

GEORGIANA (CONT' D)
Come on Grey, come on!

CUT TO:

2 INT. ALTHORP - DAY

2

In CLOSE UP, a quill pen dips into an ink well and starts to write on a virgin piece of white paper, 'The Fourteenth Day of May, Seventeen Hundred and Seventy Four...'

HEATON, a solicitor, is at a table writing this document, his ink pen scraping against the paper. Around him, the room has the atmosphere of a serious occasion: still and dark although the sun shines brightly outside and the

LADY SPENCER

...I can't think of anything in her that would stand in the way of a singularly happy marriage -

The DUKE turns for a brief moment and smiles inscrutably at LADY SPENCER. HEATON cuts to the chase.

HEATON

These are not the issues that burden the Duke, Lady Spencer. It is His Grace's duty to produce an heir. On the other hand, your daughter may expect a handsome reward when that occurs -

DUKE

Thank you, Heaton.

BURLEIGH

(resuming his writing)
Your Grace ...

The DUKE remains looking out of the window, not so much out of interest in GEORGIANA, but rather because he finds these pre-nuptial proceedings uncomfortable. LADY SPENCER throws a brief glance at LORD SPENCER, who seems disinclined to discuss these matters. She resolutely turns to the DUKE.

LADY SPENCER

Your Grace can rest assured. The women in our family have never forfeited on that account.

LADY SPENCER smiles at her husband who nods back. HEATON looks to the DUKE for confirmation, then j UCqy bU! z! zCj ! qyeb! zCM! ?(yo

HEATON

Tedatj (j ywbU! z(M?ByhbU! ij BC! ytbU! zCUCqy bU! h tthat acsueyrn

Li thNCtthe Sttoui o asodrn

HUKE

Tnuyr

The men are running back. GREY is in the lead.

GEORGIANA
Come on Grey!

GREY puts his head down and accelerates. He wins, totally out of breath and sweating. All the others follow, similarly exhausted and bent over double.

GEORGIANA turns to the other women, a book containing all the bets they've laid in her hand.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
(Charming smile)
I do apologise ladies but it appears my horse has won.

The young women smile, and gather around GEORGIANA. GREY approaches from behind, still slightly out of breath.

GEORGIANA curtsies to GREY who bows in return before
GEORGIANA runs off. GREY watches her go.

CUT TO:

4aA INT. ALTHORP. DAY

4aA

LADY SPENCER waits inside. GEORGIANA enters.

GEORGIANA

I must apologize Mama, were we
making too much noise?

LADY SPENCER

Not at all, darling. We have much
more important things to talk of.
Come here.

GEORGIANA waits expectantly for an explanation. LADY
SPENCER reveals nothing, holding in her secret, but her
excitement can't help but shine through.

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)

I have heard a rumour...

LADY SPENCER pauses for dramatic effect.

GEORGIANA

Yes...?

LADY SPENCER

...that I shall very soon be
addressing my daughter as HerGEORGIANA wngnothl DDK?(yTbU! zC

GEORGIANA
He loves me?

LADY SPENCER
Yes, of course.

GEORGIANA
(Excited)
I have met him only twice.

LADY SPENCER
When one truly loves someone, one doesn't have to know them well to be certain, Georgiana. One feels it right away. [Pause] I do believe you will be happy with him.

GEORGIANA
I know I shall, Mama... I know I shall.

CUT TO:

4aB EXT. ALTHORP. DAY

4aB

GEORGIANA walks out onto the balcony and looks into the garden. The young people are chatting and eating. GREY, however, is to one side, looking out across the fields.

GEORGIANA takes a moment to herself. In the last light of day, sun rays illuminate pollen in the air around her. The camera moves in to a CLOSE UP of her optimistic face.

CUT TO:

4A OMITTED

4A

5 INT. LONDON CHURCH - MORNING

5

CLOSE UP of GEORGIANA'S face, same framing as before, but now heavily made up and in her BRIDAL DRESS. Wedding music plays as she is walking forward down the aisle, in this relatively small and intimate space.

At the far end stand a select group of powerful and important ARI STOCRATS. As GEORGIANA passes LADY SPENCER, her mother looks incredibly proud. When GEORGIANA reaches THE DUKE, he looks composed. She smiles at him.

Credits are superimposed throughout this sequence, until the main title appears as GEORGIANA stands at the front:

THE DUCHESS

The music stops. The PRIEST steps up to begin the service.

CUT TO:

9 EXT. DUKE'S GILT COACH. LONDON STREET - DAY 9

It's a wide and busy London street. There are ORDINARY PEOPLE on the side of it, TRAFFIC kicking up dust. It's a messy mass of noise and smells, smoke and dirt.

Through the middle of this comes the DUKE'S GILT COACH followed by two other COACHES, in stark contrast to their surroundings. Heads turn to look at this eighteenth century motorcade, people wave, children start to run after it.

CUT TO:

9A INT. DUKE'S GILT COACH. LONDON STREET - DAY 9A

SCM! ?(yfbU! N! d! ?(yfbU! N! y! b! zCj UCqyLbU! zCBC! yTbU! zCBC! y b! zCj mN' (BzC
zCj UCqytbU! zCBC! yhbU! zCBC! y bU! Cj UCqytbs! zCBC! ybh! zCBC! yebU! Cj UCqytbU! zCBMUy b! y! b!

The CARRIAGE turns off the street and through the massive gateway. The gates are locked behind them.

Inside the huge courtyard Devonshire House is revealed as an oversized, stark and austere building. A wall runs all the way around it, blocking the view and completes the

THE DUKE
You're in safe hands.

His attempt to reassure her only serves to unnerve GEORGIANA more. She remains standing and looks up at the ceiling, while the DUKE expertly unlaces her corset.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)
For the life of me I don't understand why women's attire must be so damned complicated.

GEORGIANA
I suppose it's just our way of expressing ourselves.

THE DUKE
Whatever do you mean?

GEORGIANA
Well, that you have so many ways of expressing yourselves, whereas we must make do with our hats and our dresses, I suppose.

THE DUKE
Hmmm.

The corset falls to the floor. The DUKE then removes GEORGIANA'S chemise. Suddenly, she is completely naked. She

The DUKE, now naked, walks over to the bed and stands before her. The camera is behind the DUKE and focussed on GEORGIANA: having never seen a penis before let alone an erect one, she is intently and nervously staring at his.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)
(Bending down)
Kiss me.

GEORGIANA finally kisses him, inexpertly. He lies down on top of and penetrates her, the look on her face suggesting this is an extremely new and strange experience. The DUKE begins to move rhythmically while GEORGIANA still tries to make sense of the whole thing - all the time watched intensely from the walls by dozens of his male ancestors' eyes.

CUT TO:

12 OMITTED 12

13 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - BLUE ROOM - DAY 13

GEORGIANA sits looking isolated and lonely in a huge gilt-edged blue room. She is trying to read a book but her concentration continues to be interrupted by the presence of MALE FOOTMEN stationed at two of the doors, like sentries. She turns a page and tries to focus but fails.

A TALL SERVANT enters. GEORGIANA puts the book down.

HEATON
Lady Spencer, Your Grace.

GEORGIANA looks up, relieved, to see her mother enter. HEATON bows and walks away across the vast space.

CUT TO:

14 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - DRAWING ROOM - DAY - LATER 14

GEORGIANA sits with LADY SPENCER. They are playing cards - with real money laid out in front of them - and talking.

LADY SPENCER
...One has to accept one's responsibility, my darling. Certain obligations come with marriage, no matter how burdensome they may seem.

GEORGIANA
Yes, but when we are together, intimately, I mean, he...

LADY SPENCER

I know; it can be a bother.
However, it is only until you
have given him a son. The
occasions will then become fewer,
and less... determined.

Lady Spencer places down a card.

GEORGIANA

I think it would feel different if
he might talk to me every once in a
while. It's not that he's unkind
but he never talks to me.

LADY SPENCER

Well, perhaps you ought to talk
less. I fear I may have given you
a little too much education. You
make tiring conversation and ask
questions which a man is
disinclined to answer.

GEORGIANA looks at her mother in resignation. How can anyone
have too much education?

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)

Learning these things takes time,
too. Marriage is just like
languages or music or painting. It
requires a long apprenticeship.

GEORGIANA

Yes. But he is... he is not at all
as when I first met him. I thought
he would be like Papa. Under his
cool reserve I would find a wealth
of depth and sentiment. But he
doesn't seem interested in
anything. Apart from his dogs.

LADY SPENCER

Try not to be too hard on His
Grace, G. He is merely intent on
fulfilling his duty. As for talking
to him - whatever is there to talk
about, my dear?

GEORGIANA

No, you're right. How foolish of me
to think that I should be able to
converse with my gCj! qyGb! zCM! ?(yl bUy bU! zCj! qyi bU! zCj! qyp

LADY SPENCER

Georgiana, equip yourself with
patience, fortitude and
resignation. A boy will come soon
enough, then you'll see.

GEORGIANA nods. She sends her mother a polite little smile,
then lays down a winning card and scoops the pile of money
toward her.

CUT TO:

15

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

15

A great, noisy dinner party. WHIGS in full gala, among
which is CHARLES FOX, a stout little man making a speech in
the grand room. Everybody listens to him. HEATON watches on
from the side.

GEORGIANA is by his side, her attire conspicuously more
daring than before. She looks apprehensive: she is the only
woman in a room dominated by alcohol and testosterone-
fuelled MEN, one of whom is relieving himself into a
chamber pot at the side of the room. GEORGIANA, though,
pays attention to FOX. The DUKE, at the other end of the
table, does not.

FOX

...a political party, in my
definition, consists of men of
honour, entertaining similar
principles that may be more
successfully pursued by the force
of mutual support and, not to
forget, the unfailing generosity of
his Grace the Duke of Devonshire.

Everybody looks to the DUKE, applauding loudly and somewhat
sycophantically. The DUKE nods cordially.

FOX (CONT'D)

So between the persistence of my
own humble self...

Everybody laughs again, including GEORGIANA, thus betraying
that nobody finds Fox humble. FOX, pleased with the success
of his joke, joins in the laughter.

FOX (CONT'D)

I say, between my persistence and
the Duke's purse, we must always
remember the honourable and
principle aims of the Whig party,
aims that some consider radical
but which, to us, seem simply
just and right and sensible.

(MORE)

FOX (CONT'D)

Just to bring independence to America. Right to end the slave trade. And sensible to pursue freedom for the common man, so that the blessings of this blessed plot, this England, may be more equally enjoyed - by all of its inhabitants.

All these are greeted by 'hear hears' from the room, and a deep thoughtfulness from GEORGIANA.

FOX (CONT'D)

And so - having kept everyone from the burgundy long enough - let me propose a toast to our host and benefactor his Grace, the Duke, and his beautiful new Duchess.

They all shout "hear, hear", reach for their glasses and toast in the direction of the DUKE. He nods cordially back.

FOX sits down at GEORGIANA's side. The murmur of small talk rises as the guests carry on with their eating and drinking. A MACARONI on the other side of FOX compliments his speech.

MACARONI

Excellent speech, Mr. Fox, splendid.

FOX

I thank you. However, it is always easy to address a congregation of friends, and even more so when those friends are drunk.

The MACARONI and GEORGIANA smile.

MACARONI

How did the Duchess find Mr. Fox's speech?

GEORGIANA

I must confess I am not yet at ease with political speeches. Their very form tends to obstruct my view to their actual meaning - if such there be.

FOX, expecting inane flattery, is surprised, although favourably impressed by GEORGIANA's candour. The MACARONI, not observing that GEORGIANA has earned FOX's undivided attention, proceeds to think that he is still part of the conversation:

MACARONI

18 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - BALLROOM - LATE NIGHT 18

Late night, and all the guests have left. BURLEIGH oversees as a team of SERVANTS are clearing up the mess: extinguishing the candles on the huge candelabra, on their hands and knees scraping food under the table etc.

CUT TO:

19 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - CORRIDORS - NIGHT 19

GEORGIANA passes quietly down the long candlelit corridors and of this massive house. She is happy, buoyant, tipsy.

GEORGIANA walks towards their bedroom. Suddenly a door opens and the YOUNG MAID the DUKE was talking to earlier comes running out, half naked, carrying her clothes in her arms. She looks at GEORGIANA in alarm, and runs off.

GEORGIANA looks at her, shocked and speechless, as she disappears off into the darkness of the corridor. Georgiana turns and proceeds toward the bedroom.

CUT TO:

20 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - BEDROOM - LATE NIGHT 20

In the bedroom the DUKE is sitting half naked on the bed. GEORGIANA stops at a distance.

GEORGIANA
What is going on?

DUKE
About what?

GEORGIANA approaches, unnerved.

GEORGIANA
What have you been doing?

DUKE
Nothing to concern you.

He smiles at her, kisses her.

GEORGIANA
Wait, William. I don't understand...

DUKE
What is there to understand?

GEORGIANA is lost for words.

DUKE (CONT'D)

You look very beautiful tonight.
Fascinating fabric. Is this dress
your design?

GEORGIANA

Yes it is. Thank you.

DUKE

Then allow me to appreciate it in
more detail.

The DUKE kisses her breasts and proceeds to remove her
clothes. GEORGIANA, with a desire to do the right thing,
acquiesces.

CUT TO:

21 EXT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - AFTERNOON - EST 21

Time has passed. Months. The season has changed from summer
to autumn, with wind in the trees and leaves on the ground,
which workmen are busy collecting.

CUT TO:

22 OMITTED 22

23 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY 23

GEORGIANA and the DUKE sit together in a gigantic dining
room at a very long table. In the corner a musician quietly
plays the harpsichord providing a low background ambience.

SERVANTS discreetly serving food and wine. GEORGIANA and
the DUKE eat in silence. After a few moments BURLEIGH
emerges to whisper something into the ear of the DUKE. He
understands the message and nods.

THE DUKE

Send them in...

BURLEIGH exits. GEORGIANA looks at him.

GEORGIANA

(Lighting up)

Are we having company? Is it
Fox?

The DUKE chews his food and swallows before he replies.

THE DUKE

Don't you think this mutton has a
funny taste?

GEORGIANA
Not really, no...

THE DUKE

Well, I do...

HEATON enters with a NANNY holding a little three-year-old girl, CHARLOTTE, by the hand. The girl is very nervous. The DUKE looks at them, then at GEORGIANA.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

This is Charlotte. She will be staying with us.

GEORGIANA looks at the little girl who remains absolutely still. Then she looks at the DUKE.

GEORGIANA

Why...?

The DUKE signals to the BUTLER that they can leave the room, upon which the BUTLER leads the NANNY and Charlotte out.

THE DUKE

Because her mother is dead. She has no other place to go.

GEORGIANA looks in disbelief at the DUKE. The penny drops:

GEORGIANA

Have you fathered that child?

THE DUKE

It's only a little girl, Georgiana, hardly the end of the world.

The DUKE sends a suspicious look at the mutton before him. He looks up again, only to find that GEORGIANA is still staring at him. He takes a tiny bite of the mutton, examining its taste as if he suspected poison, during which he continues:

GEORGIANA

I am pregnant with your child. Surely you are not expecting me to look after her?

THE DUKE

We have a house full of vacant rooms, G. She need not trouble you. As a matter of fact, she may even be of use; you can practice your motherhood on her...
(gesturing at her stomach)
...until our son arrives.

GEORGIANA hands move protectively toward her stomach to reveal she is midway through pregnancy. She looks at him, silently furious and hurt.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

This certainly doesn't taste like
normal mutton. I am sure something
is the matter with it.

The DUKE pushes his plate away and smiles at her. A SERVANT immediately steps forward to take the plate away.

CUT TO:

24

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - CORRIDOR - EARLY EVENING

24

GEORGIANA walking past, pauses outside the room in which the nanny is putting CHARLOTTE to bed for the night. She hears sobbing coming from inside. GEORGIANA is moved by this but steals herself against the painful zCj!qynbz on At. S

CHARLOTTE stares at her in silence.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
Let us make a deal, then. Tonight

SHERIDAN

And Fox here offers an expert
opinion, seeing, as he does, a
giant belly every time he passes
a mirror.

SHERIDAN

One should never give money to one's creditors, dear boy. It only encourages them.

GEORGIANA

Is there no one in London not in debt?

SHERIDAN

Just the poor.

They all laugh loudly. Suddenly GEORGIANA stiffens as she feels a sharp pain. She gasps and looks at them in alarm.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

Are you all right?

GEORGIANA

Yes...

She doesn't look convinced. Another dart of pain. GEORGIANA is in anguish.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

I would like to...

Another shooting pain. By now, FOX, SHERIDAN, and several of the other guests have jumped to their feet to help her out.

The DUKE notices the turmoil from his table.

DUKE

Are those labour pains? My wife is in labour!

The DUKE now raises his glass and addresses the guests. He looks genuinely excited.

DUKE (CONT'D)

I think this calls for a toast. I may have an heir before the night is out.

He toasts. EVERYBODY joins in the toast and some cheer, save those who are helping GEORGIANA out of the room. The last image is of the DUKE, happy and proud.

CUT TO:

27 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL - A FEW DAYS LATER 27

The house is quiet. LADY SPENCER hurries inside.

CUT TO:

LADY SPENCER steps into the room, still dressed in her cape. A SERVANT follows her and receives her cape. She is surprised by the sight in front of her: the DUKE is throwing a ball to exercise his dogs who scamper around the ballroom.

LADY SPENCER

Your Grace -

THE DUKE

I'm in no mood for conversation,
I'm afraid.

LADY SPENCER

But, pray tell, is my daughter -

THE DUKE

Is your daughter at all able to
give me a son?

Beat, as LADY SPENCER takes in the situation and quickly contemplates her response.

LADY SPENCER

Take heart, your Grace. As long as
the mother is in good health,
consider this mishap a draft, a
promise of what is soon to come. In
our family -

THE DUKE

Yes, yes -

LADY SPENCER stops as the DUKE waves her away, in a gesture which roughly signals that the DUKE appreciates her efforts to comfort him, but is too troubled to talk. LADY SPENCER smiles politely and leaves.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

(muttering)

Hell and damnation ...

The DUKE throws the ball deep into the room, his dogs racing to retrieve it.

CUT TO:

LADY SPENCER
Darling, how are you?

GEORGIANA

Quite well.

LADY SPENCER sends her a warm smile and steps up to look at the baby sleeping in GEORGIANA's arms.

LADY SPENCER

...and is she strong and healthy?

GEORGIANA nods and smiles.

GEORGIANA

She is perfect.

LADY SPENCER smiles and looks at the girl.

LADY SPENCER

She is her mother's likeness...

GEORGIANA smiles as she looks down at the baby with her mother. Then her mind shifts, and her expression becomes darker. There is an edge to her tone.

GEORGIANA

Did William receive you?

LADY SPENCER

Yes.

GEORGIANA

Was he upset that it wasn't a son? He just glanced at her briefly and left. I've hardly seen him since.

LADY SPENCER

It's been a difficult time for

His Grace

George

GEORGIANA

(Firmly)

No, I will do it, thank you.

The wet nurse looks to Lady Spencer.

LADY SPENCER

Darling, are you sure...?

GEORGIANA
Yes, I am her mother after all.
Even if she is only a girl.

Georgiana is already starting to feed her hungry baby from her breast, a picture of earthy motherhood in stark contrast to the pomp of her surroundings.

LADY SPENCER looks over at this headstrong young woman, not a little bit worried.

CUT TO:

30	OMITTED	30
31	OMITTED	31
32	OMITTED	32
32A	EXT. COUNTRYSIDE - DAY	32A

A very wide shot of the empty English countryside, with the train of GILT COACHES mid-frame, glinting in the sunshine.

36 EXT. THE TOWN OF BATH - DAY

36

The COACHES go past the Royal Crescent. On the grass in the foreground lots of people are strolling, having picnics, children play.

CUT TO:

39	OMITTED	39
40	OMITTED	40
41	INT. BATH ASSEMBLY ROOMS. NIGHT	41

There's a massive ball inside, all guests in formal clothes. Leading Whig JAMES HARE addresses the crowd from the balcony.

JAMES HARE

It is always a delight, when one is on holiday, to request a few words of wisdom. So without further ado it is a great honour to hand over to our most distinguished guest...

We see the faces of the DUKE and GEORGIANA standing in the darkness of the wings behind HARE. Who is he referring to?

JAMES HARE (CONT'D)

When she appears, every eye is turned towards her; when absent, she is the subject of universal conversation; and what we see her wearing tonight, I look forward to seeing the rest of you wearing tomorrow...

The DUKE's face seems to sink.

JAMES HARE (CONT'D)

... the Empress of Fashion herself
... The Duchess of Devonshire.

The CROWD applaud loudly. GEORGIANA enters, accompanied by the DUKE. There's a hushed 'wow' as everyone takes in her extraordinary appearance: she wears a HUGE, THREE FOOT ADORNED WIG with OSTRICH FEATHERS inserted into it. She beams

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

whenever he turns a phrase, one
finds another facet.

There are chuckles from the CROWD. GEORGIANA, looking confident, strokes the feather in her hair.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

And as he suggests, somebody did indeed ask me earlier what kind of feather it is I'm wearing. Well, only two specimens of this rare bird are known to man. One of them has clearly ended up on top of my head. The other, rumour has it, is running for office in the Tory party.

There is great laughter. GEORGIANA looks to the side of the room and sees that the DUKE has caught the eye of a young blushing BEAUTY. She smiles at him.

CUT TO:

42

INT. BATH ASSEMBLY ROOMS. NIGHT - LATER

42

HIGH TEMPO MUSIC is being played by some MUSICIANS. j di TdN[yHbU! zCBCj y

GEORGIANA lowers her voice in a conspiratorial way. It's almost as if they are flirting with each other.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Although I had hoped to avoid being reminded of that. If only for this evening.

BESS

Trust me to say something silly. I always do, you know.

GEORGIANA

Then perhaps you should have accepted the Duke's invitation. You have much in common.

BESS does not know if she is allowed to laugh. She looks at GEORGIANA and smiles. Then they both laugh. There is a real connection here, two lost people who have found each other.

The DUKE enters the room.

DUKE

Well... Home, I think. Georgiana.

GEORGIANA and BESS look at him as he leaves. Then GEORGIANA gets up.

GEORGIANA

Where are you staying?

BESS

I've rented some rooms in town.

GEORGIANA

We must meet again.

BESS

We must.

CUT TO:

45

EXT. THE DUKE'S CARRIAGE. ROYAL CRESCENT - DAWN - LATER

45

The DUKE's carriage trundles down the Royal Crescent.

CUT TO:

45A INT. THE DUKE'S CARRIAGE - DUSK - LATER

45A

GEORGIANA
Three boys ... What the Duke
wouldn't give for one of them.

BESS smiles.

BESS
She looks least like you, your
eldest.

GEORGIANA
Yes. (Makes a decision) I'm sure
you know the story.

GEORGIANA looks at BESS. BESS does, but she doesn't speak.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
My husband's daughter was born
before we married. The mother was
a maid. The maid died; we took the
child.

BESS
I'm sorry, I shouldn't have spoken.

GEORGIANA
Never mind. It's the worst kept
secret in London. She's nine years
old now.

BESS
And... do you love her?

GEORGIANA
Of course I do. The same as all my
children. They are the world to me.

BESS smiles, but behind it her own pain shows through.

CUT TO:

48 OMITTED

48

49 OMITTED

49

GEORGIANA and BESS come out onto a balcony with tables, benches and chairs. Below and beyond it is a manicured garden with people strolling, pushing wheelchairs etc. It has the feel of an upmarket sanatorium.

GEORGIANA walks to a small drinking fountain and stops to sip a cup of hot liquid. BESS takes a sniff and recoils.

GEORGIANA

Thermal water. It's the sulphur that makes it smell so bad.

BESS

And you really have to drink it?

GEORGIANA

Twice a day for four weeks.

BESS

Do you have any reason to believe you cannot birth a male?

GEORGIANA

No. Except four miscarriages, two still births - both of which were sons - and two girls ...

BESS feels for her, and smiles supportively. They make their way to a table and sit down. BESS looks around them - people are stealing sneaky glances over at GEORGIANA.

BESS

EverygbU! zCBC! yeu bU! zCj ! qyay b! zCj UCqzCBC! yygbU! zCBC! yeu

GEe

s ORGIANT i s yi bU! zCj ! qyl bU! zCj ! qySb! zCM! ?(y bU! zCj ! qywb

DN[Kyob! zCj UCqy. bU! zCBC! G) i ' UMi TdN[yEb! zCj CB)yOU! zCBC! yGob! zCM! ?(yGb! zCj UCqyl bU! zCj !

P(rtid.nhrS si nho sne

kebU! zCBC! yebU! zCBC! erti U! zCBC! yyabbU! zCBC! yob! zCM! ?(yhb! zCj UCqyabU! zCj ! qy-b! zCM! ?

zCj ! qy-b! zCM! ?(2-

BESS

It's not illegal for a man to
beat his wife with a stick unless
the stick is thicker than your
thumb.

GEORGIANA is speechless.

GEORGIANA

Mr Foster? But - he can't do
that...

BESS

Considering what else he's done to
me, that's not the worst...

GEORGIANA
What could possibly be worse...?

BESS
He's taken my children. He won't let me see them.

GEORGIANA
What do you propose to do?

BESS
Really, I'm at my wits' end. I have made some sort of alliance with a man who will assist me in abducting them. What I'll do when he does, I don't know. Live under an assumed name, I suppose. The law supports Mr. Foster.

GEORGIANA is lost in the horror of BESS's situation.

GEORGIANA
And in the meantime, where shall you stay?

BESS
Continue lodging I suppose, until my money runs out.

GEORGIANA
Well, there at least, I think I can help.

GEORGIANA reaches out to take another drink of water.

CUT TO:

50

EXT. DINING ROOM. BATH VILLA - NIGHT

50

The DUKE - continuing the previous scene's action - picks up a glass and drinks. Georgiana, Bess and the Duke eat. Georgiana and Bess exchange secret glances.

GEORGIANA
William? We leave tomorrow. And Lady Elizabeth is not due to meet her parents on the continent for some time. And she hardly visits London at all.

DUKE

GEORGIANA

You see she doesn't have a place
to stay.

DUKE

Oh dear, problem there.

BESS and GEORGIANA hold their breath. The DUKE glances up.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Well why doesn't she stay with
us? For a while at least.

Georgiana and Bess grin like school girls.

CUT TO:

51	OMITTED	51
52	OMITTED	52
53	INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. CORRIDORS - DAY	53

GEORGIANA leads the way down the corridor. BESS follows, gazing at the house, marvelling at the grandiosity of it all. Unlike GEORGIANA's first arrival it feels informal, free, excited.

BESS

This is incredible ...

GEORGIANA, tickled to have BESS with her, takes her arm.

GEORGIANA
(Ironically)
Yes. There's the castle in
Ireland, Bolton Abbey, Chiswick,
Burlington - and Chatsworth, of
course, which is much bigger -
but this is more like home.

BESS laughs. GEORGIANA leads her through more rooms.

GEORGIANA opens a door to reveal a beautiful bedroom with
adjacent dressing area. BESS is suitably impressed. They
laugh and hug each other close.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
I am so glad you are here.
(Devilish)
I have arranged a wonderful start
to the season.

CUT TO:

ACTRESS PLAYING LADY TEAZLE

"My extravagance! I'm sure I am
not more extravagant than a woman
of fashion ought to be."

IN THEIR BOX the DUKE and GEORGIANA look on, stiff and very separate. BESS sits behind them. There's a very tense air: the DUKE is looking mortified while GEORGIANA seems to know exactly what's going on. She looks down at SHERIDAN sitting in the front row, who looks back equally knowingly, and winks at him.

ACTOR PLAYING SIR PETER

"May all the plagues of marriage be doubled on me, if ever I try to be friends with you any more!"

ACTRESS PLAYING LADY TEAZLE

"So much the better"

ACTOR PLAYING SIR PETER

"No, no madam: 'tis evident you never cared a pin for me, and I was a madman to marry you."

ACTRESS PLAYING LADY TEAZLE

"And I am sure I was a fool to marry you - an old dangling bachelor..."

The camera moves into the DUKE. He endures the humiliation with a straight face but his insides are in knots.

ACTRESS PLAYING LADY TEAZLE (CONT'D)

...who was single at fifty, only because he never could meet with anyone who could have him."

The audience LAUGH LOUDLY and look up to where the DUKE and GEORGIANA are sitting. The DUKE grips his seat.

ACTOR PLAYING SIR TEAZLE

Very well, madam! Very well! A separate maintenance as soon as you please. Yes, madam, or a divorce!"

ACTRESS PLAYING LADY TEAZLE

(Triumphant)

"Agreed! Agreed!"

The audience laugh and cheer.

Amid the noise, GEORGIANA looks across the theatre to see the reaction. She sees a handsome YOUNG MAN in his 20s. She looks back to the stage, but the YOUNG MAN remains gazing at her. She looks back, realising who it is - CHARLES GREY. Unlike the crowd, he is not laughing at all.

56

INT. DRURY LANE THEATRE - NIGHT - LATER

56

After the show: close up on champagne cork popping and champagne poured into glasses. The DUKE is skulking around the edge of the crowd. GEORGIANA and BESS meet with FOX.

GEORGIANA

Bess. This is Mr. Fox. The Leader
of the Opposition. Mr Fox, Lady
Elizabeth Foster.

BESS is impressed. They nod at each other. CHARLES GREY
approaches from behind FOX.

FOX

Ah. And here is my protegee,
Charles Grey.

BESS nods to both the men

GEORGIANA

Mr Grey.

GREY

Your Grace.

FOX

He's our newest bright young man -

GEORGIANA throws a look back to GREY, then SHERIDAN presents her to a lined-up CAST, who all curtsy and bow.

GEORGIANA
Were we fair on the Duke?

SHERIDAN
It could have been we e?

CUT TO:

58

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

58

BESS and GEORGIANA are in nightclothes, sprawled across each other on the bed. They are intimate and relaxed, like two teenage girls after a night's clubbing.

GEORGIANA

Were you at all able to forget things and enjoy yourself?

BESS

It was a wonderful distraction, thank you.

GEORGIANA

Good.

BESS

I talked all night to Mister Grey...

GEORGIANA

Oh yes?

BESS
He is in love with you.

GEORGIANA laughs.

GEORGIANA
My dear Bess. No he's not. In fact
I fear the very opposite.

GEORGIANA looks at her, thinks. BESS smiles.

BESS
Can't you tell by the way he looks
at you? Honestly, can't you tell?

GEORGIANA
Stop it, please.

BESS
Georgiana. Procreation is not just
about offspring. In fact, it can be
quite nice.

GEORGIANA
(Laughs uncertainly, lies)
Yes, I know...

BESS
Try to close your eyes ... and
envision Grey slowly opening your
dress ... and kissing your back.

GEORGIANA starts to giggle.

GEORGIANA
Oh, please, they never do such
things...

BESS
Oh yes they do.

BESS gets up and lies behind GEORGIANA. GEORGIANA looks a
little nervous about this.

BESS (CONT'D)
Close your eyes... Grey is behind
you... slowly opening your
dress...

BESS pulls back part of GEORGIANA's clothing to reveal her
shoulder. BESN! qynbU! zCj ! qygb! z! qynbU! zCj ! qoqBC! yNb! zCzCBMUyubU! zCj !

GEORGIANA

BESS (CONT'D)

Be ready, dear G, when the time comes.

GEORGIANA lies back on the bed, eyes wide open, thinking. This image is held as the sound of a haunting operatic voice - accompanied by harpsichord - starts over it and carries us into the next scene.

CUT TO:

59	OMITTED	59
60	OMITTED	60
61	EXT. CHATSWORTH. FORMAL GARDENS - DAY	61

We are in the grounds of a huge country house and its estate. SWARMS of COUNTRY PEOPLE, MEN on HORSES and TENANTS are present, with others arriving all the time. Massive amounts of food are laid out on trestle tables with a tent for the gentry on the other side.

The singing and harpsichord continue, and we find that AN OPERA singer and HARPSICHORD perform to a grand outdoor picnic.

We see the DUKE and BESS standing together. FOX and GREY are at the rear of the audience, looking on.

GEORGIANA is with her children, working her way through the ORDINARY PEOPLE and TENANTS, making them feel welcome. They respond with reverence. She walks up to LADY SPENCER and embraces her.

GEORGIANA

Hello Mama.

LADY SPENCER

(Coolly)

Hello my dear.

BESS comes over too.

BESS

We're so glad you were able to visit, Lady Spencer.

LADY SPENCER Looks hurt.

LADY SPENCER
Are 'we' really?

BESS
Yes, G speaks of you all the
time.

LADY SPENCER
Well that is nice to hear. My

GREY, encouraged by her double meaning, continues.

GREY

You know, I despise the fact that

GEORGIANA

I just feel like keeping to myself
today...

BESS sits down beside her, leaning close and intimate. They look at the men, GREY at the centre, then look at each other. BESS smiles broadly. GEORGIANA blushes.

BESS digs GEORGIANA playfully and gently in the ribs. They giggle like school girls.

GEORGIANA looks up to see LADY SPENCER is watching, a disapproving expression on her face.

CUT TO:

64

INT. PAINTED HALL. CHATSWORTH - LONG AFTER DINNER.

64

LADY SPENCER and GEORGIANA are walking through. Other GUESTS mill around.

LADY SPENCER

(Hushed)

But you have only known her ~~thre~~zCj!qyvb!zCMI n) t~~z~~WE

LADY SPENCER

Yes, and you have begun to cavort
so constantly in public you
cannot live for your own soul. It
is no surprise you are gathering
weeds instead of flowers.

GEORGIANA is stunned, like a little girl cut dead by her mother for showing off. LADY SPENCER turns on her heels and walks off leaving GEORGIANA fuming inside.

CUT TO:

64A INT. CHATSWORTH. SITTING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER 64A

GEORGIANA, a rebellious look on her face, takes a drink from a BUTLER. She then heads toward GREY who is among a group of MEN. As he sees GEORGIANA he excuses himself from the conversation and meets her.

GREY
Your Grace...

GEORGIANA
Mr Grey, I have been thinking.
The national election is in six
weeks, yes? How is the campaign
going?

GREY
Terribly. Our only hope is to
save Westminster for Fox.

GEORGIANA smiles. There's a mischievous sparkle in her eye.

GEORGIANA
I have many faults as you well
know, not least among them is my
ability to draw attention.
Perhaps we could use that to our
advantage...

CUT TO:

65 OMITTED 65

66 EXT. COVENT GARDEN HUSTINGS - DAY 66

GEORGIANA stands on a platform dressed in the most outrageous costume yet, her hair piled three foot high above her head and decorated with Whig-coloured ribbons.

In front is a HUGE CROWD noisy: a massive mix of people from drunks and prostitutes to lords and ladies. Banners proclaim WHIGS, VOTE FOX. JOURNALISTS mill around, scribbling into notebooks and sketching GEORGIANA. In the crowd, women are fanning themselves with fans bearing Georgiana's likeness. It's like a pop concert.

GEORGIANA
(Shouts to the crowd)
Ladies and Gentlemen.
(MORE)

I give you a man who will inform us of the work we must do and the party we so believe in! Mister Charles Grey!

APPLAUSE as GREY moves to take the stage. GEORGIANA and GREY exchange a look as he positions himself.

GREY
I am here in Westminster to speak on behalf of our candidate Sir Charles James Fox...

APPLAUSE.

GREY (CONT'D)
Well, I wish only to address a single issue. Power.

GEORGIANA looks at GREY, clearly proud of him.

GREY (CONT'D)
The basis of power in our country is land, as it has been for centuries. And the aristocracy owns nearly all of it...

There are a few laughs from the CROWD.

GREY (CONT'D)
...along with all the places in the Government, control of the House of Commons, Ambassadors, Governors, Judges, and a host of other posts too numerous C!]T9N' qMzCj !)i ' MBi TdNM! ! z)C!] CzC

GREY (CONT'D)

GREY (CONT' D)

Will we merely follow in the footsteps of those that came before us? Master the art of compromise? Of postponing the greater good for the greater advantage? Will we do that?

(Long pause)

No. We won't. Because we believe in the words we've spoken...

A few scattered 'hear hears' begin.

GREY (CONT' D)

...and we have faith in the hearts we've stirred.

More 'HEAR HEARS'. GREY's rhetoric takes flight.

GREY (CONT' D)

The world is on the brink of disaster or salvation. From France to America, men and women are struggling to free themselves and find meaning in their existence. Change is upon us.

Loud calls of 'YES' and applause.

GREY (CONT' D)

We shall not return to the old ways! We shall not shirk our promises and our duties! We shall take England into this brave new world and shake the thunder from

GREY (CONT' D)
(whispering)
I think of you every day.

They look lovingly at one another. GEORGIANA is just about to reward GREY'S candour with a confession of her feelings when the sight of SERVANT approaching brings her to remember herself. She withdraws her hand.

FOOTMAN
Your carriage awaits Your Grace.

GREY nods. GEORGIANA starts to leave, her eyes remaining on Grey until she turns a corner and is gone.

CUT TO:

68	OMITTED	68
69	OMITTED	69
70	OMITTED	70
71	OMITTED	71
72	OMITTED	72
73	OMITTED	73
74	INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL - NIGHT	74

GEORGIANA enters. Silence. She races across, the soles of her shoes echoing as she click-clacks across the vast space.

CUT TO:

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. COO

GEORGIANA ebe l he0spa r

80 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE DUKE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME 80
BESS' s eyes are filled with tears.

GEORGIANA (O. S. /CONT' D)
You have robbed me of my only
friend!

CUT TO:

81 INT. THE DUKE'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME

81

GEORGIANA pauses, nearly spent. Then she finally challenges the DUKE, more imploring than angry.

GEORGIANA
What is wrong with me? Why have you
never loved me?!

DUKE
(simple, exhausted
clarity)
I do not claim to be a man of
fine sensibility, G, but I have
always known what I expect from
this marriage and what I am
prepared to give.

GEORGIANA doesn't reply.

DUKE (CONT' D)
As a husband, I have fulfilled my
obligations. As a wife, you have
not.

GEORGIANA
She has to go! Now! She is never to
set foot in this house again!

DUKE
(Hackles rising)
Do mind your temper, G. You are
quite forgetting yourself.

GEORGIANA
I want her out! I never want to lay
eyes on her again! Go down and tell
her to leave at once!

DUKE
I couldn't ask her that. I won't do
it, G.

CUT TO:

82 INT. HALLWAY OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 82

The door swings open - BESS jumps aside - and GEORGIANA comes crashing out of the sitting room, furious. GEORGIANA storms down the hall, followed by BESS.

BESS
Georgiana--!

GEORGIANA
You have taken yourself from me!
You don't love me!

BESS
I do love you. Really I do.

GEORGIANA
No! Love is an act! It is more than words and undying oaths! It's what you do! I loved you! You only said you did.

BESS is stung. Her eyes fill with tears.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
Leave. Get out of this house!

BESS remains standing, reaches out for GEORGIANA.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
(breaks down, cries out)
Get out!!!

BESS leaves the room. GEORGIANA sinks slowly to the floor, weeping, sobbing.

CUT TO:

82A EXT. ALTHORP - DAY 82A

CUT TO:

83 INT. ALTHORP. LIBRARY - DAY 83

GEORGIANA sits, like a little girl, back at home. LADY SPENCER pours tea from a silver Samovar.

LADY SPENCER
I did not like her from the first.

GEORGIANA

You've made that quite clear, Mama.

LADY SPENCER

She is gone from Devonshire House,
I hope.

GEORGIANA looks away, ashamed. LADY SPENCER puts the
Samovar down.

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)

They're living there together?
Georgiana, what have you permitted
to happen?

GEORGIANA

I don't know! Won't you please just
help me! Tell me what to do, Mama!

GEORGIANA hangs her head. LADY SPENCER surveys her daughter
and the mess she's in. Her demeanor softens.

LADY SPENCER

You must write to your husband and
insist he send her back to whatever
horrid little place she came from.

GEORGIANA

He will not. It is out of the
question, he says.

LADY SPENCER

Then you must return and resume
your duties. Make him realize
whom he loves. You will give up
your politics, your nights on the
town, your gambling. For once you

84 EXT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. COURTYARD - MORNING 84

Seen from inside the house, GEORGIANA gets out of her carriage, observed by a couple of servants. She proceeds up to the front door.

CUT TO:

85 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL - MORNING 85

The DUKE awaits her just inside the door. He looks at her with worry.

THE DUKE
Hello, G. ...

GEORGIANA
(Coldly)
William.

GEORGIANA walks straight past him and proceeds upstairs.

At the top BESS meets her with an apologetic demeanour. GEORGIANA is cold as ice. She passes her without even a look.

CUT TO:

86 OMITTED 86

87 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - LATER 87

BESS quietly enters GEORGIANA's room.

GEORGIANA
I may not have the authority to remove you from this house, but I can at least order you out of my room.

BESS
Won't you please let me explain?

GEORGIANA becomes furious and shouts at BESS.

GEORGIANA
There is nothing to explain. I trusted you, I made you my confidante, and you repaid me by stealing what is mine.

GEORGIANA turns her back and looks out of the window. BESS approaches her carefully.

BESS

This is my only chance of ever
seeing my children again. The Duke
is the most powerful peer in
England. He is my only chance.

GEORGIANA turns to her.

89

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. RED ROOM - LATER THAT AFTERNOON

89

GEORGIANA comes downstairs. Unseen, she looks into the room

Well away from the carriages and COACHMEN, GEORGIANA approaches GREY, who is waiting under the trees. GEORGIANA seems preoccupied. GREY, however, is simply excited about them meeting again.

GREY
(Hushed voice)
Did you tell the Duke who you were meeting?

GEORGIANA
No.

GREY
Did he ask?

GEORGIANA
No.

GREY pauses for a moment.

GREY
Good.

GEORGIANA
He has other things on his mind.

GREY stops and scrutinises GEORGIANA. He can tell that she is not truly present.

GREY
As do you.

The direct recognition causes GEORGIANA to stop too, and then look away. She walks off in a different direction. GREY follows.

GREY (CONT'D)
(Softer now)
Would it help to unburden yourself?

GEORGIANA sends him a little smile and a shake of the head.

GEORGIANA
It is nothing I can discuss with you. Besides, it would only bore.

GREY
You don't have to please others all the time.

GEORGIANA
I was brought up to. It's a difficult lesson to unlearn.

GREY (CONT'D)
I have waited all my life for that
kiss.

GEORGIANA averts her eyes, and looks confused. He loses his
composure a bit.

GREY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry ...

GEORGIANA
No. It's...

She looks up at him again.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
I have never been kissed like that
before.

They stand and look at each other. Then they move closer, for
another kiss. Gentle. And longer, this time.

CUT TO:

91

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. DINING ROOM - MORNING

91

GEORGIANA is with BESS and the DUKE. She seems sober,
together and strong; fortified. They sit opposite each other
at the table as if in negotiation. A long silence. Then:

GEORGIANA
All right.

Beat. The DUKE looks at BESS. What does she mean?

DUKE
"All right...?"

GEORGIANA
Do you love each other?

DUKE
Georgiana -

GEORGIANA
Do you love Bess, Your Grace?

DUKE
... Well ... I ... where is all
this leading?

BESS
I make no demands on him.

GEORGIANA
...And Bess, you love my husband?

BESS

BESS
William--!

DUKE
(to BESS)
Be quiet!
(to GEORGIANA)
Are you determined to make me a
total laughing stock? A man who
cannot sire a son and then a
cuckold?

BESS
William, Georgiana only asks what
we ourselves -

DUKE
Be quiet, you fool! (to GEORGIANA)
Are you his whore?!

GEORGIANA
... No... but I can't see why you
should mind. You have Bess and
three boys...

DUKE
Three boys??? Do you think I can
make those bastards my heirs? Well,
do you?

GEORGIANA and BESS are frightened. GEORGIANA hurries out of
the room. A moment passes, then the DUKE strides out as well.

BESS
William...?

CUT TO:

92 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. CORRIDORS - MORNING 92

GEORGIANA walks fast through the space. She passes a
FOOTMAN on the way to her bedroom. The DUKE charges after
her. GEORGIANA quickens her pace. BESS follows behind.

CUT TO:

93 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - MORNING 93

GEORGIANA comes into her room, and slams the door behind her.
A few moments later, the door opens. The DUKE enters. He
shuts the door. He glares at GEORGIANA. She looks at him. The
DUKE asks a real question for once.

DUKE
You don't know me in the least, do you?

GEORGIANA
I do. We're a bad match.

DUKE
I asked but two things when we wed: Loyalty and a male heir.

GEORGIANA
Yes, same as your dogs.

The DUKE's eyes flash. He snaps. He grabs her. She tries to fight him off. Her dress is torn. They struggle. The DUKE overpowers her.

CUT TO:

94 INT. CORRIDOR OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - MORNING - SAME TIME 94
BESS stands outside the door. We HEAR GEORGIANA SCREAM.

CUT TO:

95 INT. GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - SAME TIME 95
The DUKE pins GEORGIANA onto the bed and tears away at her clothes. We hear the RIP of silk and lace. GEORGIANA screams again. He holds her face tightly between his hands and stares coldly at her.

CUT TO:

96 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. NURSERY - SAME TIME 96
LITTLE G. and HARRYO stare at the door of their room as the screams continue.

CUT TO:

97 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. CORRIDOR - SAME TIME 97
A FOOTMAN stands at attention, trying to remain impassive.

CUT TO:

98 INT. HALL OUTSIDE THE BEDROOM - SAME TIME 98
BESS hovers at the door as she listens to the struggle and screams inside. She turns and sees CHARLOTTE standing a few feet away, staring at her. BESS moves away from the door, unable to stop what's going on inside.

BESS
(To Charlotte, softly)
Come with me.

CHARLOTTE stays rooted to the spot.

BESS (CONT'D)
(Firmer)
Charlotte, come with me.

BESS takes CHARLOTTE'S arm and hurries her off down the hall.

CUT TO:

99 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - MINUTES LATER 99

GEORGIANA lies on the bed. It's over. Her clothes are torn. Her face is red and wet with tears. The DUKE sits on the side of the bed, panting, used up.

DUKE
Give me a son and then do what the
hell you want, as long as you do it
discreetly. Until then you stay
here and do as I say.

The DUKE gets up and leaves. GEORGIANA's expression is blank, dead. The sounds of crowds cheering and clapping fade up in the background until we...

CUT TO:

100 EXT. COVENT GARDEN HUSTINGS - DAY 100

SHERIDAN stands before A HUGE CROWD. There is bunting in WHIG colours and banners. The PRESS are out in even greater numbers than before.

SHERIDAN
I give you the winner! Mr Fox! The
Man of the People!

FOX comes forth to a ROAR of approval. He yells out:

FOX
And I give you the weapon! The
Duchess of Devonshire!

GEORGIANA, still shell-shocked, comes forth to WILD CHEERS. She succeeds in smiling to the crowd. BESS and the DUKE stand together off to the side. They clap and smile, but the strain is evident.

GREY, unseen near the doorway, watches GEORGIANA taking in the APPLAUSE. Finally, the applause dies.

FOX (CONT' D)
Thank you, all of you, for this
reception today.

GEORGIANA sees GREY on the sidelines. She glances at the
DUKE then turns to slip away. GREY sees this. He follows.

FOX (O. S.) (CONT' D)
We have won the vote, and now we
must win the future!

APPLAUSE as GREY exits.

CUT TO:

101 EXT. COVENT GARDEN HUSTINGS - MOMENTS LATER 101

GEORGIANA heads for her coach, well away from the crowd.
GREY catches up with her.

GREY
We did it. Or should I say you did
it.

GEORGIANA tries to smile, but she can't. She turns away from
GREY. He knows something's wrong.

GREY (CONT' D)
Georgiana?

GEORGIANA
(the hardest thing to say)
Mr. Grey... I have enjoyed more
than I can say the times we've
spent together, the talks...

GEORGIANA is overcome. She almost breaks down. GREY looks her
in the eye.

GREY
Tell me.

GEORGIANA
I cannot say what -

GREY
Now!

GEORGIANA looks at him. Cj CB)yEbu! zCCBC! yNb! zCj UCqyAbU! yEbu! zCCBC! ?j .

GEORGIANA hhhe beao aofai ratray a-

GREY

GEORGIANA
(trying to be composed)
...I have...indulged in your
affections and made it seem my
feelings towards you were more than
they are in fact. I fear the heat
of the election...

GREY
Say what you mean!

GEORGIANA
(looks dead at him)
You love me.

GREY
Yes!

GEORGIANA
I do not love you.

GREY takes this punch, but his eyes never blink, never waver.

GREY
You are not speaking what is in
your heart.

GEORGIANA
It is -

GREY suddenly stands and strides away, pacing, angry.

GREY
(cuts her off)
This is a speech, forced upon you-

GEORGIANA
(overlaps below)
No. It's what I've always known to
be true!

GREY
(overlaps above)
-- by those who would destroy our
happiness!

GEORGIANA
(loud, in the clear)
THIS IS HOW I AM!

GREY is taken aback by her force and volume.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
I was wrong to offer you hope. I
was wrong to pretend an affection I
do not feel.
(MORE)

You have said it yourself, I need
to be adored. That is my weakness.

GREY looks sick. He turns from her, angry, hurt, unable to
find a place to put his feelings.

GEORGIANA fights back the tears. We hear CHEERS o.s. GREY
turns to her and bows before heading back across the grass to
the stage. We can hear FOX still speaking.

FOX (O.S.)
We have followed our ideas and
our ideals, and in the struggle,
we have found ourselves!

CLOSE ON GEORGIANA as the colour drains from her face. She
is dying inside but she keeps it all in. She calmly turns
and walks to her carriage and is driven away into the busy
London street.

CUT TO:

102	OMITTED	102
103	INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL - THAT NIGHT	103
	AN ELECTION NIGHT PARTY. Music plays in the background.	

Where before it may have seemed glamorous and exciting it now looks uglier and sordid: a place of corruption and addiction, on the edge of collapse.

GEORGIANA downs her drink. She passes: gambling at a table; two fat old men taking snuff; a man in a lewd embrace with a drunk woman; another man toadying to an important politician.

The DUKE appears and looks on, concerned. GEORGIANA takes another drink and leaves the room.

CUT TO:

104A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. BALLROOM. NIGHT - LATER 104A

GEORGIANA comes into the dancing area alone. The DUKE and BESS are with a group nearby. GEORGIANA seems to radiate a

GEORGIANA
(very drunk)
Why, Sheridan, you never were
such a spoilsport before!

GEORGIANA does a turn and slips. FOX steadies her. She smiles an apology. Then...

Suddenly GEORGIANA stumbles. Her WIG falls against a CANDLE and GOES UP IN FLAMES.

DANCERS back away. BESS looks shocked.

GEORGIANA SCREAMS as she staggers, hair on fire. DOORS OPEN, SHOUTS, SERVANTS rush about.

BESS attempts to knock the WIG off GEORGIANA's head. The DUKE appears in his doorway, none too pleased. He sees the situation. He turns to a FOOTMAN, all efficiency.

DUKE
Please put out Her Grace's hair.

The FOOTMAN splashes water on the wig. HISS and SMOKE.

The DUKE looks down at GEORGIANA: she lies sprawled on the polished parquet floor: wig-less, her make-up smeared, her eyes red and glassy.

CUT TO:

105 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 105

CLOSE ON a SMALL BOWL with a WHITE HANDKERCHIEF draped over the top. There are DROPS OF BLOOD on the handkerchief.

DR. NEVILLE (O.S.)
Her Grace needs to rest.

We see GEORGIANA in bed, pale, washed out, and exhausted. BESS, the DUKE, and MAIDS hover as DR. NEVILLE (62) sets the bowl aside.

DR. NEVILLE (CONT'D)
As long as you follow strict
instructions, there should be no
impediment to the birth.

The DUKE is mystified. BESS looks at GEORGIANA, who shows no sign of registering what has been said.

DUKE
What are you talking about?

DR. NEVILLE
The Duchess is pregnant.

The DUKE and BESS react. GEORGIANA has no reaction at all.

CUT TO:

106

EXT. ACROSS DERBYSHIRE - DAY - SPRING

106

A church stands out against the countryside. There

They continue towards the old FARM HOUSE.

HARRYO (CONT'D)

I can't tell that he's a boy at all.

GEORGIANA

But he is.

HARRYO

But if I can't tell, I fail to see why it's so important. He looks just like the rest of us.

GEORGIANA smiles at his innocent view of the world.

GEORGIANA

All babies look alike when they have their clothes on, but each of them is something quite unique.

HARRYO

How?

GEORGIANA

You and Little G did not look at all like one another. You cried all the time when you were a baby, whereas Little G was quiet as a mouse. She could walk before you, but you could talk before her.

The children listen. Charlotte looks at GEORGIANA.

CHARLOTTE ! qyl b! zCM!]T9NUBBzCq! i ' MBi TdNS

GEORGIANA

(nods)

Mister Grey. Are you recalled from France?

GREY

For a while.

GEORGIANA

No revolution yet?

GREY

No, not yet. But it's only a matter of time.

They look at each other. A long beat, then:

GEORGIANA

I bore a son.

GREY realizes she is making a point.

GREY

Yes...

GEORGIANA

His name is William George Spencer Cavendish, Marquis of Hartington. We shall call him Hart.

GREY

You and the Duke must be very pleased.

GEORGIANA

We are. He has gone to London to celebrate.

Beat. GREY gazes at her. They're both full of longing.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

You have been missed...much missed...How is it that you are here?

GREY

I received an invitation. I assumed it was on behalf of the party; I could not say no.

GEORGIANA is confused, but covers it up.

GEORGIANA

Yes, of course. Come inside.

CUT TO:

111	OMITTED	111
112	OMITTED	112
113	OMITTED	113
114	INT. CHATSWORTH. SITTING ROOM - THAT NIGHT	114

CLOSE UP of fingers playing strings on a harp. The camera tracks back to reveal a HARPIST next to a STRING QUARTET. The music carries through this scene and the next...

The GUESTS play cards. GEORGIANA and SHERIDAN are on one table, BESS, GREY and FOX on the other. The atmosphere is tense.

GEORGIANA can't help glancing from her table to GREY at his. GREY can't help glancing back.

SHERIDAN
Down six hundred. G. Yours?

GEORGIANA
(distracted)
Yes, of course. I will match you.

SHERIDAN
You'll need cards, of course.

GEORGIANA realizes SHERIDAN hasn't dealt yet.

GEORGIANA
I am too tired to play.
(Nodding to the players)
Gentlemen.

GEORGIANA gets up and leaves the room. Just outside BESS comes up to her. There is silence and suspicion from GEORGIANA. She tries to continue walking.

BESS
No one must know.

GEORGIANA stares at BESS. What...? And then she realizes.

GEORGIANA
You summoned Grey.

BESS
Good night, G.

GEORGIANA makes her way across the hall.

CUT TO:

115 OMITTED

115

115A OMITTED

115A

GREY is sitting by the fire. The door opens. GEORGIANA enters. GREY stands up, yet keeps his distance.

GREY
Your Grace...

Beat. They look at each other. GEORGIANA walks forward and kisses him. GREY kisses her back, but after a moment pulls away. Beat.

GREY (CONT'D)
(Firmly)
I was ready to give you
everything...how can I believe it
won't happen again?

GEORGIANA approaches again.

GEORGIANA
I give you my promise...

GREY looks into her eyes, caught between his head and his heart. GEORGIANA starts to undress him, confidently, seductively until he is naked.

GEORGIANA pushes GREY gently back onto the bed. Then she hitches up her skirts and straddles him, her dress enveloping the lower half of his body. Underneath, his hands reach inside to touch her.

They begin making love. It's as if it's the first time for both of them: real, intimate and convincing, an extraordinary release...

LATER:

GEORGIANA
I'm going to Bath.

DUKE
(Looks up)
But I can't get away for weeks.

GEORGIANA
(trying to seem natural)
I shall go without you.
(To Bess)
Bess, you stay and keep our
husband company, whilst I take
the cure.

The DUKE looks decidedly undecided. GEORGIANA looks to BESS for help. She's not sure it's a good idea but acquiesces.

BESS
Yes, William, why not? If G goes
now we can catch her up when
you're free.

GEORGIANA looks at BESS, thankful for the help. She tries to remain looking casual. The DUKE relents.

DUKE
Well, if you must.

CUT TO:

118 EXT. RENTED BATH HOUSE. EARLY MORNING - EST. 118
Birdsong

CUT TO:

119 INT. RENTED BATH HOUSE. BEDROOM - MORNING 119

It's morning. GREY and GEORGIANA are in bed surrounded by newspapers and cartoons. They are looking at cartoons and laughing at them.

GEORGIANA
Which one is your favourite? This one?

GREY
(seriously at first)
Well, in this one you are proud
and strong, which is very
good... In this one you are
fair and gentle... and in this
one you seem to have only one
eyebrow!

GEORGIANA laughs, trying to snatch the image out of his hands.

GEORGIANA
(giving him a playful nudge)
Oh, you politicians know nothing
of fashion.

They laugh and continue:

GREY
But wait, wait... if you were to
ask me which is my favourite...
(leaning in and taking her face
in his hands) it's this one - my
Duchess. The G no one else ever
gets to see.

They lock eyes, clearly in love, and kiss passionately.

CUT TO:

GREY (CONT'D)

Perhaps it would be better if I were married too, then we could be a triangle or a quadrangle, or... whatever angle could contain you and me and-- I should ask Lady Bess; she seems to have surveyed the geometry and bent it to her favour.

GEORGIANA gets out of bed and tries to comfort him.

GEORGIANA

Charles, we've had this time all for ourselves. Let's not taint it with thoughts of anything else... Anyway, whatever will become of us when you're made Prime Minister?

GREY laughs.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

When you are, you'll be very far from me then.

GREY

(Very intense)
Never.

GEORGIANA embraces him. GREY holds her tight.

CUT TO:

121A EXT. POLITICAL MEETING ROOMS

121A

Contented and happy Grey walks into the political meeting rooms.

CUT TO:

122 OMITTED 122

123 INT. RENTED BATH HOUSE. ROOMS - CONTINUOUS 123

GEORGIANA is standing in her bedroom, a made bed behind her. A MAID puts the finishing touch to her hair and clothes. GEORGIANA walks out into the ante room, heading for the foyer. The double doors open in front of her...

...to reveal the DUKE and LADY SPENCER waiting for her. They are in travelling clothes. GEORGIANA gasps.

DUKE

Thought we would surprise you. I think you once said there wasn't enough spontaneity in our marriage. Or words to that affect.

DUKE

The only good fortune is that it hasn't yet made it to the newspapers.

LADY SPENCER

My dear, Grey is unmarried. He has no rank and no wealth. He risks nothing with this affair. The hazard is all yours.

GEORGIANA

Grey loves me.

LADY SPENCER

So does your husband.

GEORGIANA stares at her mother in disbelief, then at the DUKE.

DUKE

Yes. I love you!

GEORGIANA

HOW?!

DUKE

In the way I understand love.

LADY SPENCER

Georgiana, this has gone much too far. It is beneath our dignity. All London is talking...

GEORGIANA

Then let them talk! Grey makes me a fallen woman, well and good, now William may divorce me and Bess becomes Duchess of Devonshire!

LADY SPENCER

That will never happen!

LADY SPENCER stares harshly at GEORGIANA. Then she makes for the door.

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)

I think I will leave you to it.

LADY SPENCER leaves the room. GEORGIANA looks apprehensively at the DUKE.

GEORGIANA

What follows now? Are you going to tear off my clothes and force yourself upon me again?

DUKE

Why on earth would I do that?

GEORGIANA looks at him in surprise.

DUKE (CONT'D)

I know that you've not thought much of either my intellect or my manners, but in fact I never do anything that serves no purpose.

GEORGIANA is hurt, and looks at the DUKE in silence. He is composed in a way she has never seen before.

DUKE (CONT'D)

I know precisely what you two have together.

GEORGIANA

We love each other.

DUKE

I do not doubt it. He is a dreamer like yourself. You both dream of another world that does not exist and never will. (Beat) As for reality, however, allow me to enlighten you: If you do not give him up at once, I will see to it that every home and cheque book in this country is closed to him. He will be welcome neither in the halls of government nor its back rooms of power. His dream of becoming prime minister, your mutual fantasy of a changed world, will be dead as ash.

The DUKE pauses before delivering the final blow.

DUKE (CONT'D)

And you will never see your children again.

GEORGIANA is open mouthed, stunned.

DUKE (CONT'D)

You are given to say "love is an act." Well, this is an act.

GEORGIANA turns and runs out of the room.

CUT TO:

GEORGIANA is close to the wall, trembling. LADY SPENCER enters and shuts the door behind her.

LADY SPENCER

What do you imagine you will have
if you stay with Grey?

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)

Most likely you'll end up alone -
a wife with no husband and a
mother with no children. At best
you'll become someone else's

GEORGIANA
No, I made that many years ago. I
trust you can let yourself out.

GEORGIANA leaves. The DUKE sends her an icy stare, then turns
to the SERVANT at the door.

DUKE
For God's sake, open the door, man!

The servant quickly opens the door. The DUKE exits. LADY
SPENCER follows from the ANTE ROOM. At the door she shares
one last sad look with GEORGIANA, then walks past.

CUT TO:

125A OMITTED

127	OMITTED	127
128	INT. RENTED BATH HOUSE. FOYER - THAT AFTERNOON	128

GEORGIANA runs into the room and hugs her children.

Minutes later: we are behind the DUKE as he walks slowly down a corridor. We can hear children's voices in the background. He reaches the end of the corridor and the scene is revealed: GEORGIANA sits in the middle of the room, surrounded by her children, playing a game together.

GEORGIANA hugs the girls. Closer. Tighter.

In the background, GEORGIANA notices the DUKE surveying the scene. GEORGIANA gestures to the NANNY to come over.

GEORGIANA

DUKE

That's one way of putting it.
Your mother called it "common
decency before personal
gratification", or some such
thing... the exact words escape
me...

GEORGIANA

How about 'imprisoned in my own
house'?

DUKE

No, that's not how she put it. I
would have remembered that.

GEORGIANA sends him a hateful look and walks out.

CUT TO:

134 OMITTED 134

134A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. CORRIDORS - CONTINUOUS 134A

GEORGIANA walks into the corridor. After a few moments she
sees BESS appear from the shadows.

BESS

(Whisper)
How did Charles take it?

GEORGIANA stops by her. She is businesslike.

GEORGIANA

I don't know. I just left. If I
had seen him again, I would have
stayed.

BESS

No letter, either?

GEORGIANA shakes her head.

BESS (CONT'D)

I know it's cruel, Georgiana, but
it's for the best.

GEORGIANA looks at BESS, then continues to walk off down
the corridor.

CUT TO:

135 OMITTED 135

135A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT - WEEKS LATER 135A

A VIOLINIST and HARPSICHOARDIST play a beautiful, slow piece of music from the corner.

CUT TO:

136 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ROOM. NIGHT 136

The music continues in the background as three silver plates covered by silver domes are carried by SERVANTS.

CUT TO:

137 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT 137

GEORGIANA, BESS and the DUKE are seated for dinner at their vast table. It's tense, silent and extremely formal as the THREE SERVANTS bring in the plates. In unison they step forward to take away the domes, revealing elaborately prepared POUSSIN - it's an unexpected comic moment.

They begin to eat. No one says a word. Suddenly we hear DOORS CRASH OPEN from far outside the room. There is the distant sound of a man's voice, raised and angry. GEORGIANA knows immediately that it is GREY. So too does the DUKE who shoots her a vicious look. GEORGIANA rises,

GEORGIANA
Your Grace, Bess. Will you excuse me.

CUT TO:

138 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL. NIGHT - MINUTES LATER 138

GEORGIANA enters to see GREY at the foot of the stairs, surrounded by FOOTMEN trying to stop him get further. GREY is wild. He yells at GEORGIANA, quite oblivious to the FOOTMEN.

GREY
Why haven't you responded to my letters?!

GEORGIANA tries to maintain calm and walks toward him.

GREY (CONT'D)

I have written a dozen times a day, and there is nothing from you! What has happened?! Do you love me no longer?!

She looks at the FOOTMEN, headed by BURLEIGH, the butler.

GEORGIANA

Thank you, Burleigh.

BURLEIGH bows, and though still remaining present, recedes into the background with the FOOTMEN. GREY comes closer. GEORGIANA steels herself...

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

My personal feelings remain unaltered...

GREY

Then we must be together again. I want to marry you. I want you to bear my children ... and I don't care if they are boys or girls!

...But GEORGIANA is barely holding it together.

GEORGIANA

I wish it could be like that.

GREY

It can. It will. Sorrows come however we try to avoid them. We must stay our course and not give in.

GEORGIANA

(Firmly)
No, Charles.

GREY steps forward to take her arm but GEORGIANA backs away. BURLEIGH makes as if to intervene, but holds back.

GREY

You must leave and be with me, a free woman! Now, let us leave now! It is still possible. Let us at least take a chance.

GEORGIANA

I cannot risk my children.

GREY stares at her with wide, angry, tortured eyes.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

This is a sacrifice I am forced
to make...but I have given you up
for them only. And in so doing I
have lost my heart and soul.

GREY looks at her, sad and weak, nothing left to argue.
GEORGIANA stands firm. She gestures to BURLEIGH.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
Burleigh, will you please escort
Mr. Grey to the door?

BURLEIGH comes forward and stands next to GREY.

GEORGIANA still looks at him. Her eyes glisten.

GREY
You promised me.

GEORGIANA
I know...

GREY, choking with pain, stares one more beat, then turns and walks away. BURLEIGH and FOOTMEN follow, like bouncers.

CUT TO:

139 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT - MINUTES LATER 139

GEORGIANA slowly sits again. She is distant, with no interest in the food in front of her. The DUKE looks up, chewing.

DUKE
What's the matter, don't like the
chicken? I find it really quite
decent.

The table is quiet. Not even BESS can muster a reply. GEORGIANA looks at him.

GEORGIANA
I'm with child.

CUT TO:

140 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - MORNING 140

Rain spits against the window. Wind blows in the trees outside. GEORGIANA is sitting in her bed, staring blankly before her. The DUKE and BESS enter.

DUKE
(to Bess)
Will you be so kind as to inform
the Duchess of my decision?

BESS looks deeply uncomfortable.

BESS
(appealingly)
Georgiana -

GEORGIANA does not respond, but keeps staring into the air.
BESS takes a deep breath.

BESS (CONT' D)

It will be like this: you will be taken to the country where you will give birth to the child, and the child will subsequently be trusted to the care of Charles Grey's family.

GEOF

141 EXT. COUNTRYSIDE. DAY 141

On a windy, end of summer day, TWO PLAIN COACHES travel across the flat and largely featureless landscape.

CUT TO:

142 OMITTED 142

143 EXT. SMALL HOUSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY 143

The house is simple and remote, the only building for miles

BESS
For Charlotte, for Harryo, for
little G, for Hart...

GEORGIANA nods her head.

CUT TO:

145 OMITTED

145

146 EXT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY - SOME TIME LATER 146

We hear the muted sounds of GEORGIANA screaming over shots of the house and the wildlife around it.

CUT TO:

147 OMITTED 147

148 INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. MORNING 148

A baby is sleeping in its cot.

BESS is sitting in the other corner of the room. A FOOTMAN appears at the door and nods to her. BESS looks apprehensive. She goes to GEORGIANA's bedside.

BESS
(Gently)
It's time.

GEORGIANA flinches - it's the moment she's been dreading. BESS comes closer and gestures toward the BABY.

BESS (CONT'D)
Would it help if I...

GEORGIANA
(Looking up)
No, Bess. I must do it.

GEORGIANA snips a piece of hair from her sleeping baby and puts it in a distinctive silver locket.

CUT TO:

149

EXT. CROSSROADS IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY

149

It is a barren and featureless landscape with one sro

GEORGIANA gently kisses the baby's head, whispering to her, smelling her hair, her skin, running her nose down her face and breathing her in for one last time. BESS finds this impossible to watch and turns away.

With immense difficulty GEORGIANA finally goes to hand her baby over. GENERAL GREY does not take it. He nods sharply to his WET NURSE who steps forward to take the BABY, although for a moment GEORGIANA simply can't let her go.

GENERAL GREY immediately turns to go back to the COACH. GEORGIANA calls after him.

GEORGIANA
General Grey...

GENERAL GREY stops and turns.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)
...her name is Eliza.

GENERAL GREY looks at GEORGIANA giving nothing away. He turns and goes back into his COACH, followed by the BUTLER and the WET NURSE and GEORGIANA'S BABY GIRL into theirs.

As the BABY GIRL is passed into the coach, GEORGIANA can hear her daughter begin to cry a little. GEORGIANA instinctively flinches, using all her strength to hold her back from running over to comfort her.

The driver cracks the whip and GEORGIANA watches as the DARK COACHES ride off, leaving her alone with the barren landscape behind. She slowly sinks down onto the wet and muddy ground. BESS comes forward and holds her.

CUT TO:

151 INT. BEDROOM. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE - DAWN 151

The cot is empty. Low winter sun cuts through the windows.

GEORGIANA sits alone in her bedroom, lost in thought and rolling a locket of Eliza's hair back and forth between her fingers. It feels as if she has been sat there all night.

BESS enters and comes close. It takes a moment for GEORGIANA to notice she's even there. BESS produces two linen FLANNELS. GEORGIANA looks quizzically at them.

BESS
(Gently)
For your milk.

GEORGIANA looks down - there are two wet patches on her breasts. BESS kneels next to GEORGIANA and holds tight onto GEORGIANA's almost lifeless body.

BESS (CONT'D)
The Duke has asked that we return
as soon as possible.

GEORGIANA nods but doesn't move.

CUT TO:

152 OMITTED 152

153 I/E. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. GARDEN. AFTERNOON - SPRING 153

A primitive sprinkler is operated by a GARDENER spreading water across the manicured green grass making a loud and distinctive sound. Other GARDENERS are on their hands and knees cutting the grass with scissors. Time has elapsed, perhaps a month, and it's spring now.

Inside, there are a series of shots of the empty, still house.

CUT TO:

153A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ROOM. AFTERNOON - SPRING 153A

GEORGIANA sits in a chair, distracted. She clutches the silver locket of Eliza's hair, the chain wrapped tight around her hand.

A MAID appears at the door. GEORGIANA's clutches the locket in her hand so it can't be seen.

MAID

Your Grace, I have Charlotte to see you.

GEORGIANA turns her head to the door. CHARLOTTE is standing with the MAID. She steps into the room.

CHARLOTTE

We are all in the garden, Mama. Will you come and join us?

GEORGIANA is unable to connect for a split second. CHARLOTTE remains looking at her. GEORGIANA comes to and is about to say yes but sees the DUKE approaching from behind.

GEORGIANA

In a moment.

CHARLOTTE gives a small smile and leaves.

DUKE

Hello, G.

GEORGIANA

Your Grace.

The DUKE fidgets and, unusually for him, looks warmly at G.

DUKE

I am not particularly adept at expressing myself when it comes to matters of a more personal nature, but I shall endeavour to try. [Beat] Over the years I have acted in ways that you have judged... harsh. Well I do not wish for you to undergo any further suffering. Indeed, I would like our life to return to a calm normality.

GEORGIANA

Thank you William.

The DUKE looks relieved. He smiles.

DUKE

Lady Melbourne has arranged a small gathering in honour of your recent return from holiday. Given some of the vague reports that have been circulating over this past year, I think it would be wise for us to go. A show of unity, so to speak.

Beat.

GEORGIANA

Who will be there?

DUKE

Everybody.

GEORGIANA recognises what this must mean.

GEORGIANA

As you wish.

The DUKE turns back to the window. We see what he sees: BESS is playing with all their children in the garden, the image distorted by the wavy glass of the window pane. It is a mirrored moment from his opening scene where he watched the young people dancing, his thoughts then a mystery...

The DUKE resumes his faraway look and says as if from nowhere,

DUKE

How wonderful to be that free.

GEORGIANA looks at him sympathetically, as if for the first time she finally understands this trapped and complex man.

CUT TO:

154 OMITTED

154

GEORGIANA

Mr Grey.

GREY

Your Grace. . .

A subtle hush descends on the gathering as the GUESTS around them look over with bated breath, sensing the whiff of scandal. The tension in the room is palpable.

GREY (CONT'D)
...who is much loved.

Beat as she takes a moment to digest this..

GREY (CONT'D)
One day you should come and see
her. In a little while. If you
would like...

Beat. They look at each other.

GEORGIANA
I would like that very much.

GEORGIANA curtsies with perfect etiquette and walks back into the party. GREY watches her go as she walks confidently off into the crowd to join the DUKE and BESS who are waiting for her.

CUT TO:

156	OMITTED	156
157	OMITTED	157

158 OMITTED 158

159A (FORMERLY SC. 156) INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL NIGHT 159A

It's still and silent in the house.

159B (FORMERLY PART OF SC. 157) INT. HALLWAY TO BEDROOMS. 159B

