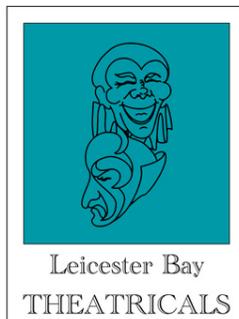


**PERUSAL SCRIPT**

# **FAREWELL TO EDEN**

A Play by  
**Mahonri Stewart**



Newport, Maine

© 2003 Mahonri Stewart  
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

CAUTION:

Professionals and amateurs are hereby warned that

## **FAREWELL TO EDEN**

being fully protected under the copyright laws of the United States Of America, the British Empire, including the Dominion Of Canada, and the other countries of the Copyright Union, is subject to royalty. Anyone presenting the play without the express written permission of the Copyright owners and/or their authorized agent will be liable to the penalties provided by law.

**Script and music copies must be rented from the Publisher and Royalty must be paid to the publisher for each and every performance before an audience whether or not admission is charged. A performance license must first be obtained from the publisher prior to any performance(s).**

1997, 1988 and 1998 Federal Copyright Law -- 17 U.S.C. section 504 -- allows for a recovery of a minimum of \$250 and a maximum of \$50,000 *for each infringement*, plus attorney fees.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without the prior written permission of the author or his respective agent(s), or in accordance with the provisions of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988 or under the terms of any license permitting limited copying issued by the Copyright Licensing Agency.

The professional and amateur rights to the performance of this play along with the lecturing, recitation, and public reading rights, are administered exclusively through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS without whose permission in writing no performance of it may be made. For all other rights, inquiries may be made to the authors through LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS. Any adaptation or arrangement of this work without the author's written permission is an infringement of copyright. **Unauthorized duplication by any means is also an infringement.**

**FOR PUBLIC PERFORMANCE RIGHTS YOU MUST APPLY TO THE PUBLISHER OR YOU ARE BREAKING THE LAW!**

The possession of this PERUSAL SCRIPT, does not constitute permission to perform the work herein contained, in public or in private, for gain or charity. Proper prior application must be made, license granted and royalty paid before a performance may be given. Copies of this SCRIPT and all other rehearsal materials may be rented from:

LEICESTER BAY THEATRICALS

P.O. Box 536 Newport, ME 04953-0536

[www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com](http://www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com)

Printed in the United States Of America

**THIS NOTICE MUST APPEAR IN ALL PROGRAMS, ON ALL POSTERS AND PUBLICITY MATERIALS AND INTERNET ADVERTISING/WEBPAGES FOR THE PLAY:**

*"FAREWELL TO EDEN' is presented through special arrangement with Leicester Bay Theatricals. All authorized materials are also supplied by LBT, [www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com](http://www.leicesterbaytheatricals.com)"*

NOTE: Your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals limits you to making copies of this document for persons directly connected with your production. Do not distribute outside of your cast and crew. Following your performance run you must destroy all photocopies, preferably by shredding them. If we sent you the document in printed format, you must return that document to us. If we provided you with an electronic PDF file, simply trash that on your computer so that it cannot be recovered. The electronic document may only be on ONE computer -- it may NOT be duplicated. This is also a part of your contract with Leicester Bay Theatricals.

PRINT AND KINDLE EDITIONS Published by PROSPERO ARTS AND MEDIA

**LBT ORDER #2119**

*Dedicated to James Arrington,*  
a trusted mentor and friend.  
He did so much to encourage and improve this play  
— and this playwright.

“The last few hours were certainly very painful,” replied Anne: “but when pain is over, the remembrance of it often becomes a pleasure. One does not love a place the less for having suffered in it.”

— Jane Austen, *Persuasion*

## FOREWORD

“Ladies and Gentlemen, we have a playwright!” I shouted and slammed my hand down on a nearby desk. The startled students of my Introduction to Theatre class at Utah Valley University had never seen me do this. Heck, I had never seen me do this.

As a university professor, I regularly taught the class, hoping to elevate interest in and appreciation for theatre as an art form. As one of the base requirements of the class all students were required to write a ten-minute (one scene, ten pages) play. In preparation we studied simple dramatic structure, how a play should look on the page (formatting), and then, with a little coaxing and a leap of faith (and a deadline and a grade), most students could produce a little comic or dramatic scene with a beginning, middle, and an end.

Most of these little plays were mundane, some were obviously movies (couldn’t be done on a stage), and a few failed so hilariously I could hardly finish reading them, but I read them anyway; part of my grading. All the while I was secretly looking for that “diamond in the rough” that all professors dream of; that one student that exceeds all expectations and that, with training and persistence, can create something quite stout and beautiful.

They didn’t come along often, you know, that raw, unfound talent. Perhaps someone who didn’t know they had any sense for drama, or suddenly found they had an unusual eye for character, or perhaps an ear for wry dialogue. Occasionally a student woke up and was genuinely surprised to find out that writing wasn’t drudgery, but fun, engaging, and even lightning in their soul. That creative moment unlocked something in their souls they’d never known before. It was a striking and wonderful moment.

But this was different. When we read Mahonri Stewart’s ten-minute play *The Fortress*<sup>1</sup> aloud in class, it became more and more obvious to me that this was a rare and special piece. This was not a hesitant talent, this was not an accidental ability, this was a true discovery of a gift—like accidentally shoveling into a vein of gold. The scene itself was thoughtful, dramatic, carefully drawn, full of suspense. And how did this bright, shiny, squeaky-clean, grinning kid produce this terrific, powerful, and resolute female lead character?! Impressive.

So, I made my pronouncement in a loud Shakespearean voice, slammed the desk and alarmed the nearly somnambulant students. I could hardly wait till the end of class to speak to this young man for I knew this moment had put us on a collision course with something wonderful.

As I remember it, the conversation went something like this:

*Me:* This is part of a larger work, isn’t it?

*Mahonri:* (*A grinning, slight hesitation*) ... Well, yeah.

*Me:* Is it already written?

*Mahonri:* Ha, ha—well, not yet.

*Me:* But this is a slice of it, right?

*Mahonri:* Yeah, yeah. It is.

*Me:* Okay, great. Well, how would you feel about writing the rest of it?

*Mahonri:* Really?!

*Me:* If it’s good enough we could produce it in the department.

*Mahonri:* (*Distant look*) Wow. Yeah, okay. Uh, okay! I’ll see what I can do.

At that point I wasn’t certain the play would actually be finished. If so, I wasn’t certain how long or

---

<sup>1</sup> Stewart and Arrington are unsure what the original working title was, the play went through so many. *The Subtle Beauty*, *The Word of the Subtle Soul*, *The Fortress*, *The Children of the Father* were all considered before deciding on *Farewell To Eden*.

torturous the experience of getting it producible might be. I wasn't even sure I could convince my colleagues to put the time and effort into a final event. Wasn't certain I believed it myself, but that strange and faith-filled path is exactly what ALL productions must go through. It's almost religious in nature, starting with a seed of hope and some ideas printed on paper, then everyone along the way must manifest faith in the possible outcome. However, at that early point, all I actually knew was that I had found what I thought, what I hoped was a new talent. I'm pleased to say I wasn't wrong.

Suddenly, early that summer after the late-in-the-semester of discovery, Mahonri actually produced a full-length, readable version. I was astounded! (I have since learned that Mahonri is the fastest writer, editor, and rewriter I've ever run in to.) The finished play, later renamed *Farewell to Eden*, hung together, the plot was thick, the characters were interesting. Though it wasn't perfect, the script had all the major components to make it juicy and workable. Over the course of the next year we went through many writes, rewrites, and changes. We eventually pulled in at something like ten rewrites.

To give the reader an understanding of Mahonri's dedication and speed, I remember reading the play and seeing that from the end of one scene to the beginning of the next (lights out, lights up), the leading lady had to change from one costume to another. Realizing, because of the style of the 19th century outfits that there wouldn't possibly be the amount of time necessary to make such a change I pointed it out to Mahonri. He understood and we talked over some possible ways to either extend the scene without the leading lady or start the following scene before she arrived. The very next day, if memory serves me correctly, Mahonri had written a short scene following the exit of the leading lady that is still one of my favorite little scenes in the entire play! Two characters that I wouldn't have dreamed could have a useful interaction made a short character statement with humor that added to the play and didn't just serve as a time waster. Boom!

I managed to convince my department of the opportunity at hand, adding that we could enter it into the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival (KCACTF), which is a nationwide organization of which we were in the Western section (Region 8). Our department had been invited to send one play to the festival years before and this would be our second effort.

It's often said, "When the student is ready, the teacher appears." In this case, it was the magnificent cast that materialized. People we hadn't seen and didn't know came out of the woodwork to create a perfect blend of characters for *Farewell to Eden*. Student designers had been carefully chosen to do the artwork of costumes, lighting, sound, and set. And finally, the show was ready for presentation. It was a wonderful collaboration and became a great hit. Fingers crossed.

The visiting adjudicators from KCACTF couldn't have been more impressed, leveling praise at Mahonri, the cast, the set, and the production values. One of the adjudicators from the University of the Pacific compared the lead character to Blanche Dubois from Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*, commending Mahonri's character work. He said that he hoped for a bright future for Mahonri in the theatre, but that "we'll probably lose him to film and television."

We were thus invited to bring the show to the Regional Festival at California State University: San Bernardino. The students' set and costume designs were also recognized, and Margie Johnson's portrayal of Georgiana Highett was commended, as she and other students of ours were invited to compete in their Irene Ryan acting competition. During a meeting which Mahonri and I had with NYU's Gary Garrison, the playwriting chair for KCACTF and the Dramatists Guild President, Garrison told Mahonri that *Farewell to Eden* was the "most intelligently written script" he had read in a decade.

It was a big deal for our whole department and that wasn't the end. Mahonri was then selected as runner-up for the National Student Playwriting Award and received the National Selection Team Fellowship Award for Region 8, for which he was flown to Washington D.C. to participate in the National Festival at the Kennedy Center and receive his awards.

That was only the beginning. Mahonri Stewart wrote another successful play while at UVU, *Legends of Sleepy Hollow*, which won the Ruth and Nathan Hale Comedy Playwriting Award (Mahonri took both prizes that year, *Farewell to Eden* winning second place in the Hale Centre Theatre sponsored contest). After graduating, Mahonri eventually entered the Dramatic Writing (playwriting/screenwriting) Masters of Fine Arts degree at Arizona State University.

To my knowledge, Mahonri has had his plays produced by UVU, ASU, international theatre festivals in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Sweden, numerous high schools, and he often produces his own works through his theatre company, since theatrical producers are few and far between in his native Utah. He has authored more than two dozen plays; he has written numerous film and TV scripts; and is working on a myriad of other projects in various genres that are hard to keep up with!

I am happy to count Mahonri as one of my friends and colleagues, and I am honored to have slammed my hand down on the desk in that classroom many years ago.

JAMES ARRINGTON, 2019

#### **REVIEW EXCERPTS:**

“One of the most intelligently written plays I have read in a decade.”

—Gary Garrison, KCACTF Playwriting Chair/Dramatists Guild President

“One of the best original plays I’ve seen.”

— Gregg Henry, KCACTF Artistic Director

“Mahonri Stewart, remember that name. . . a tremendous debut.”

— Eric Samuelson, *Irreantum Magazine*

“*Farewell to Eden* is a uniquely rewarding character study that is so splendidly played as to make it highly recommended.”

— Blair Howell, *Deseret News*

“Witty banter, symbolism, broad range of characters, historical figures popping in and out, romantic stories that avoid clichés, and did I mention witty banter and fully fleshed out characters? Please sign me up.”

— Kara Henry, *Front Row Reviewers*

“A thought-provoking experience for anyone who catches *Farewell to Eden*.”

— Russell Warne, *Utah Theatre Bloggers Association*

“*Farewell to Eden* is brilliant. It’s complicated, not very predictable, and has a lot of depth and characterization.

— Sharon Haddock, *Deseret News*

*Farewell to Eden* premiered at Utah Valley State College (now Utah Valley University) on November 13-22, 2003. It also played at California State University: San Bernardino in February, 2003, for the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival.

**Georgiana Highett** — Margie Johnson  
**Stephen Lockhart** — Aaron Wilden  
**Thomas Highett** — Brandon Michael West  
**Catherine Highett** — Amber James  
**Darrel Fredericks** — Samuel Snow Schofield  
**Mary** — Angela Youmans  
**Harold Lowe** — Kenneth F. Brown  
**Esther Whitefield** — Tatum Langton  
**Hannah Whitefield** — Fallon R. Hanson  
**Brigham Young** — Sam Davis  
**John Taylor** — Russ Bennett

**Director** — James Arrington  
**Production Manager** — Tiffany Shaw  
**Stage Manager** — Sarah Dawn Lowry  
**Assistant Stage Managers** — Chelsea Cordell, Daniel Whiting  
**Costume Designer** — Mary Haddock  
**Wardrobe** — Cassie Hinkson  
**Set Designer** — Randy Seely  
**Lighting Designer** — Brett Larson  
**Sound Designer** — Don Christensen  
**Technical Director** — Erika Smock  
**Assistant Technical Director** — Marisa Hernandez  
**Props Master** — Daniel Whiting  
**Makeup Designer** — Beth Hill  
**Hair and Wigs** — Hillary Scroeder  
**Scene Shop Foreman** — Steve Purdy  
**Costume Shop Manager** — Camille Jackson Morris  
**House Manager** — Aurora Borjas  
**Light Board Operator** — Rebecca Peterson  
**Sound Board Operator** — Brian Randall  
**Master Electrician** — Devan Byrne  
**Stage Crew** Bryce Bishop, Daniel Whiting, Devan Byrne, Erika Smock, Burke Simmons, Bryan Taylor, Joni Martin, Mile McVey, Shayne Hudson, Don Christensen  
**Set Construction** Daniel Whiting, Randy Seely, Erika Smock, Burke Simmons, Bryan Taylor, Joni Martin, Mike McVey, Shayne Hudson, Don Christensen  
**Costume Builders** Angela Youmans, Caleb Van Bloem, Erin Neilson, Sarah Hunt, Shayne Hudson, Melissa Kmetch, Collette Maxwell, Mikelle Smiley, Marlene Neptune, Lori Baird  
**Make-up Artists** — Angela Peterson, Rachel Bean, Brianna Buckley, Courtney Beam, Ryan Templeman, Brittany Treadwell  
**Female Dressers** — Diana Jex, Melissa Christensen, Colette Maxwell  
**Male Dressers** — Tyler Park, Russ Bennett  
**Wig Changer** — Deanna Ashworth

**CAST OF CHARACTERS:** 11 (5f, 6m)

**Georgiana Highett**

**Stephen Lockhart**

**Thomas Highett**

**Catherine Highett**

**Darrel Fredericks**

**Mary**

**Harold Lowe**

**Esther Whitefield**

**Hannah Whitefield**

**Brigham Young**

**John Taylor**

**TIME:** 1840

**PLACE:** Edenbridge, England

**FAREWELL TO EDEN** by Mahonri Stewart. Cast: 11 (5w, 6m) 2 Hours. 2 interior settings. Period Costumes. They thought that Georgiana Highett was invincible. Yet, after the death of her father, the return of a childhood friend, and the entrance of a mysterious and dangerous man, her secure protections are crumbling. Georgiana must draw on reserves of strength to confront threats from outside and threats from within. This award-winning period drama has won praise for its complex characterization, rich language, and stunning plot twists. Premiered by Utah Valley University, 2003. **ORDER #2119**

**Mahonri Stewart** is an award winning writer and educator. He has written over two dozen plays, most of which have been produced throughout the U.S. and Europe, including productions in Los Angeles, Scotland, and Switzerland. In 2004, his premiere play *Farewell to Eden* won the Kennedy Center's American College Theater Festival's National Playwriting Award (Second Place) and their National Selection Team Fellowship Award. Since then he has also received numerous other awards and honors and continues to expand his writing into various mediums, including screenplays, graphic novels, poetry, and novels. He received his MFA degree in Dramatic Writing from Arizona State University, where he wrote both the stage version of *Jimmy Stewart Goes to Hollywood*, as well as a screenplay version. He received his Bachelors degree in Theatre Arts from Utah Valley University. He's a former Playwright in Residence at the Noorda Regional Theater for Children and Youth.

# FAREWELL TO EDEN

## Act One

### SCENE ONE

*The Highett Household, a wealthy home, well furnished and with two portraits. The portraits are of Alexander and Susan Highett, both of whom are now deceased. Enter GEORGIANA Highett, CATHERINE Highett, THOMAS Highett, and HAROLD Lowe. GEORGIANA is in her mid to late twenties, it is obvious that she is high born, but she is not obviously beautiful. Her dress is severe and shows no sign of lace or embroidery. THOMAS is in his late twenties and CATHERINE is anywhere from eighteen to twenty. CATHERINE has a distinct beauty to her. HAROLD is nearly sixty, a dignified gentleman of the upper classes. All three of them wear black arm bands for mourning.*

**HAROLD:** A very sad business, Georgiana.

**GEORGIANA:** We do appreciate your kindness in visiting us so often, Harold. I know that Father found great comfort in you after Mother's death.

**HAROLD:** Susan—he wept like a child over her. The only tears I ever saw him shed.

**GEORGIANA:** What you have done for our family will not be forgotten.

**HAROLD:** And I find great comfort in all of you. Your father's death will not be the end of the Highett line.

**THOMAS:** Yes, the torch must go on and all that.

**HAROLD:** I assume you are managing the estate, Sir Thomas? You have a good sense for it?

**THOMAS:** I make an effort.

**HAROLD:** Along with your Father's business ventures?

**THOMAS:** It is complex work.

**CATHERINE:** Well, I do not see why you bother to carry on with Father's silly hobbies.

**THOMAS:** Father cared very much about his projects, Catherine. I—I want to honor that.

**HAROLD:** Thomas—you are not your normally spirited self.

**CATHERINE:** Please, do not encourage him back into his silliness! He is the worst person to take to parties. It is like having a *jester* at a ball! He is good for entertainment, but you never ask him to dance the minuet. Never.

**THOMAS:** *(An impish smile growing:)* We were able to get the wine out of Miss Kyle's dress. I do not see what the big to-do was! For a woman with such a tiny mouth, Miss Kyle certainly could scream loudly.

**HAROLD:** Well, you are a very different man than your Father, that is certain.

**THOMAS:** You are right there, Mr. Lowe—excuse me. I have much to do today. Miss Fields and I have made a kite. A very big one.

*(Exit Thomas.)*

**CATHERINE:** I wish you wouldn't encourage Thomas in Father's old business hobbies, Mr. Lowe. People talked, you know they did. A baronet like Father doing all that—work.

**HAROLD:** Your Father had great admiration for 'Captains of Industry' like me, Miss Catherine.

**CATHERINE:** Oh, do not misunderstand me, Mr. Lowe, I admire you, too—but that doesn't mean I am going to work at your presses.

**HAROLD:** Oh, but did you see the passion he put into his shipping business! It made him happy.

**CATHERINE:** People said it was beneath his class.

**GEORGIANA:** Catherine, when you become as noble as Father was, you simply do what you want. It is the aristocratic privilege.

**CATHERINE:** I swear, no one in this family knows what it requires to be a public figure!

**HAROLD:** Well, how are you faring then, Catherine?

**CATHERINE:** We are slowly easing ourselves back into society.

**GEORGIANA:** A little too slowly for Catherine. Not even Catherine has been able to stomach such things at a time like this. It was the first instance I had ever seen her miss a dance. That was more earth shattering than if Parliament had suddenly been invaded by the French.

**CATHERINE:** And, of course, you're back to your sharp tongue.

**HAROLD:** Well, at least you have all survived with your humors intact.

**CATHERINE:** Ah, the wit of intelligent company heals all wounds. Is that not right, Georgiana?

**GEORGIANA:** I wouldn't know, Catherine, you have not said an intelligent thing for years.

**HAROLD:** It looks like things are back to status quo then. All is well.

**GEORGIANA:** No, Harold, we still have much to pass through until our mourning is done.

**HAROLD:** You are truly your father's daughter.

**CATHERINE:** And what does that make me?

**GEORGIANA:** You father's *other* daughter.

**CATHERINE:** Excuse me, Mr. Lowe, but there is a new family in the neighborhood. I must not wait too long to leave my card.

*(CATHERINE shoots GEORGIANA a pointed look.)*

It would be rude.

*(Exit CATHERINE.)*

**HAROLD:** He was so proud of what you were becoming, Georgiana. He used to tell me all sorts of stories.

Always bragging and bullying about his daughter. I hear that you've made quite the name for yourself. The president of Eden bridge's debating society. On the council for the Philosophical Association. A political advocate. You occupy prominent positions. Especially for a woman.

**GEORGIANA:** Yes, *for a woman*. You might as well put me in a zoo of rare species. Along with the unicorns and the phoenixes. Right now I am a spectacle, a curiosity. Nothing more.

**HAROLD:** I have something here for you, Georgiana.

*(HAROLD takes out a rectangular box and hands it to GEORGIANA.)*

**GEORGIANA:** For me?

**CATHERINE:** What is it?

**HAROLD:** Open it, dear.

*(GEORGIANA opens the box to find an ornately carved dagger.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Whatever could you have—oh! It's— it's magnificent.

**HAROLD:** Your father gave it to me.

**GEORGIANA:** Truly?

**HAROLD:** He said, "Keep it sharp, Harold. Keep it sharp. Cut off all those that oppose you with a keen, dangerous wit. Dissect their logic, dig out their arguments, slice through all of their defenses." I think it's appropriate to pass it onto you now, Georgiana.

**GEORGIANA:** Thank you. I will stay true to the gift.

**HAROLD:** You will do great things. There will be those who try to stop you. Just remember that you are a stronger force and a keener mind.

**GEORGIANA:** A Highett.

**HAROLD:** A Highett. But I ought to leave now, if I am to make it back to London in time.

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas! Catherine! Mr. Lowe is leaving! I cannot thank you enough, Mr. Lowe. You have been very thoughtful.

*(Enter THOMAS and CATHERINE.)*

**HAROLD:** You're very welcome, my dear.

**THOMAS:** Goodbye, Mr. Lowe.

**CATHERINE:** Goodbye.

**HAROLD:** Farewell to you all, for now.

*(Exit HAROLD.)*

**CATHERINE:** What is that?

**GEORGIANA:** A dagger that belonged to father.

**CATHERINE:** So why do you get it?

**GEORGIANA:** Obviously, Mr. Lowe thinks the symbolism applies to me. You are not sharp enough to cut bread.

**CATHERINE:** It's a family heirloom. He came to see me, too, after all.

**GEORGIANA:** Did he? To publish your autobiography perhaps? My my, that would be fascinating reading. Chapter One, "Our noble heroine gets up and does her hair." Chapter Two, "Our estimable heroine goes to a dinner party." Chapter Three, "Our majestic heroine goes into town to buy a hat!"

**THOMAS:** Oh, stop it, you two. May I see it, Georgiana?

*(THOMAS inspects the dagger curiously.)*

My, it's a rather frightening looking thing, isn't it?

**GEORGIANA:** It's noble.

*(THOMAS lunges forward with the dagger.)*

**THOMAS:** Tally ho!

**GEORGIANA:** Oh, do be careful with it, you silly boy!

**CATHERINE:** Boys and their toys. You are such a sparrow, Thomas.

*(THOMAS brandishes the dagger about, swiping it in the air and playing at a mock battle.)*

**THOMAS:** Nice, this is nice.

*(Considering the dagger.)*

Just think of it—Thomas the Conqueror! Does the dagger match my shoes?

**GEORGIANA:** I think it is time to give it back, young Sir Thomas—

**THOMAS:** *(Mock-dignified.)* You seem to forget that I am a baronet and the oldest here!

**GEORGIANA:** The oldest, but who is the wisest?

**THOMAS:** You know, I've always thought I could be a military man. Just think of me in a war outfit. With brass buttons. Lots of brass buttons. And the other shiny things they put on you.

**GEORGIANA:** Medals?

**THOMAS:** And the dangly yellow things on the shoulders—and, and a sword. A sharp sword to match the dagger. And a plume of feathers on my hat. All along here, like this! Like the Romans used to wear on their helmets.

**GEORGIANA:** If you want a complete Roman outfit, we can probably get you a leather skirt.

**THOMAS:** Shiny boots! And white gloves! Ah, and Miss Jane Fields would be a perfect woman to stand by such a noble looking man.

**CATHERINE:** You cannot be serious.

**THOMAS:** Well, I must say that the gloves would be a necessity.

**CATHERINE:** Not the gloves. Jane Fields.

**THOMAS:** Why not? Miss Fields is a lovely woman.

**CATHERINE:** That hyena? She is as loud as a parrot. Does it not bother you that just three years ago she was a factory girl? It's vulgar.

**THOMAS:** It is not. She is a sweet girl. She calls me Teddy.

**CATHERINE:** This is what we reap from father's mingling of classes!

**THOMAS:** Money is a definite attraction, you can't deny that. Her father worked hard in that factory and he worked smart.

**CATHERINE:** Smart? That donkey?

**THOMAS:** Are you so obsessed with the animal kingdom?

**CATHERINE:** Such class jumping ought to be guarded against!

**THOMAS:** Whatever you may think of Mr. Fields personal manners, he is a mechanical and economic genius. He made himself indispensable in father's business.

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas, are you being serious? This is not one of your larks?

**THOMAS:** What about me is not serious? Am I painted like some jester with bells and cap? What about me does not appear serious?!

*(Pause. GEORGIANA and CATHERINE look at THOMAS, look at each other, and then look away.)*

Well, Father would have approved, you know that he would have, Georgiana.

*(GEORGIANA gazes at THOMAS momentarily, sincerely considering his statement. She looks back at her Father's portrait, something stirring deep within her. But then, almost coldly.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Papa still understood propriety.

*(THOMAS, genuinely surprised by this response, goes to GEORGIANA and takes her by the hands.)*

**THOMAS:** Or perhaps I understood Father in ways that not even you fathom. Please, Georgie, I would like your approval.

**GEORGIANA:** You are supposed to head this family now. Why would you need my approval?

**THOMAS:** Perhaps, but as we have seen, what is supposed to be...

*(Presenting GEORGIANA with the dagger)*

...and what is, are two different things.

**GEORGIANA:** I do not like Jane Fields, Thomas.

*(This visibly hurts THOMAS for the slightest of moments, but then he checks himself and once again puts on the fop.)*

**THOMAS:** Well, la de da, you're always so serious, Georgie! Let's finish our card game—

**CATHERINE:** Yes, I was winning—

*(They begin to sit at the card table. Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** Miss Georgiana, there is a gentleman here for you. Should I bring him in?

**GEORGIANA:** Did he leave his name?

**MARY:** Sir Darrel Fredericks, ma'am.

**CATHERINE:** A great man like Sir Fredericks? And he wants to talk to *Georgiana*?

**THOMAS:** Did you not see them at the assembly the other night, Catherine?

**CATHERINE:** No. Was he there?

**GEORGIANA:** You must have been too caught up with Mr. Johnson to notice. And Mr. James— and Mr. Baker—And Mr. Evanson—

**THOMAS:** He was paying the most rapt attention to Georgie. Now where in the game were we?

**CATHERINE:** To Georgiana? But he is so very handsome—very respected—

**GEORGIANA:** Always so predictably, delightfully vain, aren't you, Catherine?

**CATHERINE:** Please, don't get me wrong, dear Georgiana—

**GEORGIANA:** No, I think I understand you quite clearly. I told Sir Fredericks the other night that he was welcome to come to our home any time he pleased. We run in many of the same circles—thus he and I are very well acquainted. Please, see him in, Mary.

**MARY:** Like a cricket on a skillet, ma'am.

*(Exit MARY.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Let's see if we can crack into the motivations of a man who would woo a she-troll.

**THOMAS:** Nonsense, Georgiana.

*(Back to the cards.)*

Ah, I can't remember where we were-

**CATHERINE:** I was winning.

**GEORGIANA:** We'll start the points over and deal Sir Fredericks in.

**CATHERINE:** But I was winning!

*(Enter MARY with DARREL Fredericks.)*

**MARY:** Sir Darrel Fredericks.

*(Exit MARY.)*

**DARREL:** Lady Highett!

**GEORGIANA:** Why, Darrel, it is wonderful to see you again! I was wondering when you would take up my invitation. Sit down and play cards with us. Come, we have placed the table by the windows to take

advantage of the warmth of the sun.

**CATHERINE:** Yes, it was so chilly this morning!

**DARREL:** *(Looking out the windows.)* Oh, what a beautiful view you have! And those gardens!

**GEORGIANA:** Come, Darrel, play!

**DARREL:** What is the game?

**ALL THREE HIGHETTS:** Hearts.

*(They all sit to play.)*

**DARREL:** A pleasure. Certainly.

**GEORGIANA:** You will of course call me Georgiana, won't you? We've known each other long enough. I absolutely detest those wretched formalities.

**DARREL:** Of course.

**GEORGIANA:** I was just talking about you, Darrel. He is quite the accomplished man, you see, Catherine.

**DARREL:** No, no, Georgiana is the one who has impressed me! A woman of refinement, of keen feeling.

**GEORGIANA:** And my beauty?

**DARREL:** Why, that of a Greek goddess.

**GEORGIANA:** A Greek goddess! Note that, Catherine, a "Greek goddess." Artemis, the chaste huntress? Athene, the goddess of wisdom?

**DARREL:** Aphrodite, the goddess of beauty.

**GEORGIANA:** You are a detestable liar.

**DARREL:** Pardon me?

**GEORGIANA:** *(Laughs.)* I am hardly one of those simple women you are accustomed to luring in. You are as transparent as water.

**DARREL:** I don't understand what you mean.

**GEORGIANA:** Do you deny that you go from wealthy woman to wealthy woman, trying on each of their estates for size?

**CATHERINE:** Georgiana, your manners are enough to repel an elephant.

**THOMAS:** Catherine!

**GEORGIANA:** Again with the animals—my, oh, my! Well, Catherine, let's see if I can come up with a few animals of my own.

**CATHERINE:** Look how she has treated this good gentleman here!

**GEORGIANA:** Suddenly Sir Fredericks has become as fragile as a humming bird.

**DARREL:** *(Suddenly to CATHERINE.)* Actually, I actually did not come to see your sister, Lady Catherine.

I came to see you.

**GEORGIANA:** As deceptive as a chameleon.

**DARREL:** I was hoping that through Georgiana I would meet the fair Catherine who I have heard so much about.

**GEORGIANA:** And as cunning as a fox.

**DARREL:** Since I was well acquainted with Georgiana, I was hoping that, through our friendship, she would introduce me to you.

**CATHERINE:** You came to see me?

**GEORGIANA:** You must be the most simple woman alive, Catherine.

**CATHERINE:** I did not know you were the jealous type.

**GEORGIANA:** Yes, as jealous as if you were dancing with a giant scorpion.

**DARREL:** Please, Georgiana, enough with the animals!

**GEORGIANA:** A shrieking owl.

**CATHERINE:** Someone ought to take those blades out of your mouth.

**GEORGIANA:** And someone ought to take that champagne out of your brain.

**THOMAS:** Now come, let us all be reasonable.

**CATHERINE:** You resent the fact that when I am happily married that you will be an old spinster forever.

**GEORGIANA:** If you are going to marry the likes of Darrel Fredericks, I doubt you will ever be happy!

**DARREL:** Marry?

**CATHERINE:** I am sure Darrel would make a fine husband.

**DARREL:** Husband?!

**GEORGIANA:** I shall not marry because I will not have any man who is not worth having.

**CATHERINE:** Really, Georgiana, how could you be so rude to poor Mr. Fredericks?

**GEORGIANA:** Poor? Ha!

**DARREL:** Really, ladies—

**GEORGIANA:** Most men seem to build up this flittering bird of a woman—a docile, brainless thing of insignificance—

*(Motioning to CATHERINE.)*

—like this girl. If men desire such a tender beast, I do not find many men worth having.

**THOMAS:** On behalf of my gender, I'm flattered.

**GEORGIANA:** But do not fret, Darrel. You must understand that I am not so mean spirited as I seem. I just like a nice battle—for me, it's a sign of affection. By the way—

*(Putting down her cards.)*

—the Queen of Spades and all the hearts. I win.

**CATHERINE:** Drat!

**DARREL:** *(Disconcerted.)* A risky strategy.

**GEORGIANA:** You will find, *Darrel*, playing with the Highetts is not for the weak of heart. We take our entertainment very seriously.

**DARREL:** *(Standing.)* You know, I am not very good at these games of chance.

**GEORGIANA:** What? Is love not a game of chance?

**CATHERINE:** Oh please, do not feel compelled to leave on account of my sister, Darrel.

**GEORGIANA:** *(With a smile.)* Yes, I enjoy a good farce.

**CATHERINE:** Come, I want to show you the new furnishings in the ballroom—then you must see the gardens up close!

**DARREL:** I do not think Georgiana would like me to—

**CATHERINE:** But I would like you to.

**DARREL:** Well—all right then.

**THOMAS:** Let's all go together!

*(All look at THOMAS, stupefied.)*

As a group, you know, what.

**GEORGIANA:** *(Dryly.)* I am delighted. Thrilled. Ecstatic.

*(Exit CATHERINE and DARREL. THOMAS grabs GEORGIANA before she can leave.)*

**THOMAS:** Behave yourself.

**GEORGIANA:** I always behave myself.

**THOMAS:** No, you don't.

**GEORGIANA:** I cannot help it that she doesn't know when she is being insulted.

**THOMAS:** Oh, she knows when she is being insulted. She just does not know how she is being insulted.

**GEORGIANA:** *(Laughs.)* What would I do without you, Thomas?

**THOMAS:** With Catherine as your sole company? Die of boredom, I suppose.

*(THOMAS and GEORGIANA laugh and exit. After some moments, enter MARY with STEPHEN Lockhart. STEPHEN is a handsome gentleman of the upper classes.)*

**MARY:** My, we're in the mire with visitors today, aren't we? As stuffed as a duck on Christmas, I dare say. Sounds like they're in the ballroom.

*(MARY heads towards the ballroom.)*

**STEPHEN:** You do not recognize me, do you, Mary?

**MARY:** Should I? What did you say your name was again, sir?

**STEPHEN:** Stephen Lockhart.

**MARY:** Lockhart—oh my! Little Stevie Lockhart from Edenbridge school!

**STEPHEN:** Yes, the little school brat! I was wondering when you would catch on.

**MARY:** Why, you have grown taller, sir—and filled out nicely! Imagine! Those were dramatic times in this household, sir.

**STEPHEN:** You should have heard the kind of things being bandied about when Georgiana and Catherine were allowed to enroll.

**MARY:** It made quite the fuss.

**STEPHEN:** Mister Highett and the schoolmaster called it their “great experiment”—their women’s revolution did not last long, however. He died soon after Catherine graduated and those two are still the only females to have graduated from Edenbridge School.

**MARY:** Don’t tell them I told you this, but they used to come home crying.

**STEPHEN:** Georgiana as well?

**MARY:** Aye, though her tears were of a furious kind. The poor dears.

**STEPHEN:** Strange, I cannot imagine Georgie crying. She always showed such a strong face. She took it bravely.

**MARY:** Oh, she has plenty of pluck, sir. She may rub some the wrong way, but whatever else can be said about her, she has plenty of pluck.

**STEPHEN:** Oh, this is strange being back. Edenbridge —this lovely piece of paradise! I loved it here. Graduating from Eden’s school was like being cast out of the garden.

**MARY:** Childhood memories run deep, don’t they, sir?

**STEPHEN:** Yes, they do. I am glad to see that you are just as free with the guests as you always were, Mary.

**MARY:** The Highetts have never been very strict with me about that sort of thing, sir. And the children have all followed old Mr. Highett’s ideas that way. Well, Miss Catherine would rather have me behave more traditionally, but she doesn’t make too much fuss about it.

*(Enter GEORGIANA and DARREL. They are too caught in their argument to notice STEPHEN or MARY at first.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Why do you persist in pursuing my company?

**DARREL:** Because Catherine and Thomas cannot keep up with my long legs, so I wish to amuse my time with you. How did you say it before? Oh, yes—I enjoy a good farce.

**GEORGIANA:** The venom of your mouth would certainly cause the death of anyone, if your lips were not so small and petite.

**DARREL:** Oh, if you knew what else I have done with these lips, you would be jealous.

**GEORGIANA:** Hardly. The dimwitted damsels you court are simply moving, breathing pieces of porcelain with cotton in their heads.

*(Enter THOMAS and CATHERINE.)*

**THOMAS:** My, you two sprint when you argue, don't you?

**CATHERINE:** Why, who is this, Mary?

**MARY:** Prepare yourself, ma'am. This is Sir Stephen Lockhart, ma'am!

**GEORGIANA:** *(Startled, noticing STEPHEN and MARY for the first time.)* Lockhart? Stephen—can it be?

**STEPHEN:** It certainly is, Georgie!

*(The three Highetts circle STEPHEN for a moment, much like birds of prey, but with the opposite intent. ALL of them speak simultaneously.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Stephen! Thomas, Catherine, it is Stephen!

**THOMAS:** Is that really you, old boy? Why I thought—

**CATHERINE:** It cannot be—is it really—?

**GEORGIANA:** Why, I had never dreamed that I may see you again after graduation—I was devastated at the thought—

**THOMAS:** —you would have been far from here— well, how is that old cricket arm? Do you remember when—?

**CATHERINE:** I would hope you would forgive me for that time—

**GEORGIANA:** —but here you are! My confidante, my ally, my childhood friend! Could that possibly be you?

**STEPHEN:** *(Laughs.)* One at a time, one at a time! I did not die, you know.

*(The Highetts make a circle around STEPHEN, chanting something quite enthusiastically in Latin, which is understood to be a relic from their childhood with STEPHEN, for STEPHEN joins in the chant. They laugh heartily.)*

**THOMAS:** Why, it is good to see you, chap! A regular prodigal!

**CATHERINE:** My, oh, my, it is Stephen. I did not even recognize you. You are—you are quite different now.

**STEPHEN:** Well, I am taller.

**CATHERINE:** You did much more than grow taller.

**STEPHEN:** And you were that little girl who always made fun of her older sister's awkward friend.

**CATHERINE:** I would hope that you would consider that I had grown out of that peevish phase.

**GEORGIANA:** I wouldn't.

**CATHERINE:** I am much more adult than when you last saw me, am I not?

**DARREL:** *(Clearing his throat.)* Mm-Hm!

**CATHERINE:** This is—er—yes, Darrel. Yes, Sir Darrel Fredericks.

**STEPHEN:** Sir Stephen Lockhart. It is a pleasure to meet you, sir.

**DARREL:** I am sure it is.

**GEORGIANA:** You are a burst of sunshine in a dark time, Stephen.

**STEPHEN:** Yes, I read about your father's death. That is part of the reason that I thought I would come. My sincere condolences.

**CATHERINE:** Yes, Georgiana, he is sunshine! You are an absolute beacon, Stephen. I just hope that I have become as beautiful as you are handsome.

**GEORGIANA:** I believe that is the most blatant thing I have ever heard you say, Catherine—and that is saying a bit. Why, you have embarrassed Stephen. Has she not, Stephen?

**STEPHEN:** Well—

**CATHERINE:** Oh stop being a prude, Georgiana. It was a perfectly appropriate thing to say. Was it not, Stephen?

**STEPHEN:** I suppose I could say—

**GEORGIANA:** Do not feel compelled to answer that, Stephen. Well, Catherine, Darrel has come to see you and Stephen has come to see me—

**CATHERINE:** But—

**GEORGIANA:** So perhaps you and Thomas can show Darrel around the gardens, while I catch up with my dear friend.

**CATHERINE:** Oh, but—

**DARREL:** Yes, my dear, for once I agree with your sister.

*(DARREL takes CATHERINE by the arm and the two exit along with THOMAS. Exit MARY.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Well, Stephen, you have changed, my friend!

**STEPHEN:** Have I?

**GEORGIANA:** Why, where is the ungainly, fumbling friend of mine? Where are his tousled hair and freckles? Where is my awkward, little, rich boy? All I see before me is a confident, polished gentleman.

**STEPHEN:** And you Georgie! I am hearing all sorts of rumors!

**GEORGIANA:** It's rot—do not believe a word of it.

**STEPHEN:** But I do believe it. I knew you would turn into something impressive.

**GEORGIANA:** I am hardly something impressive.

**STEPHEN:** You were always something impressive. I am sure your father was very pleased.

*(STEPHEN pauses, seeing the pain cross GEORGIANA)*

What a blow that must have been, Georgie.

**GEORGIANA:** The ache is beginning to recede. It was unexpected, but those last few days with him— he tried to instill strength in us. He wanted us to keep rising higher. Rising Highett. So the best way to comfort me at this time, is not to dwell upon it. Especially with you here. Give me a way to serve you. Is there anything I can help you with?

**STEPHEN:** Can I be honest?

**GEORGIANA:** Hello, Honest.

**STEPHEN:** I will be frank then.

**GEORGIANA:** Hello, Frank.

**STEPHEN:** Oh, our childhood games! I had almost forgotten.

**GEORGIANA:** I hadn't.

**STEPHEN:** Oh, it is a joy to be with you again, Georgie--but I must admit, I had planned this trip even before I heard about your father. There is actually something I need assistance with. I heard that you could help me.

**GEORGIANA:** In what way?

**STEPHEN:** Do you remember my ambitions to be a writer?

**GEORGIANA:** Yes, I thought they were foolish notions at the time.

**STEPHEN:** I have finished something decent, Georgiana. Much more than decent actually. I dare say it is rather good! A periodical, a drama!

**GEORGIANA:** What is it about?

**STEPHEN:** Honor! Terror! Oppression! Revenge!

**GEORGIANA:** Amusing. You must let me read it.

**STEPHEN:** Oh, Georgie, how do I ask you this? I hear that you have become very influential. You are not far from London here and they say you go to your house in the city quite a bit—people say that you know people and that people know you. People like publishers.

**GEORGIANA:** I see.

*(Pause, disappointed, but then recovering.)*

I am sure that I can find someone to take a look at it.

**STEPHEN:** Truly?

**GEORGIANA:** Publishers, publishers. I know quite a few, but which would be most suitable? Mr. Johnson, perhaps? No, on second thought, I would not suggest him—why, of course! Our family knows a fine editor named Harold Lowe who was dear friend of my father's. Oh, if you had only been here earlier, he came by.

**STEPHEN:** Truly?!

**GEORGIANA:** (*Looking at STEPHEN squarely, having a sudden thought.*) Stephen—I wonder—

**STEPHEN:** You wonder what?

**GEORGIANA:** Hm. I think I know how I want to do this—why should we not make a fine time of this?

**STEPHEN:** What do you mean?

**GEORGIANA:** Do you dance better than you used to?

**STEPHEN:** I always danced well!

**GEORGIANA:** Hm?

**STEPHEN:** Well—for someone my age I danced remarkably.

**GEORGIANA:** Hm?

**STEPHEN:** Ah, blast it all, Georgie! Yes, I dance better than I used to.

**GEORGIANA:** Good, because Harold's family loves assemblies, parties, balls and the like. If I were to host one here and begged his presence— why, I am sure he would come.

**STEPHEN:** Oh, Georgiana, that is a wonderful idea! I knew I could count on your sharp mind. You always did impress me.

**GEORGIANA:** I did?

**STEPHEN:** There was no person in that school—boy or girl—more intelligent than you. There was no one so witty as you.

**GEORGIANA:** And you favored that?

**STEPHEN:** Why else would have I spent so much time with you?

**GEORGIANA:** I thought that we outcasts just naturally came together.

**STEPHEN:** But we are outcasts no longer.

**GEORGIANA:** You surprise me, Stephen.

**STEPHEN:** Why so?

**GEORGIANA:** I see you so differently now. You— have changed.

**STEPHEN:** How so?

**GEORGIANA:** You seem to have more—never mind.

**STEPHEN:** Ah, always the sphinx, aren't you? Very well, keep your secrets. I will discover them someday.

**GEORGIANA:** I assure you, it will be quite the remarkable man to learn the secrets I hold.

**STEPHEN:** And you do not think that I am up to the challenge?

**GEORGIANA:** Perhaps you are.

**STEPHEN:** Well, this Oedipus will have to solve your riddles another day then, for I am afraid I must leave you early.

**GEORGIANA:** So soon?

**STEPHEN:** There is some business I have to attend to in the area, but I shall be back before the end of the day, manuscript in hand. Then we can really be able to talk like we used to. I will find Mary to see me out.

**GEORGIANA:** Don't bother, she is right behind the door. Aren't you, Mary?

*(Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** I was just polishing the silver, ma'am.

**GEORGIANA:** Mary loves a good bit of gossip. She has an ear that is shaped well for key holes.

**MARY:** Innocent as a lamb in the butter, ma'am.

**STEPHEN:** I do not think I understand your analogy, Mary.

**MARY:** Oh, there is a kind of wisdom that comes with age that nobody else seems to quite understand.

**STEPHEN:** I—I see.

*(Back to GEORGIANA.)*

Well, thank you again.

**GEORGIANA:** The pleasure is mine. I look forward to seeing you tonight.

**STEPHEN:** Goodbye then, dear friend.

*(MARY and STEPHEN exit. GEORGIANA twirls and drops herself on a couch, with what sounds like a surprisingly girlish giggle. **Blackout.**)*

## **SCENE TWO**

*Enter DARREL and CATHERINE in riding outfits.*

**CATHERINE:** —and then she said that I had not the sense to discern a jackal from a labrador. And she said that the labrador had more intelligence than I did! She said it much better than that, though—am I not so cruelly mistreated, Darrel?

**DARREL:** A regular martyr, my dear.

**CATHERINE:** Oh, she and Thomas are as thick as thieves! They have always been like that! And then there I am left out in the cold. I so wanted to be like them growing up. To be considered witty and intelligent—but I couldn't keep up, you see. You know what else she dared say? Why, she blatantly—

**DARREL:** Sh. Enough talking.

**CATHERINE:** Oh, But—

**DARREL:** Really. You are done.

**CATHERINE:** But—

**DARREL:** You are exceptionally taking today.

**CATHERINE:** Truly?

*(Enter MARY. She gives DARREL a piercing stare.)*

**MARY:** ma'am, Jeffrey has finished stripping down the horses. Is there anything else you wish him to do with them?

**CATHERINE:** Uh, no, no. That is quite all right, Mary. Put them in the stables.

**MARY:** If you need me, ma'am, I will be as accessible as a cat looking for a rat.

**CATHERINE:** That will not be needed, Mary.

*(Exit MARY with another withering look at DARREL.)*

So you think I am “taking,” even in this outfit?

**DARREL:** When I saw you on that horse, you looked so elegant and noble. A truly romantic figure.

**CATHERINE:** Do you truly think so?

**DARREL:** You know I do. I adore you.

**CATHERINE:** *(With a discreet smile.)* So you say.

**DARREL:** I can do much more than say it.

*(DARREL goes to kiss CATHERINE. She pulls away.)*

**CATHERINE:** What are you doing?

**DARREL:** I was trying to kiss you.

**CATHERINE:** I am not cheap, Sir Fredericks.

**DARREL:** Oh, it is “Sir Fredericks” now?

**CATHERINE:** Yes, and it will continue to be so until you remember that you are with a lady.

**DARREL:** *(Laughs.)* You are made of the same metal I am, Catherine. Your marionettes and shadow shows do not fool me. You put on the proper face, which is good. We can't have anyone suspecting us, can we?

*(DARREL once again draws in, CATHERINE draws back.)*

**CATHERINE:** I am in earnest, sir.

**DARREL:** You do not have to pretend with me. I have seen your concealed looks and unblushing thoughts. I attract you and its certainly not because of my virtue. Nor yours.

*(Enter MARY in a rush, with a cart for tea.)*

**MARY:** Shall I serve tea, ma'am?

**CATHERINE:** Thank you, Mary!

**MARY:** Would Mr. Fredericks like to continue to be a burden and join you?

**DARREL:** *(Giving MARY an annoyed glance.)* I do not think that is necessary.

**MARY:** As you wish, sir. Anything to please you, sir.

*(Exit MARY.)*

**DARREL:** That maid of yours is quite the snoop.

**CATHERINE:** Mary? She's harmless.

**DARREL:** Dear, I consider myself a progressive man. I refuse to tie myself to artificial moralities.

**CATHERINE:** You think they are artificial?

**DARREL:** Catherine, you must not be so nervous around me! I have only your best interest—our *mutual* best interest in mind! I only look to our future.

**CATHERINE:** Our future?

**DARREL:** You are the dearest of women to me. You have something very—alluring. You are like an exotic spice mixed with the sweetness of cinnamon. Fragrant, almost—narcotic. Like opium. I shall love you to the day I die.

*(DARREL goes to exit.)*

**CATHERINE:** Wait. Mr. Fredericks, I—Darrel—

*(CATHERINE walks over to DARREL, lifts her head and closes her eyes, offering herself for a innocent kiss. DARREL smiles and lunges into a much more passionate kiss than CATHERINE had expected. She resists at first, but then melts into it. Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** My, my, ma'am! I'm sorry to interrupt, but—

**CATHERINE:** *(Jolting away from the kiss.)* Mary!

**DARREL:** Oh, I swear.

**MARY:** Oh, but it is most important, sir.

**CATHERINE:** What is it, Mary?

**MARY:** I—er—

**CATHERINE:** What is it?

**MARY:** I can't tell you in the presence of Mr. Fredericks! It's a very delicate family matter!

**DARREL:** Very well. Goodbye, dear Catherine.

**CATHERINE:** Goodbye, Darrel.

*(Exit DARREL.)*

**CATHERINE:** Nothing is wrong, is it, Mary?

**MARY:** Miss Catherine, your fox has a pleasant appearance to him, such a red haired furry fellow. But you don't trust a fox with chickens. You don't let him near your best birds, ma'am.

**CATHERINE:** Mind your own business, you busy old snoop. For once, know your place!

*(Flustered, CATHERINE exits. MARY exits as well.)*

**SCENE THREE**

*GEORGIANA is reading a book. She is intent upon its contents, engrossed. THOMAS enters, sneaking up on GEORGIANA from behind. He pounces on her and begins to poke her, giggling mischievously. GEORGIANA laughs as he tickles her.*

**GEORGIANA:** What—oh, stop it, stop it, Thomas!  
*(Laughs, but then slaps away his hands.)*

I said stop it!

**THOMAS:** Has some gypsy had you under a trance?

**GEORGIANA:** What do you mean?

**THOMAS:** I have been calling you for twenty minutes!

**GEORGIANA:** You have?

**THOMAS:** Are you ill?

**GEORGIANA:** No. No, I am fine.

**THOMAS:** What is that you have your nose in?

**GEORGIANA:** Nothing.

**THOMAS:** Oh, now you do have me intrigued!

**GEORGIANA:** Really, Thomas, it is nothing of consequence.  
*(THOMAS swipes the book from GEORGIANA.)*

Thomas, give that back!

**THOMAS:** Why, it can't be—

**GEORGIANA:** At once. Give it back!

**THOMAS:** What a farce! What a delight!

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas!

**THOMAS:** A romance! Has the end of the world finally come? Is this what kept you up so late last night, Georgiana?

**GEORGIANA:** It is fine literature.

**THOMAS:** Jane Austen? Never heard of her. But I am sure she is very skillful in telling a maudlin story of swooning maidens.  
*(Acting.)*

Oh, Reginald! Save me! I am all alone in this big, gothic castle!

**GEORGIANA:** Do not be childish.

**THOMAS:** I hardly recognize you, Georgiana. The severe spinster has become sentimental.  
*(GEORGIANA grabs back the book.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Do not make a fool of yourself. I have read nearly every other book in the house. My options are becoming rather narrow.

**THOMAS:** Narrow indeed!

**GEORGIANA:** Put it aside, there is another matter I want to address.

**THOMAS:** That formal, eh? Out with it.

**GEORGIANA:** I wish to host a ball here and—

**THOMAS:** Wait—did you say a ball?

**GEORGIANA:** Yes, a ball.

**THOMAS:** Truly, you have been transformed! Catherine, come in here!

**GEORGIANA:** Oh, Thomas, you traitor, please, do not—

**THOMAS:** Why? Are you embarrassed?

**GEORGIANA:** I am no such thing!

**THOMAS:** Oh, of course not. I do not think that you have been embarrassed your whole life. Completely unruffled. Catherine, come here!

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas, please, don't make this into something bigger than it is!

**THOMAS:** Catherine!

*(Enter CATHERINE.)*

**CATHERINE:** What are you off about?

**THOMAS:** Georgiana wants to host a ball.

**CATHERINE:** *(Peering at GEORGIANA suspiciously.)* Thomas, our sister has been replaced with a doppelganger.

**GEORGIANA:** I have always enjoyed going to balls and assemblies with you, Catherine.

**CATHERINE:** Yes, to play cards or talk your serious talks. But when have you ever been known to dance at a dance, Georgiana?

**GEORGIANA:** I know how to dance.

**CATHERINE:** It is one thing to know how to dance, yet it is a completely different thing to be known to dance. Of course, that may be no fault of your own. One has to be asked first.

**THOMAS:** That is enough, Catherine. Tell me, do you dispute the idea of a ball?

**CATHERINE:** Of course not.

**THOMAS:** Good. I think it is high time! We will prepare the invitations, hire the musicians, prepare some elegant food, and have a fine time.

**CATHERINE:** I have been just aching for something like this. Father's death has been such a foggy

darkness!

*(They all look to Alexander Highett's portrait.)*

**THOMAS:** Yes. We must pay no disrespect to Father.

**GEORGIANA:** No, I agree with Catherine for once. Our mourning is over.

*(GEORGIANA takes off her black arm band.)*

**CATHERINE:** It is high time!

*(CATHERINE, too, tears off her arm band. The two sisters look at THOMAS.)*

**THOMAS:** Father would not want us to grieve forever!

*(THOMAS tears off his arm band as well.)*

We shall make this the grandest ball that this area has ever seen then! We will need to get you a new dress, Georgiana.

**GEORGIANA:** I have plenty of dresses.

**THOMAS:** Yes, they all make you look like a mortician's wife. They are not suitable. That new dress you showed me yesterday, Catherine, where did you get it?

**CATHERINE:** Well, it is a bit embarrassing, but it was a dingy little shop run by two young women. But the dress was so well made that I decided to buy it anyway.

**THOMAS:** It is the most beautiful dress I have seen you wear. We will invite the dressmakers here to measure you, Georgiana, they will do splendidly.

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas—

**THOMAS:** No arguments, Georgiana. The matter is decided and you have no say in it. Mary!

*(Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** Yes, sir.

**THOMAS:** I thought you might be listening in, Mary.

**MARY:** I was just polishing the silver, sir.

**THOMAS:** Taking that comfortable spot of yours by door while doing so, I am sure. Catherine will write down some directions for you to a dress shop.

**MARY:** Yes, the one on Dover Lane.

**THOMAS:** Tell the two dressmakers that if they can come by after with some of their designs that I will make it worth their while. Give them instructions how to get here.

**MARY:** I will be there and back again faster than a hound after a fox, sir.

*(Exit MARY.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Then I shall pay for it. I will not babied. Anyway, I do have some sense. I was planning of purchasing a new dress—I just did not want to make a big scene out of it.

**CATHERINE:** Why this will be a treat to see you play the part of the stylish creature.

**GEORGIANA:** Now do not think that this will be a regular thing with me.

**CATHERINE:** A treat nonetheless. Oh, all the planning—invitations, musicians, food, silverware, and china! And the guest list—the guest list—oh, the guest list!

*(Exit CATHERINE in a near panic.)*

**THOMAS:** *(Pause.)* So, is it Stephen?

**GEORGIANA:** Pardon me?

**THOMAS:** Stephen. I am not blind, Georgiana. The ball, the romance novel—you are behaving peculiarly, and there is only one thing that I know that causes that kind of peculiarity.

**GEORGIANA:** Do not be absurd!

**THOMAS:** It is not absurd.

**GEORGIANA:** It is an embarrassing accusation.

**THOMAS:** It is not a crime to be in love.

**GEORGIANA:** I am not!

**THOMAS:** Look at your behavior.

**GEORGIANA:** Do you not remember? I am the one who is to never marry.

**THOMAS:** Oh, dear Georgiana, you are more vulnerable than I thought.

**GEORGIANA:** Do not mistake this, Thomas, I—

**THOMAS:** I saw that he came again the other day— and the next—and the next—

**GEORGIANA:** What is your point?

**THOMAS:** What was it that he brought with him?

**GEORGIANA:** His manuscript. He wanted to show me some parts of it.

**THOMAS:** I see.

**GEORGIANA:** Truly, Thomas, it is not what you think.

**THOMAS:** Could it be that someone has truly penetrated your armored heart?

**GEORGIANA:** How can you—?

**THOMAS:** Look at me.

**GEORGIANA:** What?

**THOMAS:** Look at me.

**GEORGIANA:** You are treating me like a child.

**THOMAS:** Look at me.

*(She does so.)*

Ha! Just what I suspected! You are gone.

**GEORGIANA:** Gone? Gone where?

**THOMAS:** Oh, Georgiana, be frank with your brother for once.

*(Takes her by the chin and looks again.)*

Gone!

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas!

**THOMAS:** Gone, gone, gone, gone!

**GEORGIANA:** Oh, stop being being foolish. How can I say this in a way that you will understand?

**THOMAS:** It is not surgery, my dear.

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas—

**THOMAS:** Anyone can be wounded by Cupid's arrow—even you!

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas, please!

**THOMAS:** Yes?

*(THOMAS begins investigating GEORGIANA's person in mildly intrusive ways.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas—what—what are you doing now?

**THOMAS:** Looking for the arrow, of course.

*(GEORGIANA pushes THOMAS away.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas, please, be serious! This is painful!

**THOMAS:** All right.

*(He takes her by the hands with a mock serious expression.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Truly serious!

**THOMAS:** *(This time sincerely supportive.)* Go on.

**GEORGIANA:** I must ask you something—something—

**THOMAS:** Something personal?

**GEORGIANA:** Yes. Something personal.

**THOMAS:** Go on.

**GEORGIANA:** How can I—make myself—more—

**THOMAS:** Say it.

**GEORGIANA:** —more attractive to a man?

**THOMAS:** I never thought I'd hear you say that!

**GEORGIANA:** I am in earnest. Please, Thomas!

**THOMAS:** I don't know. How should I know?

**GEORGIANA:** You are a man, are you not? Tell me what to do.

**THOMAS:** *(Pause.)* I am really enjoying this moment very much, you know.

**GEORGIANA:** Thomas! I—I know it sounds like foolishness—I have always ridiculed it as foolishness! But I have never—never wanted to look—well, attractive for a man. I thought I had more dignity than that! But it is—

**THOMAS:** It is a good move. If you want him as a man, treat him like a man by behaving like a woman.

**GEORGIANA:** Pardon?

**THOMAS:** Ornament your hair. Burn your old wardrobe.

**GEORGIANA:** Remember who you are talking to, Thomas.

**THOMAS:** Dear Georgiana! There's something hidden up in you. Something none of us have seen. It is there. Let it out. You just have to help it, that's all.

**GEORGIANA:** Do you really think so?

**THOMAS:** Absolutely.

**GEORGIANA:** But I never expected, if I were to feel such, that I would be—

**THOMAS:** Yes?

**GEORGIANA:** Well—

**THOMAS:** Hm?

**GEORGIANA:** Frightened. Where does fear play into matters of the heart?

**THOMAS:** Welcome to your first taste of humility. Celebrate it, my dear.

**GEORGIANA:** It is ironic. I always thought you the fool of the family, Thomas. Yet you have turned out to be the wisest of us all.

**THOMAS:** Now do be careful with that. It is our little secret. The disguise of the fool is a convenient device and I am not likely to part with it.

*(Blackout.)*

#### **SCENE FOUR**

*GEORGIANA with the two dress makers, ESTHER and HANNAH Whitefield. The two dressmakers are both pretty, ESTHER more distinctively than HANNAH, but they both have the*

*appearances of the laboring class. They have brought several dolls and a carrying case.*

**ESTHER:** What is it that you don't like about that dress, m'lady? If it is the color—

**GEORGIANA:** It is not the color. There is too much lace.

**ESTHER:** What if we were to take off the lace up 'ere— would that suit you?

**GEORGIANA:** No, it just will not do. I will not be made up like one of these dolls, you understand. I do have some dignity.

**ESTHER:** That I can see, m'lady. Of course, m'lady. Hannah bring over the one in green. Now this one is bit plainer, but—

**GEORGIANA:** Yes, it is plainer. Too plain. Something else.

**ESTHER:** Yes, of course. Hannah, the one with the train—

**GEORGIANA:** Oh no, that one is an abomination!

**ESTHER:** The one next to it then.

*(HANNAH brings over one of the models and GEORGIANA circles it, inspecting it closely. The dressmakers note her thoughtfulness hopefully.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Certainly not.

**ESTHER:** Yes, of course. 'Ere are two more. Bring them both over, Hannah.

*(HANNAH brings over the two remaining dolls. GEORGIANA, again, inspects them, deliberating between the two.)*

**GEORGIANA:** That one is unbearable, but that one—I like that one.

**HANNAH:** Exc'cellent choice, m'lady.

**GEORGIANA:** But the colors are terrible. Can you change the red and green to purple and green?

**ESTHER:** Yes, m'lady.

**GEORGIANA:** I should hope so.

**ESTHER:** Now, if we can measure you, Lady Highett. Hannah, will you please get out the measuring equipment?

*(Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** Sir. Lockhart is here to see you, Miss Georgiana.

*(STEPHEN enters, barging in.)*

**STEPHEN:** Hello! Sorry to barge in, but I am barging in!

*(STEPHEN laughs. Exit MARY.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Stephen! Oh! I was not expecting you for another hour.

**STEPHEN:** Yes, I did not intend to be so early. Mary tried to stop me, but that only intrigued me more. I

thought I may finally be able to solve one of the cultish riddles of womanhood, if it was that clandestine!  
(*Noting the dolls.*)

Why, I'll be stumped. Are you buying gifts for children?

**GEORGIANA:** Well, not exactly. I—perhaps it is best to say—how can I—

(*Enter CATHERINE.*)

**CATHERINE:** Stephen! I thought I heard your voice and here you are!

**GEORGIANA:** It is for Catherine! Yes, these are dressmakers who have come to show me the designs for a birthday present I am having made for her!

(*To CATHERINE.*)

Sorry to spoil the surprise for you, my dear.

**CATHERINE:** A birthday present for me?

**GEORGIANA:** Why, of course, dear sister. Come over here and we will have these two take your measurements.

**CATHERINE:** Why, I think I have harshly misjudged you, Georgiana. You are a dear sister indeed. For you to remember my birthday! And for you to think of such a thoughtful way to express your affections and apologies and adoration and—

**GEORGIANA:** (*Out of STEPHEN's hearing.*) Be quiet, Catherine. Do you not know that your birthday is not for another six months?

**CATHERINE:** Well, yes, but I do not mind. You do not even have to wait to give it to me.

**GEORGIANA:** The dress is not for you. I do not want Stephen to know it is mine until the ball.

**CATHERINE:** Oh, but I was so looking forward to a new dress!

**GEORGIANA:** (*To the dressmakers:*) Well, my dears, now that Catherine is in on our little *secret*, you might as well measure her.

**ESTHER:** We understand, ma'am.

**CATHERINE:** (*Conspiratorially to the dressmakers:*) Fret not, my darlings, I will make it worth your while. If Georgiana has not the sense to get me a new dress, I will just have to take matters into my own hands.

**HANNAH:** Thank you, Miss!

(*CATHERINE, ESTHER, and HANNAH step into a side room, from which they can still be heard and vice versa.*)

**GEORGIANA:** (*Back to STEPHEN.*) Now, before we get to your periodical...

(*Bringing him to the dolls.*)

...tell me what you think of these.

**STEPHEN:** Very pretty dolls. Let's see—

**GEORGIANA:** No, no, the dresses.

**STEPHEN:** Ah, yes.

**GEORGIANA:** Which one is your favorite?

**CATHERINE:** *(From the other room.)* I like the blue and yellow one.

**GEORGIANA:** Of course, the most gaudy. This does not concern you, Catherine. So which would be your choice?

*(STEPHEN circles the dolls, inspecting them.)*

**STEPHEN:** This one! With the lace.

**GEORGIANA:** That one?

**STEPHEN:** Yes. It is modest, but has an innate grace in its design. It is a beautiful piece of craftsmanship.

**ESTHER** and **HANNAH:** *(Offstage, from the other room.)* Thank you, sir!

**GEORGIANA:** *(Darts an annoyed look, then back to STEPHEN.)* We really need thicker walls in this part of the house. Now, there are others. What do you think of this one?

**STEPHEN:** It is rather, uhm, severe.

**GEORGIANA:** Severe?

**STEPHEN:** Yes. Where is its elegance and softness? Where is its beauty?

**GEORGIANA:** It has strength.

**STEPHEN:** Strong? This is for Catherine, is it not? She is a pretty girl, who should have a pretty dress.

**GEORGIANA:** I do not think that even Catherine should be so debased.

**STEPHEN:** Georgiana, there are certain things men and women do simply to please each other. There is no pride in it—it is a humble submission to each other's feelings.

*(CATHERINE, ESTHER, and HANNAH have finished and have now re-entered.)*

**CATHERINE:** I adore being measured. It always means something is coming.

*(Enter MARY with DARREL.)*

**MARY:** Mr. Fredericks, ma'am.

**DARREL:** Ah, Good evening, beautiful Miss Catherine. Good evening, frightful Miss Georgiana.

*(Picking up one of the dolls, amused.)*

Revisiting your childhood?

**GEORGIANA:** Why, do you want to play dolls with me?

**DARREL:** And are these two young girls your playmates? Rather rough additions to your social circle, if you ask me.

**GEORGIANA:** My relationship is purely professional with these two. They are making m—er, Catherine a

dress for a ball we are having.

**DARREL:** Yes, I am sure that Catherine has told you that I will be attending.

**GEORGIANA:** That is quite all right. I will not notice you. We will seat you behind the orchestra.

**DARREL:** 'Tis true, you are no respecter of persons. You will shuffle me off, as you have your meager playmates.

*(Enter THOMAS, ecstatically, almost as if he were in an insane daze, making wild movements and gestures, his voice rising and falling in a frenzied pitch.)*

**THOMAS:** Repent, repent, repent! Ye wicked sinners, ye vile men and women of Babylon, know ye not that the day shall come when the earth shall shake to and fro like a drunken man? This very house shall topple upon us! Repent, repent, repent!

**DARREL:** What on earth?

**GEORGIANA:** What sort of bizarre thing have you got yourself involved in now?

**THOMAS:** Today I got religion!

*(Laughs.)*

It was most entertaining. I'll show you! Mary?

*(Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** Yes, sir?

**THOMAS:** Can you bring in the gentlemen at the door, please?

**MARY:** Yes, sir.

*(Exit MARY.)*

**GEORGIANA:** You didn't—

**THOMAS:** I brought the religion home with me.

*(Enter MARY with BRIGHAM Young and JOHN Taylor.)*

My dear friends and family, we have apostles in our midst! Welcome Elders Brigham Young and John Taylor! They are preachers from America! They followed me home—can I keep them?

*(There is a shocked pause.)*

**GEORGIANA:** This must be a joke.

**THOMAS:** Well, I admit, I think it is rather a novel treat, but I think you will find them very serious.

Mormons! Latter-day Saints is what they call themselves. I just stumbled upon them, really, and opened them like Pandora's box!

**JOHN:** Not so much like Pandora's box, sir. We have something much better to give the world. We have the truth.

**STEPHEN:** The truth!

*(Laughs.)*

He has the truth! And I am sure he will sell it to us at a discount.

**THOMAS:** I was just walking absent mindedly through Liverpool and I heard this man's...

*(Motioning to BRIGHAM.)*

...strong accent. I stopped to discover a whole group had gathered to hear him preach about Jesus, oh, and angels and scripture and fa-la-la! Afterwards, if you can imagine, they told me to repent and be baptized right where I stood! Without any water in sight! We had a pleasant talk anyway, and I even bought a book off them.

**GEORGIANA:** That still does not explain why you brought them here.

**THOMAS:** I told them that, if they were brave enough, they could have a whole house of infidels to preach to. And here you all are!

**CATHERINE:** *(Mortified:)* It is like the '38 Christmas ball all over again.

**THOMAS:** Introductions: these are my two lovely sisters, Ladies Georgiana and Catherine Highett, and this is Sir Stephen Lockhart, and then Sir Darrel Fredericks.

**BRIGHAM:** Nice to meet you, folks.

*(BRIGHAM sticks out his hand, but no one receives it. JOHN bows, knowing the protocol.)*

**JOHN:** It is our pleasure to make the acquaintance of such distinguished persons.

**CATHERINE:** You are not an American like your companion, Elder Taylor.

**JOHN:** Unlike Elder Young, I was born in England, but have since lived in Canada and the the United States. But who are these two young ladies?

**CATHERINE:** Do not fret yourself, Mr. Taylor. They are just a couple of dressmakers.

**JOHN:** Dressmakers have names, do they not?

*(To ESTHER and HANNAH)*

I am John Taylor.

**HANNAH:** Yes, gov'nor. I'm Hannah Whitefield. This is my sister Esther.

**JOHN:** Miss Esther, Miss Hannah, it is our honor.

**BRIGHAM:** *(To MARY)* And who are you, ma'am?

**MARY:** Just one of the servants, sir.

**BRIGHAM:** Why, what a coincidence, I'm a servant myself. I serve God.

**MARY:** Well then, sir, you might then say that I serve Mammon.

**BRIGHAM:** It is not too late to switch sides, you know.

**MARY:** Mary, sir. I'm Mary.

**CATHERINE:** Excuse me, gentlemen, but is it some strange American custom to mingle with the hired help while neglecting your hosts?

**GEORGIANA:** It does not surprise me that religion does so well over there in your rough country, Elder Young. Why, the ignorant are always looking for another barrel to keep their superstitions afloat. Intelligence, science, and noble philosophy are expected in England.

**JOHN:** Philosophy? Fried froth.

**GEORGIANA:** Pardon me?

**JOHN:** In Paris they have a sort of exceedingly light cake. It is so light that you could blow it away. You could eat all day of it, and never be satisfied. Somebody asked me what the name of it was. I said, I do not know the proper name, but in the absence of one, I can give it one—I call it fried froth, or the philosophies of men.

**GEORGIANA:** Oh, and you are so substantial?

**BRIGHAM:** Ma'am, we carry God's truth restored. We have a story of new revelation, of an angel coming to—

**THOMAS:** *(Trying to usher them out now.)* Yes, yes, thank you very much! But now it is time—

**HANNAH:** Did he say angel?

**GEORGIANA:** *(Wryly noting Hannah's response.)* Gentlemen, the converts you will make will be nothing but the ignorant and poor of England.

**BRIGHAM:** Rich or poor, doesn't matter much to us, ma'am. I've been poor all my life.

**GEORGIANA:** Well then, you will do us a favor if you can export them all out of here into your own country. If they are not discerning enough to see through you, they certainly will not do us much good here.

**DARREL:** Now wait a minute, Georgiana.

**GEORGIANA:** You of all people can't possibly be defending these Bible wailers, Mr. Fredericks!

**DARREL:** Please, I have something to say. Unlike the rest of you, I have spent some time with these men and their associates, but more importantly, time among the class of people they convert—the class of people you have so degraded.

**GEORGIANA:** Am I incorrect in my estimations of their ignorance?

**DARREL:** Whatever your prejudices about laborers are, these people are supporting us. They are the ones making our bread, they are the ones building our homes, they are the ones building our carriages. Men and women like Mary here and the Dressmakers are the ones who literally make the clothes on our backs. If they will go to America and build the Latter-day Saints into a great nation, we would molder and rot. Can you make a dress? Can you forge a horseshoe or cook a feast? Without these "lower" classes, Georgiana, what are you good for?

*(Stunned by the direct insult, everyone looks to GEORGIANA to see how she'll respond.*

*GEORGIANA coolly regards DARREL and then looks away from him, as if he hardly mattered at all. She then addresses the two missionaries.)*

**GEORGIANA:** I would like to thank Thomas’s guests for coming, but we shall not detain them longer.

**JOHN:** Well, thank you for your time, I suppose.

**BRIGHAM:** I told ya how this would turn out, Prince John. Can’t trust these uppity types.

*(Exit MARY, JOHN, and BRIGHAM.)*

**DARREL:** *(Refusing to be ignored.)* What, no rebuttal?

**GEORGIANA:** I am done entertaining your forked tongue, sir. Stephen, come with us. Thomas wanted to play some cricket.

**THOMAS:** Come, Darrel. You will be impressed with Georgiana’s cricket arm.

**DARREL:** *Georgiana’s* cricket arm?

*(Exit GEORGIANA, STEPHEN, THOMAS, CATHERINE, and DARREL.)*

**ESTHER:** I think they forgot about us.

**HANNAH:** We can still catch them.

**ESTHER:** Catch who?

**HANNAH:** Elders Young and Taylor.

**ESTHER:** What?

**HANNAH:** Weren’t you interested in what they were saying?

**ESTHER:** Of course not.

**HANNAH:** Well, I was.

**ESTHER:** Don’t be daft.

**HANNAH:** It’s not daft. We have to hurry before they get on that carriage!

*(Exit HANNAH.)*

**ESTHER:** ‘ow are we even related?

*(Blackout.)*

## **SCENE FIVE**

*DARREL and CATHERINE are in a passionate kiss. CATHERINE tries to extricate herself.*

**CATHERINE:** Darrel—

*(DARREL continues.)*

Darrel, give me a chance to breathe!

**DARREL:** Come now, this is nothing new to you.

**CATHERINE:** But right here in the open—where anyone can see!

**DARREL:** Ah, gentle Catherine—has Georgiana been telling you how much of a villain I am?

**CATHERINE:** How can I trust you, Darrel?

**DARREL:** How can you trust anybody? There is a point when you simply have faith.

**CATHERINE:** Oh, you have taken up religion, have you?

**DARREL:** I preach a different kind of sermon than they do.

**CATHERINE:** *(With a smile.)* You're wicked.

**DARREL:** And so are you, but you look good in it.

**CATHERINE:** You charmer.

**DARREL:** Once I started to investigate your family, then I understood what a rare treasure you all were.

**CATHERINE:** I thought you first were drawn to me as an individual?

**DARREL:** So I was. Yet, I always make sure I know where I am standing, darling.

**CATHERINE:** And what did you find?

**DARREL:** More than you can imagine.

**CATHERINE:** I do not understand.

**DARREL:** All in good time, my dear.

*(DARREL and CATHERINE once again kiss, but then they hear voices approaching. They both stop and listen to them coming closer.)*

**CATHERINE:** Oh, I am sure to get another scolding for being with you alone.

**DARREL:** Shh.

*(DARREL abruptly takes CATHERINE by the hand and they hide behind a couch in a far corner. Enter GEORGIANA, STEPHEN, MARY, ESTHER, and HANNAH.)*

**GEORGIANA:** I had forgotten all about the fitting that you had with—Catherine today. I hardly know where she could be. Stephen, can you stay here, while we look for Catherine?

**STEPHEN:** Oh, I can help you look, I'm sure.

**GEORGIANA:** No! No. Catherine may come in here and I will need someone to stay while I look through the estate outside.

*(To the dressmakers.)*

Which one of you has the measuring tools?

**HANNAH:** *(Holding up her bag.)* I do.

**GEORGIANA:** Then you come with me in case we find Catherine—so we can measure her immediately.

**HANNAH:** I understand, m'lady.

**GEORGIANA:** Come then.

*(Exit GEORGIANA and HANNAH.)*

**STEPHEN:** That was strange.

**MARY:** Pardon me, sir, I really am quite busy. Miss Whitefield, come with me, please, and I'll situate you in a different—

**STEPHEN:** Oh, you can leave her in here, Mary.

**MARY:** Are you sure that's wise, sir?

**STEPHEN:** What, are you afraid something's going to happen?

**MARY:** Foxes and chickens—

**STEPHEN:** Pardon me?

**MARY:** Barnyard thoughts, sir. I'll be about my business.

*(Exit MARY.)*

**ESTHER:** So 'ave you told 'er?

**STEPHEN:** About what?

**ESTHER:** Our little scrap in the street.

**STEPHEN:** I happened upon your little street meeting with Mr. Young and Mr. Taylor quite by chance.

**ESTHER:** My sister's taken a keen interest in them, 'eaven knows why. But the way you badgered 'er and—

**STEPHEN:** Tosh. Our little debate was hardly of enough consequence to bring up to anyone.

**ESTHER:** We're nothin' of cons'quence, are we, sir?

**STEPHEN:** I did not say that.

**ESTHER:** But you meant it.

**STEPHEN:** We just inhabit different worlds.

**ESTHER:** No, Mr. Lock'art, we in'abit the same world. The same cont'nent, the same country, the same city even. And at this very moment, to both of our discomfortures, we're even in'abit the same room.

**STEPHEN:** Miss Whitefield, please—

**ESTHER:** Sir, you're a writer, aren't you?

**STEPHEN:** Why, do you think you have read my books?

**ESTHER:** I—I can't read.

**STEPHEN:** *(Laughs.)* Yes, that would make it quite difficult!

**ESTHER:** Please, sir, don't make fun o' me.

**STEPHEN:** I am sorry. I believe you were trying to drive a point, were you not?

**ESTHER:** What do you write about?

**STEPHEN:** Why?

**ESTHER:** Nothin'.

**STEPHEN:** You can speak your mind.

**ESTHER:** Because—because writers get into peoples 'eads, sir. That can be a good or bad thing.

**STEPHEN:** You are afraid that I will corrupt everyone, are you?

**ESTHER:** Sir, the other day you said that we were only talkin' to Mister Taylor and Mister Young because we were poor. Why?

**STEPHEN:** People of a—well, people in your station are much more likely to try to reach for religion, while people in my station much more readily recognize the manipulation those preachers put upon others. We are in a higher class for a reason.

**ESTHER:** Why? 'Cause you were born there?

**STEPHEN:** No, because we stay there. Certain conditions of living create a certain kind of individual. In your realms of society there are thieves, there are murderers, there are drunks and, if I may be indelicate, there are ladies of the night. The morals of your people bring down society.

**ESTHER:** Sir—per'aps you 'aven't been 'mong my kind o' people much—but recently, I 'ave 'ad a chance to be 'mong yours. And you know what I find?

**STEPHEN:** Let me guess, you think we're all “snobs.” Posh, eh?

**ESTHER:** No, sir, that is not what I was goin' to say. I wasn't goin' to say that at all. I was goin' to say that I found some very lovely people. I found that being among a diff'rent people helps you understand them. You should judge a person, sir, by the choices they have put before them, not the choices that they don't.

**STEPHEN:** Why, Miss Whitefield, that was a nice turn of phrase. Have you ever thought of going into forensics?

**ESTHER:** I'm not that kind o' girl, sir!

**STEPHEN:** Oh no, you do not understand what I mean. You have a sharper mind than I gave you credit for. You know, I enjoy talking to you.

**ESTHER:** Why, sir, is that a compliment?

**STEPHEN:** You earned it. You have impressed me, Miss—

**ESTHER:** Whitefield. Esther Whitefield.

**STEPHEN:** Miss Whitefield. Why—this may sound strange, but can I see you again?

**ESTHER:** Me, sir?

**STEPHEN:** *(Taking ESTHER by the hands.)* Why, yes. I have enjoyed our talk—I would enjoy another.

**ESTHER:** Truly? Why—I don't know, sir, that would be nice, I guess. Very nice.

*(The two stand in silence for several moments, and as they gaze at each other, there is an electric moment. MARY enters in a rush.)*

**MARY:** Oh my.

**STEPHEN:** Mary!

**MARY:** Excuse me, sir!

**STEPHEN:** Weren't you supposed to be busy doing something?

**MARY:** I was polishing the silver.

**STEPHEN:** Blast it all, Mary! Why don't you—?

**MARY:** Miss Georgiana is coming, so you two better look less—comfortable with each other.

*(STEPHEN and ESTHER realize that they're still holding hands. They drop their hands, create some distance from each other and try to look "less comfortable." Enter GEORGIANA and HANNAH.)*

**GEORGIANA:** I am sorry, Miss Whitefield, but your sister and I were not able to find Catherine. You will just have to come another day.

**ESTHER:** As you wish, m'lady.

**GEORGIANA:** Good day.

*(ESTHER takes HANNAH by the hand and the two scurry out. MARY exits behind them.)*

Now, Stephen, finally we can discuss your story. Let us start where we left off, shall we?

**STEPHEN:** *(Emerging from a private revelry, as he looked after ESTHER when she left.)* Hm? What is that?

**GEORGIANA:** We were deep into your story. Your manuscript.

**STEPHEN:** Oh, yes. That.

**GEORGIANA:** Now, Stephen, it shows wonderful promise! You have proven yourself rather profound, you know. I especially love your depiction of the lower classes and their surroundings. The filth, the grubbiness, the immorality—why, it is perfectly accurate.

**STEPHEN:** Now, Georgiana, it still is a rough draft. I am not sure whether I am keeping—

**GEORGIANA:** Oh, writers dream of such a rough draft! You are well on your way! Mr. Lowe will be so impressed.

**STEPHEN:** Really, Georgiana, I am not sure if it deserves that kind of praise.

**GEORGIANA:** Here are my new notes notes. I have written here that on page 210—

**STEPHEN:** You know, Georgie, I am not quite in the mood for this today.

**GEORGIANA:** What do you mean? We have had such good sessions—

**STEPHEN:** I know, Georgiana, but my mind is elsewhere. Maybe another day.

**GEORGIANA:** Are you all right?

**STEPHEN:** Oh, I think so.

**GEORGIANA:** You do know that you can trust me? If there is anything that I can help with, I am your friend and confidante.

**STEPHEN:** Yes, I know. But there is a certain matter I need to think over.

**GEORGIANA:** Think over?

**STEPHEN:** A matter of the heart.

**GEORGIANA:** *(Caught off guard.)* Truly?

**STEPHEN:** I have grown—very—well, how would I say it at this stage? I have grown very fond of someone. But I cannot discuss it now. Excuse me, dear friend.

*(Exit STEPHEN. GEORGIANA looks after him, bewildered and hopeful.)*

**GEORGIANA:** Could it be?

*(She sits on the couch that CATHERINE and DARREL have been hiding behind. CATHERINE squeals from behind it. GEORGIANA jolts up, shrieking in return, twirling around to look at the couch in confusion.)*

**DARREL:** *(To CATHERINE.)* You are the model of subtlety and stealth, my dear.

*(DARREL and CATHERINE rise from behind the couch, revealing themselves.)*

**GEORGIANA:** What are you two doing back there?

**DARREL:** Trying not to sneeze.

*(DARREL wipes the dust from his clothes.)*

**GEORGIANA:** You spies! You were eavesdropping!

**DARREL:** Which you ought to be glad of, Georgiana.

**CATHERINE:** Darrel—

**GEORGIANA:** What do you mean?

**DARREL:** There is quite a bit going on under your own roof that you are not aware of.

**CATHERINE:** Darrel, don't—

**GEORGIANA:** What are you concealing, Catherine? Well—out with it!

**CATHERINE:** It is nothing you need worry about, Georgiana.

**DARREL:** Believe it or not, your sister is trying to protect your heart.

**GEORGIANA:** My heart?

**DARREL:** Yes, I know, popular opinion states that you haven't got one.

**CATHERINE:** Darrel! You promised!

**GEORGIANA:** Will you stop this taunting? What kind of libelous rumors are going about that would involve my heart?

**DARREL:** You know, Georgiana, I am the only true friend you have right now. I am the only one willing to tell you the truth.

**GEORGIANA:** Good! If you have something to say, then say it. I will have none of your manipulations.

**DARREL:** Did you not wonder why your dear Sir Lockhart dismissed you so easily just now?

**GEORGIANA:** He did not—

**DARREL:** Yes, he did.

**GEORGIANA:** I am sure that he has his reasons.

**DARREL:** Yes, he certainly has his reasons. It has a lot to do with that little dressmakers of yours. The very pretty one.

**CATHERINE:** Darrel!

**DARREL:** There are certain attractions that blind men even to poverty.

**GEORGIANA:** What?

**CATHERINE:** Stephen is an honorable man.

**DARREL:** Whatever his honor dictates in the matter, the fact still remains that Catherine and I overheard his declaration of affection.

**CATHERINE:** Interest.

**DARREL:** Affection. Why, he was absolutely singing the praises of that absolutely stunning, little pauper. Ask Catherine, she will tell you the same thing.

**GEORGIANA:** Catherine?

**CATHERINE:** I—I—Darrel!

**GEORGIANA:** Catherine, just tell me it is not true.

**CATHERINE:** I wish I could.

**GEORGIANA:** It can't be true. I know better of Stephen.

**CATHERINE:** I am sorry, Georgiana. I truly—

**GEORGIANA:** It is a lie. What are you plotting?

**DARREL:** No plot. Just concern.

**GEORGIANA:** Ha!

**DARREL:** Georgiana, I know this may be hard to believe, but I am watching out for you in this matter. I view it as a personal point of honor to shield you from harm.

**GEORGIANA:** What's it matter to me? Stephen's his own man. I never entertained an idea of—of—

**CATHERINE:** Georgie—

**GEORGIANA:** Oh, I see what you are thinking—you were thinking that I dared to dream—how could you think that I could scarcely hope to dream that Stephen and I—to dream that—

**CATHERINE:** Georgiana, let us talk about this later.

**GEORGIANA:** Excuse me.

*(GEORGIANA exits, repressing the emotions that are running through her. CATHERINE turns on DARREL.)*

**CATHERINE:** You cruel man!

**DARREL:** Would have you preferred for me to keep her in ignorance?

**CATHERINE:** You have never cared a shilling for my sister!

**DARREL:** Are you so sure of that?

*(This catches CATHERINE off guard.)*

**CATHERINE:** Who are you?

**DARREL:** Who are *you*?

*(CATHERINE exits the room, desperately confused. DARREL, somber, walks to a window and looks out at the Highetts garden, as if he desires to take solace from them. **Blackout.**)*

## **SCENE SIX**

*GEORGIANA is beneath the portrait of her father, holding the dagger which Mr. Lowe had given her. She is staring up at the portrait, talking to her father.*

**GEORGIANA:** “Keep it sharp. Keep it sharp. Cut off all those that oppose you—slice through all of their defenses—”

*(MARY enters.)*

**MARY:** Esther Whitefield is here, Miss Georgiana.

**GEORGIANA:** Let her in.

**MARY:** Are you upset, ma'am?

**GEORGIANA:** That is none of your business, Mary.

**MARY:** Yes, ma'am.

*(MARY exits. ESTHER enters. GEORGIANA places back in its case.)*

**GEORGIANA:** You are late.

**ESTHER:** I'm sorry, m'lady.

**GEORGIANA:** Where is your sister?

**ESTHER:** She's very ill.

**GEORGIANA:** Well, I will have to do with you then.

**ESTHER:** We did not expect this kind of emergency.

**GEORGIANA:** No excuses. Where is my dress?

**ESTHER:** There's been some delays, m'lady—

**GEORGIANA:** Delays!

**ESTHER:** The sickness.

**GEORGIANA:** If you expect me to pay you more for your time, then you are mistaken. I will not be cheated.

**ESTHER:** We don't expect more.

**GEORGIANA:** You simply failed to meet your deadline.

*(MARY enters with BRIGHAM.)*

**MARY:** Why look at that, ma'am—we have another visitor!

**BRIGHAM:** Really I didn't need to—

**MARY:** Go on, sir.

**GEORGIANA:** Ha. What foul fate has brought you to us, Mr. Young? I had hoped not to see you in my home again. Nothing has been the same since the curse of your last visit.

**BRIGHAM:** I was just going to deliver this invitation, ma'am. I came to invite you and your family to a meeting we're having.

**GEORGIANA:** You are an ignorant fool, if you think that I would attend any of your spiritual circuses.

**MARY:** Now try to be kinder, ma'am.

**ESTHER:** A man o' God deserves anybody's respect.

**GEORGIANA:** Are you contradicting me, dressmaker?

**BRIGHAM:** You don't have to do this, Sister Esther.

**GEORGIANA:** Sister Esther? Have you joined with these religionists, Miss Whitefield?

**ESTHER:** My sister ‘as, but I ‘aven’t—

**GEORGIANA:** Well, at least you have some sense.

**ESTHER:** But—

*(Slight pause. A decisive moment.)*

I believe they’re good people and you were absolutely cruel to them the last time they were ‘ere. They ‘ave done nothing but good for my sister since she joined them.

**GEORGIANA:** You are a fool.

**ESTHER:** I’m not alone in my foolery, you ‘eartless witch.

**GEORGIANA:** You siren! I will have no more of you, dressmaker! Have your sister bring me my completed dress!

**ESTHER:** I—I’m sorry. As soon as we—

**GEORGIANA:** You better have it here within the week, or I will cut your pay into half.

**ESTHER:** We need that money!

**GEORGIANA:** Then you better be quick about it.

**BRIGHAM:** Miss Highett, she has done nothing—

**GEORGIANA:** Nothing? Perhaps you should know the character of those you spiritually woo, Mr. Young. This young seductress tried to reach past her station into my friend Mr. Stephen Lockhart. Right in this very room! Do you deny it?

**ESTHER:** It wasn’t like that! You must believe me, Elder. Young, it wasn’t like that—

**BRIGHAM:** I believe you.

**ESTHER:** ‘ow did she even know we talked?

**MARY:** Oh, don’t look at me.

**GEORGIANA:** Even with all your charms and pretty gazes, you were quite simple to think that Stephen would last on your hooks. Your face and figure may have been cut into a fine gown, but you are still coarse! And rough! And no amount of lace or finery could ever change what you were born into!

**BRIGHAM:** Truly, is this how a lady should behave?

**GEORGIANA:** A lady? Who are you, Mr. Young, to take me into account? It is your people who are unwelcome in this nation, it is your people who are as much as outcasts as this wretched, little rag doll. I assure you that you won’t increase your popularity by strengthening your ties to the likes of them!

**BRIGHAM:** Popularity? Miss Highett, if I now had in my possession sufficient money, as you have, I could buy the favor of the publishers of news papers and control their presses; I could make us the most popular people in this nation, though I expect popularity would send us to hell. Miss Whitefield, perhaps it’s time we should both leave.

**GEORGIANA:** Do not come back, Mr. Young. You are not welcome here. Neither of you will ever be

tolerated here.

**BRIGHAM:** Lady Highett!

**GEORGIANA:** My life has been nothing but a storm and a fury since you have come into my life, Mr. Young. If there is a God, perhaps he is trying to tell me something about you and your religion.

**BRIGHAM:** But what is it that he is trying to say? God extends His hand to you, ma'am, but if you reject it, you reject the only force which will save you from the coming storms.

**GEORGIANA:** See them out, Mary.

**MARY:** *(To BRIGHAM and ESTHER.)* I'm sorry about all of this.

**BRIGHAM:** God's work is not through in this house.

**GEORGIANA:** God is not welcome in this house!  
*(Exit BRIGHAM and ESTHER. DARREL enters.)*

I get rid of one nuisance only to receive another. Do you want to see Catherine, Darrel?

**DARREL:** I am here to see Thomas.

**GEORGIANA:** I hope you are not here for what I think you are.

**DARREL:** I am not.

**GEORGIANA:** Good. The last thing I need is you as a brother in-law. Mary?

*(Enter MARY.)*

**MARY:** Yes, ma'am?

**GEORGIANA:** Fetch Thomas for Mr. Fredericks.

**MARY:** So the fox wants a go at the rooster as well then, eh?

**DARREL:** Just get him, will you?

*(Exit MARY.)*

**GEORGIANA:** So why the sudden interest in male camaraderie?

**DARREL:** It is none of your business.

**GEORGIANA:** I suppose it is not. But I do not trust you, Darrel. I never have.

**DARREL:** I learned never to trust anybody years ago, Georgiana. Especially women.

**GEORGIANA:** Perhaps there is some wisdom in that—especially this woman. Don't trust me, Darrel. Don't trust me at all.

*(Enter THOMAS.)*

**THOMAS:** Hello, Darrel.

**GEORGIANA:** Goodbye, Darrel.

*(Exit GEORGIANA.)*

**THOMAS:** How are you, Darrel?

**DARREL:** As always, Thomas. As always.

**THOMAS:** I am surprised that you asked to see me. Do you plan on asking me for my sister's hand in marriage?

**DARREL:** Not yet.

**THOMAS:** *(Laughs.)* I never know quite what to make of you, Darrel.

**DARREL:** As it should be.

**THOMAS:** Cloaked in mystery, our cunning thinker.

**DARREL:** I know your secrets, Thomas.

**THOMAS:** Pardon me?

**DARREL:** I won't small talk, I won't play with you. I came here with a purpose. Don't play the fool with me.

**THOMAS:** I thought it was well understood that it was no act.

**DARREL:** Yes, the foppish Thomas Highett. Fool, clown, and high brow fellow. Who would have guessed that he is an embezzler?

*(THOMAS stops cold. His face falls, as he stares at DARREL, stunned.)*

**THOMAS:** What the devil!

**DARREL:** I am a businessman, Thomas. I looked into your assets long ago.

**THOMAS:** You what?

**DARREL:** I always know where I am standing. I found out that your fortune was much more than your shipping business in Liverpool or your family inheritance ought to suggest, as considerable as the returns from those are.

**THOMAS:** What are you doing looking at—?!

**DARREL:** I also found out why you have shown so much attention to Jane Fields. Her father has been helping you embezzle money, I presume, in return for your help in establishing him as a respectable figure.

**THOMAS:** That's a serious charge, sir!

**DARREL:** Yes, it is. And it is a true charge. You marrying his daughter will lend them some of that credibility which they have lacked and in return he has been slowly sucking money from his company and into your bank coffers. Am I accurate thus far?

*(Pause.)*

Your silence is illuminating.

**THOMAS:** Look here, what is it that you want?

**DARREL:** In return for your continual support of my publishing company, I will turn a blind eye to the corruption I have seen and will not report it to the authorities.

**THOMAS:** So all of your involvement with my sister has been a ploy to get at me?

**DARREL:** I want to be tied to you by blood, Thomas. I will need your unerring support no matter which of your sisters I marry.

**THOMAS:** Did you say *which*?

**DARREL:** Somehow your sister Catherine has developed a conscience. It was the last thing I expected. In any case, Georgiana was the one I was going to try for in the first place—but you saw how that went.

**THOMAS:** Why would a man like you prefer—?

**DARREL:** Oh, the world doesn't understand the value of a woman like Georgiana—and I'm not only talking about her excellent mind. These stupid men gallop like studs after pretty ponies like Catherine. But I tell you from experience, it's the plain women who make the most attentive lovers.

**THOMAS:** Here now! You are talking about my sisters!

**DARREL:** They're always somebody's sisters, Thomas. Or daughters, or mothers, or—wives.

*(DARREL is sincerely disturbed by his own talk for a moment. But as quickly as it came, it is gone, shrugging off the brief battle with emotion that just came across him.)*

I can have my fun with pretty women, surely, but a wife...

*(Giving the word "wife" a bitter emphasis)*

...needs to be something else. Georgiana is a rare species.

**THOMAS:** And you think that I'll just submit to you?

*(At this DARREL zeroes in on THOMAS and, with the swiftness of a viper, he pushes THOMAS against a wall and grabs his throat.)*

**DARREL:** I know what your game is, and I am prepared for it. I have partners in this. You must understand that there is more than one wolf on your trail. Tricky, little bastard that you are, yet do you think your wits can handle my whole pack of professionals?

*(THOMAS struggles against DARREL's strong grip, but DARREL only knocks him back harder.)*

Let me hear you say that you understand.

**THOMAS:** I understand.

*(DARREL loosens his grip and lets THOMAS go. THOMAS falls to the floor, struggling for air, massaging his neck. He looks up resentfully at DARREL.)*

**DARREL:** Good. I'll be back in the morning to discuss the details. In the meantime, we have a clear understanding.

*(Pause.)*

Do we not?

**THOMAS:** Yes, we do.

**DARREL:** Good.

*(Exit DARREL. THOMAS stares him and then turns over a chair violently.)*

**THOMAS:** Damn!

*(Blackout.)*

**END ACT ONE**

**Act Two contains 33 additional pages**