

HENRY JAMES

CHARLOTTE

The air...

HENRY JAMES

Her first occasion in society.

CHARLOTTE

Stand back in your silence.

I stand here...

Exposed,

Unaccompanied...

Careless.

Alone.

No he's not here.

Look round for him, you will not find him.

I am here alone,

Something is beginning.

HENRY JAMES

(V/O) Below...

Prince Amerigo.

In the crowd...

Her husband's son-in-law...

Her best friend's husband.

Moving,

Shining

Looking

Topping.

She watches him as he comes back up the stairs...

To her.

CHARLOTTE

(V/O) What do you do when you are away from me that makes you
always come back more...

(What is it?)

More.

We should be...

HENRY JAMES.

More careful?

Discreet?

Yet in Mrs Verver there is a vibration,

Exhilaration.

As her Prince returns to her.

MUSIC FADES. SHE TAKES HIS ARM, THEY WALK DOWN THE STAIRS.

IN THE BACKGROUND, A SMALL ORCHESTRA PLAYS, MAYBE EINE
KLEINE MACHMUSIK ROMANZE PLAYS. MOZART.

CHARLOTTE.

Stay with me.

PRINCE.

I was trying to find you...

CHARLOTTE.

Walk me through all these...

PRINCE.

...I was trying to escape....

CHARLOTTE.

...let no-one take you off...

PRINCE.

... got waylaid.

CHARLOTTE.

...I want her to see.

PRINCE.

Want who to see?

CHARLOTTE.

Fanny.

PRINCE.

See what?

CHARLOTTE.

Us together.

PRINCE.

She has seen us to/gether in so many places.

CHARLOTTE.

/Not here.

Not now.

PRINCE.

(SMILING) You're so strange cara mia.

CHARLOTTE.

I don't want to talk to anyone...

Walk me /through these eddies.

PRINCE.

(LAUGHING) /It is after all a party.

CHARLOTTE.

I am strange.

PRINCE.

Here is Fanny.

FANNY.

I've been watching you two.

PRINCE.

I give Charlotte now to you.

CHARLOTTE

(WHISPER) You run away so easy?

PRINCE. I must see the Ambassador.

PAUSE AS PRINCE GOES. CHARLOTTE AND FANNY STAND.

FANNY. You are here with the Prince alone?

BEAT.

CHARLOTTE. I am.

FANNY. Where's Maggie?

MUSIC RETURN. CHIANO.

Int. Carriage EVENING

MAGGIE, CHARLOTTE AND THE PRINCE ARE ALL INSIDE. THE CARRIAGE PULLS UP. THE HOUSE IS SHINING.

CHARLOTTE. Look, the house is all lights.

THE DOOR IS OPENED. CHARLOTTE GETS OUT. MAGGIE SIGHS.

PRINCE. Why do you hesitate?

MAGGIE. I shouldn't have come.

PRINCE. Maggie, of course you should have come.

(SMILING) Don't you like parties?

MAGGIE. It's not that.

REDUCE MUSIC.

CHARLOTTE.

She came,

Stayed ten minutes...

Changed her mind, **RETURN MUSIC.**

MAGGIE IS GOING UP THE STAIRS, BEHIND
THE OTHERS.

CHARLOTTE. So many people.

PRINCE. Everyone.

HE LOOKS ROUND. MAGGIE HAS STOPPED.

PRINCE. Maggie...?

MAGGIE. I shouldn't have left father.

CHARLOTTE.

Went home.

FANNY.

So you stay on together without her?

PRINCE GOES DOWN TO WHERE MAGGIE IS.

PRINCE. I'll take you home.

MAGGIE. No, you stay.

CHARLOTTE.

We do.

MAGGIE. Charlotte will be so
disap/pointed.

CHARLOTTE.

/She didn't want me to be disappointed.

FANNY.

You and I need to talk.

FANNY SLIDES OPEN A DOOR LOOKS BACK AT HER.

MUSIC FADES.

FANNY AND CHARLOTTE COME INTO A SMALL SITTING ROOM. THE PARTY REDUCES.

CHARLOTTE. We are staying on alone because Maggie has driven home, and her her father as usual/ has not managed to come.

FANNY. /As usual?

CHARLOTTE. Adam doesn't like to go out.

This evening he wasn't feeling well.

But he said go, of course.

FANNY. You say your husband's ill?

CHARLOTTE. If he was ill I wouldn't /have left him.

FANNY. /But Maggie was worried?

CHARLOTTE. She worries easily.

She's afraid of influen//za.

FANNY. //But you're not?

THE PACE PICKS UP.

CHARLOTTE (V/O, HALF WHISPER) Isn't this what you want?

Half expect?

Would you not be disappointed Fanny...

If I didn't strike in you a /spark of your curiosity?

FANNY. /So you don't think in your your husband's trouble it would be better if you yourself had gone?

BEAT.

CHARLOTTE. You can't upset me Fan/ny.

FANNY. /I don't want to upset you Char//lotte.

CHARLOTTE. //Nobody can.

FANNY. But if Maggie is willing to leave you and her husband here without her...

Don't you /think we should talk about that?

CHARLOTTE. /That my husband's daughter felt she must be the one to stay with him...

Not his wife.

Maggie thinks of fathers more than husbands.

FANNY. She loves //Amerigo.

CHARLOTTE. //She loves him, but she doesn't think of him.

One doesn't necessarily involve ///the other.

FANNY. ///You should be happy.

You live with good people.

CHARLOTTE. I don't complain.

FANNY. No.

MUSIC, QUIET UNDERSCORE. LOOKING GLASS. TOM QUICK.

CHARLOTTE. Maggie missed her father,

When he was away.

All our absences, after our marriage...

All our months in America.

Maggie...

Had arrears to make up,

She simply misses him.

All the time.

She meets him here and there,

In our separate households...

Makes her in fact see more of him than when they had they had the same house.

She likes him alone.

As he her.

They are perfectly arranged and intimate.

FANNY. And you?

CHARLOTTE. What?

FANNY. Do you arrange?

CHARLOTTE. Arrange what?

FANNY. The Prince?

CHARLOTTE. The Prince what?

FANNY. Do you arrange to see him?

BEAT.

CHARLOTTE. He never comes.

FANNY. O.

CHARLOTTE. He has not been to my house for three months.

We don't meet.

FANNY. You meet here tonight.

PAUSE. **MUSIC FADE.**

Do you not know how fortunate you are /Charlotte?

CHARLOTTE. /To be second best to some //other woman?

FANNY. //His daughter?

CHARLOTTE. His greatest love.

I have tried,

I've done everything

I've I've

Tonight brings it home to me. **MUSIC RETURN. LOOKING GLASS 6 TO END.**

Adam told me when he asked me to marry him,

He warned me...

FANNY. What?

CHARLOTTE. ...that that he wanted me just so he could help Maggie.

FANNY. Help her how?

CHARLOTTE. Release her...

FANNY. Then why now does she return to him and not you?

PAUSE.

Isn't it enough...

What you have already?

CHARLOTTE. Why do you refuse to understand?

FANNY. I don't refuse...

CHARLOTTE. What is a quarrel with me but a quarrel with...

My right...

To recognise the conditions of my bargain.

CHARLOTTE GOES, PULLING OPEN THE SLIDING DOORS TO LET THE PARTY THROUGH.

FANNY STANDS.

SIGHS.

RETURNS TO THE PARTY.

DIFFERENT PARTY MUSIC.

Int. Party NIGHT

THE PRINCE STANDS.

FANNY. Where is Charlotte?

PRINCE. The Ambassador stole her...

FANNY. Because he knew you?

PRINCE. Because he saw her.

FANNY. Because she goes about with you?

PRINCE (LAUGHING) We are in the same boat.

FANNY. Are you?

BEAT.

Isn't Charlotte in Mr Verver's boat?

PRINCE. So am I.

Without him I would have...

Drowned.

FANNY.

Indeed.

PAUSE.

PRINCE.

If you look at it in that way.

FANNY.

What other way would you like at it?

PRINCE.

That the boat never left dock.

FANNY.

Amerigo...

PRINCE.

That now and again,

We might,

She might...

Step out of it.

Feel free.

Like here tonight, we just...

Step out of the boat we find ourselves in,

Just...

We won't drown.

We won't sink.

MUSIC. EMPTY EMOTION 6. JODY JENKINS.

FANNY.

And how do you think Mr Verver might feel /about that?

PRINCE.

/Charlotte is known to be his wife.

But don't you think...

Perhaps,

Look at her.

He should (sometimes) try to be her /husband?

MUSIC FADE.

FANNY.

/By coming to a party?

PRINCE.

He wouldn't do that.

FANNY. Because he's shy.

PRINCE. Because he has his own habits,
His own ways.
He has nurtured them over the years.
He he...
Knows what he wants and makes...
His own dis/criminations.

FANNY. /So you don't like him?

PRINCE. No, I like him of course.
How can you... ask that?
I do.
He is a perfect father,
He loves my son, adores him.
His generosity is extraordinary.
I know that, I know that.
I cannot criticise him I will not criticise...
Or allow...
BEAT.

FANNY. But?

PRINCE But...

MUSIC. EMPTY EMOTION 6. JODY JENKINS.

(LAUGHS) To you Fanny, just to you.

I make one one one one tiny remark.

FANNY. Which is?

PRINCE. Given his situation, his fortune, how fortunate they are...

Why did he marry her?

PAUSE. FADE MUSIC.

FANNY.

I suddenly want to go home.

BEAT.

PRINCE.

Fanny what?

Sorry,

I just thought I just thought...

You'd we'd you'd...

I think I can say anything you to.

You, I look to you...

To see me through.

FANNY.

You are through.

You were through long ago Prince.

THE PARTY BUILDS TO CRESCENDO THEN RELEASES INTO THE
NIGHT.

Ext. Street

NIGHT

A CARRIAGE, SOLITARY MOVES ALONG THE EMPTY STREET.

MUSIC QUIET UNDERSCORE THROUGH NEXT SCENE. EMPTY. HELEN
JANE LONG.

Int. Carriage

NIGHT

FANNY AND THE COLONEL SIT INSIDE, HE INVISIBLE UNTIL LATER.

FANNY

(V/O) Did I do this did I do this?

Was this my making?

What have I done?

SHE STARES OUT OF THE WINDOW.

I hate London,

This sheltering darkness this...

(I did this)

I hate these unpeopled streets.

THE STREET RINGS WITH ITS SPARSE AIR ECHOING THE HORSE'S
HOOVES STARKLY.

A world unconscious,

Unreproachful

SHE SHIVERS.

(V/O, WHISPERS) Terror.

I must shake myself/ free.

/I see it but I cannot be //sure.

//No-one can trace their conne///ction to me.

///It's not me.

I did not make this.

They made it.

My connection is slight.

Innocent.

SHE DRAWS A BREATH.

That's all.

MUSIC FADES.

THE COLONEL SNORES SUDDENLY, ENTERING THE PICTURE SHE
NUDGES HIM.

(OUT-LOUD) Bob.

HE SNORTS AGAIN.

Don't snore.

COLONEL. I never snore.

HE CLEARS HIS THROAT.

I'm waiting for you to speak to me.

HE LIGHTS A MATCH FOR A CIGAR.

FANNY. Must you /smoke?

COLONEL. /My cigar is half eaten, I must persist.

HE SUCKS AT CIGAR. SHE SIGHS.

COLONEL. Well what did you think would happen?

FANNY. So you saw them too?

You thought...

COLONEL. I saw Charlotte standing at the top of the stairs magnificent.

FANNY. And the way he looked at her?

COLONEL. (SIGHS) The Prince has nothing in life to do.

FANNY. He behaved beautifully - when Charlotte said she
would marry his father-in-law.

I thought all along all along wonderfully of him.

I told him...

COLONEL. He has behaved beautifully.

FANNY. He wasn't afraid when she got married.

It was wonderful.

And she was so confident...

So happy.

COLONEL. Did you ask her how much?

FANNY. Never...

It wasn't a time to ask.

Asking is to suggest, it wasn't a time to...

BEAT.

I thought she could face it.

PAUSE.

I will never forgive her if she forgets who she has to thank for all she /has.

COLONEL. /You?

FANNY. Maggie.

COLONEL. Maggie?

FANNY. Astonishing Maggie.

COLONEL. Is she?

FANNY. It will be she who sees us through.

She'll have to.

COLONEL. And what about Mr Verver...

In all his idealism, /marrying Charlotte?

FANNY. /She was grateful to him,

She was sincere.

COLONEL. The question is - how much sincerity is left?

FANNY. Don't shake your head tell me.

You have an idea,

COLONEL. Leave it.

FANNY. Leave it?

COLONEL. Let them alone they'll manage.

FANNY. /By doing everything they want?

COLONEL. In their own way.

FANNY. So that's your idea to protect them?

MOMENT.

COLONEL.

They will manage in their own way.

HE OPENS THE DOOR OF THE CARRIAGE. **MUSIC RETURNS.**

Let's go in.

CLIMBS OUT, WAITS FOR HER.

SHE SIGHS.

FANNY.

Why do I feel such unease then?

COLONEL.

Because you feel like you made a mistake.

FANNY.

I feel like I'm coming back from a funeral.

COLONEL.

Then bury it.

THE NIGHT SWALLOWS, AND LIFTS INTO A SQUALLY MORNING. THE
RAIN SETTLES INTO A DAY. **AND FADES.**

Int. Staircase – Grand London House AFTERNOON

PRINCE COMES DOWNSTAIRS, JUST GOT UP. YAWNING.

PRINCE.

Maggie?

Principino.

Hello hello.

HE LOOKS INTO THE SITTING ROOM...

Int. Sitting Room AFTERNOON

GOES IN.

PRINCE.

Maggie?

Shall we have tea?

Is it afternoon all ready?

HE LOOKS AT THE CLOCK.

It is afternoon.

GOES BACK TO DOOR. YAWNING.

Are you back?

Int. Landing AFTERNOON

PRINCE.

It was a terrible party...

You were right to leave.

STOPS, CALLS UP THE STAIRS.

Maggie?

GOES INTO DINING ROOM.

Int. Dining Room AFTERNOON

PRINCE. Have I missed lunch as well?

Int. Staircase AFTERNOON

HE GOES OUT OF THE DINING ROOM AND DOWN THE STAIRS TO THE GROUND FLOOR.

PRINCE. He-llo!!

Where is my little Principino?

HIS VOICE ECHOES AROUND. HE STANDS.

PUTS HIS HEAD INTO THE LIBRARY.

Int. Library DAY

PRINCE. No-one here?

ANOTHER CLOCK TICKS.

HE COMES BACK OUT TO THE HALLWAY.

Int. Entrance Hall DAY

BUTLER OPENS A DOOR, COMES OUT.

BUTLER. May I help your honour?

PRINCE. All out?

BUTLER. All out. Can I get you something?

HALF-BEAT.

PRINCE. Nothing. I need nothing.

HE GOES BACK AT THE STAIRS SLOWLY.

(QUIETLY) All out.

HE GOES BACK UP THE STAIRS AND INTO THE SITTING ROOM.

PRINCE QUIETLY ENTERS. MUSIC. RESIGNATION. PAUL MOTTRAM.

PRINCE

(V/O) Gone again for the day.

Not back yet.

GOES TO THE WINDOW. IT IS RAINING AGAINST THE WINDOW. HE STANDS. THE CLOCK TICKS. HE SIGHS.

So quiet.

The colour of the rain.

The colour of the air,

The mud...

On the streets.

So grim.

(I hate this city)

It laughs in your face,

Spits you out.

HE SIGHS.

All of it dirty brown.

THE RAIN CONTINUES RELENTLESS.

AND THEN...

THE BELL RINGS BELOW. HE LISTENS TO THE BUTLER OPEN THE DOOR, AND A BLURRED CONVERSATION. CHARLOTTE'S VOICE.

CHARLOTTE.

Good afternoon.

PRINCE

(V/O) She'll have come for Maggie.

Hearing she's out, she'll she'll

HE MOVES TOWARDS THE DOOR.

Leave a message, a card.

(I don't know)

BELOW.

BUTLER. The Prince is in residence.

PRINCE. (V/O) Now you know I am home.

Choose.

FOOTSTEPS COME UP THE STAIRS. PRINCE MOVES ACROSS THE ROOM, AWAY. BUTLER ENTERS WITH CHARLOTTE. **MUSIC FADES.**

BUTLER. Mrs Verver.

CHARLOTTE. Good afternoon.

PRINCE. Good afternoon.

BUTLER. Shall I light the lamp under the kettle, your honour?

PRINCE. Please do.

BUTLER DOES SO. ARRANGES THE CHINA FOR POURING.

BUTLER. Would you like me to...?

PRINCE. No no I'll do it. That'll be all.

THE BUTLER GOES OUT. CLOSSES THE DOOR. THEY STAND.

Where then have you been?

CHARLOTTE. Everywhere.

PRINCE. Everywhere?

CHARLOTTE. Everywhere I could think of, except to see people.

I don't want people.

BEAT.

I have been home three times,

SHE LAUGHS.

Three times and then come out again.

The cabman thought I was crazy, kept sighing and scratching his head.

SHE LAUGHS.

PRINCE. Do you want tea?

CHARLOTTE. I devour tea.

SHE THROWS HERSELF IN A CHAIR. HE POURS.

MUSIC. RESIGNATION 2.

I went to the British Museum,

The British Museum I love.

Then the National Gallery, not so much.

Walked round in the rain on Charing Cross Road.

For books...

Old books.

Came across treasures.

Had lunch on (don't know what it was)

Wanted the Tower, but it was too far.

The cabbie said that,

The zoo was too wet.

SHE LAUGHS AGAIN.

So I went to St Pauls which was sombre but so still.

I stood absolutely held for I don't know how long.

I bought too many books.

BEAT. **MUSIC FADES.**

When did you last see them?

PRINCE.

Who?

CHARLOTTE.

Maggie and the baby.

You know she's with my husband.

PRINCE.

She told me she was taking the baby as usual...

Da nonno.

CHARLOTTE.

For the whole day?

PRINCE.

She didn't say I didn't ask.

CHARLOTTE.

She was at my house before eleven.

Adam was reading the baby a book.

MUSIC. RESIGNATION 4.

Int. Landing MORNING

ADAM READS TO THE BABY IN THE SITTING ROOM, CHARLOTTE LISTENS A MOMENT.

ADAM (READS) Mr Tod was coming up Bulls Banks and he was in the very worse of tempers.

TO BABY.

Look at that bad fox bad tongue hanging out.

Fox, yes get him.

(READS, FADES) First /he had been upset by breaking the plate. It was his own fault; but it was a chine plate, the last of the dinner service...

CHARLOTTE /Maggie had gone out, taking the carriage to do something for him that he...

PRINCE. Your carriage?

CHARLOTTE. I don't know.

It doesn't matter.

It's not a question of a carriage...

MUSIC FADES.

It's not a question even of taking a cab.

I...

It's beautiful...

The way they feel,

I hadn't seen or thought it before.

They feel a confidence...

PRINCE. They feel a confidence.

CHARLOTTE. ...that everything is wonderful.

That we are all wonderful.

BEAT.

I have this latchkey.

The one thing that irritates Adam

Is is

Coming home and the servants all waiting,

Standing inhumanly straight.

If we come back late from somewhere,

Or in the small hours.

So today,

I slipped in and out, kept the cab at the door.

And crept up, THE SOUND OF THE SITTING ROOM GROWS
AS CHARLOTTE GOES UP THE STAIRS.

CHARLOTTE.

Made out... Int. Landing DAY

MAGGIE AND VERVER GIVE THE BABY
LUNCH.

CHARLOTTE.

Whether Maggie was still there.

MUSIC. RESIGNATION 4.

MAGGIE. I don't even know if babies
should have boiled eggs.

VERVER. Fine if it's well done.

MAGGIE. Don't eat his /bread.

CHARLOTTE.

/I came,

VERVER. The bronze got here by the
way.

MAGGIE. The head?

VERVER. It's at Southampton, I'll just
ship it //straight.

CHARLOTTE.

//I went.

MAGGIE. I'd love to see it.

CHARLOTTE STARTS TO RECEDE, BACK
DOWN THE STAIRS. THE VOICES FADE

CHARLOTTE.

Without they so much as ///dreaming.

VERVER. ///He's still not eating his
egg.

MAGGIE. You ///are though.

CHARLOTTE.

////What do they think I do?

Physically, materially I mean - a mere wandering woman.

Harmless wife

Best stepmother.

SHE LAUGHS AGAIN.

Wonderful.

MUSIC FADE.

I don't think they even think of me.

PRINCE

(SIGHS) They think so much of you.

CHARLOTTE.

Don't put it on me.

PRINCE.

You are wonderful to them.

You're a personage.

CHARLOTTE.

You're quite wrong.

Personages do not have latch-keys.

You, caro mio...

Are the personage.

PRINCE.

Don't put it on me.

BEAT.

What will you say to them you've been doing all day?

CHARLOTTE.

I shall say beautifully...

I've been here.

PRINCE.

All day?

CHARLOTTE.

Yes all day.

Keeping you company in your solitude.

They will like that.

BEAT.

PRINCE.

They love my boy.

They would do the same for a child of yours.

BEAT. **MUSIC RESIGNATION 2.**

CHARLOTTE.

If I could have one.

PRINCE.

You might.

CHARLOTTE.

No.

I hoped...

It would have been better.

He hoped too.

PAUSE.

And now I'm sure...

It will never be.

PRINCE.

Never?

CHARLOTTE.

Never.

BEAT.

Things turn out as they...

Turn out.

Leave us more alone.

PAUSE.

We are both alone.

MUSIC FADES.

PAUSE. THE PRINCE MOVES AWAY.

PRINCE. I just don't understand them.

That's the difficult thing.

I didn't at first,

But I thought I thought...

I would learn.

CHARLOTTE. They are extraordinarily happy toge/ther.

PRINCE. /So it doesn't matter if I don't understand?

You understand.

CHARLOTTE. I understand my husband I don't understand Maggie.

PRINCE. At least as Americans you have that in common.

I...

Have failed,

I'm /too different.

CHARLOTTE. /I cannot put myself into Maggie's skin.

I could not breathe in it.

HALF-BEAT.

But I would do anything to keep it from bruising.

More so for my husband...

With all his sweet simplicity.

PRINCE. We must take care...

Then,

Of them.

CHARLOTTE. Every hour.

PRINCE. Always.

CHARLOTTE. Protect them from any harm.

PRINCE. It's wonderful...

CHARLOTTE. It's beautiful.

PRINCE.

...to keep them safe.

THEY KISS.

MUSIC. RESIGNATION.

PRINCE

(V/O) I don't go to her house his house.

I don't go to where she lives with him.

But sometimes no choice...

A grand dinner.

One that Maggie thinks her father ought to give...

And Adam,

Adam...

Who has little idea as ever of not doing what he should do...

Let's Charlotte give it.

MUSIC FADES.

CHARLOTTE PUTS THE FINISHING TOUCHES TO THE TABLE. VERVER AND MAGGIE SIT AT IT.

VERVER. Why do we do this?

MAGGIE. Because everyone loves to see you Papa.

VERVER. See me?

MAGGIE. You're the big new American thing.

VERVER. My money you mean.

In all its filthy...

MAGGIE. Papa.

CHARLOTTE. New money is new money.

VERVER. They only wish they could get their hands on it.

CHARLOTTE. Maggie, you can't sit there.

You two can't sit together.

I have put you...

SHE LOOKS AT THE TABLE-CARDS.

Next to Lord Barnes.

MAGGIE (GETS UP) Who?

CHARLOTTE. Don't be too excited - he's sixty.

And a Tory.

VERVER. I never understand /all these classes.

MAGGIE. /Do I have to?

CHARLOTTE. It's that or the bishop.

VERVER. Who am I next to?

CHARLOTTE. Lady Castledean.

VERVER GROANS.

VERVER. She'll want to go over the whole house...

She craves my possessions.

CHARLOTTE.	They're better than hers.
	Hers are all faded.
VERVER.	O I hate this.
MAGGIE.	You have to sometimes /Papa, make a show.
CHARLOTTE.	/And your suit is here.
VERVER.	What suit?
CHARLOTTE.	The one you were measured for.
VERVER.	Charlotte dresses me /now.
MAGGIE.	/Someone had to.
CHARLOTTE.	Maggie at least// understands.

UNDERSCORING, PEOPLE ARRIVE. MUSIC. IMMERSED. IGOR DVORKIN.

PRINCE

(V/O) //Everybody comes.

Everybody rushes.

A large bright dull...

Involving for the most part...

Very bland

Very exalted

Immensely announceable...

BUTLER.

Mr and Mrs...

PRINCE

(V/O) Couples.

The Assingham's come of course.

(They wouldn't miss it)

Fanny glances at me,

And I smile without thinking.

(I try not to look at Charlotte)

Held so high,

So handsome.

Where all else

Mature.

Sedate.

She's young...

(V/O) I look at Maggie instead.

To stop myself...

She's perfect in her own little way.

But so simple, so...

(SIGHS)

So so so like her father.

THE SCENE MOVES TO DINNER.

MUSIC FADES.

Int. Drawing Room

NIGHT

THE PRINCE STANDS. FANNY APPROACHES.

FANNY.

Amerigo.

PRINCE.

Fanny.

How are you?

FANNY.

Have you been avoiding me?

PRINCE.

I don't come to this house often.

FANNY.

Whereas I do.

PRINCE.

You delight in Maggie.

FANNY.

Who is always here.

PRINCE.

With her father, yes.

FANNY.

Whereas Charlotte... is sometimes ab/sent.

PRINCE.

/Well she must face down society.

Bears the burden of the visiting list.

And...

Be everything to everyone.

BEAT.

FANNY.

You know after all they're not going to Matcham?

PRINCE.

Matcham?

FANNY.

At Easter.

PRINCE.

The good old English country house?

FANNY. They're not going...

PRINCE. Who's not going?

FANNY. Adam.

Maggie.

PRINCE. Were we all inv/ited?

FANNY. /Did you not reme//mber?

PRINCE. //It was a general invitation.

FANNY. Did you accept?

PRINCE. All that...

Shooting

Riding

Golfing

Walking...

Tea-drinking,

/Breakfasting

Lunching...

FANNY. /You sound bored.

PRINCE. English society cuts me in two.

FANNY. So you won't go without Maggie?

PRINCE. You mean will I go by myself?

But you'll be there won't you?

O I see, you mean you won't go if I don't go?

BEAT.

FANNY. Charlotte won't go without her husband will she?

BEAT.

PRINCE. I have no idea...

I haven't asked her.

I haven't really thought of it till you brought my attention to it.

BEAT. MAGGIE GOES BY.

FANNY. Maggie...

MAGGIE. Fanny, I've hardly had a chance...

FANNY. I hear you're not going to Matcham?

MAGGIE. At Easter, no.

FANNY. Why not?

MAGGIE (LOWERS VOICE) O poor papa.

One night of Lady Castledean is enough.

She's currently walking him round the china.

At Matcham...

She tries to sell him all her suits of armour.

PRINCE. Charlotte and I will go to represent the family.

MAGGIE. Yes strangely...

You love that kind of thing.

Excuse me, I must rescue father.

PAUSE. MAGGIE GOES AWAY.

PRINCE. I always love Matcham.

The splendid hospitality.

And I suppose Charlotte's at hand...

We can of course...

Exchange ideas,

Impressions.

FANNY. You know that isn't what I meant.

EVERYTHING TURNS. A SUDDEN SPARK OF NOISE. MUSIC. THIS IS
THE BEGINNING OF THE JAZZ-AGE. IT'S A GATSBY MOMENT

Ext. Matcham. A Grand Country House DAY

CARRIAGES ARRIVING. THE PRINCE CLIMBS OUT, LOOKS UP.

MUSIC: SALLY ANN. ALEXIS SMITH.

PRINCE (V/O) Matcham. (of course)
With all its people.
All its possible combinations.
Of the quickened play of possible proximity.
HE WALKS UP TO THE FRONT DOOR, PEOPLE COMING AND GOING.

Int. Matcham, Entrance Hall DAY

HE ENTERS.

PRINCE (V/O) We arrive separately.
(Charlotte and I)
Without our sposi.
HE ENTERS INTO THE SITTING ROOM.

Int. Sitting Room DAY

MANY PEOPLE DRINK CHAMPAGNE, CALL TO HIM.

PRINCE (V/O) Happy boldness,
Mingling thus.
Each unaccompanied.
We...

CHARLOTTE WANDERS.

CHARLOTTE (V/O) Don't necessarily go around together.
We pass...

PRINCE. (V/O) Linger.

CHARLOTTE (V/O) Talk...

PRINCE (V/O) Continue.

HE GOES. CHARLOTTE CONTINUES.

CHARLOTTE (V/O) People think we're funny.

SHE WALKS THROUGH THE SITTING ROOM AND OUT INTO THE GARDEN.

Ext. Garden DAY

SHE WALKS AWAY INTO THE GARDEN, FOLLOWING A HEDGE.

CHARLOTTE (V/O) It is the easiest...

And most informal of places.

Nobody thinks anything of anyone else. MUSIC GONE. FADE AT 48 SECS.

THE PRINCE IS SUDDENLY NEXT TO HER AGAIN.

PRINCE (V/O) Or anyone else with anyone else.

THEY WALK TOGETHER FOR A MOMENT.

It is such a shame my wife could not leave her home.

CHARLOTTE. And my husband,

Sends a beautiful deprecating apology.

I have left him amongst his treasures.

PRINCE (V/O) People note our harmony...

CHARLOTTE (V/O) Clever son-in-law.

PRINCE (V/O) The charming step-mother.

CHARLOTTE (V/O) As long as it is not excessive.

PRINCE. (OUT-LOUD) The Assinghams are here.

CHARLOTTE. (OUT-LOUD) Always one false note.

SHE TURNS AWAY.

I must leave you.

THE PRINCE RE-ENTERS THE HOUSE INTO THE DRAWING ROOM.

SOMEONE PLAYS A PIANO.

Int. Drawing Room

DAY

MUSIC. SALLY ANN 3. UNDERSCORES REST OF SCENE.

PRINCE

(V/O) Every voice in this great bright house...

A call to pleasure.

PEOPLE LAUGHING.

Every echo...

A defiance of difficulty.

Every aspect - a plea for immediacy.

It's like a spell.

(V/O, WHISPER. DEEPER) What would you make of this Maggie...

Moping as you are...

In that monotonous square London house.

With your father?

His house.

Is your imagination never ruffled by a...

By an...

Anomaly?

Int. Sitting room

NIGHT

MAGGIE COMES THROUGH. VERVER SITS.

MAGGIE.

The baby is sleeping.

VERVER SLEEPS TOO, A GENTLE SNORE.

And so are you Papa.

IT IS VERY VERY STILL. SHE POURS A GLASS OF WINE, WALKS ACROSS THE ROOM.

MAGGIE	(V/O) ...isn't new.	
	Isn't something that just happened.	
PRINCE	(V/O) That you are so...	cosy.
MAGGIE	(V/O) You have been absent.	
PRINCE	(V/O) Look at us, see us here.	
MAGGIE.	(V/O) You have been blank...	
PRINCE	(V/O) You never could see past all your make-believe.	
	CHARLOTTE JOINS HIM.	
CHARLOTTE.	Amerigo.	
	CHARLOTTE AND THE PRINCE KISS AND WALK ONWARDS.	
MAGGIE	(V/O) From the beginning.	
	SHE GASPS. THE SOUND MELTS AROUND HER. MUSIC FADES.	
	<u>Int. Sitting Room in London</u>	<u>NIGHT</u>
	VERVER JUMPS AWAKE.	
VERVER	(WAKES) What's the matter?	
MAGGIE.	Nothing Papa.	
	Nothing.	
	Just a bad dream.	

FANNY EATS BREAKFAST. PRINCE ENTERS.

PRINCE. Fanny...

FANNY. Amerigo join me?

Are you having eggs?

PRINCE. Too early.

FANNY. What time are you leaving?

PRINCE. Is your husband still in bed?

FANNY. Bob's up.

He likes to smoke first thing three cigarettes...

One after another, no good reason.

CHARLOTTE ENTERS, WITH BREAKFAST.

CHARLOTTE. Good morning.

FANNY. Charlotte.

I feel like I've hardly seen /you.

CHARLOTTE. /Time has gone so quickly.

FANNY. What train shall we take home this morning?

CHARLOTTE SITTING DOWN.

MUSIC. EMPTY EMOTION 3. QUIET

CHARLOTTE. O that's sweet of you – going together would be lovely.

But you mustn't mind us –

We're we're settled...

Amerigo and I,

To stay over for lunch.

BEAT.

I must oblige our hostess Lady Castledean.

FANNY. O.

PRINCE. And as a consequence,
I must...
Of course, decently see Charlotte home.
BEAT.
Both Maggie, and Adam...
Would want that.

FANNY. Of course.
Of course.
BEAT.
I will go to Adam's what I get back.

PRINCE. Yes, they'll be there.

FANNY. Tell them when to expect/ you.

CHARLOTTE. /Say we're all right.

FANNY. I can't say anymore.

PRINCE. Nor less.

FANNY. O I won't say less.
I'll go straight to them.
So you can be easy.

CHARLOTTE. We're easy.

MUSIC FADES.

FANNY. And you'll return for dinner?

PRINCE. O we're not likely to make another night away.

FANNY. Well then I wish you a pleasant day.

MUSIC CONTINUE INTO NEXT SCENE.

PRINCE STANDS. THE LAST CARRIAGE IS GONE AWAY. CHARLOTTE JOINS HIM.

CHARLOTTE.

What can she do to us anyway?

There's not a word she can breathe.

She's helpless...

It all comes back to her.

She started all this...

She introduced you to Maggie.

She made your marr/iage.

PRINCE.

/And she had something to do with //yours.

CHARLOTTE.

//She took their lives in her hands...

And that's what ties her up.

She can't go to them and say...

I was mistaken.

PRINCE.

Because she wasn't.

She was right,

Everything's right.

Everything will stay so.

CHARLOTTE.

She was born to smooth.

Now she has the chance /of her life.

PRINCE.

/I've hardly seen you - even here.

CHARLOTTE.

We pass.

We talk.

We don't even touch.

PRINCE.

Nothing then.

Nothing for Fanny to worry about.

CHARLOTTE.

But now they've all gone away.

HE TAKES HER HAND.

PRINCE. It's already eleven.

If we have to stay here for lunch...

CHARLOTTE. We don't have to stay here for lunch.

PRINCE. But our hostess?

CHARLOTTE. Lady Castledean doesn't dream of us sta/ying.

PRINCE. /What does she dream of?

CHARLOTTE. Mr Blint.

PRINCE. Mr Blint?

CHARLOTTE. She only wanted us for the others...

To show she wasn't left alone with him.

Now that's done, they've all gone...

She of course knows...

PRINCE. What?

MUSIC. STARTS QUIET. CHIANO. DAN SKINNER.

CHARLOTTE. ...that we love cathedrals.

BEAT.

CHARLOTTE. So we shall go to Gloucester?

Cloisters or towers or /something.

PRINCE. /The tomb of some old king.

We must see him, and the cathedral.

We must know all about it...

The little shops.

CHARLOTTE. Do you remember that golden cup?

PRINCE. No.

CHARLOTTE. The beautiful one, the real one...

That I offered you so long ago,

And you wouldn't have.
 Just before you were married...
 That gilded crystal cup?
 In a little shop in Bloomsbury?

PRINCE. What, that cracked thing you wanted to /palm off on me?

CHARLOTTE. /I often thought about it.
 And that man who tried to //sell it to me.

PRINCE. //He's probably still keeping it for you.

CHARLOTTE. I risk the cracks.

PRINCE. I go, as you know by my superstitions.
 That's why...
 I know where we are.
 They're every one of them today on our side.

CHARLOTTE. I go but by one thing.
 You.

PRINCE. Me?

CHARLOTTE. I know the name of an inn.
 There are two, but I've chosen the right one.
 And I think I remember the tomb.

PRINCE. What tomb?

CHARLOTTE. Of the old king.
 All of it.

PRINCE. All of it?

CHARLOTTE. These days...
 Yesterday, last night...
 I want everything.

PRINCE. You shall have everything.

THEY KISS. MUSIC BUILD AND STOP.

Int. Sitting Room

EVENING

MAGGIE IS IN THE SITTING ROOM AT HER FATHER'S HOUSE. THE DOOR-BELL GOES SOMEWHERE BELOW. WE HEAR FANNY'S VOICE TO THE BUTLER.

FANNY. Thank-you. I'll find my way up.

MAGGIE MOVES TO THE DOOR.

MAGGIE. Amerigo?

FANNY. Maggie.

FANNY ENTERS THE ROOM.

Just me.

MAGGIE. Fanny...

THEY KISS.

FANNY. I am the forward party, that's all.

I come bearing a message.

MAGGIE. What message?

FANNY. Amerigo and Charlotte have stayed on for lunch with Lady Castledean.

BEAT.

MAGGIE. Really?

FANNY. Yes. Lady Castledean insisted,

I think on behalf of Mr Blint.

Do you remember Mr Blint?

MAGGIE. No I...

FANNY. Long bean of a man.

Art historian.

He has a moustache.

No use for anything...

Well,

Apart from the use Lady Castledean /has of him of course.

MAGGIE. /I do remember him,
He once tried to sell Papa a...

FANNY. Then I think they said they will have a quick hop round Gloucester,
See the cathedral come /home.

MAGGIE. /There is a cathedral?

FANNY. Amerigo said however, they would both come here to your father's
and meet you for//a late dinner.

MAGGIE. //Here?

FANNY. Where is your father by ///the way?

MAGGIE. ///Writing letters.

FANNY. I don't think they'll be too late...
Although who can speak for the trains.

MAGGIE. Who indeed.

FANNY. I think they both actually wanted to escape with us.
The weekend was all blown out.

MAGGIE. Was it extravagant?

FANNY. Well I was sole and single frump of //the party.

MAGGIE. (LAUGHS) //You were not.

FANNY. Here in London I am picturesque...
But there,
In all my sparkling glory...
I am a disaster...
You were lucky not to be there my dear Maggie.
You missed nothing.

BEAT.

And now if you don't mind my dear, asking someone to summons
me a taxi.

MAGGIE. I'll take you home.

FANNY. No need.

MAGGIE. I'll order the carriage round.

FANNY. Thank you kindly but you don't need...

MAGGIE. I need to go home.

FANNY. You won't stay?

MAGGIE. No.

FANNY. But for the late dinner?

MAGGIE. The Principino is at home /with the nurse.

FANNY. /But Amerigo,
He expects you to be //here.

MAGGIE. //Well then I'll surprise him.

BEAT.

I think it will be the first surprise I have ever given him.

Ext. Streets

EVENING

A CARRIAGE PASSES CLOSE BY AND AWAY, IN ALL ITS NOISE AND
THEN MOVES ONTO QUIET.

A CLOCK STRIKES TEN. FANNY SITS. COLONEL CALLS HER, COMING DOWNSTAIRS.

COLONEL. Fanny?

FANNY. I'm here.

COLONEL ENTERS.

COLONEL. Why you sitting here in the dark?

FANNY. The beautiful thing is at least they're afraid for them.

COLONEL. Who?

FANNY. Amerigo and Charlotte.

COLONEL. Afraid for who?

FANNY. For the others...

That they must /never know...

COLONEL. /You mean for Maggie and her father?

FANNY. ...and afraid of themselves / of course.

COLONEL. /For themselves you mean.

FANNY. Such blindness.

COLONEL. Who?

FANNY. Mr Verver.

Maggie.

COLONEL. Is Maggie blind?

BEAT.

FANNY. I thought so...

But when you dropped me off...

To tell her they would be late,

I told her and

she she...

COLONEL. What?

FANNY. Drove me home, she /never drives me home.

COLONEL. /Here?

FANNY. And then she went home.

Even though there had been a message they would have dinner at her father's.

If they return.

COLONEL. You think they /won't return?

FANNY. /I think there is nothing they're not //capable of...

COLONEL. //You think they may have bolted somewhere?

FANNY. Stayed over at Matcham.

May have wired...

God knows what.

Whatever they have done I shall never know.

Never never because I don't want to.

Nothing will induce me.

So they may do as they like.

And I will be blind,

I will know nothing.

I will not see, I will not...

There is nothing, nothing...

SHE BREATHES IT IN ALL, STOPPING HERSELF FROM COMPLETELY BREAKING DOWN. THE COLONEL WAITS.

COLONEL. Do you want a cigarette?

FANNY. I do.

HE LIGHTS ONE, GIVES IT TO HER. SHE INHALES ONCE.

COLONEL. You think Maggie suspects?

FANNY. I don't know Bob.

There was there was...

Just something,
 In her face,
 Her voice,
 Her whole manner I...
 HALF-BEAT.
 I felt she was trying her best to be...
 Quiet and natural.
 BEAT.
 I saw her beginning to doubt...
 Her wonderful little judgement of her /wonderful little world.
 COLONEL. /What do you think opened her eyes?
 FANNY. She misses her husband.
 COLONEL. She never missed him before.
 FANNY. She did but she didn't let herself know it.
 Today she knows it.
 HALF-BEAT.
 That's illuminating - it illuminated //me.
 COLONEL. //Poor girl.
 FANNY. Don't pity her.
 COLONEL. We can't be sorry for her?
 FANNY. Not now.
 Not yet.
 It's too soon if it's not already very much too
 late.
 HALF-BEAT.
 COLONEL. You mean she will get the Prince back?
 FANNY. To get him back is to have lost him.

To have lost him she must have had him.

What I take Maggie to be waking up to...

Is that,

All the while she has never really had him.

Never.

BEAT.

Now why am I holding this disgusting stub in my hand.

Take it away.

COLONEL TAKES CIGARETTE, SUCKS IT.

Don't smoke it!

COLONEL. You've hardly left me any.

FANNY. O stop complaining.

COLONEL. Cigar?

FANNY. Don't be disgusting.

And you can't smoke that in here.

COLONEL SIGHS.

Don't sigh.

HALF-BEAT.

Nothing – in spite of everything will happen.

Nothing has happened.

Nothing is hap/pening.

COLONEL. /How can you be sure of that?

FANNY. Because we know nothing about it.

COLONEL. We know nothing on earth.

FANNY. We are innocent as babes.

COLONEL. What about Maggie?

FANNY. She's awake.

COLONEL.	How can you be sure?
FANNY.	There's never been such a test...
COLONEL.	Through their absence?
FANNY.	Yes, it has become a test.
	It has spoiled...
COLONEL.	Soured?
FANNY.	Changed.
	Everything.

A CLOCK TICKS. MUSIC. EMPTY. HELEN JANE LONG. STAYS OR CAN
GO IN AND OUT FOR WHOLE VOICE-OVER.

MAGGIE

(V/O) I wait...

I wait for you to come home.

You won't find me at my father's house,

Where you expect me to be where you...

Have arranged me to be.

I wait for you like the most natural act in the world.

But I am no longer playing with blunt and idle tools...

(there passes across my vision the gleam of a sharp blade)

I shut my eyes.

Let myself be lulled by motion and sound.

THE ROOM STILLS AND TICKS.

All I have done...

Is return home instead of waiting...

For you.

(I crouch)

I just I just I just

(like a tame tigress)

Want to...

Get nearer to something I wouldn't couldn't describe.

SHE BREATHES.

So I surprise you...

For once.

I...

Don't do what you expect.

I...

Sit here.

Dressed for dinner.

I wait.

You're late,

Very late.

You may have driven with Charlotte to her house.

You may remain there.

BEAT.

I left you no message.

DOWNSTAIRS THE FRONT DOOR OPENS.

SOMEONE COMES UP THE STAIRS.

THE DOOR SUDDENLY OPENS.

THE PRINCE ENTERS.

(V/O) Time stops.

PAUSE. EVERYTHING DISTILS TO SILENCE.

(V/O) You stop.

HE STOPS.

(V/O) You come through the door, your face...

TIME AND SOUND DISTILS AGAIN.

(V/O, WHISPER) Uncertain.

EVERYTHING REDUCES.

(V/O) As if you wished to see how you should find me.

SHE SUDDENLY MOVES.

I want to strike you.

Some kind of violence I never imagined.

SHE HOWLS AND RUNS AT HIM.

AND THEN RETURNS.

THE SOUND DYING.

(V/O) I don't move.

In this ten seconds between us.

THERE IS A SILENCE.

(V/O) Meeting me here,

My small breach with custom.

Meeting me alone instead of elsewhere...

HIS BREATH OPENS.

(V/O) Your blankness,

Your sudden fear of a complication.

We stand...

THE SILENCE EXTENDS.

(V/O) There is a balance,

An equilibrium between us.

We both hold our breaths.

Will they hold...

All that is between us?

THEY STAND.

(V/O) Say something like you always do.

Touch me.

Lull me.

Tenderly, resolve me.

MUSIC FADES.

PAUSE EXTENDS.

THE PRINCE MOVES SUDDENLY, SMILES. KISSES HER CHEEK.

PRINCE. The train was a slow, stopped every/where.

MAGGIE. /Have you eaten dinner?

PRINCE. No.

MAGGIE. How was Gloucester?

SHAKES OFF HIS COAT.

PRINCE. Old.

We looked for the cathedral.

It took longer than we thought.

HE STRETCHES, YAWNS.

O I must have a bath and dress...

I've...

Been on the musty old train,

Why do those things...

The window's never open.

YAWNS AGAIN.

Excuse me for the shortest time?

HE KISSES HER QUICKLY, STARTS TO GO.

MAGGIE.

Can I help you?

PRINCE.

No.

MAGGIE.

Can I come up with /you?

PRINCE.

/No.

I mean I...

I I...

It's ten o'clock, dinner will be so late.

I will be faster alone.

I'll be quick.

HE KISSES HER AGAIN.

MUSIC RETURNS.

MAGGIE

(V/O) And still...

The beautiful sight of you...

My sense of possession.

MUSIC FADES.

THE PRINCE EATS DINNER, MAGGIE DOESN'T. CLOCK STRIKES LATE.

MAGGIE. What did Charlotte think of Matcham?

PRINCE. Grand.

Busy.

MAGGIE. Everybody?

PRINCE. Everybody.

MAGGIE. What did they think of her?

PRINCE. Endlessly entertain/ning.

MAGGIE. /To great effect?

PRINCE. Traceably pro//duced.

MAGGIE. //Clothes?

PRINCE. Inimitable.

MAGGIE. Cleverness?

PRINCE. Gracefully display///ed.

MAGGIE. ///Social utility?

PRINCE. Brilliantly exemplified.

THEY LAUGH.

MAGGIE. And the cathedral hunt?

PRINCE. Raining, everywhere.

MAGGIE. But you saw the cathedral?

PRINCE. Only from the outside.

There was a service, we didn't want to sit long.

Thinking about getting back.

BEAT.

MAGGIE (V/O) And you stop again.
Stare hard at me.
You know I...
Have an idea.
You weigh
It in the balance,
You...
Consider,
Decide
Dis/miss.
PRINCE. /You not eating?
MAGGIE. No.
PRINCE. You tired?
MAGGIE. No.
PRINCE. Come to bed?
MUSIC RETURN AGAIN?
MAGGIE (V/O) The terror...
Of the weakness that your tenderness...
Makes in me.
PRINCE (STRETCHES OVER THE TABLE, TAKES HER HAND) Will you?
MAGGIE (HALF-WHISPER) Yes.
AND FADE.

CHARLOTTE STANDS BY THE WINDOW. MAGGIE COMES UP THE STAIRS. MR VERVER SITS IN AN ARMCHAIR.

VERVER. Who's that?

CHARLOTTE. Good morning?

MAGGIE. Good morning.

MAGGIE ENTERS.

CHARLOTTE. Maggie?

MAGGIE. Charlotte are you going out?

CHARLOTTE. No, I'm just up early.

Like you.

MAGGIE. I wanted to hear about your trip.

Papa.

VERVER. Good morning.

SHE KISSES HIS HEAD.

I am buried in bills,

Papers...

And demands.

HE HUGS HER BACK FROM THE CHAIR.

Hello hello.

No Principino?

MAGGIE. Still sleeping.

MAGGIE SITS AT THE TABLE.

CHARLOTTE. Coffee?

MAGGIE. Yes.

CHARLOTTE. Of course.

Let's get fresh.

RINGS A LITTLE BELL.

MAGGIE. I don't mind this.

CHARLOTTE. No, it's cold.

DOOR OPENS.

Coffee please.

Anything else?

MAGGIE. No.

CHARLOTTE (TO SERVANT) Nothing else.

VERVER. How did you get here?

MAGGIE. I walked.

CHARLOTTE. Walked?

MAGGIE. I needed the air.

CHARLOTTE. Exhilarating.

MUSIC. SUNBEAM 7. QUIET.

MAGGIE (V/O) And you too Charlotte.

Search my face as if there is something there.

Then /look away.

CHARLOTTE. /Do you want more coffee Adam?

VERVER. That would be wonderful.

MAGGIE (V/O) And Papa, here you are with all your acceptances...

THE COFFEE IS BROUGHT.

CHARLOTTE. More milk?

VERVER. Yes please.

MAGGIE (V/O) ...I am different from you now.

CHARLOTTE POURS. MAGGIE SITS DOWN.

MAGGIE. So, tell me about everything about your weekend?

Amerigo told me bits,

Not much...

I am more curious /than ever.

CHARLOTTE. /Where should I start?

MAGGIE. The house?

CHARLOTTE. I don't know how I feel about Matcham...

It's such an old stack of a/ place.

VERVER. /The pictures are good.

CHARLOTTE. Adam won't go //there.

VERVER. //I've been there ///once.

CHARLOTTE. ///He thinks some of the pictures are frauds.

VERVER. Not frauds just copies, students not masters.

THEY ARE LAUGHING.

CHARLOTTE. Have you told Lady Castledean ///that?

VERVER. ///Why would I – she insists on their originality.

And by the way her vases make me nervous.

CHARLOTTE. How so?

BEAT.

VERVER. I think they're not where she thinks they're from.

CHARLOTTE. Copies?

VERVER. They're too vivid they try too /hard.

CHARLOTTE. /Can a vase try too hard?

VERVER. It is the simplicity of line, that makes them...

Original.

CHARLOTTE. These old houses make you nervous.

VERVER. I can't enjoy the whole big picture.

I have to separate them bit by bit.

I know people laugh at me.

CHARLOTTE. Or look forward to you coming.

MAGGIE. They might make a sale.

THEY STILL LAUGHING.

VERVER. I try to look without looking.

It's the way I put my glasses on, /give me away.

CHARLOTTE. /I love the way you put your glasses on.

MUSIC. SUNBEAM 6, TO END.

MAGGIE (V/O) And there you are Charlotte...

CHARLOTTE. He means business.

MAGGIE (V/O) ...so perfect....

VERVER. I'm so easy to see through.

MAGGIE (V/O) ...always say the /right thing.

VERVER /And I am short-sighted by the way.

That's age.

CHARLOTTE. It's curiosity, which is a more //beautiful thing.

MAGGIE (V/O) //You cannot stop soothing and/// stroking...

CHARLOTTE (DELIVERS THE COFFEE TO HIM) ///Here's your coffee.

VERVER. Thanks so much.

CHARLOTTE. Would you like me to scrape over some toast?

VERVER. I should say no but...

SIGHS.

A blood orange marmalade arrived this /morning...

CHARLOTTE. /Also part of his collecting.

VERVER. ...yet so quickly and woefully gone.

CHARLOTTE BUTTERS AND MARMALADES.

CHARLOTTE. Tell us more about your trip to Matcham?

VERVER. Aach, I can just about /remember.

CHARLOTTE. /It sounds much more interesting //than mine.

MAGGIE (V/O) //So you beautifully take possession of us Charlotte.
So easily change the subject.

CHARLOTTE TAKES THE TOAST TO HIM. HE EATS.

VERVER. Aw they make me peevish, these places.
People think it's because I am promiscuously viewing...

CHARLOTTE. Things you cannot have?

VERVER. I think they'd let me have them at the /right price.

MAGGIE (V/O) /You proceed with us Charlotte.

CHARLOTTE. Well you are in fact sighing at their high-backed sofas //and cabinets?

MAGGIE (V/O) //You treat us wonderfully.

VERVER. They are not what they seem.
I'm not a snob...

MAGGIE (V/O) As if you ///take your cues from us.

CHARLOTTE. ///Of course you're not a snob,
You're a realist.

VERVER. I can't keep believing like the English...
In all their old money,
When their old money so quickly dissolves and fades.

CHARLOTTE LAUGHS. **SUNBEAM 7.**

MAGGIE (V/O) You comply...
Bend,
Re-create...
Amuse.

CHARLOTTE. Well let me tell you about Lady Castledean then.
(Talking of old /money)

VERVER. /Interesting.

CHARLOTTE. I can only say Mr Blint.

MAGGIE (V/O) I suddenly... // see.

VERVER. //Mr Blint?

That scrappy little art-historian?

MAGGIE (V/O) You are so like Amerigo...

CHARLOTTE. She likes him.

MAGGIE (V/O) As if you take your cue...

VERVER. Likes him?

MAGGIE (V/O) ...not from us, but from him.

CHARLOTTE. For herself.

MAGGIE (V/O) From each other.

PAUSE.

VERVER. I don't think of any of us should be going to Matcham if such...

CHARLOTTE. It's nothing...

VERVER. ...goings on are going on.

CHARLOTTE. ...quite innocent.

SUNBEAM 1 – TO END OF VOICE-OVER.

MAGGIE (V/O) You soothe us,

Both of you...

In the same practiced tone.

CHARLOTTE. He only stayed for lunch...

MAGGIE (V/O) You are in harmony with each other.

CHARLOTTE. ...and was very nervous.

VERVER. /Poor Mr Blint.

CHARLOTTE. She would devour him whole.

VERVER. Where was her husband?

CHARLOTTE. Off killing things to string up.

MAGGIE (V/O) /I begin to discover...

Piece by piece,
Small shining diamonds out of the sweepings of my ordered house.
I challenge the last grain,
The refuse of my innocent economy.
You take me...
You and Amerigo,
Take me us along with you.
WITHOUT KNOWING IT SHE SUDDENLY STANDS UP.
(OUT-LOUD) I must go.

REDUCE MUSIC.

VERVER.	Maggie?
MAGGIE.	I forgot, the Principino... He has a sore tooth, when he wakes he will /want me.
VERVER.	/I'll come with you.
MAGGIE.	No don't let me interrupt your breakfast. Your... You haven't seen each other. I just wanted your news Charlotte.
CHARLOTTE.	I'll come and drink tea with you later.
MAGGIE.	I would like that.

BUILD MUSIC. AND BREAKS OUT ONTO THE STREET. MAGGIE WALKS, OBLIVIOUS TO THE WORLD AROUND HER. STOPPING AND STARTING AS SHE MUST.

MAGGIE

(V/O) You have worked out a scheme for not wounding...

Us.

That's it.

You have...

All these days,

REALISES...

Shut me into a vault.

Sat me here in my chamber of helplessness,

You have prepared for me...

A bath...

Of benevolence.

SHE CHANGES.

I don't want that.

I'm not a child I'm not I don't...

A bird in a cage..

Is what you've made me?!!

Waiting for an extra lump of sugar.

I'm not... (like that)

Have I ever complained?

Have I ever...

Ever ever ever,

From beginning to end,

Been anything but...

Pliable.

SHE HALF CRIES OUT.

Why?

SHE WALKS AGAIN, CRIES OUT TO THE AIR.

(OUT-LOUD) Why?!!

STEADIES HERSELF. STOPS.

(V/O) You have got me into a sweet warm bath...

And through agreement with each other,

Have kept me there.

I am so easily kept how could I interfere with...

What

you

have

arranged.

With each other.

You don't want me free.

You want to keep me...

Where I sit,

Where I stand,

So as not to disarrange that...

Which

Is

Between you.

PAUSE.

All four of us arranged.

You two together.

And I...

SHE HALF BREATHES/SOBS, ONCE.

Apart.

Alone.

MUSIC FINISHES.

FANNY SITS, KNITTING. THE BELL RINGS AT THE DOOR. AND MAGGIE IS LET IN BY BUTLER.

MAGGIE (FROM OFF) I'll find my way.

SHE OPENS THE DOOR, COMES IN. FANNY STANDS UP.

FANNY. Maggie...

Maggie?

Let me close the door.

MOMENT. FANNY CLOSSES THE DOOR.

MAGGIE. What is there between them Fanny?

FANNY. I beg your pardon?

MAGGIE. Between my husband and Charlotte?

FANNY. You suspect them?

SHE SPEAKS FAST, HER MIND TUMBLING OUT.

MAGGIE. I speak...

From torment.

Forgive me if it comes out like this,

I've been thinking and thinking and I've no-one no-one no-one to turn to.

I've no-one to help me to make...

Make things out.

No impression but but but but but but my own.

I don't know I don't know

I...

Don't you see,

I have only what I see,

What I think,

What I understand...

To go by.

BEAT.

FANNY.

What have you been thinking?

MAGGIE LAUGHS.

MAGGIE.

Horrible horrible things.

That...

There must be something wrong.

Something they...

Cover up.

FANNY.

You think they're in love?

BEAT.

MAGGIE.

I don't know.

Help me find out.

I've nothing but this this pressing...

Anxiety, I...

Grip

This....

Feeling like a like a...

Sickness.

Inside me,

In...

Like a dread I don't know.

Have you...

Do you...

See

Any of this?

BEAT.

FANNY.

Is what it comes down to...

That you're jealous of Charlotte?

MAGGIE HALF LAUGHS, HALF SIGHS.

MAGGIE.

Do you mean do I hate her?

No.

No no not on account of my father.

FANNY.

I meant...

On account of your husband?

BEAT.

MAGGIE.

Maybe.

If I'm unhappy I'm jealous...

Right?

It all comes to the same thing - I'm not afraid of the word.

If I'm jealous then I'm tormented,

And all the more so because I'm helpless.

Last night...

I stuffed a handkerchief in my mouth.

And I kept it there,

I keep it there...

So as not to be heard...

Moaning.

Screaming

Howling.

I can't keep it in any longer.

I am screaming at you...

I live in the midst of their arrangements.

Have you ever imagined me feeling like that?

FANNY.

Jealous?

Unhappy?

Tormented?

No.

But then,

I am not sure what I may call 'knowing' you.

You feel things so deeply,

I never imagined your life so poisoned.

And I don't think I don't think

Since you wish to know...

If you need be.

Nothing strikes me as more unnecessary.

PAUSE.

MAGGIE.

You think me always quiet and natural and easy?

FANNY.

I think of you...

As,

Absolutely good and sweet and beautiful.

MAGGIE SIGHS, ALMOST GROWLS.

I never thought of you but outside of ugly things.

Untouched by cruelty or vulgarity.

I never mixed you up /with them.

MAGGIE. /You believed me happy because you believed me stupid.

FANNY. If I believed you stupid I wouldn't have thought you interesting.

And if I hadn't found, thought you interesting I wouldn't have known you at all.

I've always been conscious of...

There being...

Something in you.

Something...

Hidden.

You've just in general been too modest.

MAGGIE. O I'm modest today,

Screaming and shouting like /this.

FANNY. /Screaming is something new I'll give you that,

But I must fit it somewhere.

To what?

BEAT.

Because they went away alone?

MAGGIE. Yes.

FANNY. In a place they may have met alone?

MAGGIE. Yes.

FANNY. But isn't it true you were invited but you...

MAGGIE. Yes.

FANNY. So, it was a test?

MAGGIE. No.

I didn't see until they came back.

Or if I had seen before if I'd known,

I hadn't let myself see.

But now...

It's so clear.

And they suddenly are aware.

Alert...

To what I may or may not see.

FANNY. I think you're wrong.

I was there...

I was at Matcham.

I...

Saw no awfulness.

I suspect /none.

MAGGIE. /You weren't there the whole time.

FANNY. Maggie...

MAGGIE. You mean you never imagined anything between them?

BEAT.

FANNY. O there is no moment of my life when I'm not imagining something.

And it's thanks to that...

That I see your husband,

Who you think viciously occupied with your stepmother

Actually...

Tenderly interested

In his adorable admirable wife.

MAGGIE SIGHs. PACES.

MAGGIE. O god.

I could tear out my hair.

FANNY. Maggie,

He wouldn't let anyone hurt a hair /on your head.

MAGGIE.

/Yes that's it,

That's it isn't it.

FANNY.

And Charlotte wouldn't either.

MAGGIE.

O Charlotte, no she wouldn't either.

They do everything I like

They do everything I like for me,

That's how they work together.

Never to aggravate me,

Never to...

SHE MOANS.

...to disturb me.

O I am so small and admirable...

That's the words you say about me.

And they they they...

Are afraid that I should ever know anything else about myself.

They move between doing too much

Or too little.

Just to stroke me down,

Cajole me

They are so afraid that I might see.

They would do anything for me,

Make me so admirable and sweet and adorable,

So long as I do not see what goes on right here.

In front of me.

Between them.

HALF-BEAT.

O I could make them do whatever I like.

FANNY. You're amazing.

MAGGIE. Am I?

FANNY. You could be terrible.

MAGGIE. You don't believe that.

You're just a little surprised.

Because I'm so mild aren't I, all the time?

You think I can bear anything...

FANNY. Bear?

MAGGIE. For love.

FANNY. Of your father?

MAGGIE. For love.

FANNY. Of your husband?

MAGGIE. For love.

PAUSE.

FANNY. Speaking of your love then...

You believe your husband,

And your father's wife,

To be in a...

Act of...

What,

To be lovers?

And you call that allegation mild?

MAGGIE. Not to you.

Not to you.

But I've told you and you must have seen for yourself...

How mild I have been to them.

FANNY. But this terror you speak of,
To make them /do as you like?

MAGGIE. /There would be no terror if they had //nothing to hide.

FANNY. //Do you know what you're saying love?

MAGGIE. I'm saying I'm I'm...
Tormented,
And bewildered.
And I've no-one but you to speak to.
In fact
In fact
I know, I'm sure...
That you have seen it for yourself.

BEAT.

That's why I believe you will meet me half way.

BEAT.

FANNY. Half way to what?
Denouncing them?

MAGGIE. Yes.

FANNY. Two friends...
Who I have for years years,
Admired and...
HALF-BEAT
Liked?

MAGGIE. Yes.

FANNY. I haven't the shadow of a charge to make.

BEAT.

MAGGIE. Then denounce me.

I'd rather you denounced me than them.

Denounce me.

FANNY. When?

MAGGIE. Now.

Denounce me to my face.

Revile me,

Put me where I should be...

FANNY. For what reason?

MAGGIE. So I shall be saved.

So I shall be wrong.

(I want to be wrong)

FANNY. You say you have no-one to speak to.

You have disguised your feelings,

You...

Have never given yourself away.

But don't you think don't you think Maggie...

You should speak to your husband.

BEAT. MUSIC. ALL IN VAIN 2. PAUL MOTTRAM TO END.

MAGGIE. I've spoken to him.

FANNY. I thought you'd made no sign?

MAGGIE. I've made no trouble.

No scene.

No stand.

I've not reproached or accused him.

But you see there is something,

He feels it...

In my silence.

He can't quite believe in it yet...

Because I am so simple,

So straight-forward,

So admirable.

He likes to keep me that way.

Because you see after all...

He pities me.

FANNY.

Pities you?

MAGGIE.

Little doll that I am.

Passed about, tenderly expertly.

Held in the right manner.

Dressed so quaintly.

FANNY.

Maggie...

MAGGIE.

I'm here...

Solid little fact.

Cost a great deal of money.

How sweet, how simple...

How could I not be happy?

FANNY.

That's why he pities you?

MAGGIE.

I bore him I know I bore him. (I bore /myself)

FANNY.

/Everybody bores the Prince.

MAGGIE.

Not Charlotte.

BEAT.

FANNY.

So you really believe...

From day to day,

Under your own eyes,

And your father's?

MAGGIE. Yes.

I really believe that.

FANNY. I can't entertain it.

MAGGIE. Well then,

That's what I wanted from you.

FANNY. Then you're welcome to it.

MAGGIE. You have never never...

Entertained it?

FANNY. Not for a moment.

MAGGIE. You'd swear that?

FANNY. Yes.

On my word as an honest woman.

BEAT.

MAGGIE. Thank you.

FANNY. Now do you believe it?

MAGGIE. I believe you.

FANNY. Well as I believe them...

It comes to the same thing.

MAGGIE. The same thing.

FANNY. So you're no longer unhappy?

MAGGIE. I won't be.

MAGGIE STANDS.

FANNY. So, I've convinced you it's impossible?

MAGGIE STANDS.

MAGGIE. Impossible.

FANNY TAKES HER HAND.

FANNY.

Maggie look at me.

Say something.

Scream or...

Please.

MAGGIE.

There is nothing more to say.