

SCRIPT TITLE

Written by

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EPISODE ONE

1 EXT. NEW YORK. DAY.

1

The great city of New York is below us. We see the Zoo and the bridges, but sheep graze on the green slopes of Central Park and 5th Avenue is bustling with horse-drawn traffic. We descend, moving north along the avenue, past a skating rink on what will be the site of the Plaza Hotel, until we arrive at East 65th Street. A mailman is walking past an enormous, newly constructed palace on the corner, where some workmen are delivering a vast chandelier, supervised by a butler and a red-headed man, whom we will later know as Stanford White.

NEW YORK 1882

2 EXT/INT. BROOK HOUSE. EAST 65TH STREET. NEW YORK. DAY.

2

The mailman crosses the road, reaching a more modest brownstone almost opposite the palace. He opens a gate and, descending to the basement, he knocks on the door. A man in the blue livery of a footman, Jack Treacher, opens it.

JACK

Hello, Mr Griffin.

He takes the letters. One envelope has thick black edging.

GRIFFIN

Bad news, I'm afraid.

JACK

They're old. They get bad news every week.

GRIFFIN

You're all heart.

He turns and leaves as Jack closes the door. We are inside the basement hall with him. He passes through the kitchen. The cook/housekeeper, Mrs Bauer, glances at the letter.

MRS BAUER

Oh, dear. I wonder who that is now.

BANNISTER

I'll take those, thank you, John.

Bannister is the English butler. A stickler for proper form.

MRS BAUER

Why not let Miss Armstrong carry them up? Or that one at least.

BANNISTER

Thank you, Mrs Bauer. But I think I know what I'm doing.

He walks away from the kitchen. Mrs Bauer watches him go.

3

INT. HALL. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

3

Bannister is walking towards the staircase holding a silver salver with the letters on it, when a woman in late middle-age emerges from the dining room. This is Miss Ada Brook. She is followed by her King Charles spaniel, Pumpkin.

ADA

Is that the mail, Bannister?

He stops, although he is reluctant to do so.

BANNISTER

Yes, Miss Ada. I was just taking them up to Mrs van Rhijn.

ADA

And are they all addressed to Mrs van Rhijn?

He hesitates and she's got him.

BANNISTER

One is addressed to you both.

ADA

May I have it?

After a beat, he walks towards her, holds out the salver and she takes the black-edged envelope, with a light smile.

BANNISTER

I hope it's not more bad news.

ADA

It is the same bad news, Bannister. The letter is from our niece. Since her father is recently dead, she will use mourning envelopes for a year at least, I should think.

BANNISTER

Shall I tell Mrs van Rhijn you have taken the letter, Miss Ada?

ADA

I'll tell her. Come along, Pumpkin.

She returns to the dining room with the dog and a smile of triumph, picking up a letter-opener from the table. Clearly, her life consists of small victories and large defeats.

In the hall, Bannister sees the maid, Greta, watching him.

BANNISTER

Get on with your work.

But she chuckles as he climbs the stairs.

4

INT. AGNES'S BEDROOM. BROOK HOUSE. DAY.

4

In this pretty, if ornate, bed chamber, heavily draped with flowered chintz, Agnes van Rhijn lies with a charmingly laid breakfast tray over her knees. She is propped up against a dozen lace-edged cushions. She stares at her sister.

AGNES

What do you mean she's not coming?

ADA

She's not coming. I shouldn't have thought it so very hard to grasp.

AGNES

But what else can she do?

ADA

She says Henry's left her provided for and she has yet to determine what she means to do with her life. She thanks us for the offer, she is very grateful and so on, but she's not coming.

AGNES

Fiddle-de-dee! She can't live alone! A young girl without a companion? Does she want to be a pariah? To have people cross the street to get away from her? Is that the plan?

ADA

I would imagine she has a variant to it in her mind.

AGNES

As for Henry's leaving her provided for! He couldn't provide for a dog in a ditch! He never kept a dollar in his pocket if there were women or drink within five hundred miles!

ADA

She must have some reason for saying so.

AGNES

He's lied to her, that's all. Just as he lied to every other human being he ever encountered.

ADA

That seems rather harsh.

AGNES

Do you disagree?

Ada does not quite disagree.

ADA

So, what's to be done?

AGNES

Nothing. We have invited Marian to live with us. She has refused. The matter is concluded.

ADA

Agnes, you can't mean that. She is our niece, without a friend in the world to guide her. We can't just cast her off. We should have gone down there for the funeral, anyway.

AGNES

It wasn't worth two days of travel to make sure Henry was dead.

ADA

Well, I'll write again.

AGNES

Then write in your own name and not in mine. And take that nasty little dog away.

ADA

It's different for you. You have a son.

AGNES

And you have a nephew. Let him be enough. And why take Marian's letter off the tray? You see? You think I don't know what goes on in this house but I do.

ADA

It was addressed to us both.

AGNES

When a letter is addressed to both of us, it comes to me first.

ADA

But why?

AGNES

Because that is how things are managed here. Ah, Armstrong. Fetch me my cushion, if you'd be so kind.

Agnes's maid has entered the room. Ada sweeps Pumpkin into her arms defiantly and leaves. Agnes cannot resist a slight nod of victory as her sister goes.

5

INT. KITCHENS. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

5

Mrs Bauer cooks. Greta, Jack and Armstrong sit at the table.

GRETA

What did he do? Their brother?

ARMSTRONG

Mainly, he was a general in the War Between The States, but he fought for the South, so everyone's forgotten that now.

JACK

Mrs van Rhijn won't have forgotten.

GRETA

What about when the war was over?

ARMSTRONG

He survived, but that's as much as can be said.

JACK

Why did he never come here?

ARMSTRONG

They didn't like him. And they certainly didn't like his wife.

GRETA

Why not?

ARMSTRONG

She wasn't good enough. At least Mrs van Rhijn thought she wasn't.

GRETA

What was wrong with her?

ARMSTRONG

Who knows? She died in childbirth, so it was an old quarrel, but it was never patched up.

GRETA

Will the daughter be coming here?

ARMSTRONG

Not according to Mr Bannister.

MRS BAUER

Mr Bannister don't know everything.

BANNISTER

What don't I know, Mrs Bauer?

He is standing in the doorway. Mrs Bauer returns to her work.

6 INT. A LAWYER'S OFFICE. MORGANTOWN. WEST VIRGINIA. DAY. 6

A handsome, young lawyer, Mr Tom Raikes, throws down some share certificates on to his desk.

TOM RAIKES

I'm afraid none of them are worth the paper they're printed on.

MARIAN

But surely, with the railroads spreading all over the country...? Every day the papers talk of some new millionaire who's made his fortune out of railways.

TOM RAIKES

And every day the bankruptcy courts see rail companies go under, taking their owners and investors down with them. Miss Brook -

Now, for the first time, we get a proper look at Marian Brook. She is lovely, in her early twenties, and strong, or so she seems. She is dressed in mourning, neatly but not extravagantly. She takes this blow on the chin.

TOM RAIKES (CONT'D)

The plain fact is, I have looked into the estate of the late Mr. Brook -

MARIAN

The late General Brook.

TOM RAIKES

The late General Brook and I cannot find any assets beyond the contents of his bank account.

MARIAN

And the house.

TOM RAIKES
The house is rented, Miss Brook.

MARIAN
Oh, I'm sure that's wrong.

TOM RAIKES
I'm afraid not.

MARIAN
But Papa always said -

She stops herself. She is not going to expose her father before this man. She recovers.

MARIAN (CONT'D)
I see. So how much is left?

TOM RAIKES
I have paid the funeral charges and other outstanding accounts and I will waive my own fee -

MARIAN
There's no need.

TOM RAIKES
There is every need. You will have in your possession something in the region of thirty dollars.

This is a sharp blow. But she tries to normalise it.

MARIAN
And there are no other debts?

TOM RAIKES
Not as far as I know. But that may change as word of his death spreads

For a moment the two just stare at each other.

MARIAN
You see, Mr Raikes, none of this is what my father told me.

TOM RAIKES
So I gathered. Maybe the General was mistaken. About what he held in his possession.

Again they look at each other. They both know he was not mistaken. He was a liar. But Marian won't say it.

TOM RAIKES (CONT'D)
What are you going to do?

MARIAN

I'm not sure. First, I must find some paid employment, I suppose.

TOM RAIKES

But what sort of paid employment?

MARIAN

Well, I'll have to give that some thought. I can sew and I can paint in watercolours a little -

TOM RAIKES

Miss Brook, forgive me but you have not been raised to work.

MARIAN

I haven't been raised to starve, either.

TOM RAIKES

Surely you must have a relative who could give you a home until...

MARIAN

Until what?

TOM RAIKES

Until some other possibility is open to you...

MARIAN

I want to do something with my life, Mr Raikes. Something useful. I don't want to be a passive little homebody, cooling my husband's brow when he returns from the bank.

He admires her. We can see that.

TOM RAIKES

Well, the rent is paid to the end of the month. Perhaps you will signal your intentions before that point is reached.

MARIAN

Perhaps I will. Thank you.

She stands and he stands with her.

TOM RAIKES

I'm very sorry I couldn't be more helpful.

MARIAN

Don't worry, Mr Raikes. I'm not beaten yet.

TOM RAIKES

At the risk of impertinence, I
would say you are a long way from
being beaten, Miss Brook.

Which almost earns him a smile.

7 INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY. 7

Mrs Bauer, standing, is receiving her orders.

AGNES

We won't bother with a savoury, but
maybe some chocolate ice cream.

ADA

Oh, but that's such a nuisance to
make. Why not some fruit, instead?

AGNES

Chocolate ice cream, thank you, Mrs
Bauer.

Ada does not try again. The cook leaves.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Really, Ada. What makes you think
you have the right to give orders?
Or to contradict me?

ADA

I only meant that she has her work
cut out as cook and housekeeper,
and she has no proper kitchen maid -

AGNES

Who pays Mrs Bauer?

ADA

You do, Agnes.

AGNES

And Bannister? Or Armstrong?

ADA

Well, she's your maid. Greta looks
after me more than Armstrong does.

AGNES

And who pays Greta?

ADA

I have been unfortunate, Agnes.
Like many people from the South.
There's no need to rub it in.

AGNES

Clearly I must remind you that you owe your salvation to Mr van Rhijn. His money rescued you and restored your good name. More to the point, I am his representative on earth.

ADA

I know.

AGNES

Then don't forget it.

She picks up a journal from a side table.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Charles Darwin has died.

ADA

I saw.

AGNES

Let us hope that his unfortunate ideas have died with him.

At that moment, there is the noise of a carriage below. To end the conversation, Ada rises and walks to the window.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Is it that woman again?

ADA

She must be so pleased they're moving in at last. It's a pretty carriage. You have to admit it.

Agnes has joined her sister.

AGNES

I don't have to admit anything.

Across the street, outside the classical palace we saw at the start, a handsome woman in her forties climbs down from a barouche. After one glance, Agnes simply draws back out of sight. The same butler stands at the grand entrance and the woman goes inside. With a snort, Agnes returns to her seat.

8

INT. HALL/DRAWING ROOM/LIBRARY. RUSSELL HOUSE. DAY.

8

The woman we have just seen, Bertha Russell, has given her coat to her maid, Laurent, watched by the butler whose name is Church. The house is receiving its finishing touches. The handsome, red-headed man, Stanford White, directs as the chandelier we saw delivered is being hoisted into place.

BERTHA

Is everything under control, Mr White?

STANFORD WHITE

I wish, Mrs Russell.

BERTHA

Is that from the Palazzo Borghese?

STANFORD WHITE

No, from the Hôtel de Soubise in the Marais. You're thinking of the clock in the library.

She allows herself a smile as she walks into the adjacent, drawing room. Here, maids arrange flowers on a table and seamstresses are adjusting the fall of the curtains.

BERTHA

Another inch.

SEAMSTRESS

Very good, Mrs Russell.

She walks on, into the library. George Russell looks up from his newspaper. She surveys the gilded spines of the books.

BERTHA

I'm sorry for the chaos, but we had to move in or they'd never get out.

He takes a cigar from a box and lights it as she speaks.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

I wish you wouldn't do that in here. What is the smoking room for?

GEORGE

To entertain my friends. And I will not be told what I can and can't do in my own library.

You would think she might object but she doesn't. There is always a sense of a bond, a physical bond, between these two.

BERTHA

You must get the servants to open a window when you go up to change.

GEORGE

They've shot Jesse James.

BERTHA

He had his troubles. I have mine.

GEORGE

So, how was your afternoon?

BERTHA

I've left cards with Mrs Stevens, Mrs Rutherford, Mrs Jones, Mrs Vanderbilt, Mrs Schermerhorn and Mrs Astor, of course.

GEORGE

Of course.

BERTHA

So now they know we're here.

GEORGE

We have been in New York City for three years, Bertha, watching this house rise from the sidewalk.

BERTHA

But we've been stuck down on 30th Street with yesterday's men.

GEORGE

You chose the house.

BERTHA

I didn't know how things worked then. Now I do. The point is, we're settled where we should be, and that's what I wanted to show them.

GEORGE

They don't care. They don't know we exist.

BERTHA

There's no need to sound superior. I'm only doing it for you. You and Larry. And Gladys, of course.

GEORGE

Of course.

His tone is increasingly ironic. He continues reading.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Larry and Gladys can manage for themselves.

BERTHA

I need people to see they come from a good background. They'd be lucky to welcome them into their homes.

GEORGE

And would they be lucky to welcome you into their homes? Or me?

BERTHA

You can laugh, but we'll get there.
I just have to manage it carefully.

GEORGE

The Russell family's managed pretty
well so far, if you ask me.

BERTHA

Because they didn't know any
better. Mrs van Rhijn and her sad
sister were spying on me when I
came back.

GEORGE

I don't know why you bother with
them.

BERTHA

I don't bother with them.

But she does. He throws the cigar cutter on to a table.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

Careful. That table belonged to the
Dauphine of France.

GEORGE

She had it once. I've got it now.

BERTHA

I'm going up to change.

9 INT. HALL. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

9

Bertha comes back into the hall to find the butler, Church.

BERTHA

Church, could you tell Laurent I've
gone to my room?

CHURCH

She's already upstairs, Madam.

BERTHA

Is Miss Gladys back from her walk?

CHURCH

She's with Miss Grant in the
schoolroom.

BERTHA

And is everything ready for Mr
Larry's return?

CHURCH

I believe so, Madam. But I will check with Mrs Bruce.

BERTHA

He's never seen the house finished.

CHURCH

I am sure he will be pleased when he does, madam.

BERTHA

I expect he'll want to bring his friends here, so we'd better be ready for regular invasions.

She smiles at her small joke then walks towards the vast staircase, a tiny, lonely figure in a desert of marble. Church watches her for a moment, then strikes the gong. He replaces the striker and goes downstairs.

10

INT. KITCHENS. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

10

This is a far grander affair than the Brook house. The kitchen is full of kitchen maids, all working to put away the new equipment. A workman is making adjustments to the gleaming new range. The chef, Monsieur Baudin, moves among them all. He seems rather domineering. Church enters.

CHURCH

I've rung the gong.

A grey-faced man stands.

WATSON

I never heard it. I'd better go up.

BAUDIN

Tell him I'm making a list of what is not right about this kitchen.

A liveried footman looks over.

FRANK

The Master won't bother with that. You'll have to get Miss Laurent to tell the Mistress.

But Watson has left. Baudin gestures at the worker.

BAUDIN

How can I cook in this madhouse?

CHURCH

Can't you use the stove in the still room for this evening?

FRANK

I think it's going to work well.
It's far bigger than the last place
and you didn't mind that.

BAUDIN

It was only rented. Abandoned by
its owner because 30th Street is
out of fashion. Why complain about
a house when it's rented?

He says the word "rented" as if it were actually dirty.

FRANK

I'd say this is three times the
size. If you ask me, we're lucky.

CHURCH

You're very free with your views,
Francis, when we don't know if
you'll be staying on.

FRANK

Won't I, Mr Church?

CHURCH

Not if you serve the soup like you
did last night.

FRANK

That wasn't my fault. She jogged my
elbow.

CHURCH

It had better not happen again.

FRANK

It won't, Mr Church.

CHURCH

I'm going to see the drawing room
is ready for when they come down.

INT. MARIAN'S HOUSE. MORGANTOWN. WEST VIRGINIA. NIGHT.

Marian has opened the door to Tom Raikes.

MARIAN

Mr Raikes. It's very late for you
to come calling.

TOM RAIKES

I'm afraid I wasn't helpful when
you were in my office. I've been
worrying about you.

He walks in. She closes the door. He looks around.

TOM RAIKES (CONT'D)

Do you live alone?

MARIAN

A woman comes in to clean during the day but yes I suppose I do now.

They have drifted into the sitting room.

TOM RAIKES

Doesn't that leave you very vulnerable?

MARIAN

Vulnerable to whom?

TOM RAIKES

To someone who likes to prey on unguarded females.

He is standing close to her and she has her back to the wall.

MARIAN

What would you suggest I do?

TOM RAIKES

I suppose the traditional solution would be to find a protector.

MARIAN

A protector or a husband?

TOM RAIKES

That rather depends on you, surely.

He is close now. She decides to take the bull by the horns.

MARIAN

Are you intending to ravish me, Mr Raikes?

TOM RAIKES

What?

MARIAN

Do you mean to throw me to the floor and have your way with me?

TOM RAIKES

Of course not.

MARIAN

Then perhaps you will step back but before you go, I must thank you.

TOM RAIKES

What for?

MARIAN

You have helped me to make a
decision that I was avoiding.

11 INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

11

The sisters are in the heavily draped room. Ada hugs Pumpkin as Agnes reads a telegram. Bannister waits in silence.

AGNES

Thank you, Bannister. There's no
reply.

The butler leaves.

ADA

What does she say?

AGNES

She thanks you for the letter that
you did not show me, and for the
tickets that you purchased without
my knowledge. She means to join us
here just as soon as she has closed
the house and sold her furniture.

She sits back in her chair with a sigh. Ada is defiant.

ADA

Well, I'm glad she's changed her
mind and if my letter played a part
in that, then I'm glad I sent it.

AGNES

I doubt it was your letter. I would
say that between her high-handed
refusal of our invitation and this -

She holds up the telegram.

AGNES (CONT'D)

She has discovered that her father
lied to her and left her without a
penny to her name.

ADA

Poor Henry.

This is greeted with an acid look.

AGNES

What was she supposed to do if she
stayed there? Pick cotton?

ADA

It's quite a journey. First she'll ride the Baltimore and Ohio to Jersey City. And then she'll have to catch the Communipaw ferry across the Hudson to the Liberty Street landing. But once she's there I guess she can take a cab.

AGNES

Are you planning to open a business as a travel planner?

ADA

No.

AGNES

Then what on earth makes you think I would be interested?

Ada is silent. Being crushed is ordinary for her.

ADA

I should take Pumpkin for a walk.

AGNES

So, what will we do with her? Now she's coming to disturb our peace?

ADA

Maybe she'll want to work. If her father has left her penniless, she should be able to support herself.

AGNES

Work? What at?

ADA

There must be something she could do. Be a governess, maybe.

AGNES

A niece of mine, a *governess*?

ADA

She's my niece, too.

AGNES

Then you should be ashamed of yourself. And why did you send her two tickets?

ADA

I thought she might have a maid, or at any rate someone who could accompany her on the journey. I didn't want her to travel alone.

AGNES

But this frail flower, who cannot
ride a train without a companion,
is to face life as a governess?

Ada will not dignify this with a reply.

AGNES (CONT'D)

I have not noticed you volunteering
to make a contribution to the
household as a governess.

12

INT. MARIAN'S HOUSE. MORGANTOWN. WEST VIRGINIA. DAY.

12

A sale is in progress, of the contents of the Brook household. It takes place in the sparse living room. Marian walks up to Tom Raikes who stands at the back.

MARIAN

I am surprised to see you here, Mr Raikes.

TOM RAIKES

I'm afraid you misunderstood my intentions the other night.

MARIAN

Did I? I do hope so.

AUCTIONEER

A lady's daybed in two parts known in Europe as a *duchesse brisée*.

MARIAN

That was my mother's. Or so Papa always told me.

TOM RAIKES

You could send it to your aunts.

MARIAN

If they knew it was Mama's, they'd organise a ritual burning.

The piece of furniture is knocked down for ten dollars.

AUCTIONEER

A pair of portraits, painted in oils, dating from the 1850s.

MARIAN

Oh, no. I'm sorry. They're of my parents. I never meant for them to be sold.

She walks forward.

AUCTIONEER

But they've already been offered.

MAN

Let her have them! For God's sake,
man! They're her parents!

AUCTIONEER

Well... it's irregular.

But he allows her to take them. They are not large, a foot by
eighteen inches, so she carries them easily. She drops back.

MARIAN

I'd better hide them under my bed
when I get there, or they'll use
them for target practice.

TOM RAIKES

When are you leaving?

MARIAN

Thursday morning. On the ten
o'clock train.

TOM RAIKES

Will you let me take you to the
station?

MARIAN

There's no need.

TOM RAIKES

I want to. By way of an apology.

MARIAN

I repeat: There's no need.

TOM RAIKES

I'll call for you at nine.

13

INT. MARIAN'S BEDROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

13

Ada sees the open door of the room. When she looks inside,
Mrs Bauer and Greta are making the bed.

ADA

Oh, Mrs Bauer, you shouldn't be
doing that.

MRS BAUER

I can't be too fussy, Miss Ada. Not
in this house.

ADA

But it's late and you have so much else to do. And she won't be here until the day after tomorrow.

MRS BAUER

I like to get ahead if I can.

ADA

I hope she won't make extra work for you. Miss Marian, I mean. You must say if it's too much.

MRS BAUER

I don't mind. I think she may brighten the place up a bit.

ADA

Yes. That's rather what Mrs van Rhijn is afraid of.

14

EXT. RAILWAY STATION NEAR CHARLESTON. DAY.

14

In the bright morning sun, Marian is waiting by a pony trap as Raikes walks towards her.

TOM RAIKES

This is the receipt for your trunk. It should be delivered the day you arrive. Do you have enough to manage until then?

MARIAN

I do.

She has a small band box as well as a reticule and a bag.

TOM RAIKES

The train will be along in a few minutes.

MARIAN

You're not to wait.

TOM RAIKES

I don't mind.

MARIAN

No, I mean it. You have to get on and the train won't be long.

TOM RAIKES

Then I guess this is it. I'm sorry you're going, Miss Brook.

MARIAN

But glad I will no longer be alone
for anyone to take advantage of.

This makes him blush.

TOM RAIKES

I guess you won't want me to write
to you.

MARIAN

I shall have so many letters to
answer from Virginia, I'll have no
time for my new life in the city.

TOM RAIKES

You're right. Goodbye, Miss Brook,
and good luck.

He starts to climb on to the box. She regrets her words now.

MARIAN

I only meant -

But he has gone. Marian looks around and then makes her way
to a seat where she can sit beside the track. She is alone
except for a young African American woman some distance away,
sitting on another bench. They wait.

Suddenly the woman in the distance seems to vanish. She has
slipped off the bench on to the ground. Marian runs over to
her and takes some smelling salts out of her purse.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

Here. Smell this.

The young woman does and her face recoils. She is awake now.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

We need to get you to a doctor.

PEGGY

I'm not ill.

MARIAN

You're not well.

PEGGY

I just felt a little faint.

MARIAN

When did you last eat?

Peggy hesitates.

PEGGY

Two days ago.

MARIAN

There we are then. Problem solved.
I had these put up for the journey.

Her small bag contains sandwiches, and a little bottle of wine with a glass. She unwraps one and gives it to her.

PEGGY

But they're for you.

MARIAN

Just eat. Let me introduce myself.
My name is Marian Brook.

PEGGY

I'm Peggy Scott.

They are sitting together now, on the bench. Peggy does eat the sandwich. She is ravenous.

MARIAN

You must be headed for New Jersey.
Are you travelling on to New York?

PEGGY

I don't know, Miss Brook. I haven't got a ticket so I don't know where I'm going.

MARIAN

How will you manage?

PEGGY

Sometimes, if the Conductor's... like me, they let you ride in the caboose.

MARIAN

But I have tickets, spare ones, I mean. For the train and the ferry. If you're going on to the City.

PEGGY

But you don't know me.

MARIAN

No. But I don't know of anyone else who wants the tickets.

The train has drawn in. A porter is loading boxes and Marian's trunk as they approach the first class carriage.

PEGGY

I can't get on here.

CONDUCTOR

Hey!

A grizzled, African American hurries towards them.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
She can't ride in there!

MARIAN
What?

CONDUCTOR
She can't ride in a first class carriage.

MARIAN
But I have tickets for us both. And there's no law that says she can't.

CONDUCTOR
Even so.

MARIAN
You don't expect me to travel without my maid? Alone in a carriage? With heaven knows who?

CONDUCTOR
In a first class carriage.

MARIAN
If you think a gentleman can be trusted any more than the next man, you have a lot to learn about life.

CONDUCTOR
We all have a lot to learn about life, Ma'am.

But the engineer is looking down to see what the hold-up is.

CONDUCTOR (CONT'D)
Oh, get aboard. But I'm telling you now, if anyone complains, she has to move.

All this time, Peggy has stood in silence. Now they climb on to the train. Just before they vanish she turns to Marian.

PEGGY
Your maid?

15

EXT. GEORGE RUSSELL'S OFFICE. NEW YORK. DAY.

15

A large and muscular building where great things are done.

16

INT. GEORGE RUSSELL'S OFFICE. NEW YORK. DAY.

16

This is a sumptuous place. George Russell sits behind a huge desk signing papers, talking to his deputy, Richard Clay.

GEORGE

Thank you, Mabel.

A stenographer picks up the papers and leaves.

CLAY

So we're all set for a clear run from New York to Chicago?

GEORGE

I think so. Thorburn is still making trouble on his stretch -

CLAY

From Buffalo to Cleveland? Will he see sense?

GEORGE

I don't care much if he doesn't.

CLAY

What will you do?

GEORGE

Build another line, right alongside his. It'll show the world we mean business.

CLAY

And ruin Thorburn in the process.

GEORGE

You can't make an omelette without breaking eggs.

CLAY

So the next step is for the City Aldermen to grant permission for the new station.

GEORGE

"Grant permission"? You make them sound very important.

CLAY

Not as important as they think they are. But the fact remains, we need them to pass the law.

George considers this for a moment.

GEORGE

Have we got a list of their names?

CLAY

Right here.

He opens a folder he carries and hands over a paper.

CLAY (CONT'D)

Should I find some detectives? See if we can dig up anything useful?

GEORGE

Not yet. We'll start by appealing to their greed. But do nothing now. I'll tell you when to begin.

It is quite clear that there is another side to nice George.

17

INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE. WEST VIRGINIA. DAY.

17

Marian and Peggy are alone in the compartment.

MARIAN

So we're both children of the South. Do you remember anything before the war?

Peggy shakes her head.

PEGGY

I'd say my first memory was when my parents were freed. I must've been about five, I guess, and everyone went crazy. Men and women running round, screaming and shouting fit to burst. I s'pose that's why I remember it.

MARIAN

What did your parents do then?

PEGGY

They moved to New York. Some stayed and took wages to do the same work, but my daddy didn't want to. They'd told him he was free and he chose to get away.

MARIAN

And they took you with them?

PEGGY

Of course.

MARIAN

Did he find a job?

PEGGY

Oh, yes. But they were hard years.

MARIAN

They were hard for us, too.

PEGGY

Really?

She raises an eyebrow, unconvinced.

MARIAN

I mean it. Our house was just outside Charleston and the Yankees burned it to the ground. Then we sold the land for taxes.

PEGGY

And I expect it was inconvenient releasing all those slaves.

Marian looks at her steadily.

MARIAN

I don't recall that life, any more than you do. And I *certainly* don't want it back. Besides, the State was winding it down even before the war was over.

PEGGY

What about your daddy? How did he survive?

MARIAN

He did what he could... He wasn't what you'd call a business man.

PEGGY

And now he's dead and you're headed for the city.

MARIAN

How did you end up back in West Virginia? When you'd got away?

PEGGY

It's a long story.

MARIAN

Are your parents still in New York?

PEGGY

I guess so.

Which is a slightly odd answer.

MARIAN

Is that where you're going?

PEGGY

I don't know. Before today, I
wasn't sure I'd even get there.

MARIAN

Nor me. But it looks like we will.

The door opens and a woman stands, staring.

WOMAN

I don't quite understand.

MARIAN

Scott is my maid, madam. I don't
care to travel alone.

WOMAN

Oh, I see. Well, in that case...

She comes in, sits down and takes out a book. Of course the
conversation between the others is at an end.

18

INT. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

18

Bertha is with her son, Larry. He looks round at the vast and
sumptuous interiors. A workman is fixing a gilded pelmet.

BERTHA

Well?

LARRY

I guess it's big enough.

BERTHA

If you're going to do a thing, you
might as well do it properly. What
do you think of the panelling?

LARRY

Why?

BERTHA

Mr White found it in the Château de
Chavaniac, the home of Lafayette.

LARRY

Well, what do you know? I should
get going. I'm catching the four
o'clock to Newport.

BERTHA

But you've only just got home.

LARRY

Is that what this is?

BERTHA

Take a later train at least. We haven't seen you all semester.

LARRY

But it'll be fun. It's the one Mrs Fish gave us, and most of the party are travelling on it.

BERTHA

Who is in the party? Do you know?

LARRY

The usual crowd. Ogden Goelet and his wife, the Joneses, the Larry Wilsons. Carrie Astor, I think -

BERTHA

Carrie Astor?

LARRY

I think so.

BERTHA

Do you know her? You never said.

LARRY

I don't. Not really. Not much.

BERTHA

Then get to know her. And catch that train.

LARRY

Mama -

But she silences him by raising her hand.

BERTHA

I know what I'm doing.

He would protest but thinks better of it. A foreman arrives.

KOWALSKI

We've finished the gilding in the ballroom, Mrs Russell.

BERTHA

No. You think you've finished the gilding, Mr Kowalski. But nothing is finished 'til I decide.

LARRY

I'm going, Mama. Where's Gladys?

BERTHA

Why?

LARRY

I want to say goodbye to her.

BERTHA

I'll say it for you. She's gone to the park with Miss Grant.

LARRY

She's not a child, anymore, Mama. You shouldn't treat her as one.

BERTHA

She's a child until I say. Now have a good time. Where are your bags?

LARRY

In the carriage.

BERTHA

Then hurry along. And give my regards to Mrs Fish.

LARRY

But you don't know her.

BERTHA

Not yet. But I will. Now, come along, Mr Kowalski. Show me what you think you've done.

Larry watches his mother driving the foreman before her.

19

INT. THE COMMUNIPAW FERRY TERMINAL. DAY.

19

Marian stands by the window, staring out across the water. She looks up as Peggy approaches.

PEGGY

The ferry's almost here.

MARIAN

Have you decided if you'll go to your parents' house?

PEGGY

That's if they're still there.

This is not an answer.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

I don't want to. I may have to, but I don't want to.

MARIAN

Why not? I wish you'd tell me.

PEGGY

I just don't want to is all.

MARIAN

I'd take you to East 65th, but my aunts are not exactly 'modern.'

PEGGY

You've been very kind, Miss Brook. I do know that. So don't worry now. I'll be fine.

Peggy starts to organise Marian's band box and the rest of their luggage as Marian watches.

MARIAN

You could come with me as my maid.

PEGGY

What?

MARIAN

You've travelled on the ticket they sent. They won't be surprised if I arrive with a lady's maid.

PEGGY

But I'm not a maid. I'm not even a servant and I never have been.

MARIAN

It was just an idea. To give you some shelter for a few days.

PEGGY

And then what?

MARIAN

Then, when you're ready, you say you've found another job and you leave. You wouldn't have to do anything. Any work, I mean.

Peggy thinks for a moment.

PEGGY

I'd have to pretend. I suppose there are other servants.

MARIAN

But I couldn't pay you. I'm as poor as a church mouse. That's why I'm going to my aunts as a last resort. I wouldn't if I had a choice.

PEGGY

I guess rich folks' 'poor' is different from poor folks' 'poor.'

MARIAN

But it's true. I barely have more than the clothes I stand up in.

PEGGY

I suppose there'd be food and a place to sleep. I just need a little time to catch my breath.

MARIAN

Exactly.

PEGGY

How will you explain you have a lady's maid when you have no money?

MARIAN

We're from the South.

PEGGY

What would I do about a uniform?

MARIAN

Ladies' maids don't wear uniforms. No uniform, no cap, no apron. Do you have a black dress?

PEGGY

I do.

MARIAN

Then we're all set. If you're sure.

PEGGY

Are you excited?

MARIAN

Not excited. Resolved. A new life is starting for us both and somehow we must try to make it work.

A porter walks down the passage from the entrance.

PORTER

Liberty Street ferry coming in.

MARIAN

Can we ask him to carry our things?

PEGGY

I'll do that. If I'm your maid I'd better start acting the part.

In a wide shot, the ferry arrives.

20

INT. DINING ROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

20

Gladys Russell sits in silence. She is a beautiful girl in her late teens but she enjoys no freedom. She is dining with her parents, George and Bertha. The room is enormous. Footmen wait behind their chairs. Church stands by the sideboard. The crystal, the silver, the gilt, all conspires to make them seem small and alone in this vast space.

GLADYS

How are things at the office?

BERTHA

Don't start him on that, I beg you.

GLADYS

I suppose Papa's business is what we all depend on.

She gets a glare from her mother and a smile from her father.

GEORGE

Don't worry about me. When does Larry get back?

BERTHA

Tomorrow or the next day.

GLADYS

He said Wednesday in his note.

BERTHA

Tomorrow or the next day.

George gives a sympathetic glance to his daughter.

GEORGE

I suppose he has some oats to sow. Now that college is over.

Gladys opens her mouth to answer but Bertha cuts in.

BERTHA

He must decide what he wants to do.

GEORGE

He'll come in with me, won't he?

BERTHA

I don't know. Ask him.

The three eat in silence for a while.

GEORGE

Why not invite your sister to come and stay for a while?

BERTHA
I don't think so.

GEORGE
Well, what about your old friends?
You never see them now.

BERTHA
I don't want my old friends. I want
new friends.

GEORGE
But who are they, my dear?

Bertha does not answer. We can hear the sound of their spoons
sliding across the plates as they drink their soup.

21 INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 21

Marian is with her two aunts. Bannister hands round coffee.

ADA
Bannister, ask Mrs Bauer to send up
a tray for Miss Marian.

MARIAN
No need. I ate on the ferry.

AGNES
Have you made any plans yet, that
we might share?

ADA
She's only just arrived, Agnes.

AGNES
She's been travelling for two days.
What else was there to think about?

MARIAN
I haven't made any plans, no.

AGNES
I suppose you only recently learned
that your father had let you down.
We were very sorry to hear it.

MARIAN
Please don't speak ill of Papa.

AGNES
I will say what I like in my own
house.

MARIAN
Not to me.

Bannister halts for a second in his walk.

ADA

What Marian means -

AGNES

Don't trouble yourself, Ada. Marian Brook is Henry's child. That is explanation enough.

Marian would respond but she catches Ada's eye. The older woman shakes her head very slightly.

ADA

I gather you've brought your maid. I hope she'll be happy here.

MARIAN

I'm not sure how long I can keep her, since I have nothing to pay her with. But she has family in New York so we needn't be concerned.

AGNES

What concerns me is not the fate of your maid but how you intend to spend your time now you're here.

MARIAN

I thought I might find a job. I know I could be a governess. Would that be out of the question?

AGNES

Only if you wish to live here.

MARIAN

Well, I don't want to be idle. Perhaps there's a charity that could use my services.

ADA

How generous. And how suitable.

AGNES

That depends on the charity she chooses.

ADA

We must look out some people with sons and daughters your age.

MARIAN

It's true I don't know anyone.

AGNES

To start with you should understand that we receive the old people in this house, not the new.

MARIAN

What's the difference?

AGNES

The old people are *our* people. The new people are invaders.

ADA

It's not quite as simple as that.

AGNES

Yes, it is.

MARIAN

I'm new. I've only just arrived.

AGNES

No. You belong to old New York, my dear, and don't let anyone tell you different. You are my niece and you belong to *old* New York.

22

INT. KITCHENS. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

22

The servants are eating their supper.

JACK

I think she seems nice.

GRETA

Pretty?

JACK

Almost as pretty as you.

MRS BAUER

That's enough of that.

Peggy appears at the door. Bannister stands and so does Jack.

BANNISTER

Please come in, Miss Scott. Will you fetch Miss Scott some supper, Greta?

Greta goes to the stove, to serve it.

PEGGY

There's no need. I had something to eat on the ferry.

They all stare at her. Bannister fills the silence.

BANNISTER

Miss Scott is Miss Brook's maid.
Are you unpacked?

PEGGY

Almost.

ARMSTRONG

Have you been a maid long, Miss
Scott? Because I'm a lady's maid,
too. To Mrs van Rhijn.

She says it as a challenge. Greta brings a plate of food.

BANNISTER

Then you can be very helpful to
Miss Scott, Miss Armstrong.

Armstrong seems less certain. He turns again to Peggy.

BANNISTER (CONT'D)

You will be sleeping on the top
floor with Mrs Bauer and the maids.
Jack and I sleep down here.

Mrs Bauer is pouring tea. She turns to Peggy.

MRS BAUER

Do you drink tea?

PEGGY

Yes, I drink tea. Thank you.

MRS BAUER

I just wanted to be sure.

She bustles about as the others sit there, staring.

23

INT. MARIAN'S BEDROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

23

Marian closes the lid of a trunk. She is changed for bed.

MARIAN

That's everything.

PEGGY

Jack can take it down in the
morning. Where do you want these?

She produces the two portraits. Marian takes them, and puts
them on a chest of drawers, leaning them against the wall.

MARIAN

But they can't stay there.

PEGGY

Why not?

MARIAN

The old ladies hated my father.

PEGGY

Hmm. I know what that's like.

Marian runs her finger over the face in the picture.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Were they mistaken about him?

MARIAN

Not completely. But I loved him.

PEGGY

Even though he left you without a cent?

MARIAN

He lived on dreams and I like that. His never came true, but maybe mine will.

PEGGY

Let's hope so. I'll say good night.

She leaves and Marian returns to the picture of her father.

MARIAN

Well, we're here now, Daddy. So, if you can still hear me, please help me as you never helped before.

She shakes her head, wipes away a tear and climbs into bed.

24

INT. KITCHENS. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

24

Later, Armstrong and Bannister are alone.

ARMSTRONG

I suppose it's all right, Mr Bannister. I mean, I've got nothing against coloured folks.

BANNISTER

It is not for us to have an opinion, Miss Armstrong.

ARMSTRONG

I just don't want there to be trouble in the house, and while I doubt that she would cause it, she may unwittingly be the cause of it.

BANNISTER

I repeat, it is not for us to have an opinion.

Jack comes in.

JACK
I'm going to bed.

BANNISTER
Good night.

JACK
I think that Miss Scott seems nice.

ARMSTRONG
Which is all you know.

JACK
Yes, it is. And I'm sticking to it
until she proves me wrong.

He leaves.

ARMSTRONG
She'll disrupt things. I told Mrs
Bauer but she wouldn't listen.

BANNISTER
Maybe we need a bit of disruption.

25 INT. DRAWING ROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

25

A new day. They sit in this cavernous chamber. George and
Bertha read. Gladys embroiders.

BERTHA
Gladys, that's bad for your eyes.
Sit nearer the window.

Frank enters with a letter on a salver.

FRANK
Just delivered, Ma'am.

BERTHA
Thank you, Francis.

She takes the envelope. Jack leaves. She looks up with joy.

BERTHA (CONT'D)
A Mrs Morris and a Mrs Fane want me
to support a charity in aid of
orphaned girls. The idea is to
train them for service so they have
no need to resort to... baser
methods of earning a living.

GEORGE
Is that Mrs Patrick Morris and Mrs
Charles Fane?

BERTHA

Er... Yes, it is. Why?

GEORGE

Their husbands are City Aldermen. I may have some business with them. What do the wives want of you?

BERTHA

Well, to start with, there's a meeting for friends of the cause to be held at the Fifth Avenue Hotel.

GEORGE

Not in one of their own houses?

BERTHA

I dare say a hotel was more convenient.

GEORGE

I hear the Fifth Avenue's slipping. No one wants to be down on 23rd Street any more.

BERTHA

I won't let you spoil it for me.

GEORGE

I don't want to spoil it.

BERTHA

It's beginning. I knew it would. After all, persistence is the key to everything. Patience and persistence.

GEORGE

They are useful qualities, certainly. You should take Gladys.

Bertha is by the window. She considers his suggestion. Across the road, Marian is carrying a suitcase up the steps.

BERTHA

The old ladies have a visitor.

GEORGE

Another old lady?

BERTHA

No. A young woman. She's carrying a case so she must be staying.

GEORGE

I suppose it's allowed.

BERTHA

You can be so irritating at times.

But there is always a *frisson* between these two.

26

EXT. MRS FISH'S COTTAGE. NEWPORT. DAY.

26

A group of young people sit and walk and play tennis and croquet in front of a large house, Larry Russell among them.

MAMIE FISH

You must all play something!

LARRY

But we're having such a nice time where we are.

MAMIE FISH

What makes you think I've brought you here to have a nice time?

Their hostess, a woman of about thirty, is eccentric to say the least. She turns to a young woman.

MAMIE FISH (CONT'D)

Carrie, make Mr Russell play croquet. Any fool can play croquet.

CARRIE ASTOR

But they've started the game.

MAMIE FISH

Barge in and make them start again.

She stalks off towards another group. Carrie looks over.

LARRY

She's unusual, isn't she? Mrs Fish.

CARRIE ASTOR

Let's just find some mallets and then we can stand at the edge of the lawn without attracting attention. How do you know her?

LARRY

Her nephew was at Harvard with me but as to why she took me up, it's anyone's guess.

They stroll off in search of mallets, conversing as they go.

CARRIE ASTOR

Handsome young men who talk are always useful. That's what my mother says.

LARRY

How long have they had this house?

CARRIE ASTOR

They only rent it. I think they'd like to build here, but...

LARRY

But what?

CARRIE ASTOR

I'm not sure they can.

LARRY

Isn't everyone here made of money?

CARRIE ASTOR

That's the impression they like to give but it's mainly the new people who have the money.

LARRY

That's me. Or at least it's my dad.

This amuses her, but a man has joined them.

OSCAR

If anyone knows who's rich and who's not, it must be Miss Astor.

CARRIE ASTOR

Mr van Rhijn. I thought you weren't coming. I heard you were in Europe.

OSCAR

I was. I've only just got home. I haven't told anyone I'm back yet. But then I thought, what the heck?

CARRIE ASTOR

This is Mr Russell.

Oscar turns. He's interested by what he sees. Too interested.

LARRY

I know how you feel. I came down from College and I left an hour later, my mother calling down East 65th street as I went.

OSCAR

Where are you on East 65th?

LARRY

My parents have built a house on the corner of Fifth Avenue. They've just moved in.

OSCAR

But I know it well. My mother lives almost opposite.

LARRY

Then they may have met already. My parents are Mr and Mrs George Russell. Has she spoken of them?

OSCAR

Yes... but not as acquaintances. You've moved in, then.

LARRY

We have or, at least, they have.

OSCAR

They?

LARRY

My father, my mother and my sister.

OSCAR

Oh, you have a sister?

He catches Carrie's eye. Still, it's Larry who interests him.

27

INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

27

Marian enters, with a package. She picks up Pumpkin.

AGNES

Must we have that horrid thing in here?

MARIAN

I think we must. Don't you, Aunt Ada?

ADA

Have you had a nice walk, dear?

MARIAN

I have. Your case is mended. I brought it back myself. I've put it in your room, and -

AGNES

You carried a suitcase through the streets of New York?

MARIAN

Oh. Have I broken another rule?

AGNES

You were to check it was ready then send the footman to collect it.

MARIAN

Well, it's done now. Here are your gloves, Aunt Ada. I must say, they've mended them beautifully. You can't see it at all.

AGNES

We have a surprise for you, my dear. It came by hand this morning.

She holds out a letter. Marian reads it.

MARIAN

Who are Mrs Morris and Mrs Fane?

AGNES

Mrs Fane is a niece of my husband. Mrs Morris was born a Stuyvesant so we thought it suitable for you to begin your charitable career.

MARIAN

Training orphans to be servants.

ADA

To save them from something worse.

AGNES

There's no need to go into that.

MARIAN

But it's addressed to you, not me.

AGNES

They want a donation from us but they'll be delighted when we offer them a pair of willing hands.

MARIAN

So I should go to this meeting?

ADA

I will come with you.

MARIAN

There's no need.

AGNES

There is every need.

ADA

You'll meet other young women there and young men, of your own age.

AGNES

And background.

Marian is not very convinced.

Mrs Bauer is setting out ingredients. The rest sit at the table which is in a space to one side of the working kitchen.

GRETA

Do you want any help with that?

MRS BAUER

I can manage.

GRETA

What was Mr van Rhijn like?

BANNISTER

Mr van Rhijn was a gentleman.

JACK

That doesn't tell us much.

BANNISTER

It tells you all you need to know.

He opens his newspaper. Armstrong takes over.

ARMSTRONG

Mr van Rhijn had money. Not so much money. Not like the new people have these days, but enough to salvage the pride of Miss Agnes Brook.

MRS BAUER

She must have been good-looking. And the Brooks were gentlefolk when they first arrived in America.

GRETA

Were they happy?

BANNISTER

Greta, that is enough.

He looks severely at his older companions.

BANNISTER (CONT'D)

Miss Armstrong, Mrs Bauer, I am forced to rebuke you. Please do not encourage the girl's impertinence.

GRETA

I only wanted to know if they were happy.

BANNISTER

Happiness is not always a priority. Not for gentlemen and ladies.

Bertha has arrived, with Gladys in tow, in the foyer among quite a crowd of fashionable women. These strangers greet each other with single kisses and chatter away, as Bertha and Gladys move silently through their midst. Two very grand women are shepherding the crowd towards the ballroom.

BERTHA

Mrs Morris?

AURORA

I'm Mrs Fane. Mrs Morris is over there.

BERTHA

Mrs Russell. Mrs George Russell. And this is my daughter, Gladys.

Mrs Fane looks blank.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

From further up Fifth Avenue? On the corner of 65th Street?

AURORA

But of course! That great - that new house we've all been talking about. How good of you to come.

She looks fixedly at her co-hostess who is standing nearby.

AURORA (CONT'D)

Let me introduce you to Mrs Russell, Mrs Morris.

The other woman is a little puzzled.

ANNE MORRIS

How do you do?

AURORA

Mrs Russell has come here today with her daughter. From their new house on the corner of 65th and 5th. It's just been finished. You must know the one I mean.

The penny drops.

ANNE MORRIS

But of course! How thrilling!

AURORA

Who built it for you?

BERTHA

A new firm, McKim, Meade and White.

ANNE MORRIS

I haven't heard of them.

BERTHA

You will. We had a young architect trained in Europe, Mr Stanford White, and he took charge. You must pay us a visit.

But it won't be that easy.

ANNE MORRIS

How brave. Not to go with the same old builders everyone else used.

There is a criticism tucked in here.

BERTHA

I don't think we should be afraid of new things or new people.

This is quite pointed. Mrs Fane saves the day.

AURORA

How often have we said to each other: We must know the family who live in that marvellous house! Every time we drive past! And here you are. I hope we can persuade you to take an interest in our cause.

BERTHA

Well, as you say, I'm here.

AURORA

And you, of course, Miss Russell. I trust you'll be persuaded to take our part.

BERTHA

My daughter isn't 'out' yet. She has only come to accompany me.

ANNE MORRIS

Surely charitable work is good for the spirit at any age?

BERTHA

It depends... Who's that?

At the edge of the company, a tall and beautiful middle aged woman is watching the crowd. She is wonderfully dressed but quite immobile, almost like a statue.

ANNE MORRIS

Mrs Chamberlain. Mrs Augustus Chamberlain.

She says the name sonorously, as if it were significant.

BERTHA

She seems to know as few people as I do.

AURORA

Oh, I think she knows a good many of the women here.

Mrs Morris speaks under her breath.

ANNE MORRIS

They just don't want to know her.

This interests Bertha and for a moment she catches Mrs Chamberlain's eye. But Ada and Marian have arrived.

AURORA

Aunt Ada! You are good.

ADA

Nonsense.

AURORA

How is Aunt Agnes? Is she coming?

ADA

I am her ambassador. And this is Marian our late brother's daughter.

AURORA

How do you do, Miss Brook. We're almost cousins, you know. My uncle was married to your aunt. The English would say we're *connected*. Are you in New York for long?

ADA

Marian has come to live with us. She'd like to help with the charity if she could be useful.

AURORA

But this is manna from Heaven! I'll send a note this very afternoon.

Bertha and Gladys have stood in silence with Mrs Morris.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I'm so sorry. This is Miss Brook and Miss Marian Brook...?

She has forgotten the Russells' names.

BERTHA

Mrs Russell. And Miss Russell. We are neighbours, I think.

ADA
Of course we are.

But she knows her sister would be furious at this.

MARIAN
Not that splendid new palace right
on the avenue?

ANNE MORRIS
The very one.

MARIAN
I was looking up at those rows of
windows only this morning,
wondering what lies behind them.

She laughs pleasantly, but Ada is uncomfortable.

BERTHA
Then you must cross the road and
see. Isn't that so, Gladys?

GLADYS
If Miss Brook could spare the time.

Ada gives an anxious look to Mrs Fane, who takes command.

AURORA
I think we should go in.

Ada seizes her chance to separate from Bertha and the group
surges forward, leaving Bertha and Gladys standing.

AURORA (CONT'D)
Don't tell Aunt Agnes they were
here. She'd be livid with me.

ADA
She'll find out.

AURORA
I feel rather sorry for the girl.

MARIAN
I liked them.

ADA
That's not the point.

MARIAN
Then what is?

AURORA
Let's face it, Aunt Ada, we need
the money, and you know how much
those women give when they want to
get in.

ADA

There's a price for that, Aurora,
and it's no good thinking you won't
have to pay it.

They vanish through the door into the ballroom. Marian looks round for a moment. Mrs Chamberlain is watching her from the back of the crowd. She turns to Aurora Fane, speaking softly. Aurora glances back at Mrs Chamberlain.

30

INT. MRS BAUER'S ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

30

Armstrong is with the cook/housekeeper.

ARMSTRONG

It's only that I'm afraid she won't
be happy here.

MRS BAUER

Oh?

ARMSTRONG

It's all very well for Miss Marian
to come and live with her aunts.
It's only proper. But New York is
not the South, Mrs Bauer. And Miss
Marian can't make it so.

MRS BAUER

I just hope Miss Scott's not
unhappy. I wouldn't want that.

ARMSTRONG

Of course not, and this is my
point. If you ask me, I think she
needs a good reference and a job in
a place she's used to.

MRS BAUER

What does Mrs van Rhijn say?

ARMSTRONG

She can't see it.

MRS BAUER

Is that a fact?

ARMSTRONG

She's from the South, herself. She
is not entirely free of their ways.

MRS BAUER

I wouldn't like you to be against
Miss Scott for the wrong reasons,
Miss Armstrong.

ARMSTRONG

Certainly not. I'm just worried for her welfare, that's all.

31 INT. DRAWING ROOM. MRS FISH'S HOUSE. NEWPORT. EVE. 31

Larry is with Carrie Astor as they all gather before dinner.

LARRY

Do you often come to Newport?

CARRIE ASTOR

I will. My parents bought a house here last year, Beechwood. They've nearly finished the renovations, so I suppose I'll be here a lot.

LARRY

Was there much to do?

CARRIE ASTOR

Well, obviously my mother couldn't live in a house without a ballroom.

Her tone is somewhat ironic.

LARRY

Your mother is quite a force.

CARRIE ASTOR

A force for good, I hope.

ORME WILSON

Well, a force to be reckoned with.

They've been joined by a handsome man in his twenties.

CARRIE ASTOR

Do you know Mr Russell? This is Mr Wilson. Mr Orme Wilson.

LARRY

Hello. Have you just joined us?

ORME WILSON

I begged Mrs Fish to let me come but she said I could only be here for one night and the last day. You know what she's like.

LARRY

Why were you so anxious?

ORME WILSON

I had my reasons.

He glances at Carrie but she looks down, blushing.

LARRY

I can't help feeling Mrs Fish has an odd manner for a busy hostess.

OSCAR

She's lucky they've decided her rudeness is entertaining.

Oscar has arrived, like the other men in white tie and tails. His manner is crisp and witty but maybe slightly defensive.

CARRIE ASTOR

The butler was looking for you.

OSCAR

He found me. He had a letter from my mother.

LARRY

Did you tell her about me?

OSCAR

Not yet. She wrote that a spinster cousin has come to live with them so that's something to look forward to: An old maid with a face like a cabbage and a figure to match.

32

INT. MARIAN'S BEDROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

32

Marian, lovelier than ever, is dressing while Peggy watches.

PEGGY

I don't know what to make of Mr Bannister, and Mrs Bauer is quite hard to read. But Greta's nice and the boy, Jack.

MARIAN

Greta?

PEGGY

The housemaid.

MARIAN

What about my aunt's maid, Armstrong?

PEGGY

I'm not sure.

MARIAN

Nor me. Is your room all right?

PEGGY

Oh, yes. It's over this one, but smaller.

MARIAN

Can you lend a hand?

She is struggling with a button and Peggy rises to do it. Just as she does there is a knock and Ada comes in.

ADA

I'm glad you're settling in, dear.

MARIAN

How can I help?

ADA

It seems silly, I know, but I'm not sure Agnes would be too pleased we were with the Russells earlier. It might be better not to mention it.

MARIAN

Wouldn't that be dishonest?

Of course she is teasing but Ada cannot see it.

ADA

Oh, I don't think so. We're just sparing her from an annoyance. What's wrong with that?

MARIAN

I thought they were pleasant.

ADA

I'm afraid Mrs Russell was anxious you should find them so, dear.

MARIAN

Surely you want to be friends with your neighbours, Aunt Ada?

ADA

This is different.

MARIAN

Why?

Ada doesn't know why, so she brings it to an end.

ADA

Aunt Agnes will be waiting for me. Come down when you're ready.

She is gone. The other two share a sigh of relief. As Peggy speaks, Marian sits to tidy her hair.

PEGGY

If she'd come in a minute earlier, we'd have some explaining to do.

As she speaks, she picks up the laundry.

MARIAN

You don't mind doing that?

PEGGY

I have to convince them I'm a maid.
Who is this Mrs Russell that Miss
Ada was talking about?

MARIAN

She's from the big house across the
road. Her daughter was with her.

PEGGY

And you're not to know them?

MARIAN

That's what Aunt Agnes thinks.

PEGGY

What do you think?

MARIAN

I think it's time to go down.

She pats her hair and gets to her feet.

33

INT. DINING ROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

33

Three of the Russells sit and eat in solitary splendour,
footmen standing to attention round the walls.

BERTHA

I've decided to give an 'At Home.'

GEORGE

What does that mean?

BERTHA

You know perfectly well. I'll send
cards saying I'll receive after
dinner on such and such an evening,
and they're welcome to come by.

GEORGE

Who are 'they'?

BERTHA

Mrs Fane was telling me how curious
people are about the house. And Mrs
Morris. They were practically
begging to be invited.

GEORGE

They want our money, Bertha.

BERTHA

It's a good cause.

GEORGE

I'm sure, and I am glad if you want to donate. But please don't deceive yourself that their interest in us is something more.

BERTHA

George we have to start somewhere. I haven't built this house so that I can dine alone with you and Gladys every night.

George glances at Frank, the footman. His face is impassive.

BERTHA (CONT'D)

Everyone calls on Mrs Vanderbilt now. They're seen everywhere.

GEORGE

What's that got to do with it?

BERTHA

When his grandfather arrived in New York, no one would go near him.

GEORGE

That was half a century ago. What are you saying? We have to keep this up for fifty years and then someone may drop by?

BERTHA

Things move faster nowadays.

GEORGE

That's a relief.

GLADYS

I think what Papa means is -

BERTHA

They're curious about this house. They've watched it going up and now they want to see inside. I'd like to take advantage of that.

GEORGE

It doesn't make them your friends.

BERTHA

I'm not asking them to dine or dance. I won't even use the ballroom. I'll save that for another time.

(MORE)

BERTHA (CONT'D)

I just want them to look in. And some of them, at least, will not be able to resist.

But the sympathy is clearly between father and daughter.

34

INT. KITCHENS. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

34

The servants are having dinner.

JACK

Is it true Miss Ada and Miss Marian met Mrs Russell from across the road at their charity event?

GRETA

How do you know that?

JACK

I saw one of their footmen in the street and he was talking about it. Miss Armstrong?

ARMSTRONG

I don't think I should say.

BANNISTER

Don't tell me you're having a fit of discretion, Miss Armstrong.

PEGGY

They met them. Why does it matter?

MRS BAUER

It'll matter when Mrs van Rhiin hears about it.

JACK

She'll have to give in one day.

BANNISTER

Why?

JACK

Well, she can't turn her back on every millionaire in the city, Mr Bannister. They own the future, those men, bought and paid for, and Mrs van Rhijn will have to come to terms with it sooner or later. Stands to reason.

BANNISTER

What will you do if she doesn't?

JACK

Me? Nothing, I guess.

BANNISTER

Oh, I see. You spoke so definitely
I thought you had some course of
action planned in protest.

JACK

No, Mr Bannister.

BANNISTER

No. And don't you forget it. Now,
they'll be going upstairs in a
minute, so look sharp, everyone.

He stands. The servants' dinner is over.

35

EXT. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

35

Larry Russell climbs out of a carriage with a suitcase.

MARIAN

Pumpkin!

The dog has slipped its leash and run into the road. Larry
drops his case and seizes it, just before it is squashed.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

Good heavens, that was brave.

She has crossed the road herself and takes the dog.

LARRY

Anyone would have done it.

MARIAN

I don't think so. Or there'd be
bodies up and down Fifth Avenue.

LARRY

Are you a van Rhijn?

MARIAN

Almost. Mrs van Rhijn is my aunt.
I'm Marian Brook.

LARRY

Miss Brook. I'm Larry Russell.
Well, you'd better tell them to
keep him under control in future.

MARIAN

Oh, nobody can keep Pumpkin under
control. Not for very long, anyway.

She takes the dog and walks back cross the road, turning once
to look at Larry as, behind him, Church opens the door.

36

INT. HALL. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

36

Larry hands the heavy suitcase to Church.

LARRY

Take this, will you, Church?
There's a dear chap. The trunk
should get here this afternoon.

CHURCH

Very good, Master Larry.

Gladys comes downstairs and Church drops back.

GLADYS

I was watching for you from my
window all morning.

LARRY

Very flattering.

GLADYS

No. The point is, Mama's giving a
soirée. She's sent out cards for an
At Home and almost -

BERTHA

There you are, dear. Have you had a
lovely time?

She has emerged from the drawing room. She gives him a kiss.

LARRY

Lovely enough.

BERTHA

You should have a valet of your own
now you're down from college. It's
not fair to burden Church with
extra work.

Church just bows and leaves with the case.

LARRY

I gather we're going to Christen
the new house.

BERTHA

Just a few people calling in. But I
think it's time.

LARRY

If you say so. Has anyone accepted?

BERTHA

I don't believe an 'At Home'
requires acceptances. Or refusals.
Not in the usual way.

LARRY

They just turn up or they don't.

BERTHA

That's it. I wondered if you'd like to ask any friends of yours.

LARRY

Such as?

BERTHA

Such as Mrs Fish or the Goelets or that nice Miss Astor.

LARRY

I hardly know them. I was only there to make up numbers. Are you asking Mrs van Rhijn?

BERTHA

Maybe. Now, go and wash. We'll have luncheon in a minute.

She moves away. Gladys catches her brother's eye.

37

INT. GEORGE RUSSELL'S OFFICE. NEW YORK. DAY.

37

The stenographer, Mabel, is with George, checking a list.

GEORGE

Tell Atkins no. Tell Gomez my offer is final. Warn Schultz I'm interested but not yet convinced, and give Brennan until six tonight or the deal's off.

MABEL

Very good, sir. And Mr Stanford White is waiting outside.

GEORGE

Bring him in, bring him in.

He stands and she ushers in the man we met with Bertha when she first arrived.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Come in, Mr White. I'm sorry to drag you here in the middle of your busy day.

STANFORD WHITE

I hope nothing's wrong with the house.

GEORGE

Quite the contrary. It's working splendidly. So splendidly, in fact, that Mrs Russell has decided it is time we began to entertain.

STANFORD WHITE

That's what it was built for.

GEORGE

You will receive a card for her *soirée*. She feels our guests will be interested in the place. She'd like you there to answer questions.

STANFORD WHITE

I should be honoured, of course.

GEORGE

But the main question is, will any of them come?

He is very blunt and the younger man is silenced.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You think me a hard-headed business man, but I understand these things better than you know.

STANFORD WHITE

I have no doubt of it.

GEORGE

Mrs Russell believes she can break the doors open, but can she? While those doors are locked?

STANFORD WHITE

They will not be locked forever.

GEORGE

Will you help her, Mr White?

STANFORD WHITE

How? I am not fashionable myself.

GEORGE

Yet.

STANFORD WHITE

But this gives me the opportunity to thank you properly for taking a chance on me.

GEORGE

You have Mrs Russell to thank, not me. Whatever her faults, she has imagination and taste. And nerve.

STANFORD WHITE

She will need all three in the coming struggle.

GEORGE

It is too late for her to cancel.

STANFORD WHITE

Nor should she, Mr Russell. To begin any journey, one must take the first step.

38

EXT. CENTRAL PARK. NEW YORK. DAY.

38

Agnes, Ada and Marian are riding in a modest Landau, open to the skies. Marian has her back to the horses. Ada cuddles Pumpkin on her lap.

AGNES

Why do you bring that horrid dog? Dogs are supposed to run alongside carriages, not travel in them.

MARIAN

Oh, I think we must make an exception of Pumpkin.

This earns her a grateful glance from Ada. At that moment, a carriage passes them and the occupant nods pleasantly but Agnes sits, staring straight ahead, unflinching.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

Who was that?

ADA

It was Mrs -

AGNES

I have no idea.

Marian and Ada share the moment.

AGNES (CONT'D)

Oscar's back in New York. I've asked him to look in this evening. It's time he met you. He'll have a friend with him, John Adams. They were at College together.

MARIAN

That's nice.

AGNES

You've heard of President Adams?

MARIAN

And John is his descendant?

AGNES

But you will call him Mr Adams.

Marian opens her reticule.

MARIAN

I almost forgot. Bannister gave me this as I was leaving. A footman left it just before we came down.

She hands an envelope to Agnes who opens it and recoils.

AGNES

What on earth is it?

She holds up a card as if it were infectious. Ada takes it.

ADA

It's from Mrs Russell.

AGNES

Who?

ADA

Agnes, you know perfectly well who. It's addressed to you as well, Marian. "Mrs van Rhijn, Miss Brook and Miss Marian Brook."

AGNES

She has clearly had lessons in etiquette.

MARIAN

She's trying to be neighbourly.

AGNES

But what does she want with us?

ADA

It's an invitation.

AGNES

Addressed *to us*?

ADA

Agnes, they were bound to start entertaining soon. They can't have built that great house to sit by the fire and read.

AGNES

Then let her entertain her own sort. Heaven knows there are plenty of them to choose from.

ADA

I agree with Marian. I think she meant to be friendly. It would be odd for her to give a party right opposite our front door and not ask us. And she has a daughter, not much younger than Marian.

AGNES

How do you know, and how does she know that Marian exists?

Ada and Marian are slightly nervous.

MARIAN

She might have seen me walking in and out. She probably asked the servants who I was. You know how they all talk.

AGNES

She may choose to gossip with her servants. I don't.

MARIAN

Aunt Agnes may I ask you something? Who is Mrs Augustus Chamberlain?

The result is an immediate *frisson*.

AGNES

How do you know that name?

MARIAN

Mrs Fane told me. Mrs Chamberlain was at the charity gathering.

AGNES

And was she, by heaven? Ada, who else was there? Pickpockets? Newly released criminals? The sweepings of the streets?

MARIAN

She was wonderfully dressed.

AGNES

Appearances are not everything. Good looks pave the road to hell quite as much as good intentions. What was Aurora thinking of?

ADA

One must remember that the point of the exercise was to raise money.

AGNES

That is no excuse for risking the reputation of every lady in the room. Marian, when and if you see Mrs Chamberlain again you will turn your face away. Do you hear me?

MARIAN

You don't know her, then?

AGNES

We do not know her and *we will not know her*. Is that clear?

MARIAN

Very. So what about Mrs Russell's party? I presume we're not going?

AGNES

Are you mad?

The carriage rolls on.

39 INT. HALL. FISH HOUSE. GRAMERCY PARK. NEW YORK. DAY. 39

Bertha stands in a grand hall. A butler walks towards her.

BUTLER

I'm afraid Mrs Fish is not at home, madam.

BERTHA

Really? Only she knows my son, Larry Russell. He was just staying with her. In Newport.

BUTLER

She is not at home, madam.

Her defeat is painful to watch.

BERTHA

But you'll give her my card? And this envelope? You'll say I called?

BUTLER

Of course, madam.

She has been blocked. There is nothing to do but go.

40 EXT. GRAMERCY PARK. NEW YORK. DAY. 40

Bertha climbs into her carriage, with its coachman and postilions, and is driven away. From an upstairs window of the house, Mrs Fish looks down from behind the curtain, holding a pasteboard invitation which she tears in half.

41 INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

41

Agnes is with Oscar van Rhijn, who has just come in.

AGNES

Ah, Oscar. Where is Mr Adams?

OSCAR

I'm meeting him here. Why did you want me to bring him?

Agnes ignores the question.

AGNES

You should have come earlier. You've been home for ages and you've never even met your cousin.

OSCAR

Well, I'm here now. How long will she be staying?

AGNES

Why?

OSCAR

I'll already have Aunt Ada round my neck. That's if anything should happen to you.

AGNES

Why must you always sound so sharp?

OSCAR

I presume I'm expected to keep the house running indefinitely.

AGNES

I shouldn't worry about Marian. She'll be gone long before I am.

OSCAR

What makes you so sure?

At that moment, the door opens and Marian comes in. Oscar is clearly surprised. She is not the old maid he was expecting.

AGNES

Marian, my dear. I don't believe you've ever met my son, Oscar.

MARIAN

Mr van Rhijn. I was beginning to think you were only a dream.

OSCAR

Should we kiss? We are cousins.

MARIAN
Let's shake hands for now.

OSCAR
But I hope you'll call me Oscar.

He is not interested in her but he sees she could be useful.

AGNES
He's been in Europe.

MARIAN
How I envy you.

OSCAR
It was mostly dull meetings in
dusty boardrooms.

MARIAN
I can't believe that.

Bannister opens the door. A handsome and muscular young man
come in.

BANNISTER
Mr John Adams.

AGNES
Mr Adams. How good of you to drop
by. What can we give you?

JOHN ADAMS
Nothing, thank you, Mrs van Rhijn.

AGNES
May I present my niece, Marian
Brook? She's just arrived.

JOHN ADAMS
Is it your first visit to New York?

MARIAN
It's my first visit to almost
anywhere. Can you help me with what
I should see?

JOHN ADAMS
I am sure Mrs van Rhijn will have a
comprehensive list of museums.

Despite his looks, this isn't the right man for Marian Brook.

OSCAR
So the Russells have moved into
their house, in my absence.

AGNES
Don't remind me.

OSCAR

George Russell is a power in the land, Mama. Before long you'll put money into his pocket with every train ticket you buy.

AGNES

I have given up travelling beyond the reach of a carriage.

JOHN ADAMS

But have you met them?

AGNES

We do not move in the same circles.

OSCAR

Mama, you are incorrigible.

AGNES

I take that as the highest praise.

OSCAR

I ran into the son in Newport. He's pleasant and he's good looking, and I gather there's a daughter.

MARIAN

I believe so. Miss Gladys Russell.

OSCAR

I should like to meet her. Are you going to their soirée?

AGNES

Of course not. Don't say such things.

The door opens and Ada appears.

ADA

Ah, Oscar. How nice to see you. You've met Marian at last?

OSCAR

I have. And this is Mr Adams.

ADA

How do you do.

AGNES

Can you both stay for dinner?

OSCAR

We're not dressed and we're expected at the Union later.

He bends over to kiss his mother.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 Goodbye, Mama, and I suspect you're
 right about Marian. Adams?

He leaves with John Adams. Below, the dinner gong sounds.

MARIAN
 Right about me how?

AGNES
 Never mind.

MARIAN
 I'd better get changed.

She leaves. Agnes looks at Ada.

AGNES
 Well? Do you think she liked him?

ADA
 It's going to be a great deal more
 difficult than that, Agnes.

42 INT. KITCHENS. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. DAY.

42

Mr Baudin is in a filthy mood. He is with Church.

BAUDIN
 She says two hundred but I must be
 ready with more at a moment's
 notice if we go over that figure.

CHURCH
 So what's wrong?

Baudin's exasperation spills over.

BAUDIN
 I'm not making ham sandwiches, Mr
 Church. I am not making toast. I'm
 making soufflés and syllabubs and
 spun sugar towers. How exactly am I
 to produce "more" if we go over two
 hundred? There is no such thing as
 instant food. Not in my kitchen.

CHURCH
 I won't tell you how to do your
 job, Monsieur Baudin, if you don't
 tell me how to do mine.

LAURENT
 I sympathise with Monsieur Baudin.
 Madame does not understand how
 these things should be managed.

CHURCH

I beg your pardon.

LAURENT

You know as well as I do, she isn't one of them. I used to work for Mrs Griswold on 53rd. She wouldn't have come near this house.

FRANK

Why ever not?

LAURENT

The mistress is not a player in the great game, whatever she likes to pretend. I doubt the old crowd - the *established* crowd - will want anything to do with her.

CHURCH

I'm going to ring the dressing gong, Miss Laurent, so I hope you can overcome your distaste and give the mistress a helping hand with her clothes for the evening?

He leaves them to it.

FRANK

Surely things are changing?

LAURENT

Not fast enough for Mrs Russell.

FRANK

I thought you liked her.

LAURENT

So I do. In a way. But she does not have the manner of the *real* people and she cannot learn it. Mrs Griswold would see through her in a moment. In just a moment.

WATSON

Why did you leave her if she was so wonderful? Or were you fired?

LAURENT

She died, Mr Watson, of a heart attack, just as she was changing to go to Mrs Astor's ball. It was very hard on Mr Griswold.

FRANK

Because he was left all alone?

LAURENT

Because he wanted to go to the ball.

The sound of the gong drifts down.

LAURENT (CONT'D)

That's us. And you, Adelheid. See to Miss Gladys but I will look in to inspect before she comes down.

ADELHEID

I can manage, Miss Laurent.

LAURENT

Yes, you can. Because I will look in to inspect. Off you go.

She, Watson and the wretched maid leave.

FRANK

Do you think she's right, Mr Baudin? It seems kind of harsh.

BAUDIN

I am cooking Coquilles St. Jacques. I have troubles of my own.

43

INT. BERTHA'S BEDROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

43

Bertha is being dressed by Laurent when George comes in.

GEORGE

You're ready very early. I should get changed.

BERTHA

There's no hurry. I just want to be downstairs to supervise all the final details.

GEORGE

You look wonderful, don't you think so, Laurent?

LAURENT

Madame always looks *superbe*.

GEORGE

Could we have a moment together?

LAURENT

But of course, Monsieur.

She hurries out. Bertha touches the tiara on her head.

BERTHA

It feels as if it's held on with nails.

GEORGE

She's right. You look superb.

BERTHA

Your people from the office are coming, aren't they?

GEORGE

I shall be angry if they don't.

BERTHA

And they're bringing their wives?

GEORGE

Again, I shall be angry if they don't.

BERTHA

You think I'm foolish to want it.

GEORGE

I'd like you to be happy. And I know my loving you is not enough.

She looks at him, as sincere as we have ever seen her.

BERTHA

It's almost enough.

There is an admission here, but quite a touching one.

GEORGE

I'll go and get dressed. Watson will be wondering where I am.

He walks towards the door, then he hesitates.

BERTHA

What is it?

GEORGE

Nothing.

He wants to warn her but he can't. Outside, Laurent is waiting. As he leaves, she enters and closes the door.

44

EXT. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

44

A red carpet is carried out as servants sweep the sidewalk in preparation. Church is supervising.

45 INT. MARIAN'S BEDROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

45

Marian and Peggy look out of the window. There is a knock and Ada comes in. Peggy jumps to her feet, snatching a shirt which she starts to fold. All this Ada sees.

ADA

I expect you've been watching the preparations across the road.

MARIAN

They're taking a lot of trouble.

ADA

It must seem hard to miss the party but Agnes feels so very strongly -

MARIAN

She can prevent my going. But she can't make me dislike them.

ADA

Nor would she want to.

MARIAN

Yes, she would.

ADA

Well, perhaps she would, but I would not. I'll see you downstairs.

Ada leaves. Marian drifts back to the window.

MARIAN

I wish I were going.

PEGGY

Why don't you?

MARIAN

You heard her. Aunt Agnes would have a seizure.

PEGGY

Does she have to know?

They share the look of co-conspirators.

46 INT. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

46

Bertha, magnificent, sweeps through the rooms. The flower people are just finishing the enormous arrangements.

BERTHA

Lose the chrysanthemums. I said specifically: No chrysanthemums!

They start to unpick the failed flowers as she walks on.

BERTHA (CONT'D)
When are they putting the carpet
across the sidewalk?

CHURCH
They're doing it now, madam.

BERTHA
And Monsieur Baudin isn't too
hysterical?

CHURCH
Well...

Church almost shrugs and they smile.

BERTHA
How are we getting on in here?

She walks into dining room.

47 INT. KITCHENS. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE. 47

Bannister is reading the paper.

BANNISTER
How long until dinner, Mrs Bauer?

MRS BAUER
I'm waiting for Miss Scott to tell
me when Miss Marian comes down. I'm
sure she'll be here in a minute.

Armstrong makes some sort of dismissive snort.

BANNISTER
Are you quite well, Miss Armstrong?

ARMSTRONG
Why shouldn't I be?

BANNISTER
Has Miss Scott annoyed you? Said
something unkind, perhaps, that
would justify your disdain?

ARMSTRONG
No.

BANNISTER
Then might you please bear that in
mind?

He chuckles softly. Peggy comes in.

PEGGY
Miss Marian's in the drawing room.

48 INT. DINING ROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE. 48

Bertha rises from her chair, throwing down her napkin.

BERTHA
We must let them get in here. They need to clear away and start laying the supper.

LARRY
No cigars and brandy for you, Papa.

GEORGE
We could go to the smoking room.

GLADYS
Is there anything I can do, Mama?

BERTHA
I should send you to bed.

LARRY
She's not a child.

BERTHA
So you keep telling me.

GEORGE
No one will mind that she isn't officially out, not in her own mother's house.

LARRY
Why isn't she out, anyway? She ought to be. You should have brought her out this year.

BERTHA
I am not giving a ball for Gladys until I know we can fill the rooms.

GEORGE
Let her stay, my dear.

BERTHA
If you're all going to bully me -

GLADYS
I can help.

BERTHA
Oh, very well. Now, go. Church, tell them to come in.

CHURCH
Very good, ma'am.

49 INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. EVE.

49

Ada is playing Solitaire, with Pumpkin on her lap. Agnes reads a newspaper. Marian strolls over to the window. She looks out at the red carpet, with two footmen standing with torchères on both sides of the giant front door. There is the sound of an orchestra. A carriage stops. Two guests get out.

MARIAN
I'm going for a walk.

AGNES
Don't be silly.

MARIAN
I want some air.

AGNES
But who would accompany you? You can hardly go out alone.

ADA
I could come if you're really determined. I'll bring Pumpkin.

MARIAN
No, there's no need. I'll take Scott. I won't be long.

AGNES
Indeed you won't, but -

Marian slips out of the room.

ADA
What a shame. I should have liked a stroll. Poor little Pumpkin. I'll ask Bannister to take you out.

AGNES
This is Henry, all over again.

ADA
She's only gone for a walk.

AGNES
A walk at night. If that's where it begins, where will it end?

50 EXT. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

50

The door is opened by Bannister. Marian and Peggy emerge. They wait for him to close it.

PEGGY

Won't he see what we're up to?

MARIAN

He won't tell if he does.

They approach the carpet. They are alone as they walk its length towards the waiting footmen. The music is louder now but there are no carriages and no sound of a crowd.

51 INT. HALL/DRAWING ROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 51

In the hall, footmen and maids are ready to take the coats but no other guests.

PEGGY

Shall I wait outside?

MARIAN

Don't be silly. This is my maid, Scott. I wonder if she might sit quietly somewhere until I am ready to go home.

She is addressing Church, whom she does not, of course, know.

CHURCH

Certainly, Miss Brook. She can wait downstairs.

PEGGY

I don't mind helping here.

CHURCH

That is kind but I'm not convinced we need more help than we have.

At this, Marian and Peggy catch each other's eye.

CHURCH (CONT'D)

If you'll come this way.

He moves into the open arch dividing the hall from the drawing room. At the far side of the palatial chamber, Bertha is with two or three people. A few more, maybe six, stand around the huge apartment. Church announces:

CHURCH (CONT'D)

Miss Brook.

Bertha looks up and walks over.

BERTHA

Miss Brook, what a surprise. I thought you weren't coming. Are your aunts with you?

MARIAN

I'm afraid they couldn't get away.

BERTHA

But you are made of sterner stuff.

Marian seeks to make things normal.

MARIAN

I was impressed that your butler knew my name.

BERTHA

Good servants know everything. Ah, Larry. May I present my son, Larry, Miss Brook. You're neighbours. You should know each other. Excuse me.

She leaves them to greet a bewildered looking Aurora Fane.

LARRY

I hope the little dog recovered from its shock.

MARIAN

His near demise, you mean, but don't worry. He's very resilient.

She smiles, staring round the uninhabited space.

MARIAN (CONT'D)

I guess I'm a little early.

Larry shakes his head, following her glance.

LARRY

I don't think so. You see, Miss Brook, my father's dollars do not always have the desired effect. Usually, but not always.

She examines his face. He is certainly very handsome.

MARIAN

You don't seem to mind much.

LARRY

I don't. These things should happen naturally. Unlike dear Mama I'm not a big believer in forcing change.

MARIAN

Then I suspect she and I have more in common than we do.

LARRY

I think I met a cousin of yours recently. Oscar van Rhijn.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

He seems to want to get to know us.
We should have asked him tonight.

MARIAN

He's my aunt's son, but we've only
just met.

LARRY

You had not met when he spoke of
you, judging by his description.

Before Marian can respond to this, Gladys appears.

GLADYS

Hello, Miss Brook.

LARRY

Do you two know each other?

MARIAN

Yes, but you mustn't tell my aunt.

She laughs. Bertha is talking to Aurora Fane.

BERTHA

Is Mr Fane not with you?

AURORA

He wanted to be, very much, but
business has tied him to his desk.

BERTHA

And Mrs Morris? I thought she would
be here. She was so curious about
the house.

AURORA

How she longed to come!

BERTHA

But she couldn't get away either?

AURORA

Isn't it a shame?

BERTHA

A real shame when you think of the
check you both want me to write.

AURORA

I know. But I thought if I came
alone and just stayed for a few
minutes then that might -

She breaks off, suddenly aware of what she has said.

AURORA (CONT'D)

I mean -

BERTHA

I know what you mean, Mrs Fane. And please don't feel you have to linger. It's really not necessary.

AURORA

Well, I -

BERTHA

Just go, Mrs Fane. Please go.

Bertha stalks away, furious at her own humiliation. Marian is still with Larry and Gladys.

GLADYS

Mrs Fane is leaving.

LARRY

She wasn't here long. I suppose Mama has made another enemy.

MARIAN

I'm afraid I can't stay, either. My aunts are waiting for me. I wanted to look in, to pay my respects to your parents, but I ought to go.

GLADYS

I hope we meet again.

MARIAN

I'm sure we will.

LARRY

Let the three of us be friends in spite of everything. Contra Mundi.

He takes her hand which surprises her but she smiles. She walks to where Bertha stands with George and Stanford White.

BERTHA

Leaving already, Miss Brook?

MARIAN

I'm afraid I must get back but thank you so much for including me.

BERTHA

For including you in what?

GEORGE

Thank you for coming, Miss Brook.

Marian walks away, watched by an interested Stanford White.

STANFORD WHITE

Who was that?

GEORGE

Our neighbour, Miss Marian Brook,
and there's no need to be angry
with her, my dear. The aunts will
have forbidden her to come and she
has chosen to defy them.

BERTHA

But why must I be the enemy?

STANFORD WHITE

Because you are the future, Mrs
Russell. And it frightens them.

In the hall Marian finds Aurora Fane waiting for her coat.

AURORA

Miss Brook, what are you doing
here? Does Aunt Agnes know?

MARIAN

No, and please don't give me away.

AURORA

I won't tell if you don't. Good
night. I hope we meet again soon.
In less foreign climes.

Back in the drawing room, Bertha looks round angrily.

BERTHA

Where are your business partners?

GEORGE

At a guess, I would say their wives
would not accompany them and they
were reluctant to come alone.

BERTHA

By God, I'll make them pay one day.

GEORGE

But not tonight, I think.

They stand together in the almost empty chamber.

52

INT. DRAWING ROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

52

Marian finds her aunts sitting just as they were.

ADA

There you are. Have you had a nice
walk, dear?

MARIAN

Very nice, thank you. I think I'll
say good night.

AGNES

We're going up, too. Come along,
Ada. It's long past your bedtime.

They stand together, but as they are about to leave...

AGNES (CONT'D)

By the way, we have decided to make
you a modest allowance.

MARIAN

Oh, Aunt -

AGNES

You needn't faint with delight. It
won't be much but you'll be able to
keep your maid and have something
in reserve, besides.

MARIAN

You're darlings, both of you!

AGNES

Fiddle, faddle, no nonsense please.
Now go to bed and pray you haven't
caught a cold in the night air.

She leaves. Marian turns to Ada.

MARIAN

You are darlings whatever she says.

ADA

Your Aunt Agnes loves you very much
but please make sure you never
disappoint her. And Marian -

Marian stops and turns.

ADA (CONT'D)

When you're ready will you explain
why your maid is not a maid?

MARIAN

But I -

ADA

I am not clever, my dear. I know
that. But I am not completely
stupid, either.

MARIAN

Will you tell Aunt Agnes?

ADA

No. On one condition.

Marian waits.

ADA (CONT'D)

That you explain what Scott is doing here.

MARIAN

I don't know, Aunt Ada. Not really. But I think she's honest, and I want to be her friend if I can.

ADA

I assume she's not trained?

MARIAN

She is a great help to me, and I hope I can persuade her to stay.

Ada thinks for a moment.

ADA

That sounds like the truth, so I'll keep your secret. And now, good night, my dear.

She goes. Marian drifts back to the window to look out at a carriage leaving below.

53 INT. DINING ROOM/HALL. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 53

A huge display of food of every variety is almost untouched. Bertha stands with Church and George. Footmen line the walls.

GEORGE

What will you do with it all?

BERTHA

Church, get the kitchen staff to box it up and send a message in the morning to the Charity Organisation Society. Ask them to collect it.

GEORGE

I don't quite know what the poor of New York will make of lobster salad or crêpes Suzettes.

BERTHA

Who cares? They might as well eat it. No one else will.

George nods to Church and follows his wife out.

54 INT. KITCHENS. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 54

Laurent is with Baudin and some of the others.

BAUDIN

Cooking for paupers? That's not what I'm used to.

WATSON

You're not used to making supper for guests who never eat it.

LAURENT

The evening was a folly. This house is a folly.

FRANK

Don't count her out so quickly.

WATSON

I agree. She knows what she wants. Why shouldn't she try to get it?

LAURENT

It's nothing to me, if she fails or succeeds.

CHURCH

Isn't it, Miss Laurent? You seem to me to take it personally.

He has come in and now they stand straighter than they did.

LAURENT

Failure is catchable, Mr Church. It rubs off if you're not careful.

55

INT. MARIAN'S BEDROOM. BROOK HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

55

Peggy is sitting by the fire as Marian undresses.

PEGGY

I've decided. If I'm going on with this, I'll take a course in how to do it properly.

MARIAN

Does that mean you'll stay?

PEGGY

For now and, if you're going to pay me, I'll work.

MARIAN

There's no need. I like having you here. I think I should go mad with no one to talk to.

PEGGY

I want to work. I'll learn how the job's done. It could be useful. Who knows? I may open a hotel one day.

MARIAN

I'd like to work. Properly.

PEGGY

What at?

MARIAN

Who cares? I just want to be busy, to be needed, to be in a hurry.

PEGGY

You know they'd never allow it. Except for charity.

MARIAN

Then I'll work at my charities, and I'll do it well. And after that, who knows? I'm going to bed.

PEGGY

Me, too. And you're right, we'll have to see.

She stands and gathers up the laundry.

PEGGY (CONT'D)

Good night, *Miss* Marian.

The door closes and Marian blows out her candle. We can just find her in the moonlight. She opens a drawer and looks down at the portraits of her parents.

MARIAN

Yes. We'll have to see.

52

INT. NEW YORK BOARDING HOUSE. NIGHT.

52

Oscar takes out a key and opens a door. Inside the bedroom, John Adams is waiting for him.

JOHN ADAMS

How was your evening?

OSCAR

Wasted. I wanted to go to a party.

JOHN ADAMS

Any party?

OSCAR

No. A special one. At the Russells'. But I wasn't invited.

JOHN ADAMS

You will be next time. What was the attraction?

OSCAR

Never mind about that now.

He walks into the man's arms and kisses him passionately.

56 INT. HALL. MRS ASTOR'S HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT.

56

An immensely grand butler, the legendary Mr Hefty, in an immensely grand hall, opens the front door. Two young women enter with a man. One is Carrie Astor. They're dressed for some glamorous gathering.

HEFTY

Good evening Mr and Mrs Roosevelt.
Good evening, Miss Caroline.

CARRIE

Is Mrs Astor still awake, Hefty?

HEFTY

She's in the drawing room.

HELEN

Say good night to Mama for me. I'm nearly dead and Rosey has to be up at dawn.

CARRIE

I will. Good night.

57 INT. DRAWING ROOM. MRS ASTOR'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

57

This splendid room is lit by pools of lamp and candle light. Gilt glimmers in the darkness. In a chair sits Mrs Astor, an imposing figure. Not handsome, but imposing. Carrie comes in.

MRS ASTOR

Carrie, dear. How was it?

CARRIE

All right. Mr Dvorak played until I thought his fingers would come off and then he spoke about composing and we couldn't understand a word, but the supper wasn't bad. And the ortolans were really delicious.

MRS ASTOR

Who was there?

CARRIE

The usual crowd. Did you know Mrs Goelet's had a baby boy?

MRS ASTOR

I did. Where's Helen?

CARRIE

She's gone to bed. Rosey has to get up early for some diplomatic thing.

MRS ASTOR

I wish you wouldn't call him that.

CARRIE

What are these?

She has taken up a pile of invitations from a side table.

MRS ASTOR

Old invitations. I was looking through them to see if I needed to keep any of the addresses.

CARRIE

This one was for tonight. Mrs George Russell at eight hundred and eleven 5th Avenue. I met their son, in Newport with Mamie Fish. Did you go?

MRS ASTOR

Don't be ridiculous.

Mrs Astor takes back the card and throws it on the fire.

58 INT. BERTHA'S BEDROOM. RUSSELL HOUSE. NEW YORK. NIGHT. 58

Bertha, dimly lit by moonlight, smothers her own wracking sobs. George comes quietly in at the door. She stops, closing her eyes tightly. He whispers from where he stands.

GEORGE

Are you awake? Would you like me to come in with you?

But she is silent, forcing herself to breathe evenly.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

This is harder than you thought it would be. I know that. But I hope you won't give up.

Still she does not respond.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Then good night.

He walks towards the door but she suddenly sits up in bed.

BERTHA

I will never give up! Never! And I
promise you this: *I'll make them
sorry one day!*

GEORGE

I am glad to hear it, my dear.
Defeat is not your colour.

With that, he leaves her with her dreams of revenge.

END OF EPISODE ONE