

EIGHT POINT FIVE YEARS

Gibbo has been thrashing around with ideas for his next filmic triumph:

biopics, crime, lust-in-the-dust ...

Result? It's a no-brainer: take a beloved classic novel and film it!

Even if there are already 20 such offerings, surely Gibbo can add one more.

In a new twist, the peeps at Buckingham Palace decide to give out hisses (rather than kisses) to the deserving few. Instead of KCMG, the "honour" will be WTEBS ("Worst Thing Ever Been Seen").

And Gibbo will be first cab off the rank.

"Cajolery" will earn for him the inaugural **Crotch-Kick** non-award.

The moral being:

"If you don't understand Jane Austen -- then leave the poor girl alone!"



OPENING TITLES

It is 1814. Stuningly beautiful music accompanies the sumptuous view of a man-of-war sailing ship approaching the coast of West England.

The titles roll through.

At the completion of the titles, we move seamlessly inside the ship into a private cabin provided for Admiral Croft and his wife Sophy.

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ACT I

I, Scene i: Now That We Are At Peace (Home Waters 1814)

Sophy (Mrs Sophia Croft) sits at a tiny desk next to a porthole aboard the sailing ship which we watched in the Opening Titles. The gentle rocking does not disturb her. On her desk lies a profusion of letters. She picks up one, scans it, shakes her head then takes up another (for perusal).

Admiral Croft enters the well-appointed cabin.

Sophy And so it is all concluded? We are not for America?

Admiral Croft No, my love. I am (as ever) of your opinion. 'Tis time to put our sailing days to rest. My brother officers in the Admiralty have nodded to my seniority and wish me a hearty retirement. Amen to that. We are at last at Peace ... and we shall remain at peace.

I shall thereby leave the naval squabbles over the vast ocean to younger men. We (you and I, Sophy) shall accustom ourselves to a life on dry land.

Sophy nods. But it is evident that a certain sadness has captured the Admiral.

Sophy And I have been more than busy discerning where it is that we should reside.

Admiral Croft Aye? Do you recommend any particular county?

Sophy retrieves one of the pieces of paper. She glances at it.

Sophy So many of my correspondents have directed my notions first this

way and then that ... But (my dear) my thoughts still meander towards Somerset.

Admiral Croft Somerset d'ye think?

Sophy *slyly* Considering that you are a native of that county, might that fact not recommend itself to me?

Admiral Croft *dreamy* Somerset, where I was raised. Memories of my boyhood are fond. Aye!

But of course, you must decide upon your own inclination.

Sophy The Mendip Hills seem to call to me. My informant believes that part of lovely England to be romantic, grand and delectable. There!

If we were to secure the lease of a handsome acreage in Somerset – Well, I should think myself very fortunate indeed.

And of course Bath is there.

Admiral Croft Bath!

Very well then. We are not to venture forth to America ... Then on dry land we must be ... By preference in Somerset.

The benefits of Bath are great indeed. Especially at my time of life.

And soon we shall put to port for the very last time. I trust that we shall not shed too many tears at the sombre thought ...

Sophy Fo! Our new life will take up all of our considerations and leave us no time for maudlin weeping.

Walks about the countryside taking in the many lovely prospects. And perhaps a pony and gig, that we may tool about the vales, towns and villages. What a quaint picture that presents after all of our many travels in the East Indies and so forth.

Admiral Croft *nods* 'Fore long we will be disembarked. And there it ends ...
[Slight pause to indicate regret]
You are right my very dear. Let us not gloom over the past.
I shall hire rooms post-haste in the best inn that is to found, and
from there I shall send notice to my man of affairs directly. And
with that (hopefully) we shall draw to a happy conclusion. Aye!
The thing is as good as done.

Sophy *smiles* What a pleasant life awaits us in Somerset!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene ii: Dear Reader (Sydney suburb 2022)

A suburban garden somewhere in the outskirts of Sydney. It is well-established and pleasant. Donny snoozes in an outdoor chair. His mother Lina is clattering about in a garden shed. From this shed Lina wheels out the old wheelbarrow (which is loaded with a few battered cardboard or wooden boxes).

Lina is dressed in old gardening clothes and wears gumboots and protective garden gloves. She wheels the wheelbarrow up to Donny. She gives her son a good shake such that he wakes up.

Lina *bright* Here! Fill your boot!

Donny (still drowsy) wakes up. He groans.

Donny Wha?

Lina (still wearing the gloves) opens a box and starts to ruffle through it.

Lina Didn't Gibbo want some ideas from old books? Early Victorian?
Regency? Well, here are some golden oldies.

Rather than sitting down next to Donny, Lina uses the spare chair as a receptacle for each box in turn. She sifts about until finally she finds her quarry. Meanwhile Donny casually picks up and discards a few of the old books.

Lina *triumphant* Ah! Here it is! Here it is! Here it is! My favourite: this is the one we want.

Lina passes a very worn paperback to Donny. He glances at this book with uncertainty.

Lina These aren't mine. They're Grandma's.

Donny *unsure* I don't like the look of --

Lina No that's exactly what you want. Only you **have** to remember that it's all old-speak. This is from the time of Napoleon and Nelson and Wellington and those kind of people. Make sure you impress that upon Gibbo.

Lina turfs the boxes of books off the outdoor chair, then sits down next to Donny.

Lina When the blokes say that they are going off to enjoy some sport – that's not what they mean. "Sport" in those far-off days wasn't golf or footy or tennis or so on ... It was taking out a shotgun (and a dog or two) to shoot game birds. "Pheasants" not "peasants". And grouse.

You'll get the drift.

Donny is unimpressed. Frowning, he passes the book back to Lina. With a happy sigh she riffles through the pages.

Lina Oh! And don't make the dreadful mistake that I made. Grandma nearly fell off her chair laughing at me. I couldn't work out why they were always on about going to take a bath. You know: soapy water in a tub. But they were going to a **place** called Bath in England. I think it had something to do with old Roman baths ... But I'm probably on the wrong tram there.

Lina then passes the book back to Donny.

Donny *reluctant* Thanks, old girl. But I don't think this is what Gibbo is looking for.

Lina Yes it is. That's exactly it!

It was all so lovely. Polite, polished, refined ... Sipping tea in

absolute elegance from fragile china cups. Drawing rooms furnished to die for. Precious, sweet ...

Donny squirms.

Donny *shakes head* Nah, we had a Miss Marple look-alike in the dinosaur movie and she didn't go down all that well. I got told by someone who was really up on all that stuff: she said that it was pretty crap actually.

Lina That was Bonnie Mason-Carr, I'll bet.

What would she know? You and your mates made a motzer out of that one. And then you creamed everyone with the pirates slash Vikings epic.

This one will be just as good!

Just make sure that Gibbo sticks to the era. Curtseys, maids, butlers, a cook, roaring fires, hand-delivered letters, horse-drawn carriages ...

Donny I might take a decko at these other ones ...

Lina presses on, ignoring the rejection of the novel that she has chosen.

Lina They never said "seven-thirty AM" or anything like that. It was always "half-past seven in the morning". And you **have** to avoid anything that smacks of keyboard-speak.

Donny *all at sea* What the hell's "keyboard-speak"?

Lina They would call the year "eighteen hundred and five". Never "eighteen-oh-five" because keyboards hadn't yet been invented. Well maybe they had but no-one knew about 'em. Especially not the genteel landed gentry in the English countryside.

Just don't substitute "oh" or "zero" for "nought" ...

Yes they had printers so it's okay to talk about uppercase and lowercase letters. However, they would write all their correspondence (and they wrote all the time like it was going out

of style) with quill pen and ink. That's where "penknife" comes from.

Er ... What else?

Oh yes! Gentlemen stood up for ladies and assisted ladies. It was as if ladies were so delicate that they needed constant care.

Donny laughs in spite of himself.

Donny So I'm guessing that they didn't hack around in the garden dressed in daggy old togs like you, huh?

Lina stands.

Lina Of course not.

Oh! Oh! Oh! Most important!

The female **had** to be a virgin right up to her wedding night. Mandatory!

There were so many rules in Society. You had to know where you stood in the pecking order: who bowed to whom. Who sat where at the formal dinner table.

The gentlemen rose from their chairs in the dining room after dessert when the ladies filed out (headed for coffee and a polite natter in the drawing room). The men sank back into their chairs to get stuck into the port while they discussed politics, money and horseflesh. So sophisticated!

They then trooped in to sit about with the ladies. Giving advice to those who were sewing tapestries and so on. Somebody tickled the ivories as other people got up to sing. Or they indulged in a jolly country dance. Then the carriages were called for so that the guests could go home and pop off to bed.

No electricity – so candles only. What a life, eh?

Donny *shakes head* Horseflesh ... While the guys were yacking about "horseflesh" what were the ladies talking about?

Lina *shrugs* Same as they do today: flower gardens, fashion, children, ailments and babies.

Now Donny stands. He has selected a few battered old books to study. Lina adds her favourite to the top of his pile. Donny smiles and sighs.

Lina Guys nowadays bore each other to death with skiting about their motors. Cars, SRVs, motorboats, jet skis ... Well in the "good-ole-days" the gents rattled on about their horsepower – literally!

[Takes a long sigh]

So where is Gibbo? Have you already told me? Have I forgotten?

Donny Paris.

Lina That's right.

[Nods towards the pile of books]

Oh ... So you're off to Paris with this lot, then?

Donny No I'll go through them first.

Lina I meant to ask ...

Is Bonnie still on the scene? I mean are you and she -- ?

Donny *shrugs* I guess so.

Lina Where is she? In Paris with the others?

Donny *uninterested* Nuh. London.

Lina Okay ... Alright! Just remember to tell Gibbo when you see him that if he scripts one of these "oldie" novels, then he **has** to stay in the era.

Watchword: If you don't understand Jane Austen -- then leave the poor girl alone!

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iii: Malice At The Palace Part I (Buckingham Palace 2022)

In the administrative section (Buckingham Palace) a group of three females and one male comprise the Logistical Operations department. Headed by Angst, the other members of this very necessary and strategically placed group are Blenheim, Chisel and the sole man, Draino.

Angst is a thickset, chunky woman in her 50's. She dresses in dowdy, expensive clothes befitting her age and situation. Her name is Barbara Jarvis, and she is the wife of a captain in the Royal Navy.

Blenheim (early 30's) and has never married. She is Ann Anderson. Blenheim is relentlessly bullied by Angst. Thus Blenheim takes every possible step to remain out of Angst's sight. However she is in a close relationship with a peer of the realm (Lord Frederick Keynes).

Chisel (Chloe) is in her 40's is divorced but has retained her married name. She is very attractive, dressing with style and care.

Draino appears to live in a dream world. In truth he is very fly. He is bullied by the other three department members but seems to be completely unaware of the Turkish treatment. Either that or he is simply thick-skinned. He is Angus Johnson.



The scene opens on a Friday afternoon. Angst sits at a huge desk in her imposing office. Angst writes with biro, ignoring the laptop which stands at the ready (also on the desk).

There is a knock at the door.

Angst loudly *Enter who dares!*

Draino opens the door, peeping around it without entering the room.

Draino smiling *Just popped my head in to wish you a happy weekend.*

Angst glances at her wrist watch. For a small moment she studies Draino. Then she forces a smile which ultimately looks forced.

Angst Yes ... The weekend ...

And what delights await you, Angus? Taking out the golf clubs, are you?

Draino edges into the room, leaving the door ajar.

Draino 'Fraid not, Mrs Jarvis. No – that is – Relatives of my good lady wife will by now have landed in Liverpool. Travelling from Ireland.

Angst Ireland?

Draino They possess a quintessential prospect of Fingle Bay. Lovely it is! Mullioned windows and so forth.

Angst And they are to stay with you and -- ?

Draino No! They are in fact dossing at the Savoy (of course) whilst in Angleterre. But they will catch up with us tomorrow evening. Cheesies and winesies. Bridge. I so love a rubber of bridge (when I'm with people who understand the nuances of that splendid card game). Don't you?

Angst Irish? That could mean anything.

However ... they are aficionados of bridge which probably intimates that --

Draino has been waiting for the "big reveal". Here it comes!

Draino Lady Dalrymple and her enchanting daughter the Honourable Miss Cartaret.

Angst has to work extra hard to force a smile.

Angst I see ...

All elegance and refinement, one supposes. Well, well.

Draino *smug* Quite!

Angst Off you trot then. Mustn't keep the aristocracy of the Emerald Isle waiting, must we?

Draino nods, smiles and leaves. The door shuts behind him.

Angst glowers towards the closed door. She rises, and walks briskly to the window. There (seething) she drums her fingers on the window sill.

Angst *venomous, to self* I'll think of you while I'm attacking my nut grass! Since I am still acting the part of "grass widow" whilst Captain Jarvis plies about in his Royal Navy vessel. Heaven knows in what ocean ...

[Frowns]

And where (one might enquire) is Chisel?

Angst lifts the phone receiver. Just as she begins to press buttons, there is a knock at the door.

Angst *loudly* Enter who dares!

A very flustered Chisel pops her head around the door. Angst gives the panting Chisel a withering glance as she replaces the handset of the phone.

Chisel *breathless* Oh! I'm so sorry, Barbara. I've been chucked out of my office. Had you heard about that?

Angst No, I haven't ... Why? Why chucked out?

Angst appears to be offended on Chisel's behalf.

Chisel That ... They ... That ... Oh! the powers that be are refurbishing the Holland Square suite of offices and I've been moved elsewhere.

Angst *appalled, offended* No-one told me! No-one breathed a syllable. I have not approved the refurbishment of your quarters. Nor will I.

Chisel No! No! You misunderstand. I'm simply being moved out of their way. Electricity, water and so on ... These facilities may have to be cut off. My office being the only one affected, they wanted me out of the way. Immediately. That is I'm the only one not being

rennoed I mean.

Angst And they gave you no warning?

Chisel No! Just "get out".

Angst And presumably these "mover-onners" have provided you with alternative accommodation?

Chisel Well, it's temporary only. A loaner. Yes, the chaps from Planning & Equipment (or is it Equipment & Planning?) Anyway – yes, they're moving me now.

But it's still disconcerting. Unsettling, you know what I mean ...
And on a Friday afternoon.

Angst I trust that your temp bolthole will answer the purpose. You know I'm going to raise the most incredible stink if it is not up to scratch.

Chisel Um ... Yes. It's pleasant actually. Roomy.

Angst changes expression. Her mood changes. Now she holds her head on the side as she glares at Chisel.

Angst "Roomy"? How does "roomy" equate? For instance, is your temporary abode as big as (say) **this** office?

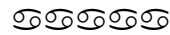
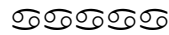
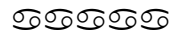
Chisel becomes extremely flustered. She cannot answer her boss. Angst is now defiant.

Angst *crisp* Show me!

Angst grabs her handbag, slinging it over her arm in the manner of HM. She gives a brief gesture to Chisel, indicating that they should immediately visit the new room.



Our camera positions itself such that the two ladies march purposefully towards it. Angst is grimly determined whereas Chisel remains breathless and extremely flustered. We hear the crisp sounds of their footfalls.



We are now situated in a completely different part of the Palace. Again, our camera positions itself such that the two ladies march purposefully towards it. Angst is still grimly determined whereas Chisel remains breathless and extremely flustered. We hear the crisp sounds of their footfalls. And Chisel speeds up such that she will reach the door first.

Chisel *over-bright* Here it is!

Chisel swings open the door, inviting Angst to enter.

Chisel Oh good! They've finished! Please come in.

Angst steps inside the office, looking about. She is obviously very displeased. Even offended. Angst struts about looking everywhere. Her eyes flick from this to that. Her mouth works to indicate her ill-humour. Chloe is wary.

Chisel *tentative* Is anything the matter? I expect I'll be able to work okay here ...

Angst continues to strut about. From her handbag Angst extracts a tape measure unit. She commences to measure up the room. She makes loud "hmphing" noises as she does so.

Then Angst turns to point at a door in the far wall.

Angst Where does that portal lead?

Chisel is mortified. She can hardly find the words such is her agony.

Chisel *whispers* Um ... It's a ... It's a water closet.

Angst gives Chisel a look of complete despise as she briskly opens the WC door. Into the little room she steps (leaving Chisel a-gush with trembling). Then Angst leaves the WC, closing the door with a decided snap.

When Angst speaks, her voice is very much edged with fury.

Angst You have moved **here** to **this** temporary office in which we find a WC.

A toilet.

A lavatory.

A bog.

Of your very own. No sharesies.

Chisel can only make squeaking noises. Angst has reached the limit of her patience.

Angst Understand this. I am no less than the Head of the Logistical Operations Department at Buckingham Palace. My work area (therefore) must be the biggest, the best and (most importantly) the most impressive. I am the Head. And you (Ms Chloe Hunt-Marsden) may not luxuriate in your private pissoir whilst your senior officer (that is my good self!) has to park her botty on a shared seat in the general Ladies loo.

Angst makes the stowing of her tape measure unit in her handbag into a show of power. The clinching of the handbag makes an impressive snap. Chloe is unable to more than quake in real terror. Angst really works her mouth.

Angst *businesslike* Well, hurry up now. They all tend to decamp early on a Friday afternoon. Explain that this move (me to you and you to me) is only temporary but that it must be undertaken at once. And if there is any funny business they have my express permission to –

What do you shake your head at me for?

Chloe *trembling* I don't understand the arrangements.

Angst *from the heights* I am the Head of the Department.

It behoves **me** to run my professional affairs from a solid workplace which truly befits my high station, reflecting the enormous respect and esteem in which I am held.

Chloe (dear) you will find those males from the Estate, Equipment

and Planning Department (who assisted you not long since) and you will instruct same to move *my* office here whilst at the same time moving *your* office there. We'll swap.

And this geographic situation will continue unabated until such time as the Holland Square refurbishments are at an end.

On your way.

Angst nods. Then Angst snaps her fingers several times. Chisel gets the message. She dashes from the room. Angst smiles: she is pleased with herself.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene iv: "Worst Thing Ever Been Seen" Part I (London 2022)

Night.

Frederick strolls into his bedroom to find Blenheim in bed. She is playing with her mobile phone. At his entry she flings herself under the covers causing Frederick to laugh out loud.

Shyly, she re-emerges. Blenheim is wearing a very attractive informal outfit (as if she came home and just flopped immediately into bed).

Frederick I thought that you were on a night out with the girls.

Blenheim *smirks* Snuck home to make sure that you were behaving yourself.

Frederick pretends to be alarmed. He has not invited anyone over in Blenheim's absence, but pretends that he has (as a jest).

Frederick Oh shit! I'd better launch into an arse-cover exercise before you wise-up.

[Theatrical]

Darling! I must make a few phone calls to warn off my expected

guests.

Blenheim Lady guests?

Frederick *rueful* Female anyway.

They both laugh. He throws himself onto the bed such that they can cuddle for a while.

Frederick You poor thing! All dressed up and now I'm going to remove all the swish clothing (as is my way).

Blenheim Oh, yes. Anything you can devise to cheer me up will be greatly appreciated.

Frederick sets to work undressing Blenheim. This proves difficult as she is in bed. Besides, she does nothing at all to assist him.

Frederick What happened? Did you gals get yourselves into a fight?

Blenheim No. The movie was awful. I lasted 5 minutes. Then I waited in the foyer for the others. But they followed soon after.

That is to say, we all hated it. Absolutely loathed it.

Frederick Put a scathing review on-line. Savage them with a tranche of keystrokes. That'll show 'em.

Blenheim In the morning. It warrants sleeping on.

Frederick Do it now while your blood is up.

Blenheim No. I'd rather muck around with you ...

The light switches off. We hear rustling and giggling.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene v: "Worst Thing Ever Been Seen" Part II (London 2022)

Three members of the London Arts Council (Dunbar, Henge and Nugent) meet with Blenheim. These people have found a marvellous sunny spot on a protected terrace in London's bon vivant district.

They are all tucking into large plates of food from a smorgasbord (seen in the background). A photograph of Nugent (during his time with the Royal Ballet Company) appears on a nearby wall.

Dunbar spots Nugent glancing lovingly at this photograph. Smiling, Dunbar chides Nugent.



Dunbar

Ah me! You'll never *entrechat six* again, Paddy dear.

Nugent *laughs* Hardly! But at least my frontispiece remains as dependable as ever.

Dunbar *rueful* Touché.

Nugent *aside* We really must press on.

Nugent turns to Blenheim.

Nugent We've jotted down this feast as "work" so tell us what we're up for. Need to justify ... and so on ...

Henge *joyful* Since it is highly unlikely that the Logistical Operations Department at Buckingham Palace would ever need the services of we three from the Arts Council ...

 You can understand our concern. Yes?

Blenheim Well, that's where you're wrong. About us not needing you, I mean. Take a goosie-gander at **this** poultice.

Blenheim dives into her bag, then shoves a newspaper clipping across the table such that Henge is able to see it.

Henge *reads the clipping* Ah! Yes!

 I've heard that it's a riot. Loads of belly laughs (intentional or otherwise).

Blenheim *angry* Jane Austen would be turning in her grave. That's what!

 How **dare** they shred my favourite heroine in this repulsive way?

The clipping is passed about. Realizing that Blenheim is acutely upset, the three men restrict their comments to mutterings, nods and long sighs.

Blenheim Woke up in the middle of the night and penned a scorcher. Sent it off then received the obligatory email stating that my movie review had been accepted and was on-line for all the world to read. So then I was unable to get back to sleep due to feelings of inadequacy and guilt. That must explain my grumpiness today.

Crown). A corpus. An eminence gris.

Nugent And what will these committee members do? Edit? Rewrite?

Blenheim *shakes head* Steer the Philistines away from dangerous shoals and into the safe harbour of propitious interpretation. Wag the finger. It's never been done before.

Make it abundantly clear that should they crap all over our beloved English literary gems, these movie-makers will earn themselves a negative honour in the Birthday list. A kick instead of a kiss. (Hopefully for the males a good swift kick in the naughty bits).

The men look about: at each other, at their plates, at the other guests, at the view. You can tell that the wheels are turning.

Dunbar Mind you, that thing of Shakespeare -- it was brilliant. Bening and McKellan-- Fascist England in the 1930s. A Triumph! Denis Lill put his face in the frame.

Henge Yes! Richard III! Well our committee would give that the tick of approval, surely?

Blenheim Exactly! Now I think that you artistic gentlemen can finally understand what I've been blathering on about.

Henge It all sounds so marvellous. With any luck it might actually work.

Nugent clicks his fingers as he has recalled something.

Nugent I hear that some well-meaning Aussie goon is slapping together a real shocker. He's working with Leon Freland (who to my mind equates to abject failure). Thirty years in the profession and yet to make his mark with anything half-decent.

Britain's literary heritage under attack from southern climes.

Dunbar Yes, I heard that!

Set in 1814 it is. Yet I understand that someone in the film hears a

telephone ringing --

The other men groan "No! No!"

Dunbar "I'll call you" trills one of the Musgrove girls.

All four dinner companions now howl their disapproval.

Nugent Agreed. Our project is somewhat formidable. The general idea (then) would be for our embryonic committee to simply slap an embargo on him?

Henge I desperately want it to gel: but can it, really? I mean, where do you start and where stop? An impossible brief it would seem!

Blenheim *forceful* If we can't stand up for the classical works of our deceased immortals then--

Henge *doubtful* Can one be both deceased and immortal?

Blenheim Angst might be a lot of things (all nightmarish in proportion) but she has one matchless gift: she totally shines in committee.

Dunbar Put her in charge, you think? Alright I'm sold. Onwards and upwards with Angst at the helm.

Nugent *shakes head* Nah. It'll never make it past --

Dunbar Excuses, excuses ...

It's like the bloody Stewards' room at Ascot after the running of a Group race. Anything that **can** be dredged up (to avoid *mea culpa*) **will** be dredged up.

Henge *enthusiastic* I hear you and can confirm that I am officially on board. Bring 'em on: those Barbarians who skulk at the gates.

Nugent No can do. Where do we start? What will we allow? I mean: where's the Wallace Line that divides "Yay" from "Nay"?

Henge Mucking around with the classics will always contain shades of difference. Remember that 1940 Hollywood movie – I'm absolutely

positive that Darcy was enacted by none other than the venerable Laurence Olivier! These were Regency girls dressed in Victorian crinolines. I ask you!

You would have railed at full voice against that travesty. However, the movie worked. Darcy was true to "Pride" and Lizzie was true to "Prejudice". And a deliciously aesthetic vehicle it turned out to be, too!

Nugent Whereas Emma Thompson was entirely spot-on with her "S & S". Won an Oscar for it.

Henge She threw herself into the period. No! Let's not cut corners here: she nailed it to such an extent that she actually *became* Jane Austen. Fact!

Blenheim I know what you're saying ... And I know what I'm saying ...

Dunbar Before we commit, might you not have a discreet word with Chisel?

Blenheim Oh! Don't!

She'll be so angry!

Angst gives *her* curry and then Chisel attacks *me* as a compensation. As a sop to her greed for revenge on Angst.

Dunbar Any psychologist worth his or her salt would have a field day at the Department of L. O. Egos crushed at 10 paces. How *do* you stand it?

Henge And then the three of you ladies bully Draino who is (after all) little better than a thoroughly hen-pecked husband anyway!

You're right Dunbar: that merry-go-round which they term "workplace" would do justice to a top-notch research paper.

Dunbar Back to Lord Keynes's original idea then. Set up a committee. As you said Blenheim, Angst shines in committee.

END OF SCENE

I, Scene vi: Let's Knock This Pile Of Books Into Shape (Sydney 2022)

Donny has put off his perusal of the books given to him by his mother Lina (ACT I, scene ii).

As the sun sets Donny chucks the pile of battered paperbacks onto his bed. He is not pleased.

Donny *absently* Dear Mum

 No mon

 Send some

 Your Son.

Donny picks up the first offering. He reads the back cover.

Donny *to himself* "An unfairly disgraced weaver is robbed of his gold. A tiny tot (a little girl with golden hair) marches into his life and gives him a sense of purpose."

 Nuh!

Chucks away the book.

Donny *absently* Dear Son

 Got none

 Have fun

 Love Mum.

Donny picks up the next literary offering. Again, he takes the lead from the back cover.

Donny *to himself* "An outspoken lady who has four sisters, a foolish mother and a witty father receives a proposal of marriage from a rich man who thinks she is beneath him and says so."

Well, that'll win ya brownie points for sure! **Not!**

Nuh! Nothing there ...

Chucks away the book.

Donny *absently* Izzay an Ozzay izzay Luzzay?

Izzay an Ozzay Izzyay?

Is it because hay izzan Ozzay that hay keeps you buzzay Luzzay?

Donny then goes for another book. We see him squint at the back cover blurb.

Donny *to himself* Ya, ya, ya ...

This is crap: "A young scientist creates a creature using an unorthodox experiment." No thanks! More dinosaurs and transformers there. Keep old Gibbo away from that lot! At all cost.

Chucks away the book. He picks up the next book.

Donny *sighs* Gothic. I thought that Goths were a tribe: heavy make-up, black clothes ...

"\$4000 ash dash a rash cash splash."

And **smash** to you!

Donny hurls that book away in disgust.

Donny *sighs* Has he jazzi ways and duzzie

Make you go all fuzzay-wuzzay?

Got you duzzay hazzay Luzzay? Izzy an Ozzay Luzzay eh?

Donny grabs three more books. These are flicked away quickly.

Donny *really tired of it* Mystery of ... Oh Jesus! When will it end? How far can we push old
all Don before he teeters over the edge? And to think that my own

beloved Mother got me into this crappo mess ...

I'm not a pleasant ...

Uh, uh, uh.

I'm not a pheasant plucker, I'm a pleasant ... No!

Donny is obviously totally fed up. The last book is the one that his mother recommended. Donny lets out a long sigh. He lies back on the bed, flipping through the pages until he is nearly at the end.

Really evocative music (flute and harp) are heard.

Donny *to himself*

Mum's choice. Yeah, right ... A letter ... **Everything** gets sorted out with a letter ...

... Hazzay jazzay ways and does hay ...

~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~

"I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope. Tell me not that I am too late, that such precious feelings are gone for ever. I offer myself to you again with a heart even more your own than when you almost broke it, eight years and a half ago. Dare not say that man forgets sooner than woman, that his love has an earlier death. I have loved none but you. Unjust I may have been, weak and resentful I have been, but never inconstant. You alone have brought me to Bath."

~~~~~ ~~~~~ ~~~~~

Good old Bath! Why don't we let Gibbo loose on a romance that has drizzled on for 8.5 years? What sort of a mess can he make with that!

Bath ... Gee! I hope they got plenty of rubber duckies.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I

[And any copyright that has been infringed upon above will be sorted out later.

B.C. Hilliam and Malcolm McEachern wrote "Is he an Aussie". I have changed the words but am still indebted to the writers of the song. PS I remembered it by heart. Further proof of my wasted childhood.]



ACT II

II, Scene i: Sir Burton Takes The Lead From Angst (London 2020)

*Sir Burton's office indicates that he is **very** high up the totem pole at Buckingham Palace. We only see his back and hear his voice. Angst is facing him. She is wreathed in vote-winning smiles.*

Angst has passed a stiff sheet of paper to Sir Burton. He peruses this.

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Angst My committee is more of an “eminence gris”. There are some very worthy members to support my efforts. As per that list ...

Sir Burton I wonder that your list indicates a paucity of actual script writers.

Angst No. The broader the better, Sir Burton. Do you see? Opera singer Nicholas Dunbar, ballet dancer Patrick Nugent, valuer of fine arts Craig Maramur. All are respected fellows of the Arts Council. Then we find Lindsay Henge (award-winning actor), Vaslav Tedeschi (crime writer), and master of the written word Jean-Armand Ebile.

Sir Burton This is very impressive, Mrs Jarvis.

Angst Our British literary heritage will be protected from Hollywood misrepresentation by means of this august committee. They will be warned! Desecrate at your peril or feel the wrath of the Palace.

Sir Burton The Royals have never gone in for this kind of negativity before. There was a certain amount of reluctance. But the latest movie: that grotesque Jane Austen farce has pushed all resistance over the cliff. The Palace stands four-square behind you and your committee, Mrs Jarvey.

Angst gives a very smug grin as she places the folded list into her handbag.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene ii: A Fine Day’s Shooting (Stow-on-the-Wold, The Cotswolds 1814)

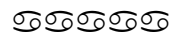
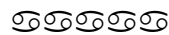
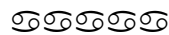
[The back story presented in this scene represents the Jane Austen novel which Donny is (all too reluctantly) reading.]

Captain Wentworth is played by the same actor who plays Donny.

In this scene (and all others in this ilk) the colour and depth of detail as filmed will be superb, breathtaking and hauntingly lovely.

The scene is set in the countryside on the outskirts of Stow-on-the-Wold in The Cotswolds. Four young gentlemen (of the middling sort) stride about with a couple of farmhands to assist them. Two of these men are Captain Wentworth and his brother Edward. Two spaniels stand poised, questing the air.

The four gentlemen are shooting at game birds (with old shotguns). There is noise and smoke. The dogs are full of business (as befits the activities of the men: collecting birds without any canine fuss). We hear male voices calling out: congratulations to each other and so on.



Now the gentlemen return home, as filmed from behind. Edward Wentworth (Frederick's brother) has the rectory of Stow-on-the-Wold, which position entitles him and his new wife Sarah to the tenancy of a very pretty cottage (that is the parsonage). Their only servant is an elderly gentleman (Saul).

Edward and Captain Wentworth remain at the dining table following dinner. They drink red wine. Edward seems absurdly happy. Captain Wentworth also seems glad to be with his brother.

Edward ... and so we were married some many months back whilst you were still at sea.

Of course, Sarah was sorry to leave Shropshire. But The Cotswolds ain't that far removed. It's a matter of no trouble to toss her up onto a wagon or such that's headed for Stroud: and the thing is done! She is thus able to reacquaint herself with her kinfolk for a brief time at little or no expense.

Captain Wentworth Excellent!

Edward I should gladly have set myself up in Stroud had a living been

offered to me there.

However this parish fell vacant at just the right time. As luck would have it, the Reverend Varney was getting on and was unable to manage longer. He has moved in with a widowed sister (a woman of property) in Bath.

So now all of the parish pastoral work falls upon me. And this quaint little cottage thrown in.

Couldn't be happier, Freddie.

Captain Wentworth Well done! Well done indeed! You have well and truly landed on your feet. I hope that you have passed on this news to our dear sister. She would be most delighted to learn of your felicitous tidings.

Edward jumps up. From the dresser he rescues some correspondence. This he hands over to Captain Wentworth, who glances over the letters as he and Edward continue to converse.

Edward Indeed I have done so, Freddie. Here! I collected these to show you.

Sophy is a very dedicated writer. But as you'd know (who better?) it is often difficult for her to be at all able to send forward her many epistles whilst on board ship.

Captain Wentworth Then think how much more difficult for **me** to receive her news (aboard ship).

Edward *shrugs* Whatever that may be, now that the Peace is upon us, we shall see her and Admiral Croft more often. That must count as a very fine blessing.

Captain Wentworth Aye! For according to **this**, she and the Admiral are set to take up residence at Kellynch Hall in Somerset.

[Looks up from his reading]

I know it. A very fine residence. Magnificent prospect.

Edward *nods*

And thus our brother-in-law and our Sophy shall find themselves in great comfort in a highly desired situation.

Further, they will be close enough to Bath that the Admiral might enjoy its restorative cordials. And all the other benefits which Bath exclusively provides.

[Vaguely gestures at the letters]

She mentions in one of her letters that the Admiral is gouty.

Captain Wentworth reads avidly.

Captain Wentworth

But does she explain how it comes about that Kellynch Hall is free to let? Sir Walter Elliot hasn't been summoned by God to a better place, has he? For if so, I have not been apprised of that fact.

Edward

No! No! He still goes on as hale and hearty as ever. Still full of his own importance: thinking that everyone else must give way to his whim.

No. Apparently, he is all to pieces. The family decided that he should quit Kellynch and relocate to Bath. Well, when I say "family" of course I mean his one sensible daughter, Anne (in league with the estate manager naturally). You know Anne I think. It may even be that I introduced the two of you.

There are three Elliot daughters. But only Anne (the middle one) has a first-class mind. A great thinker. Common-sensical. Not a blue stocking, mind ...

Captain Wentworth's hardens. Our camera picks up a change in his expression.

Edward *frowns*

What is it, old fellow? Have I touched a nerve?

Captain Wentworth does not respond, but stares in a hard, calculated way at the opposite wall.

*When Edward speaks the word "Lieutenant" he **must** do so in the English manner: "leff-ten-ant".*

Edward

Ah ... I did wonder ...

She is still in an unmarried state (if that makes any difference) ...

[Pause]

We never spoke of it (you and I) but there was some difficulty for you (am I not right?) in about the year six. At first I thought it was all due to the exigencies of your work. You were a mere Lieutenant then with all your future to look forward to. All the perils and dangers of a life at sea during wartime might certainly obtrude ...

[Pause]

However, I must admit to coming to a far different conclusion in later years. There had been a tenderness for Anne (was there not?) and I guess that you were rebuffed ...

I take it that the pride of the Elliot clan stood in your way. The two of you parted for ever.

Suddenly Captain Wentworth jumps out, decided and determined.

Captain Wentworth Come along, Ned. We must not leave your Sarah all alone in the drawing room. Let us go to her for a moment's chat. Then bed! I find that I am somewhat fatigued after all our leg-stretching this day. Tomorrow I hope to find myself more accustomed to being back on dry land.

Without another word, Captain Wentworth swings around and marches purposefully out of the dining room. Edward watches him. His face wears a curious, thoughtful expression.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iii: "It Is Over. The Worst Is Over." Part I (Sydney 2022)

[We oozed into the last scene – probably imagining that this was the Gibbo travesty. But it is Donny's interpretation that is at work here. Well, we (the audience) need to discover that. We shall do that by presenting Donny in 2022 thinking about what he has read.]

Donny's Sydney apartment is more than luxurious. It is a modern, sumptuous harbour-side dream. Donny is dressed in pyjamas and dressing gown. He stands (drinking a cup of coffee) as he stares out of the enormous window directly towards the Sydney Harbour Bridge. As this goes on, we hear Donny in voice-over. He is thinking to himself. The much-read Jane Austen novel (as handed over to Donny by his mother Lina) lurks about in full view.

Donny *voice-over*

Captain W pisses off from his brother's cottage and links up with his sister and Admiral C at Kellynch Hall.

Mr Musgrove from the Uppercross Great Hall rocks up to introduce himself to the new neighbours (as you do).

When he and Captain W meet they become best mates. And so Mr M invites Captain W over for dinner.

Our boy steels himself. He realizes that he will meet up with Anne again because ... aw! This bit gets complicated.

Okay! Here we go.

Anne's younger sister Mary (who is a straight-up B-I-T-C-H and then some!) has married Charles (son and heir of Mr M). And they (Charles and Mary) live at Uppercross, but in the near-by cottage (not the Great Hall). And Mary has summoned Anne to look after her. Mary has tickets on herself as well as being a great malingerer.

I hope everyone's paying attention because questions might be asked.

Okay. So the guests at this marvellous dinner at the Great Hall will

be Charles, Mary, Anne and Captain W. However, Anne doesn't actually make it ...

END OF SCENE

II, Scene iv: "It Is Over. The Worst Is Over." Part II (Somerset 1814)

[The back story presented in this scene represents our continuation of the Jane Austen novel which Donny is (all too reluctantly) reading.]

Anne Elliot is played by the same actress who plays Bonnie.

In the grand old dining room (Uppercross Great Hall) the large table groans under the weight of substantial food and wine. The air is filled with bright chatter. Wax candles flicker. A fire roars in the grate. The diners are: Mr and Mrs Musgrove, their young and pretty daughters Henrietta and Louisa, their son Charles with his wife Mary and Captain Wentworth.

Mrs Musgrove *alarmed* And young Charles is out of danger? Does the apothecary hold out any fears on his behalf?

Charles *soothing* Mother! Do not stress yourself! All is well.

Aye. Young Charles fell from a tree (indeed that is true) and at first we were all in dire concern for his head. But his brain took no hurt. Imagine our relief!

Yet, he has dislocated his collar bone. That must be set to rights. The apothecary's instructions are clear: he must be kept very quiet and still.

Mary *firm* Which is why Anne stayed behind. She was dressed and furbished to come to dine with you, to be sure. But she did not come. She stayed behind.

Henrietta *sly* And not **you** Mary? Your own son ...

Mary *even firmer* If Charles was to come and meet with Captain Wentworth then I must meet with him too! 'Twould be monstrous unjust if Charles became acquainted with the Captain while I did not.

The camera picks up the expression (judging and saturnine) on Captain Wentworth's face. Mary and Captain Wentworth bow to each other. But it is clear that he does not think well of Mary.

Mrs Musgrove *confused* But that cannot be quite right ... Miss Elliot does not visit you so that she must play nursemaid to your son, Mrs Charles.

Mary *defensive* I could not possibly remain in the sickroom, Mrs Musgrove. My nerves could not stand it: to see Charles's son and heir stricken as he was. The child's puling and whimpering set me off in a very sad way. No! I was unable to remain at home. I needed diversion and distraction. Otherwise there was no comfort to be had.

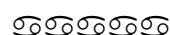
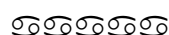
Clearly Mary's maternal feelings are now under review. Captain Wentworth is particularly unimpressed. Charles quickly intercedes in defence of his fickle wife.

Charles Anne insisted, Mama. It was all her doing. An aunt (you know) has not the same tender feelings as does a mother.

She saw at once that Mary was too overset by emotion to care for young Charles. And so she stayed behind.

Louisa *bright* Henrietta and I shall walk over on the morrow to visit the boy. We shall call on you after breakfast, Mary.

Mr Musgrove *indulgent* Ah that is very good of you Louisa. Henrietta. Very good of you to show such Christian feelings.



And so the dreaded meeting comes. Just about finished breakfast next morning, Mary and Anne (at the Uppercross cottage) are interrupted by Louisa and Henrietta, attended by Captain Wentworth.

Louisa *bright* Here we are! Good morning Anne.

Is little Charles awake? Is he much improved? May we see him?

Mary speaks first before Anne might get in a word.

Mary Peep around his door. If he sleeps then so be it that he should sleep on. But his nanny sits with him. She will advise you.

Mary nods dismissal. The two Musgrove girls rush off, leaving Captain Wentworth staring at Anne (who is stricken with nerves).

Mary Captain Wentworth. I am so glad that you accompanied the Miss Musgroves to our cottage. Charles will be prodigiously happy to see you here.

There follows a long awkward pause.

Mary I remember that in all the talk last night we might have spoken of Anne: my sister Miss Anne Elliot. Were you at all acquainted with Anne? Surely you two might have met in former times.

Anne is unable to speak. She drops a curtsey. Captain Wentworth holds himself straight for a second or two, then bows. There is no sign of pleasure or of fond memory on his face.

Captain Wentworth Yes. We did meet once or twice.
coldly

In former times.

[Slight pause]

How do you do, Miss Elliot?

Anne gathers up all her courage.

Anne *softly* How do you do, Captain Wentworth?

Captain Wentworth has finished with Anne. He now addresses Mary only. He is cheerful again.

Captain Wentworth Well, Mrs Musgrove. Charles intimated last evening that we might take out a gun or two and find some sport. He has a young dog to train. And when I think of my midshipmen, I always recall that the only way to teach the uninitiated is to set them to the task sooner than later. Such it is with gundogs, I believe (even though they may spoil our sport).

Louisa and Henrietta return to the others in high spirits.

Henrietta to Anne He is such a fine little fellow and quite brave as to his injury. You'll restore the colour to his cheeks in no time, Anne.

Captain Wentworth Come along then. Your brother Charles will be awaiting us.
rallying It was very pleasant to visit you, Mrs Musgrove. Thank you for your hospitality. After you ladies.

Captain Wentworth surprises Anne with a quick bow and then he departs.

Louisa bright to Anne We are off for a walk Anne to watch the shooting. Would you care to join us?

Mary offended And not me?

Henrietta and Louisa would rather not drag Mary along. They give each other speaking looks.

Henrietta awkward Um ... Mary ... It is well known that you do not care for ... for --

Louisa urgent But Mary! You could not enjoy a walk knowing that poor little Charles is laid up in bed and unable to move.

And needs you!

Mary brisk Nonsense! Nanny will care for him and Anne shall stay to oversee it all. I'm coming too!

Mary fetches her pelisse. The three ladies exit without another word to Anne. She is beyond relief now. Anne cannot bear to stand and must take a seat.

Anne to herself It is over. The worst is over. I have seen him again after all this time.

[Long sigh and deeply thoughtful look]

He has not changed.

Indeed! He is the same Captain Wentworth who won my heart and soul so many, many years ago ...

END OF SCENE

II, Scene v: Fearing To Be Overset In The Gig (Somerset 1814)

[The back story presented in this scene represents our continuation of the Jane Austen novel which Donny is (all too reluctantly) reading. No, I take that back. Donny is right into it now.]

It is a fine sunny morning at Kellynch. Captain Wentworth wanders about, looking at (but hardly seeing) the flower gardens. Mrs Croft can be seen in the background in close discussion with a gardener.

Captain Wentworth *to himself* I should never have recognised her as the same woman who broke my heart all those years since.

'Pon my soul! Her beauty has faded beyond all recall. There is no bloom. Her eyes: tired and careworn. Why, she is almost haggard.

If that comes from regretting her rejection of me, then so much the better. I shall not repine.

Captain Wentworth bends to carefully touch some shrub. While he is squatted down, he silently reflects.

Captain Wentworth *to* But I am unable to be unkind. Not to such a lady. I try so hard to

himself

forget the sweetness of her kiss so long ago. Her lips against mine. Too painful! Too painful!

Yet I cannot be thrown into her vicinity without feeling **some** modicum of care for her.



Admiral Croft and Sophy are tooling about the countryside in the gig. In a country lane they have stopped to chat with the party of walkers from Uppercross (Henrietta and Charles Hayter, Charles and Mary Musgrove, Louisa and Captain Wentworth ... And Anne).

Captain Wentworth approaches Sophy.

Captain Wentworth
whispers

Sophy! Miss Anne Elliot is very much worn out. She is unable to travel further without assistance.

Her care for the little boy (perhaps) has done for her. Will you not insist that she accept a place in your gig? She is somewhat reluctant (perhaps due to shyness).

Captain Wentworth then steps back, approaching Anne. As Sophy implores her, Captain Wentworth takes Anne's hand in order to coax her and lead her to the gig. He will then hand her up into it.

Sophy *smiling*

Dear Miss Elliot! It would be more than a pleasure to have you accompany the Admiral and I.

Admiral Croft *jovial*

What my dear? Is Miss Elliot to ride with us? What a splendid notion, Sophy!

Sophy *encouraging*

Do allow my brother to hand you up here. Fie! If we should all have your slim figure, I am more than confident that we could fit two or three of you here on the seat beside me.

Admiral Croft
encouraging

Aye! 'Twill save you a good mile of walking on this jagged lane, my dear Miss ... er ... Elliot.

Sophie *clinging* it

Come along, Miss Elliot. You must not fear that the Admiral will overturn us. He is as fine a hand with the horses as you would wish to see, even for a sailor.



Captain Wentworth stands, moving on. Another bush is worthy of inspection while his thoughts overwhelm him.

Captain Wentworth *to himself*

I must forget Anne and think only of Louisa. I must!

Aye! And forgetting Anne will be no hardship once I am safely married. It is time that I married. Louisa may be a bit too giggly (now and then) ... but she will surely grow out of that. Her conversation may not be deep enough to satisfy me ... but with time ... Perhaps ...

Oh! Anne had stimulating talk. I laughed and chatted with her for hours on end. Never once feeling that ...

[Wracked with unexpressed feelings]

But when I saw her with her head bowed as she tended to the sick child.

When his two-year-old brother toddled in to pester the aunt who gives so much with so little received in return ...

Why, I **could not** but interfere.



Little Charles lies on the Uppercross couch. Anne (kneeling) is beside him, wiping his brow with a cloth soaked in lavender water. Walter jumps on Anne's back with his arms squeezed tightly around Anne's neck. She cannot free herself.

Without fuss, Captain Wentworth steps forward, taking the little boy by the arms such that he is able to wrench the boy away from Anne. She does not speak to Captain Wentworth, nor he to her. Captain Wentworth scoops the little boy up into his arms, distracting him from his nefarious activities.

Captain Wentworth Come now! You are a bold little fellow, Master Walter. A fine, sunny strong seafarer you will make, eh?

Let me see if I can find some scrap of paper: enough to fabricate a toy boat that we can sail on the millstream. What think you?
What a good treat!

The child evidences great delight at hearing of this scheme. Captain Wentworth carries the little boy off.



Sophy now advances. She is carrying a basket full of various floral tributes.

Sophy You and I have spent so much time at sea (dear brother) that the sight of a simple garden brings more delight than might seem deserved.

Captain Wentworth Yes, Sophia. You and your husband travelled so much time about the globe as I have. nods

[Pause]

Edward and Sarah are very keen gardeners. You must visit them at Stow-on-the-Wold on your way through to Bath.

Sophy Yes. We plan to do just that.

You are for Lyme and we for Bath. And I sincerely hope that you find dear Captain Harville improved in his health.

Captain Wentworth Aye. So I also hope. And Benwick will be there ...

Sophy You do not visit Lyme alone, I think?

Captain Wentworth No. No indeed!

Charles Musgrove and his Mary bring Miss Anne Elliot and the two Miss Musgroves. So if I count myself as being amongst the group, we shall number a clear half-dozen.

Charles is a fine, good fellow. I like him very much.

Sophy And the ladies?

Captain Wentworth Well ... to be candid I find the young Mrs Musgrove (Mary) to be selfish, tedious and spoiled. One is unlikely to forget her Elliot breeding I am certain.

Sophy *shocked laugh* Ho! Ho! That is surely cutting up a character finely! And is her sister like (in your opinion)?

Captain Wentworth Anne? Oh, no. Not at all like.

Miss Anne Elliot is quiet, composed, and very dignified. Nothing at all resembling Mary. Anne recites poetry in a way that might catch at the heartstrings: Mary judges verse to be a complete waste of time. No! No comparison at all there.

Sophy *enthusiastic* I like Anne! Oh, I agree that it is a little difficult to squeeze any noise out of her. But when you had the good sense to place her in our gig the other day ... I found her charming and very sensible.

Captain Wentworth Aye. True, true ... However, I'm working my way into Miss Louisa Musgrove's affections. She is a pretty young lady with real purpose and strength of character. The other (Miss Henrietta) seems already promised to her cousin Hayter. But I find that there is no attachment with relation to the very spirited Louisa ... yet!

[His face hardens]

That is what I look for in my future wife, Sophy. I must not be bowled-over by some lady (no matter how comely she might be!) who is easily persuaded to go against the grain. I see **that** as an unassailable fault and cannot tolerate it. For me the virtue stands as all decision and single-mindedness. That is what my Mrs Wentworth shall be.

Sophy I see. So you go to Lyme to bring matters to a head? With the object of an engagement?

Captain Wentworth Aye. Then you may wish me joy, Sophy. With this Peace will come my prosperity and all things happy for me.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene vi: Wanton Lust, Bed Games And A Lack Of Propriety (London 2022)

This is Frederick's bed as already visited in ACT I, scene iv.

Frederick and Blenheim are very much in love. They have been physical. Now there is wine and there are chocolates. They giggle as they drink the wine. Suddenly, Frederick removes the chocolate box out of Blenheim's reach.

Frederick Come on! No more sweets until you tell me.

Blenheim God! You sound like one of those vile men who prey upon children. "Come along, Tessie. If you come with me in my car, I'll give you a nice bag of sweets".

Frederick does not take offence at being jokingly labelled a potential child molester.

Frederick Ah!

Are you aware that one of your "eminence gris" is a panderer? I mean I only bleat like one. Your boy really *is* one.

Blenheim

What?!

Frederick

Tell me!

Blenheim

Think of the first four letters in the alphabet: A, B, C & D. Someone had to give Barbara Jarvis an "A". Could have been "Alpha" or "Annie" or ... Oh anything. What did they choose? "Angst".

Frederick

Because she gives it – angst?

Blenheim

I think so. And "D" for the single man in the group. Well, some dedicated comedian opted for "Draino".

Frederick

Grab your sharpest pencil and note down this very cogent memorandum: Draino is not even half as dumb as he makes out. In fact he is a sharp operator. Smooth and ruthless. The dum-dum persona is all window-dressing.

Blenheim

How do you know that?

Frederick

We'll come to that. "C" – tell me about "C".

Blenheim

Chisel. Her real name is Chloe. It is *she* who ought to be in charge. She doesn't waste time with meaningless power gestures. She simply gets on with it.

Frederick

And you are "B"?

Blenheim

Oh! I'm always so terrified of Angst. Just turn into a complete blob. I stay completely out of her way and work only with Chloe. I know! Chloe can be a bitch. But she's an angel compared to the other one.

Anyway, on Friday afternoon (a couple of weeks ago) Chloe was shifted to a temp office which turned out (by some mischance) to be a better office than the one Angst prowled in. Well!

Unbeknownst to me ... it was so awful. On the Monday morning I swanned into what I thought was Chloe's temp office only to find Angst at large. Glaring at me! Oh! God! I shrieked. I'm sure they heard my scream of agony right through the Palace. I dropped and smashed two full mugs of boiling hot coffee and then ran out (almost wetting myself).

Frederick starts laughing. Blenheim joins him. They rock about, with chocolates rolling about with them on the bed.

Blenheim "B" for "Blenheim" because I am vaguely related to the Churchill clan. The Duke of Marlborough. Blenheim Palace.

Frederick grunts. Then he returns the box of chocolates to the bed within Blenheim's reach.

Frederick So Draino. I believe (my sources are quite trustworthy) that your Draino will turn everything on its head. Not by himself. He will act through intermediaries.

The watchword is: watch this space.

END OF SCENE

II, Scene vii: The Proverbial Has Hit The Fan (London 2022)

We are found in a stylish, up-market cocktail bar in London. Quite a crowd has descended on this watering-hole. Two men (Draino and Nugent) stand apart in a secluded corner of the bar. Draino swallows his cocktail. He frowns deeply at Nugent.

Draino Do you know ... I've heard that expression but never understood its connotation.

Nugent It's a euphemism. A double euphemism actually.

Draino Explain. Explain it to me.

Nugent Instead of saying "shit" (which might be found offensive) one uses the word "proverbial". People understand.

 Now: picture a room full of people huddled about an electric fan which --

Draino Why? Why the fan?

Nugent It's hot, I suppose. Perhaps a heatwave.

 Anyhow, some tosser flings a bucketful of shit at said electric --

Draino What sort of excrement? Where did they find it and why fling it?

Nugent It's a bucketful of moist cow plops ... or horse doings ... Whatever it is, it is thrown at the fan. So conjure up in your brain that when it ***hits*** – Well all the peeps are spattered upon.

Draino I can't think of anything more ghastly. What sort of person does such a thing?

Nugent No! It's an allegory or aphorism or adage. Use your imagination. It's ... It's a saying.

Draino Let me try to understand. Yes, yes ... When some soupçon of scandal (hidden for an incredible time) leaps out and everyone hears of it – there follows the jarring effect of the proverbial slapping into a fan. Yes?

Nugent My God Draino! My nerves are so jangled ... If you only knew ...

Draino *suave* Oh, I know. I know.

 Albrecht and his crossbow. *Quelle tragédie!* Most unfortunate that the arrow entered directly into the heart of the quarry.

Nugent *aghast,*
whispers Don't! I was tricked. It should have been a stage prop – not the real thing.

Draino How unfortunate. *En Afrique ...*

 I always have believed that genuine armoury is kept ready at hand

behind the stage. Who knows when such weapons may be required? Mmm? Ready to be swapped with the various props lying about ... And particularly in a far-flung dictatorship in Africa.

Now: were you handsomely recompensed?

Nugent (bereft) covers his face with one hand.

Draino No? However (as you so rightly commented earlier) the proverbial is about to hit the fan ...

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II



ACT III

III, Scene i: Gibbo Throws The Cat Among The Pigeons (London 2022)

Gibbo has grown his hair into a long unkempt mullet. His uncombed beard has grown shaggy. All is sprinkled with grey.

We find Gibbo in Spartan surroundings in the seediest Fish 'n' Chip shop in London's seamiest area. The shop is very crowded. We can see many dubious types wandering past the window. A fight breaks out. Gibbo ignores the fisticuffs.

Gibbo dumps three large bundles of food (wrapped in newspaper) onto a wonky wrought iron table which already bears 6 cans of Coke. He sits at that table (on a pathetic excuse for a chair) prior to ripping open one bundle of food. Steam billows out of the open food parcel. Gibbo tears open a Coke, taking a large swig.

We see through the window Cooper and Jeparit arrive on the scene. They become involved in the fight. Then they amble into the café. Gibbo (stuffing his face) does not react to the arrival of his friends other than to nod in their general direction.

Cooper and Jeparit sit. They look around, very unimpressed.

Cooper Bit of a come-down, isn't it?

 Are these for us?

Gibbo *nods, very thickly* Yeah. Best fish 'n' chips in London.

Jeparit and Cooper give each other a quick look. Then they sit and get stuck into the food. They also open cans of drink and take long guzzles of same. The food is hot and sticky. Plumes of steam rise from the food. Salt and pepper shakers are busy. Then the three men eat voraciously as they discuss the subject at hand.

Jeparit This is alright. At least we get a proper salt shaker. In Sydney all they give you are those little paper sachet thingos.

Cooper Best fish 'n' chips in London, ya reckon? Well it's bloody good anyway. Thanks (by the way). You done good.

Gibbo Look! You even get a wet towel.

Gibbo uses his teeth to tear open the wet towel packet. Then he gets busy wiping his hands.

Jeparit How did you know that I love these bits of fruit deep fried in thick batter and then coated in sugar?

Gibbo *shrugs* Dunno. You just look like the kind of prick who loves that gooey stuff. Now listen!

Cooper (still with sticky fingers) ruffles Gibbo's hair and beard.

Cooper *laughing* This is a new look for you Gibbo. Are you trying to bung on side as one of the last head-hunters in the lost tribe of Borneo?

Gibbo *annoyed* Piss off! Obviously I'm getting myself into character. I'm playing Sir Walter Elliot (Baronet) in our latest block-buster called "Cajolery".

Jeparit *dismissive* It'll be lucky to even make it to the late, late spot on the TV (let alone get to the cinemas and become a sensation). I've read your script. It's completely lousy, Gib.

Gibbo ignores the negativity.

Gibbo Jep you play my heir, the devious Mr William Elliot.

Jeparit Is it a good part?

Gibbo Blood oath.

Coops: you are Captain Harville. You have to limp.

Cooper Does it matter which leg?

Gibbo Nuh.

Cooper *shrugs* Kay. I can do that.

Am I the hero by any chance? It's about time I got a key role in one of your magnum things ...

Gibbo You are the hero's best friend. The hero is a bloke called Captain Wentworth.

But that's not what we are meeting here to discuss.

Jeparit points to each of them in turn.

Jeparit Hang on! If ***I'm*** not playing the hero and ***Coop*** is not playing the hero and ***you're*** not playing the hero, then --

Gibbo Donny. Donny is playing Captain Wentworth. He's perfect.

And Bonnie Mason-Carr has the role of Anne (his love interest). She's my daughter.

Jeparit *drawls, very sarcastic* And Donny would be ... ? Where ... ?

There is a long pause. Gibbo cannot answer Jeparit's question. The three men let out long, deep sighs.

Jeparit *nasty* Without our main character, I'm thinking that we and our "triumph" are well-and-truly up shit creek --

Cooper In a barbed wire canoe with --

Gibbo *nods sadly* Yeah I know – with tennis racquets for paddles.

Cooper Come on. We'd better clear out. I think they want our table.

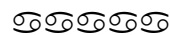
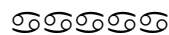
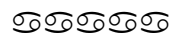
Gibbo Fuck 'em. Snuggle up close so we can be private.

Our camera closes in such that the three heads are as close as possible. Gibbo speaks in a deep hushed whisper.

Gibbo Leon and I had to front up to an Arts Council committee. The dame in charge was a vixen called Barbara. Very major. So this Barbara and her lackeys demanded (more front than Myer they had!) – ***demanded*** that I give them all the deets about our up-coming film.

So I laid it all out for those Pommy dweebs.

Let me tell you they went troppo.



The three friends are now standing beside an ornamental lake in a pretty London park.

Cooper *grousing* We could've taken them on, ya know. We could have kept the table.

Jeparit Don't be a prick. We'd finished our lunch.

[Shrugs]

Let someone else have it.

Cooper *grumbling* I didn't like the way they spoke to us. Bunch of no-hoper Poms. We should shove some TNT up their bums. Then they'd know.

Jeparit Yeah well you scrunched your dirty newspaper in one bloke's face. I reckon they got the message from that ...

Cooper *disgusted* Think their shit doesn't stink. I hate the way Poms make out that they're --

Jeparit Mate! That was the worst wrought iron table and chair set that anyone ever provided as "furniture". Even my granny Nani

wouldn't let that lot past her front gate. I was fuckin' **glad** to leave it for those other dickheads.

Gibbo

Guys! Guys! Come on.

Now. The committee. I want to talk about the committee.

Cooper

What about the committee?

Gibbo

They ranted on and on about all the mistakes I'd made. That it was 1814 so they wouldn't have had placky cards, mobile phones, TV, handbags, take-away food, ciggies and cigarette lighters ...

On and on and on.

Then they said that if Leon and I couldn't smack it into shape (à la Jane Austen) that we would be hauled up to no less than Buck House for Her Madge to sling a nasty on us. And I said: Okay. Go ahead, ya wankers! Fine! Her Madge can sling a nasty at me any time she likes!

But then I thought (just sort of on the same wavelength as you, Coops) why should some Pommy bastards with their heads firmly stuck up their arses tell **me** how to interpret a famous novel?

Cooper *very interested* Yeah? So what did you do?

Gibbo gives a slight cough as he pauses for effect, glancing at the other two men.

Gibbo

I rang the Terzo Boys.

There is a taut silence. Cooper and Jeparit look at each other.

Jeparit *very quiet*

The Terzo Boys?

Gibbo

Yeah. For them to lean on them. To lean on the committee members is what I mean.

With the Terzos at my back the intention is that I go in there and say something like: "Madame, would you kindly vacate the room? I should like to speak to the gentlemen alone." Matter of fact, I

might address Barbara as "Darl". That'd get the ball rolling.

Jeparit The Terzo Boys? Construction and destruction ... for a price ... ?

Gibbo Yeah.

Jeparit Deploy 'em and destroy 'em ... for a paper bag full of folding money ... ?

Cooper *almost an awe-struck whisper* Men who force the issue and make things happen? The Terzo Boys?

Gibbo *grins* That's right. You got it!

Cooper *frowns* Is that what we had to hear from you? Was that why we had to cuddle up in the Chish 'n' Fips café? And then decamp to this crappo lake?

 Geez, Gib! Mildura has at least **two** lakes that are better than this one.

Gibbo *firm* Listen! I got in touch with the ... the "Boys" and they agreed that it was a fair cop and that I was justified in taking "necessary action" against this Arty-Farty council.

 Well ... they wanted to do a bit of research before giving me a heads up, but. So I gave them a list of the committee members which they studied.

 Lo and behold! As it happens, they reckon (that is the "Boys" reckon) that all of the said committee are very dodgy. Every single one of them. But! One of them is very dodgy. **Very** dodgy.

 They reckon that we can take action.

Cooper *astounded* What sort of action?

Gibbo looks about. The lake is pretty. Gibbo sucks his breath in through his teeth.

Gibbo I want Donny. I can't make up my mind what to do until I see Donny. He's brainy about that stuff ...

Cooper Okay. Let's drag Donny over here to Angleland.

 What about Wayno?

Gibbo Nope. He and Shailah are on their honeymoon in Hawaii where they're heavily involved in another witches and wizards glamfest. So it's Donny only.

Jeparit Alright. Great! Donny it is.

 And by the way Gibbo – you've got a portion of fried plaice tangled up in your ziff. Do ya want me to pick it out for ya with me fingers or leave it for the birds to peck at?

Jeparit gives a cheesy smile, Cooper cracks up laughing and Gibbo (highly annoyed) backs away as he swats ineffectually at his beard.

END OF SCENE

III, Scene ii: This Sad Business of "Cajolery" (Sydney 2022)

Donny is in his apartment (described in ACT II, scene ii). He is found to be finishing a call from Gibbo. Donny is not pleased, judging by the grunt emitted as he hangs up.

Donny *to himself* "Jump on a bloody plane and get over here **now!**"

Angry and frustrated, Donny goes to the fridge to reef out a cold can of beer. He opens same with force then swigs down a mouthful. He slakes the back of his hand over his lips.

Donny *to himself* I'll jump on your head, mate. That's all the jumping **I'm** gonna do.

Donny takes his can of beer out onto the balcony. Donny has to-die-for views of Sydney Harbour. So bright is the sunshine that Donny is forced to put on sunglasses.

Donny *to himself* "Cajolery".

Jesus Christ! Any problems you got, mate, are of your own

making. I **told** you what my mum said about dicking with Jane Austen.

~~~~~

~~~~~

~~~~~

*Our camera soaks up the glorious scene on Sydney Harbour whilst Donny muses.*

Donny *voice-over*      If you ask anyone about this story the only thing they remember is the girl falling off the steps at Lyme.

She lies there unconscious.

Louisa.

*Donny picks up the novel, flips through the pages with his thumb, then replaces it on the table.*

Donny *voice-over*      Up until then they had all been having a ripper time at Lyme.  
CWW is in his element: back with his old Navy buddies. Rollicking along: swapping yarns. Having a great old time they are.

Anne is invigorated by the sharp breeze coming off the sea. Her bloom returns. Carefree, Anne finds herself in delightful company. No longer being belittled, she blossoms.

Woop-de-doo!

~~~~~

~~~~~

~~~~~

Now the heir to Sir Walter Elliot (father of Mary and of Anne) rocks up in Lyme. His livery is recognized setting the Musgrove party into raptures. His mono is Mr William Elliot.

~~~~~

~~~~~

~~~~~

But back to the lifeless body of Louisa, lying just where she has crashed to the ground with a sickening thud.

END OF SCENE



### III, Scene iii: This Sad Business Of Louisa Musgrove (Lyme 1814)

[The back story presented in this scene represents our continuation of the Jane Austen novel which Donny is reading.]

*This scene sets us up with a stark contrast. In the last scene we were almost blinded by the bright Sydney sunlight reflecting on the sparkling waters of the Harbour. But here dusk gathers at Lyme. All is grey and lowering. Captain Wentworth has found himself an out-of-the-way bench upon which he sits (head in hands, elbows on knees). There is activity on the beach and in relation to the boats. But the poor Captain Wentworth is seemingly isolated in his torment.*

Captain Wentworth      I blame myself. I encouraged her to rush ahead, heedless of the  
voice-over                      result. Nay! I led her on (if not pushed her forward into thinking  
                                         herself indestructible).



*[The following speech is reefered almost word-for-word from my copy of the novel (page 129) and I'm not apologizing to anyone because at least I care about Jane Austen even if some heathens don't!!!!]*

Captain Wentworth      There was too much wind to make the high part of the new Cobb  
voice-over                      pleasant for the ladies, and we agreed to get down the steps to  
                                         the lower. And all were contented to pass quietly and carefully  
                                         down the steep flight, excepting Louisa. She must be jumped  
                                         down them by myself. In all our walks I had to jump her from the  
                                         stiles; the sensation was delightful to her. The hardness of the  
                                         pavement for her feet made me less willing upon the present  
                                         occasion. I did it however; she was safely down. And instantly to  
                                         show her enjoyment ran up the steps to be jumped down again. I  
                                         advised her against it: thought the jar too great. But no! I

reasoned and talked in vain. All useless! She smiled and said: "I am determined I will".

Oh! Why could I not have ***persuaded*** her! Why were my words lost to the wind unheeded!

I put out my hands; she was too precipitate by half a second. She fell on the pavement on the Lower Cobb, and was taken up lifeless!

*There is general outcry. Mary becomes hysterical with wild screaming, requiring several people to support her. Only Charles takes up this office. Captain Wentworth is helpless as he cradles Louisa in his arms. Henrietta faints into the arms of Captain Benwick and Anne. Everyone seems to hover about in complete shock. Only Anne is in command of the situation.*



*Anne clear-voiced to Benwick*

Go to Wentworth! Go to him! For Heaven's sake go to him! I can support Henrietta myself. Leave me and go to him. Here are salts. Take them, take them!

Rub her hands – rub her temples.

A surgeon must be summoned. No, do not you go Captain Wentworth. Send Benwick as he will more quickly seek out the

surgeon for he will more readily know where he is to be found.

*With all the hubbub, Captain Wentworth sits back, unable to think or plan.*

Anne

Carry her to the inn. Oh, gently gently!

Charles you must help me to calm Mary and Henrietta. Oh gently Captain Wentworth. She must be stirred about as little as is possible. Charles you must give to the ladies all of your support and counsel.



*We are still at the Cobb, with the darkness of evening gathering fast.*

Captain Wentworth  
*voice-over*

Anne! Anne! Oh what goodness and charity and wisdom did we see there.

Anne shone in the emergency. Her calm good sense and power to override her more tender feelings allowed her to take full command. We crumbled about her as she mobilized the troops with the calm demeanour of a saint.

*Captain Wentworth (stricken) rises quickly to his feet. Then he strides down to the water's edge.*

Captain Wentworth  
*voice-over*

And now (when I am within an aim's ace of applying for Louisa's hand) I have come to the sudden, startling realization that Anne is by far the superior. Her radiance and beauty have returned. And there is Benwick wooing her with his literary allusions. And there is her cousin (Mr Elliot) gazing at her with admiration.

Oh! I am too late ... Too late.

*The camera moves in such as we are in close-up of Captain Wentworth.*

Captain Wentworth

This dreadful upset has brought me to my senses. I am duty-bound to convey Miss Anne and Miss Henrietta back to Uppercross

*whispers audibly*

and thus warn the girl's parents of this catastrophe. And then back to Lyme with not a moment to lose.

And then? What then?

I must quit Lyme immediately that the news from the sickroom might support hope. They will understand, the Musgroves. This has all been so painful ... The shock ... The anguish ...

*[Nods to himself]*

Wentworth you must fly to Stow-on-the-Wold on the fastest horse that can be summoned. Fly to your brother and await further news. Oh! If only she will recover. I could face the future were she to be recovered. Can I not hope for that?

END OF SCENE

### **III, Scene iv: A Fine Day's Walking (Stow-on-the-Wold, The Cotswolds 1814)**

[The back story presented in this scene represents the Jane Austen novel which Donny is reading.]

*The scene is exactly the same one as visited in ACT II, scene i.*

*Captain Wentworth strides out. He has a serviceable stick to beat aside the long grass and to use in investigating anything that might be worthwhile. Then he comes upon Sarah (carrying a basket) as she struggles over a stile. Captain Wentworth rushes to her aid.*

Captain Wentworth      Here! Let me assist you, Sarah.

Sarah                      Oh! Thank you Captain. I am finding it a little wearisome.

*Captain Wentworth takes the heavy basket from her hands. From now on he will carry it for her.*

Captain Wentworth      I'm so glad that you did not wish to be jumped down this stile.  
*rueful*

*Sarah is supported as she moves over the stile. Then she takes his arm as they wander on.*

Sarah *laughs*              Oh no! You must have had enough of that. And still no news as to  
how the young lady gets on?

Captain Wentworth      Not as yet. But I try to take some comfort from that. If there were  
bad news, then surely it would have been forwarded to me in  
some haste. To **not** receive news of any kind – why that in itself is  
good news.

*They walk on a little when Sarah stops.*

Sarah                      I won't trouble you any more, Captain. You go on with your walk.  
Such a delightful day. I find that I must rest.

Captain Wentworth      You are not feeling well, Sarah?  
*concerned*

*Sarah smiles shyly.*

Sarah                      Not quite ... I am in an interesting condition, Captain.

*It takes Captain Wentworth a second to take in the significance of her words.*

Captain Wentworth      An interesting ... ? Ah! Then I am all happiness for you. But Ned  
*confused*                      hasn't intimated as much.

*Captain Wentworth gestures towards a fallen log on which they might rest. They head towards that  
log and sit. All this whilst they converse.*

Sarah                      That's because I have not told him yet. I plan to visit with Dr  
Farrel tomorrow (if he is free to see me). However I'm fairly  
certain that that is the cause of my recent sickness.

I only told you that you should not think me weak and prissy.

Captain Wentworth      My dear I would never think that.

*beaming*

Sarah

It is very hard to be shackled in this way. Not able to roam about the parish.

You see, when Edward proposed to me I was more than glad to accept him. I love him so much. You are his brother – there is no earthly need for me to trumpet how good he is. But there was more to the case. As a rector's wife I am able to get about, helping people hither and yon. Bringing gruel and soup to the hungry, mucking in at lambing time, assisting the mothers and children when there is need ...

*Sarah sighs. She wipes away a tear.*

Captain Wentworth  
*kindly*

And your "interesting condition" will curtail those tasks somewhat?

Sarah

Aye. Only for a short time, I trust. The Reverend Varney is a good man. But his noble life is steadily running down. There cannot be long for him (poor soul). Edward stands proud as the vicar in his place and myself beside him. And then we shall be three (with baby and me).

I could not possibly imagine a more wonderful life. Could you?

*Captain Wentworth covers her hands with his, squeezing them. He is very moved.*

Captain Wentworth  
*smiling*

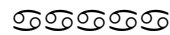
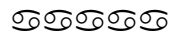
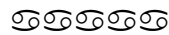
No indeed.

This news of yours Sarah takes away any heartache that I might feel.

Why! I have a sister married for many years to an Admiral. She is beyond happy. And a brother who has married the loveliest girl in the world – and now about to embark on the best time in his life. Truly! I am blessed.

Sarah *warning*

Only if Dr Farrel confirms my suspicions, mind.



*In the distance stands the parsonage. Captain Wentworth and Sarah stroll towards it.*

Captain Wentworth      Tell me if you need to rest awhile.

Sarah                      Thank you, but it has passed. I'm wondering if it might not be akin to sea sickness, Captain.

Captain Wentworth      Aye! Very true ...



*Little Charles lies on the Uppercross couch. Anne (kneeling) is beside him, wiping his brow with a cloth soaked in lavender water. Anne glances at Captain Wentworth as he steps into the room, hat in hand. There can be no disguising the surprised look on her face. She even blushes.*

Captain Wentworth      To find her (Anne) in such a situation proved an acute  
*voice-over*                      embarrassment to us both. She (a lady of worth, a Baronet's daughter) to be discovered on her knees beside her nephew as she tended to his wants. Myself – a mere interloper passing the time of day. Could I but assist her!

And yet here we both were: unable to unlock our tongues enough to wish each other good day. When in another time and in another place we had been everything to each other ...



Sarah Captain, who is Anne?

Captain Wentworth I beg your pardon?  
*alarmed*

Sarah *gently* You just now spoke the name "Anne". Perhaps you might like to tell me about her.

And I give you fair warning that our Edward has mentioned to me that there is something from your past which may be troubling you now.

I am a good listener, Captain. Perhaps if you unburdened yourself to me ...

*Captain Wentworth pats Sarah's hand. They walk at a slow pace towards the parsonage.*

Captain Wentworth Aye. Very well then ...

Some eight years ago (when Miss Anne Elliot had seen only 19 years) I met her and fell deep in love with her. I was only a grubby lieutenant then. Had nothing to recommend myself but the strength of youth and unfledged prospects. My proposals were refused since Anne's loved ones (those who cared very much for her future) warned her of the dangers of such a liaison. So young! 'Twould be foolish to tie herself to nothing more than hopes and dreams. Thus I was rejected.

I have lately come to realize that they were right of course. If I were lucky enough to have a daughter no doubt I should reason just the same. But at the time I was hurt, angry and acutely irrational. I could not bury my pride (do you see?) Pride is a large part of a young man's portion in life.

Sarah Is Anne married now?

Captain Wentworth No. No she is not. I know for a fact that she has refused a man far better set-up than me.



But there are other men who might claim her, would she have them. She still has her beauty ...

Sarah

Eight years as a single woman is quite a stretch. Is it not conceivable Captain that **you** are her one and only love?

*Captain Wentworth pauses for a second. He looks out over the countryside in an effort to curb his emotions.*

Captain Wentworth

Aye. True, true ... I misunderstood what I wanted in a wife. Thank God that I have been pulled back from the brink in time, Sarah.

Steely determination that takes no heed of wise counsel is not to be confused with steady resolve. I saw decision and single-mindedness as a strength. Whereas all the strength lies in thoughtfulness, good sense.

Anne was not persuaded to go against the grain. She was justly and correctly persuaded to wait. My fault was to hear her rejection in the wrong frame of mind. I must atone. Surely all is not lost. Surely I am not too late?

Sarah

Where is Anne? Is she far removed? Was she with you at Lyme?

Captain Wentworth

Ah! Lyme!

*recalled*

*They watch Edward running to them. He carries a letter outstretched in his hand. Edward takes over the carrying of the basket.*

Edward *puffing*

Hopefully this is the good news that you crave. Just delivered. A steaming horse and rider at a cracking pace.

*Captain Wentworth takes the letter impatiently and rips it open, immediately devouring its contents.*

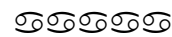
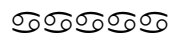
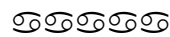
Captain Wentworth

Yes! Yes!

*utterly relieved*

She has regained her senses! What good tidings these are! The Harvilles ... The apothecary ... Charles and Mary to return home.

Oh! This is wonderful. God be praised!



*Captain Wentworth sits astride a serviceable, strong-looking horse. His kit is packed in a saddle bag which is attached to the saddle. Edward checks to ensure that all is tightly secured.*

Captain Wentworth      Write to me. Put aside your sermonizing and pen me a letter.  
*twisted smile*              When you have something vital to tell to me.

Edward *careful*              There might be tidings to cause us all great joy ... I think ... I hope  
...

Captain Wentworth      If it is a boy then you have my express permission to name him  
*smiles*                      after myself.

Edward *very surprised*      What? You knew of this before I did?

Captain Wentworth      She wants to be sure.  
  
Now! I'm for Bath. You'll receive a missive from me just as soon  
as I am able to furnish you with the latest goings-on.

Edward                      Fare you well then and God speed!

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT III



## ACT IV

### **IV, Scene i:** Introducing The Terzo Boys (London 2022)

*We are in a very swish boardroom. The special committee organized by Angst sits about, murmuring to each other. They are stationed around a large table which is liberally scattered with all manner of papers, folders and books.*

*Angst casts an eye over the group of six men, then taps her biro on her glass of water.*

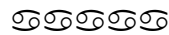
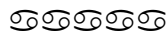
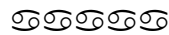
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*She meets the sudden silence with a very disarming smile.*

Angst                      Gentlemen! Our 11 o'clock candidates are Royce Withers and Glacée de Vrie. They have offered for our perusal a new take on Coward's "Blithe Spirit". You've all had a chance to read their proposed manuscript?



*On the same floor as that on which the members of the committee are making their deliberations on "Blithe Spirit", there is a long corridor at the end of which is a large lift. A few people wait for the lift to arrive. When it does arrive and the lift doors roll open, all the waiting people step back, gasping in shock. Someone says: "Blimey!"*

*Our camera allows us to see the occupants of the lift (who caused the waiting people to goggle and stare).*

*Gibbo is grim-faced. He is dressed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century outfit of a well-to-do gentleman. That is, Gibbo is in his Sir Walter Elliot costume. His beard has been trimmed and his hair plaited into a queue. Gibbo steps out of the lift in a determined fashion, followed by four large, muscular men. These men are the Terzo Boys. They wear black. Their scars, various tattoos and studding give them a very tough aspect.*

Gibbo *deeply*                      All duck no dinner gentlemen.

*Donny leans against the lift wall looking unbelievably bored. Donny swings himself forward in order to leave the lift, strolling along behind Gibbo's entourage.*



Craig *smug*                      ... and so to sum up, I find that we shall have nothing to blush for if this production goes ahead. Mr Coward might even wink his

approval from on high.

~~~~~

~~~~~

~~~~~

Our camera allows us to view Gibbo's cavalcade as it approaches the boardroom, moving along the corridor. The men give an impression of resolute and dedicated force. It is as if they are warriors going in to battle. The couple who are just about to be called into the committee room to hear the verdict on their rethink of "Blithe Spirit" sit in the corridor. They become alarmed at the advance of Gibbo's party. Notwithstanding, Gibbo marches into the committee room, with his henchmen behind, and Donny in the rear.

~~~~~

~~~~~

~~~~~

*The ingress of Gibbo, Donny and the Terzo Boys causes complete pandemonium in the committee room. Several of the committee members are heard to call out "Sir Walter Elliot". But Gibbo has the floor. He points at Angst.*

Gibbo *dominating*

Darl, would you kindly vacate the room? I should like to speak to the gentlemen alone.

*Angst hesitates. She is very scared. Her eyes flick about, looking at the committee members.*

Henge *kindly*

Yes, Barbara. Trot along. Perhaps give the security lads a buzz, will you?

Gibbo *laughs*

Ho-ho! Yes that's what we want. Some more blokes to be witnesses to what we are about to reveal.

Let me introduce my new besties. These are the Terzo Boys from Steak-and-Kidney. Good blokes every one and absolutely male to their back teeth. No "feminine side" here!

They are Machismo, Testosterone, Rippling Biceps and Six-Pack.

However I know them as Mac, Ron, Rip and Packa.

Oh, and Donny (Don Airlie who plays Cap'n Wentworth) has dragged his sad carcass along for the ride.

Donny *charming*

G'day fellas.

Gibbo

Now which one of youse blokes is Vaslav Tedeschi?

*Every eye at the table focuses on Tedeschi.*

Gibbo

Well stand up mate so we can all see ya.

*Tedeschi (gulping) hesitates. Six-Pack walks over to Tedeschi to haul him to his feet.*

Six-Pack

Gibbo told ya to stand up. Stand up.

*Tedeschi is now really scared.*

Gibbo

Six-Pack. Kindly tell us what sort of a glitterati our mate Vaslav is.

Now listen to this everyone. You'll learn something, eh.

*Just as Six-Pack gets himself organized to read from several sheets of paper, two armed security men enter (the door already being open). Gibbo is completely master of the situation.*

Gibbo

Come in. We're presenting to the committee an avant-garde twist on Jane Austen's "Sense and Sensibility". We are all "Sense" and these twisted pricks are all about "Sensibility".

*The Terzo Boys all turn towards the security guys who are now all at sea. The Terzos smile merrily as if they are in an ad for toothpaste. Machismo gestures gallantly towards some spare chairs. The security men look at each other, shrug and then sit down as advised.*

*The "Blithe Spirit" candidates pop their heads in.*

Royce

Um, are we up for our review?

Gibbo *to Royce*

Yeah! Why not? **You** can come in Sunshine, but not the lady I'm afraid. Gents only. There might be a bit of swearing and that. Rough language. Not for mixed company.

Glacée *very bright*

Oh I don't mind.

Rippling Biceps                      No, Darl. Outsky! You go and sit with the other Darl. Why don't ya hold hands and discuss how rotten men are and how bad they smell.

*Royce sits next to the security men. The door is closed on Glacée. The men are restless.*

Gibbo                                      Packa. You are now centre stage. Action!

Six-Pack *reads*                      Vaslav Tedeschi. You are a crime author whose works all have a military flavour: "The Gordon Grenadier", "Times March In Step" and so on.

But you are also a smuggler. Quite a successful smuggler. Your little schooner "The Army Band" --

Tedeschi *urgent*                      It was for personal use only. I swear. Presents for close friends maybe ... Nobody was hurt.

Six-Pack *reading*                      In league with a Devon skipper you illegally import whiskey, brandy, rum, vodka and occasionally gin from the Continent.  
  
How do you plead?

Tedeschi                                      We can save a packet by bringing it here direct from France. Shit! I pay enough in taxes already without --

Donny                                        Hope your schooner gets dry rot. You can go. Next.

*Tedeschi looks about wildly and then rushes from the room in disorder.*

Rippling Biceps                      Nick Dunbar. On yer feet, mate.

*Nick is surprised. He stands up to save bother.*

Rippling Biceps *reads*                      This famous bass-baritone sang in Carmen (Escamillo), Marriage of Figaro (Figaro), Ifigenia en Aulide (Agamemnon) and other worthy roles. Always a standing ovation.

*Gibbo begins to applaud, encouraging the others to join in. Rippling Biceps bows repeatedly.*

Gibbo                                        Ho-ho! Rip deserves a huge round of applause for the faultless pronunciation there. Bit of alright. We might be able to cast you in

our magnum opus, mate.

Go ahead: what's his brief?

Rippling Biceps *reads* His brief is ... Well he never got it off the ground. Few money problems after bad investments in racehorses and greyhounds. Tried his luck with white-collar crime but only ended up with his boxer shorts hovering around his ankles.

He is currently hell-bent on siphoning-off some much needed capital from friend-funds. So all of youse ought to check your bank statements **very** carefully. And don't lend him any money!

Donny Sling yer 'look. Next!

*Dunbar vacates the room with as much dignity as he can muster.*

Gibbo You're up next, Mac.

Machismo *reads* Craig Maramur has worked at the National Gallery for decades and --

Gibbo Have him stand up. This bloke needs to be paraded before the lions like the early Christians were.

*Maramur quickly stands. He is trembling with fear.*

Machismo *reads* And what have we got here?

Who has been a naughty, naughty, naughty boy, then?

A sex-offender with tendencies towards paedophilia and ... oooo! snuff movies. Noice.

This valuer & dealer in paintings and sculpture has eluded the police for many years. But now that our security blokes --

*[Gestures to the startled security men]*

are onto him, I believe that a conviction will be forthcoming.

Donny Gib, he can't leave like the others did. Maramur, you'd better go and sit with the security chaps. They can cuff ya when they're



ready. Machismo you'd better keep a beady eye on that one, mate.

*Now only Nugent, Ebile and Henge sit at the table. They are very scared. Suddenly, Henge's nerves get the better of him and he calls out.*

Henge                      This is an outrage!

Donny *hand to ear*      Pardon? Beg pardon?

Henge *mutters*          Sorry ... I need to take a piss.

Donny *nasty*              I thought you Pommy bastards called it "a slash". Anyway, you'll have to hold on. We're not finished yet.

Six-Pack *grins*          He'll be pissing up a rope before too long.

Security guard #1      Get on with it.

Donny                      Oakleigh-Doakleigh.

Monsieur Jean-Armand Ebile is a fixer of horse races. Well, he would be if he had enough brains to know what to do. His nasty friends from Marseille and Orly would be obliged if he would bend his many talents in that direction. Or things might get ugly for Monsieur Ebile. Tsk, tsk.

Rip you'd be able to advise him on that one, eh?

Rippling Biceps        Blood oath.

Donny                      Gib this clown is in the literature game -- not quite sure which genre. Bit of everything I guess.

My gut feeling is that he can walk.

Hands up for Jean-Armand to walk.

*All the men in the room raise their hand except for the second security guard.*

Security guard #2      No. I wanna smash his fucking face in.

Donny *nods*                Harsh but fair.

Security guard #2      I happen to know about this cunt. He owes money to his bookmaker (K. P. Main). Why don't you let your tough dudes work him over?

Machismo      That's a plan. Brighten up a somewhat uneventful day ...

*Suddenly (terrified out of his wits) Ebile sprints from the room.*

Gibbo *to the room at large*      What's that word for not the last thing but the second last?

Six-Pack      Penultimate.

Gibbo      Yeah. Right. Thanks Packa.

Six-Pack      Don't mention it.

Gibbo      Now I don't want to deal in clichés. We have more clichés bounding around here than there are crocs in the Northern Territory.

Machismo      More.

Gibbo      Correct. Our penultimate villain will of course be Lindsay Henge. This actor has plied his craft with consummate ease. An actor of renown. Roles in Streetcar, Boys from Brazil, Endgame ... and like that.

Doubles up as a drug lord and arms dealer.

*Henge has had enough. He bounds to his feet to confront Gibbo. The Terzo Boys step forward to guard Gibbo. To his credit, Henge stands his ground. He is more than angry.*

Henge *shouts*      Don't come the old acid with me you bastard! What proof? Eh? Where is your proof? You and your toughs are spouting anything and everything without **one single shred of proof!**

Royce *firmly*      He's lying. I can lay my hands on at least **three** witnesses to say that he's lying. (If that's any help).

*Despite this interruption to his rant, Henge soldiers on.*

Henge *shouts*                      You Aussie yobos come here to my beloved England and think that you can --

*Testosterone drops Henge with a well-delivered right-cross to the jaw. Henge is out cold. There follows a long, solemn silence. Finally, Testosterone takes the floor.*

Testosterone                      Sorry about that. I'm glad we shifted the ladies out, but. I don't like having a dust-up in front of the fairer sex.

Security guard #1                It was hardly a dust-up though, was it? I mean you gave him not ***one ounce*** of warning that you intended to KO him.

Testosterone  
*reasonable*                      My being here should have been warning enough.  
Are ya finished?

Security guard #1                Yes. I've said my say.

Security guard #2                And a good job too.

*The two security guards are pleased with themselves. They nod to each other. And they include Royce in the self-congratulation. Royce and the two security guards high-five each other.*

Testosterone *reads*            Patrick Nugent is (or that is to say "was") a ballerina.

Six-Pack                          Ya should say "ballerino", Ron. He hasn't got any tits. So he can't be a "ballerina".

Testosterone                      Whatever.

Nugent                              Without prejudice: I prefer "danseur noble".

Testosterone                      Yeah, well anyway a bloke who looks hot in tights.  
Can I get on with this?

Security guard #2                Yes, do hurry up. I have gnashing hunger pains right now.

*All the men glance at their watches. Gibbo nods to Testosterone.*

Testosterone *reads fast*      Patrick Nugent ballet dancer and heavily involved in human trafficking. And a paid assassin (if ya don't mind). Managed to shoot an arrow through the African president NGhami during a performance of Giselle (where he danced the plum role of

Albrecht). Claimed that it was an accident. But it wasn't.

And that's my lot. Let's go to lunch.

Six Pack *winks*

Always remember! If ya got blocked drains, youse know what to use to unblock 'em.

Gibbo

Thanks, Packa. Thanks, Ron. Thanks all. I think that we've cleared that up. If I have to flex up to Buck House for any reason at all, I will not need to be wearing a boxer's protective groin guard nor cricket box. This boy ain't getting a crotch kick award no matter how ya look at it.

And thank you for your kind attention.

*Security guard #2 marches over to Nugent (who whimpers as he sobs pathetically) and applies handcuffs. Security guard #1 cuffs Maramur. Henge remains unconscious on the floor.*

*Gibbo turns on his heel and marches out the door, followed closely by the Terzo Boys. Donny wanders over to Royce to shake his hand and wish him good luck. Then he shakes hands with both security guards. He nods.*

Donny

Nice to meet yuz.

Security guard #1

Yes. Same. Have a nice lunch.

*As Donny leaves, we see Angst and Glacée (holding hands) hovering in the doorway. Both look very concerned.*

END OF SCENE



#### **IV, Scene ii:** Shit I Hope No-one Sneezes On The Cakes! (London 2022)

*Gibbo has come to visit Donny in his palatial room in an up-market London hotel. Gibbo stalks about while Donny tries to find his Jane Austen book. It is evident that Gibbo is in a bad mood whereas Donny is all sunshine and light.*

Donny	Well, I thought you were stunning. Best confrontation ever witnessed in Human Endeavour. Muscle when muscle was called for. You'll be knighted for sure.
	<i>[Theatrical]</i>
	"I dub thee Knight of the Empire for services to Fair-Suck-Of-The-Sav. Arise, Sir Josh, Earl of Gibbo."
Gibbo <i>moody</i>	That's not even half funny. That's not even <b>close</b> to being funny. Just as well I had the Terzo Lads at my back 'cause you were an

oily creampuff covered in hundreds and thousands.

Fair dinkum, Airlie. I've never seen any bloke as weak as you were.

You **cannot** imagine how embarrassed I was to watch you sucking up to those Pommy clowns. I wanted to thump ya.

Donny Hey! We had five testosterone-charged bulls (I'm counting you in with the Terzos here). The scene needed a nice-mannered drover to steer things in the right direction. I was utterly supreme at being nice.

Otherwise it would have all dissolved into a punch-on.

Gibbo *aggressive* And what's wrong with that?

*Finally Donny locates his book in the bathroom.*

Donny *triumphant* Here it is!

Gibbo What's wrong with that? If I'd had you on song we could have made a real mess of those pansies. **And** the two security guards thrown in as well. We could have belted the crap out of them all.

*Donny hurls himself onto the couch. He flips through the pages to find his bookmark.*

Donny Yeah, yeah ... And been happier men for it.

Anyway, I liked the bouncers. They were good value.

*Gibbo snorts his disgust. He stands at the window gripping a handful of lace curtain, looking out into the busy street below.*

*Meanwhile Donny dives into the Jane Austen book.*

Donny *reading* Okay. Blah blah blah ...

Here we go! We are at the point where Captain Wentworth arrives in Bath. It is raining. He visits Molland's cake shop on Milsom Street.

*Donny has a lightning-bolt thought.*

Donny *to Gibbo* You gotta be seriously worried about those cakes at Molland's. They are just flopping around on plates.

No cling-wrap, no sneeze-guard, no fly-spray ... Nothin'! Not even a fly-swat left over from the Second World War that yer Auntie Min bought at Aussie Disposals. Jesus! They don't care!

A good sneeze from one of these crusty old seafaring types and your éclair is instantly covered in globs of nose-from.

Gibbo *completely lost* What?

Donny *philosophical* No wonder they all died in childbirth ...

*Donny resumes his reading.*

Donny *reading* Now the first person he recognizes is the very dapper Mr Elliot.

*Gibbo (still in his sour mood but now also very confused) glances at Donny.*

Gibbo *at sea* What? What are you on about?

*Donny makes a sweeping gesture towards the armchairs.*

Donny Grab a pew, Old Son. My take on this Jane Austen stuff is clearly better than yours.

Gibbo Well, that's not hard. According to the peeps that know about this stuff, my story is a load of crap.

Donny Harsh but fair. Siddown for God's sake. You make the place look untidy. Sit down! I'll take you through this fantastic love affair between me and Bonnie (that is between my Captain Wentworth and Bonnie's Anne Elliot).

*Finally Gibbo gives in to Donny's persuasion. Gibbo flops into a chair which stands adjacent to the couch on which Donny lies.*

Donny *reading* Stone the crows. My boy C. W. is now wanting to make a play for Anne. But look who we find skulking around: the suave gent that we met in Lyme who couldn't take his eyes off my Anne. Turned

out to be her slimy cousin Mr Elliot who will inherit Kellynch Hall when Sir Walter pops off the twig.

Gibbo                                      Who's playing Sir Walter again?

Donny *points at Gibbo*              You are!

Gibbo *uninterested*                Uh ... I thought so ...

Donny                                      Kay. So before everyone --

Gibbo                                      And this Mr Elliot dude? Who got the guernsey for that one?

Donny                                      You're not on the amnesia protocol, are ya?

Mr Elliot is Jeparit. I mean, Jeparit is Mr Elliot.

And before you ask, our Coops will be Captain Harville (coming up later in the long-awaited letter scene). He has to limp.

Gibbo *wryly*                            Sure! That'll test Cooper's acting talent somewhat ...

Donny                                      Yeah. Right.

So before everyone starts piss-farting around to see who's gonna take my Anne home in a carriage or walking or whatever the fuck they're doing – my boy has acquired a serviceable umbrella which he reckons is better than Mr Elliot's umbrella.

Gibbo *grins*                            As in "mine is bigger than yours".

Donny                                      Yeah. Like that. From now on, the gist of the story is that the Captain has to overcome the magnetic charm of Mr Elliot and win Anne back (remembering that they parted over 8 years ago).

Gibbo *saturnine*                      It's a lost cause ... But go on ...

*Happy, Donny snuggles into the couch. Church bells nearby ring out. Gibbo glances at his watch, then sighs long and hard.*

END OF SCENE



**IV, Scene iii: I Came To Bath Well Prepared (Bath 1814)**

*Mr Elliot is played by the same actor who plays Jeparit.*

[The back story presented in this scene represents the Jane Austen novel which Donny is reading.]

*Captain Wentworth stands under shelter outside Molland's tea shop, shaking his umbrella. He glances towards a very smart barouche standing nearby, ready to pull up in front of the tea shop when summoned.*

*We overhear the dignified voice of a gentleman who is in conversation with another fellow.*

Gentleman *voice-off*      Aye! A very stylish equipage indeed. She is of the Carteret family. Impressive wealth (as ye know) but afraid to say not assiduous in providing profound conversation. The Dowager Viscountess ...

*Captain Wentworth appears thoughtful. Then he enters the tea shop. The first person he sees is Mr Elliot paying court in an obsequious manner to Lady Dalrymple.*

*Then Captain Wentworth turns. Anne Elliot stands nearby smiling at him.*

Captain Wentworth      Look! She has positioned herself that I must cross her in moving  
*voice-over*                      about the tea-room. May I not take courage from that?

*Captain Wentworth watches Anne drop a polite curtsy. He bows in response.*

Captain Wentworth      Miss Elliot! But I knew that you were in Bath.

Anne                      I am so sorry that it rains. I am afraid that Bath is known for its frequent drenchings.

*Captain Wentworth indicates the umbrella which he possesses.*

Captain Wentworth      But ... I have purchased a serviceable umbrella. Perhaps you will allow me to escort you to Lady Dalrymple's barouche? I spy the

bustle of departure.

*Mr Elliot is very busy gathering his charges such that they may depart. The barouche now stands ready at the door. Mr Elliot escorts Lady Dalrymple and her daughter Miss Carteret. Miss Elizabeth Elliot and her companion Mrs Clay waft to the door. Elizabeth gives Captain Wentworth a scornful glance of contempt, even though he seems about to bow.*

*He notices that Anne does not move in that direction.*

Captain Wentworth      But Miss Elliot! You do not --

Anne *smiles*      Sir. The barouche might prove too much of a crush were it to hold our entire party. Mrs Clay and I have bargained it out: I will be more than happy to wander home under my own volition.

Captain Wentworth      Then you must take my arm. It will be my honour and my pleasure to escort you. Come!

*Anne is absurdly pleased with the outcome. So too is he.*

*However, Mr Elliot trots up, full of business.*

Mr Elliot *gushing*      My dear Miss Anne Elliot! I undertake to convey you to your domicile as dry as may be. For the rain has stopped you see momentarily. The Dowager Viscountess and her daughter are off, in company with your sister Elizabeth and her fine friend Mrs Clay. Nothing awaits but for us to leave immediately. And so let us be off.

*Mr Elliot (face wreathed in smiles) offers his arm. Anne gives Captain Wentworth a last look. Then she exits on Mr Elliot's arm. Captain Wentworth turns towards the camera, looking thoughtful.*

Captain Wentworth      My rival has all that I do not. Yet it seemed to me that her eyes  
*voice-over*      took on a special light when they gazed upon me.

Am I a fool to appreciate that? A simpleton or an immense poltroon?

END OF SCENE



#### **IV, Scene iv:** Weekly Meeting Of The Estate, Equipment and Planning Department (Buckingham Palace, London 2022)

*The heavy duty lads from Estate, Equipment and Planning (Buckingham Palace) are having a meeting in a shed. The shed is filled with loads of equipment which would be used for gardening, yard maintenance and such like. We must be able to read the name of this department on a sign on the wall.*

*The lads are: Bonz, Jorgen, Flip, Serge, Tom, Ignace and Ian. The men lounge about drinking coffee and eating biscuits. Some are smoking. Bonz refers to rosters and notes as he attempts to look busy.*

**Flip** *frustrated*                      He don't even gimme a chance to set up me equipment before he's moving me on because he has a party of VIPs floating by. And of course (as we well know) – they must come first. My duties are to be pushed further down the line.

*There is a long grumble of agreement from the other men.*

**Flip** *angry*                              His head is so tightly wedged up his backside ... I'm fairly sick of it.

*A car is heard to pull up outside. The men listen as car doors are heard to bang.*

**Bonz** *puzzled, alarmed*      Visitors. Here! Put them fags out.

*The men who are smoking quickly dispose of their cigarette butts. A loud knock is heard.*

*The door swings open. There is Angst dressed completely from head to toe as Boadicea. The workers gasp. Also in attendance is Draino. He is in suitable apparel to undertake the role of the Chorus in Shakespeare's Henry V.*

*It is a bit of a squeeze for Angst and Draino to enter the shed particularly given the shield and trident of Boadicea. Draino looks about him, hugely impressed.*

Draino *awestruck* Blimey! This is alright. Look at this! Toys for the boys, eh?

*The lads grin and nod. But they are completely bamboozled. Angst needs to gain control of the meeting.*

Angst I am Barbara Jarvis, head of the Logistical Operations Department (Buckingham Palace). The situation now calls for the most drastic of action.

They may beat us at Test Cricket but they shall **not** crush us at interpreting the British Classics.

*[Proud and arrogant]*

Men of Estate, Equipment and Planning – you are summoned.

Angus. You have our ears.

*Draino steps forward. He clears his throat and then goes into his speech.*

Draino *theatrical* Now all the youth of England are on fire,  
And silken dalliance in the wardrobe lies:  
Now thrive the armourers, and honour's thought  
Reigns solely in the breast of every man:

*The lads are appalled, open-mouthed.*

Angst *a call to arms* Men of England!

Ian *outraged* Oi!

Angst *caught out* Of course. Sorry. (Scotland included ...)  
Men of Britain! Now is your moment to stand up against the

heathen. It is war! It is war!

Draino

They sell the pasture now to buy the horse,  
Following the mirror of all Christian kings,  
With winged heels, as English Mercuries.  
(Sorry, sorry ... British ... er ... British Mercur ... )--  
For now sits Expectation in the air,  
And hides a sword from hilts unto the point  
With crowns imperial, crowns and coronets,

Serge *wincing*

Alright! Alright! That's enough. We get the picture.

Angst *on a roar*

Men of Estate, Equipment and Planning -- Do you have the  
stomach for a fight?

*The men (including Draino) roar loudly in response (in the affirmative) and pump the air with their fists.*

Angst *even louder*

Will you see England – Oh! I'm sorry – Er ...  
Will you see Britain stand tall and proud?

*The men (including Draino) roar loudly in response (in the affirmative) and pump the air with their fists.*

Angst *glorious*

Then the deed shall be done!  
  
Here are your instructions. We must fight while the fire rages  
strong in our bellies.

*Angst has a small compartment concealed under her shield. From this she retrieves various flyers which she hands out to the men. They read these fliers.*

Draino

Tonight lads. Defeat these colonial goats! Fight men fight!

END OF SCENE



Gibbo *uninterested* No. They're coming back. They bailed out to go down the road and play the pokies for a while. That's all.

Donny *worried* Jeez! I hope they behave better than the Viking actors did at the North Bondi RSL.

Cooper *thoughtful* Men of action. Needing occupation.

Donny Do youse wanna hear about the next bit in my story (while we are waiting for the Action Men to return)?

Jeparit *bored* Alright. If we have to.  
Where are you up to?

Donny *reads* Ah ... Yeah! We're ready for the concert. This might be a bit sad. I've looked at this from the point of view of Captain Wentworth and he realizes that he doesn't want to be there. At the concert I mean. Because of his strong feelings for Anne.  
  
I mean Anne looks lovely but Mr Elliot just drools over her and all she wants is to be alone with me. With the Captain, I mean.

Jeparit Is it alright if I remove my jacket, gentlemen? Getting a bit warm.

Cooper See that redhead over there with the two fat men? She looks at us all the time. We might be onto something there gents if we play our cards right.

Donny *sighs* Alright. The concert. In Bath. In 1814.

*A superb, very professional hostess walks up to check that everything is alright with their meals.*

*Everyone left at the tables agrees that the food and drink and the service are all excellent.*

*Jeparit notices the hostess glance toward the vacated Terzo table.*

Jeparit They're coming back. Only wandered off for a fresh of breath air.

*The hostess grins and nods.*

Jeparit You don't mind my stripping off my jacket, do you Darl? I'm just toasting up too much.

Hostess *smiles warmly* I love to hear an Aussie say that he finds London too warm.  
Please – be comfortable. Enjoy yourselves, gentlemen.

*The hostess wanders off. The boys continue to drink.*

Donny For anyone who's still interested, we're off to the concert. There's supposed to be a singer, but I can't be bothered with all that "tra-la-la" stuff. We'll just have a string quartet. Handel or Mozzie or someone like that.

Rippling Biceps You have to have a singer, but.  
  
Otherwise how's Anne gonna impress everyone with her being fluent in Italian if there's nobody singing in Italian, like?

*Donny is shocked that Rippling Biceps is aware of the plot of the Jane Austen novel. Donny looks at the other men then shrugs.*

Donny *airy* Aw ... We'll wing it.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV (Below the coat of arms of Lord Henry Scroop).







for me for now.

Anne My days do seem filled with delightful activity. And yet I can think with such happiness of our time at Lyme. Apart from those two painful hours when Miss Louisa Musgrove lay lifeless, I found the seaside freshness quite charming.

Captain Wentworth  
*frowns* I cannot be so sanguine ... The agony of waiting for Louisa to recover – what torture! I cannot think of Lyme without much regret.

Anne Oh Captain Wentworth! Once the heartache is over, surely the pleasures ... ?

Captain Wentworth  
*wryly* Yes I should find happiness in all things as you do. And the ending was to everyone's satisfaction, after all.

*[Looks about]*

When your presence of mind led you to instruct Benwick to seek out the surgeon – surely you can have had no idea of the important part he would play in Louisa's recovery.

Anne Their betrothal! I was more than surprised to hear that piece of news. But I am very certain that they shall deal well together.

Captain Wentworth They will be happy. I **trust** that they will be happy. Their plans to wed will not be delayed by caprice or --

Captain Wentworth  
*voice-over* My plans to marry the beautiful lady before me were stopped by those who saw me as a direct threat to her happiness. I cannot believe that I accepted her refusal. Look at her! She is everything.

*Captain Wentworth seems to have gone into a brown study. Anne looks a question.*

Anne Captain? You were saying?

*He gets a grip and appears to regain his composure.*

Captain Wentworth The difference in their minds and temperaments must ...

*[Very low voice]*

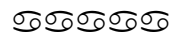
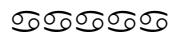
Miss Elliot! Fanny Harville (the sister of Captain Harville whom you met at Lyme) was so superior. A wise and well-educated young woman of such immense worth. Louisa – certainly sweet-tempered and pretty, but not to be compared with his lost love Fanny.

I wonder at it, Anne. I cannot but wonder at it. A man like Benwick situated as he is. Oh! His heart was wounded, pierced and almost broke. A man cannot, **must** not ever recover from such a devotion. When he lost Fanny ...

*Captain Wentworth cannot continue. He looks straight into Anne's face.*

*Then there is a bustle. Captain Wentworth and Anne look about. It is time for the concert.*

*With a bow and a curtsey, they part such that they may enter the concert room.*

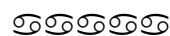




*The string quartet are in fine form. It is evident that the members of the audience enjoy the performance.*

Captain Wentworth  
*voice-over*

My mind cannot be still. The superb music and the brilliancy of the room re-ignites the dead parts of my soul. This is what I need to take my mind off those dreadful, dreadful days on board ship when I screamed orders at the men ... some of whom 'fore long lay at my feet as piles of gore. Oh! Bitter, bitter memories. I have returned here to the warmth of polite society. I cannot speak these thoughts aloud ... not to my sister, or to the Admiral. Perhaps to Anne ... ?





*The next musical item begins. Captain Wentworth stands in a corner, brooding.*

*Then he turns on his heel in order to fetch his hat and coat.*

*Suddenly, Anne stands beside him. Anne, Captain Wentworth and Mr Elliot will all speak in very hushed tones.*

Anne                                      Captain Wentworth! I had hoped that we --

Captain Wentworth                  What did you hope, Miss Elliot?  
*harsh*

*Anne looks about, desperate.*

Anne                                      But ... Will you not stay to hear the concert? The music is so very beautiful, is it not?

Captain Wentworth                  I hardly know, Miss Elliot. I hear nothing.  
*cold*

*Anne bites back her tears.*

Anne                                      Please --

*Just then Mr Elliot approaches to draw Anne back to her seat.*

Captain Wentworth *to*                  Well?  
*Anne*

Mr Elliot *to Anne*                      Dear Anne. Won't you return to your seat? Lady Dalrymple is concerned at your absence.

Anne *to Mr Elliot*                      Yes, my dear cousin. I shall return. Thank you. Please allow me one moment.

*Mr Elliot looks at Anne and then at Captain Wentworth. Eventually he withdraws.*

Anne *to Captain*                      Is not this tune worth staying for?  
*Wentworth*

Captain Wentworth                  No. There is nothing here worth my staying for now.  
*hard*                                          Goodnight Miss Elliot.

*Captain Wentworth gives a very stiff, short bow then retreats with quick, long stride. Bereft, Anne hovers (with lips quivering). Reluctantly she steps up to Mr Elliot who takes her arm as he escorts her back to her seat.*

END OF SCENE



**V, Scene ii:** Our Boys Fly The Flag For Australia (London 2022)

*Back in the Lord Henry Scroop restaurant the Terzo Boys have sauntered back inside.*

*All eight men are eating sweets. Testosterone looks up to see seven evil-looking men (along with Draino) standing about, looking very menacing. Testosterone gobbles down what remains of his sweets, then stands. He stares at the other men. This is the beginning of the face-off.*

*The “lads” are (naturally) from the Estate, Equipment and Planning Department (Buckingham Palace): Bonz, Jorgen, Flip, Serge, Tom, Ignace and Ian. Ian (wearing a kilt) is outfitted as a true Scot. Otherwise the lads from EEP (BH) wear very smart lounge suits.*

*Machismo, Donny and Six-Pack stand, facing-off. Cooper stands (still eating his sweets). Gibbo stands, tearing off his jacket and beginning to remove his shirt.*

*Ian strips off his jacket and shirt, chucking them on a nearby table.*

*Now the diners sense that trouble is brewing. People start to shift away from the men.*

*The hostess (alert and uncomfortable) steps forward. She is politely shifted out of harm's way by Jeparit. Draino appears to be outrageously excited by proceedings.*

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Draino has his own agenda. He is to remain fully dressed and takes virtually no part in the ensuing melee. Otherwise, the 15 men have removed their jackets and in most instances their ties and shirts as well. All are grim-faced and making physical movements appropriate to flexing-up for a fight.

Gibbo *menacing* Do ya wanna have a go, do ya?

Jorgen *defiant* Yes, Aussie dude. We'll have a go.

Jeparit What's this about, anyway? What's your beef?

Ignace Our beef (boyo) is that you Aussie cretins have no idea.

There is a murmur of agreement from the other diners. Meanwhile, the hostess is calling the police.

Rippling Biceps What? No idea about what?

Flip *disgusted* About culture.

It's a shame and disgrace, the way you yobos are tearing into the literary heroes of my country.

Ian Redress is swift. Swift and meaningful.

Gibbo glances at those on his team, making a meaningful head gesture. Gibbo and the others move forward.

Bonz and the lads from EEP (BH) (similarly grim-faced) also move forward.

Machismo is spoiling for this fight. It is he who lands the first blow.

From there a violent fracas evolves. Every one of the men (apart from Draino) is bent on destroying somebody on the other side. Not only punches are thrown. Men also wrestle on the floor. One or two of the men leap onto others from the tables. Pieces of furniture are used as weapons, tables are strewn about. Frightened clients rush about, trying to avoid becoming collateral damage. Several women scream.

Policemen in full protective uniforms pour into the restaurant, trying to bring about order.

Mayhem in top London restaurant

AAP. A violent brawl has broken out in London's famed Lord Henry Scroop restaurant last night. Witnesses claimed that the fight appeared to be the work of two rival gangs. However, it is believed that there were

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*Our scene shows the 14 combatants (minus Cooper and Draino) being loaded into a couple of police vans to be taken off to the clink. These men are all to some extent injured.*

*Donny ends up beside Rippling Biceps (by design). They plonk themselves down side-by-side in one of the vans.*

Rippling Biceps Donald. What have ya done with Mrs Smith and Mrs Crook?

Donny *confused* Eh?

Rippling Biceps Anne goes to visit her old school friend Mrs Smith where she learns all about what an asshole Mr Elliot is. Mrs Crook is the nurse (Mrs Smith being an invalid) – Anne learns all she needs to know from them. Sir Walter has a conniption fit that Anne’s fraternizing with an indigent invalid. It’s vital that she meets them as far as I can see.

Donny *shrugs, drawls* I don’t know about Mrs Smith and her hanger-on. She’s just ... You know, she’s not very interesting. I winged-it with the Italian bizzo. I can wing this – yeah?

Rippling Biceps Oh, yeah. That turned out a treat. Well done! You dodged the singing but included the Italian.

*Donny is pleased.*

Donny I can’t include the Smith/Crook combo. This is Captain Wentworth’s gig. He only meets them two after he and Anne get married.

Rippling Biceps Okay then. Let’s see how it pans out.

Gibbo Hey! What happened to Coops?

Machismo He got belted in the leg with a chair. They think it might be broken. By that I mean the leg **and** the chair: broken. Called an ambulance for him.

Donny *hopeful* A broken leg? So he’ll need a walking stick to help him limp about?

Machismo *shrugs* Guess so.

Donny *exultant* Bewdy!

*Donny gives Rippling Biceps a high five.*



*Draino sits at what is left of a table inside the restaurant being questioned by a police constable. All around Draino, staff attempt to clean up the mess.*

Draino                      It was the strangest thing, Constable. There I was about to take a seat in what is ***the*** most fashionable eatery in bigger London when all of a sudden ...

END OF SCENE

### **V, Scene iii:** The Pump Room Restaurant (Bath 2022)

*To the accompaniment of some jaunty music, we see a series of touristy photographs: Frederick and Blenheim taking a mini-break in Bath. The couple are happy and bright.*

- *the Roman Baths*
- *the Lower Assembly Rooms*
- *Abbey Church Yard*
- *the River Avon*

*The couple are in the modern-day Pump Room restaurant having afternoon tea. The table is laden with iced cream treats along with all the usual tea paraphernalia.*

Blenheim *laughing*              But you cannot imagine even in your wildest dreams what she looked like. Angst as Queen Boadicea! It was a triumph of complete bad taste. Heaven only knows what she was attempting to achieve.

*Frederick enjoys the joke as much as Blenheim.*

Blenheim                      Oh! And Draino was just as ridiculous. He was rigged out as if he were in some Shakespearian production.  
  
Honestly! I have no earthly idea what it was all about but it was a

hoot.

Frederick I received a tex-mess from a journalist. Apparently Draino was dragged off by the police from that Donnybrook the other night in the London restaurant outrage.

Blenheim *disbelieving* No!

Frederick *nods* Quite correct. I've confirmed it with another know-it-all. All true! I shall rely on you to furnish the full news coverage.

Blenheim Me?

Frederick You work with the guy. I need a prompt heads-up.

Blenheim I don't know if --

Frederick Let's drop it for now. We are in deepest, darkest Bath. What did we learn herein? What features did you most enjoy?

Blenheim Bath? Oh, it's brilliant. I love the Roman Baths. Just to think that real Romans actually came here.

And this was the famous Pump Room, featured in a couple of the Jane Austen novels. Restorative waters to drink ... Just so historic.

*Frederick smiles. He reaches across the table to take Blenheim's hand.*

Frederick Ann Anderson. You researched Bath before venturing out and that impresses me. In fact, everything about you impresses me.

Blenheim *keen* I love finding out everything about a locality prior to visiting it. Now I worked through aquifers. Wait ... Oh yes. The water bubbling up from the ground here at Bath, actually started off as rain falling on the nearby Mendip Hills and perked through the aquifers like coffee in a machine. Amazing!

Frederick And?

Blenheim *thrilled* I should have written it down ... marble ... unfluted Ionic columns and Corinthian columns with a crowning entablature and statues

... Maybe we should have bought a guidebook after all (in the shop).

Frederick                      You haven't told me yet how many.

Blenheim *confused*                      How many what?

Frederick *gently*                      How many times a proposal of marriage has been made in the Pump Room at Bath.

*Blenheim is all at sea. She stares open-mouthed at Frederick.*

Blenheim *awestruck*                      I'm not sure ... I'm not sure that anyone's ever counted.

*Frederick dives into his pocket and pulls out a small velvet bag (rather than the usual ring box). He places the bag on the table. From it he extracts a superb diamond ring. Without any fanfare Frederick slips the ring onto Blenheim's finger. Blenheim stares at the ring.*

Frederick *loving*                      Whatever the number is, we'd better add one more to the total.

*Blenheim (her eyes filled with tears) nods and smiles divinely.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene iv:** Captain Harville, Captain Wentworth and Anne Elliot (Bath 1814)

[The back story presented in this scene represents our continuation of the Jane Austen novel which Donny is reading.]

*Captain Harville is played by the same actor who plays Cooper.*

*We are now in a very respectable Bath hotel wherein the Musgroves have come to stay in order to purchase bridal clothes for Henrietta and Louisa. Captain Wentworth sits at a small table in a sunny sitting room in this hotel. This small table is provided with good quality writing paper, a bottle of ink and a couple of goose quills.*

*Anne arrives, causing both Captain Wentworth and Captain Harville to stand. Smiling, Anne bows to both men. They bow to her. Then Captain Wentworth resumes his task. Captain Harville (using a cane for support) winces at the pain in his leg.*

*Captain Harville stands in the background, as he shakes hands with Anne.*

Captain Harville            Ah Miss Anne. Do you have any objection if I sit? My gammy leg, you know.

*Anne gestures to chairs nearby.*

Anne                        Oh, please Captain Harville. Let us both sit. You may tell me how your dear family get on, if you will.

*Anne and Captain Harville make themselves comfortable at a large table. Their conversation is muted. Captain Wentworth writes.*

Captain Wentworth        If I can finish this letter then I may speak to Anne. I shall draw  
*voice-over*                her aside and ...

*The conversation becomes louder.*

Anne                        That is so hard for you, Captain. What a thoughtless request. Does he not realize how bitter this must be for you? Your poor sister Fanny ...

Captain Harville        Aye Miss Anne. His likeness ...

*unhappy*                You see 'twas originally painted for Fanny only months before she passed. And now another is to have it: Miss Louisa Musgrove. His new love.

*[Sighs]*

I cannot undertake it. That is why I have commissioned my friend Wentworth to arrange the framing of this miniature. He sits there

now writing to the picture framer on my behalf.

Anne *sincere*

Oh Captain! This is almost heartless in Benwick. I cannot believe it of him.

Captain Wentworth  
*bitter, sad*

My sister Fanny would never have forgotten him so quick.

Anne

No. It is not in woman's nature to forget true love.

*Again the voices of Anne and Captain Harville drop low. They are now a barely discernible murmur. But Captain Wentworth listens to them instead of writing.*

Captain Wentworth  
*voice-over*

I hear them speak.

My friend is in the right of it. Men have the stronger bodies and thus the stronger feelings.

But now Anne explains that men might distract themselves with their work and with their duties. Women are confined at home – their thoughts do prey upon them.

*Captain Harville's voice is raised.*

Captain Harville

Wentworth! You must not write a wordy speech there. He is only a little picture framer after all.

Close off your letter (my dear fellow) that we may continue with our business. Whilst the sun shines, eh?

*This startles Captain Wentworth out of his reverie. He visibly starts.*

Captain Wentworth  
*distracted*

Yes! Yes! Only two or three words more ...

*Again the voices of Anne and Captain Harville are muted. Captain Wentworth seizes a clean sheet of paper and begins to write feverishly.*

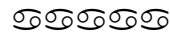
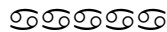
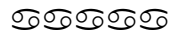
Captain Wentworth  
*voice-over*

She does not love Elliot! I can hear it in her voice. Too excellent creature! Her love for me remains – pure and intact.

Anne! Anne!

Let me scribble out onto a blank piece of paper those thoughts that rage within my heart.

I can listen no longer in silence. I must speak to you by such means as are within my reach. You pierce my soul. I am half agony, half hope.



*Anne is alone in the sunny sitting room. Mrs Musgrove enters, clucking advice and full of bustle.*

*With a puzzled look on her face, Anne moves to the little writing table that was lately occupied by Captain Wentworth. She stares: he has left his white gloves on the table. She reaches out to touch the gloves.*

*Suddenly, Captain Wentworth bursts into the room. He halts at seeing Mrs Musgrove.*

Captain Wentworth      Ah, Mrs Musgrove. Please excuse my haste: I have evidently forgotten my gloves. Aye! There they stand on the little table there. Excuse me, Ma'am.

*Anne is startled. Captain Wentworth strides over to stand beside Anne, with his back to Mrs Musgrove. He looks straight into Anne's eyes as he grasps the white gloves in his hand. Then he moves some papers aside to indicate that there is a hidden letter intended for "A. E". His eyes bore into hers.*

Captain Wentworth      For all that Heaven and Earth may conspire to plot and plan my  
*voice-over*                      future, do me this one signal honour and read this missive. A word, a look will be enough to decide my fate. Shall I call upon your worthy Father this evening? Or never enter his portal?

*Captain Wentworth leaves the room on the instant.*

*Anne (trembling) sits down. She sees "A. E." scrawled on the folded paper. She nervously unfolds. She reads.*



END OF SCENE

**V, Scene v:** Give To Me Your Least Favourite Daughter (Bath 1814)

[The back story presented in this scene represents our continuation of the Jane Austen novel which Donny is reading.]

*Sir Walter is played by the same actor who plays Gibbo.*

*Captain Wentworth is shown into the private library pertaining to Sir Walter. The door is closed by the footman. Both gentlemen (Sir Walter and Captain Wentworth) bow to each other.*

Sir Walter *smiling*                      Ah, yes. I believe that I am aware of your purpose in coming here to visit upon me.

Would you care for a sherry?

Captain Wentworth                      Sir that would be most welcome. Thank you.

*Sir Walter pours two glasses of sherry. One he passes to Captain Wentworth.*

Sir Walter                                      Your health, Captain.

Sit down! Sit down! This business need hardly take any time at all.

*Both gentlemen sit at their ease, sipping their drinks.*

Sir Walter                                      My understanding is that you have come to apply for the hand of my daughter in marriage. Am I not correct?

Captain Wentworth  
*nods*                                              Indeed sir that is the sole object of my calling upon you. My proposals have been accepted and now I must inform you that I am the happiest of men.

- Sir Walter                      Splendid! Elizabeth will make you a most excellent wife. She --
- Captain Wentworth        I beg you to excuse my rude interruption Sir Walter but Anne is the lady who has accepted my proposal of marriage (not Elizabeth whom I scarcely know).
- Sir Walter *completely shocked*        Anne? **Anne?**
- You cannot mean that it is **Anne** (and not Elizabeth) who has taken your fancy?
- Captain Wentworth        You correctly comprehend it all, Sir Walter.
- To me Anne is the most beautiful and wonderful of women. I have admired your daughter Anne for some time and can safely declare that I could not (and will not) find her equal. There can be no other wife for me.
- Sir Walter *still awestruck*        I cannot believe it! Why, Elizabeth is superior in every way. Her carriage, her beauty, her accomplishments ...
- How could you look past my perfect eldest daughter and see Anne in your preference?
- Captain Wentworth        Far be it for me to disappoint you but that is the matter as it stands. And it will not ever change.
- Please indulge me by declaring that we have your blessing (Anne and myself) and that I may plan our union with all alacrity.
- Sir Walter                      I cannot fathom this at all, Captain.
- Captain Wentworth        It seems to me that your heir Mr Elliot shows a decided inclination towards Miss Elizabeth Elliot. Such a union would be beyond all expectation grand (I should suppose).
- Sir Walter *surprised*        Mr Elliot, you say? But ... Well ... You may be in the right. Let me think on it.
- Captain Wentworth abstracts an envelope from his pocket. He places this upon the table in front of Sir Walter.*

Captain Wentworth        Herein please find a true and faithful narrative of my financial particulars. You will see that from the wise investment of my prize money I am more than beforehand with the world, Sir. More than capable of taking on a life-partner to keep her in great style and comfort.

*Sir Walter could not be less interested. He waves vaguely at the envelope, dismissing it as unimportant.*

Sir Walter                    Oh yes, yes. I shall hand that over to my trusted official and man of business Mr Shepherd for his perusal. But I'm sure –  
  
Mr Elliot for Elizabeth, do you think?

*Captain Wentworth finishes his glass of sherry then stands. He bows.*

Captain Wentworth        Certainly!  
  
Now: thank you for your indulgence Sir Walter. Be assured that I shall do everything in my power to prove a loving and worthy husband for your dear daughter Anne.

*Sir Walter is completely distracted. He waves Captain Wentworth off.*

Sir Walter                    Aye. Thank you, thank you ... Have her. Have her, if you will.  
  
You and Anne must apprise me of your news, as it comes to hand. Grant me that boon, at least.  
  
Mmmmm ... Yes. My heir to be my son-in-law. Mmmmm ... I like it well. Indeed!

*Smiling, Captain Wentworth bows, then exits leaving Sir Walter to his deep cogitations.*

END OF SCENE

**V, Scene vi: Malice At The Palace Part II (Buckingham Palace 2022)**

*We revisit the robust office of Sir Burton [ACT II scene ii].*

*Sir Burton's office indicates that he is **very** high up the totem pole at Buckingham Palace. He sits at his imposing desk opposite Draino and Chisel.*

Sir Burton *reads*

Mrs Jarvis has revealed that her marriage to Captain Jarvis of the Royal Navy is in serious need of urgent attention. She has therefore resigned her post as Head of the Logistical Operations Department (Buckingham Palace) such that she may fly out to the naval facilities at Durban in South Africa. Without delay. Post-haste. Effective immediately.

*[Looks up from the paper]*

Please be assured (Mr Johnson and Ms Hunt-Marsden) that her decision to renounce her station was in no way affected by the findings of our internal investigation into the unseemly activities recently witnessed at the Lord Henry Scroop restaurant.

Despite what you might have heard to the contrary. (The bill for repairs to said establishment has risen to close to the million pound mark, I hasten to add. A sum which the EEP (BH) is required to defray).

But as I say, this fact in no way impelled the abdication of Mrs Jarvis.

*With much dignity, Sir Burton purses his lips as he puts aside the first paper.*

*Draino and Chisel are awestruck. They glance at each other.*

*Sir Burton takes up another piece of paper and reads from it.*

Sir Burton *reads*

Ms Anderson has accepted a proposal of marriage from Lord Frederick Keynes. They intend to domicile in Fingle Bay, Ireland.

Draino *nods*

Ah yes. Mullioned windows. Superb prospect. Shining waters.

*Sir Burton glances at Draino.*

Sir Burton *crisply*

Quite!

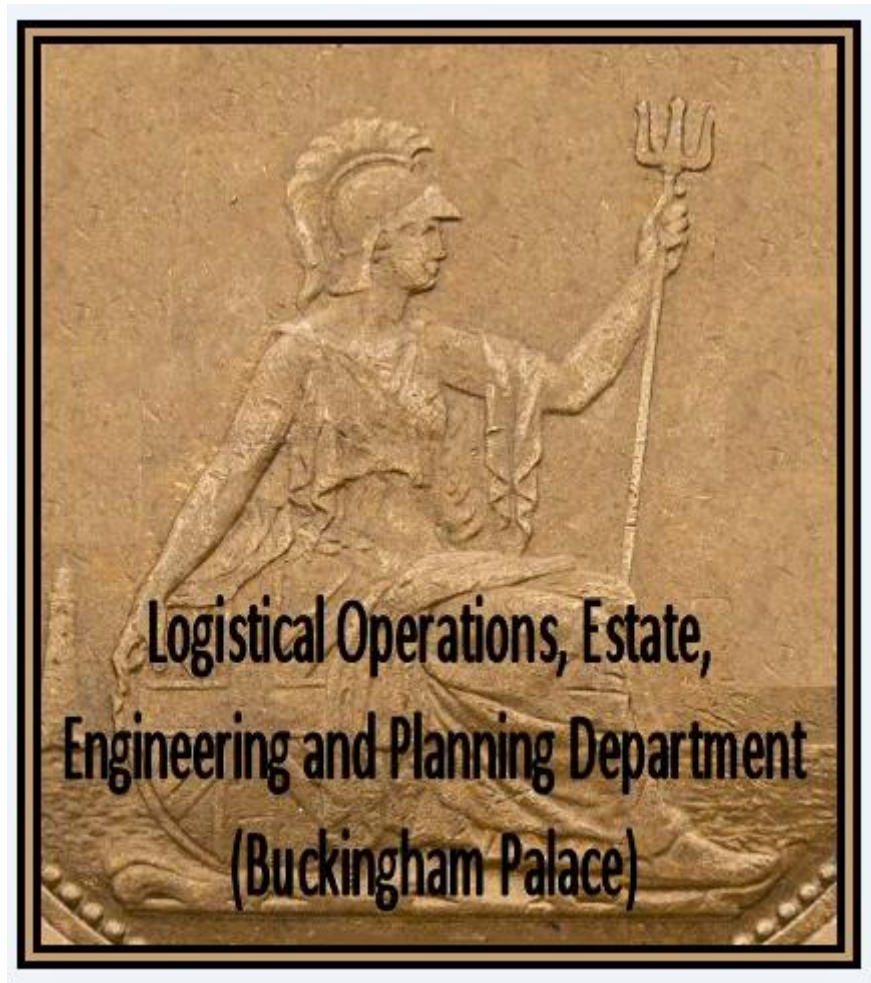
That being the case, Ms Anderson (or Lady Keynes as she will become) has tendered her resignation as Third-in-Command of your department here at Buckingham Palace.

Effective immediately.

*Sir Burton puts aside the second paper with his usual care and dignity. Then he removes his glasses, sits with fingers entwined and looks at Drains and Chisel with something approaching a smile.*

Sir Burton

It is now my pleasant duty to offer to you (Mr Johnson) the position of Head of the Logistical Operations Department here at Buckingham Palace. Your underlings will be those gentlemen who currently toil in the Estate, Engineering and Planning Department. Apparently you have made – I dive here into the vernacular – a great hit with those chaps. I understand that this will in effect combine both Departments. Be in no doubt (however) that you will hold the most senior position, Mr Johnson.



Sir Burton

Such a high-ranking official will doubtless require a title. I have therefore submitted your name as a candidate for Honours in the next Birthday List.

How does "Sir Angus Johnson" sound?

*Draino is completely blown away.*

Draino

Thank you, Sir Burton. I accept the post (and the title) with great humility. Thank you.

*Sir Burton nods and almost smiles.*

Sir Burton

Ms Hunt-Marsden. I should like you to become my 2IC.

I have closed-down the "Eminence Gris" group. I'll run that side of things myself, but will require assistance. You (Ms Hunt-Marsden)

appear to me to fit the bill perfectly. Our Birthday Honours brief remains the same: who shall receive the “gongs” and who shall receive the “kicks to the privy parts”.

*[Coughs slightly]*

My understanding is that you have lately inhabited a temporary office which your former superior seized with duress. That will now become your permanent office. My sources tell me that it contains a WC.

A toilet. A lavatory. A bog.

Of your very own. No sharesies.

Hmmm.

That seems more than suitable for a lady of your importance.

I trust that you will accept my offer?

*Chisel can only nod briskly as she makes inarticulate noises.*

Sir Burton

Very well.

I now conclude this meeting. You might wish to celebrate your success prior to taking up your new duties. You shall be allowed half-an-hour in which to do so.

Here are your instructions with concomitant salary increases also outlined therein. I’m afraid that they are held here at my desk and not in some devious device secreted behind the shield of Boadicea.

*They all stand. Sir Burton passes an official folder to Draino and then another official folder to Chisel.*

END OF SCENE

## V, Scene vii: Malice At The Palace Part III (Buckingham Palace 2022)

*Squealing at the top of her voice Chisel rushes about her office, chucking papers into the air. She dances about in huge merriment as the papers rain down upon her.*

*Next she rushes into her private en suite toilet. Chisel rushes to the unit, drops to her knees and hugs the toilet with abandon.*

Chisel                                      Oh! I could kiss you! (But won't ... Hygiene et cetera.)

*Instead, she lays the side of her head on the seat and begins to sing "Mon Coeur s'ouvre à ta voix".*

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Draino has now joined Chisel in her office. Draino pops open a bottle of French sparkling wine. They drink and laugh. Then they dance about the office. More papers are hurled into the air.

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*Draino and Chisel have flopped into chairs, laughing and exhausted.*

Chisel                                      Who won the fight?

Draino *dreamily*                              Mmmm ... ?

Chisel                                      Sir Angus (that is to be) – Who won the set-to at the Lord Henry Scroop restaurant?

Draino                                      I'm calling it a draw. All the pugilists fought gallantly. I must say it was a scene redolent of masculinity and virility and --

Chisel                                      I ask because those Australians who indulged in that famous bout of fisticuffs and derring-do are the very same blokes who penned a Jane Austen script that I'm launching into as a start to my new career. "Cajolery". It was originally rejected but later rewritten. I



feel that it might be my lucky charm. Slanted towards the male hero rather than towards the female one.

We shall see.

Draino

We certainly shall.

May I give you a peck on the cheek, Chloe? Today has been grand – so grand!

*Draino quickly kisses Chisel's cheek. They continue to drink the bubbly.*

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene viii:** Love And Marriage And Wrestling On The Floor (London 2022)

*Bonnie and Gibbo have each grabbed a take-away coffee.*

Bonnie                      Someone will have to explain to me why the bridegroom goes and asks the father of the bride for her hand in marriage. What is that?

Gibbo                      You know – “Who giveth this woman?” It was all about how in the far off old times the daughter was the property of her father. So – “You can’t have her unless I (that is the father) let her go. And you’ll have to kick-in a bride-price as well.”

Bonnie                      That’s crazy.

Gibbo                      And that leads to the next question. How come the guy (the bridegroom) fronts up to the wedding with no-one to give **him** away? And nobody asks his mum and dad if it’s okay to take him off their hands.

And that’s the same answer to the question: why is it quite okay for guys to wander around bare-chested and women are frowned

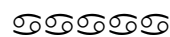
on if they do (and might even get arrested). We're different. End of story.

Bonnie That's a very blokey way of looking at it.

Gibbo You come out of your mother's tummy as either M or F. No matter how you look at it. Then puberty accentuates the difference between the sexes. Everyone tries to play fair and be non-gender-specific. But it only works up to a point.

Wedding: bride in a beautiful white dress and every eye on her. Groom: in a suit. He's just there. Nobody gives a shit. Trust me. Nobody gives a shit. It's a rite of passage. There are traditions. Read the letter at the end of our book. These "rules for males" and "rules for females" have been around for ever. Get over it.

Bonnie Er I don't see that, Gib. We are in 2022 not 1814. Things have moved on.



*Gibbo has wandered off. As Bonnie finishes her coffee she gets up to chuck away her paper cup in a bin. Then she leans against the railing, watching London sweep by at speed. She is soon joined by Donny.*

Bonnie Gibbo is the bitterest, most twisted person --

Donny His crappo marriage fucked with his brain.

Bonnie All the same ...

Donny Think how rotten it must be to never be allowed to see your kids.

Bonnie I got the impression that he just didn't care.

Donny But he did care. They're nice kids. Who wouldn't love them?

*There is a pause. Donny glances several times at Bonnie.*

Donny Talking of "love" ... You thought any more about us two getting hitched?

Bonnie Yeah.

Donny And?

Bonnie Why don't you write me great long letter? Like the Captain wrote to Anne? That has got to be the most beautiful --

Donny I can recite it.

"For you alone, I think and plan. Have you not seen this? Can you fail to have understood my wishes? I had not waited even these ten days, could I have read your feelings, as I think you must have penetrated mine. I can hardly write. I am every instant hearing something which overpowers me. You sink your voice, but I can distinguish the tones of that voice when they would be lost on others. Too good, too excellent creature! You do us justice, indeed. You do believe that there is true attachment and constancy among men. Believe it to be most fervent, most undeviating, in F. W."

Of course ... That should be "D. A."

*Bonnie can think of nothing more to say. She walks slowly away with a wistful smile on her face.*

*Then she realizes that Donny has followed her. She turns, looks at him, then goes into his arms. They kiss.*

Donny *softly* It's about time I went and had a yarn with your father.

Bonnie Terribly old-fashioned. But I like it.

And shall I apply to your mother for you?

Donny Yeah. If you want. She'll blame it all on the bloody book.

Bonnie Gibbo has pulled out of the movie, I hear.

Donny You heard wrong. I threw him to the floor: half-nelson. We rolled

around with teeth gritted in total anger. I slugged him and then he slugged me. Finally, I got him to agree that his "Cajolery" script was rubbish. Then I presented him with a much better script: mine. My go was to follow the Captain and not the spinster. And as faithful to Miss Austen as it was possible to be.

Bonnie Have to get it past the Committee From Hell yet.

Donny *shrugs* Whatever. I don't really care diddly squat ... They can like it or lump it.

Anyhow – We'll get your laptop set up and call your Dad.

Bonnie You're going to ask for my hand in marriage ***online?***

Donny Yup. Video conferencing. Saves wear and tear.

Bonnie Am I in on it?

Donny Yup. When we've "done" your Dad we'll "do" your Mum. Shake 'em up a bit.

Bonnie *chuckles* You are a total dag, Don Airlie.

Donny But a lovable one.

*[Scratches his head]*

Erm ... You know how I told you that I smacked Gibbo up. Well I really only gave him a rough hair tousle.

END OF SCENE

## **V, Scene i:** Now That We Are Again At War (Home Waters 1814)

*Our closure is a revisit to the opening scene. Except that it is Captain and Mrs Wentworth who are central (not Admiral and Mrs Croft).*

*It is 1814. Stunningly beautiful music accompanies the sumptuous view of a man-of-war sailing ship at anchor by the coast of West England. The scene is that of a major wharf.*

*With great gallantry Captain Wentworth swings his wife up into his arms such that he may carry her safely to the small boat which will take the happy couple to the man-of-war. The few Navy men hovering about give three hearty cheers for the couple (who are in blissful happiness).*

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Then we move seamlessly inside the ship into a well-appointed private cabin provided for Captain Wentworth and his wife Anne. (This is the same one viewed in ACT I Scene i.)

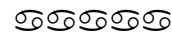
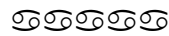
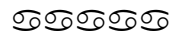
Anne stands at a porthole aboard the ship, her husband snuggled behind her.

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|                   |                                                                                                                                                              |
|-------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Captain Wentworth | Eight and a half years. We are finally married and with your father's blessing. And now I am far happier than it was ever possible to hope that I should be. |
| Anne              | Well, the freshness of the sea air agrees with me (I find). That must be very harmonious for a lady who is a sailor's wife.                                  |
| Captain Wentworth | You will try to be as happy as I am my love. I know that you will try – but I doubt that you could ever reach those heights.                                 |
| Anne              | I shall attempt it. I shall certainly try to be as happy.                                                                                                    |
| Captain Wentworth | I always said that I would not have a woman on board my ship. Yet here you are with me and Great Britain is again at War. I must                             |

therefore resume my duties. Join me on the bridge, when you are comfortable to do so.

*They kiss.*



*It is a glorious sunny day. We watch the man-of-war set sail. Meanwhile, Gibbo and Donny have the last word.*

Gibbo *voice-over*                      What did that bloke want?

Donny *voice-over*                      Er ...

Uh-oh ... Hand-delivered envelope marked from Buck House.  
Doesn't look good.

Gibbo *voice-over*                      They can't fucking force you to front up for a kick in the begoolies, Don. Fair dinkum. Chuck it in the bin.

Donny *voice-over*                      No. It's addressed to all four of us. You, me, Jeparit (only they are calling him Jasprit) and Coops (Max Cooper Esquire).

Fuck me!

Gibbo *voice-over*                      Well open it.

Donny *voice-over*                      OMG! It's signed Sir Burton Gainsborough.

He reckons that we're getting knighted. Properly. Not a rubbish gong – but a real one. OBE no less. All four of us.

Gibbo *voice-over*                      What for?

Donny *voice-over*                      "Cajolery".

Gibbo *voice-over*                      Mine or yours?

Donny *voice-over*                      Duh! Mine. "A very welcome twist to a favourite novel by Britain's most beloved author: Jane Austen."

Gibbo *voice-over*

Well! There you go!

You're a jucking fenious, young Don Airlie.

Donny *voice-over*

Yeah. Apparently.

*We hear them laughing. The ship has now pulled away out of view.*

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT V

END OF FILM



You may have dreamt of and hoped for a respite from our friends

Gibbo, Donny, Jeparit and Cooper. Get over it!

## **IMPOVERISHED AND POORLY**

**aka**

## **BROKE 'N' ILL**

Priceless rare monotreme fossils are vanishing.

Meanwhile Cooper is asked to give a DNA sample.

Jeremy Hurstbridge is concerned at the disappearance  
of his younger sister Winlagh in Broken Hill, NSW, Australia.

Ed Swan picks up a 12 year old cold case to investigate:  
that of a pharmacist (murdered execution-style).

"Swannie" also gains an assistant: Constable Blaike Penfold.

Along with a couple of gifted indigenous locals.

All this while a new disease called F-PROTA has taken over where COVID left off.

The race is on for Ed, Blaike, Cooper and Jeremy to solve the mystery.