

# FAÇADE

Television Film Screenplay (90 minutes)

By

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## SYNOPSIS

The action takes place during the years 1911 – 1915, culminating in the imprisonment of Lady Ida Sitwell, mother of Edith, Osbert and Sacheverell, for fraud.

It is also the story of Edith and Osbert Sitwell's struggle for independence from parental authority and the beginning of their successful literary careers.

## FACADE

1. EXT. RENISHAW HALL. DAY.

We have a view of the mines below Renishaw and up to the house and estate itself.

CAPTION:

## AUGUST 1911

Renishaw Hall has been the home of the Sitwell family for over three hundred years.

The present owner is the eccentric SIR GEORGE. His wife, LADY IDA, is the grand-daughter of the Duke of Beaufort.

Theirs has not been the happiest of marriages.

2. EXT. RENISHAW. DAY. MORNING.

The garden, and beyond. The private parkland leading down to the lake.

SIR GEORGE SITWELL is some distance from the house.

He is a distinguished-looking Englishman. His moustache turns upwards a little - as does that of the Kaiser whom he admires.

A pair of binoculars is slung about his neck.

He has with him a fold up chair and table with designs and drawings.

He quietly acknowledges the gardens, fields and woodland beyond.

GEORGE

Good morning.

He holds his stick up to his eyes, measuring the perspective.

He jots notes onto the back of an envelope.

He looks back at the house.

In an upper window a figure is glimpsed.

3. INT. LADY IDA SITWELL'S BEDROOM. RENISHAW.

Overlooking the gardens and the park.

IDA is a very attractive lady in her middle years, some years younger than her husband, SIR GEORGE.

MARY, her personal maid, is helping to dress her in preparation for luncheon.

IDA is in a flap - fraught and indecisive.

There are clothes everywhere.

Her maid is trying to help her choose.

It appears she can do no right this morning.

Another - a young girl - is waiting to attend to her hair.

IDA

(RE: A DRESS)

No, not that one. That one. Perhaps I should wear the blue. The blue.

MARY

Yes, my lady.

IDA

Not that one. The other one. Oh, do come on, Mary.

IDA busies herself with clothes etc, as MARY brings out dresses.

Both are on the move throughout the scene.

IDA (CONT'D)

Those nice young gentlemen, David Collins and the Stanwyck boy are coming - you'd think Edith would join us for luncheon and show a tiny bit of interest, even if it's only for her mother's sake. The blue, Mary.

(TO LUCY)

The mirror.

(TO MARY)

The blue. It's the one with the you-know.

Through the window she sees the distant figure of GEORGE.

IDA (CONT'D)  
Is that Sir George?

MARY  
Yes, my lady.

IDA comes away from the window, on her way to get the brooch she's remembered.

IDA  
If only Mrs Pare was still with us.  
It's dreadful. Quite dreadful.

MARY  
Yes, my lady.

IDA  
(TO LUCY, RE: HAIR)  
In a minute, girl. I've had this  
brooch I bought in Sheffield  
inscribed. It's for Mrs Jameson.

MARY  
It's beautiful.

IDA  
She's so looking forward to it.

MARY re: dress, she and IDA are looking at.

MARY  
Such a lovely dress.

IDA while considering the dress.

IDA  
Have you seen the boys?

MARY  
They told Henry they were going to  
the woods.

IDA  
I must speak to Osbert. I really  
ought to take them to Sheffield now

IDA (CONT'D)  
we're here. There's only four weeks  
before Sachie goes back to Eton.  
We've got to do something.

(RE: DRESS)  
What do you think?

IDA goes to the window.

IDA (CONT'D)  
What do you think, Lucy?

LUCY  
It's very nice, my lady.

IDA  
Yes. Oh dear. I'm not sure.

From a window she sees the figure of the butler,  
HENRY MOAT, carry a tray and walking in the  
direction of SIR GEORGE.

HENRY is a tall, strongly-built middle-aged  
Yorkshireman of sea-faring stock.

He has been with the family for eighteen years.

He has a slight limp.

IDA (CONT'D)  
What's Henry doing? Let me see the  
other one again.

THERE IS A KNOCK ON THE DOOR.

ANOTHER MAID ENTERS.

MAID  
It's your mail, my lady.

THE MAID hands it to MARY and goes.

MARY hands it to IDA, who takes it apprehensively.

There is one letter she doesn't like the look of,  
and which she declines to read.

She recognises the writing on the envelope of  
another letter.

IDA

Oh, I recognise this one.

She opens it.

IDA (CONT'D)

Oh, look, it's from Lady Bartlett. I knew it was. Oh dear - she's not bringing her cousin, Charlotte! She can be so inconsiderate. That means there'll be thirteen at table. That's absolutely dreadful, Mary.

MARY

Yes, my lady.

IDA

What are we going to do? Edith'll have to make up the numbers. It's no use her arguing. We just cannot have thirteen at table. Go and find her. Hurry up - they'll be here soon.

MARY

Well, I don't know where she is, my lady. She's not in her room, that's for sure.

IDA

Well, find her! I want Edith, Mary! Do you hear?

4. INT. A DOWNSTAIRS ROOM.

SACHEVERELL is thirteen-years-old, he is a fair-haired straight-forward boy. He hears his mother shouting in her bedroom.

IDA

(V/O)

There's thirteen at table! I want her for luncheon! I want Edith!

SACHEVERELL, exasperated, leaves the room.

5. EXT. WOODS. RENISHAW.

OSBERT is walking the dogs.

He is despondent, caught up in his own thoughts.

He is nineteen-years-old, and very tall.  
Physically, he takes more after his mother than his father.

We see SACHEVERELL running to catch up with him.

SACHEVERELL  
Osbert! Hey. Wait for me.

SACHEVERELL catches up with him. Out of breath and agitated.

SACHEVERELL (CONT'D)  
Mother's in a terrible rage.

OSBERT  
What?

SACHEVERELL  
She's after Edith again. You can hear her all over the house. Wants her for her luncheon party.

They have continued to talk.

OSBERT  
She isn't at her best in the mornings.

SACHEVERELL  
It's not just the mornings these days, is it?

OSBERT  
No. No.

Throwing stick for dog.

OSBERT (CONT'D)  
Fetch it, boy. Off you go.

SACHEVERELL  
She seems worse than ever.

OSBERT  
Father wants to see me at twelve. I wonder what mood he is in.



6. EXT. THE GARDENS/PARKLAND

HENRY reaches GEORGE, who continues to survey the landscape, and study his drawings.

HENRY  
Your mail has arrived, sir.

GEORGE does not take it.

GEORGE  
I shall ready my correspondence after luncheon in the future, Henry. It can so spoil the mornings.

HENRY  
Yes, sir.

GEORGE  
I've decided to move the lake.

HENRY  
I won't take up any more of your time then, sir.

GEORGE  
It'll look so much better - over there. We shall have to dig another dam in Eckington Woods, of course.

HENRY  
Yes, sir.

GEORGE  
I have to speak to Osbert today.

HENRY  
Yes, sir.

HENRY is about to go out.

GEORGE  
Are you limping again, Henry?

HENRY  
No, sir.

GEORGE

I recommend Bishops' Varalettes - just the thing for gout. It expels the Uric Acid, which is one of its main causes.

HENRY

Thank you, sir. I'll remember to pass the information on to known sufferers of my acquaintance.

GEORGE

Bishops' Gout Varalettes are, I'm given to understand, very pleasant to take. I am told they dissolve with a brisk sparkling effervescence in any beverage of one's choice.

HENRY

They should go very well with a glass of port then, sir.

GEORGE calling to him as he goes.

GEORGE

When you walk back across the garden terrace, do try not to drag your right foot too much. We don't want to displace the gravel.

HENRY

Thank you, sir.

7. INT. STAIRCASE AND HALL

IDA's maid, MARY, hurries down the stairs and into the hall.

She sees FIRST SERVANT.

MARY

You seen Edith? There's thirteen at table. Her ladyship's on the war-path.

MARY goes on into the drawing-room.

8. INT. DRAWING ROOM. (CONTINUOUS)

MARY enters.

She sees SECOND SERVANT.

MARY  
Edith's not been this way, has she?

SECOND SERVANT  
No.

MARY  
Tell her her mother wants to see her.

MARY exits into lobby to Ballroom.

9. INT. THE LOBBY INTO THE BALLROOM (CONTINUOUS)

MARY comes through into the room.

She sees another THIRD SERVANT.

THIRD SERVANT  
Poor Mrs Pare.

MARY  
What?

THIRD SERVANT  
Her being taken away to the asylum  
this morning.

MARY  
Yes, it's horrible. They say there  
was nothing for it - her mind's gone  
irretrievable.

MARY goes into the Music Room.

10. INT. THE MUSIC ROOM (CONTINUOUS)

MARY enters.

MARY  
(To FOURTH SERVANT)

Have you seen Edith?

FOURTH SERVANT

No.

MARY continues on her way in search of EDITH.

11. EXT. FIELDS LEADING TO COTTAGES

EDITH approaches and stands some distance from the small cottage rented by PARE.

She is twenty-five years old and all of six foot.

She is rather lanky, with a pale face, and distinctly aquiline nose and lank golden-green hair.

Her mother and father consider her physically unattractive (as they make clear on a number of occasions).

EDITH is retiring, defensive and sharply intelligent.

A motorcar stands outside the cottage, with the driver in his seat.

MRS PARE is brought out from the cottage by an official and by her husband, MR PARE.

MRS PARE whimpers and feebly protests, and old MR PARE tries to comfort her, soft-talking her towards the motor.

She gets her own role, as servant, and that of her mistress, LADY IDA, mixed up.

MRS PARE

It's not right... no. I'm needed.

PARE

Come on then, my love.

MRS PARE

I'm needed... Come on, Mrs Pare... it's not, is it?... not my lady...

PARE

Now you settle down, there's a good girl.

OFFICIAL

Come on, then, Mrs Pare.

MRS PARE

People are coming, and the children.  
Come on, Mrs Pare... it's so much -  
during the holidays... so much...

As they are about to help her enter the motor, she  
briefly panics, struggling, shouting and pleading.

She, her husband and the official speak  
simultaneously.

MRS PARE (CONT'D)

No! No! I can't. No! No! Come  
on, Mrs Pare! No! Mrs Pare! Come  
on! There's the silver! Yes, sir,  
my lady! No!

PARE

Come on now, my dear. Hush now. Now  
come... I'm going with you... you'll be  
alright... you see, my darling. My  
darling.

OFFICIAL

There we are, don't let's have no  
more, eh. Come on now.

EDITH is upset by what she sees and hears.

Old MR PARE follows his wife into the motor, and is  
himself followed by the official.

The door of the motor slams loudly.

The motor moves off.

EDITH, troubled, turns away.

She walks the way she came, silently across the  
fields towards Renishaw.

12. EXT. THE WOODS

OSBERT and SACHEVERELL continue to walk the dogs.

Both are throwing sticks for them to fetch.

OSBERT

Father wants me to have a military career - I think. I don't know whether I want a military career. I've been turned down by Sandhurst. I've failed my examination at Camberly Army Crammer.

SACHEVERELL

You should have some say in the matter, I suppose.

OSBERT

I don't know what to do. That's the trouble. I haven't a single idea. It's absolutely dreadful. Everyone else knows what he wants to do. I don't.

SACHEVERELL

I don't.

OSBERT

Well, you're still young. Everyone else does. Edith's going to be a writer. Or a pianist maybe.

SACHEVERELL

There's a fellow at Eton going to be a pianist.

OSBERT

The Grenadiers are alright. I've heard it's terrific fun in The Grenadiers.

SACHEVERELL

Don't tell father that.

OSBERT whistles for the dogs.

13. EXT. GARDEN

The garden just outside the house.

IDA walks out of the house, and meets HENRY on his way in.

She is on her way to speak to SIR GEORGE.

IDA indicating the flowers she's wearing.

IDA  
Look, Henry, gardenias.

HENRY  
Quite lovely, my lady.

IDA  
We're 13 at table. Have you seen Edith?

HENRY  
I rather think she's gone to the village, my lady.

She walks further into the garden, as HENRY walks towards the house.

She stops and turns back to HENRY for a moment, and, in doing so, she rests a hand on a statue.

IDA  
Henry.

HENRY  
Yes, my lady.

IDA  
How is Sir George, this morning?

HENRY  
How is Sir George this morning?

IDA  
Yes.

HENRY  
Creative, I'd say, my lady.

IDA  
Oh dear.

She continues her way into the garden, and, as she does so, she looks down at the shoot on the hand that had rested on the statue.

IDA  
(CONT'D)

Oh my God.

She continues.

14. INT. HOUSE

Somewhere in the house.

We see EDITH on her way somewhere.

A SERVANT sees her.

SERVANT

Your mother's looking for you.

EDITH

You have not seen me.

SERVANT

(WITH EMPHASIS)

Your mother says there's thirteen at table.

EDITH, continuing on her way, and under her breath:

EDITH

Someone has taught her to count.

15. EXT. THE GARDEN. RENISHAW

IDA approaches GEORGE.

There's the fold-up table and chair on which he has his plans and design drawings with which he busies himself.

IDA

Look, George, I've smut on my hands. It's all over the statues again. The soot from those coal mines gets worse every year.

GEORGE

I'm afraid we'll just have to put up with it, my dear. The rent I receive from the mine-owners pays for the luncheons you give your friends.



IDA

I thought you might like to join us today.

GEORGE

Mr Lutyens the architect will be coming to see me early this afternoon. We're making plans for the new golf clubhouse.

IDA

Oh dear.

GEORGE

(Looking at drawings)  
I think a square terrace with projecting wings, don't you?

IDA

I thought if you joined us, George, it might be an example to Edith. It's so unpleasant of her ignoring my friends.

GEORGE

I'm moving the lake.

IDA

What?

GEORGE

Fill it with fish. There's nothing like home produce.

IDA

I don't know what we're going to do with Edith. We'll have a spinster on our hands for the rest of our lives. Stuck in her room, bent over her books. She's twenty-five in October.

GEORGE

September.

IDA

She shows no interest at all in the boys she's introduced to. She scares the wits out of them. We should have

engaged a governess who was normal -  
Helen Rootham was far too

IDA (CONT'D)

intellectual. By the by, Fred  
Kitchen is in Persevering Mr Potts at  
the Empire. Perhaps I should take  
the children.

GEORGE

I'd have thought you'd have done with  
all that during the London Season,  
Ida.

IDA

My God, George, I've got to do  
something with the children. Sachie  
goes back to Eton in four weeks.  
Poor Osbert is on one foot and then  
the other, not knowing what lies  
ahead of him. A military career  
doesn't seem right for him, George.

GEORGE

For what do you think him suited,  
Ida?

IDA

I don't know.

GEORGE starts to pack up before returning to the  
house.

GEORGE

I shall get in touch with Murray's  
it's time they reprinted my book On  
the Making of Gardens.

IDA plucks up the courage to speak to him about what  
is really on her mind.

IDA

George. I have one or two  
outstanding debts.

GEORGE

I've a meeting with Mr Hollingworth  
later today. The potato crop has  
been badly affected by the drought.

IDA

I haven't any money.

GEORGE

I can see the farm making a loss this year. I must remember to purchase this month's English Review. It has a most promising article by Sir Alfred Mond on the problems of unemployment.

IDA

Will you listen to me. How am I to live on nothing?! I'm not a nun!

GEORGE

You have your annual settlement, Ida. You could start by economising - on your luncheons, for instance - on your theatre visits, by not giving everything away to your so-called friends when they so much as admire them - diamond brooches, God knows what! I can't turn my back but I'm worrying about the bills that'll be waiting for me when I return. Excuse me.

By this time, he has packed everything up, including his fold-up chair and table, and he goes - leaving IDA angry and frustrated - and with an unbearable urge to commit grievous bodily harm.

16. INT. THE MUSIC ROOM. RENISHAW

EDITH plays the piano beautifully (DEBUSSY).

OSBERT enters.

OSBERT  
(REASSURINGLY)

It's me.

EDITH continues to play throughout the dialogue below.

OSBERT (CONT'D)  
I've got to see the Big White Chief at twelve o'clock.

OSBERT picks up a newspaper.

EDITH imitates her father, teasing OSBERT:

EDITH  
"I do hope you're not suffering from  
boredom, Osbert, dear boy." Ask  
father: "People were never bored in  
the Middle Ages."

OSBERT, from the "Sheffield Telegraph":

OSBERT  
The D'Oyly Carte is at The Alexandra.

HENRY enters, stands near the door.

EDITH  
Yes, Henry?

HENRY  
Time for other things perhaps.

He winks.

EDITH  
(Gets the message)  
Thank you, Henry.

HENRY exits.

EDITH exits quickly through another door.

IDA enters through the door through which HENRY has  
departed.

IDA  
Edith! Oh. Osbert, darling.

OSBERT  
I'm waiting to see father.

IDA  
Oh. Oh good. Have you had a lovely  
time with Sach this morning?

OSBERT  
We've been walking the dogs.

IDA

Oh, how lovely. We'll go to the Sheffield Empire, darling, Fred Kitchen's in *Preservng Mr Potts*. And

IDA (CONT'D)

the Arcadians is coming in from The Shaftesbury. I'd so much like to go to that again.

IDA kisses OSBERT's cheek.

IDA (CONT'D)

I need a loan, darling. You know how it is.

OSBERT

Oh dear, I'm sorry, mother.

IDA

Your friend at Camberley - Mr Martin - he seemed to think I should get in touch with that nice American, Mr Field. Do you know Mr Field, darling?

OSBERT

No. No, I don't. But John Martin seems to know all about loans and that sort of thing.

IDA

Perhaps I should get in touch with Mr Field, do you think, darling?

OSBERT

Yes - well, John seemed to think it was a good idea, didn't he?

IDA

If that doesn't work out - perhaps you'd try to get hold of some of your other friends. I don't want your father to know about this.

OSBERT

Of course not.

IDA

I think we must see Fred Kitchen at The Empire, don't you?

OSBERT

Oh, yes.

HENRY enters.

HENRY

The guests are arriving, my lady.  
Mrs Frampton and Mr Collins.

IDA

Oh! How lovely.

She and HENRY exit.

17. INT. THE HALL. RENISHAW

The GUESTS are being taken care of by IDA, HENRY and  
SERVANTS.

There are a lot of welcomes.

IDA

Charlotte, darling. How lovely.  
You've arrived. My dear! I'm so  
sorry Mrs Wyndham is unwell.

She goes to DORA who has just arrived.

IDA (CONT'D)

Dora! You're here! I've got  
something for you.

DORA

Oh, no!

IDA

Yes. Wait a moment, where is it?  
Look after the guests, Henry. I know  
where it is. You'll take ages.

She goes.

18. INT. THE DRAWING ROOM. RENISHAW

As IDA enters.

She sees EDITH - a book in her hand.

IDA

Oh. I've been looking for you.  
Where've you been? My God, look at  
you, look at you.

EDITH

I don't want to come to your  
luncheon.

IDA

I invited those nice boys, David  
Collins and Edward Stanwyck. You  
know how Edward likes you.

EDITH

I don't want to come.

IDA

God, Edith, I do what I can for you.

There are tears in IDA's eyes.

IDA (CONT'D)

I can't see why you should want to be  
so different from everybody else.  
What am I supposed to say? They're  
expecting you. Don't you understand?  
Can't you see anybody else's point of  
view other than your own?

EDITH

Come on, then.

IDA

What?

EDITH

I'm coming, aren't I?

IDA

Oh good.  
(LOOKING ROUND THE ROOM)  
Thank goodness for that. I left a  
brooch here. I'm sure I did. Have  
you seen it?

EDITH shakes her head.

IDA (CONT'D)

I'm sure I left it - oh dear -  
Henry'll have to find it.

She starts to go into the hall with EDITH.

IDA (CONT'D)

Oh my God, do stand up straight,  
Edith! Look at you! Stand straight!  
No wonder no one ever wants to meet  
you. Good appearance is most  
important. It makes the world go  
round.

EDITH

(DANGEROUSLY QUIET)

So does a blow on the head.

IDA blinks at this retort, as they go out of the  
room.

19. INT. GEORGE'S STUDY. RENISHAW

GEORGE is working at his desk.

There is a knock at the door.

GEORGE

Come in.

OSBERT enters

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Ah, Osbert. How good of you to come  
to see me.

He looks at OSBERT, and then returns to his work,  
ignoring the boy, who waits uneasily.

After a while, GEORGE puts down his pen, and looks  
up. He surveys the boy from where he sits.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

The Welsh miners are up here trying  
to persuade the Derbyshire men to  
support their strike. They'll not  
succeed, of course.

OSBERT

(BLURTING OUT)



I was wondering whether you have had nay further thoughts on my future, sir - I thought perhaps I could go up to Oxford after all.

GEORGE

Don't let us blind ourselves, dear boy. The fees for Eton, which are by no means insubstantial, would appear to have been a wasted investment. Your army crammer at Camberley seems likewise to have failed to produce satisfactory results.

OSBERT

I don't think I'm cut out for the army, sir.

GEORGE

Come now, Osbert, one should always practi8se those things which one finds most difficult. It can have surprising results. When I was a boy at Eton, I invented a toothbrush on which I could play Annie Laurie. I may have told you.

OSBERT

Yes, sir.

GEORGE

Not many boys have done that. Also, a small hand-gun, Osbert - that shot wasps. It was most effective. I'm in the process of adapting it for the purpose of killing mosquitoes during my forthcoming visit to your castle in Florence. Montegufoni is one of the finest Medieval Tuscan castles to be seen. I bought it for you, Osbert. It's in your name.

OSBERT

Yes, sir.

GEORGE

Did I tell you I'm investigating the possibility of trading in wine with South America?

OSBERT

No, that sounds most exciting.

GEORGE

Barone Pavolino is very keen on the idea. And he has a great deal of local knowledge. We'll be able to produce our own champagne, from which I intend to recoup some of my expenditure. It's always so much better when one can make things pay for themselves - don't you think, Osbert? Think of all the peaches and apricots and lemons which will be ready for harvesting in a few weeks time. I would have liked to have been there now, but, unfortunately, I have had another letter from the Barone to say there has been a further outbreak of phthisis. I only wish he had been more forthcoming about these disadvantages before I completed the purchase. I've been looking at your accounts for your last six months at Camberley. It's clear you sought popularity.

OSBERT

Yes, sir.

GEORGE

Friends can be a great mistake, Osbert - rather more so than relatives even, I sometimes think. Have a look at this in the Financial Review: "How to Read A Balance Sheet", by J.W. Smith. Oh, and: The Times. You'll find what, I think, you're seeking in today's Times.

OSBERT

Thank you, Sir.

GEORGE

What do you think of the idea of blue stencilled porcelain cows in the park?

OSBERT

(BAFFLED)

Well, sir -

GEORGE

Aesthetically so much better than the  
real ones - don't you think?

OSBERT

Er - yes, I suppose so, sir.

There is a pause.

OSBERT waits.

After a moment.

GEORGE

So much to do.

OSBERT

Yes, sir - thank you, sir.

OSBERT leaves the room.

GEORGE returns to his work.

20. INT. THE DINING ROOM.

Luncheon is in progress.

The staff are serving.

EDITH, who is also present, and unsuitably dressed,  
watches the proceedings balefully throughout.

FIRST GUEST

The Barrington's are at Cowes.

IDA

So's Violet Vereker.

THIRD GUEST

And the Pakenhams.

FIRST MALE GUEST

Everybody's at Cowes.

THIRD GUEST

It's the last night of the Russian Ballet at The Garden tonight.

FIFTH GUEST

They're coming back in October.

FIRST GUEST

How wonderful, dear. Nijinsky was brilliant.

SIXTH GUEST

Such energy. Such colour.

IDA

You know, Betty Harrington-Jones went to see those other Russian dancers at The Palace Theatre. I wish I'd seen it. She said a dancer in it is blindfolded and dances through eggs strewn all over the stage and she doesn't break them. Isn't that killing?! All those eggs all over the place, and she prances about, missing them all. My God, I'd be no good at it, I'd break the lot!

FIRST GUEST

So would I!

SECOND MALE GUEST

So would I!

IDA

She said they'd got marionettes, but you could see the strings, so the Russians aren't that good. But eggs, dancing through eggs!

FIRST MALE GUEST

Perhaps it was called How To Make An Omelette.

IDA and her guests laugh.

EDITH does not.

HENRY enters - with IDA's brooch.

HENRY

Your brooch, my lady.

IDA  
Oh, Henry, you've found it! Thank  
you, Henry! Dora, darling! Henry's  
found it!

She passes it to DORA.

IDA (CONT'D)  
I've had it inscribed for you!

DORA  
Ida, darling! Oooh! Darling!

There are general whoops of appreciation.

DORA (CONT'D)  
I'm overwhelmed!

IDA  
(DELIGHTED)  
I knew you'd like it.

21. INT/EXT THE HALL.

From the hall, we see IDA saying goodbye to the last  
of the guests before they are driven away in the  
car.

EDITH is watching in the hall and at some distance.

IDA  
Goodbye, darling.

GUEST  
It's been lovely.

IDA  
Goodbye.

22. INT. THE HALL. (CONTINUOUS)

OSBERT hurries downstairs with The Times looking for  
EDITH. He is in a state of helplessness and  
indignation.

OSBERT

Edith! Edith! Look at this!

Reading from The Times.

OSBERT (CONT'D)

"F.O.S. Sitwell has received a commission in the Yeomanry - attached to the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars in Aldershot." Aldershot! In The Times. He didn't even ask me!

23. EXT. THE ENTRANCE TO THE LONG DRIVE TO THE HOUSE. RENISHAW.

**SPRING 1912** - comes up on the screen.

We see a car entering and driving up the drive.

We see it nearing the house.

24. INT. AN UPSTAIRS ROOM.

We see IDA at the window - looking out.

She sees the car approaching.

She runs out of the room, and down the stairs.

25. EXT. OUTSIDE OF THE HOUSE.

The car pulls up outside the house. JULIAN FIELD climbs out.

FIELD is a short paunchy man in his sixties, with unnaturally black hair and a moustache. He wears a frock coat and striped trousers, and carries a grey top hat. He has with him a case, inside which are his papers.

IDA comes out of the house to greet him. She is very nervous of his presence at Renishaw.

IDA

Mr Field. How good to see you again.

FIELD

Lady Ida. My pleasure, my great pleasure.

IDA  
Shall we walk in the gardens?

FIELD  
In the gardens? Of course, if you so wish.

IDA  
It's much too pleasant to go inside, don't you think?

She begins to lead FIELD off.

IDA (CONT'D)  
The new lake's been completed. My husband is in London today seeing Mr Lutyens - I rather think they have plans for it.

FIELD  
Most interesting.

26. INT. THE MUSIC ROOM.

EDITH is looking out of the window.

She sees FIELD and IDA.

EDITH  
Who's that? I'm sure I've seen that man before?

OSBERT, who is selecting a piece of music:

OSBERT  
Here. Debussy's *Des Pas Sur La Neige*. This is lovely.

EDITH returns to the piano, takes the music to play.

27. EXT. THE GARDENS.

Away from the house, IDA and FIELD walking.

FIELD

How beautiful it is - quite charming.

IDA  
(NERVOUS)

Yes, isn't it? I've been here since I was seventeen. Bolsover Castle is over there - beyond the hills. And Harwicke Towers. Rather too long, I sometimes think, Mr. Field. At night you can see the light from the coal furnaces at Stavely.

FIELD  
Fascinating. And Renishaw - it has been in your husband's family for many years, of course?

IDA  
Oh, yes - centuries. I can't remember how long. I think perhaps, Mr. Field, it might be best if we confined our meetings - should they be at all necessary - to London in future.

FIELD  
Of course, of course. Well now: I'm delighted to inform you I have arranged for you a loan for £600 with a Mr. Leslie.

IDA  
Oh, God. Thank you, Mr. Field.

FIELD  
Mr. Leslie's loan has been backed by  
-

He looks at his papers.

FIELD (CONT'D)  
- er - yes - Mr. John Martin - who is a friend of your elder son in the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars at Aldershot.

IDA  
Dear Osbert. He has been very helpful, bless him. He's spending a few days with us - quite



unexpectedly. He's on his way for army exercises in the Sherwood Forest. Isn't that exiting?

FIELD

Indeed it is. Despite your efforts and my own, I regret to have to say, Lady Ida, that your finances are, in fact, in a much worse condition than I have been able, until recently, to ascertain.

IDA

Oh dear.

FIELD

However, I have some good news.

28. INT. THE MUSIC ROOM.

EDITH is playing the Debussy.

OSBERT listens, "sings along", his feet up on the chaise longue.

EDITH finishes her piece.

OSBERT brings another piece of music to her.

She takes it, sorts it out to play.

29. EXT. THE GARDENS.

IDA AND FIELD CONTINUED:

FIELD

*Later* this week, I shall be meeting a Mr. Owles, a much respected financier. He has given me to believe that he is willing to make you a substantial loan, if a certain maiden lady of his acquaintance, who is of some considerable means, a Miss Dobbs, can be persuaded to guarantee that loan against non-payment.

IDA

Oh, splendid.

FIELD

I rather think Miss Dobbs is of a mind to guarantee the bill/loan, not so much from considerations of financial gain, as through a desire to, how shall we say, better herself socially. She is in need, I believe, of the necessary introductions.

IDA

Oh, I'm sure I could be of help to her.

FIELD

I know she's most eager to meet you - a lady of your birth and social position.

IDA

Oh good. What would I do without you, Mr. Field?

FIELD

(DEFERRING)

Please.

FIELD looks at his watch, aware that IDA wishes to bring the meeting to an end.

FIELD (CONT'D)

I mustn't keep you.

IDA

Shall we walk back to the car?

They walk back.

We go with them - picking them up at various stages on their way back.

As they get very near the drive, they hear EDITH's piano music coming from the house.

FIELD

Oh, no, no. Finance has only been a part-time interest, Lady Ida. It's something I've picked up from my

friends in the City. My main occupation is writing.

IDA

Writing! How killing! Edith wants to write, you know. She's quite mad about it. Perhaps she could meet you one day - once we've sorted out all this - these little difficulties. She needs taking in hand, Lord knows. Do you know, when she was only - er 15 - 16 - she was staying at her grandmother's at Bournemouth, and she ran away to the Isle of Wight - with her maid, who hadn't the gumption to stop her - and threw roses and poured milk and honey all over the grave of a writer called Swindle.

FIELD

Swinburne.

IDA

Swinburne! Yes. You can imagine the mess! What a thing to do! And Swinburne! Most unsuitable I'm sure you'll agree. We forbade her to read him, of course, and her grandmother, you know, had Edith's volume of his poems burnt.

FIELD

Good gracious, yes.

30. EXT. OUTSIDE THE HOUSE (CONTINUOUS)

IDA sees FIELD off in the car.

IDA

Goodbye. Thank you so much for coming.

She is in high spirits.

The car drives away.

She returns indoors.

31. INT. THE HOUSE.

IDA, now much relieved from FIELD'S visit, and in high spirits, arrives at the Music Room.

She opens the door and enters.

32. INT. THE MUSIC ROOM. (CONTINUOUS).

IDA entering.

EDITH is playing the piano.

OSBERT reclining.

IDA

Ah, there you are, Osbert, darling.  
That's lovely, Edith. Isn't it,  
Ossie?

OSBERT

It's Chopin's *Butterfly*.

IDA

Goodness. Why don't we all go to  
Sheffield to see the show at The  
Empire?

OSBERT

Wonderful. I go back to Aldershot on  
Wednesday.

IDA

Well, we'll go on Tuesday. That's  
perfect. I've a few friends coming  
to dinner on Monday, so Tuesday's  
fine. We'll buy you a new dress,  
darling. Perhaps Mrs. Marsham can  
make you one. You'll look lovely.  
It's time you had something new,  
isn't it, dear?

Touching EDITH's hair.

IDA (CONT'D)

Look at that hair. We'll have to get that right.

EDITH tries not to squirm or tense up at her touch.

IDA (CONT'D)

We could ask your father - but he won't come. He never does. And he'd only criticise.

EDITH

Helen's coming on Tuesday.

IDA

Who?

EDITH

Helen Rootham.

IDA

Well, put her off, put her off - she's such a kill-joy, Edith. I don't like her keeping in touch with you. She's got her own life in London, hasn't she?

EDITH

I haven't seen her for months.

IDA

(To OSBERT)

A play's much more fun, isn't it?

(To EDITH)

We'll go to the play, what do you say, darling?

EDITH

No. Helen's coming on Tuesday.

IDA

Well - if that's what you want, darling. Osbert - what about you?

OSBERT

Well -

EDITH

He wants to see Helen, too.

OSBERT

Well, yes.

IDA  
Alright - just as you wish.  
(GOING)

IDA (CONT'D)  
Don't say I don't try to bring some  
excitement and fun into your lives.

She goes out.

33. INT. RENISHAW

We see, perhaps at some distance at first, HELEN  
ROOTHAM, EDITH and OSBERT, walking through a part of  
the house - maybe a corridor.

HELEN ROOTHAM is an attractive down-to-earth middle-  
aged woman.

HELEN  
It's a boarding house.

EDITH  
Boarding house?

HELEN  
I live on the fourth floor. I can  
see across London roof-tops.

OSBERT  
Bayswater?

HELEN  
Yes.

EDITH  
It sounds wonderful, Helen.

HELEN  
Well, it isn't exactly salubrious,  
dear.

They turn into another part/corridor.

We are closer to HELEN, EDITH and OSBERT now.

OSBERT  
Not much has changed here.

EDITH  
That's the problem. I've got to get  
away. It's intolerable.

OSBERT  
You can take my place at Aldershot.

HELEN  
Are you going on holiday?

EDITH  
Mother and father are taking me to  
Florence in the Autumn. I don't mean  
that - I mean away, permanently.

They enter a large room.

HELEN  
Here we are again.

HELEN looks through a window.

They settle themselves.

EDITH  
Are you still playing?

HELEN  
A little. I've been giving a few  
recitals. Oh, and I've got some  
translation work - French, it helps  
pay the rent.

(To OSBERT)  
The 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars isn't up to your  
expectations then, Osbert?

OSBERT  
They're philistines. All of them.  
All they ever speak about, from dawn  
to midnight, is their blasted horses.

EDITH  
(TEASING)  
That's because they're a cavalry  
regiment, dear. You may not have  
noticed.

GEORGE enters the room through another door.

GEORGE

Ah. Miss Rootham. We've not been seeing very much of you recently. You've been hiding in your room reading all the time, have you?

He makes his way to a bookcase or table.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

The men are hard at it - putting up the tower in the centre of the lake. A most interesting construction.

He takes a book.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Ah, here we are.

He sees another title, looks at it, takes that one too.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Ah. Bain's Rhetoric. Very good. I highly recommend it. I myself have read it twice.

HELEN

Was it more instructive the first or second time of reading, sir?

GEORGE

As it was the same edition on both occasions, Miss Rootham, there was very little choice between them.

GEORGE goes.

OSBERT and EDITH and HELEN laugh.

34. EXT. RENISHAW.

The new lake.

GEORGE and HENRY are near the lakeside and are admiring the temporary viewing tower that is newly under construction.

There are a few men, on a floating raft, with some lengths of wooden scaffolding in the process of being erected.



GEORGE is approaching HENRY, as they walk:

GEORGE

It's going up well, Henry, don't you think?

HENRY

It is indeed. What's it to be, sir?

GEORGE

It's to be a viewing tower, Henry, a temporary construction, a vantage point - from which I can ascertain those alterations to the landscape made possible by the creation of the new lake.

HENRY

You'll stand on the top of it, will you, sir?

GEORGE

I'm hoping to have a chair put up there. One can't hurry these things.

HENRY

Very nice.

They move on to admire the tower and landscape from a different angle.

GEORGE

I'm thinking of building some sort of folly, or ruin, in the centre.

HENRY

Yes, sir. How about a Japanese pagoda with dragons at each corner of the roofs. It'll look very well out there in the middle.

GEORGE

Perhaps a Spanish Galleon. Half-submerged, its bows rising out of the water, sails torn, ivy and willow growing from the decks and up the broken masts.

HENRY

Very nice.

GEORGE

Mr. Lutyens and I really must come to a decision before the Autumn, when we commence our tour of Italy.

HENRY

I'm sure you will, sir.

GEORGE

On the other hand, it may be best to leave the tower as it is - dress it up somehow. We could employ an anchorite - a vagrant of some sort - to sit on the top all summer - as a conversation piece, most impressive. Perhaps you would like to apply for the position, Henry?

They move on to admire the tower and landscape from a different angle.

HENRY

I don't think I've the physical presence, sir - needs a slimmer - more imposing - grander figure.

35. INT. THE HALL AND STAIRCASE. RENISHAW.

**AUTUMN 1912** - comes up on the screen.

GEORGE is coming downstairs.

The SERVANTS are taking luggage upstairs.

35A. INT. THE MUSIC ROOM. RENISHAW.

EDITH is playing the piano.

She continues to do so through most of the scene.

GEORGE enters.

GEORGE

The luggage has all arrived safely from Florence, you'll be pleased to hear.

He inspects the various chairs in the room.

After a while:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Where did you disappear to all morning?

EDITH

I've been watching the miners going home after the first shift.

GEORGE

I do hope you didn't embarrass them.

EDITH

They stared at me as if I'd dropped in from the moon.

GEORGE

It's your hair I expect, dear girl. You should try to do something about it.

GEORGE has, he thinks, found the chair he wants.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What do you think of that back? That's the back we must have on the chairs Mr. Hamilton Temple Smith is designing for the golf club-house. Now a decision has to be made about the legs.

EDITH

Mr. Hamilton Temple Smith is designing the legs as well, is he?

GEORGE admiring the chair back.

GEORGE

Yes - or is it that one?

EDITH

Helen Rootham has said I can live with her in Bayswater.

GEORGE

You've no experience of living without servants, Edith.

EDITH

One should always try those things one finds most difficult, father. It can have surprising results. I have my allowance of £100 a year. If you could just help me out a little until I get settled.

GEORGE choosing the chair back he wants.

GEORGE

Yes, that's it.

GEORGE goes to the door.

36. INT. THE STUDY.

GEORGE is studying the chair, perhaps in the light of the window.

We realise that IDA is also present, and OSBERT too - standing to one side.

GEORGE turns to them - and surveys IDA for a moment.

GEORGE

I hope you can imagine the unhappiness you've caused, Osbert - taking leave of his Regiment without permission, hurrying over to us in Florence with this dreadful news. You do realise, I hope, that if I hadn't repaid the £600 you borrowed from that Mr. Leslie, Osbert's young friend, Mr. Martin, would have been dishonourably discharged from his Regiment. How you managed to get that young man back your loan, I really cannot imagine.

IDA

He did so of his own free will. He wanted to help.

GEORGE

As a result of which, Osbert no longer feels he is able to continue with the Hussars.

IDA

Osbert hated the Hussars. That's why he left. It made him quite ill. Didn't it, darling?

GEORGE

You're only making excuses for yourself. The boy's been worried to death by your financial irregularities.

There's a knock on the door.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Come in.

HENRY enters.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What do you want, Henry?

HENRY

You rang, sir.

GEORGE

You'll find a Queen Anne chair in one of the upstairs rooms we're using for storage, Henry. Bring it to me, will you?

HENRY

Yes, sir.

GEORGE

It's behind the Early Victorian collection. At the back. I rather expect you'll have to climb over some of it.

HENRY exits.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(TO OSBERT)

Perhaps, Osbert, you'd be good enough to leave us. I wish to speak with your mother alone.

OSBERT

Yes, sir.

OSBERT exits.

GEORGE

It's come to my notice you have got yourself caught up with a certain Mr Field - a man, I can only assume, you know nothing about, Ida.

IDA

Mr. Field is entirely respectable, George. He was at Eton.

GEORGE

Harrow.

IDA

Harrow, then. I thought he said Eton.

GEORGE

(CHECKING HIS NOTES)

In 1901, Field was sent to prison for three months for forgery. Over the past few years he has had a dozen bankruptcy petitions against him.

IDA

I didn't know that.

GEORGE

He is bankrupt, Ida. I don't know what dealings you have had with him, but I most strongly advise that you bring any arrangement you may have with this particular gentleman to a swift and irreversible end.

He has seen something through the window.

He opens it, leans out, and calls down.

GEORGE

(CONT'D)

What are you doing?

In the garden below, men are wrapping straw around the statues.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(TO IDA)  
Excuse me.

He exits, leaving her alarmed.

37. INT. SOMEWHERE IN THE HOUSE.

OSBERT is wretchedly hanging about, waiting and working up the courage to see his mother.

He sees her, and goes to her.

IDA  
Osbert - darling.

OSBERT  
(GOING TO HER)  
Mother - I'm so sorry - I'm so, so sorry.

IDA  
It's not your fault, darling.

OSBERT  
I don't know what to do.

IDA  
It's not your fault.

OSBERT  
It's dreadful - dreadful.

IDA, trying to laugh it off - putting on a good face for his sake.

IDA  
Oh, my God. I've had to take a loan - £6000. It's four months overdue. Your friend Julian Field arranged it for me. He introduced me to a Miss Dobbs, who, he said, promised to pay it if I was unable to do so. But now she's saying she's not responsible. I don't understand it at all.

OSBERT

If there's anything I can do.

IDA

(REASSURING HIM)

Now, don't you worry, darling. It'll all sort itself out. I'm sure of

IDA (CONT'D)

that. Cheer up - it's not that serious. Mr. Field will work something out. He's very clever with this sort of thing.

She kisses his cheek again.

IDA (CONT'D)

It's lovely having you home.

38. THE GARDEN. RENISHAW

The men are wrapping straw around the statues.

EDITH stands apart.

GEORGE comes out of the house.

GEORGE

What are you doing?

The men look up at him.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

What are you doing?

MAN

Covering the statues against the frost, sir. Mr. Hollingworth said it was time. Winter's coming, sir.

GEORGE

Yes, I know it's time. You're not doing it the right way round. Start at the bottom, not at the top.

They murmur among themselves.

MAN

Yes, Sir George. Right, Sir George.



GEORGE

Always start at the bottom.

HENRY comes out with two chairs.

HENRY

Excuse me, sir. There being several dozen chairs in those rooms, sir, I wasn't altogether certain which one you wanted.

GEORGE

I don't want that one, Henry, that's not the right one.

HENRY

No, sir.

GEORGE

That's the one.

HENRY

Oh good, sir.

GEORGE

I don't want that one.

HENRY

No, sir.

GEORGE

You'll have to take it back. Such a waste. You can't afford to dissipate your energies at your age, Henry.

HENRY

Thank you, sir.

GEORGE

That's the one. What do you think?

HENRY

I'm sure Mr. Temple Smith will approve.

As they watch the men working.

GEORGE

I believe her Ladyship has borrowed £125 from you, Henry. You have no right to lend money to any member of my family. It was most insolent of you. I view this with the gravest displeasure and concern.

HENRY  
(DEEPLY EMBARRASSED)  
Yes, sir.

GEORGE  
It would appear your wages are too high for your good sense. You will come to see me after dinner this evening, and I shall reimburse you.

HENRY  
Thank you, sir.

They watch the men working.

GEORGE  
Will you tell Mr Kirton to be ready to row me out to the viewing tower at four.

HENRY  
Yes, sir.

After a while.

HENRY (CONT'D)  
I fear - I have no choice but to tender my resignation, sir. It had to come, sir.

GEORGE  
(SADLY)  
Yes, of course.

39. EXT. THE LAKESIDE.

GEORGE and OSBERT are carrying those things that GEORGE requires for the viewing tower.

MR. KIRTON, an estate worker, is pulling the rowing boat into the right place for GEORGE and OSBERT to get in.

GEORGE

I must speak to Mr. de Taeye, the yew trees need drawing and pulling again.

KIRTON

Ah, them yews, sir - they're gluttons for drawing and pulling, sir. 'Specially in the Autumn.

GEORGE

What've you got there?

OSBERT

The Times. The Architectural Journal, The Athenaeum, The Financial News, and The Lancet, sir.

GEORGE

Rug, umbrella, good. Travelling blotter. Four shillings and threepence, Osbert. With daily memo block, soft pen and pencil. Bound in Morocco. Bought it last week. Just the thing for blotting the ink when you're on the move.

KIRTON

In you get, sir.

GEORGE and OSBERT get into the boat.

KIRTON (CONT'D)

Mr. Hollingworth says the water in the lake is dropping, sir.

GEORGE

Where's it going?

KIRTON

Into the ground, sir. He says it could be going into the coal-mines.

GEORGE

Mr. Hollingworth has no understanding of these things. It's breaking through its banks somewhere.

KIRTON is rowing them out towards the viewing tower.

GEORGE is sitting back enjoying himself.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Have you considered The Riddle of the Universe, Osbert? Study the life of

GEORGE (CONT'D)

the insects. It's all there. Dashing about. A frantic scramble to serve the Queen.

40. INT. DRAWING ROOM OR ELSEWHERE IN THE HOUSE.  
RENISHAW.

IDA and EDITH are having a blazing row.

IDA

You're living in Wonderland! You really are. Helen Rootham rents rooms in a boarding house, for God's sake!

EDITH

We'll rent a flat. I'll take a job.

IDA

Who'd do your washing? That woman was a big mistake, and no two ways about it! Ladies don't do paid work and that sort of thing.

EDITH

She's my friend, do you hear me?! Can't you understand anything?

IDA

Don't speak to me like that! You're impossible! Quite impossible - you always have been! You've never done a thing to please your mother!

EDITH

Then you'll be well rid of me, won't you? You won't have to look at me anymore, will you? Embarrassing you in front of your friends!

EDITH exits.

IDA shouts after her.

Inside, she's panicking - isolated.

IDA

My God, you'll send me to my grave,  
Edith! You'll end up in the gutter.  
That's where you'll end!

41. EXT. THE PLATFORM AT THE TOP OF THE VIEWING  
TOWER. RENISHAW.

GEORGE is seated.

He is considering the landscape.

OSBERT stands a little to one side.

GEORGE

(AFTER A WHILE)

I've received a letter from the  
Colonel of The Grenadier Guards.  
It's all arranged. You'll be joining  
them. You're to be stationed at the  
Tower of London.

OSBERT

(OVERJOYED)

Thank you, sir.

GEORGE

The Grenadiers, the Colonel assures  
me, is a highly disciplined force.  
But you realised that?

OSBERT

Yes, father.

GEORGE

I sincerely hope you've fully  
examined the basis for your decision.  
We don't want to hear cries of  
disillusionment.

OSBERT

No, no.

GEORGE

Edith is leaving us. This  
toothbrush, my invention at Eton, I

told you about it, I've re-invented it. Listen.

GEORGE starts to play *Annie Laurie* on the toothbrush.

GEORGE  
(cont'd)  
Very good, eh?

OSBERT  
Just the thing, sir.

He plays *Annie Laurie* - the sound piping poignantly across the lake.

It changes to piano music as we

41. INT. THE LIVING ROOM OF EDITH AND HELEN'S FLAT IN BAYSWATER, LONDON.

**SUMMER 1913** - comes up on the screen.

Triumphant vigorous piano music.

We see hands playing vigorously.

We see it is EDITH playing.

She has begun to make some extraordinary alterations to her appearance, has commenced developing her unique identity.

She is overjoyed and excited.

We see that the room she is in is quite small, and 'humble'.

She continues to play.

43. EXT/INT. EITHER: THE STREET AND STEPS OF THE HOUSE IN BAYSWATER WHERE EDITH AND HELEN HAVE A FLAT. OR THE STAIRS LEADING UP TO THEIR FLAT.

OSBERT arriving, runs up the stairs/steps.

We can hear the piano.

He knocks on the door.

He calls.

OSBERT  
Miss Sitwell!

44. INT. THE LIVING ROOM OF EDITH AND HELEN'S FLAT  
IN BAYSWATER.

EDITH playing the piano, hears her name called.

OSBERT  
(V.O.)  
Miss Sitwell.

She gets up, leaves the room.

45. INT. THE NARROW HALLWAY OF THE FLAT.

EDITH goes to the front door, and opens it.

OSBERT  
You look splendid.

EDITH  
I think I'm getting there, thank you.

She lets him in, and they kiss.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
Oh, nut of all nuts. You are your  
tailor's latest masterpiece. A new  
summer tie! The Grenadiers suits  
you.

She is now leading him to the living room.

OSBERT  
I attempt to dissipate gloom.

EDITH  
What gloom, darling?

OSBERT  
All gloom, Edith. Is Helen in?

EDITH

She's buying food. We're having people over on Saturday afternoons now. A Salon, dear.

OSBERT  
Sounds wonderful.

EDITH and OSBERT enter the living room.

46. INT. THE LIVING ROOM. (CONTINUOUS)

EDITH  
Tea and buns. Of necessity, rather meagre.

OSBERT  
I'm sure it doesn't deter anyone.

EDITH  
It doesn't.

OSBERT  
(CONTINUING EXCITEDLY)  
I'm taking you to the Cabaret Club in Beak Street. It's marvellous. You'll absolutely love it. It's run by Strindberg's wife, and she's mad about Whistler.

EDITH  
Good gracious.

OSBERT  
The place is packed with officers and artists - painters, writers, actors - and we dance throughout the night with each other. At least I think it's with each other. It's so dark, one can only presume it's with each other and not with someone else's each other.

EDITH prepares to receive guests for tea.

EDITH  
It sounds frightfully physical.

OSBERT



It is. Quite decadent. Marvellous.  
So you've got to come.

EDITH  
How could I resist?

OSBERT  
Oh, and I'm dining with the Asquiths  
at Number Ten again tomorrow - so  
we'll go on Wednesday. Is that  
alright?

EDITH  
It'll have to be.

OSBERT  
Mrs. Asquith is a splendid lady.  
She's most artistic. She's made  
Number Ten quite lovely, and she's  
obsessed with bridge and  
conversation.

EDITH  
She must come to one of my Saturday  
teas. Here you are.

She hands him crockery, and he helps her get things  
out for tea.

OSBERT  
I'll ask her. It's wonderful here.  
You've made it your own.

EDITH goes out to get more crockery.

OSBERT (CONT'D)  
Oh, and the Grosvenor exhibition -  
we've been invited.

EDITH  
Oh good.

She has returned.

EDITH (CONT'D)  
Here you are.

She hands him more crockery.

OSBERT  
Ah. Good.

EDITH

He says Mrs. Pare is getting worse.  
Perhaps I should go to see her.

HELEN is heard to call as she enters the flat.

HELEN

(V.O.)

Hello.

EDITH

(calling)

Hello. Osbert's here.

HELEN enters the living room with the food she has bought.

HELEN

Oh, hello, Osbert.

OSBERT

Good afternoon.

HELEN

Sorry I was so long. We're behind today.

EDITH checks the purchases.

EDITH

Buns. Good, they're fresh.

EDITH goes out to the kitchen.

HELEN

It's hectic here today.

OSBERT

Yes.

EDITH returns with a bottle of champagne in an ice bucket.

HELEN

Champagne?

OSBERT

Is it someone's birthday? It's not my birthday, old girl.

EDITH

It's a celebration. The Daily Mirror  
- they're publishing one of my poems!

They are overjoyed.

OSBERT dances with EDITH about the room. They are  
overcome with happiness and high spirits.

47. INT. PRIVATE VIEW OF THE MODERN ART  
EXHIBITION.

Crowded. Excited voices and greetings.

VOICES

Marvellous. It's so exciting. Well,  
whatever next - that's what I say.

We see IDA, having arrived, wending her way through  
the gathering, looking for someone.

On her way, she is greeted by other visitors.

IDA

Catherine.

CATHERINE

Ida. May I introduce you? Mrs.  
Rawlinson - Lady Ida Sitwell.

RAWLINSON

Howdoyoudo. We met at The  
Manchesters at Christmas.

IDA

So we did. How do you do.

CATHERINE

We'd heard you've not been too well.

IDA

Oh, I'm quite myself again now, thank  
you. I'm looking for Mrs. Masters.

CATHERINE

Who, dear?

IDA

I'll see you a little later.

CATHERINE

Of course.

IDA moves away.

We cut to another part of the exhibition and see EDITH viewing pictures. She herself is even more unusual and striking in appearance than previously.

We cut back to IDA, looking for MRS. MASTERS. She is briefly acknowledging someone.

MALE

So good to see you.

FEMALE

We must arrange dinner.

IDA

Yes.

She moves on, and turns the corner and sees EDITH.

Each is startled by the sight of the other.

IDA (CONT'D)

Edith. My God, what do you look like?

EDITH

What are you doing here, mother?

IDA

I've come to the exhibition, like everyone else, Edith.

EDITH

I didn't know you liked modern art.

IDA

What? What do you mean? Of course I do.

She looks about for MRS. MASTERS.

EDITH

Are you feeling better?

IDA

What? Yes - thank you. I thought I'd come down for a few days. Is that Mrs. Masters? We've arranged to meet, dear.

She goes her way.

EDITH watches her.

A rather short middleaged lady approaches EDITH.

LADY

Edith! Is it little Edith?!  
Gracious me, it is. How lovely, my dear. And living in London now, I hear. Is that your dear mother?  
Gracious yes. We've not been seeing so much of her this past season.

Referring to picture.

LADY(CONT'D)

Oh, dear, that's not very nice. Ugh. What do you think?

EDITH

I don't think it's meant to be nice.

LADY

No. Your dear mother - everyone loves her. She's always been so full of fun. Well, the Londesborough's always have, haven't they, dear?  
(CHEERFULLY) Your grandfather overspent to an extraordinary degree, if you don't mind my saying so - invested in quite dreadfully expensive theatrical flops and that sort of thing - you know: horses.

Referring to another painting.

LADY(CONT'D)

That's most striking. How do you find it?

EDITH

Striking.

LADY

Yes. Is it true he used to give the servants blank cheques to pay the household expenses? Not the most efficient way of conducting one's financial affairs. Anyway -

Referring to another painting.

LADY (CONT'D)

Oh, now, this is colourful. Red everywhere. Your dear mother, one

LADY (CONT'D)

does so sympathise of course. And a surprising number of people are finding it harder going these days.

Referring to another painting.

LADY (CONT'D)

I can't think what was going on in the poor artist's head when he did that. But it's so important to go about things discreetly. Such a mistake allowing one's enthusiasm to, how shall we say, keep things afloat, to lead one into indiscretion, don't you think - London is such a gossip. Of course, your mother' not been well, and ill-health can so upset one's sense of judgment.

Referring to another painting.

LADY (CONT'D)

Ah. Now that's very odd. Someone should have a word with your dear mother perhaps, but I can't think who'd be best.

Referring to another painting.

LADY (CONT'D)

Now: what do you say about that?

EDITH

I'd say that was both impertinent - and exceedingly vulgar.

LADY

Oh. Would you?

EDITH  
How is your mother?

LADY  
She died some years back, dear.

EDITH  
Yes, I'm not surprised. Excuse me.

48. GARDEN OF AN ASYLUM.

There are a number of inmates standing, sitting, and wandering about. Also one or two nurses.

MRS. PARE takes trouble in seating herself on a bench.

During which, EDITH enters the garden, and sees MRS. PARE.

MRS. PARE  
There we are. So kind of you. Here we are. I hope you've all got your new dresses. We're off to the Norfolks.

Calling to a nurse.

MRS. PARE (CONT'D)  
Richards! Come on, Annie, come on, girl.

EDITH goes to MRS. PARE.

EDITH  
Mrs. Pare.

MRS. PARE  
We're all behind this morning.

EDITH  
It's me, Mrs. Pare. Edith. Edith Sitwell.

MRS. PARE  
Everyone's been so busy. Hardly a moment in which to catch one's breath. We dined with the

Manchesters on Thursday. Such a gathering. Come along, girl, come along. Osbert's such a dear boy.

EDITH

Yes.

MRS. PARE

My God, there's so much to do.

EDITH

Is there anything you need?

MRS. PARE

No. No, thank you.

EDITH

Are you comfortable?

No reply.

EDITH (CONT'D)

Are they treating you well?

MRS. PARE

London's going to be wonderful this year.

EDITH

Yes.

MRS. PARE

Richards!

The nurse is at her side.

MRS. PARE

I have to go in for my medicine.

49. INT. THE DRAWING ROOM. RENISHAW. EVENING.

**SPRING 1914** - comes up on the screen.

EDITH is idiosyncratically dressed in a dark woollen dress with long hanging sleeves. Her hair is in a big loose bun with the sides cut short and curling about her face. There are a number of large rings on her fingers.



OSBERT enters. He is dressed fashionably in civilian clothes.

EDITH  
Osbert. I thought we were travelling up together.

OSBERT  
Regimental duties. I had to get the later train. Have you read The Times this morning?

EDITH  
No.

He hands her the copy.

OSBERT  
Owles is prosecuting mother for fraud.

EDITH  
Oh, my God. I don't understand any of it.

OSBERT  
It's dreadful. Madness.

EDITH  
Who is Owles?

OSBERT  
Professional moneylender. Do you think mother knows?

EDITH  
No, we would have heard. God, how we would have heard. Mary tells me she's stayed in bed most of the day - as usual. Father must know.

OSBERT  
What's he going to do about it?

EDITH  
Who's to say, dear? He's inscrutable.

OSBERT  
It's madness.

There is a knock on the door, and a servant enters.

SERVANT

Sir George wishes to see you, sir.  
In his study, sir. Immediately he  
says, sir.

OSBERT

Yes, yes. Thank you.

EDITH

Best go.

OSBERT

Yes.

OSBERT exits.

The servant leaves closing the door behind.

50. INT. GEORGE'S STUDY. RENISHAW.

OSBERT enters.

GEORGE is at his desk.

OSBERT

Have you read this in The Times about  
mother and this man Owles, father?

GEORGE looks up at OSBERT. He has grown a reddish  
ginger beard.

He goes back to his work.

OSBERT (CONT'D)

I would like to know what we are to  
do about it?

GEORGE

Did you have anything particular in  
mind, Osbert?

OSBERT

There must be something you can do.

GEORGE

It's none of my business, dear boy.  
I don't know anything about all that

- but I do know that since you joined the Grenadier Guards 18 months ago, you have been quite determined to disappoint me. You are now £340 in debt, over and above the generous allowance I make you of £700 per annum. Despite my entreaties, dearest boy, you have continued to squander my money on frivolities.

OSBERT

You haven't paid £240 of my allowance this year, father.

GEORGE

I retained £240 of your allowance, Osbert, so that at the end of the year I could honour some of those bills which, as I feared, you have chosen to ignore.

OSBERT tries in vain to discover the logic of this statement.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I see from your accounts, you wear lace pyjamas, Osbert. Swathed in lace throughout the night, you appear to have no concern for your descendents. I have sent you letter after letter, dear boy, but seemingly to no avail. Your Colonel assured me the Grenadier Guards would be a most fitting experience for you.

Taking the accounts.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

You seem to have learnt nothing except how to choose the most expensive suits, by Pede and Rede.

OSBERT

They don't differ from those of my fellow officers, father. And my pyjamas are laced at the neck - not lace.

GEORGE

Shirts by Hodgkinsons. Hair by Trumper of Curzon Street.

OSBERT

Everyone goes to Trumper.

GEORGE

I don't go to Trumper. Charvet neckties. Egyptian cigarettes at 6 shillings a hundred. You know you can purchase a perfectly good Virginia leaf for four and ninepence a hundred? I have frequently asked

GEORGE (CONT'D)

you to cut down on your smoking. And to provide me with a full account of the cigarettes you consume.

OSBERT

It would spoil the enjoyment of smoking with my friends if I rummaged through my cigarette case every night to see by how much it had been depleted, sir.

GEORGE

Such fine talk. I asked you to send me a list of the plays you attend.

OSBERT

I can't remember most of them.

GEORGE

The Passing Show. Two tickets? You went twice?

OSBERT

I took Edith.

GEORGE

Swat the Fly! What's that?

OSBERT

A play. Rather broad.

GEORGE

Are you spending my money on actresses, Osbert?

OSBERT

No, sir.

GEORGE

What's this? The hire of Fancy Dress

-

OSBERT

That was for the all Fools Ball given by the St John's Wood Artists at Covent Garden in April. Mrs. Keppel wore a beautiful black and gold costume with a large hat trimmed with

OSBERT

(cont'd)

diamond tassles. Prince Paul of Servis made a striking appearance as the Blue God. Ethel Levey had two small electric lights in her hat she could turn on at will. I wore -

GEORGE

I don't want to know hat you wore, Osbert. Quite obviously from what it cost to make, it was a huge production. Gold leaf perhaps.

OSBERT

Gold has come into its own this season, sir.

GEORGE

I had hoped you'd be sorry, that you'd turn over a new leaf, dear boy. God, can't you see where you are heading? I hardly have to read you a history lesson regarding your mother's family.

There's a knock on the door.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Come in.

Servant enters.

SERVANT

Dinner is served, sir.

GEORGE

Ah, yes. Thank you.

To OSBERT

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Dinner. Come along.

51. INT. THE DINING ROOM. RENISHAW.

GEORGE, EDITH and OSBERT are seated. And SERVANTS.

They are waiting for the appearance of IDA, who is late.

GEORGE  
Your mother will be pleased to see you, Edith. She'll be down in a moment, I've no doubt. Eh, Crossland?

CROSSLAND  
(SERVATN)  
Yes, sir. I'm sure she won't be too long now, sir.

They wait.

EDITH  
How are your designs for the middle of the lake coming along, father?

GEORGE  
No final decision has been taken on them as yet, Edith - I've been rather too busy with 'Sheffield in the War of the Roses'.

OSBERT  
Is that a gardening book?

IDA enters.

Anxiety and lack of sleep have taken their toll.

They rise to greet her.

IDA  
Edith! What a lovely surprise! You don't come to see us often enough, darling.

EDITH

Mother.

IDA kisses her cheek.

IDA

Osbert, darling.

She kisses his cheek.

OSBERT

Hello, mother dear.

She coughs nervously.

IDA

Oh, my chest is bad. I've been in bed all day.

She goes to her place.

IDA (CONT'D)

Osbert tells me he can see St James' Park from his room since he's moved to Wellington Barracks.

EDITH

Yes, I've been there.

IDA jealous at being left out of things.

IDA

Osbert had invited me, haven't you, darling? I'm afraid I've not been well enough to get out much recently.

They are seated.

The servants are about to serve.

IDA (CONT'D)

God, darling, those sleeves make you look like a nun. What a strange woollen thing you've got on. All those rings - I suppose it makes you feel different.

An awkward pause.

The servants serve.

IDA (CONT'D)

Ah. Soup - I think.

52. INT. DINING ROOM. RENISHAW.

Sometime later in the meal.

The atmosphere is difficult.

They are all busy eating.

IDA drinks nervously and heavily throughout the meal.

GEORGE

What is your Daily Mirror poem about, Edith? We've been looking to hearing about it? Haven't we, Ida?

IDA

Oh. Have they published another one?

EDITH

I've got a copy. I'll read it to you.

GEORGE

Yes - thank you.

EDITH rummages about and brings out a newspaper cutting from her bag.

EDITH

Would you like me to, mother?

IDA

What?

EDITH

Read you a poem I've had published in the Daily Mirror.

IDA

Oh. Yes. Do.

EDITH reads, during which IDA continues to eat and drink.

GEORGE discreetly toys with his food.



After she has finished reading, eating will commence.

EDITH

"Poor Fancy's starving! Who will buy  
His Magic mirror? Come, draw nigh;  
Reflected there, your eyes shall see  
The whole bright world in phantasy.  
There are more sights in Fancy's  
glass Than beauties in the clouds

EDITH (CONT'D)

that pass; Than roses growing in old  
Spain; Than shells upon the wild sea  
main, Or serenades sung in Provence,  
Or memories in a high romance - Sold  
for a song's worth - Poets, buy!  
Poor Fancy's starving, and will die."

GEORGE

Thank you.

IDA

That was lovely, wasn't it, George?

OSBERT

Wonderful. Absolutely wonderful.

EDITH

It's not my best.

OSBERT

Her best are marvellous.

GEORGE

I hope the Daily Mirror was prompt in  
paying you. We don't want you to  
suffer from malnutrition.

IDA

It was very nice of them to publish  
you, Edith.

EDITH

The editor has been very kind. They  
print a different poem everyday.

IDA

I expect it gives the newcomers a  
chance, doesn't it.

EDITH

The poets they've published include Milton, Tennyson, Cowper, Spencer, Shakespeare and Wordsworth.

IDA

You're in good company.

EDITH

And Swinburne.

There's an awkward pause.

IDA

(TO OSBERT)

What do you think of all this talk of war, darling?

OSBERT

Lord help us.

IDA

I'm sure it can't be right. People are such miseries.

GEORGE

If we were going to have a war, it would have broken out in 1911. I'm quite sure of it.

IDA

Well, I hope you're right, George. I couldn't bear it if Osbert had to go away. I really couldn't bear it.

OSBERT

Don't worry, mother - I'm enjoying London too much.

IDA

Darling!

The servants clear the plates and serve pudding.

IDA (CONT'D)

Oh, by the way, guess who I'm reading a novel by, dear? Mr. Heather Biggs! The children's surgeon, who did your orthopaedic brace, Edith. Now he's written a novel.

OSBERT  
Everybody is at it.

IDA  
"Nell: A Tale of the Thames." Who would have believed it? He's written a Romantic Fiction! Such a departure!

EDITH eats, and then says:

EDITH  
Have you read his essay: "The General Principles of the Treatment of Spinal Curvature"?

IDA  
(AFTER A MOMENT, DARKLY)  
There's no call to be difficult.

EDITH  
It's illustrated with photographs of naked young girls imprisoned in an assortment of his fashionable and highly remunerative inventions.

IDA  
I won't listen to you talking like this. He was a very decent man. I took to him at once.

GEORGE  
If you haven't anything worthwhile to say, Edith, then it were best you kept quiet.

OSBERT  
What's it about - his Romantic Fiction?

EDITH  
Adolescent Nell - incarcerated in a Bastille of Steel.

IDA  
It's nothing of the sort. Don't be silly! You stooped, Edith! You had weak ankles!

GEORGE

The surgeon you refer to, Edith, is a leading expert in his field. The doctors don't go into these things

GEORGE  
(cont'd)

overnight, you know. They spend many years in research before they make a move.

EDITH  
(While eating)

Steel from under my arms, so they couldn't meet my sides - down my legs to my ankles, and at night-time, locked to the soles of my feet - unable to move - to roll over - unable to brush the bluebottles from my face - my nurse tightly holding my wrist, forcing me to kill them with a matchbox in my hand - my nose tightly held by two pieces of steel from my forehead down each side of my nose - rack-forcing it in the direction it was never intended to go, my breathing restricted, and this: to ensure my posture was acceptable to good society. I'm pleased to say it failed. And my nose - to satisfy whose image, father? God Almighty! - and this man, this leading surgeon, has written a Romance! "Nell: A Tale of the Thames." Is she another victim of the revered doctor's modishly warped and mercantile imagination? You are warmly invited, dear reader, to savour and enjoy her humiliation and disfigurement.

There's a tense and uncomfortable pause, pudding is eaten.

A SERVANT comes in.

SERVANT  
Excuse me, sir, there's a telephone call for you.

GEORGE  
Ah, yes.  
(RISES)

If you will be so good as to come along to my study in five minutes,

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Osbert, dear boy, we may be able, I hope, to sort out a number of your difficulties.

(To IDA)

Excuse me, my dear,

He leaves the room.

IDA courageously remains seated, taking her last few mouthfuls of pudding.

Then, putting her serviette aside, she rises.

IDA

You always had a heightened sense of the dramatic, Edith.

(ON HER WAY, RATHER UNSTEADILY, OUT OF THE ROOM)

(TO A SERVANT)

Tell Mary I shall be in my room.

SERVANT

Yes, my lady.

IDA

Tell her to bring me the evening paper. Sir George has been hogging The Times again. I haven't read a thing all day. And I want a drink.

She exits.

Reaction shots of EDITH and OSBERT concerning the situation.

OSBERT drops his head onto the table in mock and exaggerated desperation.

53. INT. GEORGE'S STUDY. RENISHAW.

OSBERT enters.

OSBERT

Sir.

GEORGE

I've just had a telephone call, Osbert, from Scarborough. It's been arranged for you this Autumn to commence employment in the Town Clerk's Office. I feel this is really the best thing. I've given it considerable thought. In a way I've been unfair to you. Falsely protecting you from the realities of the world. Being no longer with the Grenadiers, you'll have no further need of an allowance, you'll be on your own feet. And you'll be able to enjoy first hand experience of managing your own financial affairs without me breathing down your neck. Legibility being an essential requisite of the appointment, I have promised the Town Clerk I'd provide you this summer with tuition in handwriting. To this end, I shall be engaging an instructor from Clarks Commercial College - at my expense.

OSBERT

What am I to do - in a Town Clerk's office?

GEORGE

Work your way up, I hope, Osbert. Clerical life is full of surprises, I'm told. You'll have your own desk, I understand.

OSBERT

I won't go!

GEORGE

I regret to say that you have left yourself with no alternative.

OSBERT slams out of the room, banging the door behind him.

54. INT. IDA'S BEDROOM. RENISHAW.

IDA has read the Times report.

It has driven her into a frenzy of dismay and anger.

She hits out, scattering personal possessions all about her.

IDA  
George. George.

55. MUSIC LINK.

**MARCH 1915** - comes up on the screen.

Newspaper footage of the war mixes with newspaper headlines concerning IDA's Old Bailey court case.

I.E.

"LADY SITWELL AT OLD BAILEY - FRAUD"

"LADY SITWELL - £2000 DEBT"

FIELD DUPED LADY SITWELL SAYS DEFENCE

56. INT. GEORGE'S STUDY. RENISHAW.

GEORGE is at his lying-down desk which he himself has invented.

The floor is almost entirely covered with papers, notes, manuscripts, essays, which GEORGE has arranged in small piles - as a part of the re-organisation of his filing system.

EDITH is also present.

OSBERT enters. He is in uniform. He looks pale and drawn.

GEORGE  
Ah, Osbert. The British troops are about to cross the brook of Layes which runs parallel to the road from Neuve Chapelle to Fleur Baix. Find yourself a chair. But do be careful where you tread, I am in the process of re-organising my filing system. You'll find a way to that seat over there - towards the window - and along to my papers on the History of the Two-Pronged Fork. That's right.



EDITH  
(WELCOMING OSBERT)  
Osbert, darling.

OSBERT  
Edith, Edith.

GEORGE  
Edith's working for the Supplies  
Depot in Kensington. We're all doing  
our bit, you see. Have you been up  
to see your mother yet?

OSBERT  
No, not yet.

GEORGE  
She will be most pleased to see you.  
She never stops talking about you,  
does she, Edith? We were all fast  
asleep of course by the time you  
arrived home last night.

OSBERT  
Why have you put me on the other side  
of the house?

GEORGE  
Didn't you sleep well?

OSBERT  
No.

GEORGE  
I'm surprised. I'd have thought  
after all this time in the trenches  
you'd have slept like a top.

OSBERT  
I prefer my old room.

GEORGE  
Ah yes. I expect you do. I wonder  
if you'd mind remaining in that  
bedroom during your present stay,  
dear boy. It has been widely  
reported that soldiers at the Front  
have been inflicted with vermin. We  
don't want them to spread throughout  
the entire household.

OSBERT has only the strength to stare in disbelief.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

Your mother's case at the Old Bailey resumes at ten o'clock tomorrow morning. As you know, you were to be called as a Defence Witness, but I am informed there has now been a change of plan.

OSBERT

I'm not to be called.

GEORGE

I do hope you won't consider it a wholly unnecessary journey. We'll be travelling to London later this afternoon. We shall come back here for the weekend before returning for the final day on Monday. You haven't seen my lying-down desk before, have you, Osbert? Designed it myself, of course. Very satisfied with its performance on the whole.

(DEMONSTRATING)

Press the button here and the back reclines, or, as you see, rises to any position you desire. The arms open outwards so you can easily get in and out. The leg rest is adjustable to different heights. Can be used as a foot-stool - or pushed out of the way under the seat. The front table, electric light and side tray are adjustable and removable. There we are. I always think one should be physically at ease when doing work of a cerebral nature, don't you?

OSBERT

It looks like the new stretchers the French are using.

GEORGE

Not with the electric light and side table, surely? I don't see them as practical accessories in the midst of warfare. I hope my letters to you have been of some help?

OSBERT

Yes, thank you.

GEORGE

I read in The Times you've been having great difficulty in preventing the sides of your trenches from collapsing.

OSBERT

It's the rain.

GEORGE

Quite dreadful.

EDITH

You must be so cold.

GEORGE

Do try not to give in, darling boy. I know, I know. This will be all over before long. I'm sure of that. You'll come through, I've no doubt about it. None at all.

An awkward pause.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I hear poor old Mrs. Pare has broken out of the asylum. You remember her, Edith. She's been spotted on the London Road.

EDITH

Poor woman.

GEORGE

The police wanted to know if she'd come here. Rather far I'd have thought. Perhaps you and Edith could take your mother to see The Passing Show before you go back next week. I see it's still on. Maybe I'll come with you. She'd enjoy the outing. Or there's that new revue with Gaby Deslys at the Duke of Yorks - she's very fond of Gaby Deslys. Perhas we should go to that. Have a bit of fun, mm?

OSBERT  
I'll go up and see her.

GEORGE  
Yes, do, dear boy.

Directing OSBERT through the files of papers to the door.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
Best up that way, and through Rotherham Under Cromwell. That's it. I hear the Bloody Tower has been opened to the public again. Get us all in the right mood, eh? We should take your mother there - have a day out - should be worth a visit.  
(WITH REGARD TO OSBERT REACHING THE DOOR)  
You've made it.

OSBERT leaves the room.

GEORGE (CONT'D)  
(TO EDITH)  
He's made it, Edith. He's a brave young officer, don't you think?

EDITH looks at her father in stunned disbelief.

57. INT. IDA'S BEDROOM. RENISHAW.

OSBERT enters.

IDA is not yet dressed.

She is looking exhausted and ill.

IDA  
Osbert, darling!

She runs and throws her arms about him.

OSBERT  
Mother.

IDA  
Have they brought you all the way back for this, darling? Oh, my God. It's been awful. They keep asking me

IDA (CONT'D)

questions, darling. For five hours yesterday - one question and nasty-minded insinuation after another. And I've got to go through it all over again tomorrow. (And all those awful people staring). Oh, thank God, you're here! I've thought of you all the time, all the time.

58. INT. THE COURT INSIDE THE OLD BAILEY.

IDA is in the witness box.

In the public gallery, there are a number of beautifully gowned society ladies, who, as with everyone in the court, follow the case with rapt attention.

MUIR, prosecution counsel, is continuing his cross-examination of IDA.

MUIR

I have here copies of a number of letters you wrote and sent to Field. (TO THE JUDGE) You have the originals, my lord.

JUDGE

(MR. JUSTICE DARLING)  
Ah, yes. Thank you, Mr. Muir.

MUIR

(READING FROM A LETTER)

"Dear Mr. Field, I do hope you will be able to get hold of this woman you told me about. Of course I will do everything in my power to get her into the society she requires - that lies in the hollow of my hand."

(READING FROM ANOTHER LETTER)

"Do try to get me a man as a second backer. Of course I can push ladies into good society if they would only have faith, but somehow they don't seem to believe my word." Lady Sitwell: should a woman you did not know say: I will endorse a bill for you if you will introduce me into

MUIR (CONT'D)

Society, and you agreed for her to endorse a bill for such a consideration - would that be a thing to be ashamed of?

IDA

(AFTER SOME HESITATION)

No.

Court reaction.

MUIR

I have here a third letter, in which you write: "I find Glass is only twenty." Who is this Glass?

(NO REPLY)

He is a friend, I believe, of your elder son, Osbert Sitwell?

IDA

Yes.

MUIR

(READING FROM THE LETTER)

"My boy thinks if he were with him a few days he could get hold of him. And he quite hopes if he joins the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars there must e some other boy he can get hold of." You asked your boy if, when he joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars, he would get hold of some fellow there to guarantee your loans?

IDA

No, I didn't ask him.

MUIR

Oh. Your boy told you he'd try and get hold of some fellows to guarantee your loans when he joined the 11<sup>th</sup> Hussars, did he? Is that what happened, he came to you and said he'd try this for you?

IDA

No.

MUIR

You asked him to try to get a fellow to back your loans?

IDA

Yes.

MUIR

To back a bill?

IDA

Yes, I suppose it must have been.

Court reaction.

MUIR

I have a copy of a letter you wrote to Field - this was written at the time the loan made to you by Mr. Owles, and backed by Miss Dobbs, was already three months overdue. You wrote: "Will you be very kind and let me know when I shall have some money. I must pay that spiteful maid who has a very bitter tongue about me." Is that your own maid?

IDA

Yes.

MUIR

Your maid lent you money?

IDA

Yes.

MUIR

How much did you owe her?

IDA

I don't remember.

MUIR

Are you in the habit of borrowing from servants?

IDA

No.

MUIR

(READING LETTER)

"I owe my butler £125, the brute. I want to get out of his clutches."  
Your butler was advancing you money?

IDA

He had been paying some of my household bills.

MUIR

He had been paying some of your household bills?

IDA

Yes. I couldn't pay them.

MUIR

He was paying some of your household bills - and that is how you speak of him: "the brute - I want to get out of his clutches."

IDA

I didn't mean that. I -

Court reaction, including from GEORGE, OSBERT, and EDITH.

59. INT. OUTSIDE THE COURTROOM IN THE RECESS.

People going back in to the court after a short recess.

We see GEORGE go in.

We see OSBERT and EDITH just before going in.

OSBERT

What's father hope to achieve, allowing this to happen? He could have put a stop to it months ago.

EDITH

Why don't you ask him?

They go into the court.

60. INT. THE COURT AT THE OLD BAILEY.

MUIR continues his cross-examination of IDA.



MUIR

I have here a copy of a letter you wrote to Field, on the 27<sup>th</sup> January 1912 - which refers to the projected advance from Mr. Owles and backed by Miss Dobbs: you say the loan would be absolutely safe, as, if the worst came to the worst, your husband, Sir George Sitwell, "whose income is about £15,000 a year", would pay such a debt of honour. You wrote this?

IDA

Mr. Field dictated it to me.

MUIR

Did you obtain authorisation from your husband to write this? Did he in fact volunteer or agree to do this thing?

IDA

No.

MUIR

I have here a letter, dated the 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 1912, which you wrote to a Mr. Herbert, who was, at that time, acting as a professional adviser to Mrs. Dobbs. "Dear Mr. Herbert, I would be most grateful if you would ask Miss Dobbs if she would oblige me by helping me in the advance as you tell me she has most kindly promised to do. You know that Miss Dobbs will be running no kind of risk in any way and, of course, I will gladly give her a letter relieving her of all responsibility in the matter." This is in your handwriting is it not? Did you or did you not write this letter to Mr. Herbert?

IDA

Field dictated it to me.

MUIR

Field dictated it to you. Perhaps you would tell the court what you knew and had observed of Field that

MUIR (CONT'D)

gave you the confidence you had in him and in his suitability as a financial adviser.

IDA

There were invitation cards on his mantelpiece from well-known people.

MUIR

Good gracious.

IDA

He said he had met and known members of my family. He said he was at Eton - Harrow, and represented that he was a gentleman of education, well-known in the social world.

MUIR

Had you known or heard of him before your son spoke of him to you?

IDA

No.

MUIR

But naturally you believed him?

IDA

Yes.

MUIR

And yet the first letter you received from him was addressed: Ida Sitwell, Esquire. And it began: Dear Sir.

Reaction from court, GEORGE, OSBERT, EDITH

MUIR (CONT'D)

I suggest Lady Sitwell that you wrote these letters with Field's connivance, with the intention of making an acquisition of the loan from Mr. Owles possible - making it possible, I say - by inducing Miss Dobbs to back a bill, on the totally false and intentionally deceptive written understanding that she was to be "relieved of all responsibility"

MUIR (CONT'D)

in the matter. I suggest you are a woman, of the most worldly description, who is out for money, and does not care how she gets it, or who thereby suffers. You have been represented to the Court as a mere child in business; a baby. But your letters have disproved that idea, and this "child out of the nursery" as your Counsel has described you, has been exposed in her true colours. I suggest to you that both Field and yourself did, in fact, conspire to defraud Miss Dobbs - that you knew, that of the money lent you by Mr. Owles, you did not intend to pay back a farthing. Is that not so?

IDA

No.

61. EXT. THE OPEN ROAD.

MRS. PARE, like a soldier at war, carrying her canvas bag of bits and pieces with difficulty, hurries anxiously along the road to London on her way to Renishaw.

She is muttering to herself that she is needed, she has to take IDA's place.

She is breathing heavily - out of breath.

MRS. PARE

Come on, come on... it's not right,  
not... not... coming... no, my lady... no...  
no.

A police vehicle draws up beside MRS. PARE.

Three men jump out.

They try to briefly persuade her to get inside.

They use force. She resists, protesting.

MRS. PARE (CONT'D)

No! No! No! Leave me alone. I got to take her ladyship's place. Get away! It's my duty... my duty... I'm needed... I got to go... no... her place...

Sobbing and protesting, she is bundled inside the police vehicle.

The door is shut after her with a loud bang, like that of a cell door - the vehicle is ready to drive away.

62. INT. THE COURT AT THE OLD BAILEY.

We join MR. JUSTICE DARLING, the judge, as he proceeds with his summing up.

JUDGE

Defence Counsel for Lady Sitwell has suggested that Field beguiled her into doing everything that she did, that he represented the evil spirit of the whole of these transactions. The writing of every letter, the doing of every deed, which has a dishonest look about it, is said to be due to the counsel and influence of Field. Mr. Field himself has said nothing, but his counsel has said that so far from being fact, he was really induced by Lady Ida Sitwell to do a good many things for her assistance which he would not otherwise have done. It carries us back to the story of Adam and Eve. It is difficult to apportion blame.

EDITH

(TO OSBERT)

I can't stand any more of this.

JUDGE

I suppose that there is nothing that anyone who has heard them read will more thoroughly disapprove of than the letters which Lady Ida Sitwell wrote to Field, concerning the course of conduct which she was trying to

JUDGE (CONT'D)

get her boy to take. These letters written by Lady Sitwell and at Field's instigation are relevant evidence because they might help to satisfy the jury as to whether these two people were prepared to take advantage of those who have small means of protecting themselves - such as young men just about to enter upon a life in a regiment where they are naturally cut off from their ordinary guardians. Mr. Gordon Hewart, for the Defence, has said that Lady Ida Sitwell has had no will in the matter, and that she did whatever Field told her. I cannot tell the jury, in a case where the intent is in question, that that is not a good defence. But it is a difficult defence to make out for a person who goes about in the world and takes part in ordinary things, - who wrote letters when Field was not present, - who is grown up - and how is - I believe - not said to be suffering from any recognised mental affliction?

63. INT. RENISHAW.

The following morning.

IDA, armed with yesterday's newspaper, furiously bursts into GEORGE's study.

IDA  
George. George.

63A. INT. STUDY. (CONTINUOUS)

GEORGE is not there. Only the piles of papers all over the floor, and the lying-down desk on which, from the door, IDA sees 'The Times'.

IDA  
George.

IDA makes her way to 'The Times', wading through the piles of papers, scattering them like leaves in a gale.

IDA (CONT'D)

George.

She picks up 'The Times' angrily and GEORGE enters.

She turns and sees him.

And he sees the papers scattered all over the floor - his work devastated.

IDA (CONT'D)

(AT HER WITS END)

How dare that man say I'm only interested in getting money out of people, any way I can, no matter how I do it! I've been seven hours in that box - standing there for all the world to see. Making me out a common criminal. You could have paid Owles! You could have paid him!

GEORGE

You dragged my elder son into this.

IDA

I did not.

GEORGE

This may be of little interest to you, Ida - it may only produce contempt - but throughout many generations of my family, our resources have been fostered and sustained by means of shrewd and careful husbandry.

IDA

Your family - your family - your family! I wasn't a bad bargain, was I, George? The grand-daughter of the Duke of Beaufort, a direct descendant of the Plantagenets - a pretty addition to your family tree. I'm just your property, your bloody property - aren't I? - Eh? Such a convenient arrangement, eh, George?

IDA (CONT'D)

You and father - losing money on his actresses - horses - Sir George Sitwell, Ida - head screwed on, young lady - marry him - before things take a turn for the worse. I was seventeen. Seventeen.

GEORGE

I've done all I can to make you see sense. Nothing, nothing seems to have had any effect on you.

IDA

I shouldn't have come back. I shouldn't have come back. Do you hear? Three days after the wedding - I expect you've forgotten - yes, of course. It doesn't suit you to remember, does it? I ran away. Yes. Do you remember? Three days. I wasn't going to come back - they forced me - go on, go back - be a good girl - can't have you running out on your husband - not on Sir George - a contract's a contract - Make the best of it, young lady. God Almighty. Have you seen this picture of me?

She refers to a picture I the newspaper.

GEORGE

When I was a boy, as a result of my grandfather and father's improvidence and mistaken business dealings this house, Renishaw, was closed, a great deal of the land sold -

IDA

I know all this, George - I'm not listening!

GEORGE

If it hadn't been for the discovery of coal under Renishaw Park - if it hadn't been for my mother, Ida - who worked so hard all her life - we may well not have recovered. Nobody - nobody is going to reduce us to those

GEORGE (CONT'D)

sort of circumstances again, Ida. No grasping relatives - no fun brigades - no more heavy Regency swells - we've had our share - no one selling off the family business - we lost the ironworks that way - no more tricksters, no more common swindlers. I give you my word on it - on my mother's memory - I give you my word on it.

IDA

You wanted all this, didn't you.  
Look. You've got what you wanted.

She goes to the door to leave the room. She turns.

IDA (CONT'D)

I despise you, George - your family name - your grand scheme - I despise you.

She leaves the room.

GEORGE is alone in the room.

As she leaves the room: we hear the voice over of the CLERK OF THE COURT.

CLERK  
(V.O.)

On the indictment for conspiring to defraud Miss Frances Bennett Dobbs and fraudulently induce her to accept certain bills of exchange, do you find Lady Ida Sitwell Guilty or Not Guilty?

FOREMAN OF THE JURY  
(V.O.)

Guilty, my lord.

64. INT. THE COURT AT THE OLD BAILEY.

The JUDGE is sentencing IDA.



JUDGE

Lady Ida Sitwell: you have been convicted on what I think is perfectly satisfactory evidence. It was cruel treatment that was designed against that unfortunate woman, Miss Dobbs - cruel and heartless treatment. From his examination of you, Doctor Dyer, medical officer of Brixton Prison, reports that your general health seems to be fair, although you have, what he calls, an irritable heart, and are of a rather neurotic tendency. If it were not for the state of your health, the sentence would be more severe. The sentence I pass upon you, with the deepest regret to me, is that you be imprisoned in the second division for three calendar months.

IDA looks over at OSBERT - and then at GEORGE.

She does not appear to know where she is.

Neither OSBERT nor GEORGE know what's hit them,

IDA is taken away.

65. EXT. THE GARDEN TERRACE, RENISHAW.

OSBERT and EDITH are sitting quietly - depressed.

After a moment or two, GEORGE approaches them from further down in the garden.

GEORGE

(CALLING TO THEM)

I think we say Spring is here at last. The crocuses are out in the Wilderness.

(HE STOPS A MOMENT TO SURVEY THE GARDENS)

I'm transforming the cottage beyond the Golf Clubhouse into a ladies cloakroom.

OSBERT

That should help with the war-effort.

GEORGE, turning back to OSBERT, having heard him.

GEORGE

There's no call to be rude to me in my own garden.

GEORGE finds a path to make his way up to them, during which:

EDITH

(TRYING TO COMFORT OSBERT)

Sach will be here at four.

OSBERT

The whole situation is dreadful. As soon as the publicity dies down, I'm going back to London. Poor mother. It's unbelievable.

GEORGE is arriving to where OSBERT and EDITH are sitting.

GEORGE

I've been reading a most interesting book: *The Eternal Enemy, Empires and Expansion* by Albert William Anderson. Most interesting. Just published - discusses the war - its causes, why it cannot be final.

GEORGE looks through his binoculars, surveys the perspective, and writes notes on the back of an envelope.

As he does so:

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I'm afraid it may be a longer and more difficult fight than we first anticipated. The Germans are a very determined people. One can so easily overlook their great sense of patriotism. There's no pride like it except in the Americans. It looks like rain. We best go inside. You don't want to catch cold, Osbert. Not now you're a soldier. Nor you, Edith.

GEORGE goes to the French Windows to enter. He stops a moment - turns.

GEORGE (CONT'D)

I shall be writing to the Home Secretary - to ask for the sentence to be revoked. No one expected this to happen. I'm sure you understand.

OSBERT

What did you expect, father? That they'd just let her off with a warning. Don't do it again. Is that what you thought?

GEORGE doesn't answer. He goes inside the house.

EDITH

Raise the drawbridge.

OSBERT

It'll never be the same, Edith.

EDITH

Let's walk.

OSBERT

There's nothing we can do. Is there?

They start to walk down through the gardens.

They hold hands as they go.

We follow them.

EDITH

Do you remember Nurse Davis rowing us out on the old lake, drifting through the waterlilies, watching the fish?

OSBERT

Yes.

EDITH

Father would come with us sometimes, do you remember? And on the way back, we'd hear mother playing croquet with her friends, laughing and having great fun. Eh?

66. INT. RENISHAW.

The study.

GEORGE picks up a box - he intends to recommence work. He is unable to do so.

67. EXT. THE GARDENS AND FIELDS

EDITH and OSBERT walk - hand in hand.

We follow them.

EDITH

Did I ever tell you, when I was four - Davis brought me downstairs to be introduced to a friend of mother's. And when she asked me what I was going to be when I was grown up, I said: "a genius" - and mother was very cross about that, it was a quite dreadful thing to say, and I was taken off back to bed.

OSBERT

I'm surprised you remember so far back.

EDITH

I remember everything.

OSBERT

What will you say to that lady if you meet her again?

EDITH

Told-you-so.

OSBERT

We should start a poetry magazine. After the war.

EDITH

You and me - and Sach?

OSBERT

We'll set the whole world alight. We're on our own now.

They walk.

OSBERT (CONT'D)  
It'll be summer soon.

EDITH  
Yes. It's wonderful here then - the  
gardens.

OSBERT  
The lake.

EDITH  
The lake - so many trees and flowers  
to escape to, around which to weave  
fantasies. Wherever we've been, I've  
always found gardens to be a great  
compensation.

They walk away together.

68. INT. THE STUDY

An isolated GEORGE looks out of the window at the  
figures of EDITH and OSBERT walking away through the  
gardens and towards the fields.

FADE OUT

**THE END**