

POOR THINGS

Written by

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FINAL CUT

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Based on the novel POOR THINGS  
by Alasdair Gray

1 EXT LONDON BRIDGE - DAY 1  
A woman stands on a bridge on a foggy day. She dives off.

2 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM - DAY 2  
LONDON 1882 BELLA BAXTER, a young woman around 30, sits calmly erect at the piano.

She raises her hands and then smashes down on all the keys with her fists in a joyful way, screeching with laughter as she does.

Baxter 50s, in a suit and cravat, deformed face, probably a result from medical experiments, smiles watching. The kindness of his eyes is evident despite his scary face.

3 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY 3  
Baxter is hooked up to a machine and a tube flows into and under his waistcoat into his stomach. The glass machine pumps saliva like fluid.

He and Bella eat. Mrs Prim, the housekeeper, puts kippers down. Bella grabs one, eats it, makes a face, spits it back across the table.

Baxter makes a sound. A giant bubble spills forth from his mouth.

It floats a second, they watch as it lands and evaporates. Bella laughs, claps. Baxter smiles.

He gets up, detaches the pipe from his innards and goes behind her. Kisses her on the head.

4 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY 4  
Baxter puts on his coat and hat. Bella runs along the hall to him. She has a half dog, half pig following her.

BAXTER  
Bye.

BELLA  
Ba. Ba.

He goes out. Locking the door behind him.

CUT TO

5

INT MEDICAL SCHOOL LECTURE THEATRE LONDON DAY

5

A pile of organs on a silver tray. A bunch of small animal cadavers lie nearby.

An audience of medical students, staring.

Baxter, his smock drenched in blood, addresses them.

A human cadaver, slit open and empty of organs, lies before him.

BAXTER

A pile of organs without the spark of self from a brain or the pump of blood from a heart. Just a butcher's tray for a Sunday lunch. Now who would like to reconstruct the organs? And who can tell human from animal? If there is a difference. Come come! You did puzzles as children, did you not?

They all stare at him. A young guy in his late twenties, Max McCandles watches. He is eager, righteous and badly dressed.

Some posh fops sit in front of him.

FOP 1

Is it just me or is it devilishly hard to concentrate when the monster's talking?

MAX

He is an extraordinary surgeon, his father founded this place. His research is said to be groundbreaking.

FOP 2

Have you mistaken yourself as included in this conversation Max McCandles? Your physical proximity to us does not make it so.

MAX

I-

GUY

Fuck off old pal. Get yourself a suit.

Max shrinks back. He watches as a hapless student at the front of the room tries to reassemble the organs in place.

BAXTER

You really think that is where the liver goes sir?

FOP 1

May I ask what is the purpose of putting them back in sir?

Baxter looks up. Considers him.

BAXTER

My amusement. Mr Max McCandles!

Everyone is startled.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Walk with me at the end of the lesson.

6

EXT MEDICAL SHOOL LONDON HALLWAY DAY

6

Max is staring at a portrait of a very serious looking man, handsome, in a suit. "Barret Baxter. Our founder. 1842." Baxter appears and passes right by him walking in a quick pace. Max struggles to keep up.

BAXTER

Your paper.

MAX

You liked it sir?

BAXTER

It showed signs of a conventional mind straining hard to almost touch mediocrity.

MAX

...Thank you.

BAXTER

I need someone. An assistant on a project.

MAX

I would-

BAXTER

Are you a religious man?

MAX

I believe in God.

BAXTER

Me or the deity?

MAX

Humorous I see, because you are known as...

BAXTER

It is a joke of my own making, I do not need it explicated for me.

7 EXT LONDON STREET - DAY

7

They enter the street. A little kid laughs at Baxter. The kid's mother pulls at the kid, curling her face up at Baxter.

WOMAN

The very devil's work.

MAX

Have you ever thought of growing a beard sir?

BAXTER

I look like a big dog in a cravat.

MAX

Kids like dogs. This job.

BAXTER

Yes. Come.

They arrive at Baxter's house.

8 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

8

Bella stares at the table, laid for dinner with plates and glasses. She holds a plate examining it. Happily drops it, it smashes on the floor.

She starts dropping one after another. Tosses one at the wall gleefully.

Max and Baxter arrive, unseen at the door. Baxter nods at Max. He watches. She senses him.

BELLA

God!

She runs to him and leaps. He catches her. She is round his waist.

BELLA (CONT'D)

He... He...

BAXTER

Hello.

BELLA

Lo.

BAXTER

This is Mr McCandles.

MAX

Hello Bella.

He puts his hand out to shake hers. She raises a hand gently, then swats him in the nose with a palm. Laughs uncontrollably. His nose starts to bleed.

BELLA

Bood, Bood.

BAXTER

Blood. Blood.

BELLA

Blood.

BAXTER

Marvellous.

MAX

I'm fine. I'm fine.

Bella starts walking around and around in a circle. Until she's dizzy. Max stares at her.

MAX (CONT'D)

What a very pretty retard.

Bella still spinning on the other side of the room. Baxter whispers to Max.

BAXTER

She suffered a brain injury, I repaired it. Her mental age and her body are not quite synchronised. Language is coming. She is progressing at an accelerated pace.

MAX

She is ...stunning.

BAXTER

I need to meticulously note her progression. You will do this for me.

MAX

It would be my honor.

Bella stops spinning.

BELLA

Weeeee Weee.

BAXTER

Yes it is exciting Bella.

BELLA

Nah. Wee.

A wet patch appears across her dress.

MAX

Wee. She's doing a-

BAXTER

Mrs Prim!

CUT TO

9 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY 9

Bella lies in a beautiful bed in a beautiful room. She wakes up. Prim and Max enter. Max holds a notebook. He notes down the time.

10 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY 10

Max takes notes as Bella eats eggs and kippers. Bella stops chewing. Opens her mouth drops the chewed up food out of her mouth onto the table. Goes on eating her eggs.

MAX

Do you not like kippers?

She points to him questioningly.

MAX (CONT'D)

I am partial to them actu-

She scoops it up off the table, throws the chewed up fish at him. Laughs.

11 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE SURGERY - DAY 11

Baxter, in a mask, a body on a slab. Mrs Prim is there working the anaesthetic.

Bella sits on a bench watching, fascinated by the scene, gets up, leans in close as the body is shaved so it can be cut. The knife on the skin. The scalpel slices an incision, she looks up at Baxter beaming.

BELLA

Bella cut too?

BAXTER

Just dead ones for Bella.

BELLA

Just dead.

She walks over to a section of the room where a couple of cadavers lay out. She runs a hand over one, pushes at it's breast. Holds a penis up. Lets it fall. She takes a scalpel walks to the head. Starts plunging it into the eyeballs of a cadaver. Much to Max's horror and her delight.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Squish. Squish.

CUT TO

12 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY 12

Bella rides along a hallway on her bike, chased by a chicken barking like a dog.

BELLA  
Chog! Chog! Run Chog!

Max looks at the animal, startled.

13 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE GARDEN - DAY 13

Bella feeds a collection of animals. Pig/dogs. Duck/lambs. Max stares at them wide eyed.

He eyes the filing cabinets stuffed with medical files.

14 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE STUDY - DAY 14

Max sits opposite Baxter, who is looking through Max's notes.

MAX  
She gathers 15 words a day. Her coordination seems unstable at best. Her hair grows an inch every two days.

BAXTER  
Excellent. You may go. See you tomorrow.

MAX  
Where did she come from?

BAXTER  
I believe your job is to collect data. When I add inane questions to it I'll let you know.

He nods.



15

INT BELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

15

Baxter reads to Bella from a book, she blithely lays flat on top of him on her bed.

BAXTER

And so when they returned from the wood she was reunited with her mummy and daddy. That night for dinner they ate cake until they were sick, they were so happy to be back together. The next day when she awoke..

Beat

BELLA

You me Daddy God?

BAXTER

I am... um...

BELLA

Prim say you not be? Who is?

Baxter looks down at his book for an answer. The next story. 'Adventure in the Andes', an illustration of a man and woman in explorer gear.

BAXTER

You are an orphan. Your parents died.

BELLA

Then you cut parents up God?

BAXTER

No. They were... my friends, they were brave explorers and were killed in a landslide in South America. They pushed the boundaries of what was known and paid a price. But there is no other way to live Bella. They sent you to me to care for you.

BELLA

Dead.

BAXTER

Afraid so my darling.

BELLA

Poor Bella. But love God.

She embraces him. He squirms a bit, awkward, pleasure. Drinks in her smell a bit.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Sleep here.

BAXTER  
No.

He rolls her off him.

BAXTER (CONT'D)  
Good night dear Bella.

CUT TO

16 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

16

Max sits on the floor with Bella as she looks at a map. Point to it.

BELLA  
This parents.

MAX  
Peru.

He watches Bella take a nut from a bowl full and eat it. He notes it.

BELLA  
Why you pen book every nut.

MAX  
To note down your nutritional intake.

She picks up a huge handful shoves them in her mouth, they spill out as well.

BELLA  
(mouthful)  
How many?

He smiles. She drops the nuts out of her mouth.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Tell of other places.

She walks her fingers across the map.

MAX  
You're in Lisbon, Portugal.  
The south of France, the Alps.

She jumps with her hand. Lands.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Istanbul. Cross the waters.

She jumps her hand, a long time in the air. Lands.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Australia.

BELLA  
Bella go look at world.

She walks out. He follows.

17 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE STAIRWELL - DAY 17

Bella climbs the stairs to a door in the roof. Max follows.

18 EXT BAXTER'S HOUSE THE ROOF - DAY 18

She clammers out onto the roof, calm despite the danger. Max follows her, nervously shuffling his way across on hands and knees. Sees the back of her head and the looping scar underneath her hair.

MAX  
Miss Bella this is...

She leans out and looks across the suburb, parks, houses, carriages. Takes her breath away.

Bella picks up a piece of loose shingle. Drops it over the side. Max startled, looks down as it shatters on the road. Bella laughs. Seems to decide something. Strolls back across the roof.

19 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE SURGERY - DAY 19

The windows are open. Smoke is billowing out. Baxter takes notes as a cadaver's hair burns. Mrs Prim scrambles to extinguish it as Bella runs in.

BELLA  
God. Sun. Outside must go.

BAXTER  
Outside? No Bella. We work. Cut fingers?

Max notices Baxter's reticence.

BELLA  
Then Candles take me. Candles!!

MAX  
Of course I can if-

BAXTER  
No.

BELLA

Out. Yes!

MAX

Has she ever been outside?

BELLA

No!

BAXTER

I have created a perfectly  
entertaining and safe world for-

BELLA

Now!!!! Now!!!!

She grabs a jar of tongues from the shelf throws it at  
Baxter. He ducks, it smashes.

BAXTER

Bella!

She grabs a rack of blood filled test tubes picks them up.

BELLA

Now!

Throws.

CUT TO

20 EXT LONDON STREET - DAY 20

A horse drawn carriage in the street. Curtains drawn.

21 INT CARRIAGE 21

Baxter, Max and Bella in the carriage. Bella glimpses quick  
slivers of people, action through a crack in the curtains.

BAXTER

You know so many things outside can  
kill you Bella.

BELLA

Kill dead?

BAXTER

Snakes. Carriages. Sharp faced  
birds. Earthquakes. Inhalation of  
toxic grass seeds.

She shrinks back from the window a bit.

22

EXT LONDON PARK - DAY

22

The carriage drives into a secluded area of the park. Baxter checks it's emptiness.

He opens the door. She opens her eyes. Runs out, into a deserted area of a heavily wooded park.

Rolls in the leaves.

CUT TO

Max and Bella walk. Baxter standing in the distance behind them, making sure that no other people approach them.

CUT TO

Max next to a tree, picks up and examines a small frog.

MAX

Bella.

She looks into his cupped hands.

BELLA

Kill it.

MAX

What?

She claps his hands together. He opens his hands. Dead frog. She laughs, runs away.

CUT TO

The three of them are sitting on a blanket on the ground.

She looks at Baxter's hands.

BELLA

Why you funny thumbs God?

He looks at his gnarled short flat thumbs.

BAXTER

Once when I was very small my father pinned my thumbs into a small iron case to see whether he could retard the growth cycle of bones. Well the pain was so great to stop myself from weeping I would stare deeply into my other fingers and, simply by observation, begin to parse out the epidemiological elements. When he came back, to his surprise I was smiling.

MAX

Good god.

BAXTER

He was a man of unconventional mind.

Baxter spies people coming toward them.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Time to go. A storm approaches.

They head for the carriage.

MAX

Why do you scare her so?

BAXTER

She is an experiment and I must control the conditions or our results will not be pure.

23

INT CARRIAGE - DAY

23

They ride. Baxter reads. Max takes Bella's pulse. Writes a note. Bella can hear noise. Bella peeks through the blinds. Sees a man selling ice cream at the exit to the park. People eating and laughing. Bella's eyes widen, delighted. She rips the blind back.

BELLA

Stop! God! We go!

BAXTER

No Bella.

BELLA

Bella wants walk in ice cream.

BAXTER

No.

He pushes the blind closed. She stares at him.

BELLA

Bella wants!

BAXTER

My face. People scared of God. Laugh at God.

BELLA

God lovely. Like Dog face.

Baxter winces a bit.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Woof! Woof!

BAXTER  
Quite.

Bella tries to open the door.

BELLA  
Stop! Me walking.

BAXTER  
No.

BELLA  
No now? No never?

He stares at her.

BAXTER  
Just... No.

The carriage moves on. Bella screams in Baxter's face. Kicks at the window.

Baxter pulls her down from the window. He sees through the gap in the blinds people looking at them. She bites his hand. He releases her. She opens the door. Max, not knowing what else to do, pulls her back inside, ripping her blouse as he does. Holds her as she spits at him.

MAX  
Sorry I-

Baxter pulls out a bottle of chloroform and a cloth. They struggle. He chloroforms her.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Mother of God.

She goes unconscious. He stares at her, deep sadness. Strokes her cheek.

BAXTER  
I'm sorry my darling.

24 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

24

Max carries Bella into her room. Her face against his cheek breathing. He stares at the flap of shirt revealing her skin. He leans over, hand hovers a second, he folds the cloth to cover her. His fingers touching her skin slightly. Her eyes flicker open. He gets flustered. Prim enters, turns down the bed. Bella is on the edge of consciousness, feeling hands on her, as she is stripped and put in a nightshirt.

They pull her blankets over her. And exit.

25 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE STUDY - DAY 25

Max rifles through the filing cabinets, finds Bella's file. Stares at diagrams. Including notes about a baby.

Baxter appears in the door.

MAX

What did you do to her? And why are you hiding her? Tell me what all this means or I go to the police.

Baxter considers him.

BAXTER

I shall for it is a happy tale.

CUT TO

26 EXT LONDON BRIDGE - DAY 26

Bella stands on a bridge on a foggy day. She dives off.

27 EXT LONDON RIVER - DAY 27

BAXTER V/O

It is rare to get a body albeit dead but so close to life.

On the banks of the river Bella's washed up, dead body, lies. Face down.

A burly looking GUY comes across her. He turns her over. Her lips are blue. Picks her up and throws her roughly over his shoulder.

28 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE STUDY 28

BAXTER

Rigor had not set in, the body had hardly cooled. No pulse, but some electric current so I could have kept her alive.

MAX

But you didn't?

29 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE SURGERY - DAY 29

The burly guy takes a few coins from Baxter and leaves. Baxter goes to a chair, sits. He stares at Bella's pregnant body.



BAXTER V/O

I knew nothing about the life she had abandoned, except that she hated it so much that she had chosen not to be, and forever. What would she feel on being dragged from her carefully chosen blank eternity and forced to be in one of our understaffed, poorly equipped madhouses, reformatories or jails?

Baxter gets up, dexterously picks up a scalpel, approaches Bella and in one swift motions slits open her dress from top to bottom. The dress falls open, not an ounce of blood spilt.

BAXTER V/O (CONT'D)

For in this Christian nation suicide is treated as lunacy or crime. Who was I to decide her fate? But there was also on my part a recognition.

Baxter opens her corset.

30

INT BAXTER'S HOUSE STUDY

30

BAXTER

All my research had come to this moment, fate had brought me a dead body and a live infant, it was obvious.

MAX

It was?

An incredulous Max. He stares at Baxter, not getting it.

BAXTER

Take the infant's brain out and put it in the full grown woman, reanimate her and watch.

MAX

Jesus.

CUT TO

Nighttime surgery. PRIM is there assisting. A Glass vial is rotating fiercely, then fills with blood suddenly. A bloody surgical saw is put down next to it. The top of Bella's skull is placed down next to that.

A frenetic lightning like source bounces in a glass sealed copper bowl with a tube running out of it. Surgical thread unspooling off a spindle.

Bella's bloody skull top is picked back up by his bloodied gloved hand.

We cut back to the office.

On Max's face.

MAX (CONT'D)

She knows?

He shakes his head.

MAX (CONT'D)

Who was she?

BAXTER

No idea. But would you rather the world did not have Bella?

31 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY 31

Bella sleeps fitfully, starts touching her body. She reaches between her legs. Starts to feel pleasure, as she starts to masturbate.

32 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY 32

Bella eats breakfast. She takes an apple, puts it between her legs, rolls it back and forth quickly. Feels more pleasure. Cums quickly. Sits, smiling.

Mrs Prim enters with some eggs, puts them on the table. Serves her some eggs, sour faced.

BELLA

Mrs Prim. Bella discover happy when she want.

PRIM

Uh huh.

BELLA

You are a sour face, but I fix you.

PRIM

I-

BELLA

Close eyes.

Bella shoves her hand between Prim's legs.

PRIM

Oh!

BELLA

Just wait, it takes a moment.

Prim breaks away. Pushes Bella.

Max walks in.

PRIM

She grabbed me hairy business!  
She's sick!

MAX

Bella?

BELLA

Oh I have discover something and  
must share, share, share. Watch.

She starts masturbating. He is stunned.

BELLA (CONT'D)

What if put cucumber in me?

She takes a cucumber from the table. He turns his back on her.

MAX

Bella! Cease working yourself  
immediately!

She stares at him. Stops.

BELLA

What is-

MAX

Bella in polite society that is not  
done.

BELLA

Oh.

MAX

I... just do not.

CUT TO

33	OMITTED	33
34	OMITTED	34
35	INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - EVENING	35

The three of them sit at the table. A machine, bubbling away in the corner of the room, is making a foul smelling liquid.

MAX

What is that?

BAXTER

My father took out my oxyntic and pyloric glands, so I must make my own gastric juices.

MAX

Why in God's name would he do that?

BAXTER

To discover what no one knew. Turns out we need them. Ideally.

Bella pushes her plate aside.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

You have not eaten Bella.

She pushes it further to the edge of the table. Eyes him.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Do not.

She slaps the side of it so it flips in the air and crashes. It thrills her, she smiles triumphantly.

BELLA

Good night.

Gets up and exits.

A burbling sound rips from Baxter's stomach. He opens his mouth a large bubble appears and is released. They watch it for a moment and it floats and lands on the table and bursts.

BAXTER

Do you know I am actually something of a romantic Max?

MAX

What? I-.

BAXTER

I believe I see love between you and Bella.

MAX

I... what? I... she is...

BAXTER

Perhaps you should marry her?

MAX

What?

BAXTER  
I think she loves you.

36 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM - DAY 36

Bella tossing strawberries high in the air. Max runs frantically from one side of the room to the other to catch each in his mouth.

Baxter watches them as Max falls and Bella laughs.

BAXTER V/O  
I have seen people look at each other with love, as an observer never a subject of course. I see it.

37 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM 37

MAX  
You do? I do have feelings.

BAXTER  
So you would?

38 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM 38

BELLA  
Take Bella out.

MAX  
Bella... I...

She licks his ear suddenly.

MAX (CONT'D)  
Oh.

She laughs. Does it a again, faster, it affects him.

BELLA  
Feel funny?

He nods. She leans her head to him.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Do Bella.

He reluctantly licks her ear. Slowly. She laughs.

39 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM

39

MAX

I wondered if perhaps you were raising her to be your mistress, a dark thought unworthy of me I know. So you are not laying with her.

BAXTER

Spermatic ejaculation can only induce homeostasis in me if accompanied by prolonged stimulation of higher nerve centres whose pressure upon the ductless glands changes the chemistry of my blood not for a few spasmodic minutes but for many days.

MAX

What?

BAXTER

I am a eunuch and can't fuck her. To get a sexual response from my body would take the same amount of electricity as runs North London. Besides my paternal feelings seem to outweigh my sexual thoughts.

40 EXT BAXTER'S HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

40

An enclosed courtyard, Bella is staring up at the sky. A Pig/dog and a duck/goats mill about.

MAX V/O

I apologise for my own dark thoughts.

BAXTER V/O

Not dark at all. Men's, indeed all sexuality, is basically amoral.

MAX V/O

Not all sir!

BAXTER V/O

Do you wish to marry her or not?

Max approaches Bella in the garden.

MAX

I wish to marry you. Be my wife.

She smiles, he goes to kiss her, hits her teeth.

BELLA

Ow! Let us touch each other's genital pieces.

MAX

No. I do not wish to take advantage of you. You are... special. When we are wed.

She nods, slightly annoyed.

41 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM 41

BAXTER

One condition.

MAX

She must desire it also, I understand.

BAXTER

Two conditions then. That one you said and you must live here with me always. I will have a legal agreement drawn up.

CUT TO

42 OMITTED 42

43 OMITTED 43

44 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY 44

Bella looks at the windows. Notices the new locks on them. She punches the window. Growls. Hits the window.

45 INT BAXTER'S STUDY - DAY 45

Duncan is at the office. Baxter peruses the papers. Duncan sips at a glass of port.

DUNCAN

Curious contract.

BAXTER

Hmmm. There are several spelling errors.

DUNCAN

Oh... immaterial to the legal bindingness of it I assure you.

(MORE)

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Must be quite a woman to warrant such binding.

BAXTER

Hmmmm.

DUNCAN

If you'll excuse me I need to use the facilities.

Baxter looks up at him.

BAXTER

Are you five years old that you cannot hold your water?

DUNCAN

Weak bladder, as my father before me and his before him.

BAXTER

You may have prostate cancer. Look into it.

DUNCAN

Will do.

46 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY

46

Duncan takes the stairs, two at a time, opening doors, snooping, enjoying himself.

One of the doors opens onto Bella's bedroom.

47 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

47

Bella is in a cupboard in her room. She blows soap bubbles. She hears the door to her room open. Peers through a crack.

Duncan spins the globe, looks at the maps on the floor. Picks up one of her hats.

He notices bubbles coming out of the cupboard. He goes over, positions himself and starts popping the bubbles.

The door opens.

DUNCAN

Miss Bella Baxter, as per your contract no doubt?

BELLA

Good afternoon visiting man. Want my hat?



DUNCAN  
Would it suit me?

He goes and puts it on. She follows him.

BELLA  
Yes! It is foolish good!

She claps.

DUNCAN  
I had to meet this woman who would  
inspire such a contract of marriage  
that imprisons her.

BELLA  
What you mean?

DUNCAN  
You will live here, travel with Mr  
Max McCandles and Baxter abroad,  
but not go forth in the city.

She takes this in.

BELLA  
I see. They love me tight.

His hand presses between her legs softly, as he leans to her  
ear.

DUNCAN  
I understand why. I need to pinch  
you, to see if you are real.

BELLA  
You will not pi-

He pinches her hand slowly, softly, as he presses closer. She  
closes her eyes. He is close to her.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Oh. Who is you?

DUNCAN  
Mr Duncan Wedderburn.

He walks out, tossing her hat to her as he goes.

CUT TO

48 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

48

Bella lies on her bed. Masturbating.

She hears a knock on her balcony door. Wedderburn waves.

She goes and opens it.

BELLA  
How you get up here?

DUNCAN  
I climbed.

He holds out a limp wrist. She looks at it. It snaps taut suddenly, startling her. She laughs.

49

EXT BAXTER'S HOUSE ROOFTOP - NIGHT

49

BELLA  
You were watch me long?

DUNCAN  
Not long.

BELLA  
You did not see me working myself  
to get happiness did you? It is not  
polites I know.

DUNCAN  
I do not care for polite society.  
It's fucking boring and destroys  
one's soul.

BELLA  
God not believe in soul.

DUNCAN  
I think God's the actual author of  
the soul idea.

BELLA  
Godwin Baxter.

DUNCAN  
The burnt dog. What is that story?  
You are a prisoner and I aim to  
free you.

She claps her hands.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
There is something in you, some  
hungry being, hungry for  
experience, freedom, touch. To see  
the unknown and then...

He touches her face.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Know it. So why am I here you ask?  
I am going to Lisbon on Friday. I  
would like you to come.

BELLA

Lisbon, of Portugal.

DUNCAN

That is the Lisbon I speak of.

BELLA

God never allow it.

DUNCAN

That's why I'm not asking him. I'm  
asking you.

She considers him.

Beat.

BELLA

Bella not safe with you I think.

DUNCAN

You are absolutely not.

50 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE SURGERY - DAY

50

Baxter has a line of brains on a tray. He slices one quickly  
like sushi chef and has it sectioned in no time. He examines  
it. Bella enters.

BELLA

May I have a moment of value time  
dear God?

BAXTER

Of course Bella.

BELLA

I wanted to tell you big news.  
Bella is dizzy with excite.

BAXTER

What is it?

BELLA

Tonight at midnight I secretly run  
away with one Duncan Wedderburn.

BAXTER

What!?

BELLA

You will wish to stop me.

BAXTER

I shall stop you!

BELLA

You hold Bella too tight. I must set forth into waters.

BAXTER

We can travel. You, me, and Max. Whom, I will remind you, you are betrothed to.

BELLA

I will marry Max as he seems right for that, but first I will adventure on Duncan Wedderburn, whom I think cares little of damage to me, but will be interesting as well.

BAXTER

I can't let you go.

BELLA

Kiss me and set me forth. If you do not, Bella's insides turn rotten with hate.

BAXTER

Hate?

BELLA

Hate.

He stares at her.

51 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

51

Miss Prim and Bella pack her suitcases. Max comes in at a raging clip.

MAX

Unpack those bags Prim.

Prim walks out past him. Rolls her eyes.

MAX (CONT'D)

Godwin has explained your plan. I do not blame you Bella, that man is a cad and a rake. He has insidious ways to get under a naive woman's skin.

BELLA

Mostly his eyes on mine as his hand softly between Bella's legs and whisper words I can't hear that make Bella's body heat.

Beat. Max stares at her.

MAX

Jesus! We are engaged Bella. I love you.

BELLA

And when I am back we marriage and be happy as two doves on a branch. You think I need travel hat?

MAX

This will not do. It cannot.

He starts taking off his coat.

MAX (CONT'D)

I will see to this man myself, beat him until his handsome face is a porridge of blood and bones.

BELLA

Max you are flushed and I am too at sight of different Max.

MAX

I apologise but I will not let someone I know who has nothing but ill intent in his mind and nothing for you in his heart, trick you. I will smash his fucking head in.

She crushes her lips on his. Pulls away and brings a cloth with chloroform to his mouth. An unconscious Max drops to the floor.

BELLA

Good bye later dove. I will see you after grand adventure.

Baxter comes in clutching a stack of folded notes.

Baxter grabs a dress from her case, rips open the lining, and swiftly sews the money into the dress with the skill of a surgeon. She watches him. He stares at her as he does it.

He comes to her, embraces her, then stalks from the room.

CUT TO

52 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY 52

Max wakes up. He has a half chicken half pig pecking at his chest.

He gets up, runs downstairs.

53 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM - DAY 53

The drawing room is empty. Almost.

BAXTER

I am having port for breakfast. It is strangely delicious.

He turns and sees Baxter lying on the floor, an almost empty flagon beside him.

MAX

She's gone. Why did you not stop her?

BAXTER

Because I... she is a being of free will.

MAX

She is now out there. Alone.

BAXTER

She will be fine.

MAX

I am a fool. I should've stopped her.

BAXTER

Sssh, we are men of science, this emotionality is unseemly.

Max lies down next to him. Takes a glass. Baxter pours for him. They lie there.

MAX

I just hope she's alright.

54 OMITTED 54

55 INT LISBON HOTEL ROOM - DAY 55

On Bella's flushed face.

BELLA

Oh Oh Oh.

A darkened hotel room. Bella is on top of Duncan.  
Bella has a noisy orgasm.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
OOOOOOOH!

56 INT LISBON OYSTER RESTAURANT - DAY

56

A long line of paper covered tables with trays of oysters.  
Businessmen hunch over, shucking down oysters.

DUNCAN  
You are the most beautiful woman I  
have ever seen. I will not lie to  
you, I have been with many.

BELLA  
Miss Prim said you were wolf with  
the scent of hundred women on you.

DUNCAN  
She undersells it.

Oysters arrive.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
Okay, oysters. Have you had them  
before?

BELLA  
Have not.

He pulls a knife.

DUNCAN  
Shuck. Chuck and bubble.  
Rollicking.

He shucks two oysters expertly, slides one down his mouth,  
closes his eyes, glugs champagne.

She does the same.

BELLA  
Rollicking.

CUT TO

57 EXT LISBON STREET CAFE - DAY

57

Silver dishes of Portuguese tarts. They stand at the bar,  
espresso at the ready. Tart in hand.

DUNCAN

Nuns and monks would starch their clothes with egg whites and with the yolks make these tarts. Now how to eat it.

BELLA

I will guess through mouth.

DUNCAN

It must not be eaten dainty flake by dainty flake but inhaled with gusto, like life itself.

He mashes one into his mouth. She follows suit. She chews, eyes wide.

BELLA

It incredible. What is... Who made this?... We need more.

DUNCAN

No more. One is enough, any more it is too much. It's siesta time.

BELLA

What is siesta?

58 INT LISBON HOTEL ROOM - DAY

58

Bella leans against the wall as they fuck from behind.

CUT TO

Bella flushed and ecstatic astride Duncan.

CUT TO Legs over his shoulders they fuck loudly. A bird flies into the room and flies around, they ignore it. It flies out.

CUT TO

They lie next to each other.

BELLA

Why do people not just do this all the time?

DUNCAN

Well at the risk of being immodest you have just been thrice fucked by the very best. It's probable no other man will ever bring you to the raptures I will. I feel bad for you.



BELLA

Well it will just be you I do  
furious jumping with.

DUNCAN

Furious jumping! I love that.

BELLA

I am rested, let us go again.

DUNCAN

Again? Unfortunately, even I have  
my limits. Men cannot keep coming  
back for more.

BELLA

It is a physiological problem. A  
weakness in men.

DUNCAN

Well... perhaps so.

Bella opens the shutters. The busy Lisbon streets below her.  
She smiles.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

You will be advised, if it's not  
too late, not to fall in love with  
me. I have very little to offer in  
the way of constancy, just  
adventure.

BELLA

I see.

DUNCAN

Let us sleep.

CUT TO -

Duncan snores in bed. Bella, dressed, sits by the door.  
Exits.

59 EXT LISBON STREET - DAY

59

She stands at the door of the hotel. Anxious.

DOORMAN

Taxi madam?

She shakes her head no.

She peers out onto the street. Sees the bakery they were at  
in the distance. Slowly walks towards it. Excited by being  
alone.

60 EXT LISBON STREET CAFE - DAY 60

A plate of five Portuguese tarts in front of her. Starts gorging on them, whole. Fancy society people look at her. She smiles, her face full of custard.

61 EXT LISBON STREET - DAY 61

She hears music. She follows it. Looks up to a balcony. A woman plays a fado on her guitar and sings.

Bella is mesmerised. A tear runs out her eye. A woman yells.

A couple come out, arguing spiritedly. The woman slaps the guy, turns and sees Bella watching. Screams at Bella in Portuguese.

Startled, Bella runs into a warren of streets.

Realizes she is completely lost. We see her small in a wide view of the city which now looks like a maze.

Two fisherman are having a fist fight. She stops and watches.

She starts to feel ill, throws up her tarts.

They stop and stare at her. She backs away, walks on.

Then hears it, a tram. She follows the sound as it grows louder. She turns into the main square and sees their hotel.

62 INT LISBON HOTEL ROOM - EVENING 62

Duncan waits in the room, dressed and smoking, a little agitated. Bella enters.

BELLA  
Good evening Duncan Wedderburn.

DUNCAN  
Bella where have you been? You disappeared.

BELLA  
I did not. No one can just disappear. Can they?

DUNCAN  
What?

BELLA  
Can they disappear?

DUNCAN  
No. Of course... what the fuck are you...where were you?

BELLA

I wanted a tart, but then an  
adventure befell me. I did not know  
how to return and then I heard it.  
The tram, I will walk to the noise.  
And I found it! Amazement to Bella.  
Explorer bloods in me.

DUNCAN

Bella, it is dangerous to go out  
without me.

BELLA

I have adventured it and found  
nothing but sugar and violence. It  
is most charming. I am fine.

She lies down on the bed.

BELLA (CONT'D)

I must lie down and you must lie  
down on top of me and do some more  
furious jumping.

He nods.

63 INT LISBON HOTEL RESTAURANT - NIGHT

63

Duncan and Bella dine in a restaurant busy with families and  
couples. They sit together with a fancy couple, Kitty and  
Gerald.

DUNCAN

Kitty did you see the new show in  
London by Wilde, marvellously  
witty.

KITTY

Oh I loved it. A handbag!

They laugh. Bella eating a mouthful of food, makes a coughing  
noise as she lets it fall from her mouth back out onto her  
plate.

DUNCAN

Bella?

BELLA

What? Why would I keep it in my  
mouth if it is revolting?

KITTY

I have said that before to Gerald  
if you catch my drift.

DUNCAN

You are wicked.

BELLA

Oh! Because you mean his penis!

They stare at her. A baby nearby is crying.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Duncans can be salty.

DUNCAN

Bella! Good God.

BELLA

I'm sorry, but I must go punch that baby.

She gets up and heads toward the baby, balling her fist.

Duncan is up and drags her away.

64

INT LISBON RESTAURANT HALLWAY - NIGHT

64

He stops and pushes her against the wall.

DUNCAN

You're behavior is unconscionable.  
Will you behave?

BELLA

The food was cacking my throat, the baby annoying, and the woman boring with words.

He pushes her hard into the wall, grabs her arm twists her wrist. She winces. Surprised.

DUNCAN

You will rejoin the table and will confine yourself to the following three phrases. 'How marvellous'. 'Delighted'. 'And how do they get the pastry so crisp?' Yes?

BELLA

You are hurting Bella.

DUNCAN

I'm sorry. Reason does not penetrate!

He lets her go.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Let us go.

He turns, she punches him in the side of the head.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Ow!

They look at each other, she pushes him against the wall. Kisses him. She breaks. Heads back into the restaurant. He follows.

65 INT LISBON RESTAURANT - NIGHT

65

They sit with his friends.

KITTY

Are you enjoying Lisbon Bella?

BELLA

Delighted.

DUNCAN

And how is your dear father Kitty?

KITTY

Very unwell, I fear he will not see the year out.

BELLA

How wonderful. How do they get this pastry so crisp?

66 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - DAY

66

A listless Max and Baxter at the table. Breakfast laid before them. Baxter suddenly releases a bubble into the air. They watch it float and die.

Prim comes in with mail. Baxter eyes it, bored. He sees something.

BAXTER

Good God.

MAX

What is it?

BAXTER

From her.

They look at the naive but stunning drawings on the card. Sexual drawings, espresso cups. A tram coming out of her mouth. Scrawled babyish writing over it. They try and decipher.

MAX

Me Good. Lisbon. Sugar tart lick me all day. I hope that is all one sentence anyway.

BAXTER

Good god. Are they...

MAX

Fucking. Yes. I believe so. Also  
fellating a tram.

67 OMITTED 67

68 OMITTED 68

69 INT LISBON BAR - DAY 69

She goes in. Points to the shots everyone is having. They set  
up a glass for her. She tosses a shot back. Then another.

CUT TO

70 INT LISBON BAR - NIGHT 70

Bella wakes up, slouched in a corner. Empty glasses in front  
of her.

71 INT LISBON HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT 71

A distressed Duncan walks through the lobby, half dressed. He  
sits, head in his hands. Bella plops beside him.

BELLA

Does your head ache also Duncan  
Wedderburn? I am also starving for  
dinner.

He looks at her.

DUNCAN

Where the fuck were you?

An old woman with a large feathered hat approaches.

DUCHESS

Victoria Blessington I do declare.  
I have not seen you for years.

BELLA

And you still have not as I am  
Bella Baxter, strange feathered  
lady.

The woman bridles a bit.

DUCHESS

I apologize. I could've sworn you were she.

She heads off.

DUNCAN

Right. Shall we?

72 INT LISBON RESTAURANT - NIGHT

72

Duncan sits with Bella. He is sullen. The waiter stands as Bella orders..

BELLA

Yes the steak, then the fish, then caramel things in pots that old spotted people over there have.

She points to an old couple dining nearby. Looks at Duncan.

DUNCAN

Maybe I don't want caramel in pots!

BELLA

Of course, that was all for Bella. Order at your whim. You are cross at Bella's outings and adventures, and yet, we must discover by whim, as spoken by Duncan Wedderburn to Bella Baxter day one of Lisbon love affair.

DUNCAN

Touché.

BELLA

Understand me have never lived outside God's house.

DUNCAN

What?

BELLA

So Bella so much to discover, and your sad face makes me discover angry feelings for you.

DUNCAN

Right. I have become the thing I hated, the grasping succubus of a lover. I have pried many of them off me and now I am it. Fuck!

She gets up, walks onto the dance floor, does a dance of her own making, alone.

People are weirded out. He watches her. Crazy with love. Goes and joins her. Takes her in his arms tries to dance normally with her but she has no idea how and they stumble there way across the floor. And to their seats.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
You, like me, are a creature of  
freedom and the moment!

She winks. He looks at her.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
What are you doing that for?

BELLA  
A man over there repeated blinks at  
me. I blink back, for polites I  
think.

Duncan turns and looks at the guy, who looks away. Duncan crosses the room and attacks the guy. He smashes the guy in the eye with a glass. They wrestle.

Bella watches for a moment. A man and woman come up to her.

DANCING WOMAN  
We are going to dance in town,  
please join us.

BELLA  
Oh. I have never danced in town.

She leaves Duncan fighting.

Bella walks across the room with the woman and man. He sees them, extricates himself. Attacks them. The guy and Duncan exchange punches.

Bella attacks the guy as well. Duncan looks at her.

DUNCAN  
You are quite mad.

BELLA  
Stop talking as your sounds make  
Bella angry.

DUNCAN  
I will not stop talking if I have  
something to...

Bella picks up someones drink off a table and throws it in his face, glass and drink.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
...ouch. Ow.



73 INT LISBON HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

73

They stare at each other. Bella jumps, her legs around him. She pushes him down. He slides down, smiles at her lasciviously. Lifts her dress up, then stops.

DUNCAN

What's this?

She has the word 'soft' written on one inner thigh, 'softer' on the other one.

BELLA

A man was teaching me chess when he said he thought I probably would have the softest skin he had ever touched. I said if I did it would be the inner thighs to test, for that is where the epidermis is at its most fine.

He looks at her.

BELLA (CONT'D)

So we tested, and it was the softest ever! And I noted perhaps they were not equal in softitude. Indeed they were not. So I made sure to note it, remembering which was which.

He stares at her.

He gets up. Walks out of the room.

BELLA (CONT'D)

What of the tongue play you were about to perform? Is that not happening?

74 INT LISBON HOTEL BAR - NIGHT

74

Wedderburn walks to the bar, motions for liquor. Smacks his head hard into the counter of the bar. Makes a guttural yell.

Blood runs from his head as he drinks the shot. Bella joins him.

BELLA

You are troubled?

DUNCAN

Did he... lie with you?

BELLA

No, we were against a wall.

DUNCAN

Did you... furious jump him?!

BELLA

No, he just fastlicked at my clitoris. I had the heat that needed release. So at my requesting it was.

He hits his head on the bar again.

BELLA (CONT'D)

You too may tongue play me, so am not understanding this complicated feeling you have... Are you now crying?

He is. She goes and embraces him from behind.

BELLA (CONT'D)

What a confusing person you are Duncan Wedderburn.

CUT TO

75 INT LONDON MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY

75

A cadaver lies on the table. Students wait, including McCandles. Baxter walks in. To Max he seems slightly unsteady on his feet. Takes a scalpel.

BAXTER

The liver. A small incision is all that is needed.

Baxter slices, and the knife slides down through the leg as he passes out and flops to the floor.

76 INT LONDON MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY

76

BAXTER

I was chloroforming goats all morning, I may have ingested too much.

MAX

I am going to venture to suggest you are upset by Bella's absence. The litres of port, the sobbing I hear at night.

A group of students titter to one another as they walk by. Baxter roars and takes a swing at them as they pass.

BAXTER

Good God man, you prattle like an imbecile. She is gone! I am a man of science. I just need to engage in and continue the project. That is all. I must go onto the next thing. Our feelings must be set aside. Do you think my father could have branded me with hot irons on the genitals the way he did, if he could not put science and progress first?

MAX

Branded you?!

BAXTER

Let us find a body.

He walks away.

MAX

A... what?

CUT TO

77 INT LISBON HOTEL ROOM - DAY

77

Bella wakes up, sees Duncan smoking in a chair, looking at her.

BELLA

Hello good morning.

DUNCAN

Good morning darling. I have not been as supportive of your adventurous spirit. So I have a surprise for you.

He points to a large chest.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Get in.

She looks at him.

78 OMITTED

78

79 EXT LISBON PATH - DAY

79

Bella knocks on the trunk.

BELLA

I need to wee.

80 INT CABIN - DAY

80

Bella asleep. The trunk stops.

The trunk opens. She comes to and looks up at a beaming Duncan Wedderburn.

She steps out of the trunk and looks around. A new hotel suite.

BELLA  
(nonplussed) We changed hotels?

DUNCAN  
Look out the window Bella.

She looks. The sea. Lisbon in the distance.

BELLA  
We are on boat.

DUNCAN  
Indeed.

They look at each other.

BELLA  
You aim to trap Bella at sea.

DUNCAN  
I aim to give you a new adventure.  
I suppose it is true you will be  
easier to find.

He flops back on the bed, smiles at her.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
Come disrobe me, ride me and we  
will then drink cocktails on the  
foredeck.

She stares at him a beat. Goes into the bathroom slams the door.

81 INT SHIP BATHROOM - DAY

81

Bella in the tiny bathroom. She looks out the porthole.

BELLA  
Blue. Blue. Blue.

He bangs on the door. She ignores him.

82 INT CABIN - NIGHT 82

Bella opens the door into the room. Duncan is asleep on the bed. Bella comes out, eyes him. Goes to the door.

83 EXT SHIP - NIGHT 83

Bella walks through empty ballrooms, empty bars, empty decks. Seemingly almost alone on the ship.

She steps through some doors. Out onto the deck. Sees a steward. He holds a seabird by the legs, it flaps it's wings. He smashes it against the railing.

STEWARD

Shit on me, you fucker!

She stands there, he turns to her, the bleeding dead bird in his hand.

STEWARD (CONT'D)

Madam.

BELLA

When do we stop?

STEWARD

Athens. Three days.

She nods. She stares at the bird. He flings it over the railing. Smiles at her.

CUT TO

84 INT DINING ROOM - DAY 84

A flambé crepe suzette, a women's hair on fire. Duncan stares at Bella who ignores it, she is drawing a postcard to Baxter. Her floating at sea, a bird sitting on her chest pushing her under.

DUNCAN

There is a woman on fire. Look.

She continues drawing.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I know you are mad, forgive me my kidnapping you, but it was for love. A romantic jape. Don't be such a cunt about it.

She looks at him.

BELLA

I want a drink.

DUNCAN

Of course darling. The ship is fun,  
a world to explore. I love you.  
Do you love me?

BELLA

Describe the elements I should be  
looking for within myself to be  
sure.

DUNCAN

You just feel it or not!

BELLA

So it is no evidence base as God  
would say. And so how judge it  
empirically?

DUNCAN

What the fuck are you talking  
about? Who are you? You don't know  
what bananas are, you've never  
heard of chess, and yet you know  
what empirically means!

BELLA

Bella needs a drink. Said twice  
now.

DUNCAN

I have never felt anything like  
this. Is this true for you?

BELLA

...I suppose empirically it is. Oh  
I am out of ink.

DUNCAN

Then you shall have ink my love.

He gets up and heads across the room.

She looks around the room. Sees a striking woman and a  
slightly eccentric style for the era who watches the room,  
MARTHA VON KURTZROC. She sits with HARRY ASTLEY, thirties,  
American, well dressed reading a newspaper. Bella is  
intrigued gets up and walks to her.

BELLA

Hello interesting older lady, I  
must touch your hair.

MARTHA

I noticed your hair as well. Like  
silk on a translucent glowing egg.

BELLA

That is fancy words that excite me somehow.

MARTHA

You are with handsome over there, all white teeth and hard cock.

BELLA

Duncan Wedderburn. His teeth are also hard, his penis is also white.

Harry laughs wryly. Stares at her, suddenly interested.

MARTHA

A good lay I hope.

BELLA

He is my only but I find him able to elicit exceptional sensations through my whole body and leave me yelping happily. I also wish to dash his body, form, cadaver into the sea. Is this man jumping on your body?

MARTHA

He is not. I have not been bedded in twenty years.

BELLA

What? That is terrible.

MARTHA

It does not concern me greatly. As the years pass what is between my ears is my main concern, that between my legs less so.

HARRY

A desperate rationalization Martha.

Bella looks at him.

MARTHA

This is Mr. Harry Astley. Try not to take what he says to heart. He is a cynic.

ASTLEY

Madam.

BELLA

I am Bella Baxter. And don't know this cynic is?

Duncan approaches carrying an ink well.

DUNCAN

Bella? Ink.

BELLA

Duncan Wedderburn, I have made friends, colleagues, comrades.

ASTLEY

Harry Astley.

BELLA

This is Martha. She is my new friend who has not been fucked in twenty years! Is that not astonishment?!

(To Martha)

I hope you use your hand between your legs to keep yourself happy?

DUNCAN

Jesus God Bella! You cannot speak like this.

BELLA

Polites of society. I forgot.

HARRY

Polite society will destroy you.

BELLA

It will?

DUNCAN

There is some truth to that.

MARTHA

We are all agreed on that. And in answer to your enquiry on my hand. Occasionally. Yes.

BELLA

That is much reassuring news. We shall all dine together.

DUNCAN

We actually-

BELLA

Are all on a ship and cannot escape, but there is a world to discover, enjoy, traverse, circumnavigate.

HARRY

Or can she not have friends Mr Wedderburn?

He eyes Harry, smiles.



DUNCAN  
Delighted.

85 INT SHIP HALLWAY - DAY

85

Bella and Duncan walk down the hall, him simmering. He stops suddenly, pushes her against the wall.

DUNCAN  
Marry me.

BELLA  
What?

DUNCAN  
I meant to throw you aside. A few months and then send you packing, but I cannot. Say you will marry me. No one has ever captured my heart. You have.

BELLA  
It is tricky as I am engaged to Mr Max McCandles.

DUNCAN  
What?!

BELLA  
My hand has taken by another. It is a saying I heard and did not understand, you do not take just the hand but all, do you not?

DUNCAN  
You ran away with me! From him!

BELLA  
A recounting of events the point of which is elusive to me.

DUNCAN  
You chose me! Over him!

BELLA  
For now. For fun.

DUNCAN  
I will fucking throw you overboard!

BELLA  
So you wish to marry me, or kill me? Is that the proposal?

DUNCAN  
No. No. I...  
I am going to the casino.

He stalks off.

86 EXT LONDON PARK - DAY

86

Felicity, a young woman, childlike in manner, is hit in the head by a ball thrown by Max.

BAXTER  
That's fine.

MAX  
She is coming along.

BAXTER  
Let's try again. Gross motor skills develop slowly but you will progress fast.

MAX  
Felicity.

Max throws the ball. Felicity does not reach to catch it and it hits her in the head.

BAXTER  
Not that fast.

Felicity starts sobbing uncontrollably.

87 EXT SHIP DECK - DAY

87

Bella sits in the sun reading with Martha and Astley. A small stack of books beside her.

BELLA  
I am reading Emerson. He speaks of self improvement of men. I don't know why he does not give advice to women, perhaps he does not know any.

MARTHA  
You should also try Goethe.

HARRY  
Philosophy is a waste of time Bella.

BELLA  
Really? Say more.

MARTHA  
No, no, Harry you wretch, it is integral. People and society can be improved.

BELLA

It is the goal of all to improve,  
advance, progress and grow. I know  
this in me and am sure I am  
indicative of all.

HARRY

Trust me you are definitely unique  
Bella in all ways. But this  
improvement through philosophy is  
people trying to run away from the  
fact we are cruel beasts. Born that  
way, die that way.

BELLA

It is a dark view of things Harry.

Duncan approaches.

DUNCAN

Bella, let us take the air, 'in our  
cabin'?

He winks at her.

BELLA

These two are fighting and ideas  
are banging around Bella's head and  
heart like lights in a storm.

DUNCAN

You are always reading now Bella.  
You are losing some of your  
adorable way of speaking.

BELLA

I am a changinable feast, as are  
all of we. Apparently according to  
Emerson, disagreed with by Harry.

DUNCAN

Come. Come. Just come.

BELLA

You are in my sun.

DUNCAN

What?

She continues reading. He grabs the book out of her hands,  
tosses it over the side. Martha hands her one. She starts  
reading that. Duncan grabs it and throws it over the side.

He stalks off.

88 INT SHIP CARDS TABLE ROOM - NIGHT

88

Duncan playing cards, he is not winning, slightly distracted. She comes to him, puts her hand on his shoulder.

BELLA

Come.

He looks at her.

DUNCAN

I am busy losing. Heavily.  
And busy drinking. Heavily.

He turns back to his cards, Bella turns and walks out.

89 INT CABIN - NIGHT

89

Bella is lying on the bed reading. Duncan starts kissing her feet. She pushes him away.

BELLA

I must meet Martha.

DUNCAN

Martha! She is the problem! I will  
throw that fucking perfumed bag of  
flesh overboard.

Bella looks at him.

BELLA

I dare you.

He stares at her. He heads out suddenly.

90 EXT SHIP DECK - DAY

90

Martha sits in a deckchair reading. Duncan arrives at speed, Harry is at the railing, sees him coming. Advances toward him.

HARRY

Where you going?

DUNCAN

She's going over the side.

MARTHA

Marvellous. I never imagined I'd be  
murdered. How dramatic.

HARRY

She seems happy to die. Sorry for  
getting in your way.

He pushes past Harry straight at Martha.

Duncan struggles to drag Martha in her deck chair to the railings. Two stewards attempt to restrain him. Martha hits Duncan in the throat with her cane.

Bella stands nearby roaring with laughter. The two stewards drag Duncan away.

DUNCAN  
(croaks)  
I'll be in the bar.

91 INT CABIN - NIGHT 91

Duncan sleeps, battered and bruised. Bella beside him. She can't sleep.

92 INT/EXT HARRY'S CABIN - NIGHT 92

Bella walks the cabin hallway. Knocks on Astley's door. He answers blearily.

BELLA  
You have made me think, cogitate  
and perambulate through ideas that  
are wrong, erroneous and  
nonsensically annoying that lead me  
not to sleep.

HARRY  
So...

BELLA  
You say all are cruel and I  
disagree, disavow and say no not,  
but when with Duncan the cruel just  
bubbles up in me.

HARRY  
That shows good judgement. He is a  
pretty moron.

BELLA  
No. I wish not to be cruel, I must  
improve this aspect of myself.

HARRY  
You don't know the world. And you  
fear it.

BELLA  
I don't fear it.

HARRY

Do you want to see what the world  
is really like? I'll show you.

BELLA

Yes. Of course!

93 EXT. SEA - DAY 93

The ship is approaching Alexandria.

94 INT SHIP HALLWAY - DAY 94

Bella and Harry, walk past the casino. Can see Duncan  
playing.

95 EXT ALEXANDRIA LIGHTHOUSE TO HOTEL - DAY 95

Bella and Harry travelling in a cable car.

96 CHAPTER HEADING: 96  
ABSTRACT IMAGE OF BELLA ARRIVING IN ALEXANDRIA - BUBBLE

97 INT ALEXANDRIA HOTEL - DAY 97

Harry and Bella take breakfast on the balcony of the hotel  
above the garden. Bella hears distant wailing.

HARRY

Can you hear that?

BELLA

What is it?

He motions she follow him, they follow the sound. She walks  
to the end of the balcony, steps up onto step of the balcony  
so she can peer over the walls of the hotel.

Below lies a slum, outside the hotel walls. She looks down in  
horror at a sprawling mess of impoverished, desperate people,  
mangy dogs, impoverished goats. Squalor, flies and mud.

HARRY

Lot of dead babies. Guess it's hot.

Bella stares, shocked.

BELLA

We must go help them!

HARRY

And how will we do that?

BELLA

I...

HARRY

We go down there, they'll quite rightfully rope us, rob us and rape us. And if they were here and we were there we would do the same to them.

Bella runs.

98 INT ALEXANDRIA HOTEL STAIRS - DAY 98

She runs down the stairs screaming, tripping and falling. Harry catches up to her, puts his hand over her mouth. She clamps her teeth on his hand.

99 EXT SHIP HALLWAY - DAY 99

Bella walks shellshocked along the hallway.

100 INT CABIN - NIGHT 100

Bella wakes to find dinner suited Duncan, asleep, an empty bottle of whisky on his chest, some of the content poured all over his shit when he passed out. He is covered in money. A couple of stacks on the bedside table as well. Bella stares at it.

She gets up, gathers up the money into a bag. And heads out.

101 EXT SHIP - NIGHT 101

Bella walks to the walkway off the boat. Two stewards are preparing to cast off.

STEWARD

We are casting off ma'am.

BELLA

But I must go back? I must give this money to the poor near the hotel, in something called a slum.

STEWARD 2

We are staying ashore Ma'am. We can take care of that for you.

BELLA

You can?

STEWARD

Of course, it is generous of you.

BELLA  
They need money.

STEWARD  
Everyone does.

BELLA  
Thank you.

She heads off back up the plank. The two stewards smile at each other, check the money.

102 INT CABIN HALLWAY - NIGHT

102

Bella walks down the hall. A steward stands in the doorway of the cabin.

Bella hears Duncan's voice as she approaches.

DUNCAN  
(to the steward)  
You get me the Captain! Now, we'll  
find this fucken thief!

He sees Bella. She sees he is upending the room.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)  
Bella! We've been robbed. I won! I  
won everything, like never before!  
But now it's gone!

BELLA  
You haven't been robbed. I took it.

DUNCAN  
What?

BELLA  
I took it.

She wanders in and flops down on the bed.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
I am so tired. Or maybe just my  
spirit is. My soul has been  
buckled, crumpled, flattened,  
Duncan Wedderburn by the sights I  
have seen.

He stares at her nonplussed.

STEWARD  
So, no need for the Captain then  
sir?



DUNCAN

Fuck off before I break all your teeth!

STEWARD

Indeed sir.

DUNCAN

Where is it?

She cries.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

You hid it for safety. I was drunk and foolishly left it everywhere. What a relief.

BELLA

I did not hide it. I gave it all away to these poor people, out there. Money is its own form of sickness or at least the scarcity of it. And who am I lying on a featherbed as dead babies lie in a...Oh Duncan.

DUNCAN

You what?

BELLA

I am expecting a hug of solace.

DUNCAN

You...

BELLA

I need to offer something to the world and yet I have nothing. Except some money. It is a bad day for Bella Baxter.

He grabs her hard.

DUNCAN

Where is my fucking money?!

BELLA

I just told you I gave it away to the poor.

The steward returns, knocks on the still open door. An officer with him.

DUNCAN

I thought I told you to fuck off?!

OFFICER

The steward informs me you may not have sufficient funds to make good your account sir.

BELLA

That is probably true, I gave it all away to some nice men to pass onto the slum poor.

The steward smiles.

OFFICER

You will be offloaded at the next port and confined to staff rations until then. Good evening.

DUNCAN

How dare you?!

The steward steps forward and punches Duncan in the stomach, winding him. He pushes him over and pulls the door shut.

103 INT BAXTER'S DINING ROOM - DAY

103

A letter from Bella, paper with '*aaaa ded blnd bibys nooooooooooooo bit hrry*' scrawled across pages is laid out on the table in lots of sheets, Baxter sits reading it.

BAXTER

(reading)

Dead blind babies, bit harry, my mouth was full of blood. Poor Bella, she is a ruin.

104 EXT SHIP DECK - DAY

104

Bella and Harry, Harry's hand bandaged walk up the plank.

BELLA

How is your hand?

HARRY

Fine. I'm sorry.

BELLA

You were trying to help me understand.

HARRY

No. I actually wanted to hurt you. I couldn't bear to see such dumb beautiful happiness in someone. It was cruel of me.

BELLA

I am not sorry. If I know the world  
I can improve it.

HARRY

You can't Bella. That is the real  
point. Don't accept the lie, of  
religion, socialism, capitalism, we  
are a fucked species. Know it. Hope  
is smashable. Realism is not.  
Protect yourself with the truth.

Bella looks at him.

BELLA

I realize what you are now Harry,  
just a broken little boy who cannot  
bear the pain of the world.

HARRY

I suppose so.

She kisses him on the cheek.

BELLA

Goodbye Harry. We get thrown off in  
Marseille.

HARRY

Why do you stay with him.

BELLA

I always think it will be better.

HARRY

Of course you do.

She walks off.

CUT TO

105      CHAPTER HEADING:      105  
ABSTRACT IMAGE OF BELLA ARRIVING IN PARIS  
- FLOATING.

106      EXT A SQUARE IN PARIS - DAY      106

A wide view of Paris. Bella and Duncan huddle under an  
umbrella on a park bench. A small dog sniffs at them.

BELLA

I have heard great things of the  
beauty of Paris.

The dog's owner comes by.

DUNCAN

I will kick your dog to death.  
Fucken Paris with no money. What do  
you suggest we do Bella?

BELLA

I will get us a hotel. Do not  
worry.

DUNCAN

Uh huh. With what?! We have no  
money!

BELLA

Is it not an interesting  
experiment? We have nothing, how  
will we live now?

DUNCAN

I don't know!

BELLA

Exactly. That is the experiment. We  
are now the poor. Also many  
adventurers have faced these odds.  
Robinson Crusoe for instance.

Duncan starts weeping into his hands.

DUNCAN

Selfish, thoughtless, careless  
bitch.

BELLA

I'm not thoughtless Duncan. And  
while it is true my ability to  
think things through to the logical  
conclusions is not strong, I did  
help those suffering people.  
I have ruined us as you point out,  
but I still believe my actions came  
from a good-

DUNCAN

SHUT. THE. FUCK. UP.

BELLA

I will get us a hotel.

107 EXT SQUARE PARIS - DAY

107

She sees a hotel across the square. A woman in her 40s smiles  
at her.

BELLA

Good afternoon Madam.

SWINEY

Good day my fresh, darling, English rose.

BELLA

Is this a hotel?

SWINEY

We have rooms. Are you looking for work?

BELLA

How much is a room?

SWINEY

I charge you 10 francs an hour. You charge them thirty, everyone's happy.

BELLA

Hmmm. I see.

SWINEY

Monsieur Chapelle. Fresh from London. Qu'en dites vous?

He looks Bella up and down.

CHAPELLE

Enchanté. Hello. Elle fera l'affaire.

SWINEY

Take room 16.

He heads up.

CHAPELLE

Merci.

SWINEY

So. Off you go?

BELLA

At this point I am confused.

SWINEY

You are not here to work? C'mon, lay with him, let him cock you a bit and make some nice francs.

BELLA

I see. He would pay me for this?

SWINEY

Yes. If you need money, it is the shortest route to it.

BELLA

I have never been 'cocked' by another man, and yet have wondered on that. And am in need of funds. It is I believe, a confluence of circumstances I regard as almost fate-like. Let us do this.

108 INT. PARIS BROTHEL FOYER - DAY

108

SWINEY

Room 16.

Bella makes her way upstairs.

109 INT HOTEL ROOM PARIS - DAY

109

Bella enters the room. The man sits naked on a chair smoking a pipe.

CHAPELLE

Allonge toi.

BELLA

Your name?

He shakes his head no.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Mysterious.

She lays down. He pushes her dress up. Lays down on her. Starts to position himself.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Should we warm me up a bit fir-

He thrusts himself into her.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Ow.

He thrusts himself into her three times.

CHAPELLE

Aaaaaaagh!

She holds in a laugh. He gets up. Nods politely.

CHAPELLE (CONT'D)

Merci.

110 INT PARK PARIS - DAY

110

Bella walks back along the park, carrying a chocolate eclair.

BELLA

Good day sir. Eclair au chocolat. I have come into some money, and some enlightenment.

DUNCAN

You stole it?!

BELLA

You have always said you are the best bedman in the world, and I have never known another so knew not whether this was true. But now I do! And he was terrible and made an ungodly noise as he thrust himself into me, and a mere three thrusts Duncan Wedderburn was all he could manage! Well I stifled a laugh out of politeness of course, took his money, thanked him, laughed all the way to buy us this éclair, and thought so fondly as I remembered all the fierce sweaty nights of ours.

DUNCAN

You... fucked for money?

BELLA

And as an experiment. Which I think will aid us in our relationship as it gladdens my heart for you, and my heart has been a little bit dim on your weepy swears lately.

He throws the éclair at her.

DUNCAN

YOU ARE A MONSTER. A WHORE AND A MONSTER! You are a demon sent from hell to rip my spirit to shreds to punish my tiny sins with a tsunami of destruction. To take my heart and pull it like taffy, to ruin me. I look at you and see nothing but ugliness.

BELLA

That last bit was uncalled for and makes no sense as your odes to my beauty have been boring but constant and now a simple act of letting old wrinkled man ride on me seems to erase this.

DUNCAN

Fuuuck! You whored yourself.

BELLA

Which now you are going to explain to me is bad. Can I never win with you?!

DUNCAN

It is the worst thing a woman can do.

BELLA

We should definitely not ever marry. I am a flawed experimenting person so I will need a husband with a more forgiving disposition.

DUNCAN

Cunnnt.

BELLA

My instinct now tells me you are not that. Our adventure is clearly over.

She rips open stitching in her dress, pulls God's bills forth.

BELLA (CONT'D)

I shall buy you a passage back to London.

Duncan stares at her.

DUNCAN

You had money?! The whole time!

BELLA

It is God's money for emergencies.

DUNCAN

It has been a fucking emergency for weeks!

BELLA

I believed in you the whole time. That you would rise to the occasion. Now however I see that was misplaced and there is something broken in you.

DUNCAN

You broke that something in me!

BELLA

I feel this conversation has become circular.

DUNCAN

Cuuunt!



Duncan grabs all the cash out of her hand, and runs.

111 INT PARIS BROTHEL FOYER - DAY

111

Bella stands before Swiney.

BELLA

Madam Swiney, I have examined my situation. I need sex and money. I could take a lover, another Wedderburn who would keep me, but may require an awful lot of attention or it's twenty minutes at a time and the rest of my day is free to study on the world and the improving of it. Hence I seek employment, in your musty smelling establishment of good time fornication.

Swiney smiles at her.

SWINEY

A woman plotting her course to freedom. How delightful. Come.

A group of women sit on chairs in the small foyer, waiting for clients. Swiney enters with Bella.

CUT TO

The small bell on the door rings. The girls look up. A large butcher enters.

SWINEY (CONT'D)

Ah monsieur Saveur.

He gives her a packet of freshly cut meat.

SAVEUR

Filet mignon.

SWINEY

A prime cut. Et pour vous?

She points to the women, he eyes them. Nods at Bella.

SWINEY (CONT'D)

Bella.

She follows the butcher up the stairs. Passes Toinette, one of the girls, in her twenties.

TOINETTE

Say 'formidable' at the end. House rules.

112 INT PARIS BROTHEL BEDROOM - DAY

112

He pushes in a door. Bella follows him in. She looks at him. He gets undressed. Bella reels a bit.

BELLA  
Is that smell you?

He walks toward her, pushes her against the wall. Starts fucking her.

He groans. Orgasms.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
.... Formidable?

SAVEUR  
Merci.

Bella nods. As he exits, Toinette comes in. She has a cup of tea and a handkerchief.

TOINETTE  
C'est un mouchoir à la lavende.  
Pour l'odeur. For the smell.

Bella takes it smells it.

TOINETTE (CONT'D)  
And.. tea just... because tea is nice. Un petit peu English.

BELLA  
Merci. It was brutal, in a strangely not unpleasant way.

Toinette looks at Bella. She laughs.

TOINETTE  
Pamphlet. Read. Je suis socialiste.

BELLA  
What is that?

TOINETTE  
Une personne qui veut changer..change the world pour le meilleur! Make it better. A better world.

BELLA  
Then I am that too.

The bell rings.

113 INT PARIS BROTHEL FOYER - NIGHT

113

A few whores sit in a line. A businessman is looking over them. Bella sees Mrs Swiney.

BELLA

Ah Mrs Swiney, this line up system. You really expect me to go upstairs with a man even if I find him distasteful and so am slightly sad when I let him furious jump me?

SWINEY

That is the way it is my darling. Gosh you look pretty. How it agrees with you to be ravaged.

BELLA

I suppose. But..

The man interrupts. Points at Bella, but speaks to Swiney.

MERSAULT

Nouvelle fille?

SWINEY

Oui Monsieur Mersault. Bella.

He looks at her. Bella addresses the man.

BELLA

Sir would you not prefer it if the women chose? As it would be a sign of enthusiasm for you rather than the vague sense that they are in a state of horror as you jump them.

MERSAULT

Horreur? Elles ne sont pas-

SWINEY

Elles vous aiment Monsieur. Bella is new and may have a mental illness. Elle ne comprend pas encore comment cela fonctionne.

BELLA

As God my father says, it is only the way it is until we discover the new way it is and then that is the way it is until we discover the new way it is and so it goes until the world is no longer flat, electricity lights the night and shoes no longer are tied with ribbons. You see.

TOINETTE

Je suis d'accord. As a socialist I agree entirely. Formidable.

SWINEY

Toinette, you have such a clever mouth, Monsieur Mersault will enjoy it for free. Go now.

SWINEY (CONT'D)

Bella. A moment in my office.

114 INT SWINEY'S OFFICE - NIGHT

114

SWINEY

You have the most delicious looking lobes.

BELLA

Thank you, you are most..

SWINEY

I must-

She bites on Bella's ear.

BELLA

Aha ah.

SWINEY

I am sorry, I drew blood. Here here.

Swiney gives her a handkerchief. A disconcerted Bella dabs her ear.

SWINEY (CONT'D)

I sometimes give into myself when I see beauty, young beauty. For one day my dear you will be a wrinkled old husk, and no one will want you, either to pay you for it or have it for free.

BELLA

I still believe everyone would be happier if we could choose.

SWINEY

An idealist, like me. How delightful you are. But we must give into the demands of the world sometimes. Grapple with it, try to defeat it but-

BELLA

So you believe as me?

SWINEY

Of course. But some men enjoy that you do not like it.

BELLA

What? That is--

SWINEY

Sick! But good business. Come with me.

She opens a curtain at the side of her office. A baby sits in a basket.

SWINEY (CONT'D)

My grandchild. Sick and poorly and requiring much doctoring. My choice of giving you choice will jeopardise the business, her health, her life. Do you want that Bella?

BELLA

Of course not-

SWINEY

You don't? You are so lovely.

Bella covers her ears. Swiney barks out a laugh. Bella smiles.

BELLA

I thought you were going for my lobes.

SWINEY

We must work. We must make money. But more than that Bella, we must experience everything. Not just the good, but degradation, horror, sadness. This makes us whole Bella, makes us people of substance. Not flighty, untouched children. Then we can know the world. And when we know the world, the world is ours.

BELLA

I want that.

The bell rings.

SWINEY

Now go and fuck someone and bring me ten francs.

115 INT PARIS BROTHEL BEDROOM - DAY

115

Bella walks into her room, followed by a plain looking guy in a suit. He start taking his pants off.

BELLA  
First I suggest a short quiz.

GUY  
A...quiz?

BELLA  
Tell me a childhood memory...un souvenir d'enfant, then I will tell you a joke, Toc toc, and then a quick sniff and if necessary a quick douse in lavender oil. It will all enhance our experience making it formidable. Toc toc!

GUY  
Um... Toc toc?

BELLA  
Non. I am doing the joke. You the memory. Le souvenir?

GUY  
Um... je me souviens être tombé de mon..velo..

BELLA  
You fell from your bicycle..et...

GUY  
je l'ai regardé, attendant de voir s'il..

GUY (CONT'D)  
Oui. J'ai commencé à marcher, and...it..commencé à saigner. Blood. down my leg. J'ai ressenti une joie intense.

BELLA  
Joie. Joy! You watched the blood with joy.

GUY  
Oui!

She smiles, he smiles back.

BELLA  
Knock knock.

GUY  
Oui c'est?

BELLA

Fromage.

GUY

Fromage?

BELLA

Cheese to meet you!

He laughs.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Exactly! You know it!

They come together. She sniffs him.

BELLA (CONT'D)

You smell okay. Let us fuck.

CUT TO

Bella having sex against the wall.

CUT TO

Bella is crouched semi naked, facing a wall. There is a scuttling noise. She looks back. A naked man scuttles crab like across the floor, sideways but slowly toward her. He gets there, pulls hair from her head with his pincers and eats it. Bella turns to watch him, fascinated. He scuttles away from her.

CUT TO

Bella is being fucked by a handsome guy in his forties.

She starts to orgasm as does he. They finish. Bella, spent and happy. He puts on his priest clothes.

BELLLE

God gave you a gift my friend.

PRIEST

C'est une malediction.

116 INT PARIS BROTHEL FOYER

116

Bella in a line up. She stares blankly ahead. A guy with hooks for hands points at her.

117 INT PARIS MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY

117

Bella and Toinette duck into the back of a lecture hall. A surgeon cuts up a body as he lectures the class.

118 INT PARIS MEDICAL SCHOOL - DAY 118

The empty hall. The body cut and hollowed out. Toinette and Bella eat croissants as they walk around it. Bella examines the incisions.

BELLA  
Very inelegant work.

TOINETTE  
This is what you do when you're homesick?

Bella nods.

119 INT PARIS BROTHEL BEDROOM - NIGHT 119

Bella, bored, with a bit in her mouth suspends from the ceiling. A man humps her leg.

120 INT PARIS BROTHEL ROOM - DAY 120

Two boys of sixteen sit on chairs. A man, a well spoken Frenchman, in his forties stands, Bella sits on the bed.

BELLA  
You wish what?

MAN  
My boys are of an age for education. Sexual. I will demonstrate.

BELLA  
I see.

MAN  
Vous pouvez jouer avec les seins de la femme. Cela engorge le penis et ça l'excite.

BELLA  
At times.

MAN  
Si votre penis ne s'engorge pas vous pouvez faire appelle à son assistance manuelle.

He nods at Bella. She massages his cock through his pants.

MAN (CONT'D)  
Cela augmente le flux sangain. Une fois la dureté atteinte...



BELLA

Shall I lay, bend, astride?

MAN

Let's starts simple, please.

Bella lays on the bed. She sees one of the boys staring at her, she winks, he looks down. The other is studiously taking notes.

The guy gets between her legs, enters her.

MAN (CONT'D)

...commence doucement le va et vient. J'aime bien commencer par un quatre, quatre, puis un trois trois, ensuite un deux deux qui généralement ammène au climax.

BOY

Et si ça ne vient pas père?

BELLA

Ah, to aid things along a finger in the arse or a slight choking may do it.

MAN

C'est Vrai!!

CUT TO

Bella hears a wailing sound from the alley below. She goes to the window, looks down.

Duncan sits in the alley, he is pulling clumps of hair out. Looks up, sees her, smiles, waves, a clump of hair in his hands.

BELLA

Go home!

121

EXT PARIS MULTIPLE VIEWS SQUARE - DAY

121

Toinette and Bella walk.

BELLA

Swiney was right. I am discovering parts of myself hitherto unknown.

TOINETTE

It is a way to look at it.

BELLA

The variety of desires being made manifest is fascinating.

(MORE)

BELLA (CONT'D)

Did you have the man who puts a wedge of pineapple in your mouth and covers you in dust?

TOINETTE

Oui, Jacques. Il est gentil.

Duncan appears beside her, dusty and rips in his clothes.

DUNCAN

Bella. I have decided to forgive you. I have booked our berths home. I have told mother to prepare our wedding bed. Did you fuck the guy with hooks for hands? You did. I know. I beat the tar out of that guy.

BELLA

Duncan I thought you went.

DUNCAN

I went to the boat, but started to ache and vomit, so am here to save you.

TOINETTE

Le Duncan! Quel gâchis!

He holds his hand out to her.

DUNCAN

Charmé.

BELLA

Go home Duncan. Our time has ended. I look at you and feel nothing but the lingering question of how did I ever want you?

TOINETTE

Oooo. And we must go to the meeting of socialists.

DUNCAN

You're whores!

BELLA

We are our own means of production. Get out of the way.

Duncan stops. They walk on and head through.

Felicity is finger painting on the walls of the sitting room. Max sits nearby taking notes.

FELICITY

Foot. Paint foot.

MAX

Very good.

Baxter enters.

MAX (CONT'D)

Her language is slow but improving.

FELICITY

Gmmmf. Paint. Foot.

Baxter nods to her.

BAXTER

Genius.

MAX

Can you not be so cruel to her?

BAXTER

I made a mistake with Bella. I allowed feelings to develop. But there are none for her, she is no different to the chicken dog. It is better this way perhaps, and gives some insight to my father's coolness to me. It was a necessity of science.

MAX

Good God man!

BAXTER

I do not expect you to understand village doctor. By the way I need you to operate on me.

MAX

Shall I put a beating heart in your monstrous form?

BAXTER

If you have time while taking this out.

He pulls up his shirt to reveal a large growth protruding from his stomach.

CUT TO

123 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE SURGERY - DAY

123

Baxter lies on the operating table.. He looks to where he has a mirror set up so he can watch. Max slices his belly and opens him up. Prim assists.

He slices around the perimeter of the tumour.

MAX

I will take some cells from around the tumour.

BAXTER

No need. You may close me up. It has spread. I can see tiny polyps.

MAX

Oh.

He peers in. Looks at Baxter.

BAXTER

I am dying. How to break it to the patient hey?

Laughs.

MAX

Baxter.

BAXTER

Do not cry into the wound. You will kill me faster with sepsis. Quiet now and close me up.

Max nods. Baxter closes his eyes.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

Find her.

124 INT PARIS BROTHEL BEDROOM - NIGHT

124

Bella lies on the bed. A closed book next to her.

BELLA

I am closed!

Swiney enters.

SWINEY

Hot chocolate my dear. And pain au chocolat. You are my favourite.

BELLA

I have heard you say that to others. We are a machine you feed with compliments and chocolate.

SWINEY

You are my children I feed with  
love.

BELLA

A terrible thing has happened  
Swiney. I feel almost nothing, and  
my empathy is creeping towards  
something I would describe as  
contemptuous rage.

SWINEY

This is fabulous.

BELLA

It is?

SWINEY

You are in the dark period before  
light and wisdom come to you. You  
must forge through it, and once on  
the other side you will be grateful  
to this moment. But you must keep  
going.

Bella takes it in, nods.

BELLA

I see.

Swiney looks at her. Bella covers her ears.

Swiney bites her arm.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Ah.....ah.

125 INT PARIS BROTHEL BEDROOM - DAY

125

Bella's flushed ecstatic face.

From under the sheets appears Toinette.

CUT TO

Toinette sings to Bella.

TOINETTE

Où est ton bébé?

BELLA

Quel bébé?

She points to the scar on Bella's stomach.

TOINETTE

You've got a baby scar. Moi aussi.

She sits up to show her own.

TOINETTE (CONT'D)  
 Mine is with ma maman. Le tien?

BELLA  
 I don't have one... It is an  
 accident scar. But you are not the  
 first to make the mistake.

TOINETTE  
 Why lie?!

BELLA  
 I am not lying! My God told me  
 himself.

TOINETTE  
 Un homme?

BELLA  
 Oui.

She shrugs as if that answers that.

TOINETTE  
 Voilà.

Bella takes this in. Looks down at her stomach. The scar.

CUT TO

126 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE HALLWAY / STUDY - DAY 126

A thick letter arrives, mad writing on the envelope. Max  
 finds it, picks it up.

Reads it, walks to the study where Godwin is unconscious  
 laying in the day bed hooked up to a machine, pumping blood  
 for him.

MAX  
 Wedderburn.

127 INT ASYLUM - DAY 127

Duncan is in a cell, lying facing the wall.

MAX  
 Good day sir.

He gets no response.

MAX (CONT'D)  
 You wrote to Mr Godwin Baxter.

DUNCAN

He has set a demon at large in the world, the devil has wrapped her in an alluring body that cannot be satiated and a mind that picks people apart stitch by stitch like a bloodied and burned rag doll that has been shat out an elephant's arse!

MAX

Bella. Where is she?

He looks up at him as if noticing for the first time.

DUNCAN

Who are you?

MAX

I am her fiancé sir.

Duncan takes a beat then laughs. Scratches at his leg. Max notices the bloody scratches all over his ankle..

MAX (CONT'D)

Obviously things did not end well between you?

DUNCAN

Did not?....she destroyed me!

MAX

We are all masters of our own ship so there's that.

DUNCAN

I do not like you and your words! That Godwin Baxter! He knew, and he set her onto me, trapped me.

MAX

Where is she?!

DUNCAN

I would not wish her on my worst enemy, I will save you sir from-

Max kicks him in the stomach.

MAX

Forgive my frustration, just tell me.

DUNCAN

It does not hurt, I have no insides, she has hollowed me out, my soul, my bank account.

(MORE)

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I am a shell, a bug. Shall we sing?  
Oh we are sailors on a ship of  
fools.

Max picks him up and slams him against a wall, surprising himself.

MAX

I do not wish to be like this, you  
force my hand.

DUNCAN

We are all masters of our own ship  
you cuntin'g cuntfaced deadshit.

MAX

Please I ask you as politely as I  
can. Where is she?

128 INT PARIS BROTHEL BEDROOM - DAY 128

Bella lies on her bed. Fingers the scar on her stomach.  
Toinette comes in.

TOINETTE

Tu as une lettre.

Walks out. Bella, looks at the postcard. London postmark. A  
formally drawn sketch of Baxter on his bed, surrounded by  
medical devices. 'R.I.P soon. Come.' written next to it.

129 OMITTED 129

130 CHAPTER HEADING: 130  
ABSTRACT IMAGE OF BELLA ARRIVING IN LONDON - BRIDGE

131 EXT/INT BAXTER'S HOUSE - DAY 131

Bella stares at the house as she stands at the door. She  
smiles. Knocks.

The door swings back. Prim looks at her.

PRIM

The whore's back!

Prim walks away. Bella steps inside.

132 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM - DAY 132

Baxter pulls himself up, leans on the day bed. He is hooked  
up to an oxygen machine, and a glass bulb sluices blood via a  
tube in and out of his body.



Bella comes in. She rushes to God. Hugs him. He grimaces. But is slightly overcome by her touch.

BELLA

God! Max wrote me, you are ill?

BAXTER

I am not. I am dying. A subtle difference, but one I take seriously as a physician. You are a sight. And a good one.

BELLA

You cannot die.

BAXTER

Empirical data says different. I missed you. I now have to lie down.

She helps him down.

BELLA

It is not all sunshine I bring, I also bring beady eyes and hard questions for you. Did I have a baby in me? And if so where is it?

BAXTER

I see. Well, technically you are your baby. And also I suppose you are your mother. But also neither. No memory survives. No experiences survive.

BELLA

What do you mean I am mother and daughter?

133 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE OPERATING THEATER - DAY

133

Bella goes through Baxter's papers.

Finds notes on her operation. She starts reading. Max enters, stands at the door.

BELLA

You knew? And did not tell?

MAX

I...did not see good reason too..

BELLA

And were too cowardly to.

MAX

A bit of that as well. I just wanted to be with you and was not sure you would even understand and Baxter kind of makes one a prisoner to him, and....sorry.

CUT TO

Bella examines the looping scar on her neck in a mirror.

134 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DINING ROOM (MEAL PREPARATION AREA) - ~~DAY~~

She walk into the kitchen, Felicity at the table, she is singing a song, which is really just the same word over and over as she smashes steak with a meat hammer on the table. Prim supervises.

FELICITY

Bam. Bam. Bam. Bam.

BELLA

Who's this?

Felicity keeps banging as she looks at Bella.

FELICITY

Bell whore, bell whore, Bell whore.

BELLA

You have introduced me already then Prim?

PRIM

I like this one though.

Prim reaches for the meat.

PRIM (CONT'D)

That's enough Feli-

Felicity brings the hammer down on Prim's hand with the hammer.

PRIM (CONT'D)

Fucker!

Felicity laughs, goes on hitting the table. Bella looks at Max.

BELLA

She is another?

MAX

Well...we missed you.

BELLA  
 Monsters.

Bella walks out.

135 EXT LONDON STREET - DAY 135

Bella walks the street.

136 EXT LONDON BRIDGE - DAY 136

Bella walks onto the bridge. Looks over and sees some dead fish lying on the bank.

137 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT 137

Baxter lies on the day bed. Machines whirring around him. Bella enters. She goes to him. He opens his eyes looks at her.

BELLA  
 It is hard to be in a position where one wants to hit someone who is already in obvious pain.

BAXTER  
 It is a conundrum for sure. Would you rather be a grey slab of flesh with a fish hook in your nose?

She drops her arm.

BELLA  
 I will feel good for a second, and bad for longer so...  
 I really had a fish hook in my nose?

BAXTER  
 You did.

BELLA  
 So I am your creation. As is the other one.

BAXTER  
 Neither of you are that. She wanders the halls with a hammer and a song, that is not my doing, and I have read your cards and letters home and watched you fearlessly create Bella Baxter with wonder.

BELLA

I am finding being alive  
fascinating so I will forgive you  
the act, but always hate the lies  
and trapping that followed.

BAXTER

Understood. Good to see you.

BELLA

You too. Anger, confusion and brain  
dissonance aside. I missed you.

She puts her hand on his.

BELLA (CONT'D)

I arrived home and I smelt the  
fomeldahyde and I knew what is  
next. I will be a doctor.

He closes his eyes, smiles.

BAXTER

My surgery is yours. My father once  
said to me, always carve with  
compassion. He was a fucking idiot,  
but it's not bad advice.

138 EXT LONDON PARK - DAY

138

Bella and Max walk in the forest.

MAX

He does not have long.

BELLA

I know.

They walk a bit.

BELLA (CONT'D)

You have not mentioned our  
betrothal.

MAX

You were much younger, there is  
no...bind. I was mesmerised by you  
and Baxter took advantage of it.

BELLA

So you are mesmerised no more?

MAX

I am still... mesmerised.

BELLA

I have been a whore you understand. Cocks for money inside me. Are you okay with that? Or is the whore thing a challenge to the desire for ownership men have. Wedderburn became much sweary and weepy when he discovered my whoring.

MAX

I find myself merely jealous of the men's time with you, rather than a moral aspersion against you. It is your body Bella Baxter. Yours to give freely.

BELLA

I generally charged thirty francs.

MAX

Seems low.

BELLA

Do you believe people improvable Max?

MAX

I do, as a human body can be cured of illness, so can men and women be cured of aspects.

BELLA

Will you marry me Max McCandles?

MAX

I will.

She grabs him and kisses him. He kisses her back.

BELLA

We will need less of your tongue in the future but overall most agreeable.

MAX

I will take a note. And have you been checked for um... disease?

BELLA

I have not, but I shall. I am enjoying this practical love we have.

MAX

Mine is also passionate! I assure you.

Bella laughs.

BELLA  
You are adorable. You always were.

CUT TO

139 INT LONDON CHURCH - DAY

139

Max stands at the altar, a priest before them. A few tourists looking around the church, or praying in pews. No guests. Bella walks down the aisle. Baxter appears beside her, aided by Prim.

BELLA  
God! You are walking?

BAXTER  
I have taken 5 milligrams of heroin through the toes for the pain, amphetamines for energy, and cocaine because I am partial to cocaine. I will walk you down the aisle.

They walk to Max.

PRIEST  
And so by the powers vested in me by the church I will solemnize this union. Do you Bella Baxter take this man as your husband?

She is about to answer.

ALFIE  
Did we miss the part about anyone objecting to this? Or has that been removed in some kind faux modernization of the catechism.

They turn. Alfred Blessington, a sombre looking but magnetic man, has stormed into the church.

ALFIE (CONT'D)  
Hello Victoria, you look well.

BELLA  
Do you refer to me sir?

ALFIE  
Man doesn't normally introduce himself to his wife. But if I must-

Baxter coughs violently. Blood sprays.

DUNCAN

He is the God of it. I do not know if he is in her power or she in his. It is a devil's hand at work as you see. He coughs not air as a normal man but blood.

MAX

He has cancer you fucking idiot!

BELLA

Duncan?

DUNCAN

Do not lay your eyes on me you demon.

ALFIE

As I was saying. General Alfred Blessington. Alfie to you. You really do not know me? When Mr. Wedderburn put your photo in the paper.

DUNCAN

I remembered that old bird at the hotel called you Victoria Blessington. And pieced this diabolical fuckfest of a puzzle together.

Bella looks at Alfie.

BELLA

You are-

ALFIE

Your dear Alfie. You left in a state of some mental addlement and hysteria over your pregnancy. On the discovery of your absence I felt disembowelled. I have disembowelled men on the field of battle and I always imagined a dull hollow throbbing. And that is what it was like. There is also a stench, but that does not apply as a metaphor here. Here you are my darling. Here you are.

He comes toward her arms outstretched.

BAXTER

Oh God.

BELLA

I have no recollection of you. I am Bella Baxter.

ALFIE  
Hurtful but perhaps you hit your head. And these men have clearly taken advantage of you.

BAXTER  
Please go sir!

Bella looks at Baxter and Max. Back at Alfie.

BELLA  
You were my husband?

ALFIE  
Your dear Alfie.

BAXTER  
Bella. I am sorry.

BELLA  
Actually I would like to go.

MAX  
What?!

BAXTER  
Bella!

BELLA  
Do you have a carriage sir?

ALFIE  
..Yes!

BELLA  
Let us go then.

BAXTER  
Bella!

He grabs her arm. She looks at him.

BELLA  
Let me go God.

He does.

BELLA (CONT'D)  
Will you stop me Max?

He shakes his head.



- 141 INT CARRIAGE - DAY 141
- Bella sits with Alfie in the carriage. There are flowers on the seat. It's a bit awkward. He smiles at her. Pats her hand.
- ALFIE  
It is good to have you back  
Victoria.
- 142 EXT ALFIE'S HOUSE GATES - DAY 142
- Some gates open.
- The carriage pulls into a circular driveway.
- High walls. Long driveway.
- The gates shut behind her and are bolted.
- She looks up at the mansion in front of her.
- 143 EXT ALFIE'S HOUSE DRIVEWAY - DAY 143
- Alfie helps her from the carriage.
- As they head up the steps. Alfie pulls a pistol from his pocket. She looks at it.
- ALFIE  
The servants and I have not been  
getting along. I fear an uprising.
- The door opens, a dishevelled butler, a cigarette hanging from his lip, opens it. Sees Bella. His eyes widen. He steps back.
- ALFIE (CONT'D)  
You remember David darling.
- David steps back, nods to her.
- As they enter, a maid with her arm in a sling, sees Bella.
- ALFIE (CONT'D)  
Allison look who's back.
- She nods slowly.
- 144 INT ALFIE'S HOUSE HALLWAY - DAY 144
- Allison and Bella walk together along the dusty dishevelled hallway.

BELLA

You know me?

She nods.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Tell me about myself.

The girl stares at her. Looks away. Keeps walking.

BELLA (CONT'D)

Was I nice?

The girl barks a laugh. They enter a room.

145 INT ALFIE'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY

145

Bella takes in the room, she goes to the dressing table. Sees a writing desk. On the pad is the outline of the word fuck written forty times.

146 INT ALFIE'S HOUSE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

146

Alfie and Bella sit at the dining table. An array of dishes on the table. Alfie eats with gusto. She watches him.

ALFIE

Eat. All your favourites. Kippers.  
Goose. Tongue. Champagne.  
I missed you.

BELLA

What do you think was the root of  
the unhappiness, what drove her to  
the bridge to leap off?

He stares at her. Smiles.

ALFIE

You hated the baby, and called it  
'the monster'.

BELLA

I see. I have noticed a lack of  
maternal instinct.

ALFIE

And yet I am happy to have you  
home.

He raises a glass.

BELLA

How did we meet?

ALFIE

At a ball.

BELLA

Why did we like each other?

ALFIE

We shared a love of good times.  
Watch. Allison! Soup!

He clicks his finger. The doberman in the corner stands to attention. Walks over to the door. As the door opens.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Rex.

The doberman leaps up on its hind legs and barks like crazy, just as Allison enters with a tureen of soup.

Startled, Allison staggers back, falls, the tureen of soup going all over her. Alfie roars laughing. Bella can't help but laugh too.

ALLISON

Fuck.

She gets up, makes to come at him. He takes his revolver and waves it in her direction.

ALFIE

We'll have some cheese when you can.

BELLA

A love of cruelty. I was not a kind person it seems.

ALFIE

Kind? You would never be so dull Victoria. An appalling idea. Wedderburn says you were a whore. I suspect it was part of his madn-

BELLA

I was. In Paris. I tired of it but it was fascinating.

Alfie stares at her as she tries kippers.

ALFIE

Right.

BELLA

These kippers are strangely delicious. Vinegary or something.

ALFIE

Marriage is a constant challenge some we bend to some we bend to us. I will try to forgive you for the whoring, your sexual hysteria was often out of hand, and also for the killing of our unborn child. In fact when I list how you've wronged me Jesus Christ himself would probably beat your head in with a bat. You are blessed with a forgiving husband.

BELLA

I have not wronged you. For I do not know you Alfie.

ALFIE

You're in luck as I've had a lot of experience in the field with amnesia, either men who wished to forget where they were, or a mortar exploded nearby ringing their cranium like a church bell. I suggest we stick close to the house for several months or a year until you have made a full recovery.

BELLA

I will leave at my leisure but I am flattered by your desire to trap me. You are not the first.

ALFIE

I will have to shoot you in the fucking head if you try to leave darling.

BELLA

The front or the back of the head?

ALFIE

The back as to be sure you were leaving and I was not being rash. I have missed you.

BELLA

So I am a prisoner?

ALFIE

This conversation has gone down an unfortunate route. I am sure you will be as happy as you were before.

BELLA

As I was before? When I threw myself from a bridge?

ALFIE  
I suspect you fell while looking  
for fish.

BELLA  
Why would you want to keep me here  
if I did not wish to stay?

ALFIE  
If one is to drown let it be in a  
river of love.

David clears his plate. Alfie cocks his weapon.

ALFIE (CONT'D)  
Does that pheasant look stripped to  
the bone?

DAVID  
It was a misjudgement sir. I  
apologize.

ALFIE  
Desert darling?

147 OMITTED 147

148 OMITTED 148

149 OMITTED 149

150 EXT ALFIE'S HOUSE GATES - DAY 150

Morning. Bella exits into the garden. She goes to the gate.  
It is impossible to open. Looks at how high the walls are.  
Realizes she's trapped.

151 INT ALFIE'S HOUSE DINNING ROOM - DAY 151

She passes through the house, hears talking, follows the  
sound.

Stands at the door, sees Alfie talking to a doctor.

ALFIE  
It comes off easy?

DOCTOR  
Like a button on a suit.  
I saw them do it in Africa with  
sharpened rocks but had my own more  
precise device made.

He holds a metal device, a small round circle of metal with a razor that slides across it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)  
Do you want just clitoral hood, or  
glans as well?

ALFIE  
The whole infernal packet.

DOCTOR  
It will calm her no end.

Bella stands watching, breathing heavily shocked.

ALFIE  
This time we will get it done. I  
shall get her sedated and bring her  
to your surgery this evening.

152 INT ALFIE'S HOUSE BELLA'S BEDROOM - DAY 152

Bella sits in her room, looks at the pad with the word fuck written over and over.

ALFIE O.S  
Victoria darling, where are you?!

CUT TO

153 INT ALFIE'S DINING ROOM - DAY 153

Alfie mixes martinis. Lifts one up. For her.

ALFIE  
Ah, perfect timing. Martini.

BELLA  
Rather not. I would however like to  
leave. I found our time together  
interesting, but having now  
ascertained why I threw myself from  
a bridge. I wish to now go see my  
near dead God.

ALFIE  
Adorable idea. Unfortunately my  
darling my life is dedicated to the  
taking of territory. You are mine  
and that is the long and short of  
it.

BELLA  
I am not territory.

ALFIE

The root of the problem is between your legs and I will have it off and it will not distract and divert you anymore. A man spends his life wrangling his sexual compulsions, it's a curse, and yet in some ways his life's work. A woman's life's work is children, I intend to rid you of that infernal packet between your legs and plant a seed straight after.

BELLA

Let me explain what has happened. Victoria, your wife, threw herself from a bridge and died. Baxter found her, took her to his surgery, he then removed the baby, removed the brain from the baby, transplanted it into my head and reanimated me.

ALFIE

Uh huh.

BELLA

I'll bring you the file. It's actually quite fascinating. However, I will keep my new life and my lovely old clitoris thank you. So if you'd call for a carriage for me-

Alfie draws a gun.

ALFIE

They talk and talk, and at some point there is nothing left but to pull a gun. It is the way with women.

Bella walks to him calmly. He studies her.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Are you giving in?

BELLA

I'd rather you shot me in the fucking heart.

ALFIE

I will oblige if I have to. Drink the drink my darling. Chloroform and gin, delicious.

She picks it up.

BELLA

In some ways it would be a relief  
to be rid of my questing self.

ALFIE

Sip deeply and that freedom is  
yours.

She tosses it suddenly in his face. Grabs at the gun, they  
struggle. It goes off. They stop. There is a hole in Alfie's  
foot. Blood pools out. Bella sees the blood pouring onto the  
floor. As does he. Bella still has the gun.

ALFIE (CONT'D)

Fuck.

He reaches for her suddenly, but then topples over. She looks  
down at him.

CUT TO

154 OMITTED 154

155 INT BAXTER'S FOYER - DAY 155

Alfie lies on the ground in the foyer, bleeding. Prim stands  
staring at him. Bella and Max enter.

BELLA

We must get him up to the surgery.  
He will die if we cannot stop it.

PRIM

He's bleeding a lot.

Alfie is falling in and out of consciousness.

ALFIE

You're....fucking...de..ad..

He passes out.

MAX

Bella, if he lives...I sense he is  
not a man who will stop.

BELLA

I will not watch him bleed to death  
Max, but I agree, he could do with  
improvement.

Bella and Prim drag Alfie down the hall.



156 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE SURGERY - DAY

156

Alfie lies on the surgical table, unconscious. Max is operating in his gown. He digs into the bloody flesh, tries to get the bullet.

MAX

I have controlled the bleeding.

He looks up as Bella leads the goat in.

BELLA

I have the notes.

He looks at her. She smiles.

BELLA (CONT'D)

I am never happier than when I am in here.

She picks up a scalpel.

CUT TO

157 INT BAXTER'S HOUSE DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

157

Baxter is set up on the sofa, machines pumping around him. Bella lays down next to him.

BAXTER

Bella.

She takes his hand.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

You're back.

She nods.

BELLA

It was just a story of someone else, not Bella Baxter.

Max lies down the other side of Baxter.

BAXTER

All my life people's eyes looked at me, horror, pity...

He smiles as she stares at him with love.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

But you.

He kisses her head.

BAXTER (CONT'D)

It is very interesting... what is happening...

He presses her hand. She kisses his forehead. She looks at his hand, limp in hers. He's dead. His eyes open.

Bella stares at him. With her fingers closes his eye lids. Lays her head on his chest.

158

EXT BAXTER'S HOUSE GARDEN - DAY

158

In a courtyard garden. Max is making drinks. Prim throws a ball at Felicity. She has mastered catching the ball. She's very happy. Toinette lounging on a chair and next to Bella reading.

BELLA

Anatomy exam is making me nervous.

MAX

I have tested you many times, you know it.

TOINETTE

No one knows anatomy better than you. Crois-moi.

BELLA

Certainement- effectivement.  
Ladies? Gin?

PRIM

Please.

FELICITY

Gin.

BELLA

And we should get water for the general.

We cut to Alfie. He is on the lawn on all fours, eating grass. He bleats.

PRIM

Felicity. Water.

Alfie eats grass. Bella and Toinette clink glasses, happy. Max, Prim, happy. Felicity makes her way slowly to get water.

Bella smiles as she reads her book.

THE END