

BRIDGERTON

"A Lady's Glove"

Episode #301

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Based on Julia Quinn's novel

"An Offer from a Gentleman"

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Previously On Bridgerton

Episode #208 "The Viscount Who Loved Me"

Anthony Bridgerton finds Kate Sharma unconscious in a field and carries her back to the Danbury house. Kate stays unconscious in bed with a concussion. Anthony is so distraught that he won't visit her, instead focusing on his business affairs.

Queen Charlotte believe Eloise is Lady Whistledown and threatens to bring the full might of the crown down on her if she doesn't come clean. Penelope Featherington, AKA Lady Whistledown, outs Eloise as a political revolutionary in order to protect her from the queen's suspicion.

Lady Featherington throws a ball with the money her cousin, the new Lord Featherington, swindled from the ton on a bad investment in his coal mines. At the ball, Colin discovers the scam, and threatens to out the new lord. Lady Featherington banishes her cousin to the Americas, keeping all the wealth and her good name.

The scandal of Eloise's extracurricular interests shames her family, but they still go to the Featherington ball. Eloise is humiliated, and then realizes Lady Whistledown is her best friend Penelope. She ransacks Penelope's room and finds the evidence: the income from her paper. The friends fight and fall out. Penelope overhears Colin say he would never court her in his wildest dreams.

Kate wakes from her concussion and attends the Featherington ball. Anthony Bridgerton confesses his feelings and proposes marriage at the climax of the season. Kate accepts.

EXT. MAYFAIR, LONDON - DAY

April in 1815 is fresh and bright. Ladies stroll with their gentlemen on the streets. Boys hawk newspapers. Women exit dressmakers and enjoy tea in shops. The gentry accost the news paper boy, quickly passing over the money.

EXT. HYDE PARK/ROTTEN ROW - DAY

A gardener digs in the dirt, managing flowers for the elite.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Another London season has curtsied
to us, and we in turn doff our cap.

Two gentlemen and a lady (lady's maid hovering behind) greet each other. Gentleman A takes the lady's hand in a kiss.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
But really, can anything happen
which has not already transpired in
previous years?

As they pass, the lady's maid watches gentleman B give the lady a lustful look... And she returns it.

The gardener dead-heads a rose.

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

PORTIA FEATHERINGTON (40s) is in full command of her home, never more colorful and gaudy than now. PHILIPA (21), boney like a flamingo, eats lavish chocolate from a box on the couch, bored. PENELOPE (19), plump and rosin, reads in a chair out of the way and glances out the window, sad.

PORTIA
Never fear my dears, this is the
year we find you both a match, what
with your dowries are richly
supplied.

PHILIPA
(pointed look at Penelope)
Really, *both* of us mother?

PORTIA
Yes, both. And stop that,
(grabs chocolates box)
Unless you wish to join her.

PENELOPE

Mama, how can we have dowries when our cousin stole from every member of the ton. They will wonder-

PORTIA

Nonsense. We were as much a victim as any of them.

(bitterly)

Your dowries were set aside in trust by you dear, thoughtful papa before he passed.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

Will 1815 be a dull affair, the same scandals dressed in different frocks?

Penelope sighs and looks out the window, across the street...

EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE/BRIDGERTON HOUSE - DAY

The most extravagant house in the square drips in wisteria, framed with sweet roses. Fairytale beauty, aristocratic luxury.

A BUMBLEBEE hovers around a lush LADIE'S GLOVE flower.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

Fear not, gentle reader, for if there is some sumptuous morsel of gossip to be had, you can be sure I, your valiant author, will uncover it.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/FRANCESCA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

FRANCESCA BRIDGERTON (18), dainty like a sparrow, stands before a mirror in a white silk dress, in all the elaborate gilding of a DEBUTANT. She is nervous.

The maids buzz around Francesca, yet she is not the center of focus. The room is filled with five of her seven siblings. All hang about the room dressed in finery for presentation.

FRANCESCA

Is Daphne coming? Where is Anthony?

VIOLET BRIDGERTON (late 40s), the embodiment of motherhood, paces the room, not nearly as nervous as previous years. She's an old hand at this.

VIOLET

They are coming dearest, don't worry. They wouldn't miss your special day. Eloise, support your sister.

ELOISE (19) quick witted and bookish with a fire inside, reads a thick leather book in the corner, resentful of all the day stands for. Her satin dress does not sit right.

ELOISE

I don't see what else I can do for her, I've already set the bar so low. She will fall somewhere between me and Daphne: not the season's diamond, but not a political revolutionary.

Her brothers, BENEDICT (28), tall with sculpted face, COLIN (21), stout with tanned skin, and GREGORY (14), mischievous like Peter Pan, all snicker.

VIOLET

Eloise!

ELOISE

What?

(tries again)

Maybe Lady Whistledown will interrupt your presentation too.

FRANCESCA

Mama!

VIOLET

Out! Everyone out!

The siblings stampede to the door like finely dressed cattle. HYACINTH (12), a child of spring, skips over and pecks her sister on the cheek.

HYACINTH

You'll do brilliantly sister. You look like a fairy princess!

The sisters squeeze hands. Violet grabs Benedict.

VIOLET

Find him.

ANTHONY (30), Adonis in a tux, enters with his wife KATE (22), whip smart, divinely beautiful, and 8 months pregnant.

ANTHONY
No need, We'd never miss it.

FRANCESCA
Anthony!

ANTHONY
(kiss on the cheek)
You look lovely sister.

VIOLET
(giving a kiss)
Kate! Are you sure you should be here?

KATE
I wouldn't miss my dear sister's presentation. I'll just wait for your all to return.

ELOISE
I'll stay too, keep my dear sister company.

VIOLET
(steely)
No, you will not.

ELOISE
Mama!

VIOLET
No Eloise, the ton will only forget last year's indiscretion if we give them a reason to.

Francesca is forgotten again, but smiles at herself in the mirror, watching her crazy family.

ANTHONY
Speaking of which, shall we?

He offers his arm to Francesca. The Bridgertons tumble out of the room and down the stairs.

EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE - DAY

A mayhem of siblings, carriages, and horses. DAPHNE BRIDGERTON BASSET (20) greets them, a kiss for Francesca. The ladies fill their carriage, the men theirs.

They aren't the only ones. Down the street...

EXT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE - DAY

The home is as grand as the Bridgerton's but otherwise opposite in every way: dark, forbidding, no flowers, and a little worn down.

The doors burst open as ARAMINTA GUNNINGWORTH, COUNTESS OF PENWOOD (40's) swans out: beautiful, vicious. Behind her, snobbish and elegant, hurries her eldest ROSAMUND REILING (18), dressed for presentation to the queen.

ARAMINTA

Look at you. You will be the season's diamond, if the queen isn't blind, or touched in the head... like her husband.

Rosamund snorts at her mother's barb.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

What was that? A lady never snorts. Come now. Posy. POSY! I swear that girl. She'll not make us late. Come on, up in!

Rosamund gets into the carriage as another daughter barrels to the door. POSY REILING (17), is awkward and pudgy and very nervous. Ugly duckling indeed.

Hurrying behind her is SOPHIE BECKETTE (17), helping with last touches. The dull servant's rags can't quite detract from her beauty, nor her kindness.

POSY

This is awful. I wish she would wait another year, like she did for Rosamund. You know she did this on purpose, don't you? To set up a contrast with Rosamund, so she would look even more beautiful.

SOPHIE

You look lovely Posy. Don't worry. The queen will love you. She's met enough debutants to discern the rose from the thorn.

Posy is immediately encouraged.

ARAMINTA

The new earl will meet us there.
POSY!!!

The girls jump and Sophie picks up Posy's train to help her in. The carriage takes off. Sophie and servants watch. Sophie's encouraging smile falls away.

The servants go inside. All is quiet. Except the crunch of stones as the house keeper, MRS. GIBBONS (50s), steps up to put an arm around Sophie.

MRS. GIBBONS

Come now Sophie, there's just
enough time for a pot of tea before
we have to ready for their return.

Sophie smile weakly before the older woman leaves. Sophie looks down the empty road before heading inside.

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRIVATE STUDY - DAY

QUEEN CHARLOTTE (70'S) is elaborately festooned for her role in presentation day. She is utterly focused on a gilded wall where drawings of young ladies have been tacked.

Glittering strings connects images, various underlined Whistledown leaflets, with notes in the queen's hand. There is a large X over Eloise Bridgerton, but Penelope and the other young ladies are still open. She is DETECTIVE QUEEN.

LADY DANBURY (70s) enters, just as regal, less extravagant, more practical. A swan to the queens peacock.

LADY DANBURY

Your Majesty?

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

It's one of them, I just know it.

Lady Danbury's brow raises as she takes in the gilded walls.

LADY DANBURY

One of the debutants?

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

Of course not! They are too young.
And the papers started two years
ago. It was that crop, right under
my nose. But she will be here this
season. And I- I will sleuth her
out. No one can out-fox this queen.
This is the year I unmask Lady
Whistledown.

She turns, sending her enormous skirts swinging, and sashes out of the room, determined. Lady Danbury takes in the wall with a smile, and follows, cane clacking.

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

SOCIETY MEMBERS fill the hall. Bridgertons on one side. Young men wait eagerly to take in the next crop of young ladies.

Queen Charlotte is sitting to attention and looking everywhere BUT down the center, hunting for Lady Whistledown.

MONTAGE: A series of young women are announced and presented before the queen. She gives them barely a flick of a glance before looking again all over the room.

LORD-IN-WAITING

Miss Francesca Bridgerton.
Presented by her mother. The Right Honourable, the Dowager Viscountess Bridgerton.

Heads turn, taking in Francesca, who is nervous, but not to the point of freezing. She walks down the aisle delicately.

She bows, perfectly... but the Queen is distracted, straining all over the room. She gives a dismissive jerk of her hand.

Francesca is CRUSHED. Her sibling frown, watching the Queen. She backs away slowly, discouraged.

LORD-IN-WAITING (CONT'D)

Miss Rosamund Reiling.
(another card)
Miss Posy Reiling.
(another card)
Presented by their mother. The Right Honourable, the Dowager Countess Penwood.

Rosamund, Posy, and Araminta make their way down the aisle. The queen is distracted, until catching a glimpse of Rosamund. She stops, concentrates.

Araminta smiles smugly. Posy can hardly breath, sweating.

They bow before Her Majesty. Posy's shaking. Queen Charlotte gives them a nod with a raised brow. They back away slowly.

ARAMINTA
 (to her daughters)
 Victory is sweet.

BRIDGERTON TITLE
 SEQUENCE.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

The family is spread out in their various pursuits: Benedict drawing, Colin poring over maps, Gregory and Hyacinth playing chess, and Daphne is serving tea.

Kate embroiders a small bib over a very round belly, nestled comfortably in Anthony's arms as he reads the newspaper.

Violet reads the latest Lady Whistledown sheet. She laughs.

VIOLET
 I see we were not the only one to
 witness the queen's
 absentmindedness.

ELOISE
 (venomous)
 Lady Whistledown wasn't even there.

KATE
 How could you possibly know that?

The other siblings look questioningly at their sister, sprawled on the couch with a book.

ELOISE
 (hesitating, then
 flippant)
 Mark my words, Lady Whistledown
 gets all her news from
 eavesdropping servants. She is not
 the center of society, she is the
 back end of it.

COLIN
 That would be fitting. The rudder
 of a boat steers the whole ship.

VIOLET
 If she noticed the queen's lack of
 attention, then others will know
 her assessments were... off the
 other day.

DAPHNE

Indeed, you are quite right mama. I thought you were splendid Francesca, and the queen will discover it soon. So will Lady Whistledown.

ELOISE

Oh enough with Lady Whistledown! She is a twittering, jealous, spiteful fool!

VIOLET

Are you quite alright dearest?

Eloise goes back to her book, fuming.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

In any case, you are right Daphne. The queen merely needs another chance to observe your sister's charms. We will host a ball.
(stroking Francesca)
In your honor, my dearest.

FRANCESCA

Really?

HYACINTH

A ball! Can I come?

VIOLET

Certainly.

GREGORY

Balls are boring. They're all the same, and you never let me do as I like.

HYACINTH

YOU weren't invited.

GREGORY

Hey!

HYACINTH

Though he has a point. What if we were to do something different? What about... a masquerade?

Varying expressions of surprise.

GREGORY

Yes! That sounds wonderful.

FRANCESCA

If the ball is in my honor, isn't the point for me to attract suitors? How can I do that if they don't even know who I am under the mask?

DAPHNE

You would wear a demi-mask. I hear they're all the rage. Besides, you could have quite a lot of fun with your costume.

ELOISE

That is actually not a terrible idea.

VIOLET

A mascaraed... I love it! Yes, we'll throw a mascaraed ball.

BENEDICT

Excellent, it's well to know Colin and I won't be recognized by the over-eager mama's.

KATE

(snorting)

Of course they will, you're a Bridgerton.

Anthony strokes his wife fondly.

ANTHONY

What a relief to be off the market.

VIOLET

(sternly)

You shall direct your efforts to helping your brothers join you in matrimonial bliss.

BENEDICT/COLIN

Mother!

VIOLET

We'll have to get costumes for your all.

HYACINTH

Can I be a princess?

COLIN

I thought the point was to look somewhat different than one normally does at a ball.

FRANCESCA

Or maybe it's an excuse to dress up as royalty.

Benedict sneak out of the room as the others discuss costumes. His mama follows.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

VIOLET

Benedict - I expect to see you there, and I would recognized my sons no matter what they were wearing.

BENEDICT

Oh mama, must I?

VIOLET

Yes, you must look for YOUR wife. Your brother has secured his bride and now it's your turn.

BENEDICT

I rather thought it was BECAUSE my brother secured a wife that I did not have to. And you already have a second grandchild on the way.

VIOLET

It's not that -
(on his look)
Oh alright, it's partially that, but I want to see you happy.

BENEDICT

I am happy -

VIOLET

No, you're not, you're stalling. What happened at the art academy?

BENEDICT

All is well mother. You have no need to worry.
(kiss on the cheek)
I will come to your ball.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The servant's bedroom is small, bare. Sophie wakes on a narrow pallet just before dawn. She rolls over and pick's up a stained copy of Whistledown. With a faint smile as she's carried away.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

There has been some speculation as to This Author's identity, loud wonderings that I might be a servant.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

Sophie carries heavy buckets down a dark hallway, trying not to spill the water.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

For truly who has greater access to the intimate secrets of the ton, than the industrious men and women of our society whom we rely so heavily upon?

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ARAMINTA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Araminta sits in a tub, reading the INVITATION to the Bridgerton masquerade ball, a devilish smile on her lips. Sophie pours in more hot water.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

They are the quiet chaperone in the corner, the ones who clear our fire places, indeed prepare everything that our hands touch.

Araminta exits the tub, taking care to slosh as much water as possible on the floor and Sophie, who must stand there waiting with a towel.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ROSAMUND'S ROOM - DAY

Sophie cleans out the fireplace and finds a partially burnt correspondence. It's still legible, she considers reading, but tosses it in the rubbish bin.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
 But any empty headed fool who might
 believe this clearly has no grasp
 on just how hard our loyal servants
 work.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/KITCHENS - DAY

Sophie helps the cook and other servants as they prepare the dinner and afternoon tea. They chatter and laugh together, enjoying each other's company.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
 This Author is known for her barbed
 tongue, but I urge you, dear ton,
 take good care of your staff:
 compared to them, I know nothing.

ROSAMUND
 (screeching loud enough to
 be heard in kitchens)
 SOPHIEEEEEEEEE!!!!!!!!!!

The entire kitchen staff stop and look at Sophie. All smiles are gone. She sighs, picks up the tea tray and hurries off.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ROSAMUND'S BEDROOM - DAY

Sophie backs into the room with a tea tray, revealing Rosamund in a corset, another maid tightening it. She slaps her away and summons Sophie with a snap.

Sophie deposits the tray and takes her place behind the corset.

ROSAMUND
 I won't be late for this ball. If I
 am, I shall have your head on a
 platter.

SOPHIE
 You won't be late.

She helps her get into her Marie Antoinette dress. Posy comes into the room in her mermaid costume, nearly tripping over the tail. She picks it up over her arm.

POSY
 Sophie, do you think you would have
 time for my hair? I've found some
 green ribbons that look like
 seaweed.

ROSAMUND

She WON'T have time. She has to help me.

Sophie lifts the monstrous white wig and deposits it on Rosamund's head. She holds bobby pins in her mouth.

SOPHIE

I'll come as soon as I'm done.

Araminta comes swishing into the room.

ARAMINTA

It's too loose, they didn't get my measurements right.

POSY

Didn't it just arrive?

ARAMINTA

And they did it wrong. You'll have to take it in before the ball tonight Sophie.

SOPHIE

Of course.

Posy looks at Sophie, crest fallen. Sophie gives her a wink.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

(last pin, patting the wig.)

There, all set. Let me take a look at your dress.

Araminta comes over and Sophie begins taking in the fabric with her pins.

POSY

Mama, Sophie is going to dress my hair tonight like -

ARAMINTA

Of course she's going to dress your hair. Quit your dilly-dallying this minute and go put compresses on your eyes so they don't look so puffy.

POSY

My eyes are puffy?

ARAMINTA
Your eyes are always puffy, don't
you think so Rosamund?

ROSAMUND
Always, but a compress will help,
I'm sure.

Posy glances at Sophie who shakes her head from where she's
crouched, needle pins in her mouth. Posy sighs and leaves.

SOPHIE
How's that?

ARAMINTA
Too tight.

SOPHIE
(after adjusting)
What about that?

ARAMINTA
Too loose.

SOPHIE
(replacing the pin in the
EXACT SAME SPOT)
There. How does that feel?

ARAMINTA
It'll do.

Sophie smiles to herself.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ENTRYWAY - NIGHT

Araminta, Rosamund, and Posy rush out the door, in thick
cloaks. Sophie watches them go and sighs wistfully.

Mrs. Gibbons hurries over to her and snatches her hand.

MRS. GIBBONS
There's no time to loose!

SOPHIE
I beg your pardon?

MRS. GIBBONS
Come with me. You'll need to get
undressed.

SOPHIE
What?

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - NIGHT

The ball room is lavishly decorated with richly colored plants and dark curtains, reminiscent of a Venetian masquerade.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

Of the vast and varied balls of the season, I believe there is nothing more intriguing than a masquerade.

INTERCUT MASQUERADE BALL/SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophie undresses. Household maids flit around her, excited, helping her into a grand silver dress.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Guests fill the ballroom holding glasses of champagne, everyone wearing masks, and a wide variety of costumes. Portly men are King Henry VIII, and more fit men are Alexander the Great.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

This Author waits with baited breath to see what costumes the ton will choose for the Bridgerton masquerade. It is rumored that Eloise Bridgerton plans to dress as Joan of Arc, and Penelope Featherington, out for her third season and recently returned from a visit with Irish cousins, will don the costume of a leprechaun.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maids fix Sophie's hair into an updo of curls. A demi-mask is laid to her face and tied in the back. A maid applies rouge.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - NIGHT

The unmarried Bridgerton brothers have gone as themselves: basic black kit and black demi-mask. Gregory breaks the mold-Pirate. He zooms between guests.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Miss Posy Reiling, stepdaughter to
the late Earl of Penwood, plans a
costume of mermaid, which This
Author personally cannot wait to
behold.

Bridgerton girls have greater variety: Hyacinth - princess,
Francesca - swan, Eloise - Joan of Arc. Daphne - nymph,
accompanied by her Duke, Simon - Apollo.

Kate wears an ornate Indian sari, stitch with gold tingling
coins. Anthony is enamored with his wife, wearing a matching
embroidered kurta at her side.

Mrs. Gibbons brings and ornate pair of stitched SILVER
SLIPPERS belonging to Araminta. Sophie looks concerned but
steps into them.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Our great ton, forever under the
quizzing glass of society, their
mamas, AND the queen, relish the
chance at anonymity.

The Featheringtons are a bowl of produce: Portia - grapes,
1st daughter Philipa - banana, 2nd daughter Prudence
Featherington Finch- tomato, and Mr. Finch - Zucchini.

EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Carriages pull up to the Bridgerton's home. The Penwood women
disembark in heavy cloaks.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Indeed, I assert to you we will see
the true hearts and desires of the
ton with the mask ON, as we will
never see with it off.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Maids help Sophie pull on silk gloves past her elbows. Sophie
fingers the monogram: SLG

MRS. GIBBONS
SLG. Sara Louisa Gunningworth. Your
grandmother.

Sophie gives her a startled look. Mrs. Gibbons, all the
maids, are moved by the moment.

MRS. GIBBONS (CONT'D)
 You look lovely, darling. Now
 listen - the coachman has returned
 from taking the countess and her
 girls, he will take you to
 Bridgerton House. But he has to be
 waiting outside when they wish to
 depart, which means you must leave
 by midnight and not a second later.
 Do you understand?

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - NIGHT

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
 So pay careful heed, dear reader,
 at the upcoming Bridgerton Ball.

Araminta and her daughters enter the ball, Rosamund looking
 well pleased with herself dressed as Marie Antoinette. She
 casts an enticing eye at the Bridgerton brothers.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
 Will you find your stolen kiss
 with a duke, a viscount, or
 perhaps, even... forbidden love?

Posy waddles along behind as a mermaid, forgotten.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN
 Will any of the young lady's catch
 the eye of a Bridgerton brother?
 This Author sincerely doubts it,
 for if any member of the ton had
 caught their eye thus far, surely
 they would have acted sooner.

Penelope circles the ball in a ridiculous leprechaun outfit.

ELOISE
 Eaves dropping for your gossip rag?

PENELOPE
 Eloise -

ELOISE
 I must applaud you. Truly, how you
 discovered I would be Joan of Arc,
 I will never know.

PENELOPE
 Eloise, please, this is enough. Can
 we not talk?

(MORE)

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Surely you must understand by now I was protecting you -

ELOISE

You were protecting YOURSELF! If you really were protecting me, you would have turned yourself in to the queen. Told her who Whistledown really is.

PENELOPE

She never would have believed me.

ELOISE

You could have MADE her believe you. You convince the rest of the ton of whatever else you please, and then suddenly, when I am on the line, your powers of persuasion fail you!

The women stare at each other.

PENELOPE

You are my friend -

ELOISE

I am not your friend! I understand that now. You smear everyone around you to cast attentions off yourself.

PENELOPE

If you actually READ it, and thought of anyone but yourself and your family, you would see that is not true! Look at the things I wrote -

ELOISE

- About your family? Ah, yes, and dear Marina, when you smeared my brother Colin as well. What a victim you appear to be Pen! Well I am done with you.

Eloise swans off, self righteous, leaving a furious and hurt Penelope behind her.

Francesca waits to be asked to dance. A promising young man, dressed as Alexander the Great comes towards her...

And offers for another girl, a flamboyantly dressed Cleopatra. It's like Francesca is INVISIBLE.

Queen Charlotte enters with her attendants. All in the ballroom bow. The queen surveys her domain, dressed as Marie Antoinette...

Rosamund and Araminta look down at Rosamund's costume in horrified shock. Posy muffles a snort.

Lady Danbury approaches as Hera, goddess of women, marriage, and childbirth. She bows.

LADY DANBURY

Your Majesty.

(falling in step)

It looks as though your efforts to unmask Lady Whistledown will be rather thwarted this evening.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

(examining each guest)

Why would you assume that?

LADY DANBURY

Because they are ALL masked.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE

(conspiratorial)

Not at all, Lady Danbury. Don't you see: all the easier for me. Lady Whistledown will believe herself never safer than in an anonymous crowd. She will slip up, and I - I will catch her when she does!

Detective Queen presses on, determined.

EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Sophie gets out of the carriage alone, taking the hand of the footman, who gives her a wink for good luck. She looks up at Bridgerton House in awe.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - NIGHT

Eloise joins her brother, hiding in a corner of the room.

BENEDICT

Is that pants???

ELOISE

(proud)

I am Joan of Arc, before her battle.

BENEDICT
Are you at war, sister?

ELOISE
On all fronts. Give me that.

She snags a glass of champagne from a passing waiter.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
(paling)
Oh no, here comes mother.

Eloise dashes away as Violet approaches them.

VIOLET
Benedict, wasn't your sister here a moment ago?

BENEDICT
What can I do for you, Mother? And don't say 'Dance with Hermione Smythe-Smith.' Last time I did that I nearly lost three toes in the process.

VIOLET
I wasn't going to ask anything of the sort. I was going to ask you to dance with Philipa Featherington.

Off Philipa, a vivid banana in the corner.

BENEDICT
Have mercy, Mother. She's even worse.

VIOLET
I'm not asking you to marry the chit, just dance with her.

BENEDICT
I'll tell you what, I'll dance with Penelope Featherington if you keep Philipa at bay.

VIOLET
(smug)
That'll do. She's over there by the lemonade table, dressed as a leprechaun, poor thing.

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

The color is good for her, but someone really must take her mother in hand next time they venture out to the dressmaker. A more unfortunate costume, I can't imagine.

BENEDICT

You obviously haven't seen the mermaid.

VIOLET

No poking fun at the guests.

BENEDICT

But they make it so easy.

VIOLET

I'm off to find your sister.

BENEDICT

Which one?

VIOLET

One of the ones who isn't married. Viscount Guelph might be interested in that Scottish girl, but they aren't betrothed yet.

(pointedly)

Thank you for dancing with Penelope.

Benedict braces himself and pushes through the crowd.

BENEDICT

Miss Featherington!

(both misses turn)

Er, Penelope.

Penelope beams.

The crowd ripples. Benedict turns to see...

Sophie, dressed in silver. She enters the room with awe at the magnificence of it. Everything SLOWS as he watches.

Sophie is a true DIAMOND compared to the gaudy bright costumes of the other guests, and she RADIATES JOY, truly happy for the first time in her life.

Francesca and Hyacinth watch her in awe, jaws dropping.

HYACINTH

(whisper)

She looks like a real princess.

Benedict stills, but he isn't the only one. A millisecond later, they descend, like flies to an unattended cream cake.

Benedict breaks off and moves for Sophie. Penelope is left, distressed and again humiliated. Violet watches in dismay.

Colin, standing close by, sees the whole thing and frowns. He swoops in.

COLIN

What a wonderful costume, Penelope.

In honor of your recent visit to
Ireland no doubt.

(offers hand)

Might I have this dance?

Penelope beams. This is who she wanted anyway. They pass to the dance floor.

Benedict is at the back of the hoard of suitors buzzing around Sophie. They all ask for the next dance but Benedict pushes through.

BENEDICT

Excuse me, gentlemen, but the lady
has already promised this dance to
me.

Sophie grins at his lie and takes his offered hand, following him to the floor.

BENEDICT (CONT'D)

Have you permission to dance the
waltz?

SOPHIE

I do not dance.

BENEDICT

(genuine smile)

You jest.

SOPHIE

(conspiratorial)

I'm afraid I do not. The truth is,
I don't know how.

BENEDICT

A beautiful lady who cannot dance?
It is a crime against nature.

(MORE)

BENEDICT (CONT'D)

There is only one thing to do then:
I shall teach you. Come with me.

Eloise stands at the back, sipping her champagne. Her costume is so convincing that with her mask, the men standing near by give her a brusque nod, assume she is a man too.

PHILIP CAVENDAR (20s), CHARLES HARISON (20s), LEWIS HUMPHREY (20s) are RAKES, educated at Oxford, entitled dandies.

PHILIP

Ah, and I see Colin Bridgerton has run to the rescue, once again.

CHARLES

I don't understand why her mother bothers. Penelope Featherington will still be hugging the wall six seasons from now.

Realization dawns on Eloise as she understands he's right. Lady Whistledown will go on and on forever.

ELOISE

(deepening her voice)
Hardly, she'll be off the market this year.

PHILIP

(peering at her)
Do you know something we don't know.

ELOISE

Obviously.

LEWIS

Well come then, out with it.

ELOISE

Her dowry.

The men all laugh.

CHARLES

Penelope Featherington's dowry is nothing to take note of:
(gesture to the swirling ripe young things)
It's smaller than most of the young ladies.

PHILIP
 (mocking)
 With far less incentive.

They guffaw. Eloise makes a face at the idiots when they're not looking.

ELOISE
 You clearly haven't heard the latest then. Her mama discovered a dowry left for her daughters in trust. A sizable sum.

LEWIS
 How much?

Eloise gives them an aloof glance.

CHARLES
 Double?

Eloise raises an indulgent brow. Now she has their full attention.

PHILIP
 Triple?

ELOISE
Quadrupled.

In unison, the three men look to where Colin swirls the little leprechaun around the room, smiles gone.

The music draws to a close. Colin steps back, bows, Penelope curtsies.

PHILIP
 And how do you know this, sir...

ELOISE
 John..D'Ark. John D'Ark.
 (toasting)
 It was in Whistledown.

Colin spies Eloise and makes his way over.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
 As I was saying, anyone with any interest in that fortune had better move fast, before the cue starts.

The three rakes are perfectly still, calculating, hesitant.

CHARLES

Certainly the same must be said for her sister Philipa.

ELOISE

(dismissive)

Certainly, but I think you will find Penelope the harder catch.

PHILIP

(suspicious)

Why?

ELOISE

You've evidently never talked to either girl. Philipa is a nitwit. Penelope at least has a brain, and she's rather kind...

(recollecting her dear friend, shakes herself)

Why do you think Colin and Benedict are always rushing to her rescue?

Colin stops for a glass of champagne.

ELOISE (CONT'D)

(laying her trap)

What do you gentlemen say to a friendly wager?

LEWIS

What wager?

ELOISE

I'll sweeten the pot: whoever is first to propose to Penelope, and she accepts him, I will give an extra one-hundred pounds.

Colin, only now hearing them, spits out his Champagne in shock.

PHILIP

I'll take that wager.

Eloise shakes hands with each of them and they take off, hunting for their leprechaun...

COLIN

Eloise! What was that?

ELOISE

(back to normal voice)

What? Just a little bit of fun.

COLIN

That was cruel!

ELOISE

Hardly. Penelope is in want of a husband. And anyway it is true. Her mother has increased her dowry substantially. I only gave a friendly push.

COLIN

I'm shocked at you. You would encourage men of disgusting character to court your friend out of interest in her fortune.

ELOISE

Isn't that what most proposals within the ton are about anyway? When you get right down to it.

Eloise leaves. Colin watches as Penelope is swarmed by three men, all asking for the next dance.

Penelope is shocked, flushed with pleasure.

Colin is horrified.

EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/PRIVATE TERRACE - NIGHT

Silver moonlight cloaks the terrace. No guests were expected up here, so only vines garnish the carved stone.

BENEDICT

Here, the private terrace for your first dance lesson.

SOPHIE

The PRIVATE terrace?
(realizing)
You are a Bridgerton. You are Benedict.

BENEDICT

Well, miss, you know my name. It is only fair you give me yours.

SOPHIE

(hiding behind her fan)
Alas, I cannot.

BENEDICT

Not even a hint?

SOPHIE
 (laughing)
 No! This isn't a night for truth.

BENEDICT
 Fair enough, but it is a night for
 dancing, yes?

He steps close and puts his hand to the small of her back,
 taking her hand in his. She's startled but also melting with
 delight.

BENEDICT (CONT'D)
 Your arm rests on mine, here,
 and... one - two - three -
 (etc.)

Sophie is awkward at first, but begins to get the hang of it.

Their smiles fade as they look up from Sophie's floundering
 feet, and are lost in each other's eyes... A tense moment as
 they almost kiss.

BENEDICT (CONT'D)
 (breathless)
 Who are you?

SOPHIE
 (looking away)
 My lord -

BENEDICT
 Fine, then tell me about yourself.
 Do you play the piano? Read? What
 are your interests?

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

- Sophie on the ground in the corridor, scrubbing grey water,
 flecks of dirt on her cheeks, her frock filthy.
- Sophie bringing in Araminta's breakfast tray.
- Sophie changing the chamber pot.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

SOPHIE
 I... sew. I sew.
 (stalling)
 What of you, my lord?

BENEDICT
Benedict, call me Benedict.

SOPHIE
Benedict, what are your interests?

BENEDICT
Until recently I had a position at
the Royal Academy of Art.

SOPHIE
You are an artist?

BENEDICT
(biting, sensitive)
I am an amateur.

SOPHIE
What do you mean?

BENEDICT
I lack the skill of the true
working man.

SOPHIE
(heartbroken for him)
You were dismissed?

BENEDICT
(snorting)
No. I rather think they would have
enjoyed my brother's continuing
patronage, but I could not endure
the patronization. It is an
unfortunate byproduct of my birth.
I will never be as good as they for
one reason; I simply do not need to
be.

Sophie stops and steps out of his arms, shock at what she's
hearing.

SOPHIE
You CHOSE to leave?

BENEDICT
(confused, reaching out
for her)
Well... yes.

She steps away, holding out her hand to stop him.

SOPHIE

Let me see if I have this right.
You WANT to paint, you have the
means, your family supports you,
you have all the time in the world,
and you gave it up...for PRIDE?

Benedict is utterly cowed. Sophie is angry. She steps up to him fiercely.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

If you so admire the working man,
Benedict, then don't let anything
stop you! Chase what you want with
every last ounce of your being. The
rest of us do not have that choice!

Benedict is in astonished awe of her.

The clock strikes midnight. Inside the ballroom, everyone is removing their masks.

BENEDICT

(craving, reaching for her
face)

Who are you?

Sophie clamps her hand on her mask.

SOPHIE

(whirling away)
Midnight, I have to go!

BENEDICT

(snatching)
Wait!

He catches only the edge of her glove and it slides from her hand as she makes her escape.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - NIGHT

All across the ballroom everyone is unmasking. Sophie is small enough to dash and weave, escaping, as Benedict loses sight of her. Sophie slams into Araminta.

ARAMINTA

Watch where you're going!

Sophie dashes away, making her escape into the carriage.

Eloise escapes upstairs without removing her mask.

Penelope is surrounded by admiring suitors.

Francesca is alone taking off her mask. No one cares.

EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE - NIGHT

Benedict pushes through the exiting guests, runs to the street, but there are carriages coming and going everywhere.

The silk LADY'S GLOVE dangles in his hand. He lifts it too his nose. Smells. Frowns.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Francesca sits on the sofa with her embroidery, eagerly awaiting her callers after last night's masquerade. Daphne and Violet handle the tea service, her chaperones.

Hyacinth spins around in delight.

HYACINTH

It was a magical evening.

Eloise is seated at a table, maps spread before her. Colin enters and storms over to her. He keeps his voice low.

COLIN

What has Pen ever done to you?

ELOISE

(full volume)

Ever heard of Jean Baret?

COLIN

You will go to her and explain and apologize.

ELOISE

She was an explorer, like you, dear brother.

(tracing Jean Baret's
route on the map)

She circumnavigated the globe.

COLIN

They would never allow a woman to do that without her husband.

ELOISE

Oh, to be sure, she was with her husband, but she had to disguise herself as a man until they reached Tahiti. Rather ingenious if you ask me.

VIOLET

(breaking in)

She disguised herself as a man? How scandalous. I'm sure they sent her straight back.

ELOISE

Not at all, dear mother. They gave her money -

VIOLET

(scared)

They what?

ELOISE

The king provided her with a stipend for her work as a botanist, because she was quite as capable as her husband - when given half a chance, and even that she had to make for herself.

FRANCESCA

Why is no one coming? I have had NO callers.

VIOLET

I'm sure they're coming, dearest.

COLIN

(whispered)

Eloise!

ELOISE

(loudly)

They are probably all at the Featherington's. Word has gotten out of their ample dowries.

Colin straighten and hurries out, passing Benedict.

VIOLET

Benedict! You forgot to dance with Penelope Featherington last night. You're lucky your brother was there to dance in your stead.

BENEDICT

Mother, do you recognize this crest?

He passes her the silk glove. She needs only a second.

VIOLET

Penwood.

BENEDICT

As in 'Earl of'?

VIOLET

And the G would be for Gunningworth. The title recently passed out of their family, if I recall correctly. The earl died without issue... oh, it must have been six or seven years ago. The title went to a distant cousin.

BENEDICT

Who, then, is SLG?

VIOLET

(eyes narrowing)
Why are you interested?

BENEDICT

I don't suppose that you would simply answer my question without posing one of your own.

VIOLET

(snorting)
You know far better than that. Who does the glove belong to, Benedict?
(to his holding out)
You might as well tell me everything. You know I will figure it out on my own soon enough, and it will be far less embarrassing for you if -

BENEDICT

I met someone last night.

VIOLET

Really?

BENEDICT

She's the reason I forgot to dance with Penelope.

HYACINTH

Yes! We saw you brother, didn't we
Francesca? She was like a princess
out of the fairytales.

Francesca sighs and gives up watching the door.

VIOLET

One of Penwood's daughters? No,
can't be. He didn't have any
daughters. But he did have two step
daughters. Although I must say,
having met those two girls...
well...

BENEDICT

Well, what?

VIOLET

Well, I simply wouldn't have
guessed you'd be interested in
either of them, that's all. But if
you are, then I shall surely invite
the dowager countess over for tea.
It's the very least I can do.

BENEDICT

(espying his mother's
discomfort)

What now?

VIOLET

Oh nothing, Just that... well...

BENEDICT

Spit it out, Mother.

VIOLET

Just that I don't particularly like
the dowager countess. I've always
found her rather cold and
ambitious.

BENEDICT

Some would say you're ambitious as
well, Mother.

VIOLET

Of course I have great ambitions
that my children marry well and
happily, but I am not the sort
who'd marry her daughter off to a
seventy-year-old man just because
he was a duke!

(MORE)

VIOLET (CONT'D)

I would allow my children to marry paupers if it brought them happiness.

Anthony and Kate enter the room, unseen by Violet.

VIOLET (CONT'D)

They would be well-principled and hardworking paupers, of course. No gamblers need apply.

Anthony comes up behind his mother and gives her a kiss.

ANTHONY

Unless they be very savvy horse gamblers. I swear I never lose when Kate come with me to the races.

Kate glows as she gently lowers herself onto the sofa and admires Francesca's handiwork.

VIOLET

(embarrassed)

Yes, well, you should not concern yourself with me.

BENEDICT

Of course I must.

VIOLET

I shall put aside my feelings for the dowager countess if you care for one of her daughters.... DO you care for one of her daughters?

BENEDICT

I have no idea, I never got her name. Just her glove.

(on his mother's look)

It was all very innocent, I assure you.

VIOLET

I have far too many sons to believe *that*.

BENEDICT

The initials?

VIOLET

It's rather old.

BENEDICT

I thought so as well. It smelled a bit musty, as if it had been packed away for some time.

VIOLET

And the stitches show wear. I don't know what the L is for, but the S could very well be for Sarah. The late earl's mother, who has also passed on. Which would make sense, given the age of the glove.

BENEDICT

I'm fairly certain I did not converse with a ghost last night, who do you think it might belong to?

VIOLET

Someone in the Gunningworth family, I imagine, at Penwood House. The new earl hasn't given them the boot yet. Don't know why. Perhaps he's afraid they'll want to live with him once he takes up residence. I don't think he's even in town this season.

BENEDICT

Mother -

VIOLET

Five houses down, on the left.
(to his retreating back)
And Benedict - Rosamund and Posy.
The names of the daughters. Just thought you might want to know.

Benedict comes back and gives her a quick kiss on the cheek.

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Portia is taking her morning tea in the drawing room with her daughters, not expecting company.

Penelope smiles privately, remembering her lovely evening.

PORTIA

Now we may begin the season in earnest. Thankfully Lady Whistledown was kind enough to mention your improved prospects.

(MORE)

PORTIA (CONT'D)

It's about time that woman cast us
a kind word. We seem to be the
brunt of all her jibes. Today we
shall stroll in Hyde Park -

The footman enters.

FOOTMAN

A caller, my lady.

PORTIA

(joyous, to Philipa)
See! I knew it was only a matter of
time -

FOOTMAN

For miss Penelope Featherington.

The room is stunned to silence. Portia and Philipa look at
Penelope in shock.

PENELOPE

(squeak)
Me?

In strides Philip Cavendar with an enormous bouquet of tiger
lilies and Irish heather.

All the women rise, startled, and Philip marches over to
Penelope. He takes her hand and kissed the knuckles.

PHILIP

Miss Featherington. Allow me to
present you with these flowers.

Penelope takes them, smiling delightedly, and uncertainly.
Philip takes a coil of her red hair.

PHILIP (CONT'D)

The blooms reminded me of your
hair, though they are not nearly as
lovely as you.

Penelope is SPEECHLESS, she has no idea how to respond.
Thankfully - the footman enters again.

FOOTMAN

A Mr. Lewis Humphrey

Lewis strides in with a bouquet of blue flowers. Philipa
looks up hopefully. Lewis bows and offers to flowers to
Penelope.

LEWIS

Miss Featherington. A token of our lovely evening. They reminded me of your eyes.

PENELOPE

(gawping, receives them)
Oh my.

FOOTMAN

Mr. Charles Harison

Charles strides in with a bouquet of... green flowers.

Philipa and Portia watch like spectators at a tennis match, unable to believe their eyes.

CHARLES

Miss Featherington, I brought you...
(seeing the two other bouquets, weakly)
They reminded me of your costume.

Philip snorts.

PORTIA

Might any of you be interested in Philipa?

PHILIP/CHARLES/LEWIS

(not even looking)
No.

The footman re-enters.

FOOTMAN

A mister -

But now the men are flooding in, bearing gifts of all shapes, sizes, and colors. Seems word has spread.

They flock to Penelope, who is overwhelmed but utterly gleeful. She has no need to say anything, they all work to outdo each other in courting her.

Colin Bridgerton can barely squeeze in.

Portia has busied herself managing the bouquets and gifts at the back of the room, jubilant at her daughter's triumph.

PORTIA

Ah! Mr. Bridgerton. How good to see you. Are you here for Penelope?

COLIN

Yes, I -

He watches with dismay as Penelope is at the heart of the many admiring suitors.

COLIN (CONT'D)

Good God!

PORTIA

I know, it is rather a surprise, although I can't say that I am truly shocked. After all, I have dressed her so well for each of her seasons.

COLIN

Lady Featherington, please, I need to speak to Pen.

PORTIA

(glowing)

Certainly! Only, I'm afraid you'll have to get in line. She's rather busy at the moment.

COLIN

No, it's important.

PORTIA

(firm)

I'm sorry, Mr. Bridgerton, you had your chance. Beggars can't be choosers.

Portia swans away. Philipa tries to open one of Penelope's gifts, and Portia stops her.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/DININGROOM - DAY

Sophie polishes the Gunningworth monogrammed silverware. She remembers the events of last night in flashes.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

- Sophie POV all the men turning towards her as she entered the ballroom.

- Benedict breaking through and leading her away.

- Benedict pulling her into his arms, dancing, the tense moment when she thought they might kiss.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

Sophie sighs contentedly. Araminta storms into the room, thrusting one of her silver slippers before Sophie.

ARAMINTA

Sophie! What is the meaning of this?

SOPHIE

My lady?

ARAMINTA

Right here, look, it's scuffed. These shoes are brand new. Brand new!

SOPHIE

Perhaps -

ARAMINTA

There's no perhaps about it, someone has been wearing my shoes.

SOPHIE

I assure you, no one has been wearing your shoes. We all know how particular you are about your footwear.

(quickly)

Perhaps they were scuffed in your closet. I'm sure I can rub it out, or brush it.

ARAMINTA

You do that. In fact, while you're at it, you might as well polish all of my shoes.

SOPHIE

(crestfallen)

All of them?

ARAMINTA

All of them. And while you're at it-

The butler enters.

BUTLER

Lady Penwood?

(passing her Benedict's card)

A gentleman is here to see you, my lady.

ARAMINTA

Oh! Tea, and biscuits! The best silver. At once.

The butler leaves.

SOPHIE

May I be of any help?

ARAMINTA

No! I'm far too busy to bother with you. Go upstairs at once. What are you doing down here anyway?

SOPHIE

You asked me to polish -

ARAMINTA

I asked you to see to my shoes!

SOPHIE

Alright, I'll just put away -

ARAMINTA

Now! Wait - make sure that Rosamund's and Posy's hair is properly dressed. Then you may instruct Rosamund to lock you in my closet.

Sophie stares at her, hoping she's jesting.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

Do you understand me?

SOPHIE

Why do you keep me here?

ARAMINTA

Because I find you useful.

Araminta stalks away.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ARAMINTA'S ROOM - DAY

Sophie and Posy stand before the closet, bigger than Sophie's bedroom. Row upon row of glittering shoes stand to attention like soldiers.

SOPHIE

Lock me in the closet, if you will.

POSY
I beg your pardon?

SOPHIE
I'm meant to polish your mother's shoes.

POSY
I'm sorry.

SOPHIE
So am I.

Posy locks her inside. Sophie goes to work on the shoes.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Benedict enters to find Araminta sitting in a state of posed nonchalance.

ARAMINTA
(rising to greet him)
Mr. Bridgerton! How unexpected.

BENEDICT
(polite bow)
You must be Lady Penwood.

ARAMINTA
Indeed. I am so delighted that you have chosen to honor us with a call. I have, of course, informed my daughters of your presence. They shall be down shortly.

BENEDICT
(pleased)
I look forward to meeting them.

ARAMINTA
Then you have not met them?

BENEDICT
(improvising)
I have read such lovely things about them in Whistledown.

ARAMINTA
It is no surprise. My Rosamund is considered one of the loveliest girls of the season. She caught the attention of the queen herself.

BENEDICT
 (with perverse pleasure)
 And your Posy?

ARAMINTA
 Posy is, er, delightful.

BENEDICT
 I cannot wait to meet Posy.

Araminta is lost for words. The maid enters with tea.

ARAMINTA
 (sharply, surprising
 Benedict)
 Where are the spoons?

MAID
 (panicked curtsy)
 Sophie was polishing the silver in
 the dining room, my lady, but she
 had to go upstairs when you -

ARAMINTA
 Silence! Be gone!

The maid bobs another curtsy and leaves.

Rosamund and Posy enter. Benedict looks up hopefully. He rises, greets them with bows, and tries to not look disappointed.

BENEDICT
 And do you have any other children?

ARAMINTA
 Of course not, else I would have
 brought them out to meet you.

BENEDICT
 Cousins staying with you through
 the season? Distant relations of
 your late husband the earl,
 perhaps?

ARAMINTA
 He had once sister, a woman of
 faith who died a spinster.

ROSAMUND
 I very much enjoyed your masquerade
 ball last night. Did you enjoy it?

BENEDICT
 (surprised, forgot them)
 I did indeed.

ROSAMUND
 I noticed you spent a great deal of
 time with one lady in particular.

Araminta is immediately suspicious.

BENEDICT
 Did you?

ROSAMUND
 She was wearing silver. Who was
 she?

BENEDICT
 (enigmatically)
 A mystery woman. I'm afraid I must
 be gone, ladies. It's been lovely.

ARAMINTA
 (walking him out)
 Indeed. Brief but lovely.

Once Benedict is gone...

ROSAMUND
 What in the world was that about?

Araminta goes to her window and watches the street.

POSY
 Perhaps he is looking for her, the
 woman in silver, and is visiting
 all his guests.

From Araminta's view out the window, Benedict pulls out the
 glove. She sees the monogram. Araminta is horrified.

POSY (CONT'D)
 Are you alright mother? You look
 rather pale.

ARAMINTA
 The shoes!

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ARAMINTA'S SHOE CLOSET - DAY

Sophie sits on the ground, polishing, muttering darkly. The
 door bursts open so suddenly she falls back, startled, making
 a disordered mess of the shoes.

ARAMINTA

You little rat! You bitch! You ungrateful whelp! I fed you! Clothed you! When I could have thrown you to the streets ages ago.

SOPHIE

What?!

ARAMINTA

The shoes! You wore my shoes!

SOPHIE

I didn't -

ARAMINTA

Don't lie to me. You stole my shoes. I don't know how you managed it, but you were at the masquerade last night. You dared to pretend you are as good as the rest of us -

SOPHIE

(rising)

Yes! I dared, and I'd dare again. I may be the earl's by-blow, but at least his blood runs in my veins -

Araminta slaps her.

ARAMINTA

Out! I want you out. Pack your things and be gone by tomorrow morning.

Araminta stomps away, nearly tripping over all the shoes. She stops, turns around, surveys the mess.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

(cruel smile)

But not until you finish the job I assigned to you.

She exits the room, closes the door, locks it. Sophie slams against the door, and then crumples to the ground in tears.

EXT. HYDE PARK - DAY

Penelope sits under a canopy at a table with tea and cakes, surrounded by her adoring suitors.

Portia and Philipa in the background. Philipa is bitter.

LEWIS

And how was Ireland, Miss Featherington?

PENELOPE

Oh, quite lovely, of course, though not nearly as interesting as the season.

CHARLES

You were missing Lady Whistledown, and her gossip, no doubt.

PENELOPE

Indeed, I was.

LEWIS

What ever can you have done to entertain yourself?

PHILIP

No doubt she went hunting with her cousins. It is the only amiable pass time I can think of in Ireland.

PENELOPE

Um... no, I read.

Her suitors are silent, having no idea how to engage with this remark. Not a single good match.

The Bridgertons are walking by, taking the air. Anthony and Kate in wedded bliss, Francesca looking around hopefully, Gregory and Hyacinth running around.

Eloise sees the attentions paid to Penelope and smirks. Colin hurries over to Penelope's menagerie.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Colin!

COLIN

Pen.

(arm out)

Might I induce you to stroll with me.

PENELOPE

Certainly!

She leaps up, to the grumbling of the suitors who cast Colin competitive looks. They stroll away.

Benedict joins the Bridgerton party, Violet slides her arm in his.

VIOLET
You're back early.

BENEDICT
They weren't her.

VIOLET
(to herself)
Oh, thank God.

BENEDICT
What was that?

VIOLET
You will find her dearest! You must simply keep looking. Do the season with us - or are you afraid you won't recognize her?

BENEDICT
No, I would recognize her.

Violet is delighted at her son's new amorous fervor, squeezes his arm.

Colin lags behind with Penelope, looking for privacy.

PENELOPE
Did you have a good evening last night... at the masquerade?

COLIN
Hmm? Yes, certainly. Listen, Pen, those men back there -

PENELOPE
(embarrassed)
I know, it's a shock.

COLIN
No, listen to me, you cannot trust them.

PENELOPE
Don't worry, I read Whistledown too, I know to take my time and investigate properly before forming any attachment -

COLIN

No! I mean you cannot trust ANY of them.

PENELOPE

Aren't some of them your friends?

COLIN

Yes, but -

Penelope begins to get angry, stops and pulls her arm out of his.

PENELOPE

Oh! I see, I am not good enough for any of your friends. Well I'll have you know, Colin Bridgerton, that they don't seem to think that.

Colin is stunned into silence by Penelope's anger.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

(hurt)

Excuse me.

COLIN

(grabbing her arm)

No, Pen. Wait. It's the other way around. They're not good enough for you!

Penelope stops, staring at him, hoping... wondering...

COLIN (CONT'D)

It's your money they're after. They know about the increased dowries.

Penelope freezes, looking between her suitors, and her mother and sister. Oh the shame.

PENELOPE

(quiet)

If that were the case, then why aren't they going after Philipa?

Colin is silent, tense, he doesn't want to shame her further.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)

Is it really so inconceivable, Colin, that someone would want to dance with me? I may not be as lovely as your sisters, but I have a mind Colin.

COLIN

Then use it! Can you not see that Cavendar is a worthless fellow? As are all the others.

PENELOPE

(throwing his earlier words in his face)

Just because I'm "*not someone you would court in your wildest fantasies,*" doesn't mean other men feel the same way.

She storms off, and leaving Colin blinking in confusion.

BEGIN FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

EXT. PENWOOD PARK/FRONT STEPS - DAY

All the servants are arrayed to greet the earl. Sophie (8) stands with them, but doesn't quite belong.

A grand carriage rolls up. The EARL OF PENWOOD (40s) gets out. He immediately turns and offers his hand. Sophie holds her breath. Araminta Gunningworth gets out.

SOPHIE

(breathless)

She's beautiful.

Her governess, MISS TIMMONS (30s) hushes her.

Sophie watches with delight as Rosamund (9) and Posy (8) get out of the carriage, miniature misses. Posy has a lot of baby-fat.

The earl begins introducing his wife to the staff. Sophie waits... and waits. He turns to lead his wife inside.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

(stepping forward, squeaky)

My lord?

EARL OF PENWOOD

Ah, Sophia, I didn't realize you were here.

Sophie beams.

ARAMINTA

And who might this be?

EARL OF PENWOOD
My ward, Miss Sophia Beckett.

Araminta stares at Sophie, eyes narrowing second by second.
The resemblance between Sophie and the earl is unmistakable.

ARAMINTA
I see.

The staff stiffen.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)
Rosamund, Posy, come with me.

The go inside, Sophie watching.

INT. PENWOOD PARK/NURSERY - DAY

Sophie is bent diligently over her lessons. The governess sits quietly at the front of the room, smiling at Sophie with pride and worry.

Araminta stocks into the room. Miss Timmons hurries to rise.

ARAMINTA
Miss Timmons.

MISS TIMMONS
(curtsy)
My lady.

ARAMINTA
The earl tells me you will teach my daughters.

MISS TIMMONS
I will do my best, my lady.

ARAMINTA
This is Rosamund. She is nine. And this is Posy, she is eight.

MISS TIMMONS
Sophie is also eight.

ARAMINTA
I would like you to show the girls around the house and garden.

MISS TIMMONS
Very well. Sophie, put your slate down. We can return to arithmetic -

ARAMINTA

Just *my* girls. I will speak with Sophie alone.

Miss Timmons hesitates, but she is no match. She ushers Posy and Rosamund out of the room. Sophie stands, waiting.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

I know who you are.

SOPHIE

M-my lady?

ARAMINTA

You are his bastard, and don't try to deny it.

Sophie is shocked, frozen. Araminta grabs her chin and squeezes so hard Sophie can't help but flinch.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

You listen to me, you might live here at Penwood Park, and you might share lessons with my daughters, but you are nothing but a bastard, and that is all you will ever be. Don't you ever, EVER, make the mistake of thinking you are as good as the rest of us.

Araminta's grip on Sophie's chin leaves biting marks.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

My husband feels some sort of misguided duty to you. It's admirable of him to see to his mistakes, but it is an insult to me to have you in my home - fed, clothed, and educated as if you were his *real* daughter.

Araminta throws her away.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

I don't want to see you. You are never to speak to me, and you shall endeavor never to be in my company. Furthermore, you are not to speak to Rosamund and Posy except during lessons. They are the daughters of this house now, and should not have to associate with the likes of you. Do you have any questions?

Sophie shakes her head.

ARAMINTA (CONT'D)

Good.

Araminta leaves Sophie trembling, trying not to cry.

EXT. PENWOOD PARK/GARDENS - DAY

Araminta and the earl take tea, waited on by servants.
Rosamund sits with them, perfection.

Sophie is hidden in the garden, laying on the grass, reading.

Posy, holding a biscuit, finds her by accident.

SOPHIE

(sitting up, pleasant)

Oh, hello.

POSY

My mummy says I'm not supposed to
be nice to you.

The two girls stare at each other. They start to smile.

The earl cries out, clutches his heart, and falls face first
into his trifle, sending the cup of tea crashing.

ARAMINTA

(clutching at him)

Richard! Richard! NOOOOOO! But I am
not yet - I mean

(glancing at the servants,
who rushed over)

- I think I am with child!

Sophie stands. She and Posy watching on.

INT. PENWOOD PARK/STUDY - DAY

Araminta is in black, seated, listening to the solicitor. The
new earl wavers in the back like a reed of grass. He is
drunk. The girls are no where to be seen.

SOLICITOR

Rosamund, Posy, and Sophia will
each receive equal dowries, a total
of twenty thousand pounds.

(MORE)

SOLICITOR (CONT'D)

And to my wife, Araminta
Gunningworth, Countess of Penwood,
I leave a yearly income of two
thousand pounds -

ARAMINTA

That's all?

SOLICITOR

- Unless she agrees to shelter and
care for my ward, Miss Sophia Maria
Beckett, until the latter reaches
the age of twenty, in which case
her yearly income shall be trebled
to six thousand pounds.

ARAMINTA

I don't want her.

SOLICITOR

You don't have to take her. You can-

ARAMINTA

Live on a measly two thousand a
year? I don't think so.

She stands in outrage.

SOLICITOR

What is your decision?

ARAMINTA

I'll take her.

SOLICITOR

Shall I find the girl and tell her?

ARAMINTA

I'll tell her myself.

INT. PENWOOD HOUSE/ HALLWAY OUTSIDE SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

We see Sophie sitting on her bed, sad, dressed in black.
Araminta steps into the room, shutting the door on us.

END FLASHBACK SEQUENCE

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/ARAMINTA'S SHOE CLOSET - NIGHT

The moon is silver and full outside the window, shining its subdued light on Sophie's forlorn face. The closet is a tumble of shoes. She hasn't done anything.

The key scrapes in the lock. She looks over to see...

Posy open the door. Posy looks over the shoes until she finds Sophie in a heap. She goes to her.

POSY

I am so sorry Sophie.

SOPHIE

(shrugs)

I am a bastard. I deserve nothing more.

POSY

Don't say that!

They sit in silence.

POSY (CONT'D)

What will you do?

SOPHIE

Leave, get work somewhere. I should have left long ago.

POSY

You could be a governess! Your french is excellent, much better than mine or Rosamund's, and you can read latin and greek, you know all the classics, and your penmanship is superb -

SOPHIE

(shaking her head)

You need a reference to be a governess, and Araminta would never-

POSY

I could supply one.

SOPHIE

And what would you do when they called on you? Araminta would discover it at once and ruin my name. I would be scorned all over London. Besides,

(smirking)

(MORE)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

If you were the lady of the house,
would you want a seventeen-year-old
miss teaching your children, right
under your husband's nose?

POSY

(understanding)
And you are so lovely.

SOPHIE

(snorting)
Yes, rough fingers and worn
petticoats are just what a
gentleman looks for.

POSY

He came looking for you, Mr.
Bridgerton.

SOPHIE

WHAT?!

POSY

That was how mother put it
together. Benedict came for tea,
and he was obviously looking for
the silver lady.

(encouraging squeeze)

You've quite stolen his heart
Sophie. Why don't you go to him, he
could help -

SOPHIE

NO.

POSY

What? Why not -

SOPHIE

Think about it Posy. I am a maid, a
child born out of wedlock. Mr.
Bridgerton would never -

POSY

You don't know that -

SOPHIE

Yes, I do. I would NEVER be
accepted into his world. Maybe he
could find me a position, out of
pity, but I couldn't take that.

POSY

He loves you Sophie, I am
determined -

SOPHIE

Maybe, but then he would ask me to
be his mistress, and I would never,
I could never -

(she chokes up, her voice
too thick to continue)

If I became his mistress, there
would be a child. I would love it
more than my own life. And I WILL
NOT subject my child to the life I
have lead, as an unwanted by-blow,
a bastard, who's very existence is
vial. I won't do it Posy!

The two are silent.

POSY

What will you do?

Sophie pushes her tears away, hardening herself.

SOPHIE

I will leave London, I will become
a maid far away, somewhere in the
country, away from London society.
I have always loved the country, my
happiest memories are there.

POSY

Before we came along.

SOPHIE

Well... yes, but I'm glad to have
met you, dear Posy.

POSY

But you have no money, mother never
paid you. How will you get a
ticket?

Sophie stands, catches sight of a glimmer: SHOE CLIPS. She
takes them.

SOPHIE

I guess I am a thief now. Though
you are right, she has never paid
me, like the other servants, so I
confess I don't feel bad about it.

POSY

Quick, she's out tonight at another ball. I said I wasn't feeling well.

Sophie gives Posy a tight hug.

SOPHIE

Thank you. You were the only good thing from the last ten years.

POSY

That's not saying much, given how horrendous they've been.

They laugh, and then Sophie rushes away.

INT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/SOPHIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Sophie quickly packs a bag, stuffing her things in them, along with the shoe clips.

EXT. GUNNINGWORTH HOUSE/FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

Sophie leaves, her cloak nothing more than a smudge in the darkness.

INT. FIFE'S BALLROOM - NIGHT

Benedict watches the door as guests come in, mill about him. He looks away in disappointment, sipping at his brandy.

Anthony comes up behind him and grabs his shoulders. Benedict gives him a forced smile.

ANTHONY

What has gotten into you brother?

BENEDICT

Nothing.

ANTHONY

You have been watching that door all night. Waiting for someone?

BENEDICT

Maybe.

ANTHONY

Ah... *"What is it to love a woman?"*

BENEDICT
And where is your wife?

ANTHONY
At the house, last night exhausted
her.
(on Benedict's knowing
smile)
I meant the masquerade!

BENEDICT
Oh, yes. Surely.

ANTHONY
Come then, whom are you hunting
for? Perhaps I can be of help,
since you were such a help to me
last season.

BENEDICT
I don't know.

ANTHONY
(snort)
Brother -

BENEDICT
I do not know her name! I do not
even know, truly, what she looks
like. I met her at the masquerade
last night, and I know for certain
I have not met her before.

ANTHONY
Then how are you supposed to find
her?

BENEDICT
I would recognize her... it's
just... never mind.

ANTHONY
No, go on.

Benedict give him a dubious look.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Though I don't possess your
artistic sensibilities, I
understand now they are real, and
powerful.

The two men have a stand off. Benedict looks away.

BENEDICT

It's just - it was as though, even behind that mask, our souls recognized each other. I would KNOW her, though I've never seen her in full.

Anthony is silent, understanding the import of the moment.

ANTHONY

(clapping him on the back)
Then you will find her, brother. I am certain of it. Nothing could keep you apart.

The ball is filled with beautiful young women, talking and dancing with men.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

The choosing of one's life partner is a ponderous task. The methods are as wide an varied as species of flowers.

EXT. DARK LONDON STREET - NIGHT

Sophie hands over her ticket, climbs into the carriage.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

Many among the ton chose their partners based on wealth, or titles. Most pray for some pleasing form or countenance.

INT. COMMUTER COACH - NIGHT

The other occupants of the carriage are *sketchy*, an older man in rough clothes, who needs a shave, gives Sophie the once over. She clutches her bag closer.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)

Still others hold out for that rarest of gems: the love match.

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/PENELOPE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Penelope stands by a window and smells a flower, smiling to herself. Her desk lays open, paper and quill waiting.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
But is this nothing more than a
romantic flight of fancy from the
poets of old?

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/STUDY - NIGHT

A fire flickers in a grate. Eloise lays on the leather sofa,
reading her book. She looks sad, a little guilty.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
A cruel trick played on the young
for the propagation of our species?
Can anyone one being truly LOVE
another enough to call them, that
terrifying title, "Soul Mate?"

INT. MONDRICH'S GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - NIGHT

Benedict sits before a fire, ignoring the other gentlemen in
the club, a glass of whisky next to him.

A sketch book is propped on his knee as he draws, in
charcoal, the silver lady. She holds her skirts up as she
rushes away from him. It's a remarkable likeness.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
I say "terrifying" dear reader,
because what if it is true? The
"Soul Mate." What if one cannot
find him or her? Then, what should
become of us, to be separated from
our very souls?

INT. COMMUTER COACH - NIGHT

Sophie looks out the window at the moon, and starts to smile.

END OF EPISODE