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# Love & Friendship

By Whit Stillman

[military drum beat]

**Man, narrating:**

Langford.

If only if it hadn't been for Langford.

How happy we might have been.

Manwaring!

Manwaring, don't turn  
your back to me, please!

I can't bear it!

Frederica!

Wait! I beg you!

Catherine, a letter.

Seems Lady Susan will finally visit.

In fact, she is already on her way.

- What?

- Lady Susan Vernon?

Congratulations on  
being about to receive  
the most accomplished  
flirt in all England.

- You misjudge her, Reginald.

- How so?

Well, like many women  
of beauty and distinction,  
our sister-in-law has been a victim of  
the spirit of jealousy and all that.

- It's jealousy?

- Yes.

Well, like anyone,  
Susan might be capable  
of an action or a remark  
which is open to misconstruction,  
but I can't help  
but admire the fortitude  
with which she has  
supported grave misfortune.

Excuse me.

I spoke out of turn.

Why would Lady Susan,  
who was so well settled at Langford

- suddenly want to visit us?

- What reason does she give?

Her "anxiety to meet me

and to know the children"  
has never concerned her before.  
Your Ladyship.  
Susan. Come, hurry.  
My dear, such haste.  
How curious you are.  
Mr. Johnson's carriage is about  
to come into the street.  
Surely that must happen often.  
- You didn't receive my letter.  
- Letter?  
Mr. Johnson forbids  
my seeing you.  
Why, that's preposterous.  
By what means "forbids?"  
He threatens the severest  
punishment imaginable:  
sending me back to Connecticut.  
Oh, to be tarred and feathered.  
He claims to have important  
business at Hartford.  
He threatens to settle there if our  
connection isn't entirely severed.  
And for what possible  
reason or pretext?  
His former ward Lucy  
Manwaring wrote to him.  
Did she?  
- Horrid woman.  
- I know.  
Deranged.  
If she were going to be jealous,  
she should not have married  
such a charming man.  
I recall thinking  
as I approached Langford,  
I like this man.  
Pray heaven no harm come of it.  
I was determined to be discrete,  
and I have been,  
admitting no one's attentions  
but Manwaring's,  
avoiding general flirtation entirely...  
except for a little notice

bestowed on Sir James Martin,  
but if the world knew my motive there,  
it would honor me.

- Martin?

- Sir James Martin,  
of Martindale.

- Vastly rich, rather simple.

- Ideal.

Miss Maria Manwaring  
has set her cap for him,  
considering such an income too large  
not to be shared,  
but with a little notice, I detached him  
and soon had him in love with Frederica.

If my daughter were not the  
greatest simpleton on earth,  
- she'd be engaged to him now.

- What?

She refused him...

a baronet with 10,000 a year.

- It's all so provoking.

- But where will you live?

If there were another place open to me,  
I would crawl there on my knees.

The worst spot this side of the ocean.

A country village.

Churchill, my brother-in-law's seat.

Mrs. Cross, a gentlewoman  
in strait and circumstances,  
will come with me as my companion,  
to pack and unpack, you know,  
that sort of thing.

And, as there's an element  
of friendship involved,  
I'm sure the paying of wages  
would be offensive to us both.

My brother-in-law

Charles Vernon is very rich.

Once a man gets his name on a  
banking house, he rolls in money.

So it's not very rational for his lady  
to begrudge the sums he's advanced me.

Decidedly irrational.

Not rational at all.

I have no money and no husband.  
Well, in one's plight, they say,  
is one's opportunity.  
Not that I would ever want to think  
in opportunistic terms.  
Oh, certainly not. Never.  
Churchill coming  
into view, Your Ladyship.  
Heavens, what a bore.  
Yes. Decidedly boring.  
Charles.  
- Susan, welcome.  
- Thank you.  
- This is Mrs. Cross.  
- Mrs. Cross.  
You're quite welcome to Churchill.  
This is Frederick and Ellen.  
Good afternoon, Frederick.  
Very pleased to meet you.  
Mrs. Cross is a friend  
of Lady Susan  
and should be in the adjoining room.  
No reason to complain  
of Mr. Vernon's reception.  
Not entirely satisfied with his lady's.  
- No?  
- Mm-mm.  
She's perfectly well bred...  
surprisingly so.  
But her manner doesn't persuade me  
she was disposed in my favor.  
As you might have noticed,  
I sought to be as amiable as possible.  
Exceptionally amiable.  
In fact, entirely charming.  
- Excuse me for saying so.  
- Oh, not at all. It's true.  
I wanted her to be delighted with me,  
but I didn't succeed.  
I can't understand it.  
It's true I've always detested her  
and that, before her marriage,  
I went to great lengths to prevent it.  
Yet it shows an illiberal spirit to resent

for long a plan which didn't succeed.  
Decidedly illiberal.  
Not liberal at all.  
My opposing her marriage  
and then later preventing her and  
Charles from buying Vernon Castle  
might have given her  
an unfavorable impression of me,  
but I've noticed that where  
there's a disposition to dislike,  
a pretext will soon be found.  
- You mustn't reproach yourself.  
- I shan't. The past is done.  
My project will be the children.  
I know a couple of their names already,  
and I've decided to attach myself  
to young Frederick in particular...  
taking him on my lap and sighing  
over him for his dear aunt's sake.  
[knock on door]  
Come in.  
Mrs. Vernon's compliments,  
Your Ladyship.  
She asks if you and Mrs. Cross  
would join her for tea.  
With pleasure.  
Mrs. Cross would prefer her repose,  
but thank Mrs. Vernon.  
I'll join her directly.  
[woman speaking French]

**Susan:**

you have quite an appetite.  
You will grow tall and  
handsome like your uncle.  
- [Frederick giggles]

**- Ellen:**

[speaking French]

**Ellen:**

Don't touch that.  
[crash]  
Frederick, be careful.

Oh, I'm so sorry.

- No, not at all.

- Les enfants...

Such a family resemblance.

Rather moves me.

You'll want to change.

No, no. Let's have our tea  
while it's still warm.

Mrs. Cross is a genius  
with fabrics.

- You sure?

- Oh, yes.

How much Frederick reminds  
me of his dear uncle.

Do you think there's a resemblance?

Oh, remarkable.

The eyes.

Weren't Frederick Vernon's eyes brown?

I refer more to the shape  
and slope of the brow.

Oh.

I must thank you for this visit.

I'm afraid the short notice  
must have come as a surprise.

Only because I understood you  
to be so happily settled at Langford.

Well, it's true Lady Manwaring and  
her husband made me feel very welcome,  
but their outgoing dispositions  
led them so often into society.

I might have tolerated  
such a life at one time,  
but the loss of a husband such as  
Mr. Vernon cannot be borne easily.

To stay with you here at your...  
charming environment  
became my fondest wish.

I was happy to have the chance to meet.  
Might I confide something?

Langford was not ideal for my daughter.  
Her education has been neglected,  
for which I fault myself.

Mr. Vernon's illness prevented  
me from giving her the attention

that both duty and affection required.  
I therefore placed her at this  
excellent school: Miss Somers-Keeve's.  
I trust Frederica will visit soon.  
Well, a visit, as delightful  
as that might be,  
would represent so many hours and days  
deducted from the grand  
affair of education,  
and I'm afraid Frederica can't  
afford such deductions.  
But she'll come for Christmas.  
Alas, no.  
Miss Somers could only give her the  
concentrated attention she requires then.  
- I'm so sorry.  
- Not at all.  
If you'll excuse me,  
I'll give it to Mrs. Cross,  
who, when rested, craves activity.  
Once she's applied her genius to it,  
all traces of little Frederick's  
interesting design will disappear.  
The fees at Frederica's school  
are far too high  
to even think of paying.  
So in a sense it's an economy.  
Yes, although Mrs. Cross  
is upstairs resting.  
I confess to curiosity  
to know this lady,  
to see firsthand her bewitching powers.  
- Is she as beautiful as they say?  
- You worry me, Reginald.  
Don't. I understand Lady Susan  
possesses a degree of captivating deceit  
- which might be pleasing to detect.  
- You truly worry me.  
Good evening.  
What charming expressions.  
Susan, uh, let me introduce  
my brother Reginald DeCourcy.  
Reginald, may I present  
Frederick Vernon's widow



Lady Susan and her  
friend Mrs. Cross?  
Delighted to make your acquaintance.  
Your renown precedes you.  
I'm afraid the allusion escapes me.  
Your reputation  
as an ornament to our society.  
Oh, what you say surprises me.  
Since the great sadness  
of my husband's death,  
I've lived in nearly perfect isolation.  
To better know his family and to  
further remove myself from society,  
I came to Churchill,  
not to make new acquaintances  
of frivolous sort,  
but of course I'm pleased  
to know my sister's relations.  
[woman singing opera]

**Mrs. Cross:**

Mr. DeCourcy's society more pleasurable.  
To some degree.  
At first, his conversation  
betrayed a sauciness and familiarity  
which is my aversion,  
but since I've found  
a quality of callow idleness  
which rather interests me.  
When I've inspired him  
with greater respect  
than his sister's kind  
offices have allowed,  
- he might in fact be an agreeable flirt.  
- He's handsome, isn't he?  
In a cough-like way...  
not like Manwaring, of course,  
but there's a certain pleasure in  
making a person predetermined to dislike  
instead acknowledge one's superiority.  
How delightful it will be to humble  
the pride of these pompous DeCourcys.  
A letter for you, my dear.  
- Letter?

- Yes, from Catherine.

I hope she'll arrive soon.

The season's cheerless  
without children.

Well?

I'm afraid this cold  
has affected my eyes.

Save your eyes, my dear.

I'll read for you.

- No, it's all right.

- No, I just...

Here. Uh...

Let's see.

Mm.

Catherine hopes you are well  
and asks most particularly  
that you give me her love.

Yes, and?

Uh...

Oh, Reginald has decided to stay  
at Churchill to hunt with Charles.

He cites the fine open weather. What  
nonsense. The weather's not open at all.

Well, maybe it is there, or it was when  
she wrote. My dear, could you just read?

- Verbatim?

- Yes, the words.

Some of Catherine's  
voice will be in them.

Well, I'll read every word, comma,  
and dash if that's what you wish.

Here...

Just the words, please.

No punctuation at all?

All right. That's much easier.

- Lady Susan?

- Yes, she has been visiting Churchill.

- Lady Susan Vernon?

- Yes.

Well, how could Reginald engage in  
conversations with Lady Susan Vernon?

Conversations which are...

What would they talk about?

My eyes have definitely cleared.

I can read it. Don't trouble yourself.  
No, no. If my son and heir's involved  
with such a lady, I must trouble myself.  
[clock chimes]  
- Well, I must go.  
- No. I'll write.  
No, no.  
If this is happening, there's no time.  
Thank you.  
- Father.  
- Reginald.  
How extraordinary for you to be here.  
- You're in good health, I trust?  
- No.  
How's Mother?  
What brings you to these parts?  
Take a seat.  
I won't dissemble and say I  
have business in the district.  
What I've come about is more important.  
What's of such importance?  
I know young men don't admit inquiry  
into affairs of the heart,  
but, as the sole son  
of an ancient family,  
you must know that your conduct  
is most important to us.  
Your happiness, ours, the credit of  
the family name, its very survival...  
- Father.  
- No, no, no. Hear me out.  
I know that you'd not deliberately form  
an engagement without informing us.  
But I can't help fear  
that you'll fall into an obligation  
which everyone near you must oppose.  
- What do you mean, sir?  
- Well, Lady Susan Vernon's age alone...  
Father, you astonish me.  
What surprises you?  
Impugning such ambitions to Lady Susan.  
She'd never think of such a thing.  
My sole interest has been to enjoy the  
lively conversation of a superior lady.

Catherine's prejudice is so great.  
Prejudice? Lady Susan's  
neglect of her late husband,  
her extravagance and dissipation,  
her encouragement of other men  
are so notorious...  
These are vile calumnies.  
I could explain each  
but would not so dignify them.  
- I know you spend little time in society.  
- Oh, none.  
Should you have frequented it more,  
you'd know the astonishing degree  
of vile, hateful jealousy  
in our country.  
Don't deprecate our country, sir.  
I can't prevent you  
inheriting the family estate,  
and my ability to distress  
you during my life  
is not the kind of revenge  
that I would choose to take.  
- Father, this is unnecessary.  
- No, no. Let me continue.  
A permanent connection  
between you and Lady Susan Vernon  
would destroy every  
comfort of our lives.  
It would be the death  
of the honest pride  
with which we've always considered you.  
We'd blush to see you, to hear of you,  
to think of you.  
Father,  
with the utmost humility,  
let me say that what you imagine...  
is impossible.

**Susan:**

Poor Mrs. Cross was obliged  
to accept a paid position  
in Buckinghamshire.  
As there was an element  
of friendship between us,

I realized the paying of wages  
would be offensive to us both.  
You value friendship highly.  
Yes. I hope I was  
of some help to her.  
And your friends don't neglect you.  
Thank you, Charles.  
It's from Frederica's school.

No.

I can't believe it.  
It defies comprehension.

- What?
- Frederica has run away.
- She's run away from school.
- Heavens. Where to?
- They don't know.
- She's lost?

No. They detected her plan  
early enough to intercept her.  
What folly. Where could she  
have thought of going?

Surely here.

No, this is the last  
place she would come.

- I mean, rather...
- But she must miss you terribly.

Certainly. I just don't think  
Churchill would be her object.

Oh. This is outrageous.

Miss Somers requires  
that Frederica be removed from school.  
Miss Somers must be under the impression  
that, as a widow without fortune,  
I may be bullied. Evidently she's  
forgotten Frederica is a Vernon.  
But Charles must put this right.  
Confronted with his imposing words,  
even the mistress of a school  
must be persuaded to act rightly.

[bell tolls]

I have no notion of Frederica  
being so contrary.

She seemed all Vernon milkiness.  
But it confirms the rightness

of my plan. Did Sir James call?

- Several times.

- Excellent.

I followed your instructions,  
scolding him roundly for making  
love to Maria Manwaring.

He protested that it had  
only been in joke.

You're right.

He's wonderfully silly.

But we must not let Sir James forget  
with whom he's in love.

A man so rich and foolish  
will not remain single long.

Sir James is so far from  
having forgotten the Vernons,  
I'm sure he'd marry either  
of you in an instant.

I must go back to Churchill.

But I may need your help  
finding a school

if Miss Somers

won't take Frederica back.

Under no circumstances will I  
have Frederica at Churchill.

That's wise.

What do you mean?

The nearness of their ages,  
her and Reginald's.

How unkind.

- Forgive me.

- Forgiven.

The fallacy of youth.

Isn't it rather clear that it is we,  
women of decision, who hold the trumps?

Lady Susan?

Lady Susan Vernon.

How dare you address me, sir.

- But, Lady Susan...

- Begone, sir, or I will have you whipped.

- Outrageous.

- Have you never met him?

No. I know him well. I would never  
speak to a stranger like that.

I hope you will see my friend Alicia.  
She's an American from the Connecticut  
branch of the Delancey family.  
Well, though even the best bred  
Americans don't sound particularly fine,  
there's a freshness to her manner  
I find rather tonic.  
Her family were treated outrageously  
there during the late war,  
punished for their very  
loyalty to the Crown.  
Americans really have shown themselves  
to be a nation of ingrates.  
Only by having children can one begin  
to understand such a dynamic.

Yes.

Susan, I've been looking for you.  
The afternoon coach brought this note.  
Perhaps Charles has  
succeeded with Miss Somers.  
Oh, it's as I've feared.  
Miss Somers refuses to keep Frederica.  
She says she must think  
of her school's reputation.  
Preposterous. I've never  
heard of her school.

- Could that be them?

- What, Frederica?

Here.

Hello, hello. Here we are.

- Is this Frederica?

- Yes.

Allow me to introduce  
our niece... charming girl...  
uh, Miss Frederica Vernon.

Welcome, Frederica.

We've longed to know you.

My brother Reginald DeCourcy.

Hello.

Pleased to meet you.

Good afternoon, Frederica.

Good afternoon, Mother.

It's as I've feared.

Excuse me. I must go to my daughter.

Poor Frederica.

- Poor mother of Frederica.

- What?

The daughter is, I understand,

- a troubled girl.

- How do you so fear?

She hasn't had tea.

Could be a lack of nourishment.

Where is Frederica?

In her rooms,

practicing the pianoforte.

She practices quietly.

Don't look.

Frederica's watching us.

- Watching us?

- Through the window. Don't look.

How odd to be spied upon.

That's the parent's lot.

We bring these delightful

creatures into the world,

eagerly, happily,

and then, before long,

they're spying upon and judging us,

rarely favorably.

Having children is our fondest wish, but  
in doing so, we breed our acutest critics..

It's a preposterous situation  
but entirely of our own making.

- I marvel at your good humor.

- Well, what alternative have we?

It's the way of the world.

We must accept it with a smile.

Of course, when the little

ones are very small,

there's a kind of sweetness

which partially compensates

for the dreadfulness which comes after.

- You worry for Frederica's future?

- I worry for her present,

acknowledging that the responsibility

for securing her future rests with me.

[woman singing opera]

Go.

[laughing] Come on.



Pretty? You think so?

Yes. You don't?

No, I ought not to have said that.

In any case, beauty matters little.

It's vivacity and a lively intelligence  
one looks for, even from the young.

[laughing]

Oh, I'm sorry.

Please excuse me.

I beg your pardon.

- What is it, my dear?

**- James:**

He's here.

He is here.

Sir James is here.

- Who?

- I'm so sorry. Please excuse me.

**James:**

Fre...

Oh. Sorry

to come like this.

I... I suppose you weren't expecting me.

Sir James, allow me

to introduce my sister-in-law

Mrs. Catherine Vernon and her brother

Mr. Reginald DeCourcy.

- How do you do?

- How do you do?

How kind of you to ask.

Uh, excellent.

Truly, very well.

Thank you.

Uh, excuse my hurry in coming,

the lack of notice beforehand,

et cetera, et cetera.

The truth is I forgot to write.

Then it was too late.

Now I'm here.

Took the liberty of a relation,

hoping to be one soon.

I must say, you look surprised.

You were astonished

to see me, no? Not?  
That's how it looked.  
Yes. I was astonished,  
and I still am.  
Uh, an impressive establishment you  
have here, sir. My congratulations.  
Immaculate.  
Mr. DeCourcy is  
Mrs. Vernon's brother.  
Very good.  
It's her husband Charles Vernon  
who has Churchill.  
Churchill.  
That's how you say it.  
All together like that:  
Churchill. Ha ha!  
Oh, well, that explains a lot.  
You see, I'd heard "church" and "hill"  
but couldn't find either.  
All I could see was this big house.  
Ha ha!  
Fine name, Churchill.  
Marlborough, right? The general.  
Showed the French.  
- You must be very proud.  
- No connection.  
But I believe I have  
heard it spoken of.  
I... I think you mentioned it.  
Churchill.  
Yes, I think you did.  
But, again, I heard "church" and "hill,"  
and I couldn't see either.  
But I realized I was in mistake  
and now stand corrected.  
Ah, happens  
quite a lot. Ha ha!  
Reginald, would you be so kind  
as to take Sir James to see Charles?  
I think you'll find  
Charles very well versed  
in the advanced agricultural methods  
in which you've taken such an interest.  
Oh, yes. Advanced agricultural methods.

Very much so.

Collins, who supervises Martindale  
for me, speaks of them often.

A landowner of the current day  
must know all sorts of things.

That is our role.

"Hello, Collins," I say.

"What advanced agricultural methods  
have we today?"

Excellent.

Oh. There you are.

Are you asleep?

- No, Mama.

- Well, what, then?

You were hiding from me.

Please explain.

No.

My strange girl.

- What were you up to back there?

- What?

Rushing out before Sir

James entered the room.

I couldn't bear to see him.

Couldn't bear.

Ungenerous manner of speech.

Frederica, dear,

Sir James Martin is

a kindhearted young man

whose only offense seems to be wanting  
to provide you with a life of comfort.

Have you nothing to say?

Dear, our present comfortable state  
is at the most precarious sort.

We don't live.

We visit.

We're entirely at the mercy of  
our friends and relations,

as we discovered

so painfully at Langford.

Here, you seem to have won  
your aunt's affections.

I think I served you well there, for I  
believe she'd do anything to spite me.

But such a dynamic

cannot continue forever.

- But Mama...

- But Mama.

I will not always be here  
for you to contradict me.

If a life of comfort  
such as Sir James has to offer  
is not to your taste, what will you do?  
How will you live?

- I... I could teach.

- Teach.

Had you been more in school,  
you'd not consider such a thing.

Answer this.

When our Lord wrote his commandments,  
which did he consider so important  
that he put it in the fourth position?

The fourth position?

Yes, the fourth commandment.

I know the commandments,  
but not their order.

See? This is what comes of  
an irregular education.

Yes. Fourth commandment.

- Thou shalt not...

- No, it's not a shalt not.

- It's a shalt.

- A shalt?

If I had not myself been present,  
I would wonder if I were even your mother.

"Honor thy father  
and mother."

I'm sorry, have I done anything  
that's dishonored you or Father?

To honor means, among other things,  
to listen with respect  
to a parent's sincere council.

I do listen with respect, Mama.

It's just that...

If you will not pay attention to me, then  
perhaps you will to a larger imperative.

The law of the universe.

An offer as splendid as Sir James's  
is not likely to come around again.

He has offered you the one thing he has of value to give, his income.

I fear and reproach myself having shielded you for far too long. Had I let you starve a little bit more, you would resist much less.

Mama, I was often hungry at school. Well, evidently, not hungry enough.

In any case, the starvation at the schoolhouse is nothing like that of a destitute. Is that what you want?

No.

I can see Sir James is a kind man, and if it weren't a matter of marriage, I'm sure I could like him.

But marriage is for one's whole life. Not in my experience.

Meanwhile, I must ask you not to speak to your aunt and uncle about this matter, or seek their interference in any way.

I insist.

Promise?

- Remember the commandment.

- Yes, Mama.

Sir James's arrival and suddenness requires some explanation.

You were not too surprised, I hope.

It was unexpected.

Certainly.

To me as much as anyone.

I'm afraid Sir James's best qualities are not immediately apparent.

- Certainly, he's no Solomon.

- Solomon?

The wise king in The Bible who had the idea of dividing the infant disputed by two mothers in half.

Or in two. I don't recall the exact wording.

- Yes, of course.

- So, Sir James is no Solomon.

How many suitors of great wisdom could

a young woman expect to find these days?

- I don't know.

- None.

And, I confess, I ask myself is such a quality even desirable in a husband?

[chuckling]

How jolly.

Tiny green balls.

Mm. Yes.

Good tasting.

Quite sweet.

What are they called?

Peas.

Oh, yes.

No, I knew that.

I recall now.

I must get Collins to cultivate these at Martindale.

Novelty vegetables.

Could make quite a packet.

[laughs]

Ohh. Tiny.

I'm enjoying Sir James's visit.

His conversation's lively.

Brings a new angle to things.

What would you think, uh, to come and see the Fredricksville Farm?

He mentioned he had an interest in agricultural methods.

Yes.

- Frederick, be careful.

- Frederick, you must try to be good.

- He's utterly ridiculous.

- Certainly, he's no Solomon. But...

- Solomon?

- The wise king from The Bible.

I know he's not that.

But any man navigating the cascades of romantic courtship, and occasionally falling into its foaming waters is apt not to appear at his best.

- What?

- A simple word, Reginald.

Comprehension.

I admire your caustic mind,  
but I think you're  
not entirely sensible  
at the degree to which  
you can intimidate others.  
Particularly a young man over  
whom you have every advantage of,  
position, looks, and character.  
Sir James Martin  
is a fool because of me.  
Yes. Around you,  
he seems very silly.  
- Isn't he silly around everyone?  
- No.  
I believe he's given everyone  
the same impression.  
Well, they've only seen him around you.  
But you deny Sir James's  
intentions toward you.  
- Toward me?  
- He's clearly besotted with you.  
Oh, it's with Frederica he's smitten.  
- That's not possible.  
- Well, he's proposed to her.  
How could such a blockhead  
even be allowed to court your daughter?  
It's incomprehensible.  
This is the incomprehension  
of the rich and easeful.  
You can afford to take the high ground,  
and add another layer to your pride.  
If you realized the full  
extent of ridiculous manhood  
a young girl without  
fortune must endure,  
you'd be more generous to Sir James.

**Lady Susan:**

you could steal away.  
We can only meet through  
such subterfuges.  
Mr. Johnson  
is relentless.  
I'll not be sent back to Connecticut.

I don't see why he believes  
that association with me  
would lower your reputation.

But a question.

Did Sir James mention to you  
any plans to come to Churchill?

Heavens no.

What folly.

How did Mr. DeCourcy  
react?

Well, I had some gratification there.  
At first, he observed Sir James with  
attention not untinged with jealousy,  
but it was impossible  
to really torture him,  
for I had to finally reveal  
that his object was Frederica.

Then he was all astonishment.

Left to ourselves,

I had no great difficulty  
in convincing him I was justified.

I don't remember the exact reasoning,  
but it was all comfortably arranged.

So what's your verdict  
on young DeCourcy?

Well, he's not stupid, and  
he has a great deal to say,  
but I can't help but look  
with a certain contempt  
on the fancies of a heart so doubting  
the reasonableness of it's own emotions.

I vastly prefer the generous  
spirit of a Manwaring  
who deeply convinced of one's marriage  
can be satisfied that what  
everyone does is right.

I know that no one really deserves you,  
but young DeCourcy might be worth having.

Excuse me, Frederica.

When I came down this morning, I...

I couldn't help but notice  
you were reading a book.

Which book was that?

This volume of Cooper's verse.



Cooper the poet?  
He... He also writes verse?  
Most impressive.  
Yes, he's versatile in that way.  
So, Frederica, you read  
both verse and poetry.  
In this, I believe,  
you take after your mother,  
who knows a great many things.  
Just yesterday, she cited to me  
a story from The Bible  
about a very wise king.  
This reminded me of many such accounts  
one learns in childhood.  
Perhaps most significant  
in forming one's principles  
is that of the old prophet who came  
down from the mount with tablets,  
pleading the 12 commandments,  
which our Lord has taught us to obey  
without fail.  
- 12 commandments.  
- Mm.  
Excuse me but, uh,  
I believe there were only 10.  
Really?  
Only 10 must be obeyed.  
Excellent.  
[chuckles] Well, then,  
wh... which two to take off?  
Perhaps the one about the Sabbath.  
I prefer to hunt.  
- Well...  
- After that, it becomes tricky.  
Many of the thou shalt nots.  
Don't murder.  
Uh, don't covet  
thy neighbor's house or wife.  
You... One simply  
wouldn't do, anyway.  
[chuckles]  
Because they are wrong.  
Whether the Lord allows us  
to take them off or not.

[chuckles]

It's so kind of you.

No, uh, delighted.

Honored.

My... my pleasure.

Would you like me to sign a note?

Uh, no, no documents.

Uh, no note necessary.

All in the family,

or hoping to be soon.

And, uh...

and the carriage?

Oh, yes. The carriage.

Definitely. Certainly.

My pleasure.

Honored.

[clapping]

- Good day, Charles.

- Good day.

Oh, hello.

- Good day.

- Good day.

Do you know where

I might find your mother?

I believe she has gone out.

Gone out?

- Are you all right?

- Mm-hm.

What is it?

Tell me what's wrong.

Please say.

Sir, I...

I do not know to whom I can apply.

What is it?

Please tell me.

I'm sorry, I shouldn't  
have said anything.

It's just that...

You're the only one I think

Mother might listen to.

Why would you say that?

Well, she pays no one such regard as  
she does you, except Lord Manwaring.

- What do you mean, Manwaring?

- No.

I'm sorry.

It... It's just that  
of all the people, I thought  
Mother would listen most to you.

Let me understand this.

It's that you find

Sir James's presence,  
and courtship of you unwelcome.

If his presence here disturbs you, it's  
to Charles and my sister you should apply.

I promised Mother I would not.

I don't understand.

Why would you promise that?

She required it.

What does she require?

What?

These silences are vexing.

- Mama forbade it.

- I don't understand.

I promised not to speak to my  
aunt and uncle on this subject.

- For what possible reason?

- It's wrong of me to speak now,  
and I'd not have  
if I weren't at my wit's end.

But I can't marry Sir James.

To what do you object?

You must have noticed.

He's very silly.

But besides that.

Besides that?

Yes, I confess the first impression  
he made on me was also...

indifferent,

but don't those

knowledgeable of such matters

consider Sir James a good catch,

or match or whatever it is they say?

A man of cheerful temperament,

happy to devote a large

income to a wife's comfort.

I would rather work for my bread.

But what could you do?

I could teach.

- Teach.

- I could...

Yes.

You must have been very little  
in school to think that.

Tell me, how did this happen?

Your mother is a woman  
of excellent understanding.

Her concern for you is great,  
though wise and clear-eyed.

How could she be as mistaken as you  
suggest, if you truly despise Sir James?

I don't despise Sir James.

I'm sure he's a kind man.

And he has a...

charm of a kind.

And certainly he is likable,  
and I'm sure I could like him if he  
were a cousin or a cousin's cousin,  
or a friend or a friend's friend,  
or an in-law or a step something.

I just don't want to marry him.

Come.

Tell me the particulars.

If they are as you say,  
I can't for the world imagine your  
mother would remain deaf to your wishes.

Thank you.

Catherine.

I'd like to thank you for this visit.

- You're leaving?

- Yes, I must.

Why?

As you've said, it's important that this  
season one of us be with our parents.

You've just decided this now?

Yes, but before going

I must ask one thing.

I'd be grateful if you could see  
justice is done Frederica.

She's a sweet girl

who deserves a better fate.

I'm glad you now see her worth.

Yes. My eyes have opened  
to many things.

- Aunt, I did something very wrong.

- I'm sure not.

No, I... I did. And now  
he and my mother have quarreled.  
He's to leave and it is my fault.

- Mama will never forgive me.

- Don't worry.

If any of what you fear comes to pass,  
I'll happily intercede.

Good afternoon, Catherine.

That cough of young  
Frederick's worries me.

I have from London some of Dr.  
Preston's excellent lozenges.

- Would you like them for the dear boy?

- Yes. Thank you.

Also, is it true that we're losing Mr.  
DeCourcy today?

Yes, it seems that we will.

How remarkable.

When he and I spoke barely an hour ago,  
he made no mention of it.

But perhaps he did not  
then know himself.

Young men are so impetuous  
in their resolutions.

Why, I wouldn't say  
Reginald's impetuous.

Oh, yes, he is.

He's like other young men that way.

Hasty in making resolutions,  
and then just as quick to unmake them.

I would not be surprised if he were to  
change his mind and stay.

He seemed quite decided.

Well, we'll see.

Some strangeness also seems  
to be affecting Frederica.

I believe the girl's actually fallen  
in love. With your brother the object.

Sir, Lady Susan asked if she  
might have a word with you.

She asked if you would be so kind  
as to visit her in her dressing room.

[knocking]

**Lady Susan:**

Come in.

I beg your pardon  
for calling you here, sir,  
but I've just learned of  
your intention to leave today.

- Is that true?

- Yes, it is.

May we close the door?

I entreat you not, on my account,  
to shorten your visit by even an hour.

Well...

I'm perfectly aware that after  
what has passed between us,  
it will ill suit either of us  
to remain in the same house.

It is I who should go.

No. Why?

My visit has already been  
inconvenient for your family.  
For me to stay risks dividing a clan  
affectionately attached to one another.

Where I go is of little consequence.

Whereas your presence is important to all.

**Lady Susan:**

close I came to destruction.

It all started with Frederica,  
in a grip of a madness of some kind,  
entreating Reginald

to intercede on her behalf  
as if I were some kind of unkind mother  
not wanting the best for her child.

Next, Reginald paid a visit to my rooms  
with an expression of the utmost solemnity  
to inform me of the impropriety  
of allowing Sir James  
Martin to court Frederica.

I tried to joke him out of it,  
but he refused to be.

Heavens, is he really so pompous?  
The pomposity, I assume.  
It was his disloyalty, which outraged me.  
If he held me in true regard, he would not believe such insinuations in my disfavor.  
A worthy lover should assume one has unanswerable motives for all one does.  
Certainly.  
Scarcely an hour had gone by when I learned that Reginald was leaving Churchill.  
Well, something had to be done.  
Condescension was necessary, though I abhor it.  
I sent for Reginald. When he appeared, he seemed astonished at the silence, and he seemed as though he were half-fearing, half-wishing to be softened by what I might say.  
The outcome justifies some portion of vanity, my dear, for the effect was no less favorable than immediate.  
- You brilliant creature.  
- So now I have many tasks.  
I must punish Frederica for her application to Reginald, and punish him for receiving it so favorably.  
And I must make myself serious amends for the humiliations I've been obliged to undergo.  
Manwaring's in town.  
Manwaring.  
How is he, the divine man?  
Absolutely miserable about you.  
And jealous of DeCourcy.  
To such a degree I can't answer for his not committing some great imprudence  
- such as following you to Churchill.  
- Heavens.  
[chuckles] I think I've dissuaded him from it.  
If you do follow my advice

and marry DeCourcy,  
it will be indispensable for you  
to get Manwaring out of the way.  
Only you have the influence  
to send him home.  
And by remaining in town, I'll be able  
to reward a long penance at Churchill.  
[door opens]  
With a little wealth anticipation.  
Madam, Lord Manwaring has arrived,  
and begs to be admitted.  
Please ask him to wait.  
Miss Vernon?  
It's so good to see you here.  
Might I help you?  
Yes. A friend was asking...  
how in accord with Christian teaching  
the fourth commandment should be honored?  
The fourth commandment? Yes, remember  
the Sabbath day to keep it holy.  
No, I meant the commandment  
"Honor thy mother and father."  
The fifth commandment.  
My favorite.  
It's the church of Rome  
that has it as the fourth.  
Yes, the fifth commandment,  
Honor thy father and thy mother  
that thy days may be long upon the land  
which the Lord, thy God, giveth thee.  
Beautiful. Profound.  
I believe one should apply this  
sentiment of gratitude and loyalty  
to every aspect of our lives.  
We're not born into a savage wilderness  
but into a beautiful mansion  
of the Lord that  
the Lord and those who have  
gone before us have constructed.  
We must avoid neglecting this mansion,  
but rather glorify and preserve it.  
As we should all  
of the Lord's creation.  
The superb Baumgarten has



outlined this aesthetic trinity  
as beauty, truth, and good.  
Truth is the perfect, perceived  
by reason. Beauty by the senses.  
And the good by moral will.  
From where do you come?  
Church.  
Why were you in church?  
Well...  
It is our religion.  
Yes, but this time of day,  
neither morning prayer nor vespers?  
The sky had clouded over.  
I was sure there would be a downpour.  
There was.  
Oh, you are quite drenched!  
You must get into some dry clothes!  
Oh, excuse me.  
[ birds crowing ]  
Dearest, welcome.  
What joy your letter gave us.  
- I wrote too hastily.  
- What?  
I couldn't imagine that every expectation  
I had would be dashed so quickly.  
You frighten me.  
Poor girl. Her one  
chance to break free.  
Who knows what punishment  
her mother will now impose.  
But Reginald can't be blind  
to such a lovely girl.  
He's become blind.  
Reginald is more securely  
Lady Susan's than ever.  
Please don't tell your father.  
I worry for his constitution.  
Tell me what?  
Susan, stop!  
Dreadful news.  
Mr. Johnson's been cured.  
Oh, how is that possible?  
No sooner had he heard you were  
in London than he had a cure.

Well, then could you do  
me the greatest favor?  
Could you go to Seymour Street  
and receive Reginald there?  
I dare not risk his  
and Manwaring's meeting.  
Keep him with you  
all evening if you can.  
Make up anything.  
I'm sorry I wasn't there to greet you.  
But didn't I provide  
a charming substitute?  
Strange, you remain silent  
but Mrs. Johnson couldn't  
stop singing your praises.  
Excuse me?  
I fear Alicia's rather  
fallen in love with you.  
It's given me quite a scare.  
You're joking.  
But you did like her.  
Of course.  
I so admire Alicia.  
She has none of the uncouthness  
one expects from Americans  
but all of the candor.  
Her husband, Mr. Johnson, is  
older and rather disagreeable.  
But a word of complaint never  
drops from Alicia's lips.  
Exemplary.  
Only by one's friends can  
one truly be known.  
That Alicia is mine will, I hope,  
help you think better of me.  
I already thought well of you.  
You are not plagued by doubt?  
Some things disconcerted me,  
that you were not here...  
Please, Reginald, don't be severe.  
I can't support reproaches.  
- But...  
- No, I entreat you. I can't support them.  
My absence was to arrange a matter

so that we could be together.  
I'm forbidden to say more.  
Please don't reproach me.  
Have you considered what I asked?  
I have, and I believe that  
our affairs require a caution  
and delicacy that perhaps  
in our candid enthusiasm,  
we might have insufficiently heeded.  
What do you mean?  
I fear that our feelings have  
hurried us to a degree  
which is in ill accord with  
the views of the world.  
I'm sure that in time...  
Perhaps with time, but...  
Given the poignancy of our feelings...  
You no longer wish to marry?  
No! No, all  
I'm saying, or,  
or hesitantly suggesting  
is that we postpone  
an open understanding until  
the opinion of the world  
is more in accord with  
our inclinations.  
- That could mean never.  
- No, no.  
Perhaps... months.  
I confess that such delay is  
against my every inclination.  
Then let's.  
No, Reginald, I will not be  
responsible for dividing your family.  
I thought we'd decided.  
I know such delay is insupportable,  
especially when we're both in London.  
But separations, only those  
that are also geographical  
can reasonably be tolerated.  
- What?  
- I'm sorry, Reginald.  
Staying in London would be  
the death of our reputations.

We must not meet.  
And not to meet, we must not be near.  
As cruel as it may seem, the necessity  
of it must be evident to you.  
Where will you go?  
Of course, it's necessary  
that I remain in London.  
There are arrangements that I  
must make for us to be together.  
But on the contrary, I know  
your family crave your company.  
Particularly that elderly gentleman  
to whom you owe so much.  
I would hate to be the cause of an  
loignement between you and your father.  
Who, forgive me,  
might not have long left.  
There's no reason for  
worry that I know of.  
- Father's rather in his prime.  
- Oh, thank heavens.  
So he's not in decline.  
He has the usual aches and pains, but  
he's overall, I believe, in good health.  
In any case, he'd not want  
any concern on that account,  
- which he'd consider so much rubbish.  
- Ah, mortality.  
Our mortality, and that of others,  
but most particularly our own  
is the hardest and most intractable  
hand life can deal us.  
I long to meet the dear gentleman.  
Of course, it's natural that he  
would want to ignore or minimize  
the cold, sad end that awaits us all.  
Not at all.  
Father's a Christian  
for whom the prospect of the  
end is neither sad nor cold.  
Ah, yes. Well, thank heaven  
for our religion.  
So important in this life and  
most especially in the next.

Must we really wait?

I entreat you to reconsider.

[ woman weeping ]

Lady Manwaring.

Excuse me, I'm in such a state.

I don't know what to say.

Is Mr. Johnson at home?

I must speak with my guardian!

Yes, of course.

You poor dear.

I'll let him know you're here.

Lucy Manwaring is here to see you.

- Mr. Johnson!

- Please go in.

- You must help!

**- Mr. Johnson:**

[ muffled voices ]

Madam, Mr. DeCourcy.

Oh, good day.

Mr. DeCourcy, what a surprise to see you.

So kind of you to call.

I must thank you for last evening  
for setting matters right.

Lady Susan's explained everything.

I am ashamed to have spoken as I did.

It was foolish of me.

No, no, no, not at all.

Most sympathetic.

But you did not have to come to thank me.

Courtesy did not dictate it.

In fact, it's not my sole motive.

Lady Susan has entrusted  
me with a letter for you.

Strictly private.

How intriguing.

[ Mrs. Manwaring sobs ]

- Has an animal been injured?

- No, private theatricals.

Medea. They perform next week,  
but prefer not to be watched rehearsing.

Thanks again for the charming evening.

She's with him now!

This can't continue! It mustn't!

Lucy, please, don't. Stay here,  
rest, recover your equanimity.

Equanimity?

They're together now!

I implore you, come with me.

Talk with Manwaring. Reason with him.

As my guardian, won't you help?

Even if I found them,

what good could be done?

Yes, heed Mr. Johnson. His counsel's  
excellent in such matters.

What have you? A letter?

In her hand?

Return that letter, madam.

It's not for you!

- Lucy, no!

- Excuse me!

Madam, I believe you are on the  
verge of making a grave error.

You are Lady Manwaring?

Lady Manwaring of Langford?

You've recognized your friend

Lady Susan Vernon's hand

- and assumed the letter's for you.

- You think that lady is my friend?

She's with my husband now.

As we speak.

He visits her.

That's not possible, Madam.

I've just left her. She's entirely alone.

- Even her servant's sent off.

- Owen!

Owen, come here.

Stand here.

Tell this gentleman what you've seen.

- Your ladyship...

- Repeat to him what you told me.

Well, sir...

Lady Susan sent her servant away,  
and then you left,

and a few minutes later,

Lord Manwaring arrived

and was received by her Ladyship.

- Alone?

- Yes, sir, I believe so.  
No one else came or went.  
No, stop, the letter's for  
Mr. Johnson only.  
Here. I send Reginald  
with this letter.  
Keep him there all evening if you can.  
Manwaring comes this very hour.  
That's not possible.  
I must stop this!  
Please, sir, come with me.  
What could possibly be gained?  
It could even be dangerous.  
This is a matter for your solicitors.  
Mrs. Johnson, this is beyond  
what I could have imagined.  
You promised that you would give up  
all contact with this woman.  
I have no idea what she writes.  
She's gone mad.  
I'm sorry to say, my dear, that  
I hear the Atlantic passage  
is very cold this time of year.  
[ sobbing ]  
- Madam?  
- Agonies, my dear.  
- What's happened?  
- The worst.  
- Disaster.  
- Disaster?  
Mr. DeCourcy arrived  
just when he shouldn't have.  
Lucy Manwaring had just forced herself  
into Mr. Johnson's study to sob her woes.  
Oh, has she no pride?  
No self-respect?  
What an impression she makes.  
Bursting from Mr. Johnson's library,  
wailing like a stuck child.  
Seeing the letter in your handwriting,  
she tore it from Reginald to read aloud.  
- No!  
- Yes.  
"Manwaring comes

this very hour."

- And Reginald heard that?

- He read it himself.

How ungentlemanly.

- It's shocking. I can't believe it.

- Yes, very shocking.

A gentleman entrusted with  
correspondence marked private  
reads it regardless, and then because  
of a few confidential remarks,  
the obloquy's mine?

Who has acted badly in this affair?

Only you and I stand innocent of  
reading other people's correspondence.

Unluckily, Lady Manwaring  
also wormed out  
of her husband's servant that  
Manwaring visited you in private.

Oh.

Facts are horrid things.

Don't worry, I'll make my  
story good with Reginald.

He'll be a little enraged at first,  
but I vow that by dinner  
tomorrow, all will be well.

I'm not sure, he was with  
Mr. Johnson when I left.

Forgive me for saying it, but,  
I dread to imagine what's  
being said in your disfavor.

What a mistake you made  
marrying Mr. Johnson.

Too old to be governable,  
too young to die.

Good afternoon, madam.

**Susan:**

outlandish or shocking to others,  
but we're not expecting others  
to read our correspondence.

And don't put things for their benefit.

Manwaring only visited me  
as his wife's friend.

Friend?



She herself denies this.

Well, of course.

I was her friend when she was sane.

Her great enemy since.

Manwaring left Langford to  
escape her deranged suspicions.

In granting him an interview,  
my sole motive was

to persuade him to return to  
her and see what might be done

- to ease the poor woman's mind.

- Yes, but why alone?

- Why did you arrange to see him alone?

- You cannot divine the motive there?

Servants have ears,

with the unfortunate tendency to repeat  
whatever they imagine they've heard.

I dreaded injuring the poor  
woman's reputation still further.

You imagine I could accept  
such an explanation?

I can only tell you what

I know to be true.

- Did you succeed?

- What?

Did you convince Manwaring  
to return to his wife?

Yes, I did.

But it seems that her judgment  
is too deteriorated to allow it.

Her jealous and suspicious condition is  
not one that would allow reassurance.

You forget.

I saw the letter with my own eyes.

No, I do not forget.

I greatly resent it.

A fault you compounded by misinterpreting  
what you should never have seen.

Do you think I would have confided  
a letter to a third party

if I thought its contents  
in any way dangerous?

Have I not already explained  
everything which

the ill-nature of the world  
could interpret to my discredit?  
What could so stagger your  
esteem for me now?  
After all we've discussed  
and meant to one another,  
that you could doubt my actions,  
my intentions? My word?  
Sorry, Reginald, but I've  
reflected upon this deeply.  
I cannot marry a man with an  
untrusting disposition. I cannot have it.  
What?  
We cannot marry.  
Whatever commitment  
was between us is severed.  
Any connection impossible.  
What are you saying?  
Mistrust does not bode well  
for any union.  
I have a great regard for you.  
Yes, a passionate one,  
but I must master it.  
Oh, Catherine?  
Catherine?  
- Reginald has returned.  
- He's here?  
- He's just going to find your father.  
- It's not...  
No, the most happy news.  
- Our fears were in vain.  
- What?  
- The engagement's off.  
- How?  
Well, Lady Susan broke it off herself.  
She did?  
Reginald's most cast down.  
But I'm sure he'll soon  
recover and, dare we hope,  
cast his look elsewhere.  
That woman's a fiend.  
- What do you mean?  
- Lady Susan.  
She has an uncanny understanding

of men's natures.

By forcing the rupture herself,  
she's engaged Reginald's pride.

Uncanny? I don't understand.

Reginald will start to doubt everything  
he's heard to her detriment.

A guilty regret will overwhelm him and  
slowly, surely, he'll convince  
himself he's wronged her.

You frighten me.

Yes, if Frederick Vernon,  
renowned for his good sense,  
let Lady Susan ruin him,  
what chance has Reginald?

You speak as if your brother  
were not wise.

I'm sure he is. Everyone comments  
on his lively understanding.

You are the best of mothers,  
but Reginald has just  
the sort of sincere nature  
most vulnerable to

a woman of her genius.

You think she's a genius?  
Diabolically so, like the  
serpent in Eden's garden.

Does this woman always get her way?

From what I understand,  
only clever tradesmen  
are astute enough to see  
through her stratagems.

Several banded together to send their  
agents to intercept her on Seymour Street,  
obliging her to pawn  
the last of her jewels.

Slay the fatted calf, my dear,  
the prodigal's returned.

What's wrong, my boy?

The joy of seeing your  
aged parents eludes you.

- Don't tease him, father.

- It's a father's right.

- You'll have him fleeing back to London.

- No risk of that, I assure you.

London holds no charm for me.  
Oh, you've realized that?  
Good.  
Never appealed to me at all.  
Dirty, noisy, noxious gases.  
Soot.  
I don't see the point of towns.  
Far better to live on one's own land.  
Everyone should.  
I'm afraid this relates  
to my sister-in-law.  
Yes, sister.  
Congratulations on your  
entire vindication.  
On the contrary, I don't  
seem out of danger at all.  
- I assuredly am.  
- What's the matter?  
What's happened?  
I don't understand.  
Reginald, dear, Frederica  
has prepared a charming piece.  
Help me persuade her to sing it for us.  
No, you are too kind, Lady DeCourcy.  
I am not ready.  
Excuse me, Miss Vernon.  
Mother, as much as I'd like to, I'm afraid  
I'm too tired to be a suitable audience.  
If you'll excuse me.  
No, you must stay. Frederica's a  
song-bird. Never heard anything like it.  
Don't deny us this pleasure, my dear.  
Reginald, we need you to insist.  
- As I said...  
- No, I'm sorry. Excuse me.  
You must play it, my dear.  
Please.  
The Kentish Nightingale, I call her.  
Voice is remarkable,  
even to my hearing.  
She must have it  
from her mother's side.  
Lady Susan's voice is a clear,  
natural soprano, lovely.

Beautiful.

- [ horses approaching ]

- It is, is it?

- Do you expect visitors, mother?

- No. Who would visit us?

Look who's come from London?

What an agreeable surprise.

Excuse me for arriving this way.

What a delightful family pose.

Yes, it is the season

for families to unite.

So it's especially welcome

to have you here.

Thank you, Charles.

I do hope that recognizing

a mother's anxiety

to see her child, you might

excuse my abruptness.

Nothing to excuse.

Sir Reginald, Lady DeCourcy,

might I introduce my

sister-in-law, Lady Susan Vernon.

Enchant.

Please, forgive this intrusion.

Now that I'm fixed in town, I  
can't rest with Frederica away.

- Isn't such anxiety new?

- Yes, it is, I entirely agree.

But now I'm in London where the  
instruction Frederica needs  
can so readily be found.

Her voice has some promise.

Some? She's a veritable songbird.

The Kentish Nightingale, I call her.

Do you?

Is this really Kent?

Delightful.

You're right sir, Frederica  
has the native talent

a bird might, but those few  
notes can get repetitive.

But mama, couldn't I stay?

But mama, couldn't I stay?

Charming.

I thank you, dear sister, for making Frederica feel so at home and welcome wherever she goes.

I've secured you a lesson with Signor Valtroni.

Where the grand affair of education is concerned, there's no excuse for half-measures.

Isn't it key, sir, to cultivate her voice?

- A nightingale, didn't you say?

- Yes, that's right.

The Kentish Nightingale, I call her. Delightful appellation, and perhaps, with a teacher such as Signor Valtroni, it could even become true.

- Frederica, have you your things?

- Leave for London now?

We'd so looked forward to having Frederica with us.

How remarkable.

Only a few weeks ago it was hard to find anywhere for Frederica. Now the world fights for her company. Astonishing.

Astonishing that she was neglected then, or is fought over now?

Excellent observation, dear sister, but I will stop now, because I know how my daughter hates to be praised.

How are you, sir?

I hope well.

We should go.

Excuse me, mama.

I must collect my things.

Yes, you must.

We cannot buy a new wardrobe for each displacement.

That poor girl.

Did you see her face?

I must talk to her and remind her that she will always have a home with us.

Or with us.

If you are referring to the past,  
I doubt her mother will  
again risk misinterpretation.  
Henceforth, we can rest assured that  
Lady Susan will make clear to Frederica  
the consideration and affection  
which guide her actions.

I have not gone to  
the trouble of retrieving  
Frederica from Parklands  
to again be thwarted.

Maria Manwaring may sob, Frederica may  
whimper, and the Vernons may storm,  
but Sir James will be Frederica's  
husband before the winter is out.

- You brilliant creature.

- Thank you, my dear.

I am done submitting my will  
to the caprices of others.

Of resigning my own  
judgment and deference  
to those to whom I owe no duty  
and have very little respect.

Too easily have I  
let my resolve weaken.

Frederica shall know the difference.

You're too indulgent with the girl.

Why let Frederica have him when  
you could grab him yourself?

Sir James?

Yes, I know your unselfish nature,  
but can you afford to bestow  
Sir James on Frederica  
while having no Sir James of your own?

Madam, Mr. Johnson sends word  
he returns to dine.

Thank you.

- How insulting.

- The opposite.

I don't doubt your ability to get  
DeCourcy whenever you want him.

But is he really worth having?

Isn't his father just the sort of

enraging old man who will live forever?  
And how will you survive?  
On the allowance that Frederica  
as Lady Martin might grant you?  
As guests at Churchill?  
I'd rather be married to my own husband  
than dependent on the  
hospitality of others.  
We must protect her. Not just for her  
own sake, but for her dear late father's.  
What can we do?  
We must find the argument to persuade  
her mother it's in her best interest,  
which, of course, is her only guide.  
That will mean a trip to London.  
Fortunately, Charles must have some  
business there to justify such a trip.  
What a marvelous husband  
you have, my dear.  
Charles seems to live to oblige.  
It's true.  
I've been lucky.  
Charles always seems to have some pretext  
or other for doing just what's wanted.  
[ humming ]  
Dearest, I believe you have  
pressing business in London.  
Oh, um, yes.  
Frederica?  
You're so kind to visit.  
Frederica will be delighted.  
And how are the children?  
Especially my dear Frederick.  
Very well, thank you.  
Frederica, come and see who's here.  
I can't express my gratitude for  
the hospitality you've extended us.  
Not at all.  
Our great pleasure.  
- Hello, Frederica.  
- Good afternoon, my dear.  
- Hope you're well.  
- Thank you.  
Oh, it's so good to see you.



Frederica, why don't you  
go upstairs and play a piece?  
Select something charming to show your  
aunt and uncle what you've studied.  
With pleasure.  
You'll see the strides  
she's been making.  
Oh, do mind your head.  
Frederica plays all the new music.  
Haydn, Himmel.  
Bernadini.  
Carabini.  
Do sit down.  
So you're happy with  
the progress she's making?  
Yes.  
Only in a city such as London, I believe,  
could she have had such instruction.  
Well, if Frederica is making  
such good progress in London,  
that complicates matters.  
What complication would that be?  
We'd hoped that Frederica  
might return to Churchill.  
She's greatly missed,  
especially by the little ones.  
Oh, what a moving sentiment  
of cousinly regard.  
But my concern, my obligation,  
is to see the defects in  
Frederica's education repaired.  
Could we invite one of her teachers to  
Churchill to continue her lessons there?  
What a kind thought.  
But these are London's  
most sought after Masters.  
No invitation to a country retreat,  
even such a delightful one as Churchill,  
would be in their power to accept.  
Perhaps a private tutor.  
Might I confess something?  
Frederica and I have become  
such great friends,  
it would be hard for

me to part with her.  
You might have noticed  
for a time there was a...  
strange tension between us.  
That is now happily disappeared.  
Excuse me, are you well?  
Sorry, we so set our hearts  
on Frederica's return.  
I understand completely.  
She's become an agreeable companion.  
Even her tendency to extreme quiet  
I've grown to find rather soothing.  
But there is one  
factor that concerns me.  
Does she look quite well?  
- Oh, yes.  
- That was your impression.  
London's vaporous air is not, I think,  
healthy for her.  
- Does she not seem pale?  
- She does.  
The London air, these smoky gasses  
cannot be salutary for her.  
Fresh country air is  
what the young require.  
Yes, how curious they are.  
Does not the town's dank air  
favor the spread of influenza?  
The influenza in London?  
Several cases have been reported.  
It is, after all, the season for it.  
Of all the disorders in the world,  
the risk of influenza contagion  
is the one I dread the most  
for Frederica's constitution.  
Shouldn't we consider, then,  
removing her from this danger?  
What you say does give me pause.  
But it would be such a hardship to  
lose my daughter's companionship  
just when I've grown to rely on it.  
And, of course, her studies.  
[ sighs ]  
Congratulate me, my dear.

Frederica's aunt and uncle have  
taken her back to Churchill.  
I thought you'd grown to  
enjoy Frederica's company so.  
Comparatively. A bit.  
But I'm not so self-indulgent as to want  
to wallow in the companionship of a child.  
Alas, I fear this is our last meeting.  
At least while  
Mr. Johnson is alive.  
His business at Hartford  
has become extensive.  
If I continue to see you, he vows  
to settle in Connecticut forever.  
Oh, you could be scalped!  
I had a feeling that the great word  
"respectable" would some day divide us.  
Your husband, I abhor, but  
we must yield to necessity.  
Our affection cannot be impaired by it,  
and in happier times when your  
situation is as independent as mine,  
we will again unite.  
For this, I will impatiently await.  
I also.  
May Mr. Johnson's next gouty  
attack end more favorably.  
[ chuckles ]  
[ chattering ]  
Thank you.  
Do you know where Frederica is?  
Lady Susan's written to her.  
Oh.  
Frederica?  
Frederica, a letter from your mother.  
Thank you, Aunt Catherine.  
What does she say?  
She's written to you herself.  
My mother and  
Sir James Martin have wed.  
What?  
How could that happen?  
How could they possibly marry?  
To what do you refer?

Both were free to do so.  
He a bachelor, Susan a widow.  
Sir James Martin is a fool.  
Well, a bit of a rattle, perhaps.  
A bit of a rattle?  
He's a complete blockhead.  
Well, there are three possible  
explanations as I see it.  
First, perhaps Sir James has  
more merit than we've allowed.  
No.  
Well, second, perhaps in order  
to secure your future, Frederica  
your mother found it necessary  
to make a prudent match herself.  
That could be the case.  
Mama has always been  
concerned with my future.  
And the third possible explanation?  
That she came to love him.  
There is a saying:  
"the heart has its strangeness"  
or words to that effect.  
The heart is an instrument we  
possess but do not truly know.  
Human love partakes of the divine,  
or at least it has in my case.  
You'll find it in  
the writings of Rousseau.  
Julie.  
Or The New Heloise, I think.  
I'll will confirm the citation,  
if you're interested.  
I just find it incomprehensible that so  
brilliant a woman could marry such a...  
pea brain.  
Or peas brain.  
- It happens all the time.  
- It strains credulity.  
Certainly, as you said,  
Sir James is no Solomon.  
But if she can give Lady Susan  
the happiness and security  
which the sad events of

recent years deprived her of,  
then he is someone that I,  
and all of us, should value.

I very much agree, Uncle.

We all should.

I wish them every happiness  
in their life together.

Congratulations, sir,  
on the match I long favored.

There's a rightness to  
your being together.

Not that any man could  
really deserve Lady Susan.

I agree most heartily.

And I've pleasure in adding double  
congratulations are in order.

What?

The most beautiful woman in  
England, present company excepted,  
will soon be the most beautiful mother.

Yes, I'm to be a father.

Marvelous.

You certainly don't delay matters.

Congratulations, sir.

Yes, the very morning  
after the wedding,

Lady Susan hinted at the happy news  
which was shortly confirmed.

Truly marvelous.

I'm as proud as you can imagine.

[ sobbing ]

What's that?

Such a burden.

When Lord and Lady Manwaring separated,  
Mr. Johnson, who is Lucy Manwaring's  
guardian, invited her to live with us.

Really?

What upsets her?

The separation, still.

- She goes on about it.

- What?

This carrying on about a  
marriage that ended weeks ago.

If a woman fails to please her husband,

why go on about it,  
advertising one's failure?  
Why announce to the world  
that the man who knows you best  
would rather be with someone else?  
It seems as if  
Lady Manwaring has failed  
to consider the difference  
between the sexes.  
For a husband to wander  
is not the same as vice versa.  
If a husband strays, he's merely  
responding to his biology.  
That is how men are made.  
But for a woman to act  
in a similar way is ridiculous.  
Unimaginable.  
Just the idea is funny.  
[ laughs ]  
Couldn't agree more.  
Quite funny.  
I rather blame Lady Manwaring's  
scene-making for driving her husband away.  
But her loss has been our gain.  
As a result of the trouble  
her solicitors caused,  
we've had Manwaring stay  
with us these past weeks.  
That's not inconvenient?  
Not at all.  
Capital fellow.  
Couldn't get on better.  
Loves to hunt.  
Small and large game.  
Excellent, excellent to have a guest.  
And the talk that comes with it.  
Of course, Lady Susan's sharp,  
but it's easier to talk with a fellow,  
particularly one who shares  
one's interests.  
Before long, we'll have another guest.  
Frederica?  
No, of course.  
The baby!

Manwaring?  
Manwaring?  
Have you seen my husband?  
What have you been saying, tell me.  
How is he?  
Well, Madam.  
Very well, I believe.  
Couldn't be better.  
[ sobs ]  
- Tea?  
- Quite.  
Oh!  
Look up!  
Ah, so, here's the church.  
But where's the hill?  
Don't see it.  
Doesn't seem to be one.  
Strange.  
Odd.  
[ church bells ringing ]  
[ people cheering ]  
God Bless you all!  
[ chattering ]  
Please excuse me.  
Your mother must be very proud.  
And I am enormously grateful to her.  
Without her efforts, I never  
would have found such happiness.  
Do excuse me.  
And bearing false witness?  
Oh, no, that would be the ninth.  
You must be most proud of Frederica.  
I would not say proud.  
I'm glad I was able to  
attend to her education.  
My daughter has shown herself  
to be cunning and manipulative.  
I couldn't be more pleased.  
A Vernon will never go hungry.  
We must ask Frederica to sing.  
That would be delightful.  
Surry Songbird, we call her.  
What? No.  
The Kentish Nightingale.

Always called her that.  
Surry songbird?  
What nonsense. Rubbish.  
Ridiculous.  
Ladies and gentlemen,  
Mr. Reginald DeCourcy.  
Over the past months I have  
continued to be startled  
by Frederica's  
loveliness and good heart.  
I had wanted to write some verses  
as a memorial to these discoveries.  
But they are now so extensive,  
they would form a volume.  
So I'll just read these few lines.  
Mean engaging?  
Mien. Appearance,  
or countenance.  
It's from the French, mien, I believe.  
I can find you the citation.  
[ applause ]  
Mrs. Reginald DeCourcy.  
As you may already know, I take Lady  
DeCourcy's requests as commands,  
and therefore I will sing this piece.  
Over the mountains  
And over the waves  
Under the fountains  
And under the graves  
Under floods that are the deepest  
Which Neptune obey  
Over rocks that are the steepest  
Love will find out the way  
Thought I detest imprudence  
and sincere emotions of all kinds,  
where Manwaring's concerned...  
And very quickly, he was in good humor?  
I see what you mean, how flattery  
alters a man's spirits. It's delightful.  
Such a posture, resenting  
a well-meaning parent  
is apparently common  
among girls her age.  
They are, perhaps, undercooked.



Not at all.

They're perfect.

Mmm. Yes, good tasting.

Quite sweet.

I shouldn't have said anything at all.

[sobs]

She's lovely.

No DeCourcy should forget the lengths  
to which Lady Susan went  
to prevent Charles Vernon  
marrying Catherine,  
which, had she succeeded, would have  
ruined your sister's happiness forever.

Lady Susan sent her servant away?

And then you left, and

a few minutes later...

Mrs. Johnson, this is beyond  
what I could have imagined.

I'll never forgive  
the trouble he's caused.

Thank you, my dear. May his next  
gouty attack be a severe one.