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The Best Offer

By Giuseppe Tornatore

Pinewood marriage chest
with groove joinery
and hand-forged hinges in
the shape of tulip buds.
Walnut sideboard.
16th-century French decorations
of herms and
Griffin-shaped cartouches.
Embellished deplorably
in the 19th century.
A pair of oak veneer cabinets
in the Flemish style.
Upper section with two doors,
featuring carved anthropomorphic
figures and caryatids.
Something wrong, Mr. Oldman?
Is it important?
If you were kind enough to
let me have this as a gift,
I'd be delighted to accept.
I don't remember that.
It may look like mouldy wood,
but centuries ago,
beneath the mould,
there must have been a painting.
- Good evening. How are you?
- Very well.
The management and
staff of Styrorex
would like to offer our
best wishes, Mr. Oldman.
Happy Birthday, Mr. Oldman.
This year, our chefs wish
to dedicate in your honour
an ancient recipe of a
Renaissance dessert
made of choux cream
and bitter almonds.
Enjoy.
- Most likely a rash.
- It must be that.
Was it not to your
taste, Mr. Oldman?
Quite the contrary, but you

see, my birthday is tomorrow.

It is now 10:

I'm very superstitious.
Pretend I had accepted.
The day after tomorrow, then.
The director of the Vatican Museum
wants you to call him back.
The reliquary attributed
to Cellini, I presume.
The report on this is ready.
There's a pile of gifts.
What shall I do with them?
Send them to my house
except the mobile.
Only one this year.
Good. Word's out
that I hate them.
Unless you've changed your habits,
you'll have to answer that.
It's the first call
on your birthday.
Tradition.
Hello.
I have no wish to
waste your time.
- Who's speaking?
- It's me, Claire Ibbetson.
Please don't hang up on me.
You're Mr. Oldman's
secretary, aren't you?
You can speak to me. It
makes no difference.
You see, I... I don't know
anybody. I'm on my own.
I'm sorry, Miss Ibbetson,
this is not a helpline.
I'm not explaining
myself very well.
I'm not in the habit of
speaking to people much.
That's a considerable
stroke of good fortune.
- Talking to people is perilous.

- I'm desperate...

You made the call so
you're running the risk.
It's about the furniture
of my parents' villa.
They... about a year ago.

- You see?

- I understand.

An estate of great...
I've always heard it
referred to as being of...
Extremely valuable.
Very rare pieces,
including paintings.
Unfortunately, I
have no photographs.

So what?

To be honest, I haven't decided
yet, but I would like to have a...

Oh, I'm out of my depth.

What's the word?

- Valuation.

- Exactly.

That is why I asked to
speak to Mr. Oldman.

Does Mr. Oldman have the
pleasure of knowing you?

Oh, no, not at all.

He doesn't know me.

But... but I know
a lot about him.

Mr. Oldman's assistants are
responsible for assessments.

- I'll put you through.

- Perhaps I didn't make myself clear.

I must speak to

Mr. Oldman in person.

Mr. Oldman never presides
over early appraisals.

But you see, before he died,

Dad told me that if I
decided to sell everything,
I should entrust the auction
sale to Mr. Virgil Oldman.

- In his opinion, the best.

- Sold!

Ladies and gentlemen, it gives me great pleasure to present lot 231, a refracting elongated telescope constructed by Galileo Galilei.

It's still in perfect working order.

Can we open bidding, please, at 1,000,000?

- 1,100,000.

- 1,100,000. 1,200,000.

1,300,000. 1,400,000

on the telephone.

1,500,000 back in the room.

1,600,000.

1,700,000. 1,800,000

in the room.

1,900,000. 2,000,000.

At 2,000,000.

Gesundheit. Was that a bid?

At 2,000,000. 2,100,000.

2,300,000 on the telephone.

2,500,000. I can sell it.

2,700,000.

At 2,700,000. Any more?

Are we all done?

At 2,700,000.

Sold. Congratulations, Sir.

Lot 232.

Disciple of Boris Gregorian,

Thurst. Oil on canvas, 60 x 70.

This one will go

to the best offer.

1,000. 2,000.

3,000. 4,000. 5,000 online.

6,000. 7,000.

8,000. 9,000 on the telephone.

10,000 back in the room.

11,000 online.

12,000. 13,000 online.

14,000. 15,000.

This is not doing

my neck any good.

At 15,000.

20,000. At 20,000.

Any more? Sold!

- Beautiful, isn't it?

- Yes. Very.

You never miss a trick,
do you, governor?

- Who is it really?

- Yansky.

A Russian painter who
died in the late '30s.

An outstanding
landscape painter.

But among his many landscapes,
he painted three portraits.

Only three in his whole life.

And this is one of the three.

It's double, alright?

How long have we
known each other?

Quite a while.

We've pulled off some sharp
tricks time after time.

Remember Milo Hensen?

You were the only one who
knew he was going to be big.

We got that portrait of
his mother for a song
from under the noses of
that bunch of idiots.

Must be worth a fortune now.

You almost sound bitter
you didn't get more.

Have we ever talked about
money, you and me?

- Honestly, no.

- It's been good enough for you.

It's been good enough
for me, you misery.

What matters is that
you're satisfied.

My only regret is never
being able to persuade you
that my paintings are evidence

of a great artistic talent.
A love of art and knowing
how to hold a brush
doesn't make an artist.
You need an inner mystery. A
knack you've never possessed.
You're right. Double
wasn't enough.
In my 36 years in this business,
never has anyone had the gall
to keep me waiting 40 minutes.
It's a disgrace. A
display of bad manners.
Let me explain. I
tried to call.
- There's no excuse.
- I tried to call.
Never come near me again.
Nobody answered and I don't
have your mobile number.
I do not possess a mobile phone.
It's the lbbetson
woman on the phone.
- Tell her to go to hell.
- She's crying.
Serves her right.
She was hit by a car on
her way to meet you.
So much the worse for her.
It's no concern of mine.
She was left unconscious.
She was lying in a pool of blood
when the ambulance arrived.
Alright. Put her through.
- Yes?
- Please forgive me.
I had no intention to be
in any way disrespectful.
Nothing too serious, I hope.
No. Fortunately, they'll...
they'll let me out tomorrow.
Good. I hope you make
a speedy recovery.
Would you consent to

a new appointment?

- Please.

- Alright.

But I'm sending an assistant.

I hope it's the same one

I spoke to last time.

What do you mean?

Well, I can't explain it, but

I understood from the outset

that voice could only have

been yours, Mr. Oldman.

Truly surprising,

wouldn't you say?

We think we'll be able to

bring out the whole face,

part of her dress and the

left side of the background.

Incredible. But what made

Mr. Oldman think that?

- What period is it from?

- Too soon to say.

Perhaps Mr. Oldman will

be able to work this out

more quickly and better than us.

- It's a fake.

- How is that possible?

- It's beautiful!

- I didn't say it wasn't.

I said it wasn't authentic.

From an analysis of the

pigments and wood,

we thought it was

pre-17th century.

- Even older.

- Then it must be worth something.

It is a work by Valiante, the

female forger of the 16th century.

She copied masterpieces,

but couldn't sign them

as she was a woman,

so she marked them

with a personal code

hidden in the folds

of the drapery

or in this case, in the
gaze of the subject.
The beam of light on the
Iris is nothing if not a V.
That is Valiante.
It is worth something, but nothing
compared to the original.
- Are you Mr. Oldman's assistant?
- Yes.
I'm Fred, the caretaker.
Pleased to meet you.
- Please, come in.
- Thank you.
And Miss Ibbetson?
She sends her apologies,
but overnight, she was
running a temperature.
She should have called me.
Spared myself a wasted trip.
Well, give her my best wishes.
She asked if you would
go ahead with valuation.
She's instructed me
to show you around.
Everything's at your disposal.
Come with me.
Miss Ibbetson was hoping
to meet your boss.
It doesn't matter. Your
mistress didn't show up either.
Fair enough.
I suppose it'll get
the job done quicker.
Forgive the mess.
It's gone to wrack and ruin ever
since Miss Ibbetson's parents died.
Let's go up.
How long since the owners died?
By the look of it, you'd
think it was centuries ago,
but it's only been one year.
First Mrs. Ibbetson and then,
scarcely 45 days later,
poor Mr. Ibbetson.

You have a good look.
Take your time.
Just getting these
curtains open.
Too many windows in this room.
Okay.
How many brothers and sisters
does Miss lbbetson have?
None. She is an only child.
- Is she married?
- No.
- Has she ever been?
- No, no.
I don't think she
even has a boyfriend.
- Grandparents, aunts, uncles?
- No, none at all.
As far as I know, Miss
lbbetson is on her own.
So many rooms.
You know, I've never
managed to count them all.
Have there been other
valuations before me?
Absolutely none.
Yours is the first.
Miss lbbetson is extremely
fond of this house.
Maybe too fond.
She'd prefer to keep everything,
but what can you do?
The empire crumbles. A woman
on her own can't cope.
Is she thinking of putting the
house up for sale as well?
That, I don't know.
Maybe a part of it.
She won't get rid
of the whole place.
What kind of work does she do?
I couldn't say. I only
dealt with her parents.
- May I see the cellars?
- It's this way.

It's a long way down.

Go ahead.

I honestly don't get it.

In the time I've known you,

I've never seen you beaten.

I've watched you produce

all manner of gadgets

from most unremarkable ironwork.

Optical, arithmetical

devices, water clocks...

Even that hairdryer that probably dried

the locks of Jules Verne's wife.

But you've nothing to say about

this curious contraption?

I'm surprised that an art

connoisseur like yourself

can get so carried away by

a banal piece of ironwork.

It's not the object that

arouses my curiosity,

but it's contradiction.

- Contradiction?

- Look.

I found it in this position in

contact with damp flooring,

but the rust is all along the top

of the cogs, nowhere near the damp.

What does this mean?

The object hadn't been

there for very long.

It got rusted in some other place.

Or someone turned it upside down.

That's all, nothing more than a

useless exercise in deduction.

Hi. Did you manage it?

Did you ever doubt me?

This works perfectly now.

And I transcribed the

recording from the tape.

You're a genius. How

much do I owe you?

Oh, nothing.

Maybe you'll invite me out.

Count on it.

- Can I give you a kiss?

- Yes, you can!

That I am good at.

- Good evening.

- Good evening.

William-Adolphe Bouguereau.

The Birth Of Venus.

Authentic.

Umberto Veruda,

The Honest, 1890.

You've been the talk

of the town lately.

I hoped to see you on TV.

I don't like to appear. I

prefer to remain in shadow.

We're much the same that way.

That doesn't mean we'll agree.

My secretary's been

looking for you.

How do you know that a painter

will become collectable?

Intuition, which also makes

me doubt your intentions.

Sorry for that impression but I've

entrusted you with my belongings.

That's not how it works.

There must be a signed

contract before the inventory.

It takes time, and unless

you stop fooling around

and decide to come out it

will never get started.

Go ahead with the inventory.

I'll meet you at the villa.

We'll reach an agreement.

You have my word.

- Take these.

- Yes.

Be careful!

I'm not sure but it

looks German to me.

Austrian. Careful with that.

It's 11:

appointment was 8:30.
She's not answering. She said
she'll come. She'll be here.
The piano doesn't
need restoration.
Quite so.
We have to check it
but there's no key.
But here it is.
Last time there was no key.
Looks good.
Mr. Oldman!
Would you help me
with the bookcase?
Italian bookcase, wood.
First half of...
Who smashed this?
Nobody, Mr. Oldman, it
was already broken.
Is this part of the
house inhabited?
Why?
There have been some changes.
No, no, Mr...
I'm sorry, I'm not
sure of your name.
I thought you were...
It doesn't matter who I am.
Nobody lives here.
Be that as it may, if your
mistress is not here by midday
I will have no option but
to suspend operations.
Mr. Oldman!
Miss lbbetson.
Hello, Mr. Oldman?
Mr. Oldman, can you hear me?
Mr. Oldman, I apologise.
What must you think of me?
Spare me the self-serving
justifications.
Let me speak.
I cannot touch your things without
a contract. Is that clear?

Would you leave it on the
table in the hallway?

I'll sign it. I accept
all your conditions.

Yes, but I do not accept yours.

I will not do business with a
silly, superficial phantom.

Be careful!

I understand your exasperation.

But please believe me I
didn't mean anything by it.

It's been a series of unfortunate,
unintentional mishaps.

So what exactly happened today?

My car was stolen and I had to
go to the police to report it.

Which police station
did you go to?

- The one in the city.

- Whereabouts?

- On the main square.

- Which square?

No more interrogation!

No more! Who do you
think you are?

Are you here, Miss lbbetson?

What kind of question is that?

Are you here?

I don't understand.

I don't understand.

- If you're here, come out now.

- Stop it!

Explain the meaning of this game
which I do not find amusing.

Call me tonight. I'll explain.

It's the same material
and the same workmanship too.

These belong to the same system.

There's no signature,
no inscription?

I mean when I've got the rust and the
oxidisation off the other piece.

There's nothing.

I can do the same with these but, I

mean, right now I can't see anything.

What have you found?

The technique, how the cog has been attached to it's axis.

It's really old. I've never seen it before.

Here, look. Have a look.

It's 18th century.

We could be onto something big here.

Could you guess what it is?

Three pieces of the mosaic is not enough, Mr. Oldman.

In the last few years the old couple were unwell.

The house was in a terrible state then.

Mr. lbbetson always said that they'd have to sell something.

And Miss Claire. How old is she?

About 27.

What else can you tell me about her?

Nothing really.

I've never had much to do with her. I don't really know her.

And yet you've been in the service of the lbbetsons for about 10 years.

Well, 11 years to be exact.

I don't have much to do with her.

I talk to her often at all hours but...

But?

I've never seen her.

- How could that be?

- It's the truth. Not once.

Why?

Because Miss Claire suffers from a very strange illness.

- Hello.

- Good evening. It's Oldman.

I was expecting your call.

I have no wish to quarrel and

I'm sorry if I was rude today.
It doesn't matter.
But if I confirm I am
available, at the same time
I cannot permit this joke in poor
taste to continue any longer.
I wish you to stop all
involvement in my affairs.
I apologize for the trouble.
Send me your bill. Good night.
Lot 93. Valiante.
Portrait of a Lady.
16th century,
inspired by the Portrait of a
Young Girl by Petrus Christus.
Oil on wood. 30 x 40.
I have here an opening
bid of 20,000.
- 22,000.
- 22,000.
24,000. 26,000
on the telephone.
28,000 in the room. 30,000.
35,000. Thank you, Sir.
40,000 on the telephone.
45,000 in the room.
50,000.
55,000. 60,000. 65,000
on the telephone.
70,000. At 70,000.
Any advance on 70,000? 75,000.
80,000 on the telephone.
Any more?
All done at 80,000.
All done at 80,000.
90,000. Any more?
Sold.
- Thank you, Sir.
- I bid 90,000 too.
Mr. Oldman should have
been aware of that.
I don't believe so, Mrs Derain.
Mr Whistler bid 90,000.
- He was the only one.

- They bid simultaneously.
She got her bid in first.
I saw it.
What should we do?
I'm the biggest collector of
Valiante forgeries and I'll Sue you!
You were too slow, Billy! You didn't
get in with your bid in time.
And you were too late. Too late.
You didn't keep up with
me for God's sake!
She was behind me. If I'd
seen I'd have bid again.
You're losing it!
Maybe you're right
but it's not the first
time we've messed up.
It's the way things go. Never went
into a rage like this before.
That wasn't a Valiante forgery.
It was the genuine one
by Petrus Christus.
It'll be worth 8 million.
Woe be me.
I'm sorry. Honestly.
But even when we lost Van
Gogh's Lady With The Fan
you didn't take it this hard.
What's going on, Virgil?
1,011.
1,119.
1,320.
1,404.
- What will you have?
- 1,581.
Tea, thank you.
8,109.
8,725.
Sorry, darling, 8,625.
8,725!
8,725.
Take a closer look, you moron.
Shit! You're right, 8,725.
Well done, girl!

That's it?

- Bye!

- Bye!

I gave them a clean with
this special fluid.

And I have studied
them by the millimeter
and look what's come up.

Vaucanson.

I can't believe it!

Jacques Vaucanson.

18th century constructor
of automata.

When I was a student I
did my thesis on him.

That's incredible!

One of his most famous
androids even managed to talk.

Exactly. People would pay
to ask it questions.

The android would move it's
head, bow, and give it's reply.

I bet there was someone inside.

You know, a dwarf maybe.

Just like Edgar Allan Poe suspected
with Maelzel's Chess Player.

More than likely.

But the mystery that
nobody could explain
was how Vaucanson's automaton
always got it right.

Of course there was trickery
in making the automaton talk.

Everything it said was true.

You bring me all the pieces.

I promise to put them back together
exactly how Vaucanson had them.

I don't doubt it

but I fear I've lost my chance
to get the missing pieces.

They must be in the same
place you found these.

And all I need is 80%
of the elements,

and I can work out the rest
and rebuild it myself.
It's not that easy.
I'm sorry. That's my girlfriend.
Hey, Sarah, this is
Mr. Virgil Oldman.
Pleased to meet you, Sarah.
It's a pleasure. Robert has
told me so much about you.
Don't young people talk
about more exciting things?
Why don't you eat with us?
That's very kind. Another
time, thank you.
Alright, we won't insist.
We'll promise.

- Bye.

- Goodbye.

Cancel New York and tell the
Alphasons to meet us here.
We called the meeting.
So we've changed our minds.
Is that a problem?
Alright, Mr. Oldman.
Claire lbbetson phoned.
What does she want now?
She asked you to

meet her at 2:

Meet her where?
At the lbbetson villa.
Where else?
I'm extremely grateful to
you for coming, Mr. Oldman.
How did you know it was me?
Fred has a limp. You don't.
Ah.
To be honest I didn't expect
you'd want to speak to me.
I know you can't stand my excuses.
If I were you, I wouldn't either.
In fact, your beh...
How should I put it?
Speak frankly. Don't worry.

I won't deny that your whimsical little ways are getting a bit tiresome. I hope not too tiresome. But I wanted to say sorry for... well, my behavior. Typical of a "silly, superficial woman", as you put it. Why do you systematically avoid meeting me? Nothing personal, believe me. Why would you want to do business with a person who arouses such aversion in you that you can't even look him in the face? It's hard to explain. You won't believe me anyway. If I didn't believe you, I wouldn't be here playing hide and seek. I don't meet many people. It's been a long time now. I see nothing serious in that. Everyone has moments when they prefer solitude to the multitudes. I haven't left this house since I was 15.

- I don't think I understand.
- You understand perfectly.

This is my room. If there's somebody in the house or in the villa, I lock myself up in here. I've always done that, even when my parents were here. I hardly ever saw them. I don't see anybody. But why? Why do you go around with your hands covered by gloves? It's a question of hygiene. I don't see the connection. You're afraid to touch others.

To touch their possessions
disgusts you.
I'm afraid of going to
places where others live.
These seem to me very
similar personal choices.
You'd like me to believe you haven't
walked a street in 12 years?
I see you know my age.
Being a hermit and employing
a caretaker doesn't add up.
I walk about quite a bit, if
that's what you want to know,
inside the villa when
there's nobody here,
which is often now,
but I never go out.
The very idea paralyses me.
I hope you understand me now.
I hope that, within the limits
of your work, you'll help me.
You have my word, Miss lbbetson.
As to any agreement between us, I
leave it to you to set your fee.
I trust you blindly.
Leave the contract on the table.
You'll find it signed next time.
Now, please, I'm very tired.
Apart from your
fondness for my gloves,
what made you decide
to call me again?
I haven't been kind.
I was taken by the way you were
looking at my house yesterday
from the bar opposite.
You found the missing pieces.
In the meantime make
do with this one.
How much would the
automaton be worth
if we manage to make it work?
Think of a really,
really high figure.

- Do you have one in mind?

- Yes.

You've probably

pitched it too low.

You're good at talking

without saying anything.

I'll take that as a compliment.

Should things go the

way I trust they will,

you'll be very

handsomely rewarded.

I didn't mean to talk about money.

It's a real privilege for me.

Where did you find these?

There are very precise rules

in the world of antiques.

It's forbidden to

reveal one's sources.

There's a few more gears

but bigger in that corner.

Gather them together. I'll take

care of the cataloguing myself.

Of course.

Candlesticks.

- Which period?

- 17th-century. Repair.

Mr. Oldman.

Mr. Oldman.

Yes.

What have you decided about

the furniture in this wing?

We're only drawing

up the inventory.

Later you can tell me

what to leave out.

Thank you.

Listen, Miss lbbetson, I can't help

thinking about your situation.

I'm sorry to have intruded

on your thoughts.

That's not the point.

I've been wondering how

you can live like this.

I'm organized and

self-sufficient,

I don't need any help but I appreciate your concern.

You're welcome.

- See you soon, then.

- Have a good day.

Mr. Oldman!

Your contract.

I read it and it seems fine to me.

I initialed every page and signed the last.

That's how it's done, isn't it?

Perfect.

But your personal details are missing.

Take them from my passport.

But it expired quite some time ago.

- Personal details never expire.

- That's true enough, I suppose.

I was just a girl then but it'll do for your purposes.

I wanted to mention that in certain critical cases my advice is to proceed directly to restoration.

You know best.

It means the whole thing will take a little longer.

We can widen the scope of the valuation.

I understand.

You dye your hair.

I never noticed.

I'm disgusted by people who don't trust their own hair!

I don't trust people who think so much of themselves that they won't come outside.

Ah, Sir, there'll be no more caretaker service as from Monday.

I'll just come in to bring Miss lbbetson her shopping.

- The matter is of no interest to me.
- These are the keys.
- Why give them to me?
- It's what Miss lbbetson wanted.

In case you needed access
for further inspection.

When you come in, slam the door,
otherwise she'll get
scared and panic.

I'm going off my head
trying to work out the
alignment of these devices,
trying to figure out which
one fitted into which.

- That can't be easy.
- But not impossible.

You know, gearboxes
are like people.

If they've been
together long enough,
eventually, they take
on each other's forms.

So, you believe time can make any
kind of cohabitation possible?

Yeah, well, absolutely.

You've reminded me of a friend
who met a much younger girl.

She had agoraphobia.

Fear of open spaces
and distances?

Exactly. She lived for years locked
up in an apartment on her own.

Recently, she gave him the keys
to her house and ever since,
he's been in a state of...

permanent anxiety.

What did I tell you? Now he'll
be constantly worried about her.

He'll be thinking,

"What does she need, shampoo,
medicine, tights... yoghurt?"

it's beautiful, isn't it?

I'm not so sure.

Tell your friend to stay calm,

'cause time is already
working on their gearboxes.
And there you are, Mr. Oldman.

- Are you angry with me?
- Why should I be?
- What I said about your hair.
- Not at all.

I was just calling to ask
if you wish the sale of the furniture
to be identified by your family name.
Or do you prefer anonymity?

- Anonymity, anonymity.
- Good.

This time, I did see you.

- Oh?
- On TV.

I don't generally give
interviews but I was forced to.
You're more intriguing this way.
You'll be a great success
with the ladies.

So, we go to Lot 132.
Gustave Rett, Portrait
of a Woman With a Hat.
1956. Oil on canvas.
80 x 100 cm.

This one goes to the best offer.
10,000.

Fred, any news from Miss lbbetson?

She hasn't answered in days.

It's a while since

I heard from her.

I've been in bed all week, ill.

Who's been bringing her food?

Miss lbbetson?

Miss lbbetson?

Miss lbbetson? Answer me!

Claire?

Claire, are you alright?

Oh, no. Please!

- No. It's me, Claire.
- Get out!
- It's me, Mr. Oldman.
- Go away!

- Listen to me, it's Mr. Oldman.
- Get out!
There's nobody else here.
Calm down.
What's wrong? Tell
me what happened.
I wasn't well.
I didn't know who to call.
Nobody answered.
And then I fell.
I fell and I hit my...
Open the door.
You need to see a doctor.
No, please! Please!
Please, no!
Can you fix a broken
auctioneer as well?
I wouldn't know where to begin.
It's good to see you
again, Mr. Oldman.
Is something wrong? You seem
more preoccupied than usual.
Too many woodworms
and spider webs
and too few masterpieces.
Could we put it that way?
- So, how's our toy coming along?
- Ah.
Well, I've managed to put
some sections back together.
But, I mean, there's just still
too many pieces missing.
The entire exterior.
We can't establish what
kind of character he is.
Like my friend and his
girl in the tower.
Yeah, maybe, although we've
never seen our android.
We're still groping
around in the dark.
So is he.
He speaks to her
through a closed door.

- Closed door?

- Yes.

If anybody moves in the house, she barricades herself in her room.

- He's never seen her face?

- Not only him, no-one has.

That's like when two young people meet on the Internet.

They get to know each other, then reveal themselves.

She won't reveal herself.

Maybe he hasn't got a good strategy.

So, it's more difficult for my friend to succeed in his enterprise than for us to reconstruct the Vaucanson automaton?

Depends on the number of Rusty pieces you're able to bring me.

Well...

here's one more.

That's a mobile phone.

This is brand new.

I'm the one that's Rusty because I don't know how to use it.

Could you teach me before your girlfriend gets here?

- Hello.

- Good evening, Mr. Oldman.

It's Claire Ibbetson.

Am I disturbing you?

No, not at all, Miss Ibbetson.

I told you, from now on, you can call me any time you like.

I wanted to thank you for... everything, really.

No need. All that's important is you're feeling better now.

Yes, it was just a small cut on the head. I'm much better.

I wanted to tell you, I looked over the inventory.

Oh! What do you think?

You've done a great job.

Really, you have.
But I'm troubled
by so many doubts.
I'm not sure if it's a good idea
to sell. What would you advise?
I couldn't say. I don't
know what your plans are.
Why did you decide to
sell in the first place?
Out of necessity in order to start
life afresh or another reason?
All of the above, I suppose.
I'd even sell the house.
It's too big for me now.
Sometimes, I feel as though
I were in a public square.
I'd like something smaller.
But the idea of
having to leave here
and go somewhere else
fills me with dread.
How would I manage it?
Wear blindfolds? Have myself
carried out while asleep?
I'd get into a state and end
up putting everything off.
You have all the time in the
world to make up your mind.
- You think?
- Well, until the catalogue is printed.
Don't torment yourself. Think
of yourself, your future.
That's the biggest
torment of all.
When I think about it,
I can't even work.
I didn't know you were working.
I write. I write novels,
stories, things like that.
I'd like to read them.
I'll buy some.
Luckily for us, you'll
never manage to.
Why not?

Because I write under a pseudonym
and I loathe what I write.
Artists always loathe what
they make, Miss lbbetson.
Yesterday, you called me Claire.
I wasn't aware. I was
in a state of alarm.
- Sorry.
- I'd like you to continue.
"I'd like you to continue." She
said it to him, just like that.
Well, what did he say?
He was taken back but he went
along with what she wanted.
What else could he do?
I'd have asked her to do the
same, call me by my first name.
That's not his style.
Besides, I don't think my
friend intends to court her.
Then he'll never get
her out of there.
I don't think my friend
intends to court her.
I don't think my friend
intends to court her.
Horrible voice!
I'd have thought he'd at least
have desired to see her face.
'Desired's probably
not the right word.
Curious to see her, perhaps.
Yes, I could understand that.
But the chances of it happening
seem to be really remote.
There might be a way.
Just depends on how
brave your friend is.
- The French bureau.
- Yes.
- The table with the roll top.
- No, I'd like to keep that.
That's it. Next time,
we'll do the paintings.

- Ok.

- One last thing, Claire.

You'll have to decide whether we do the photography here or in a studio.

In a studio. I don't want many people around the house.

That's the best solution.

Well, I'm off now.

- Anything you need?

- No. Thank you, Mr. Oldman.

When will we next see each other?

You mean, when do you see me? Since I am not given that privilege.

- Forgive me.

- But soon.

- Have a good day.

- You too.

Hello?

- I can't believe it.

- I couldn't sleep at night, Virgil.

I had to do something to make you forgive me.

But how did you get it?

I heard that Mrs. Durane had fallen on hard times, so I persuaded her to sell it to me for 250,000.

Hmm, not exactly cheap!

I thought it was a reasonable price.

You were talking about 8 million.

This way, everyone gets a good deal.

How much do you want, Billy?

I don't want a Penny more than I gave the old girl.

Now you're really losing your grip.

I just want to get back to where we were.

How was your friend, your accomplice,

your trusted procurer of women?
If you're doing this to win back my
trust, it's been a bad deal for you.
You never lost it
in the first place.

Oh!

This is great. This is great!

You found important stuff.

Best bit is this.

- An ear.

- A step forward, wouldn't you say?

I'd say! I'd say we're
at a turning point.

Look.

- Huh?

- Excellent.

The pieces are
attracting each other.

So...

How did things go with your...
friend?

How many seconds did it take you to
realize I was talking about myself?

Quite a few, to be honest.

Let me confess, I didn't
follow your advice.

There was something too contorted
about it, too imprudent.

Yeah, Ok, I see your point.

The mathematical set
of a six-day week.

The mathematical set
of a 51-minute hour.

- What will you have, Sir?

- Tea, please.

Have you thought
of anything else?

The length of a point. The
direction of a circle.

Your tea's ready, Sir.

The edge of a circumference.

The Centre of space.

- The area of a segment.

- Amazing. Well done!

The vertical position
of a sphere.

I brought the furniture
and painting valuations.

Look at them carefully because
you'll have to authorize them.

- I don't know a thing about this.

- I know. Trust me, Miss lbbetson.

You've been spending time
in the cellars recently.

- Is that why you changed the locks?

- I change them every six months.

And I take care to double-check,
compare and correct
when dealing with odds
and ends in cellars.

It's how I work. If it
upsets you, speak now.

You'll find the new keys on
the table. Please take them.

Thank you for your trust.

Were you offended at
being locked out?

No, but I was worried.

You're right, I should
have told you. I'm sorry.

Claire, you're ruining your life
for reasons which are beyond me.

This illness of yours is so
absurd, it almost seems unreal.

My mother thought I was
faking it the first time.

We were abroad.

I was so afraid of walking at
the foot of the Eiffel Tower
that it paralyzed me.

I started screaming,
fell to the ground.

I was just a little girl, but
it kept happening more and more
and she had to believe me.

Has there ever
been an open space
where you weren't

overcome by anxiety?
Only one. During a school
trip to Prague. I was 14.
The square with the
astronomical clock.
I must have walked across it a
hundred times. It was beautiful.
I remember a restaurant
with very strange decor.
If there's one place in the world
I'm nostalgic for, it's that.
I was really happy there.
It was called Night and Day.
- You've never been back?
- Never.
Why not go now? I'd
be happy to take you.
Well, you don't seem too
pleased. We're almost there.
Our automaton is about to
emerge from the shadows.
No, I'm delighted. You're
a force of nature.
It's just that...
this is one of those evenings
when one feels like this
contraption here...
incomplete.
Why did you never marry?
You know, never have kids?
The regard I have for women
is equal to the fear I've
always had of them...
and to my failure
to understand them.
If that's the rule,
then Miss lbbetson
gives every impression
of being the exception.
I'm afraid so.
Have you really never
set eyes on her?
Just once.
What's she like?

I suppose feeling a certain
interest in a person
necessarily engenders a
conviction that she's beautiful.

Up to a point.

It's her birthday in two days. I'd
like to get her something useful.

I don't think useful is
probably your best approach.

- No?

- Not the first time.

It's better to get her
something more... traditional.

Morning, Sir.

Hello, Sir.

Hey, Mr. Oldman. Look what
I found in the cellar.

I saw you were interested
in this old junk.

The supports for the
Murano chandelier.

My colleagues
couldn't find them.

- I can put them in your car.

- That's very kind.

Wait.

Oh, thanks.

Morning, Mr. Oldman.

I took the liberty of
remembering it's your birthday.

Happy Birthday, Claire.

I read the valuation
documents.

Did you manage to
understand some of it?

Of course. Ridiculous
sums of money.

Even a backwards child would
know she's being cheated.

They need interpretation.

They're starting bids.

- There'll be higher bids later.

- Suppose there aren't!

Unlikely, but in that case,

we'll even things out.

We'll raise the margins
on other pieces.

A gamble? Where I'm the
only one that can lose?

You're trying to cheat me.

It's all to your advantage.

You're a fucking thief!

I'm willing to resign the
commission forthwith.

Huh!

I'll have them replace all your
mediocre bric-a-brac immediately.

And do me the favor of
disappearing completely
from the face of the earth!

1984, Sir.

- Hello.

- I behaved so badly.

I feel so stupid. I constantly
have to offer justifications.

I've never been given
flowers before.

I don't know what
this says to me.

There's no need for this display of
anguish. I'm not angry with you.

My birthdays have always
been so horrible.

And you... Since
you came along...

you've turned my
life upside down.

The other day, I
went downstairs.

I opened the main door and
looked out onto the garden.

- Did you go out?

- No.

I was afraid.

I felt terrible.

But I never even got
that far before.

Do you want me to come over?

I already know it's pointless.
There are new treatments
nowadays. They might help you.
I'd rather talk to you
than to some shrink.

- Should I take that as a compliment?

- Yes.

I see you brought up the
portrait of the dancer.

- It's something I want to keep.

- No great value.

It's a portrait of my mother.

She was about my age
when she had it done.

Do you look like her?

- She was prettier, I can assure you.

- I cannot judge.

Alright, Claire. I'll go.

Don't hesitate to call if
you need anything at all.

Thank you, Mr. Oldman.

See you soon, I hope.

Hello? Oh, it's you, director.

No, I would've called
you, it's just that...

clearing the furniture
has been complicated.

Yes. Oldman is dealing with it.

What's he like? Not as
old as you might think.

He dresses in an odd way, but
he's still a good-looking man.

I know I can trust him.

Why? Are you jealous?

In love? No, I don't think so.

He's too put off by my
illness, like everybody.

Oh no, it's nothing. I...

I hurt my foot.

Can we talk later?

Who is it?

Who's there?

No, get out! No,
please, get out!

Go away! Get out!

Get out! Please, leave me alone!

Get out!

Get out!

- Hello?

- Please, help me, please.

Calm down, Claire.

What's happened?

You have to help me! Help me!

- I'll be there as soon as I can.

- Please.

Claire!

- It's me. I'm here. What's happened?

- There's somebody in the house!

- Please get them out!

- Calm down. There's nobody here.

- There's someone in the house!

- Calm down.

It was me before, Claire.

It was me.

It was me.

I hid in the room

so I could see you.

You were spying on me?

You were spying on me?

Get out!

I want nothing more to

do with you! Get out!

Please, Virgil. Don't go.

Believe me, I don't normally

behave like this...

Neither do I.

So I'm bound to make

some mistakes...

but nothing in the world would

make me want to hurt you.

It's just that I

can't help myself.

I need to see you.

You should've seen her.

Pale, like a Durer etching.

She had the look of some creature

terrified of the universe.

And I could read my own

terror in her eyes.

Every man on earth would like to be
as terrified as you at this moment.

- You've worked a miracle.

- It's too soon to tell.

And you be careful, alright?

This is when mistakes occur.

When you think you've made it,
that is when you lose strategy.

- And what strategy would that be?

- Never stop surprising them.

Do things they couldn't have
foreseen. Take a gamble, run a risk.

You're asking me to behave
in a way that isn't me.

That's why you have to do it.

As long as you're playing
according to her rules,
you're always gonna make her
feel like... like a patient.

She needs to be
treated like a woman.

What do you think?

Do you like it?

I don't know.

What do you think?

It looks marvelous
on you, Claire.

Perhaps the smaller size?

Yes. I think so too.

It's been a long time since

I got a present like this.

- Long overdue, don't you think?

- I don't know.

I'm a little, you
know, taken a back.

- I'm sorry, I can't...

- What?

Oh, certainly.

I'm sorry. I
didn't understand.

I don't honestly know
if I deserve all this.

Let me be the judge of that.

If we don't set a date for
the Stockholm auction,
they'll shoot themselves.
It's too far. Let them
shoot themselves.

We have to schedule the
meeting with the Hermitage
and the auctions in San
Francisco and Madrid.

Ditto. Too far away.

- We can't abandon them.

- There are auctioneers galore.

They'll find someone else
and it will cost them less.

As you wish.

Lambert, are you married?

Yes. Nearly 30 years.

What's it like,
living with a woman?

Like taking part in an auction.

You never know if yours
will be the best offer.

- This one.

- Very well, Sir.

What do you think? Have

I made myself pretty?

- Beautiful. You've done very well.

- Liar.

- Claire.

- I haven't done this for years.

I've forgotten how to do it.

I look like a monster.

Trust me. Some practice
and you'll be wonderful.

And you'll take me to

one of your auctions,

and to galas with

elegant people,

and to the most refined
restaurants in the world.

That's the reason for your
presents, isn't it, Virgil?

To help me recover little by

little, and then take me out.

Isn't that right?

No!

Claire. Don't be like this.

Let's talk.

Maybe we did get the last moves wrong. I was a bit rash.

Don't blame yourself.

It's always her who manages to pull everything apart.

Robert. My aunt's gone missing again.

- You're kidding.

- Pardon me.

- We found her in Central Park.

- I'm sorry, Terry.

It was no good trying to reset this thing.

It was much more easy just to make a new one.

This one has a much wider range.

She can go off and you won't lose touch.

Just make sure you reprogram the PC, okay?

I can manage that.

You're an Angel.

- Thanks, darling.

- No worries.

- I'll see you tomorrow night, yeah?

- Yeah.

You need an idea that'll excite her but at the same time reassure her.

Yes, but she'll still see through it as some deceitful therapy.

- You should invite her to dinner.

- Yes! Noma in Copenhagen!

At the climax of the evening, by candlelight, tell her that she's beautiful.

And after you'll have coffee with us?

Why not?

Joking apart, I'd be glad if you did see her, hear her talk.

I'm sure you'd understand
far more than I.
Who said anything about joking?
129,403.
Your champagne.
- Thank you.
- Calculate this.
12,624,831.333.
Unbelievable!
You're radiant, Claire.
You did all this?
I can turn my hand to
interior decorating.
You've done a wonderful
job, Virgil. Thank you.
I can't tell you how long I've
wanted to spend time alone with you.
Somewhere quiet, far
from the madding crowd.
To your serenity, Claire.
To your irony, Virgil.
- Now I feel I can finally tell you.
- What?
You are more beautiful
than the dancer.
Dinner is served.
- Please be seated.
- Thank you.
I warn you, as a waiter
I'm not the best.
I offer no guarantees.
- I'll take the risk.
- Somewhat foolhardy of you.
- Why?
- If the service is not to your liking,
next time I'd have to
make a reservation
at the best restaurant in town.
Let's not ruin this
evening, Virgil.
- Please, let's not talk about me.
- Alright.
Instead I'd like you to
tell me about your past.

You see, there's nothing
very original about my life.
A child loses his parents,
a horrible orphanage...
The only point of interest is that
the nuns would punish the boy
by making him work with a restorer
who had a workshop there.
That's beautiful.
He loved to observe
this craftsman,
so the little boy got up
to all sorts of mischief
to ensure he'd be punished
as often as possible.
So he became
acquainted with art,
techniques of painting, how to
tell a forgery from an original
etc., etc.
In an old article of yours I
found on the Internet, you said,
"There's something authentic
in every forgery."
What did you mean?
When simulating another's work
the forger can't resist the temptation
to put in something of himself.
Often it's just a trifle,
a detail of no interest.
One unsuspected stroke,
by which the forger inevitably
ends up betraying himself,
and revealing his own, utterly
authentic sensibilities.
I really love the way you talk.
You couldn't have
been more convincing.
Huh? A born seducer.
- So you'd give me a pass?
- A+. With distinction!
Sorry, you've been a
bit neglected lately.
You haven't said

anything about Claire.
If I didn't know about her
problems, I'd say she was normal.
And she's much more beautiful
than you described.
Really. I liked her.
You're going to make me jealous?
If you want my advice, you pray
that girl never gets better.
Do you want lots 87 and
88 done separately?
No, together. That's important.
How can I help you?
- It's about Robert.
- What's going on?
Don't be afraid to tell me.
We're not getting on so
well, that's the problem.
All those girls
hovering around him...
I guess I'm just...
I'm afraid of losing him.
Is there anything I can do?
Do you want me to talk to him?
For a while now he's been talking
about someone called Claire.
Claire?
I don't understand.
With him everybody's got to be
on their guard, all the time.
That goes for you, too.
I feel so stupid.
Promise me you won't
say a word to him.
I promise.
Have you been waiting long?
If you'd phoned, I wouldn't
have kept you waiting.
- I prefer to see you.
- Is something wrong?
My assistant will come by today.
Kindly hand over the
Vaucanson as it is.
Alright. Whatever you want.

Tell him how much you're owed.
He'll pay you.
Aren't I at least
due an explanation?
You're not the trustworthy
man I thought you were.
It's weird seeing them so
perfect and polished up.
It's as if they weren't mine.
I believe nothing is missing.
There is something missing.
How could you have lived the
best years of your life in here?
I don't know. I don't know.
It was just the right thing.
"Was."
it still is.
It always will be.
Always.
You have to get out of here.
You have to do it by yourself.
I don't have the courage.
It's a spider's web that I don't
know how to break free of.
It's an old collection
my father was fond of.
I never did understand
what it was.
Hello? Good morning, director.
Yes, I'm nearly finished.
But I would like to
rewrite the last chapter.
A more upbeat ending.
If that's all you want...
Yes. Talk to you soon. Thanks.
I wouldn't rule out them being
part of something valuable,
but exactly what I couldn't say.
- I often wonder if...
- What?
If you're more interested
in my furniture than in me.
How could you say that?
I shouldn't have let you

in here. I shouldn't have.

I've found all the
missing pieces.

How do you feel about
finishing the job?

Well, it's your problem.

Sarah came to see
me a few days ago.

She was upset about
your relationship.

- Are you here to advise me now?

- No, you're the expert on women.

Alright. We can pick
up where we left off.

On two conditions.

You just stop involving
me in your private life.

And the second?

Is that you take this back.

I didn't get excited about
your Vaucanson for the money.

I brought it back.

It's in the car.

And the new pieces too?

You'll have to be patient for those.

They're tied up with my private life.

I don't know and I
don't want to know.

If you were forced to choose
between Claire and the automaton,
which would you take?

- This one.

- An excellent choice, Mr. Oldman.

If it's the wrong size,
please inform the lady to
pass by whenever she wishes.

Thank you, I'll let her know.

Claire? It's me.

Claire! I've brought lunch.

Claire!

Claire, answer me!

Claire!

Claire!

Claire!

Are you down here?

Claire!

Have any of you seen a woman
going out the gate of the
villa across the road?

No, I can't say I have.

Has anybody seen someone
coming out of the villa?

A young woman. Medium
height, light hair.

- A bit pale.

- I think I saw her.

I didn't see her go out,
but she was walking
away from the gate.

- When?

- This morning at breakfast.

- What else can you tell me?

- She seemed a bit weird.

- Weird? Which way did she go?

- That way. Towards the park.

Idiot!

- Hello? Virgil?

- She's gone.

- Who? What's going on?

- Claire's disappeared.

I've looked. They saw
her leave this morning.

- Do you want me to come over?

- Please.

Has this happened before?

She never even appeared
at the windows.

Just behind the shutters.

Did she have friends
she could go to?

She'd talk to people on her
computer under different names.

- She can't have gone far.

- Let's hope so.

I've already been
round three times.

- Hello?

- Mr. Oldman.

- Listen, has Miss lbbetson phoned?

- No.

- If she calls, let me know.

- I will.

Mr. Oldman, I wouldn't like
to think you'd forgotten.

Forgotten what?

- There he is. Here we go.

- Lot number one.

Late Baroque, Venetian,
mid-18th-century mirror.
Inlaid wood with gold leaf,
with adornments, floral
motifs and festoons.

Upper frame richly...

Inlaid wood with gold
leaf, with adornments,
floral motifs and festoons.

Upper frame richly
engraved with whirls.

Can we say 130,000 Euros?

140,000 Euros.

150,000 Euros.

Gentleman on my left.

160,000 Euros. Lady up the back.

170,000 Euros. 180,000

Euros on the telephone.

200,000 Euros. Gentleman
on my left in the room.

220,000 Euros.

250,000 Euros on the tele...

Still nothing, Mr. Oldman.

I'll keep looking.

- Robert's looking further afield.

- Alright.

- I'll call you later.

- Alright.

- He's gone crazy.

- 280,000.

310,000. Any more?

Sold!

I'm doing the rounds of the
hospitals, but there's nothing.

Just keep looking.

- We'll find her. I'll keep in touch.

- Thanks.

Lot number 2.

A 17th-century

Fassadenschranke wardrobe

in walnut, Maple, oak and ash.

The carved frame surmounts

an inlaid stripe,

and two doors engraved

with architectural motifs,

surrounded by carvings of fruit.

Three spiraled, tapered

columns flank the doors.

The lower body has two drawers.

And um...

There's nothing for it

but to call the police.

It'll be all over the papers.

They'll drag me into it.

Let's wait a bit longer.

What do you hope will happen?

That she'll come back...

or turn up.

Or they'll find

out where she is.

Someone with her problems doesn't

just disappear into thin air.

Well, that depends.

No matter how deeply

rooted it is,

sometimes a phobia can

just disappear by itself.

So, why did she run away?

Maybe something

happened between you

that drove her to take

that kind of decision.

You know perfectly well

that's impossible.

You're the only person

who knows everything

that happened between us.

Excuse me a minute.

- Hello?

- I'm sorry, Mr. Oldman.

I've called all the
publishers in existence
but none of them
knows who she is.

They said that often
even they don't know
the identity of authors
who use pseudonyms.

I'd never have guessed that you
would have ended up
in a mess like this.

- I don't know how I can help you.

- All you had to do was listen.

Ah.

Considering the lady's illness,
it seems highly unrealistic
that she's just run away.

I'd say, I don't know, she'd
been abducted or something.

That's not likely. I don't
think she had any enemies.

It could be somebody became
so besotted with her
and carried her off by force.

- But who?

- I've had my doubts about Robert.

The young guy?

The way you describe him,
he doesn't seem the type.

From the literary point of
view, he fits the bill.

The young knight
rescuing the damsel
from the clutches of the
old man incapable of love.

Literature, exactly.

Don't go overboard, Virgil.

She could have had her own
reasons for disappearing.

I can't imagine what reasons.

Recently, she's been experiencing
emotions and feelings
that are incompatible

with flight.

I wouldn't be so
sure, if I were you.

Human emotions are
like works of art.

They can be forged.

They seem just like the original,
but they're a forgery.

- Forgery?

- Everything can be faked, Virgil.

Joy, pain, hate.

Illness, recovery.

Even love.

- Hello?

- Listen.

There's something that
hadn't occurred to us.

Are you sure there are no other
secret rooms in the villa?

I don't remember
any other doors

like the one to Miss
lbbetson's room.

Claire!

The only place we haven't looked
at is the attic... if you want?

Did you know that Miss
Claire was a writer?

I heard her parents
talk about it.

She used a pseudonym
for her books.

I never knew that. I've
never seen the books.

She never wanted them here.

Claire!

We're wasting time. There
are no other secret rooms.

You've come back.

- We should...

- Quiet!

You've...

You've come back.

You've...

You've come back.

You've... Claire?

Claire, I can feel you're there.

Answer me.

You've come back.

- You've come back.

- Of course I have.

Were you afraid I wouldn't?

I thought you'd abandoned me.

- Like last time.

- Last time?

When we got back from Prague.

Claire.

I will never abandon you.

I'd been happy in Prague in

that very odd restaurant.

I was there with my first

and only boyfriend.

He was older than me.

When we got back

from that excursion,

one afternoon, we were

walking in the city Centre.

A car crashed into us.

When I came to, he

wasn't there anymore.

I went back home and I

never went out again.

I've never slept with a woman.

In fact, I didn't close my eyes.

I spent the whole night

just looking at her.

- It was wonderful.

- Well, welcome to the grown-up club.

You've succeeded in

making her fall in love.

I had a good teacher.

I understood where

the dwarf hid.

Look, there must have been

a sunken pedestal here.

He would crouch in there

and his voice would

reverberate in the body.

It must have made an impression.
Do you think love can be faked?
In keeping with what you
say about art forgeries,
I'd say it can't be
completely faked.
If one could say love
is a work of art.
It'd be amazing if it
were, wouldn't it?
It could be sold
off at an auction.
The highest bidder could relive
the greatest love stories.
I hope I haven't destroyed
your love story.
No problem. No problem.
A new valve, two
hinges, one fuse...
It'll be good as new.
Just like the first day.
What do you think
you're going to do now?
I want to coax her out.
Yeah, I wouldn't push
too hard if I were you.
She's too fragile.
You'll see. When you least expect it,
things will fall into place naturally.
No!
Hello? Hello?
Virgil? Virgil, is that you?
Virgil! Virgil!
Virgil?
Help! Help!
- Hold it up!
- It is up!
Why don't you love it?
I've never felt it to be a
real home. More like a hotel.
You come home a night,
sleep if you can.
Next morning, you're
off somewhere else.

Let's go back inside.
Seems to have been planned
to welcome a lot of people.
Yes, but the plan
was never realized.
Except for the
inaugural reception.
I was so distrustful
of other people
that I kept them away from the
perimeter of my personal hotel.
I was a fool.
Even now, I still get upset
when I see the housekeeper
and the maids walking about.
After dinner, I send them home.
I wasn't wrong when I said
we were very similar.
Yes, you were right.
And thanks to you, I understood.
- Where are you taking me?
- You'll soon find out.
Close your eyes. I'll tell
you when you can open them.
Don't be afraid.
I'll lead the way.
I never liked games where
you had to close your eyes.
- Mind the step.
- Gently, please.
We're almost there.
Stop now.
Open your eyes.
I don't believe it.
It's overwhelming.
I've been collecting
them all my life.
So, I'm not the first. You
have had other women.
Yes.
I've loved them all and
they loved me back.
They taught me to wait for you.
And now that you're here,

we'd like you to come
and live with us
and make this beautiful
hotel your home.

Oh, Virgil.

If anything should
ever happen to us,
I want you to know
that I do love you.

I love you too.

The catalogue for the sale of
the paintings and furniture
of Ibbetson Villa is ready.

Congratulations. It's a
lovely volume. About time!

I wonder who'll buy this
wonderful stuff... Oh, sorry.
I can't conceal my anxiety to
know what you think about it.

Well, don't you like it?

No, it's just that...

ever since I decided to
come and live with you...

I've been thinking I...
don't want to sell anymore.

I'd like to leave
everything the way it was.

I understand.

Are you sure?

Believe me, if I were you,
I'd do the same thing.

Tomorrow, everything will
be back in it's place.

Alright, Virgil!

To the most tortured and most
fortunate catalogue of my career.

That's saying something.

- Here, here.

- Cheers.

And since you've
become my family...

I too have an important
announcement to make.

Next week, I have an

auction in London.

It will be the finest of my
career and the very last.

They say he's been seen
recently in female company.

- Who? Virgil?

- Yes.

It's finally come home to him that the
worst sexual perversion is Chastity.

How is it going onstage
for the last time?

I've never felt better. There's a
whiff of anticipation in the air.

All my colleagues have
come to see me off.

That's nice of them.

This affection is because they won't
have to put up with me anymore.

Anyhow, I'm happy, Claire.

I just wish you were here.

Me too.

But I'm not ready to travel yet. I
got dizzy in the car yesterday.

Don't let it get to you. We have all
the time in the world to travel.

- We're ready, Mr. Oldman.

- I'm coming.

Have you heard from
our young friends?

Constantly. I'm never
left on my own.

Good. Give them my love.

- I can hear you've got to go.

- Yes.

- But I can't wait to get back home.

- Good luck, my darling.

12,100,000.

Any more?

12,300,000.

Any advance?

12,500,000 on the telephone.

Any more?

All done at 12,500,000.

Sold for 12,500,000.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I thank you.

- Good to see you.

- Thank you. Not a bad price.

Can I say hello
to you in public?

Oh, Billy.

You were fantastic, my friend! I'm
happy for you. I'm going to miss you.

You say it like we'll
never meet again.

Of course we will.

But I'm feeling nostalgic
thinking about all our exploits.

- You'll get over it.

- Virgil?

To remind you of what a great
artist I could've been
if only you'd believed in me, I've
sent you one of my paintings.

I promise I won't burn it.

Claire.

Claire, I'm back!

Hello?

- Have you seen Miss Claire?

- No, Sir.

Claire?

Where are you?

Claire?

Mr. Oldman, she
must have gone out.

It was the same yesterday.

Sarah and Robert came to get
her, then came back for lunch.

Alright.

"There is always
something authentic concealed
in every forgery."

I couldn't agree more. That's
why I'll miss you, Mr. Oldman.

"There is always
something authentic
concealed in every forgery."

I couldn't agree more.

That's why I'll miss
you, Mr. Oldman.

"There is always
something authentic
concealed in every forgery."

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"There is always
something authentic
concealed in every forgery."

I couldn't agree more.

That's why I'll miss
you, Mr. Oldman.

"There is always something
authentic concealed in every..."

Good morning, Mr. Oldman.

We have visitors today.

Isn't this nice? Look
who's come to see you!

How are you, Mr. Oldman?

I've brought your mail,
some newspapers and
a few magazines.

A few days ago, they brought some
furniture to the villa opposite.

Did you notice?

I think so, but I don't
see much from in here.

Ask her.

Claire?

Listen to what this
gentleman wants to say.

Yes.

And the day after,
other workmen came and took
everything away again.

The day after?

In 18 months, three deliveries

and three removals.

I was here a while ago.

- Do you remember?

- Nine.

- What do you mean?

- You've been here nine times.

Today makes 10.

I was wondering if you saw
a woman leave the villa.

Medium height, light
hair, a bit pale?

- Yes.

- That time was 231.

Are you sure?

Then another six.

In a year and a half, I
saw her go out 237 times.

What did I say?

She's a phenomenon,
remembers everything.

It's not possible.

You were at the villa 63 times.

36 during the day
and 27 at night,
excluding the night
of the accident.

- One, four, four.

- One, four, four?

The telephone number
for the ambulance.

The villa is free now.

If you're interested,
I'll get you a good deal.

- Who owns it?

- Me.

But I don't know
what to do with it.

I often rent it out
to cinema people.

Cinema people?

For the past two years, it's
been taken by the engineer
who does the lift that
takes me up to my house.

He's really nice, that boy.
He can do anything.
There's nothing he can't fix.
And he's always kissing me.
Bringing me flowers.
The Paris Express is now
arriving at platform seven.
Your attention, please.
The Berlin-Prague Arrow is
running 40 minutes late
due to fog on the line.
Come in, Sir.
We furnished it exactly
as you requested.
And tomorrow, your trunks
will be delivered.
And later, I'll pass by with
a copy of your contract.
If there's anything else,
please don't hesitate to call.
Oh, Virgil.
If anything should happen to us, I
want you to know that I do love you.
Are you on your own, Sir?
No. I'm waiting for someone.