





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. BURLEIGH cuts to the chase.

BURLEIGH

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, Burleigh.

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. BURLEIGH looks to the DUKE for confirmation, then decides to address his comment to no one in particular.

BURLEIGH

Well in that case...

BURLEIGH turns the document around toward the others for them to look at. The DUKE smiles at them, then turns and fastidiously removes a spot on the window pane.

DUKE

So be it, then.

CUT TO:

4

EXT. ALTHORP HOUSE - DAY

4

The men are running back from the tree. The race is

GEORGIANA looks up to see LADY SPENCER standing on the top of the stairs outside the house. GEORGIANA curtsies to GREY who bows in return before GEORGIANA half runs toward her.

As GEORGIANA goes, GREY hears a noise. He looks out to the side of the house and sees the DUKE's distinctive carriage racing away across a small bridge over a stream. A strange, uncomfortable sensation comes over him. He quickly looks back for GEORGIANA but she has now reached LADY SPENCER...

We are with GEORGIANA and LADY SPENCER by the house:

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.

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 Her Grace, the Duchess of Devonshire.

GEORGIANA is taken wholly by surprise.

GEORGIANA  
Is it true, Mama?

LADY SPENCER  
(Proudly)  
It is.

GEORGIANA  
But... the Duke of Devonshire ...  
He is the handsomest man.

LADY SPENCER  
I had hoped not to part with you until 18 at the soonest, but with such a fine match it would be selfish of me not to let you go.

GEORGIANA  
So he loves me?

LADY SPENCER  
Yes, of course.

GEORGIANA  
I have only met him 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.

LADY SPENCER turns and goes back inside. GEORGIANA looks back into the garden. All the young people are chatting and eating at the picnic. 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. The DUKE looks impatiently at the MINISTER, evidently annoyed that the ceremony is taking so long.

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.

CUT TO:

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

Still in her wedding dress, GEORGIANA sits alongside the DUKE in his CARRIAGE. The DUKE has his curtains closed around him to shield him from public view. There's an awkward silence. Finally,

DUKE

Here we are.

A bit further down this street the CARRIAGE nears a set of massive gates where a large group of THE GENERAL PUBLIC can be seen waiting and waving outside. The DUKE waves back, out of duty. GEORGIANA looks bemused.

GEORGIANA

What do they want?

DUKE

To see me. And my new wife, of course.

GEORGIANA

Oh.

DUKE

It's a damn bother, but you'll get used to it. Comes with the job, I'm afraid.

GEORGIANA, however, smiles and gives a little wave: she doesn't mind at all.

CUT TO:

10 I/E. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - DAY 10

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 foreboding sense of arriving in a prison. The FOOTMAN opens GEORGIANA's carriage door.

GEORGIANA steps out into this hugely intimidating space. Flags bearing the Duke's crest blow in the wind, making a tense and aggressive sound. She stops a moment to take it all in.

HEATON, the HEAD BUTLER steps forward.

HEATON  
Welcome, Your Grace.

HEATON then leads her toward rows of HOUSEHOLD SERVANTS who are formally lined up to greet her. They bow and curtsy as GEORGIANA walks past.

SERVANT 1  
Your Grace.

SERVANT 2  
Your Grace.

GEORGIANA looks up to find the DUKE has disappeared inside.

CUT TO:

10A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL. DAY 10A

GEORGIANA enters a massive marbled ENTRANCE HALL. The DUKE stands at the top of the staircase.

DUKE (O. S.)  
This way.

CUT TO:

11 INT. THE DUKE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT 11

GEORGIANA stands in front of the DUKE who is sitting on the bed, about to undress her. He awkwardly unfastens her skirt and lets it fall to the floor. She smiles at him, a bit nervous. She tries to caress him, and leans forward to kiss.

THE DUKE  
Erm, stay where you are, please...



GEORGIANA straightens herself up. The DUKE proceeds to take off her clothes.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

I take it this is quite new to you?

GEORGIANA

Yes...

THE DUKE

Well, 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 proceeds to remove the rest of her garments - with some difficulty.

THE DUKE (CONT'D)

For the life of me I don't understand why women's attire must be so damned complicated! (di pTvCBC! d pU! vCBC! di p! vple

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 you may have had a  
little too much education. You  
make boring 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, my darling. Marriage is not  
like languages or music or  
painting. It requires a longer  
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 him, G.  
He is merely intent on fulfilling  
his duty. As for talking - 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 husband.

LADY SPENCER sighs and looks at her spirited daughter.



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)

MACARONI  
(Ingratiatingly)  
I myself found it very rousing...

FOX ignores him. He knows who he wants to talk to.

FOX  
In which particular section of  
the speech did the message elude  
your Grace?

GEORGIANA  
Well, I have great sympathy with  
your sentiments in general, but  
fail fully to comprehend how far we  
- the Whig party, that is - are  
fully committed to the concept of  
freedom.

FOX  
We would like to see the vote  
extended...

GEORGIANA  
To all men...?

FOX  
Heavens no. But certainly to more  
men. Freedom, in moderation.

GEORGIANA  
"Freedom in moderation"?

FOX  
(Pleased with himself)  
Precisely.

GEORGIANA nods, then smiles faintly, but mischievously.

GEORGIANA  
I am sure you are full of the  
best intentions, Mr. Fox, but I  
dare say I would not spend my  
vote - assuming I had it - on so  
vague a ?Bdi pU! vCj ! qdnp! ! vCj ! qdnp! vCM! ?(dgpU! vCj ! qd pU?U! v



DUKE

I have no problem with politics,  
it's the rhetoric I can't stand.

The DUKE turns back and continues down the corridor.

GEORGIANA

So... shall I come with you?

DUKE

Not at all, why ever should you?

The DUKE turns and leaves. GEORGIANA looks at him, bemused.

CUT TO:

17

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - BALLROOM - NIGHT

17

The conversation has stopped, everyone fearful their benefactor is aggrieved for some reason. The whole table of men watch as GEORGIANA sits back down, looking to her for reassurance. She addresses the room.

GEORGIANA

The Duke is fine. He simply wants  
to rest a while.

People nod and smile, the tension relieved. Conversations resume. FOX looks at her.

FOX

Was it the length of the speech  
that got the better of the Duke?

GEORGIANA

(Wry, flirtatious)

Certainly not. He enjoyed it  
immensely and expressed a hope that  
next time it would be even longer.

Fox sends her a look. She smiles back at him, reaches out for a drink and takes a long swig. The MACARONI leans over.

MACARONI

The dress you are wearing is made  
of a fascinating fabric, Duchess.

GEORGIANA

(Quick off the mark)

Thank you. Canton Crepe, a bit  
heavier than crepe de chine.  
They've developed an entirely new  
dyeing technique, which produces  
the most incredible nuances...

CUT TO:





DUKE (CONT' D)

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

GEORGIANA

Thank you. Yes it is.

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 HEATON emerges to whisper something into the ear of the DUKE. He understands the message and nods.

THE DUKE

Send her in...

HEATON exits. GEORGIANA looks at him.

GEORGIANA

Are we having company?

The DUKE chews his food and swallows before he replies.

THE DUKE

Yes, we are. 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.

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 pauses outside the room in which the nanny is putting CHARLOTTE to bed for the night. She hears sobbing coming from inside.

24A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - CHILDREN'S ROOM - EARLY EVENING 24A

GEORGIANA pushes open the door a little to catch a look at the little girl, not knowing if she dares enter. The NANNY catches sight of her and makes a curtsy.

NANNY

Your Grace, I didn't see you.

GEORGIANA

Would you leave us, please.

The NANNY looks nervously at GEORGIANA, not knowing whether she ought to leave.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

...leave us, please...

The NANNY scurries out of the room. GEORGIANA sits down on CHARLOTTE's bed. CHARLOTTE is hiding her face, still sobbing. She reaches for her doll, as if it was threatened by GEORGIANA's presence and she means to rescue it.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

(Softly)

I am Georgiana. What's your name?

CHARLOTTE makes no reply. GEORGIANA smiles at her. She can see that she is trembling and gently puts her hand on her shoulder to calm her.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Shh, there now, you are safe here  
...so what do you call your doll?

No answer.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Surely, it must have a name. Every  
doll must have a name.

CHARLOTTE stares at her in silence.

GEORGIANA (CONT' D)

Let us make a deal, then. Tonight you decide on a name for your doll. You may choose between any in the whole wide world, and then, in the morning, you tell me which one you've picked.

Charlotte nods slowly. GEORGIANA rises and turns to leave.

CHARLOTTE (O.S.)

Alice.

GEORGIANA turns back to Charlotte and smiles.

GEORGIANA

Good night then Alice. And good night Charlotte.

CUT TO:

25 EXT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. COURTYARD - WINTER EVENING 25

It's snowing outside and GUESTS arrive in fur coats.

CUT TO:

25A INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL - WINTER EVENING 25A

MUSICIANS are playing in the foyer.

GEORGIANA - dressed amazingly - receives people with smiles, and poses as a newspaper sketcher draws her from the corner of the hall. Her belly is gigantic - she is in the very last stage of pregnancy. FOX arrives with the flushed and flashy RICHARD SHERIDAN. He looks at her.

SHERIDAN

An inch more, and I do believe your Grace will explode.

FOX

Sheridan certainly knows how to pay a compliment.

GEORGIANA smiles.

GEORGIANA

There are still a few more weeks to wait.

FOX

A huge belly has never been more becoming on anyone.

SHERIDAN

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

GEORGIANA smiles. SHERIDAN leans against FOX in affected confidentiality.

SHERIDAN (CONT'D)

If your belly were on a woman, we'd all know what to think.

FOX leans against SHERIDAN in imitation of his act.

FOX

My dear Sheridan, less than an hour ago, my belly was on a woman - so now what do you think?

GEORGIANA delights in the risky repartee.

GEORGIANA

That will teach you to insult Mr Fox before the gaming has begun.

CUT TO:

26

INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - RED ROOM - LATER

26

The ballroom has been converted into a gaming area with a series of round card tables and is full of GAMBLERS. It has a decadent, opulent and smoky atmosphere.

The DUKE is at one table while GEORGIANA sits at another with SHERIDAN to one side and FOX to the other. The conversation runs fast and easy.

DEALER

Her Grace wins again.

GEORGIANA pulls in her chips.

DEALER (CONT'D)

Another wager?

SHERIDAN

I'm out. My funds have run dry and I've no one left to borrow from.

FOX

Maybe it would be different if people thought you had the slightest intention of paying them back?

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.

28 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ROOM - DAY

28

LADY SPENCER steps into the room, still dressed in her cape. A SERVANT follows her and receives her cape. The DUKE is with his dogs, reading a newspaper and very depressed.

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 puts his head in hands. He is deeply troubled. The dogs sense their master's mood and mill around him.

CUT TO:

29 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - ROOM - DAY

29

LADY SPENCER enters the room in which GEORGIANA lies exhausted, the curtains mostly closed. She musters a smile as she approaches her.

LADY SPENCER

Darling, how are you?



GEORGIANA

Fine.

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 well and healthy?

GEORGIANA nods and smiles.

GEORGIANA

She is perfect.

LADY SPENCER smiles and looks at the girl.

LADY SPENCER

She looks just like her mother...

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.

LADY SPENCER

It's been a long night for him, too, my dear. Many eyes are upon him. (Looks at the baby) Why, she's the loveliest...

GEORGIANA looks at the baby with LADY SPENCER, seeming to think that this makes it all worth while. The baby starts to wake up, hungry and crying.

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)

Nurse...

Lady Spencer gestures to the WET NURSE to come forward which she does, unbuttoning her shirt to feed.

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.

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. She has no other concern in the world. LADY SPENCER, however, looks out of the window, worried.

CUT TO:



39	OMITTED	39
40	OMITTED	40
41	INT. BATH ASSEMBLY ROOMS - DAY	41

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

SIR 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?

SIR 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.

SIR 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 at the crowd, the total centre of attention. The DUKE looks uncomfortable next to her.

GEORGIANA

We come away to Bath to get away from London and all of London has come away to Bath.

EVERYONE laughs. The DUKE forces a smile.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

I always appreciate Sir James' introductions. He has a jeweller's wit; whenever he turns a phrase, one finds oneself  
at so

t  
sR



All eyes are upon her: COURT REPORTERS in the corner try to sketch it; men look on from the sides with barely disguised sexual interest; women look at her dress, the feather, and then their husbands' reactions.

The DUKE, however, stands at the side, pretending only to be half-watching. GEORGIANA is spurred on by his indifference, and as the dancing progresses, she begins to show off and flirt in inverse proportion to it.

GEORGIANA then loses herself in the dancing until... She glances up to see the DUKE talking to another prey - a beautiful young woman in a dark dress, BESS FOSTER.

GEORGIANA now sees BESS evidently rejecting the ducal overtures and leaving the room. Rejection is a new experience for the DUKE, and he is appropriately taken aback, as is GEORGIANA. The DUKE's eyes stay on BESS as she leaves into the next room. GEORGIANA stops dancing.

GEORGIANA  
(To her partner)  
Excuse me...

GEORGIANA turns and walks away from the DANCERS.

CUT TO:

43	OMITTED	43
44	INT. BATH ASSEMBLY ROOMS. ANNEX. DAY - LATER	44

BESS is helping herself to some food from the sideboard. She is about to take a bite of a tart when she sees GEORGIANA, staring.

GEORGIANA  
I don't believe we have been  
formally introduced?

BESS  
I haven't, at any rate. Lady  
Elizabeth Foster. Bess.

They greet each other.

GEORGIANA  
I saw you in the ballroom,  
talking with my husband.

GEORGIANA looks at BESS in a levelled way. BESS returns the look.

BESS  
Yes, he wished to dance.

GEORGIANA

That is not usually considered  
his forte. And you declined?

BESS

She 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 tonight.

BESS

I apologize. 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, nibbling at a chicken drumstick. He seems to dislike the taste, looks at the drumstick and throws it.

DUKE

Well... Home, I think. Georgiana.

He turns to leave, throwing a puzzled look at the drumstick on the floor. 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 - DUSK - LATER

45

The DUKE's carriage trundles down the Bath street.

CUT TO:



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

45A

The DUKE sits on the seat. GEORGIANA, however, has to sit on the floor to make room for the ostrich feather that's still on top of her head.

They are not looking at each other and the strain of their relationship shows on them both. We remain on GEORGIANA's face as the bright sounds of young children's voices fade up until we...

CUT TO:

46 OMITTED

46

47 EXT. BATH PARK - DAY

47

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

BESS smiles.

BESS  
She is very dark, your eldest.

GEORGIANA  
Yes. (Makes a decision) Her mother  
was dark. 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.  
There I go again, talking nonsense.

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 my life.

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

CUT TO:

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. Along  
with all the women who cannot  
give birth...

GEORGIANA gestures toward a group of WOMEN, also sipping  
from teacups.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)  
...even to a girl.

GEORGIANA takes a sip from her cup, grimaces and puts it  
down. BESS laughs and they walk on.

CUT TO:

49A INT. BATH. PRIVATE BATHS. DAY - LATER

49A

GEORGIANA and BESS are in a private area of the baths. They  
both undress. GEORGIANA is a little self-conscious taking  
her clothes off, but she can't help looking at BESS who is  
much more open.

Suddenly GEORGIANA sees a RED MARK on BESS'S NECK.  
GEORGIANA is shocked, and her hand instinctively reaches  
out to touch her.

GEORGIANA  
What's that?

BESS looks evenly at Georgiana, as if trying to decide to  
tell her something.

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  
 But ... how can that happen? What do you propose to do?

BESS  
 Really, I'm at my wits' end. The law supports Mr. Foster, I'm afraid.

GEORGIANA is lost in the horror of BESS's situation. A SERVANT pours more HOT WATER into the bath. Steam rises.

GEORGIANA  
 And in the meantime, where shall you stay?

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

GEORGIANA  
 Then you must come and stay with us. I will ask the Duke if he will allow it.

CUT TO:

50	OMITTED	50
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 (CONT'D)  
(Ironically again)  
Unfortunately the State Rooms are  
reserved solely for the King and  
Queen... So this will have to do.

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)

IN THEIR BOX the DUKE and GEORGIANA look on, stiff and very separate. BESS sits behind them. There's a very tense air:

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

57 INT. DRURY LANE THEATRE - NIGHT - LATER

57

SHERIDAN presents GEORGIANA to a lined-up CAST, who all curtsy and bow to her.

GEORGIANA  
Were we fair on the Duke? We didn't go too far?

SHERIDAN  
It could have been worse.  
(Whispers to her) My original title was "The Bad Marriage."

GEORGIANA  
Yes, that does make 'The School for Scandal' sound like an exercise in subtlety.

SHERIDAN smiles.

A SERVANT enters with a tray of drinks. Everybody helps themselves to one. SHERIDAN produces a bottle of opium.

SHERIDAN  
Opium?

GEORGIANA  
Just a drop...

SHERIDAN pours opium in their drinks. A few of the actors and actresses have a drop too.

CUT TO:

BESS standing near the WINGS.

She watches GEORGIANA surrounded by admirers, laughing, charming them all. Then she looks at the DUKE, who now sits very close to the young GIRL. GREY comes up to her with a drink. BESS takes it.

GREY  
Infantile atmosphere, isn't it?

BESS  
Well, it's ... certainly not what I'm used to.

GREY  
It's quite a feat to get through all the conversations and still remain sober.

GREY raises his glass and smiles at her. BESS raises hers.



GREY (CONT' D)

What does Her Grace make of it all?

BESS

In truth I think Her Grace may be tiring of Society. Her real passion lies in politics.

BESS gives GREY a cheeky look to make sure the innuendo is not lost on him.

GREY

(Very interested)

Really...

They both observe GEORGIANA talking animatedly on the stage, a crowd around her and loving the attention. Then they spot the DUKE, who has cornered his prey against a wall. GREY cannot believe what he is seeing.

GREY (CONT' D)

Is it always like this?

BESS

Well, as they say, the Duke of Devonshire must be the only man in England not in love with his wife.

GREY takes this in as he watches the DUKE and GEORGIANA.

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.

GEORGIANA looks at her, thinks. BESS smiles.

BESS  
Can't you tell by the way he looks  
at you? He wants to touch 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. BESS begins to kiss it.

GEORGIANA  
Bess, stop.

BESS  
(Firmly)  
... close your eyes... kissing  
your back...

GEORGIANA relents and closes her eyes. BESS continues to kiss her back. Suddenly GEORGIANA goes silent, a look of real surprise on her face: she is experiencing sensations she never knew even existed.

Bess continues, soft but in charge, as they both allow themselves to become lost in the erotically charged moment:

GEORGIANA lets out little gasps of pleasure...

BESS pushes it further...

Her hands explore under GEORGIANA'S nightclothes...

Over her breasts...

The tops of her legs...

GEORGIANA gasps again, a realisation that parts of her body could give such pleasure...

BESS tugs GEORGIANA'S hair back a little...

Her hands reach further...

GEORGIANA closes her eyes...

BESS (CONT'D)  
(Whispers)  
There... see...

BESS stops what she's doing. Beat. They both breathe heavily, the sexual tension and arousal hanging heavy in the air. They are a little embarrassed, scared even of what might happen if they carried on, and for a moment it seems that is what they might well do...

But BESS gets up and walks to the window as GEORGIANA readjusts her clothes. They regain composure and try to carry on as if nothing has really happened.

BESS (CONT'D)  
In the play this evening, there was a scene in which Lady Teazle and Mr. Surface discuss their affair. They acknowledge that once a lady of quality has provided her husband with a son then she may take a lover.

GEORGIANA takes it in.

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 harp - 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. Massive amounts of food are laid out on  
trestle tables with white table cloths.

The singing and harp continue, and we find that AN OPERA  
singer - with GEORGIANA on harp - perform beautifully,  
perfectly, to a grand outdoor picnic.

CLOSE ON GEORGIANA as she plays: eyes closed, passionate.

We see the DUKE and BESS standing together with FOX and GREY

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 daughter's letters have become so short of late that finally they do not exist at all.

GEORGIANA  
I do apologise Mama. It is merely a reflection of my current state of happiness...

LADY SPENCER  
(Cutting across)  
I only know what she is up to by reading the Morning Post.

GEORGIANA is stung by this. The DUKE wanders up behind, surveying the scene.

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)  
And how long do you intend to stay on Lady Elizabeth?

BESS  
Please, 'Bess'. I don't know. I'm sure I've worn out my welcome already.

GEORGIANA  
Nonsense.

DUKE  
Lady Elizabeth is free to stay with us for as long as she likes.

LADY SPENCER is left open-mouthed, a little alarmed at how close they all seem. FOX and some WHIGS come forward. GEORGIANA turns from her mother and smiles broadly.

GEORGIANA  
Who let these radicals through the gates of Chatsworth?

FOX  
No one lets us in anywhere!  
That's why we're radicals!

CUT TO:

62 EXT. FORMAL GARDENS. DAY - LATER

62

The DUKE leads a SHOOTING PARTY of men with rifles at the bottom of the hill. Ahead of them GAMEKEEPERS walk through the trees, banging them with sticks.

GREY, encouraged by her double meaning, continues.

GREY  
You know, I despise the fact that  
so few men have so much power - and  
that they mismanage it so  
appallingly.

GEORGIANA smiles at him.

GEORGIANA  
So you agree with the French?

He returns her smile.

GREY  
Yes, in so far as I believe in  
reform... That a man ought not to  
be governed by laws in the  
framing of which he had no voice.

GEORGIANA looks impressed. She realizes how close they're standing, and in full view of the PEOPLE. She moves away a few feet.

GEORGIANA  
I must attend to my duties.

GEORGIANA starts to walk off in the direction of more TENANTS. GREY watches her go, disappointed. He starts toward FOX and SHERIDAN.

CUT TO:

63

EXT. CHATSWORTH. FORMAL GARDENS. DAY - LATER

63

It is toward the end of the day. The sun is casting long shadows on the lawn as the picnic is being packed up.

GEORGIANA sits against a tree, sipping a cordial, all the while watching GREY in conversation with some men. BESS approaches GEORGIANA.

BESS  
Whatever is the matter with you?  
Your behaviour is so out of the  
ordinary.

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 three months!

GEORGIANA

Bess is my friend! She is the very best of women.

LADY SPENCER

She seems many things, but I would be hard pushed to say she were that.

GEORGIANA

It may pain you to recognise it Mama, but a great change has come over my life and its name is Lady Elizabeth Foster...about whom it can be truly said I have at long last found my other self.



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:

INT. CHATSWORTH. SITTING ROOM - A LITTLE LATER

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

GREY (CONT' D)  
Will we merely follow in the  
footsteps of those that came before  
us? Master the art of compromise?  
Of killing a good bill in a bad  
committee? 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  
the skies! This we vow!

APPLAUSE. CHEERS. GEORGIANA gazes at GREY. GREY looks at  
her, flushed and excited. She blushes like mad.

CUT TO:

67 I/E. COVENT GARDEN HUSTINGS. BACKSTAGE - A LITTLE LATER 67

GREY stands alone. GEORGIANA approaches.

GREY  
How did I do?

GEORGIANA  
(Trying to hide her  
feelings)  
I think it was not an  
embarrassment.

GREY's face crumbles in disappointment. GEORGIANA grins.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)  
It was a marvel.

GREY smiles. A big open, boyish smile of relief.

GREY  
But did you agree with what I said?

GEORGIANA  
Every word.

GREY gains self-confidence. He approaches GEORGIANA.

GREY  
I was jittery. Your presence  
trebled the numbers at least.

GREY is now very close indeed. GEORGIANA feels the effect of it. She becomes short of breath. GREY speaks softly.

GREY (CONT'D)  
I am jittery even now...

GEORGIANA knows that she ought to keep a distance, but remains where she is.

GEORGIANA  
So am I.

There is tension in the air. A POLITICIAN walks past them. They both acknowledge him as he goes. Then GEORGIANA stares at GREY, and moves a little closer.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)  
Do you think of me when we are  
not together?

GREY  
(surprised)  
You ought to know I do... of you  
more than anything else.

GEORGIANA  
You hesitated before replying ...

GREY  
I am unused to being asked so  
directly, and by you of all  
people.

GREY walks close. He very gently puts his hand on hers. She looks down at his hand, then up at him, blushing a little.

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. t

76

INT. THE DUKE'S BEDROOM - DAWN - HOURS LATER

76

THE DOOR opens and the DUKE enters, stealthily. The sun is just pouring GRAY LIGHT into the room. He closes the door very softly and then turns to see...

GEORGIANA sitting on his bed. She looks ashen.

CUT TO:

77

THE SAME. AN HOUR LATER.

77

GEORGIANA paces. The DUKE sits on the bed, caught. It is difficult to see if he is actually ashamed, but he is listening patiently to GEORGIANA.

GEORGIANA

Of all the women in England, you had to throw yourself upon her. I have not objected once to any of your affairs, I have accepted whatever arrangement you have proposed, I have raised Charlotte as my own daughter, but this... I have one single thing of my own... why couldn't you

CUT IN.

d7pzCv! qq(Md7p(! ! v)UU] T9NzBC! vU?(kzMBkTdN[dGpU! vCBCj dEp! vC(?)M)kzUMkTdN[dwpUIEi

GEORGIANA (O. S. /CONT' D)

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  
Georgi ana--!

GEORGIANA  
You have taken yoursel f from me!

BESS  
Pl ease --!

GEORGIANA  
You don' t love me!

BESS  
I do love you, Georgi ana. 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 di d.

BESS is stung. Her eyes fill with tears.

BESS  
...I do love you. But ...

GEORGIANA  
Leave. Get out of thi s house!

BESS remains standing, reaches out for GEORGIANA.

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

BESS leaves the room. GEORGIANA sinks slowly to the floor, weepi ng, sobbi ng.

CUT TO:

GEORGIANA sits, like a little girl, back at home and





84 EXT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. COURTYARD - DAY 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 - DAY 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 - DAY 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.

GEORGIANA

There are limits to the sacrifices one makes to see one's children.

BESS

No, there aren't. No limits whatsoever.

GEORGIANA takes in what she just said, before letting animosity get the better of her once again and turning away.

BESS (CONT'D)

Give me a chance to show you that you can trust me... Please... Please.

GEORGIANA

Get out of here. We have no more to say to each other.

BESS leaves, closing the door silently behind her. GEORGIANA punches walls and cupboards, throwing things around the room.

CUT TO:

88 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM - MORNING 88

GEORGIANA is asleep in her bed. She is awakened by the sound of a carriage outside. She goes to the window.

CUT TO:

88A EXT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. COURTYARD - MORNING 88A

The DUKE'S CARRIAGE pulls up. AUGUSTUS, JOHN, and HARRY emerge from the carriage.

BESS shrieks with joy and leaps out of the house. She runs

89 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. RED ROOM - DAY

89

GEORGIANA comes downstairs. Unseen, she looks into the room and watches the DUKE getting AUGUSTUS a hunting rifle from the wall. The DUKE appears surprisingly keen, gentle even. He clearly relates to boys. To one side BESS holds a sleeping HARRY.

GEORGIANA stares on in silence, understanding the DUKE and BESS in a way she has never done before. They look like a quiet, functional family unit.

GEORGIANA quietly comes closer. The DUKE is now showing AUGUSTUS how to use the rifle.

DUKE  
...hold it like that, Augustus, it  
won't come back at you.

AUGUSTUS  
Yes, I see.

DUKE  
Good. Your father doesn't hunt, I  
take it.

AUGUSTUS  
No.

DUKE  
Oh dear. Well, we can soon make up  
for that.

AUGUSTUS smiles, as does BESS. The DUKE looks up, and seeing her approval does a rare thing: he smiles too. BESS gets up and brings the DUKE a drink.

BESS  
(Whispered gently)  
Thank you.

The DUKE strokes her hand. GEORGIANA moves away and leaves.

CUT TO:

90 EXT. LONDON PLEASURE GARDENS - DAY

90

It's a grey and drizzly day. The gardens are largely empty. GREY'S carriage is parked by the roadside. COACHMEN wait beside it, informally leaning on the vehicle. A little further down the road, GEORGIANA'S carriage pulls up.

In wide shot GEORGIANA, black cape with hood up, makes her way across the gardens.

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  
Would you permit me an  
observation?

GEORGIANA  
Of course.

GREY  
I think you do it so that people  
will love you.

GEORGIANA  
(Looks deeply at him)  
What would make you think that?

GREY  
From what I have seen. With your  
husband, your friends - especially  
Lady Bess. Even the public.

GEORGIANA  
(Looks away)  
I have never thought of it that  
way. You make me sound pitiable.

GEORGIANA turns and walks away, upset. GREY realizes he has  
gone too far. He chases up with her.

GREY  
I've gone beyond my brief. I  
apologize. Please believe it was  
only for your sake I spoke.

GEORGIANA looks at him, and then carries on walking slowly,  
thinking deeply. Grey moves closer to her again.

GREY (CONT'D)  
Please tell me what is wrong.

She turns and looks at him intensely. The fountains in the  
pleasure garden dance in the background.

GEORGIANA  
I fear I have met some people too  
late in life and some too early.

They stare at each other a moment. The wind blows gently in  
the leaves of the trees above them.

GREY  
No, you haven't.

GREY (CONT' D)

BESS  
... As I do you.

GEORGIANA nods, still not giving anything away.

GEORGIANA  
You intend to stay here?

BESS  
... William asked that I do.

GEORGIANA nods.

GEORGIANA  
And you couldn't find it in your  
powers to refuse him.

BESS  
... No.

BESS and the DUKE remain quiet. Beat.

GEORGIANA  
Then let us make a deal.

DUKE  
A deal?

Beat. The DUKE and BESS exchange glances.

GEORGIANA  
Yes. I give you my blessing if you  
will accept my feelings for Charles  
Grey.

BESS blinks, taken aback. GEORGIANA is nervous. She smiles,  
waiting for The DUKE's reaction.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)  
I wasn't sure at first, I thought  
perhaps it was a dalliance or ...  
But it isn't. He can make me  
happy.

BESS tries to manage a smile. She darts a look at the DUKE,  
who now stands. Suddenly cutlery and crystal jangle. BESS  
and GEORGIANA start.

DUKE  
(seething with fury)



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

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 slaps her repeatedly until she no longer resists, then drags her to bed.

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 will  
 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 tonight.

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.

GEORGI ANA

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

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  
 (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.)  
 The bleeding is stopped.

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?



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 are sounds of distant bells far off in the distance. A BOY runs into the bell tower and rings the bell as hard as he can...

In another church in another part of the county, another BOY hears the sound and rings his own the church's bells...

BURLEIGH

Your Grace. As per the terms of His Grace's inheritance, this is for you. To spend as you wish.

BURLEIGH hands her a cheque. GEORGIANA looks at the DUKE with disdain.

GEORGIANA

(very sad and dry)  
Success at last.

The DUKE looks away, ashamed. GEORGIANA turns to the door.

DUKE (O.S.)

I too abhor this whole thing.

GEORGIANA turns back. The DUKE is now standing.

DUKE (CONT'D)

Yet remove it - separate our estates, sell off the land - and the aristocracy simply ceases to be; and with it the Whig party. England will be ruled by absolute monarchy - or absolute anarchy. Either way it won't just be our heads on the block, but our children's too. I don't wish to see that happen. Do you?

GEORGIANA looks at him, then turns and leaves.

CUT TO:

110 EXT. CHATSWORTH GARDENS - DAY

110

The BABY BOY lies in a moving pram. GEORGIANA walks with the children. She holds CHARLOTTE by the hand, while LITTLE G. and HARRYO look into a pram pushed by a NANNY.

LITTLE G

He's so small.

HARRYO

You've been that small yourself.

LITTLE G

Not that small. Have I, Mama?

GEORGIANA

You have, darling. You've all been that small once.

HARRYO

See, I told you.

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  
What about me, Mama?

GEORGIANA  
You never cried, darling. You were always so brave.

They have reached the cascade by the side of the house. The children instinctively run in and start playing in the water.

GEORGIANA turns to look down the hill. She should be happy. She isn't. Then she seems to see someone. HER POV -- A MAN coming across the GREEN. As he gets closer she realises who it is: GREY.

A LITTLE LATER:

GEORGIANA waits for GREY. He takes off his hat and bows. It's awkward, stiff.

GREY  
Your Grace.

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  
William Hartington. We call  
him... Hart.

GREY  
You and the Duke must be very  
pleased.

GEORGIANA  
We are. In fact 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. She opens her mouth to speak, but  
at this point, FOX and SHERIDAN arrive on horseback too.

SHERIDAN  
(sneers)  
Well, well, the prodigal son  
returns.

FOX  
(embraces GREY)  
My dear fellow!

CUT TO:

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

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.

CUT TO:

115 INT. CHATSWORTH. GEORGIANA'S BEDROOM. NIGHT - LATER 115

Silence. GEORGIANA's door opens and she comes out of her room, holding a candle.

CUT TO:

115A INT. CHATSWORTH. PAINTED HALL. NIGHT - MOMENTS LATER 115A

GEORGIANA makes her way carefully down the staircase. When she reaches the bottom she finds BESS standing in the shadows.

GEORGIANA  
(starts, gasps)  
Oh!

BESS  
Shhh! (whispers) Discretion, this  
time.

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

GEORGIANA  
You summoned Grey.

BESS  
(nods)  
William must not know. Honesty is  
not the virtue you will need.

BESS goes off. GEORGIANA watches her go, shocked. When BESS  
is gone, GEORGIANA makes her way across the hall.

CUT TO:

116 INT. CHATSWORTH. GREY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT - LATER 116

GEORGIANA walks down the hall to GREY'S DOORWAY. She opens  
the door. He is in his BED. They stare at each other over  
the flickering candlelight. He comes toward her, takes her  
hand and leads her into the room, shutting the door behind  
them.

LATER:

GEORGIANA and GREY are passionately making love in his bed.  
It's as if it's the first time for both of them. The sex is  
real, intimate and convincing, an extraordinary release...

LATER:

The window is open and wind blows gently in. Night birds  
call in the background. GEORGIANA and GREY lie in each  
other's arms. They kiss, long and tender. GREY pulls away.

GREY  
(Gently)  
You should return to your room.

GEORGIANA  
No I should not.

They begin to make love again...

CUT TO:

117 INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. DINING ROOM - DAY 117

A few days later. GEORGIANA, BESS, and the DUKE eat.

GEORGIANA  
I'm going to Bath.

DUKE  
(looks up)

GREY (CONT'D)

Perhaps it would be better if I  
were married too, then we could be  
a triangle or a foursome, or...  
whatever angle could contain you  
and me and-- I should ask Lady



GREY  
Only for a few hours, hopefully.  
I am beginning to fear that  
politics is divided into those  
who want to fix things and those  
that merely want to talk about  
fixing things.

Grey kisses her hand. GEORGIANA smiles blissfully.

GREY (CONT' D)  
I wish we had this time just for  
ourselves.

GEORGIANA  
Whatever will become of us when  
you're made Prime Minister?

GREY laughs, delighted.

GEORGIANA (CONT' D)  
When you are, you'll be very far  
from me.

GREY  
(Takes her hand, very  
intense)  
Never. We'll be together. Always.

GREY smiles. GEORGIANA leans across and kisses him.

GREY (CONT' D)  
Now pass me a towel.

CUT TO:

GEORGIANA  
Mama, what are you doing here?

LADY SPENCER sends her a severe look.

DUKE  
So. Have you seen many of our  
circle down here?

GEORGIANA  
Some. The Cokes. And Haverford. And  
Lord Wicklow.

DUKE  
Bunch of politicians, too, aren't  
there? Meetings and such.

GEORGIANA  
I believe.

DUKE  
Isn't... isn't Grey here?

A beat as GEORGIANA's heart stops.

DUKE (CONT'D)  
By which I mean Mr Charles Grey.  
Rumour has it that he is.

GEORGIANA jumps to the heart of the issue.

GEORGIANA  
I won't give him up.

LADY SPENCER  
Georgiana!

GEORGIANA  
Everyone has a lover. Bess is the  
lover of my husband!

DUKE  
That situation was agreed upon.

GEORGIANA  
Yes, I held myself in so little  
esteem that I acquiesced to make  
you happy!

DUKE  
If you had exercised some



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 neither my intellect nor 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

124

INT. RENTED BATH HOUSE. ANTE ROOM - CONTINUOUS

124

GEORGIANA is close to the wall, trembling. LADY SPENCER

LADY SPENCER (CONT'D)  
Most likely you'll end up alone -

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.

CUT TO:

125A EXT. BATH. POLITICAL MEETING ROOMS - DAY 125A  
GEORGIANA's carriage is parked outside.

CUT TO:

126 INT. BATH. ANTE ROOM. POLITICAL MEETING ROOMS - DAY 126  
GEORGIANA and GREY are discussing what has happened. She looks worried and is pacing up and down. In the background are muted sounds of POLITICIANS debating next door.

GEORGIANA  
He will come down on us with  
everything in his power, Charles.

GREY  
Yes... (beat) Does that frighten  
you?

GEORGIANA  
I would be foolish not to be  
frightened.

GREY  
We would be foolish to let future  
fears stand in our way.

Georgiana takes heart in Grey's determination.

GREY (CONT'D)  
Sorrows will come however we try to  
avoid them. And when they come, we  
must stay our course and not give  
in.

Georgiana is relieved at his words, but holds her course as the voice of prudence.

GEORGIANA  
He will be without mercy.

GREY  
Then so will we.

GREY kisses her gently.

GREY (CONT' D)  
I shall be back soon.

GEORGIANA looks at him as he leaves. GREY turns in the doorway and smiles. She smiles back at him.

CUT TO:

127      OMITTED      127

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

GEORGIANA enters the room, strong and confident. A SERVANT takes her cape and hat then leaves. GEORGIANA is alone. She is aware of the package of CHILDREN'S LETTERS on the side table where the DUKE left it.

GEORGIANA turns away from it but after a moment turns back. She takes a deep breath and rips it open. There are LETTERS in spidery children's handwriting, colourful drawings. It hits her hard. She fingers trace over the drawings, the messages, the kisses at the bottom...

She is suddenly faced with the reality of the choice she is about to make. It's heart breaking but she knows she can't be without her children.

CUT TO:

129      OMITTED      129

130      OMITTED      130

131      OMITTED      131

132      INT. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE. ENTRANCE HALL - DAY      132

GEORGIANA runs into the entrance hall.

CUT TO:



GEORGIANA enters the room and is met by LITTLE G who looks bewildered at GEORGIANA. She is crying. CHARLOTTE steps in as a big sister, puts her arm around her and draws her close.

LITTLE G

Mama.

GEORGIANA

Come here, my dearest.

GEORGIANA hugs her, and looks at CHARLOTTE. HARRYO comes out too. GEORGIANA hugs them all.

HARRYO

Where have you been Mama? Papa said you were never coming back.

LITTLE G

Don't go away again, please.

GEORGIANA

I shan't. I shan't. We'll all be together. There now...

GEORGIANA hugs the girls. Closer. Tighter.

In the background, the DUKE appears in the doorway and surveys the scene. GEORGIANA gestures to the NANNY to come over.

GEORGIANA (CONT'D)

Now girls, run along. I shall join you in a moment.

The GIRLS | C! dhp! vCj UqMvCj ! )kzUMkTdN[dCpU! vCyI | yoCj ! qdrp! vCMU! vCyI |

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. We mother's  
have no choice.

GEORGIANA looks at BESS, then continues mother's





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

HEATON comes forward and stands next to GREY.

GEORGIANA still looks at him. Her eyes glisten. GREY, choking with pain, stares one more beat, then turns and walks away. HEATON 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.



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 around. Chickens peck outside. It is far removed from the opulence GEORGIANA and BESS are used to.

The two COACHES are parked outside. From the rear COACH, luggage is being unpacked and brought inside.

CUT TO:

144 INT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. DAY 144

GEORGIANA enters this house with BESS and a SERVANT. It's plain and un-lived in.

BESS follows GEORGIANA into what is to be her bedroom.

GEORGIANA  
Thank you for coming.

BESS  
I couldn't not be with you.

GEORGIANA smiles.

CUT TO:

145 EXT. HOUSE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. DUSK - MONTHS LATER 145

GEORGIANA

I count it a triumph we have  
become friends again when fate  
has been so intent on keeping us  
rivals.

BESS

So do I. I may have caused you a  
lot of pain but you must believe  
that I didn't plot or plan any of  
it. [Beat] The Duke is for my  
boys only. You are for me.

GEORGIANA is touched by these comments. Another moment  
passes and her mind returns to the situation to hand. She  
puts her hands around her stomach.

GEORGIANA

Bess, how will I do this?

BESS

For Charlotte, for Harryo, for

GEORGIANA  
BESS  
E FB ((vMI pBCURM) UdEp! vCM! ?(dSpU! vCBC! dRpU! vCBC! d pU! vCBC! S el s fl  
t tol dd pupoem  
i rot uammsd. Bpucto heCt]e] hehni n. tan



BESS is sitting in the other corner of the room. After a moment, she hears a faint sound and goes to look out of the window. From a long distance away, a small train of COACHES travel toward the house, kicking up dust in its wake.



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.

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. Your sentiments are very welcome.

The DUKE looks very relieved. He smiles.

DUKE

Lady Melbourne has arranged a function 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.

GEORGIANA

As you wish.

DUKE

Very good. Please inform Bess, so that she too has enough time to prepare.

The DUKE looks toward BESS in the garden, but his attention is taken by the children playing. He stares at them, 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...

DUKE (CONT'D)

How wonderful to be that free.

GEORGIANA looks at him surprised and for the first time sympathetic, as if she finally understands this trapped man. The DUKE, a little exposed by his revealing statement, nods at GEORGIANA and quickly leaves.

GEORGIANA returns to look out of the window at the children playing with BESS - it certainly is carefree, full of life and happiness. CHARLOTTE waves her out to play. She's not sure she's going to. She steps out of the dark of the house and opens the door into the light of the garden.

All the kids are hugely enthusiastic to see her - their mother is back. A game begins and the children, BESS and GEORGIANA run around laughing and playing together in the bright spring sunshine.

CUT TO:

154 OMITTED 154

155 I/E. LADY MELBOURNE'S HOUSE - NIGHT 155

A society gathering is in full swing. A FOOTMAN addresses the party in his booming voice.

FOOTMAN  
The Duke and Duchess of  
Devonshire. And Lady Elizabeth  
Foster.

Behind the front doors BESS whispers to GEORGIANA.

BESS  
Are you ready for this?

GEORGIANA  
(Hint of old self)  
Of course.

The room goes quiet with a great sense of expectation...

The doors swing open...

GEORGIANA steps back into the limelight...

She's looks stylish and sexy but in a mature, demure way.

GEORGIANA walks confidently through the crowd, taking in the scene around her. She nods hello to FOX and SHERIDAN, and there's a warm, ad-hoc mix of bowing and 'welcome home Your Grace'. She has been welcomed back by society with respect and relief.

CUT TO:

155A OMITTED 155A

155B INT. LADY MELBOURNE'S HOUSE. ROOM - NIGHT 155B

GEORGIANA enters another large room full of people. Almost immediately she bumps into a young man. It is CHARLES GREY. They are both taken completely off guard, their hearts beating rapidly.



She is the spitting image of a younger GEORGIANA. Beat. GEORGIANA swallows hard and summons up all her courage. . .

GEORGIANA  
(Whispers)  
Do you love her?

A long beat. GEORGIANA fears the worst. Then a look of kindness appears on GREY'S face, followed by a gentle, knowing smile.

GREY  
I have met her twice.

GEORGIANA returns the smile: a shared joke from their first scene together that momentarily relieves the underlying tension. They know exactly what is being said - GREY'S is a practical marriage and they still love each other and forgive each other everything.

Beat. Their eyes stay fixed on one another.

The DUKE walks off up the stairs to his bedroom alone.

CUT TO:

157 INT. HALLWAY TO BEDROOMS. DEVONSHIRE HOUSE - NIGHT 157

GEORGIANA and BESS walk together, two massive dresses side by side down the middle of the wide corridors and rooms, rustling in the silence. They look at each other and smile supportively, then reach out to hold hands.

They carry on walking until they reach a pair of double doors leading into the area of the house where their bedrooms are. GEORGIANA pulls them open to let BESS through. GEORGIANA then takes the handles and pulls them closed, her strong and beautiful face finally disappearing behind the crack in the middle.

FADE OUT.