

The Draughtsman's Contract

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The Draughtsman's Contract

Synopsis

At an evening Assembly in the 1630's a celebrated draughtsman is persistently propositioned by the wife of a wealthy landowner to execute a commission of twelve topographical drawings of a country-house and its gardens. The wife is convinced that the drawings are to be the necessary reconciliatory present for her husband who is an enthusiastic admirer of the draughtsman's work.

Reluctant to take on, what to him is a humble and unattractive commission, the draughtsman patronisingly attempts to dissuade his client by putting forward what he believes to be an unacceptable price for his services - full board in the country-house, a substantial fee and one sexual liaison per drawing with the landowner's wife under precise conditions of his choosing.

To the draughtsman's surprise, she calls his bluff and agrees. He is obliged to comply and a secret agreement is drawn up, witnessed and signed.

Characteristically the draughtsman organises his drawing schedule meticulously. He familiarises himself with every room in the house and every tree in the garden, finally selecting thirteen vantage-points that will demonstrate a landowner's pleasures of ownership and his own virtuoso talents. The views are exhaustively examined to assess their interest under different day-light conditions and the shortest possible route between the vantage-points is worked out since no daylight time must be wasted.

To satisfy the Commission, the draughtsman is obliged to reject the thirteenth potential site - an evening view of the side of the house that includes a cedar-tree and a stone memorial to a horse.

Eventually the draughtsman is ready to draw up a curriculum. The fourteen midsummer days of the Commission period are to be divided into two sections, seven days are allotted for the execution of the first six drawings and seven for the last - allowing one day in each case for bad weather. Each day is to be divided up into six sittings of two hours each so that the draughtsman can be at the same site for the same period each day to experience as near as possible the same lighting conditions. Starting at seven in the morning, three drawings were to be worked on each morning and three each afternoon, with lunch from one until two o'clock at the family table and occasional refreshments brought out to him at his vantage-points.

At the draughtsman's insistence, once the Commission had begun, the family and the household staff were expressly told not to move any household object, shut a window, pick a fruit, or take a walk, or alter in any way the preparations the draughtsman had organised for the drawings. The curriculum

was pasted up in various public-rooms of the house so that every member of the household should know of the draughtsman's whereabouts at all times, and be aware of the relevant demands of each drawing.

The draughtsman also presented his client with a curriculum - a secret one - this time explaining with his usual dispassionate meticulousness, his intention to exploit herself and her person.

The first six drawings are completed when the married daughter of the household discovers her mother's infidelity and baiting parts of the house and garden with clues, convinces the draughtsman that he had drawn evidence of a murder attempt on her father, his client's wife, thus making him, the draughtsman, an accessory or accomplice. The daughter promises to reveal nothing on condition that the draughtsman accepts one sexual liaison per drawing with her, entirely under conditions of her own choosing.

A secret agreement is duly drawn up, witnessed and signed.

The signatory and witness to these various secret agreements turns out to be the estate manager and notary who has good reason and possibly real intentions to wish to murder the landowner.

With all contracts duly honoured, the drawings are completed and the landowner is found dead at dusk on the site beside the house near to the cedar-tree and the stone memorial to a horse.

The signatory is suspected and accused of murder and threatens to expose the mistress of the house by revealing her forced infidelities with the draughtsman, blackmails her into giving him the commissioned drawings that he might sell them to pay for his protection and legal defence.

At a hurriedly arranged sale, the notary convinces the daughter's husband that the drawings contain evidence of his wife's infidelities with the draughtsman and the drawings are bought at an inflated price by the daughter's husband who pays the draughtsman as much again to remove the suspected evidence of his wife's duplicity.

Professionally intrigued by the possibilities of the thirteenth drawing and behaving for the first time against the grain of his usual behaviour, the draughtsman convinces himself he feels some compassion for his client, the one person who has lost most and gained the least - and he returns to the estate to make her a thirteenth drawing.

Possibly for the mutual satisfaction of them both, the draughtsman and the landowner's wife agree to a last liaison after which the draughtsman goes out to draw the evening view of the side of the house that features the cedar-tree and the stone memorial to a horse. At dusk, the draughtsman is murdered under the same circumstances that were present at the death of his client's husband.

The Draughtsman's Contract

Approach

The prime visual metaphor of the Draughtsman's Contract is the continual comparison of the drawings with the landscape - the manufactured artefact with the 'real' thing, with the ironic undertow that both the drawings and the 'real' thing are brought together and relate to one another on yet another manufactured artefact - the film surface.

It is intended that a consciousness of these three layers of representation should be omnipresent.

A visual approach is to be sought that acknowledges this intention and will juggle with concepts of stylisation - in 1) The Dialogue

The dialogue is 'stylised', owing its flavour to the delivery and mode of Restoration stage-dialogue with its repartee, soliloquies and set-pieces. And there is an additive self-referencing technique of constant 'story-telling' whose content picks up, prologues, underlines and foreshadows the main themes and incidents of the drama.

2) The Plot

The plot at large is symmetrical and see-saws metronomically between two men and two women with a third man as the pivot or fulcrum. Inside the symmetry there is a catalogue consistency of narrative that follows a strict chronological timescheme of twelve days - each day divided into six parts. The film begins and ends in the dark.

3) The Characters

The characters are moulded in a fashion that has resonances from stock 'theatrical' stereotypes.

4) Visual style

The characterisation and dialogue are to be portrayed in a style that owes a lot to set-piece landscape and portraiture whose aim was consistently to show the goods on offer at their most advantageous - the best profiles, the most property-conscious views.

5) The 'look of the film'

For stylistic reasons the film is to be shot in black and white - a) because the plot concerns a draughtsman executing thirteen black and white drawings and the constant appreciation of seeing the world in terms of black and white and all that metaphor implies. b) because of a newly discovered excitement at the possibilities of creating by camera negative on colour stock, with the very real options of introducing nuances of vestigial colour by manipulating the grading in the emulsion layers. This process would also allow for the superimposition of colour in optical printing sequences for titles, credits, and, if necessary, captions.

NB Very recent examination of a laboratory show-reel of 16mm E/W stock blown up to 35mm ColourStock suggests interesting potential - for those very characteristics of high contrast and grain that traditionally make the enlargement of 16 to 35mm unacceptable, could in this project offer opportunities for 'style'.

6) Imagery

It is intended that the film should be full of visual and aural conceits and emblematic and symbolic imagery that delighted and fascinated the seventeenth century imagination, and is not without enthusiasts now. Cyclic paths of behaviour. The garden as a pattern of chaotic nature. Fruit as symbols. and so on.

The film is no way intended to be solely and primarily a historical-reconstruction movie. Though there are references to the contemporary political and religious conditions, the film cannot be read convincingly, or other than incidentally, as a polemic.

The genesis of the film as it stands now as a project and as a script is primarily a fascination for the subordination and subjection of life to the status of a stylised artefact. It is a project of style and representation.

The 1690's are relevant because that decade saw the height of Restoration Drama and also its denunciation, the beginnings of the Age of Reason and the significant change of dynasty that brought in the Dutch and the Germans and the introduction of strong middle-class property-owning factions. It saw the birth of 'English Country-House' culture, the emergence of the English dilettante and is a date credible for the two major plot characteristics of the subjugation of women and the emergence of horticulture as a suitable pursuit for an English gentleman.

Having established these respectable origins and interests, it is also a project that includes a strong erotic content and a climactic violent end. It has alternating passages of rest and action, and light and dark, it has a strong forward plot-line that fits long-standing and universal expectations of tragedy and it has great cinematic opportunities for consideration of English Landscape.

The script as it presently stands is long - it needs rattling for the superfluous to fall out - but that is best done after a short period for a greater objectivity to flourish and would in the long term be further accomplished when locations are chosen, for the locations are central to much of the action of the plot.

Prologue

THE EVENING ASSEMBLY
conversations setting out
introductions, motivations
and motifs in anecdote-form

15 minutes

Reconnaissance

'Montage' Preparing
Drawing Curriculum

8 minutes

1st Six Days
Drawing

1st Day

2nd Day

3rd Day

4th Day

5th Day

6th Day

with
six liaisons
with
client

40 minutes

2nd Six Days
Drawing

7th Day

8th Day

9th Day

10th Day

11th Day

12th Day

with
six liaisons
with
client's
six liaisons
with
client

death of client's husband

Aftermath

BLACKMAIL OF CLIENT

SALE OF DRAWINGS

10 minutes

RECRIMINATIONS

Coda

REAPPRAISAL

FALSE RECONCILIATION ONE

FALSE RECONCILIATION TWO

gap of 12 weeks

17 minutes

LAST DRAWING

death of draftsman

The Draughtsman's Contract

The Draughtsman's Contract

An Evening Assembly in the 1690's.

In firelight and candlelight a party of guests are assembled for conversation. They drink wine and tea, and peel and eat the fruit from their gardens. From general talk and anecdote of property-owning and the new fashionable pursuit of horticulture, a drama between a fastidious draughtsman and his persistent client takes central place.

The conversational groups continually alter and reform until every one has eventually talked to every one else.

The camera is persistently at table-top level and the characters are seen from approximately the waist up, close-up to the camera with a complete and velvet darkness behind them. Their attitudes are reminiscent of the somewhat formal and stylised contemporary portraiture of Kneller and Lely.

To contrast strongly with the open sunlight of the sequences to come in the main body of the film, this first section, which acts like a prologue and an overture, is dark, and gets darker as the evening progresses. Rich textured fabrics, silky hair and wigs, white skin and the glint on glassware and porcelain recall the tenebrism of Caravaggio and more especially Georges de la Tour.

Great play is made of the pattern of fingers emerging out of darkness and considerable 'business' is made of the different ways the guests peel and eat fruit, hold and drink from glasses and teacups, and crack and eat walnuts.

I

Mr Noyes, notary and estate-manager to the Herberts is talking to the Talmanns, daughter and son-in-law of the Herberts.

Mr Noyes

..... and Mr Chandos spent more time with his gardener than with his wife - they discussed plum-trees and nauseam.
He gave cause for his family and tenants to dread September for they were regaled with plums until their guts rumbled like thunder and their backsides ached from over-use.
He built the chapel at Gissing where the pews are plumwood - the tenants still remember Chandos through their backsides - on account of the splinters.

As Mrs Telmann laughs, she turns her head to her left and the camera begins to pan across the dark spaces of the room....

SUPERED TITLE "THE DRAUGHTSMAN'S CONTRACT"

.... and alights on a conversational group of four - the twin Poulenc brothers, Mr Neville, the draughtsman and Mr Herbert, landowner.

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Mr Poulenc I	" At Southampton, Mr Herbert, there is a house that I have admired because from the side it looks so flat. It is of white Portland Stone and it appears as though it might be attached to the sky. Especially in the evening.
Mr Poulenc II	It's owner is a Miss Anterim - she is a lady without a husband.
Mr Poulenc I	From the side Miss Anterim is also a lady without a significance.
Mr Neville	Maybe that is why, unlike her house, the lady is unattached.
Mr Poulenc I	What with one flatness and another, Mr Neville, as a painter and as a draughtsman
Mr Poulenc II	 you could be entertained
The Poulencs in unison	 it seems especially in the evening, from the side".

The camera moves on to the right, away from the twin, emaciated identical-twin Poulenc Brothers and travels among the guests.

The camera alights on a group of three standing before a table. They are dramatically lit from a stand of three candles which throw a sensuous light onto the neck and shoulders of the mature figure of a landowner's widow, Mrs Clement.

Mrs Clement " Who is that man I see often in your garden, standing in unexpected places, and looking so pale?"

Mr Seymour My father, in a parsimonious moment, conceived the idea of paying a man to dress in white and imitate statuary in the furthest parts of the garden.
The man you saw is his son. He is very ambitious.

Mr Parkes Mrs Herbert, our neighbour, is frightened of him when his 'Bacchus by Bernini' stands by the Orangerie, he is so well endowed he can be appreciated from afar."

The camera moves on to a dark corner where two figures are dramatically lit from the glow of a fire.

Mr Herbert

"I saw your drawings sir at May, and again at Croydon Park.

I understand you to be a meticulous draughtsman and can flatter a man he owns more than he can afford to own. That his trees are more leafier than those in the Garden of Eden, that his paths are as geometrical as

Mr Neville

I think you must be mistaken for I draw modestly, find it difficult to flatter and have never seen the Garden of Eden.

However I was certainly interested in the house at Croydon Park. I have still not been paid however.

Mr Herbert

Then you are a poor man of business?

Mr Neville

I do not think so - just, in this case, unable to secure a surety before starting - on account of taking a lady's commission whilst her husband was in the Low Countries giving away his patrimony to a bulb merchant. The lady was very persuasive, but I would hesitate from taking a commission from a lady again."

Mrs Herbert

Are Mr Neville's prices high, Mr Parkes?

Mr Parkes

He is fastidious, Mrs Herbert, for a man who only sees the world in black and white. And he is fast becoming adept at discovering where his best profits may lay. There was a time when he would draw for gentlemen for the delight of being seen in their company. But patronage and the loan of a house in Southwark have altered his opinion about his value. There is a story of his being in Scotland where his progress through Dumfries was curious in that each house he drew was worth fifty guineas more than the last until in the end

- Mr Talmann " How is it Mr Neville, do you think that a man like yourself is more at home in other men's houses than he is in his own?"
- Mrs Clement Maybe it is because his own home is another man's house?
- Mr Neville It could be said, if I were looking for a neat way to rebuke your barbed familiarity, that on paper, all men's houses are mine. I am able after all to exercise power over the life and death of a rich man's favourite bay tree by giving it more - or less - leaves. I hold the delight or despair of a man of property by putting his mouse in the shadow or in the sunlight, - even possibly, I have some control over the jealousy or satisfaction of a husband by depicting his wife, sir, dressed or - undressed.

- Mr Herbert Mrs Clement asked me if I had a wife - which had a ring of impertinence - she knows I have a garden - how come does she not know I have a wife?
- Mrs Talmann Maybe because you boast of one and not the other. But I suspect a sense of modesty is an impertinence to such a lady as Mrs Clement.
- Mr Herbert Your mother takes a sense of modesty an unprecedented distance. Why doesn't she come out more?
She frets in the shadow ...
- Mrs Talmann She does not fret father ... or if she does, you well know the cause in your indifference. A house, a garden, a horse, a wife. The preferential order.
- Mr Herbert Nonsense.
- Mrs Talmann Maybe you should get Mr Neville to paint your wife. he has a way with bright sunlight.
- Mr Herbert Mr Neville does not paint ladies.
- Mrs Talmann Maybe he cannot.
- Mr Herbert He draws houses well enough.
- Mrs Talmann A proper compensation. On his own admission he draws what he cannot own, so why should he draw ladies?
- Mr Herbert Then his admission has a ring of impertinence.
- Mrs Talmann Father, the word 'impertinence' is a word seldom used except by grandmothers, frightened schoolmasters, the unnecessarily chaste - or the inordinately prudish.
- Mr Noyes That is long enough a list to make the word quite popular.

Mrs Clement

" his garden is full of surprises -
sour-smelling herbs and dark tunnels and
stretched and crucified trees.

Mr Talman

But he was a conventional man - keen on the
observed orthodoxy. He had been to the Vatican.
Only to look you understand.

Mr Noyes

He grew fig trees, he said, to permit his
catamites to attend assemblies such as these
madam, dressed with at least the recognised
regard for decorum"

- Mrs Herbert You can see how your father could be impressed by such a man as Mr Neville. He is as neat in his public conversation as he claims to be meticulous in his drawing.
- Mrs Talmann I find Mr Neville a little too prepared - his conversation sounds as though it has been practised. I wonder how the man behaves when he is surprised.
- Mrs Herbert Do you think Mr Herbert will ask him to come to Chester?
- Mrs Talmann Why not improve Mr Neville's chances, and yours by inviting Mr Neville yourself?
- Mrs Herbert That is a too imaginative strategem for me. Your father would find it uncharacteristically bold.
- Mrs Talmann Then you could surprise him and perhaps surprise Mr Neville as well. And if that frightens you mother, we could lay the blame on Mr Neville. We could suggest between us that Mr Neville himself was inordinately keen to admire the house and the grounds of a discerning man of property and taste so far from London. Such a compliment would please Mr Herbert and you could find a way to take the credit.

Mr Parkes speaking to the Poulenc Brothers

Mr Parkes Mr Lowtner is being persuaded to compile a catalogue of his curiosities. He has a collection that might interest a gentleman who concerns himself with horticulture.

- He has a petrified peach complete with the tooth-marks of a monkey and a stone inside that rattles.
- He has a shiny nut fished from the sea - it is as big as a man's head and is shaped like a vulva
- and in a large glass of spirits of wine he has a blackbird that has choked to death on a crab-apple

II

- Mrs Herbert I am anxious Mr Neville that you should draw my husband's house at Chester.
- Mr Neville Why is that madam?
- Mrs Herbert My husband is a proud man who is delighted to be associated with every brick and every tree of his property at every moment of his waking life - and no doubt in his dreams as well - though I have not been too well acquainted with his dreams since
- Mr Neville Madam, with such an excellent relationship as your husband has with his property he surely, having the real thing, does not need a copy.
- Mrs Herbert That is curious Mr Neville - I would have thought it would not be to your advantage to put forward such an argument. If I am not to be patronised, why should you chose to be so sensitive on my husband's behalf to the extent of being detrimental to your own?
- Mr Neville You said that with some ill-concealed petulance Mrs Herbert and madam I feel sure you could realise I can patronise better with fewer words. Overall madam I sense perhaps that your husband's good relationship with his house is not entirely to your liking. Perhaps it is too exclusive.
- Mrs Herbert I have no cause to complain Mr Neville. I live well in his house. I am my own mistress. I have full use of his household. I drive in his carriage, I use his servants, I make use of his horses
- Mr Neville But do not sleep in his bed?
- Mrs Herbert I am not admitting to anything that could cause you to laugh at me or at my husband's expense.
- Mr Neville Madam, I am a meticulous draughtsman of other men's property and I can be a most meticulous respecter of their confidences, and madam, also - of the confidences of their wives.
- Mrs Herbert When could you start?
- Mr Neville Start what madam?
- Mrs Herbert When could you come to Chester and draw my husband's house.
- Mr Neville Do you not think madam that we should discuss the matter with him?

Mrs Herbert

No Mr Neville, we should not. The intention is to surprise him.

- Mrs Pierpoint Now Mr Noyes, do you have a ribald piece of gossip for me?
- Mr Noyes Madam, I am here I am sure to fulfil a role as entertainer, so I am sure that sooner or later, I could find something for you.
- Mrs Pierpoint Then you are here on merit, a characteristic that the rest of the company does not share, being merely here to express their confidence in one another's money.
- Mr Noyes Madam you are one of the company.
- Mrs Pierpoint My merittious conduct in the company of Mr Seymour has been my invitation. I am strictly not of the company but part of its property.
- Mr Noyes Since that is what the company is here to discuss and revel in, then you should be well favoured. I would well favour you above two parterres and a drive of orange trees.
- Mrs Pierpoint You are not extravagant in your compliments, Mr Noyes.
- Mr Noyes As yet I am not wealthy enough to offer you more but I intend to be so soon. In the present company of thirtoon that owns a fair slice of England, two parterres and a drive of orange trees is a beginning.
- Mrs Pierpoint Among thirteen guests, one must be superfluous, do you believe Mr Parkes to be aware that he has spoilt the symmetry he so lauds for his garden? Who do you think is the odd one out?
- Mr Noyes There are three sure candidates Mrs Pierpoint, perhaps we should fight for the distinction. My humble self, you madam, and Mr Neville. Mr Neville has slowly acquired his possessions by drawing them, you madam by seducing them - so it is I who can claim to be the successful outsider.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville I have heard that you have travelled?

Mr Neville A little madam.

Mrs Talmann To Cumberland, Renfrew, Glamorgan, Dumfries?

Mr Neville Madam, this is beginning to sound like a tour of the Highlands.

Mrs Talmann And the Low Countries Mr Neville?
I understand you have been to the Hague?

Mr Neville With a Mr Rowley of Ipswich, on his behalf to draw the property of his wife's family.
Mr Rowley is an architect. You are well informed

Mrs Talmann I understand that Mr Rowley's wife's family are considered in the Low Countries to be not especially wealthy - in fact quite humble - a small house at Rimmingen with a hundred acres or so?

Mr Neville Madam, the acreage of Mr Rowley's wife's family at Rimmingen maybe of interest to an assessor of taxes, a keeper of cows

Mrs Talmann and apparently to a meticulous draughtsman of property?

Mr Neville You have I think concluded a case that I am not averse to drawing the property of a humbler sort.

Mrs Talmann My father's property at Chester is a little more forward than humble I should think - and since humility in a building is not antithetical to you, perhaps I can prevail on you to come to Chester?

Mr Neville Ah. The same proposition from a different quarter. A concerted effort naturally intrigues me, but I feel, things being as they are - may I be so bold - I do not think you or your mother could afford for me to come to Chester.

Mrs Clement
to Mrs Pierpoint

... on the first of May, out come all his bushes,
- oleanders, lemons, apricots, plums, peaches,
nectarines - dragged down the gravel along with
his exotics - pulled up onto their little plinths,
unwrapt from their swaddling. And out came
Mrs Cameron's blackamoor, shivering. e'd been
in the hotnouses all the time, living with the
cats - eating the kittens I shouldn't wonder ...

- Mr Neville Your mother madam is excessively keen to have her house down on paper - or perhaps it is you that is keen and your mother is merely your surrogate?
- Mrs Talmann I admit Mr Neville to being a suppliant on my mother's behalf - but she is not asking for herself but for her husband.
- Mr Neville The supplication then has a long and diverse path. I am flattered. But, may not Mr Herbert himself do his own commissioning?
- Mrs Talmann The point of the exercise Mr Neville is to avoid that one thing. You Mr Neville are to be the instrument of a hopeful reconciliation.
- Mr Neville Dear me, Mrs Talmann, and what if the commission, if completed does not satisfy Mr Herbert?
- Mrs Talmann I do not think you can be wholly unaware that Mr Herbert has a considerable regard for your abilities.
- Mr Neville But possibly not as an intrusive instrument for domestic reconciliation. The arrangement sounds far too conspiratorial.
- Mrs Talmann I think I am prepared to conspire a little in the circumstances, and I do not see how your contribution as a draughtsman need
- Mr Neville Madam could I suggest that from past experiences, conspiracies - especially of the family variety are most prudently avoided.

Mr Parkes
to Mr Herbert
whilst both
are peeling
and eating
fruit.

I planted rows of 'Red Carolina Gooseberries which
all died of a blight - and tried neektarines in
the close-house. The pips sprouted and died -
and then paid the Duke of Cavendish's Frenchman
for a hundred olive-bushes. The bark went black
and then became covered in mould. My son is married
to a Roman and she insisted I pulled them up before
they poisoned the ground

- Mrs Herbert Mr Neville, I understand your father was a tenant farmer in Suffolk.
- Mr Neville That is true Madam, I feel a conversation is about to be repeated, but your enquiry into my parenthood may be revealing.
- Mrs Herbert Did your father own an orchard?
- Mr Neville He did madam. At my birth he planted some four acres of apples. I ate windfalls as soon as I could walk.
- Mrs Herbert Mr Parkes tells me you have enjoyed the pleasures of a garden ever since.
- Mr Neville Ever since what Mrs Herbert?
- Mrs Herbert Why, ever since you undertook the house at Southwark.
- Mr Neville I have a single fruit tree there madam - and the apples are indigestible.
- Mrs Herbert Why not accept our patronage at Chester, - and enjoy my husband's garden.
- Mr Neville Madam I cannot say I would not be delighted but I fear madam, despite your persistence, I have work to do throughout this coming apple season, and will be in the service of Lord Burlington until next year's apples are all drunk as cider.

Mrs Clement
to Mrs Pierpoint

... my father was frightened of fire.
He lost two houses in sixty-six.
He set a watch at Allhevinghay every night.
In a dry summer he made my brothers sleep
in the gardener's house to watch over the
trees.

Some years ago two gentlemen went back
to Amsterdam saying Allhevinghay was like
home, there was so much water - so many
canals, so many ornamental ponds, fountains
and sinks, so many basins and sinks. There
was even a wind-pump.

What they had not realised was my father
had turned his land into a pattern of
reservoirs - because he was frightened
of fire.

There was a room under the main stairs that
housed two hundred buckets - leather pails
and all of them filled with water. I know
because when taken short my brothers and I
used to run in there and use them - those
buckets were filled before my mother died
and they are still there now - never once
been used - with the same water of twenty
years back still in them - I shouldn't
wonder...

Mrs Herbert Mr Neville, how can I persuade you to come to Chester?

Mr Neville You cannot madam.

Mrs Herbert But you can be bought Mr Neville. What will it cost?

Mr Neville More than you can afford madam.
But I admit that the prime reason is indolence.
I increase my price in proportion to my expectation of pleasure. I do not expect great pleasure at Chester.

Mr Seymour, landowner, talking to the Foulenc Brothers and Mr Herbert.

Mr Seymour Thomas Cotton had a fish-pond excavated by his tenants in nine days, he even brought in his footmen to dig - once he had an idea, it had to be put into practice immediately.

Mr Herbert He met and married his wife in a day - not that he regretted it ...

Mr Seymour It was I who regretted it.
The fishpond was dug out of clay-loam, but the water drained away every time he filled it from the river.
One week it rained for five days and nights - and the pit - for that was what it was - was flooded. Thomas put in his stock of carp - hundreds of them.
Three days later the lake had drained away and there were the fish flapping in the mud.
Then Thomas's horse died - his favourite horse, and he dragged it into his pit, put all the excavated earth back and erected a stone memorial over it.
His neighbour had a mason creep over there after dark one night and had him carve an inscription on the pedestal - EQUUS MEUS ITER CARPARE LEICIT - Here lies Carp, my old horse, drowned without water -
Thomas didn't know any Latin and was much impressed. In gratitude to his neighbour he sent him a barrel of salted fish - only they had been hastily cured in the rush to get them out of the way - and I was in bed for a week and thought I was going to die.

Mr Herbert aggressively under his breath to his wife

Mr Herbert Would you arrange madam to be ready to leave
at six in the morning.
I wish to be at Norwich by tomorrow night. If
you cannot make yourself ready by then madam
I must leave you behind and you must return
next week when I can send you the carriage.
Good night madam.

- Mrs Herbert I have decided that it is most important that you come to Caester to make for me twelve drawings of my husband's estate. In ten days time my husband is to go to Southampton for twelve days. Will that be enough time for you?
- Mr Neville First madam, you make a demand that suggests we have not discussed the proposition at all this evening.
Second, you increase your demand by at least twelve.
Third, you add to the proposition a time limit. And fourthly, you expect me to start in ten days time - in the height of the summer season when I am three hundred miles from Chester.
- Mrs Herbert Four factors Mr Neville you have convinced us are all well within your talents and capabilities.
- Mr Neville Your terms are exorbitant - then so must mine be. For twelve drawings I will ask thirty guineas a drawing, full board at your house, a private room of my own and a room for my servant - free choice of what I shall draw and madam
- (the draughtsman goes up to Mrs Herbert and whispers in her ear. Mrs Herbert stares straight past him, blushes and walks away.)

- Mr Poulenc I There was a man at Plymouth who had an unfaithful wife
- Mr Poulenc II who found some solace in making his carriage into an aviary.
- Mr Poulenc I He would ride his estate accompanied by captive song-birds
- Mr Poulenc II that would wound themselves to death trying to escape through the glass of the coach windows.
- Mr Poulenc I Having discovered for certain that he was a cuckold and that his own brother was the cause
- Mr Poulenc II he drove his carriage to the coast and had his footmen set gull-traps along the cliff.....
- Mr Poulenc I then with a carriage full of kittiwake and herring-gulls, he had his coachman lash the horses.
- Mr Poulenc II You can imagine the flap, scratch and panic of those trapped birds.
- Mr Poulenc I The coach was found the next day on the stones of Cnosil Beach, overturned with a broken axel.
- Mr Poulenc II Inside was the unfortunate cuckold covered in guano, feathers and the rotting remains of dead fish.
- Mr Poulenc I When asked what had happened he said with a thin smile
- Mr Poulenc II that his footmen had been gulled ...
- Mr Poulenc I into thinking his horses had flown.

With a heated complexion and a tall thin glass of red wine in her hand, Mrs Herbert approaches Mr Neville who has been talking to Mr Poulenc I. She indicates that they should step a little away from the others. They withdraw further into a darkened area until only Mrs Herbert shoulders and the draughtsman's hands are discernable. They talk in low tones - Mrs Herbert almost whispering.

Mrs Herbert	"Mr Neville, I accept.
Mr Neville	Accept what Mrs Herbert?
Mrs Herbert	Your offer. .
Mr Neville	What offer Mrs Herbert.
Mrs Herbert	Your conditions
Mr Neville	Madam I was jostling. The conditions are too costly. On my time and your privacy.
Mrs Herbert (whispering with some vehemence)	That suggests Mr Neville that not only are you greedy and arrogant, but that you are also unreliable. Your
Mr Neville	To put my honour at fault for relieving you from a grosser fault to your honour could seem charitable.
Mrs Herbert	I am not after charity just one dozen drawings. You are after a reputation for reliability
Mr Neville	I accept. (he turns to look across the room) Mr Noyes - Thomas - we need your discretionnable services to construct a contract."
Mrs Talmann (entering the frame)	Mother, have you persuaded him. What has it cost you?
Mrs Herbert	A considerable amount. Possibly - probably - certainly more than Mr Herbert deserves.
Mrs Talmann	Shall I be your witness?
Mrs Herbert	No - thank you - the fewer witnesses to this contract, the better."

In a dark cabinet illuminated by a single candle placed on a table, Mr Neville, Mrs Herbert and Mr Noyes gather to sign a contract. The candlelight mainly falls on the tablecloth, papers, an inkwell and the hands of the three participants

Mrs Herbert "I wish you Thomas, to be a discretionabile witness - discretionary in my interest and in yours - to an unorthodox agreement that would discredit me irreparably if discovered. One of the conditions of the agreement is that all copies of it will be destroyed on the first of August in the presence of us three.

Mr Neville The conditions of the agreement Thomas are - my services as a draughtsman for fourteen days for the manufacture of one dozen drawings twenty inches by thirty inches, or thereabouts, of the estate and gardens, parks and outlying buildings of Mr Herbert's Property near Chester. The sites for these twelve drawings to be chosen at my discretion though advised by Mrs Herbert

Mrs Herbert For which I am willing to pay thirty guineas a drawing, to provide full board for Mr Neville and his servant and

Mr Noyes and madam?

Mrs Neville
(in a low whisper) .. for each drawing to agree to meet Mr Neville in private and to comply with his requests concerning his pleasure with me.

The dark warm claustrophobia is abruptly shattered with brilliant open-air sunlight, over-exposed for effect, of the Chester gardens at midday - and correspondingly the whispers of a small enclosed space are shattered by loud music - Purcell, Handel or Mozart.

Planning the 12 Drawings

*(An extended montage
cut to music)*

Mr Neville is seen wandering briskly about the garden/the park/
the parterre/the corridors and staircases of the house at
contrasting times of the day - at dawn, dusk and hot midday -

with his hands behind his back
carrying a cane
trailing a white ribbon tied to a thin stake
sheltering in doorways and under trees when it's raining
wearing a wide-brimmed hat
carrying his coat
accompanied by a servant
accompanied by dogs
accompanied by dogs and servants
accompanied by Mrs Herbert
accompanied by Mr Porringer, the estate-bailiff
accompanied by a gardener and a groom
accompanied by a gardener, a groom, Mrs Herbert, Mrs Herbert's
grandchild, dogs and servants

he is seen on the roof
peering from bushes
wiping the mud from his boot after standing among lettuces
he is seen looking out windows on the first floor
the second floor
the third floor
the basement

seeing to the gravel being raked
asking the gravel to be raked again in the opposite direction
asking a gardener to trim a hedge
weed a lawn
tie up a herb
asking a gardener on a tall ladder to pleach the top branches
of a lime avenue
asking a maid to draw and then undraw curtains
asking for the lid of a keyboard instrument to be opened,
partly opened, closed, propped up on a book.

moving a vase
a carpet
a portrait
setting a chair on a table and finding it not high enough,
changing the chair for a taller one, then changing the table
peering at an engraving
dipping a stick into the lake to test its depth
aligning a tree with a cornice
aligning an archway with a statue
aligning two trees with a potted orange tree
throwing a stick for a dog
arguing with a groom
introducing himself to a maid
shaping a quill over the water of a fountain
holding a plumb-line
kicking a dog

The draughtsman is seen carrying a chair,
accompanying a servant carrying a chair,
inspecting a line of different chairs collected together for his
appraisal,
trying out a chair for comfort,
asking Mrs Herbert to try out a chair for comfort,
asking a gardener to try a chair for comfort,
carrying a savonarola,
accompanied by a gardener wheeling a large armchair in a
wheelbarrow,
a servant trying a chair that collapses beneath him,
a groom carrying four chairs at one time and falling down a
flight of stone-steps, (subsequently this groom is seen throughout
the film walking on a crutch)
asking a servant to place a chair and then replace it,
for ever changing the position of a heavy chair under a rowan tree
walking from one chair to another - measuring the paces,
kicking a dog away from a chair,
stepping up and down stairs with an attendant holding a chair.

sitting on the grass,
lying on the grass,
asleep against a tree,
squinting into the sun,
walking the forecourt drinking from a silver mug,
eating an apple,
kicking gravel,
pulling branches of a tree,
sitting on a balustrade looking sullen,
writing notes,
urinating in a secluded place,
making a rush at some cows,
riding a horse on the outskirts of the park,

at night with a lantern,
leaving the lantern under a tree and stepping back to view its
effect,
talking to Mrs Herbert conspiratorily by lantern light.

Mr Ferringer/Mr Neville and a groom are seen at various
parts of the house and garden pinning up handwritten
copies of the curriculum and various members of the household
are seen reading them or having them read to them.

Planning the Drawings (continued)

Occasional conversations during the appraisal period

I Mr Neville, the draughtsman, and Mrs Herbert on the Main Drive.

Mr Neville Does your husband use the Main Drive?

Mrs Herbert The main drive is on the wrong axis.
It leads only to Kettering and the villages.
If you come to the house from the Chester
Road and want to use the main drive, you
have to circle the park.

2 Mr Neville, the draughtsman and Mrs Herbert sheltering from
the rain under a tree.

Mr Neville Why doesn't your husband have the sink
cleaned out?

Mrs Herbert He doesn't like fishing and the duckwood
from his closet looks like a lawn.
His mastiff drowned there last summer
retrieving a mallard.

3 Mr Neville, the draughtsman and Mrs Herbert at dusk by lantern
light.

Mr Neville Mrs Herbert, I have taken the liberty of
drawing up a list for your eyes alone.
It pleases me, madam, I hope it will please
you.

Mrs Herbert Pleasure is not part of the contract Mr
Neville.

Mr Neville I intend it shall be for me madam.
And surely in the end it must be for you.
You will notice madam that the liasons are
to be brief - I hasten to add - brief with
respect to your position as employer of my
services and therefore with regards to a
respect to the fee you are generously paying.
Somewhat towards that end, madam, may I
discreetly suggest - and I am sure it will
be the case anyway considering the good
prospects of the weather - may I suggest
madam that you could see your way to wearing
your clothes loose.

4 Mr Neville, the draughtsman, with Mr Porringer, the estate-bailiff in the park.

Mr Neville Who owns those two enclosures over there

Mr Porringer Thomas Street

Mr Neville When is Mr Street likely to cut his hay.

Mr Porringer It is traditional to pay the mowers in time for midsummer night and since the hill is south facing, the hay is as good as ready now.

Mr Neville Well, can you arrange for Mr Street to press upon his bailiff to make up his mind.
I would be obliged that he either does it now or else makes sure he does not cut it until after the first of July.

5 Mr Neville, the draughtsman, with a groom after placing a chair against a field gate set in a high hawthorn hedge.

Mr Neville It is essential that this gate is not used.

Groom But it is used sir as a short cut to the Bottom Farm, and the tenants jump the gate, you will be trodden down.

Mr Neville You must make sure I am not, by palisading the drive fifty feet on the other side.
(A parson on a fat horse jumps the gate, startling the groom and the draughtsman, Mr Neville tips his hat and bows)
- by palisading the gate both sides at thirty feet and at fifty.

6 Mr Neville, the draughtsman, and a laundress who is accompanied by a maid. They are viewing six sheets laid on a hedge to dry.

Mr Neville Those sheets, madam, it is customary to leave them long?

Laundress Till midday sir - they should be dry by then.

Mr Neville I want you to leave them where they are madam for a week, maybe longer. And at half eight every morning I want you to throw a tub of clean water over each one.

Laundress But they'll need turning sir, else they'll bleach to rags.

Mr Neville No matter. And soak the yard madam, and leave the tubs where they are.

DAY ONE OF THE COMMISSION

The first drawing 7am to 9am

Mr Neville the draughtsman is up early standing at his first drawing point, looking at his subject. He sits and begins to draw. The camera frames the scene as the draughtsman sees it, and picks out cropped details, each one carefully composed, sharp, clean and precise.

The camera occasionally wanders away from the vantage-point of the draughtsman and takes in a face at a window, a distant gardener, a bird, a child up a tree. The draughtsman's concentration also occasionally wanders. The montage of shots begins again and ends with the face at the window.

Reverse angle from point of view of the face at the window. It is Mrs Herbert in her night attire. She watches as Mr Neville - a distant figure - gets up from his chair, adjusts his drawing equipment and carrying a board walks off to his next site.

The second drawing 9am to 11am

The camera follows the draughtsman as he walks briskly to the second site. Along gravel-paths, across terrace steps, ducking under a trailing hedge, through a fruit garden.

The grounds are now full of people. (contemporary drawings picture the grounds of English Stately Homes as densely populated - a characteristic that was suddenly to change around 1710 when the formal French gardens were swept away to be replaced with variations of 'the studied landscape' where the emphasis was on uncluttered vistas devoid of human activity)

- 1 The draughtsman stands aside for a man carrying a tray of radishes on his head.
- 2 He meets a nurse walking with Mrs Talmann's child, she is teaching the child his alphabet "D is for Damson, F is for Fig, P is for Peach etc".
- 3 Two workmen are digging in a deep trench, throwing the earth up onto a bank.
- 4 A distant groom is exercising a horse on the main drive.
- 5 A gardener sits pruning in a tree.

The draughtsman has arranged for a straight-backed chair to be set in an arbour of box and honeysuckle. The view he has planned to draw contains some of the paths he has just taken, and as he settles to draw the people in the landscape who have been observing him, melt away from the area of his vision. The garden now looks deserted - the workmen have left their spades on the mound of earth, the tray of radishes have been left on a bench and the gardener's hat and long handled shears are left in the grass at the base of a tree.

The draughtsman draws and the camera takes up his viewpoint. Comparisons are made between the drawing and what is being drawn. Carefully selected and framed details are picked out - the hat, the shears, a spade, a tree, the edge of the house and the paths lately travelled. Particular attention is paid to an intersection of two gravel walks. Eventually, in the distance, a servant bearing a tray approaches. The camera watches him come all the way along

the paces travelled previously by the draughtsman. The servant is briefly acknowledged by the draughtsman, and places the tray beside the draughtsman's chair. It contains a covered silver mug and slices of bread and a lemon. The servant departs and the draughtsman eats.

From the shelter of a hedge, the draughtsman is being watched by Mr and Mrs Talmann who, in walking attire, have momentarily stopped.

Mr Talmann Your Mr Neville, Sarah, has the god-like power of emptying the landscape. It is a wonder the birds still sing.

Mrs Talmann If they stopped I doubt whether Mr Neville would appreciate the difference. His attitude to Nature is strictly material.

At eleven o'clock - indicated by the striking of a distant clock, the draughtsman puts down his pen and drawing-board and disappears quickly down a lane of pleached limes.

A pale gaunt man dressed in dirty white clothes - the 'human-statue' we have heard mention of previously - appears from nowhere and seats himself on the vacated chair, eats the unfinished slices of bread and drinks the contents of the mug. The landscape returns to its former animated condition, including this time the distant retreating figures of Mr and Mrs Talmann accompanied by their child who can distantly be heard reciting " L is for lemon, O is for Orange, P is for Pineapple, - what is a pineapple?

The third drawing 11am to 1pm

A spiral of water in the sun falls upon a bleached white sheet. As requested by the draughtsman, a servant is soaking six sheets spread over a yew hedge.

The water drips on the small leaves of the hedge and collects in puddles on the flagstones. In contrast to the whiteness of the sheets, a dark-wood, straight-backed chair stands on the flagstones. The servant disappears and the draughtsman ducks his head through an archway, walks straight up to the chair, sits down and prepares himself and begins to draw.

Seen from the point of view of a servant standing just inside the laundry door, the draughtsman and his chair are almost black silhouettes against the sheets. Comparisons are made between the drawing in progress and the scene being drawn. As before, sections of the view, in carefully framed details, are examined. There is distant chatter in the interior of the laundry.

A servant comes out of the house to tell the draughtsman that dinner is about to be served and Mr Neville packs up his equipment and departs.

Almost immediately a groom leading a large white horse enters the frame from the left, and the horse passing close to the chair, knocks it over.

1pm to 2pm

At the midday meal, the family are assembled with Mr Neville, Mr Seymour and Mr Noyes.

Mr Talmann The trouble with the English landscape is that it is so mono - colo - ratic, (said with difficulty) so green. Too green - too much rain - too much watering. No wonder the English look so bilious, now in Lubeck

Mrs Talmann (to Mr Neville who is eating politely but voraciously) I can see Mr Neville, that you are not slow to capitalise on the terms of your contract as they favour you?

Mr Neville Mrs Herbert is I understand never parsimonious. I am merely showing my appreciation.

Mr Noyes We are grateful Mr Neville, for we know that your part of the contract is being admirably supplied.

• Mr Neville Your compliments Mr Noyes are received but premature.

Mr Talmann and when it is not too green, it is too grey. Flat and grey with continuous cloud from corner to corner. No wonder the English look so glum, now in Germany

Mr Neville Do you think William, that Mr George Lewis will
(to Mr Seymour) ever consent to leave Herrenhausen? To leave such a paradise for so green and grey a place.....

Mr Seymour It is certain Stephen that his wife will not - I wonder how the garden flourishes at Ahlden?

Mr Neville It is not perhaps the gardens that flourish now, but the gardeners.

Mr Talmann It is not so clever to mock the Hanoverians, when your problems are far more serious, we

Mrs Herbert Is everything as you wish in the garden Mr Neville?

Mr Neville It is well in the garden madam - and I am reluctant to complain - but not so well in the house.

Mrs Talmann How is that Mr Neville?

Mr Neville On the second floor madam I believe, in the large withdrawing-room above the gallery, there is an energetic servant who appears to be engaged as a scene-shifter in a theatre - either that, or she is perhaps playing at some tumultuous game with the curtains. For as a consequence, the window alternately flaps with the curtains like a ship furling sail, or is suddenly black like a blind-man without eyes.

Mrs Herbert That sounds like Maria keeping the sunlight from the pictures - I am sure however Mr Neville that you exaggerate.

Mr Seymour A little exaggeration madam, helps a tale along.

Mrs Talmann Yes Mr Seymour, we are indebted to you for much of the same.

Mr Neville And madam, if I may be so bold - and I suspect that I anticipate a problem - I have noticed that Mr Porringer is keen to move the chair that I have had so carefully positioned beneath the yew-tree, as soon as I have vacated it. Now I am sure he will return it to the same place tomorrow - but if it is no trouble to you, I would be pleased if he would let well alone for the duration of my stay.

Mrs Talmann It sounds sir, that you may have borrowed one of his own particular chairs, he is very scrupulous with his own property and less scrupulous with ours.

Mr Noyes I will ask him to leave it where it is, and if he fears it will get wet then he can cover it with an oil-cloth.

Mr Neville Perhaps sir, you could ask him not to lurk in the hedge. When he concentrates, he whistles and his whistling is tuneless. If he would remain silent when he watches me and if he would hide his red breeches more thoroughly among the greenery, I could be well pleased.

Mr Talmann Do you ever Mr Neville, get lost in all that greenery?

Mr Neville No sir, I am well accustomed now to finding my way - such that I now believe I could do it in the dark.

Mrs Talmann Do you intend sir, to spend much time in the garden after dark?

Mr Neville As yet madam, I have no such public intention though the nights are very warm Mrs Talmann, and there is nothing to fear.

Mr Talmann Well, I am never sure on walking out by day, where a path will lead.

Mr Neville The garden is well organised Mr Talmann. I am surprised that you are not more acquainted with it.

The First Private Liaison between Mrs Herbert and Mr Neville

In the withdrawing-room on the first floor with the lower half of the casement window open onto the garden. The interior of the room is dark, the exterior very bright. In front of the window on the inside, right up against the heavy swagged curtains is a large reclining armchair, heavily upholstered. Outside the window, on a patch of green lawn in full sunlight is a straight-backed chair standing on its own shadow. Beside it is a small table and a servant is taking the contents off a tray and placing them on the table - a white porcelain jug, a silver knife and a blue plate of fruit. The china and the cutlery glisten in the sun. The figures of Mr Neville and Mrs Herbert obscure the window for a moment. They are close up to the camera and their bodies are at no time fully in the light, much of what follows being inferred rather than seen.

Mr Neville After you madam.
 Into the corner if you please, and take off the lace,
 you may leave the jewelry.

 When your husband had the pear-trees grafted, do you
 know if he asked for the advice of Mr Seymour's
 gardener?

 Pardon madam, You do not speak very loud.

Mrs Herbert We do not know the Seymour's gardener, Mr Neville.

Mr Neville But madam, you know Mr Seymour.

Mrs Herbert By no means as well as you, Mr Neville.

Mr Neville I see. The trees have been poorly cared for - the
 angle between the branches and the main trunk is too
 steep - but the original work is good.
 Lift your arms above your head madam.

 And what of the pears themselves madam? In season.
 Are they presentable?

 Madam, for our next meeting would you be so
 considerate as to see that the under part of your
 arms should be shaved.

The camera moves from the shadowed movement of limbs and rich fabric to the view out of the window, to the chair and beyond. In a far part of the garden, two gardeners are clipping a hedge. There follows a montage of aspects of the garden, not necessarily as seen from the window of the withdrawing-room - silent statuary, deep shadow under an obelisk and so on. These shots go to make up a generic list or catalogue of shots which are continually being seen in total or in part to represent the draughtsman's interest in the different lighting effects at different times of the day in the garden and grounds of the house.

The fourth drawing

2pm to 4pm

The montage finishes with a shot of Mr Neville settling himself into the chair on the lawn that was previously seen from the open window of the last scene.

The draughtsman begins to draw. The view in this fourth drawing is predominantly the house itself, central in which is the window of the room he has just vacated. The camera appreciates the scene from the draughtsman's point of view, and as before, selects carefully framed details, comparing them with the draughtsman's firm beginnings. The open window of Mrs Herbert's room is a persistent detail. As is a window underneath and two further away. In this room quite close up to the window Mrs Talmann sits down to play at a keyboard instrument. She does not play very well, but the sound which reaches the draughtsman is not unpleasant. What does disturb Mr Neville is the fact that Mrs Talmann is for ever getting up and sitting down again, lifting and lowering the lid of the instrument - at one stage slamming it. This restless activity is constantly picked up in well-framed close-ups as seen from the draughtsman's point of view. It is apparent that the activity is annoying the draughtsman. Finally the lid of the instrument is slammed again and Mrs Talmann looks out of the window, sees Mr Neville and ducks back, only to cautiously reappear and finally nod in his direction. The distant clock strikes four and Mr Neville packs up his equipment and without a backward look, departs, leaving Mrs Talmann staring after him.

The fifth drawing

4pm to 6pm

Mr Neville sets off on a longish walk and the camera notes his progress with a continuity shot of each stage.

He walks across the lawns, across a hedged parterre and a kitchen-garden, along a pleached avenue, through a brick-arch onto a gravel avenue boarded with limes, he leaves a well trodden path to climb a stile, walks passed some bee hives to a field-path and climbs a slope to find his chair up against a wide field-gate. As instructed the field-gate has been protected at some yards distance on both sides with palings. The chair is a wide-seated bench with a low back and a sack of straw for a cushion.

Mr Neville settles to draw and the camera frames what he sees - a wide panoramic vista that includes the distant house and gardens and a number of the features that the draughtsman has just walked through. The camera selects and examines the details - each detail carefully composed. These framings of the real landscape will be exactly paralleled in the coming scenes with equivalent details of the drawing as it progresses.

One of the details picks out, at a distance of perhaps half a mile, two reapers in a field. Another detail picks out a distant cart. A further detail picks out the distant figure of Mr Talmann accompanied by a servant. They disappear for a time behind a hedge then re-appear much nearer. Eventually they cross the stile Mr Neville crossed. The servant carries a basket and Mr Talmann is dressed for walking. He carries a cane.

Mr Talmann Goodday Mr Neville. I can see that you have selected a fine view of my son's inheritance.

Mr Neville Goodday Mr Talmann, though I prefer for the moment at least to regard the view as the property of Mr Herbert

In the brief silence that follows, the servant unpacks the basket, lays a white linen cloth on the grass and places on it a stone-bottle of ale, a stemmed glass, two peaches, a lump of cheese some preserve in a ceramic-pot, one knife and one plate - it is undoubtedly a meal for one person. Mr Talmann without ceremony prepares himself to eat. Mr Neville is mildly surprised but continues to draw in silence.

Mr Neville Your appetite is vigorous, Mr Talmann.

Mr Talmann In Lubeck we eat a light meal in the middle of the afternoon. I find it very necessary in England because the English are accustomed to eat so late. Eating late is bad for sleep.

Mr Talmann eats and between eating finds breath to whistle. Mr Neville continues to draw and the servant lies in the long grass at the field-side.

Mr Neville Mrs Herbert keeps a fine cellar.

Mr Talmann It is adequate. But there are few preserves as I know them.

Mr Neville Is it your intention Mr Talmann to continue to stand there?

Mr Talmann I can see the view very adequately from here Mr Neville thank you.

Mr Neville Will you be wearing the same coat tomorrow?

Mr Talmann Why - I have not decided (He sucks his teeth and whistles) Is it important? It depends on my servants. May be I will.
Well, I must be going (He walks a few paces off)

Mr Neville Mr Talmann, are you likely to come tomorrow?

Mr Talmann I may be walking this way Mr Neville, to see Mr Porringer about a horse.

Mr Neville Is it possible for you to make up your mind for certain now.

Mr Talmann No it is not (He walks a few further paces off)

Mr Neville In that case Mr Talmann you might like to tell me at dinner tonight. You might also like to tell me if you intend to ease your hunger on my refreshments tomorrow. If you are we ought to instruct the servant to bring enough provision

to lay a cloth for two.

Mr Talmann glares at Mr Neville from a distance, nonchalantly looks at the view and then walks off. Mr Neville continues to draw, eating a peach with his free hand. He indicates to the servant to eat the remainder of the food and drink if he wants it.

The camera frames a detail of the distant Mr Talmann clumsily leaping a brook, and then a little later of him meeting his wife. A very distant clock chimes six and Mr Neville packs up his drawing equipment and followed by the servant retraces his steps to the house.

The sixth and last drawing of the day 6pm to 8pm

A chair is standing not far from the main gravel driveway, among widely spaced trees cut through with paths which in perspective lead to the house. There are two groups of people in view - one stands by the front steps of the house and the other, much nearer is wandering on the lawn accompanied by dogs.

Mr Neville says something to the servant who still accompanies him and the servant hurries off to speak to the nearest group of people. He is obviously asking them to move aside - they argue, gesticulate and point in the draughtsman's direction. It is possible to hear their raised voices but not to understand what they say. Mr Neville ignores them, settles to draw and eventually the group moves out of the field of vision.

The servant then runs to the second group at the steps, bows and is seen persuading them to move. There is more discussion and this time laughter. Eventually the whole group - although at a distance of four hundred yards - turn in the direction of the draughtsman and bow and curtsy with mock solemnity. The draughtsman grins to himself.

As the shadows continue to lengthen, Mr Neville continues to draw. Details from the view are picked out and examined and compared with the new drawing.

There follows a montage of the views and details of the gardens, house and estate that we have seen before, but this time in the fading light. The clock strikes eight and the draughtsman packs his equipment and putting on his jacket, walks towards the house leaving the trees and the chair to the night. Lights flicker near the house.

8.30 pm The evening meal on the first day

The family and the same guests that were present at midday are seated in the same places. The difference being one or two changes in costume, and the light. The sun is setting through the windows, and during the conversation servants bring lighted candles to the table prior to closing the shutters to the windows and drawing the curtains.

Mr Seymour Mr Lucas's enthusiasms were equally divided between his children and his garden. Every time his wife conceived Mr Lucas planted a fruit-tree. His wife seldom came to successful labour and those she was blessed with died before weaning. Mr Lucas threatened to cut his trees down but he never did. To date, there are eleven trees in his fruit-garden and he knows them all by their christian-names.

Mr Talmann The English are not blessed with the most appropriate fecundity at the moment. They can grow colonies but not heirs.

Mr Neville It depends Mr Talmann which colonies you are speaking of - some of England's oldest colonies have heirs in plenty.

Mrs Talmann Ah Mr Neville, do we have an indication of your sympathies?

Mr Neville You would be reading far too much into a simple statement of fact Mrs Talmann.

Mr Talmann If the best Englishmen are foreigners Mr Neville and that seems to be a simple statement of fact, the best English painters are foreigners too. There is no English painter worthy of the name would you agree Mr Neville
To be an English painter is a contradictory term.

Mrs Herbert Then my husband shows some good sense in encouraging Mr Neville.

Mr Talmann Mr Herbert, madam, as we all know, is full of contradictions.

Mrs Herbert Contradictory enough to have welcomed you into this house sir - despite his being a man without airs and graces.

Mr Talmann But not privy to whom his wife welcomes into his house madam.

Mrs Talmann When my father is away Louis, my mother is at liberty to run his house as she feels fit. And she has seen fit to invite Mr Neville.

Mr Neville A gracious speech Mrs Talmann

Mr Talmann ... to hide all manner of inconveniences.

Mr Neville How is that sir?

Mr Talmann It is apparent sir, is it not, from our meeting this afternoon, that your presumptory regime not only extends to confining the household like animals in reservations but also directing us as to whether or not we should wear a coat, carry a walking-stick or whistle.

Mr Neville When I met you in the garden this afternoon I believe you were doing all three of those things and in blue, I would, if you intend being there tomorrow afternoon, wish you to dress and behave in the same way. However it is beyond my power to describe a whistle pictorially, whether indeed, it comes from an Englishman, or from a German dressed like an Englishman.

Mrs Talmann And what do you do about the birds Mr Neville, if you ignore their song, you cannot surely prevent them from flying across the field of your vision?

Mr Neville Madam, the prospect of twelve fine-weather days with clear skies and sharp shadows is an excellent proposition but not to be guaranteed - so I am naturally anxious to avoid any waste of time. It would assist me greatly therefore madam, if my instructions, which have been given great consideration, should be observed. I am painstaking enough to notice quite small changes in the landscape and have not the time or the inclination to waste on re-starts and erasures. Once started I make that a committal madam, whatsoever ensues - and I think you can surmise, it is an attitude from which I obtain great satisfaction and considerable entertainment.

The second day of the Commission

The first drawing on the second day 7am to 9am

As on the previous day, the draughtsman is at his site in the early morning light and has progressed somewhat with his drawing, when, picking her feet up over the damp grass, Mrs Herbert approaches.

Mr Neville An good morning Mrs Herbert. This morning I am progressing well. I am beginning to enjoy myself. Would you sit beside me, madam. And loosen your dress at the back.
It is a little chilly perhaps, but I think you tremble too much.
It is not easy for me to use your person as I would like to. Madam would you be so good as to stand.

Your son-in-law at the table last night mentioned I believe that he intended to have the limes on the drive cut back. It would be a pity do you not think, considering they have still some time to go before they mature.
Would you be so good madam, as to stoop forward a little.

The drawing is momentarily abandoned and placed on the small table beside the bench. The camera follows the movement and stays to examine the drawing in detail and compare it with the original it is supposed to represent.

Mr Neville If you have any influence over your son-in-law, and if you have any influence over your husband's gardener, could you suggest that he should travel over to Mr Seymour's to see what can be achieved with limes by doing as little as is possible.
Limes madam can smell so sweet. Especially when they are allowed to bloom without hindrance.
And it will be shortly time to bloom.
A little sticky perhaps,
But still very attractive.
Madam, would you be so good as to pass me that cloth.

The camera moves back from its contemplation of the drawings to find Mrs Herbert has gone leaving Mr Neville contemplating the view and wiping his hands on a cloth.

The Second Drawing on the Second Day 9am to 11am

The draughtsman is progressing with the drawing in the most popular and usually populated part of the garden - now deserted according to instructions - and the camera carefully compares details of the drawing with the reality. Mr and Mrs Talmann out with their child for a walk approach the draughtsman, and look over his shoulder.

Mr Talmann How is it Mr Neville that you have contrived to make the gardens so empty of people?

Mr Neville The authority for these drawings Mr Talmann, comes from Mrs Herbert - do you think she is a woman who likes a crowd of people trampling on her greens, kicking up her gravel and moving earth around like a pack of dogs in her herb garden?
I would seek solace and quiet in a garden, and noise and excitement at a carnival.

Mrs Talmann So Mr Neville, you would reserve your revelries for a religious occasion - *carnem levare* - and what of Gethsemane?

Mr Talmann A wild sort of a garden I shouldn't wonder.

Mr Neville Certainly Mr Talmann, there would be no geometric paths and no Dutch bulbs.

Mrs Talmann Well we have a Cedar of Lebanon and a Judas Tree, perhaps we could cultivate a Tree of Heaven

Mr Talmann The gardens of England are becoming veritable jungles these exotics are grossly unsuitable. If the Garden of Eden was planned for England, God would have seen to it.

Mr Neville The Garden of Eden was originally intended for Ireland Mr Talmann where St Patrick eradicated the snakes.

Mr Talmann The only useful eradication that ever happened in Ireland Mr Neville was performed by William of Orange four years ago on my birthday.

Mr Neville Happy Birthday to you Mr Talmann and if you are not too old to receive presents, the gardener and I might find you a snake for your Orangerie.

Mrs Talmann smiles and begins to pull Mr Talmann away with her linked arm. Mr Talmann is not sure whether he has understood, but does not protest.

Mrs Talmann Goodday to you Mr Neville.

Mr Neville (standing up) Goodday to you madam. . .

The third drawing on the second day 11am to 1pm

The draughtsman draws the wet sheets on the hedge. He pays especial attention to the line of the hedge-top with the sky which is interrupted for a few yards by the trellis intended for sapling fruit-trees. The draughtsman draws it in detail but leaves it incomplete for the day because the clock strikes one.

The fourth drawing on the second day 2pm to 4pm

The draughtsman walks out to the chair placed in the hot sun on the south side of the house. He is accompanied by a servant who is carrying a shade-for-the-sun fixed to a tall stake. As the servant drives the stake into the turf, the draughtsman lays out his drawing and compares it with the scene in front of him. Some of the house-windows are open and some shut. The drawing and the house do not match. The draughtsman shows the discrepancy to the servant who inspects the drawing and then hurries off to close two windows from the outside and to open a third. Mr Neville settles down to draw and the servant disappears inside the house, to re-appear a moment later opening an upstairs window.

The draughtsman has just started to concentrate when from around a corner of the house, out of the viewpoint of the drawing, Mr Neville sees Mr and Mrs Talmann and two servants. The Talmanns are dressed for walking and the servants are carrying a wicker basket between them. Ten paces behind them, a maid servant is carrying a white cloth and a lap-dog. Mr Neville after a moment's amused smile, carries on his drawing.

The fifth drawing on the second day 4pm to 6pm

Mr Neville, carrying his drawing-equipment, walks the slope of the hill to the site of the fifth chair to find with surprise Mr and Mrs Talmann sitting on chairs placed at a discreet ten paces from his own. Two servants are unpacking food and drink from a large basket and a maidservant is spreading a large white cloth on the ground. Mrs Talmann has a dog in her lap and Mr Talmann is drinking from a tall glass.

Mr Neville The company is assembled. What are we to be the spectators of madam?

Mrs Talmann You must not be surprised Mr Neville, we are here at your request.

Mr Neville I did not request an audience madam, nor a meal on the grass. Did you intend to applaud the view?

Mr Talmann The scribbler is never satisfied. He is as insatiable as a

Mrs Talmann You intimated strongly that Mr Talmann should be never dressed in blue and carrying a gold-topped cane.

We have taken you at your word.
There was another instruction, but conveniently I
have forgotten it.

Mr Talmann Whistling, Sarah.

Mrs Talmann So much for convenience.
And we have taken you at your word and I am here
to persuade him to it.
Besides the day is beautiful, my dog needs a walk
and I enjoy eating in the open air.

Mr Neville You say nothing to this Mr Talmann?

Mr Talmann Black velvet was laid out for me today Mr Neville,
so you do not catch me in the best of tempers
wearing yesterday's clothes - and I give you
twenty minutes only, for I am off to ride a
freshling.

Mr Neville Then sir, please take your place.

Mrs Talmann I will take a walk. Come with me Maria and we will
see what we can find.

Mrs Talmann and the maidservant walk off with the dog still being
carried.

Mr Neville A little to the right sir, if you please.
Puff out your cheeks.

Mr Talmann Why should I do that?

Mr Neville Last time sir, you were whistling. A tune perhaps
not appreciated by the composer's own country?
And you will have to stand still sir, if my time
is not to be wasted.

Mr Talmann Your time Mr Neville, and what about my time?

Mr Neville Consider sir, yourself as future guardian of this
prospect.

The camera turns to look at the view and to frame the top of the
trees, the clouds in the hot midsummer afternoon. to pick out
distant features, birds, labourers and cattle.

This montage continues whilst the aggressive but vain Mr Talmann
and the sarcastic but basically uninterested Mr Neville voice
their reciprocal hostility. Their talk grows fainter and fainter
until it dies away altogether.

Mr Talmann And not before time

Mr Neville That, Mr Talmann, sounds conspiratorial, if not
traitorous.

Mr Talmann And what Mr Neville would your designs be in inviting me to grace your drawing of this prospect?

Mr Neville A figure - your figure - sir, will give the prospect a scale. - construe that scale a prophetic one on your son's behalf. Stand straight sir.

Mr Talmann If I stand any straighter I will resemble a fence-post.

Mr Neville And turn your body sir a trifle clockwise, so that I might see your profile.

Mr Talmann And what of my feet sir, I am not a corkscrew. Besides I do not feel entirely happy that Mr Herbert will find my presence in this drawing totally acceptable.

Mr Neville You are Mr Herbert's son-in-law and the father of his grandchild, the husband of his daughter, consider what he has invested in you sir.

Mr Talmann You talk of investment as though my person were a herd of cattle or a grove of walnut trees.

The montage indicated above has continued through this gradually fading conversation and has ended with a selection of close-ups of the appetising food on the spread cloth, finishing with the flies on the pickled walnuts.

The warm pastoral munificence is cut short by a sob.

Mr Neville Madam, you must not spoil your face by crying.
Your face will beg question at dinner.

Mrs Herbert is lying face-down on a white pillow, her face pressed into the pillow and her clothes rucked up around her shoulders. The draughtsman is out of frame.

Mr Neville Madam I have a surprise for you, whose strategem only came to me this afternoon.
- and suddenly I cannot but believe that someone else, by providing the opportunity, had the same strategem in mind as well.
Look madam.

Mrs Herbert turns and the camera travelling across the sheets stops short on drawing number five - of the prospect of the Herbert Estate as seen from the hill to the east. The outline of the headless figure of Mr Talmann is large and prominent to the right of centre.

Mr Neville This man has no head - a typical German proposition.

Mrs Herbert Mr Seymour, you are talking about my son-in-law.

Mr Neville By the grace of God madam, you have a grandson by him, is that not a better thing to talk of?

Mrs Herbert And you mock my money and my person to draw only caricatures.

Mr Neville Madam, by your help and three pictures in the gallery and my memory, I intend to place the head of Mr Herbert on these shoulders as a fitting and appropriate acknowledgement of your husband and his property.

Mrs Herbert If he should return.

Mr Neville Why, madam what a strange thing to say.

Mrs Herbert If he should return home to me

Mr Neville Why should he ever not?
Having paid trustingly with three drawings in advance, he must return to you.

Mrs Herbert Mr Neville it is getting towards evening, you have a drawing to finish.

Mr Neville Madam, with alacrity, your servant.

Mr Neville, half-dressed, bows low and taking up his drawing and his clothes, leaves.

The sixth drawing on the second day 6pm to 8pm

The draughtsman approaches the chair among the trees at the front of the house, selects a pen, wipes a nib and before he begins, takes a look at the prospect. Hanging over the branch of a tree some thirty yards from him is a white linen-shirt. He gets up, puts the drawing-board down on the chair and stands for a few seconds comparing the prospect with the drawing. He takes a few paces towards the shirt, thinks better of it and re-seats himself. He draws the shirt, the bough and the tree.

Lights are lit in the groundfloor room of the house and there is distant talk and laughter. The camera begins a montage of details of the house and garden in the dusk that ends with close-ups of the ground floor windows and finally with the window of the dining-room where guests are sitting at dinner.

The evening meal on the second day. As well as the usual members of the Herbert family and Mr Neville, there are two new guests and the Poulenc Brothers.

Mr Talmann Mr Neville is our resident draughtsman, Mr Hammond, and he is making a few drawings of Mr Herbert's house and estate.

Mr Hammond I have heard of your prowess Mr Neville, Indeed I have heard more than that. I have heard that you are not a conventional man.

Mr Neville I wonder sir, who would want to claim that distinction.

Mr Hammond I have heard it said that you are more interested in the back-stairs of a house than you are in the main hall.
That you would rather draw a groom than a king and would stop painting a beautiful woman for the delight of drawing a bucket of onions.

Poulenc I Are you a sort of malcontent sir?

Poulenc II Or perhaps he is a Leveller

Poulenc I Perhaps he is a Catholic

Poulenc II Perhaps he is a Whig

Mr Neville
(to the
Poulenc
twins) Whatever I am gentlemen, I could persuade myself that there is only one of me - a distinct advantage I would have thought in a world where there is too many of everything.
Looking alike is for onions in a bucket.

Mr Talmann Mr Neville has planned his stay here like a general in an hostile billet. We have orders to appear and disappear, to wear cocked hats, to eat meals in the open air and to prepare out furniture for inspection.

Mrs Herbert And yet I understand Louis that you are not adverse to exchanging exercise on a new horse for standing to attention like a halberdier in the hot sun.

Mrs Talmann Even the wheat stands to attention for Mr Neville. We have received a complaint from our neighbour Mr Street, to the effect that his bailiff is sorry to be losing fine weather for the sake of the attention his hay is attracting for only two hours every afternoon. He wishes to know whether we are serious in pursuing our desire that he does not harvest his hay for a fortnight and is obliged to say that the sooner you have finished Mr Neville the better it would please him for repeated deputations by his servants are becoming tedious.

Mrs Hammond

What control you must exercise Mr Neville -
it sounds as if you might be better employed as a
military man than as a man who merely draws
a landscape.

Mrs Herbert, whatever is the price you must pay to
capture the services of this general who leads
the wheat by the ear.

It is misty and from the vantage-point of the chair, visibility is limited. The draughtsman walks up and down under the trees waiting for the mist to clear. Slowly the sun pierces through the mist. The camera picks up details of water-drops on the leaves and drenched spider-webs.

As the mist clears, the draughtsman settles to draw and to find that a new element has been introduced into the view - a ladder has been propped up to the window of a room on the first floor. After some hesitation, Mr Neville begins to draw, and he includes the ladder.

The prospect of the gardens to the south with the stone statue of Bacchus. Mr Neville is drawing in deep concentration when he is approached by Mrs Herbert.

Mrs Herbert The contract is void, Mr Neville.
I cannot meet you again.

Mr Neville Mrs Herbert, come and sit here.
Move your head into the shade. Would you like
a glass of wine?
Do you not think the gardeners have excelled
themselves with the topiary?
You can see the clocktower from here. I notice at
midday when the sun gets well up, that the tower
begins to melt away in the heat - it begins to
reappear about four o'clock.

Silence. The draughtsman kneels beside her and with his board on his
knee and his back against the tree, he continues to draw.

Mrs Herbert You should not continue to draw Mr Neville.
I can no longer feel able to continue the terms
of our contract.

Mr Neville Could you understand madam if I said that since
starting this commission it has grown less and
less onerous?
That despite my earlier protestations, I am enjoying
the work. The gardens are a delight and the
weather is magnificent. I ...

Mrs Herbert I am glad of your pleasure sir, and you may
remain here for the delight of the garden but
I must withdraw from my side of the contract -
the fee is yours as is the hospitality of the
house.

Mr Neville Madam I was about to say that, despite all my
satisfaction at the prospect of continuing the
commission under such delightful circumstances,
the peak of my delight is obtained in those
short minutes that I spend with you, and I would
regret losing them. Besides I do not have to remind
you that the contract was arranged by two people
and it will surely take the consent of both
the signatories to make it void?
And now madam I feel that from the roots of this
tree I cannot adequately see what I ought to be
seeing and I must request you to find some other
resting-place - at least until four o'clock when
our meeting is to be consummated as arranged.
Here is your daughter madam, perhaps you can both
walk together to the main drive and back. I have
calculated that such a walk taken briskly can be
accomplished in twenty-five minutes.

The third drawing on the third day 11am to 1pm

Mr Neville is drawing the prospect with the sheets flung over the hedge. One of the sheets is crumpled and pushed to one side to make room for a drenched, cream velvet-jerkin or jacket. The draughtsman goes up to examine it. He then readjusts it, goes back to his chair, readjusts again and settles down to draw.

A servant from the laundry, her arms covered in soap suds, approaches the chair and with a curtsey asks if she ought to remove the jacket.

Mr Neville No, don't worry about it. Leave it where it is.
 The garden is becoming a wardrobe
 But I would like a glass of water. Can you bring me
 one?

The servant goes off and the camera watches the jacket being laid into the drawing.

The fourth drawing on the third day 2pm to 4pm

The draughtsman is outside the south side of the house, becoming irritated with Mrs Talmann's restless playing of the keyboard inside the groundfloor music-room.

Mr Neville is drawing Mr Talmann against the prospect, but it is apparent that Mr Talmann is standing stiffly and uncomfortably in vain for the draughtsman is attentive to the details on the left side of the drawing.

The camera compares these details with the view they depict and picks out the distant figure of Mrs Herbert walking along a tree-bordered path.

Mr Neville Very well Mr Talmann. I have finished for today.
 Good day sir.

Leaving Mr Talmann about to remonstrate, Mr Neville wraps up his drawing materials and walking around the servant who is packing up the refreshments, he climbs the gate and hurries off down the back of a hedge. He crosses a field and joins the tree-bordered lane further down. He climbs a low wall and enters an outbuilding. In an alcove beside some damaged statuary is Mrs Herbert.

Mr Neville Madam. From the roof we can see the river.

Mrs Herbert I cannot climb.

Mr Neville Of course you can madam. That is what ladders are for madam, witness the ladder propped against the window-ledge of Mr Herbert's closet.

Mrs Herbert How is that?

Mr Neville I do not know madam. I thought you may be able to enlighten me. I have asked Mr Porringer, and he does not know. I have intended to ask Mr Noyes, but your estate-manager is rarely to be found, Thomas was always illusive. He was once lost madam for two days and found by accident inside a hollow tree. Are there any hollow trees madam, on the estate? I can remember a ladder being used on that occasion.

Mrs Herbert How should I know Mr Neville?

Mr Neville Know what madam?

Mrs Herbert If there are any hollow trees.

Mr Neville Then madam, ought we to drag the ponds. We could use a ladder there too.

Mrs Herbert If you are making any elaborate allusions to the presence of that ladder Mr Neville, I do not understand them, but I will make sure it is removed

Mr Neville You must not now madam, for the ladder is in the drawing.

This conversation has been carried on, a little breathlessly by Mrs Herbert, as they travel across the loads of successive out-buildings. They arrive at a small banqueting-room which contains a stone-table and a stone-bench, a sun-bleached pallet with pillows and a sheet.

There is a drop of forty feet onto the tree-lined drive, and looking out through the stone balustrade they can see Mr Talmann walking along, swinging a riding-crop and picking his nose. The servant is some forty yards back struggling with the hamper, dragging it on the grass so that its silver-utensils rattle.

Mr Neville Madam, who is your husband's direct heir after you?

Mrs Herbert My grandson Mr Neville, only not after me.

Mr Neville And what about your daughter and her husband?

Mrs Herbert They will be guardians on my grandson's behalf.
Do you plan to study legal matters Mr Neville?

Mr Neville You must forgive my curiosity and take off your brocade.

• Mrs Herbert To have possession sir, of my person, is not an
excuse for you to be privy to my husband's will.

Mr Neville Your loyalty madam is exemplary.

The camera pans to the view through the stone balustrade. Throughout the previous conversation, the sound of the servant dragging the wicker hamper with its rattling utensils, has been getting nearer and nearer. As the camera peers down the servant approaches the spot under the balustrade, drops the hamper and prepares to urinate against the wall, the camera pans away and frames the view through the trees and stays there until the sound of the dragging hamper begins again. It stays framed on the trees, and the rattling-utensil-sound moves by and dies away. The camera still remains fixed on the view for two more lines of conversation.

Mrs Herbert If you have completed your work here Mr Neville,
there is more for you in the front of the house.

Mr Neville Madam, I am away. If I do not see you at dinner, I
will know that you failed to negotiate the ladder.

The sixth drawing on the third day

6pm to 8pm

The draughtsman draws the view at the front of the house. The white linen shirt still blows slightly in the wind. Mr Neville looks up at one point from his concentration to find Mrs Talmann watching him. She waves and he waves back. And then knowing the edge of his drawing, Mrs Talmann walks slowly back to the house. Mr Neville watches her and then idly draws a sketch of her in the left hand margin of the drawing he is working on.

A servant from the house walks out to pick parsley and, unaware of her position within the draughtsman's vision, she stops to look at the hanging shirt. She looks around, possible to envisage an owner, sees the draughtsman, curtsies and hurries off to disappear behind a hedge.

Mr Neville is drawing the early morning view, and has been drawing for an hour, when Mrs Herbert's grandchild accompanied by a nursemaid, approaches the chair where Mr Neville sits. Seeing the boy's curiosity, he encourages it. He sits the boy on the bench beside him, gives him a sheet of paper and a pen and the boy draws the same view as the draughtsman. The nursemaid stands by uncertain of her responsibilities but not forward enough to interfere.

The camera compares the prospect, the draughtsman's drawing and the boy's drawing, concentrating on the detail of the ladder propped against the closet window.

The second drawing on the fourth day 9am to 11am

The draughtsman brushes some leaves from the chair on the second site. He settles to draw and discovers that at the foot of the Bacchus statue is a pale-coloured cloak or overcoat. Wryly he inspects the landscape for other anomalies. The landscape is itemised detail by detail but the draughtsman and the camera can find nothing untoward.

The third drawing on the fourth day 11am to 1pm

Without incident, the draughtsman takes the drawing of the sheets drying on the hedge, a stage further.

The fourth drawing on the fourth day 2pm to 4pm

Without incident, the draughtsman takes the drawing of the south of the house a stage further. The window of the music-room is open but Mrs Talmann is not at the keyboard.

The fifth drawing on the fourth day 4pm to 6pm

When Mr Neville arrives at the site of the fifth chair, Mr Talmann is sitting on it.

Mr Neville Good afternoon Mr Talmann

Mr Talmann Good afternoon Mr Neville, you are late. I heard the clock strike four some several minutes ago.

Mr Neville That is indeed true. I met Mr Porringer.
I am becoming Mr Porringer's taster of victuals.
Does the same happen to you? Today it was strawberries.
I congratulate you on today's strawberries but not on yesterday's Carolina gooseberries - they were too green - like that coat, Mr Talmann.

Mr Talmann There is no way Mr Neville, that I was going to wear that coat a third day.

Mr Neville Then I am afraid Mr Talmann that we cannot proceed.
If you are very quick Mr Talmann, you may just be able to go back to the house and change it.

Mr Talmann That is out of the question.

Mr Neville There is the afternoon wine and fruit Mr Talmann -
we could have sent your servant back for the coat?

Mr Talmann Mrs Talmann has found him a more useful occupation than dragging wicker-baskets about the countryside.

Mr Neville We are indeed losing the novelty of the situation
 Mr Talmann.
 First I was graced with the presence of Mrs Talmann
 and yourself, two servants, a maid and a meal served
 on silver-plate.
 Now what have we Mr Talmann? Yourself in the wrong coat.

Mr Talmann Mr Neville - enough. Your enthusiasm for complaint
 knows no limit. For a fee of thirty guineas your
 impertinence is too expensive.

Mr Neville Would you have me impertinent for nothing sir?

Mr Talmann For nothing Mr Neville I would have you run off my
 property. Good day.

Mr Neville Your property Mr Talman?
 Mr Talman you have forgotten your riding-boots.

Mr Talmann They are not mine Mr Neville. I felt sure they were
 yours.

Mr Talmann walks off and says no more, Mr Neville looks at the
 drawing and then at the boots.

The sixth drawing on the *fourth* day 6pm to 8pm

Mr Neville arrives at the chair on the sixth site to find a tray
 on a small table. On the tray is a decanter of wine, a glass, a
 silver-plate and knife and a peach and a note. Mr Neville reads the
 note and looks up. Mrs Talmann is standing with a maid some one
 hundred yards distance. Mrs Talmann and the maid cutsey elaborately
 and the draughtsman acknowledges them. He drinks a glass of wine and
 begins to draw.

Private contract/fourth scene

Bedroom at night.

The outline of a large window and a starry sky is just visible. Mrs Herbert enters. The initial conversation begins in almost total darkness.

Neville. "Ah madam, you are indeed quiet. Perhaps you would be so considerate to light us

"No, let's think better of it, no light, perhaps you would like to go to the window and I will join you there.

"The garden towards the Seymours looks fine".

"If you would be so good as to turn around - and lean a little towards the prospect of Mr Seymours property."

"I think we would be more comfortable on a small stool.

"Ah madam you anticipate me".

"I have a complaint - not with you madam - please keep still, as you know in the south avenue where the gravel has been raked I am drawing the Bacchus figure with the herb garden beyond. The Bacchus figure, madam, you will know is no great piece of work, indoors or out. I dare say Mr Herbert must have inherited it - he would be too discriminating to have brought it down from Northampton. Madam, I must compliment you - you're linen is so white - my complaint madam, is that the inferior Bacchus this morning were around his ankles a long coat, a dirty-cream coat, maybe a faded yellow - as you know the drawings are
- merely in black ink on white paper - but the colour could be important for you may know the garment. I confess I didn't go near it, but from a distance the coat had dark buttons. I have - may have - seen the coat in the hall, where you may have seen it too.

Herbert. "It sounds Mr Neville, like a riding-coat of my husbands"

Neville. I think madam that I suspected it.

Herbert. "I do not know what it was doing there. If it is still there tomorrow I will have it removed"

Neville. "I think not - Bacchus now has the beginnings of a cloak at his feet - all be it with buttons - and it must stay there. I have drawn it in. For the more particularly observant it is a hint of nonchalance on the part of your husband - that Mr Herbert leaves his clothes about in the garden - that Mr Herbert is so informal - governs such an easy-going estate that he treats its walks like so many cupboards in a wardrobe. You need not worry madam. For the more casual observer, Bacchus, in a moment of self-revealing immodest - insobriety - has dropped his cloak. He means to pick it up. But the sculptor has caught him between the thought and the action.

Your robe madam - if I could see it perfectly - I would hazard that it had fallen to your ankles - are we to be caught madam, between the thought and the action?

The first drawing on the fifth day 7am to 9am

The draughtsman works on the first drawing without incident.
The drawing progresses.

The second drawing on the fifth day 9am to 11am

The draughtsman works on the second drawing without incident, turning the chair around so that the drawing-board rests on the back of the chair.

The third drawing on the fifth day 11am to 1pm

The draughtsman, drawing the sheets spread out on the sledge, becomes bored. He stretches, gets up and goes for a walk. He picks a herb, elaborately rolls it between his fingers and sniffs it, then he flicks it on the surface of the water in the basin of a shallow fountain.

He wanders back to find a group of servants and scullery staff collected around the drawing on the chair.

The fourth drawing on the fifth day 2pm to 4pm

The draughtsman works without incident. The drawing progresses.

The fifth drawing on the fifth day 4pm to 6pm

The draughtsman arrives at the site of the fifth chair to find only Mr Noyes there sitting on the chair. A flagon and a basket of strawberries stands besides the chair.

Mr Noyes stands up when Mr Neville arrives and a blur coat that has lain across his knees falls to the ground.

Mr Noyes Mr Neville, I have been sent by Mrs Talmann to see if you could use me in place of Mr Talmann who is indisposed.

Mr Neville Well, Mr Noyes, to begin with you are the wrong shape and the wrong size, but you will block out the light well enough. Do you whistle Mr Noyes?

Mr Noyes If I did it would not be through patriotism.

Mr Neville I see we understand one another Mr Talmann

Mr Neville places Mr Noyes on the edge of the field and begins to draw.

Mr Neville Are you an ambitious man Mr Noyes?

Mr Noyes As ambitious I suspect Mr Neville as yourself.

Mr Neville Do you satisfy your ambition Mr Noyes by working for Mr Herbert?

Mr Noyes I have been here eighteen years Mr Neville, and I have seen my ambition mature.

Mr Neville Mature into what Mr Noyes? Please unclench your fist.

Mr Noyes I have the confidence of Mrs Herbert.

Mr Neville But not of her husband?

Mr Noyes It is not always easy to satisfy Mr Herbert.

Mr Neville It is curious - is it not - that Mr Herbert's satisfaction is exactly the reason for me being here drawing you Mr Noyes, and you standing there being drawn.

Mr Noyes I doubt whether Mr Herbert would appreciate my being here. '

Mr Neville In standing in for Mr Talmann who is standing in for Mr Herbert, you could say you were achieving an ambition Mr Noyes.

Mr Noyes Mr Herbert and myself sir, benefitted at the return of the King, but we did not benefit equally, though we started as equals.

Mr Neville Why would that be Mr Noyes?

Mr Noyes (Silence)

Mr Neville Perhaps Mr Noyes it might be put down to marriage?

Mr Noyes It might.

Mr Neville And yet sir, consider how close you are to the lady, as a confidante, it could be construed, who acts in opposition to the best interests of her husband.

Mr Noyes (Silence)

Mr Neville Perhaps Mr Noyes, a confidante is not close enough?

Mr Noyes (Silence)

Mr Neville You are eloquent in your silence Mr Noyes, but not elegant in that coat.
Hold your head higher Mr Noyes. The holding of a head high is most important for a man of property - like Mr Herbert.

The first drawing on the sixth day - the last day of the first
six drawings 7am to 9am

A glittering early morning.

The draughtsman completes the drawing before nine strikes. With the drawing in the foreground left balanced on the chair offered to mirror, for the camera's inspection, the scene it is meant to represent, the draughtsman takes a walk and walks into the scene. He, by inference peoples his own landscape. He disappears behind a hedge and reappears on the ladder - by inference he climbs the ladder in the drawing. He peers into the window at the top of the ladder, sees nothing of interest and climbs down. He disappears behind the hedge and reappears in front of the drawing. He lifts the drawing off the chair, turns the chair over and walks out of frame. The camera tracks back to take in the whole scene plus the upturned chair.

The second drawing on the sixth day 9am to 11am

The draughtsman is drawing the front of the house with the Bacchus figure.

He completes it and places it on the grass at his feet and compares the drawing with the view. He walks into the drawing area towards the statue and then returns. By inference he is walking in the drawing.

He picks up the drawing, turns the chair upside down and exits. The camera tracks back to view the upturned chair in front of the whole scene.

The third drawing on the sixth day 11am to 1pm

The draughtsman, having completed the drawing, leaves it on the chair and walking up to the hedge, slowly peels the sheets off. A maid runs out and helps him, together they begin to fold the sheets. The reality compared with the drawing is made visible by the drawing on the chair being angled exactly to correspond with the reality. A second maid appears and they continue to fold the sheets, picking out the occasional leaf and twig. The draughtsman turns the chair over and exits carrying the drawing. The camera retreats and views the scene with the upturned chair in the foreground.

The fourth drawing on the sixth day 2pm to 4pm

Angled for the camera the drawing is compared to the view. The draughtsman is nowhere in sight. The camera tracks back and the draughtsman is revealed asleep in the grass under a tree.

The fifth drawing on the sixth day 2pm to 4pm

The draughtsman approaches the site of the sixth chair. He is accompanied by a servant carrying a bottle of wine and a basket. The site is vacant except for the chair and the pair of boots.

Mr Neville Well Philip, drawing is a four-day wonder.
 You will have to stand in.

Servant With or without boots sir?

Mr Neville I was thinking that they might be yours.

Servant They would fit well enough (appraising them)

Mr Neville Then if they are unclaimed they are yours, but
not until four o'clock.
Mr Herbert is going to be a man of parts - and not
one part his own. (Looking at the drawing)
For a man who is the pivot of this whole enterprise
he is on paper only, and that in a shape not his own.

Mr Neville, working on drawing number six in the evening session of 6 until 8 is mildly startled by the sudden appearance of Mrs Talmann.

Mr Neville I have to admit madam that I have noticed you enough on the periphery of my drawings to wonder when you might enter it. There are others of course. They on the whole walk the garden with less assurance than yourself. Indeed observing, madam, your grace and your boldness, I began to conjure an entrance for you, as you can see, -

(he points to a drawing of Mrs Talmann in the margin of the drawing - she is depicted in costume with bare breasts and carrying a prism. He lifts the sheets underneath to reveal other attempts - on horseback, and dressed as a harpy)

However now you have made the decision, I congratulate you for confounding my expectations.

Mrs Talmann Maybe the reason for my unexpected arrival will
confound your expectations some more.

Mr Neville Maybe it will madam, but I am convinced it concerns
 the linen shirt that hangs so nonchalantly on the pear-
 tree.

Mrs Talman It does indeed

Mr Neville I confess I resisted drawing it first because it did not hang there the first day nor the second. And I have a feeling the scullery servant that picks the parsley felt so too.

 It is the only object in the landscape that blows in the wind - if ever so slightly. It is very white and - no doubt bleaches whiter in the sun every day. I would be sorry to part with it now. If it yours I insist you leave it there.

Mrs Talmann No, it is not mine. (She walks towards it at some
fifty yards distance, touches it
and walks back not entirely
without coquetry.)

 It is my father's.

Mr Neville Your father is obviously becoming a forgetful man.

Mrs Talmann It is my father's and there is blood on the sleeve.

Mr Neville I confess it would be difficult to see the blood
 from here.

Mrs Talmann The shirt Mr Neville is prominent enough in your drawing. Would it be possible do you think to disguise its presence? Could it be turned into - perhaps a broken branch snapped at the trunk by the wind?

Mr Neville What wind madam?

Mrs Talmann Why - the wind you volunteered, the wind that always blows the smell of limes this way on a summer's evening.

Mr Neville Mrs Talmann, without wishing to sound inordinately dogmatic or immovable in the face of imagination - or the summer wind - I take some intellectual excitement in deliberately doing my very best to record exactly as I can what is in front of me. Though I agree that a black drawing on a white sheet of paper is at best not reality - but a schematic equivalent, I try very hard not to distort or dissemble -

Mrs Talmann Would that always be your method of working Mr Neville

Mr Neville It would.

Mrs Talmann Well, let me make a little speech.
In your drawing of the north side of the house, my father's cloak lies wrapped around the feet of a figure of Bacchus.

In the drawing of the prospect over which my husband turns an appreciative gaze you will have noticed that there is unclaimed a pair of riding-boots -

In the drawing of the park from the west side, it is possible to see leaning against my father's wardrobe, a ladder usually put to use for collecting apples.

And the drawing of the ice-house outside the laundry is a jacket of my father's slit across the chest. Would you not think that before long you might find the body that inhabited all those clothes.

Mr Neville **Five** garments and a ladder madam, are not necessarily going to lead us to a corpse.

Mrs Talmann Ah Mr Neville, I said nothing about a corpse.

Mr Neville Madam you are ingenious, it is as if you had planned it.

Mrs Talmann Perhaps I did Mr Neville, perhaps I did not.

Mr Neville Your father is in Southampton so he would not miss his clothes or notice the ladder.

Mrs Talmann Is my father in Southampton Mr Neville?
 My mother told you that.
 And you must realise she is a lady of few words and not incapable of a few stratagems. Have you not thought how hard she persuaded you to be her draughtsman to draw her husband's house when her husband was away.

Mr Neville Her explanation for that can be supported

Mrs Talmann Is it a proposition you have experienced before - or a proposition you have witnessed before - or heard of before?
 Or have you only heard it before wrapped up in Mr Noyes' store of anecdotes?
 Perhaps Mr Neville, you have taken a great deal on trust.

Mr Neville I look forward Mrs Talmann to the eventful purpose and outcome of your ingenuity. My last six drawings will no doubt be redolent of the mystery. I will progress by stages to the heart of the matter.

Mrs Talmann Perhaps to the heart of my father Mr Neville?

Mr Neville Lying crimson on a piece of bright green grass?

Mrs Talmann What a pity Mr Neville that your drawings are in black and white.

Mr Neville You rush ahead Mrs Talmann. The objects of your story are innocent.

Mrs Talmann Taken one by one Mr Neville perhaps they could so be construed. Taken together you could be regarded as a witness of misadventure.

Mr Neville Madam what misadventure. There is no misadventure.

Mrs Talmann And more than a witness Mr Neville - an accessory to misadventure

Mr Neville Madam you are fanciful

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville, I have grown to believe that a really intelligent man makes an indifferent painter for painting needs a certain blindness - a certain partial refusal to be aware of all the options. An intelligent man will know more about what he is drawing than he will see. And in the space between knowing and seeing he will become constrained, unable to pursue an idea strongly, fearing perhaps that the discerning - those who he is eager to please, will find him wanting if he does not put in not only what he knows but what they know as well.
 You Mr Neville, if you are an intelligent man and thus an indifferent painter, will perceive that a construction such as I have suggested could well be placed on the evidence contained in your drawing.

Mrs Talmann
(continued)

If you are, as I have heard tell, an exceptional draughtsman - then - I could imagine that you could suppose that the objects I have drawn your attention to, form no plan, - strategem, or - inditement.

Mr Neville

Inditement madam? Your descriptions and suppositions are ingenious - I am allowed I see, to be neither of the two things that I wish to be at the same time.

Mrs Talmann

I propose Mr Neville, since I am in a position to throw a connecting plot over the inconsequential items in your drawing - an interpretative plot that I could explain to others to account for the disappearance of my father - and there is no word now for twelve days from my father having arrived in Southampton - I propose that we could come to some arrangement that might protect you and humour me.

Mr Neville, for the first time, puts down his pen and stares at Mrs Talmann.

I suggest that we come to a similar arrangement as you have struck with my mother.

The draughtsman is completely taken by surprise, presuming no-one know of his contract with Mrs Herbert.

And for each drawing that remains to be unfinished you will meet me under conditions entirely of my choosing.

A scene entirely reminiscent of the previous contract-signing at the end of the prologue. In a dark cabinet illuminated by a single candle, Mr Neville, Mrs Talmann and Mr Noyes gather to sign a contract. The candle-light falls mainly on to a table-papers and hands.

The document having been agreed upon, Mr Noyes silently hands the pen to Mrs Talmann who signs, then to Mr Neville who signs, and then signs himself. Mrs Talmann leaves the room followed by Mr Neville. Mr Noyes 'sands' the document, folds it, places it in a vellum envelope and secrets it away. He licks his finger and thumb and squeezes out the candle.

Immediately after the signing of Mrs Talmann and Mr Neville in a corridor that leads into the sunlight of the garden. The draughtsman has moved towards the door and does not expect to be called back.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville, you have a chair in the corridor outside the withdrawing room on the second floor and you will be there I notice in the middle of the afternoon. I will meet you there at three o'clock.

Shots of the twelve empty chairs about the house and the garden.

A small child is sitting on one in the garden.

One has been knocked over under an apple tree.

One has a basket of clean washing perched on it.

One is ~~waiting~~ *visited by a dog*.

The final one of the twelve is the chair in the withdrawing room on the second floor.

The Second Set of Six Drawings

The draughtsman embarks on the second set of six drawings, fulfilling his obligations as before with Mrs Herbert and the new obligations to Mrs Talmann.

There follows a set of scenes that are dependant on the character of the location, but would be treated with no less lack of incident and detail as before, developing the themes already muted

- a) the reciprocal animosity of Talmann and Neville
- b) the bitterness of Mr Noyes towards Mr Herbert
- c) the growing animosity to Mr Neville by Mr Noyes

and introducing

- d) a growing animosity of Mr Seymour for Neville fed by Noyes and Neville's arrogance.
- e) the introduction of a horse 'evidence' of Herbert's absence from the drama.

Some of the scenes in this section of the second set of six drawings are here fully fleshed out and placed chronologically.

The first drawing of the afternoon session - 2pm until 4pm. The draughtsman sits on a padded chair outside the withdrawing room on the second floor. Before him, and the object of his drawing is a long vista of rooms joined one to another with a corridor. The afternoon light streams in from his right side turning the corridor into alternate passages of light and dark.

Accompanied by a large dog, Mrs Talmann enters the very end of the corridor and slowly approaches the camera and the draughtsman. She disappears into each room for ten seconds or more as she walks forward. Since there are at least eight rooms it is difficult at first to make much sense of her actions until by the fifth room it is apparent that she is taking off a garment in each room. She reaches the room before the one where the draughtsman waits, and disappears apparently we imagine to disrobe before finally approaching the draughtsman. Only she does not appear at the expected interval.

After a pause of some thirty seconds Mrs Talmann's reflection in suitable attire or lack of it, is seen in a poorly silvered glass standing right behind the draughtsman. She has manouevred round him through an intervening passage that connects the corridor rooms out of sight of the draughtsman and the camera.

The following day the draughtsman sketches in a woman in the early afternoon drawing - at the very end of the vista.

Mr Neville en route from one viewing-point to another almost collides into Mrs Herbert who is out walking with her grandchild

Mr Neville Madam I have changed my mind about this afternoon's meeting. I wish to meet you instead in front of the Homage to Optics by Januarius Zick.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville I do not understand you. .

Mr Neville Your husband has an eccentric and eclectic taste in paintings. Whilst most of his peers are content to collect portraits, preferably of an edifying family connection, Mr Herbert collects anything. Perhaps madam he was being patriotic in a foreign country. Perhaps he has an eye for optical theory. Perhaps, madam he has - and I would stand beside him in this - an interest in the pictorial conceit. Madam.

Mr Neville bows and leaves.



Mrs Herbert is seen curiously scanning the paintings in the gallery and then in the withdrawing-rooms. Brilliant sunlight streams into the dark interior through a succession of large windows. In the long corridors some of the casement windows are open, the curtains move slightly and peaceful sounds from the garden outside filter to the inside.

Here begins a montage that starts leisurely and slowly increases in speed. Into the search for the correct painting, is intercut shots of Mr Neville sitting drawing in brilliant sunlight. The bright exterior and the dark interior are intercut until the view Mr Neville is drawing represents the outside and the dark heavily-varnished paintings represent the inside. One of the paintings, unbeknown to Mrs Herbert, is the one she is looking for - an obscure allegorical landscape painted by the German Januarius Zick.

Mrs Herbert suddenly in long shot is startled to see Mr Neville. He is sitting in an upholstered chair, his legs stretched out, his jacket off due to the heat. Laying back he is looking at the painting by Zick. He turns his head and watches Mrs Herbert's approach.

Mr Neville An Mrs Herbert - I was a little early, being pestered by your grandchild who I had no wish to rebuke.
But I was eager also to renew my acquaintance with Januarius Zick - and of course madam, with yourself.
Perhaps for comfort you would be so kind as to lock that door.

From a central viewpoint in which the painting is the main element Mrs Herbert, who has been standing in front of Mr Neville, moves off to the right and out of frame to shut the door which she has just come through, whilst Mr Neville gets out of the chair, and moves out of the frame to the left to shut a door down the corridor. They both return to their former positions.

Mr Neville Are you not intrigued by this painting madam?

Mrs Herbert I confess I have paid it little attention

Mr Neville Can you see why your husband had reason to buy it?

Mrs Herbert It is of a garden - that is probably reason enough.

Mr Neville True, but what of the events that are happening within it? Come by me madam, and we can peruse it together.

The seduction scene follows - the action and the conversation intercut with carefully framed details of the many anecdotes in the painting.

Mr Neville Do you see madam a narrative in these apparently
unrelated episodes?
There is drama is there not in this overpopulated
garden?
What intrigue do you think is here? - madam,
would you step out of your shoes.
Do you think that the characters have something to
tell us?
Would you know if your daughter has any particular
interest in this painting?
Madam, could you put a season to it?
What infidelities are portrayed here. Madam, do you
have an opinion?

This barrage of insinuating questions along with Mr Neville's
firm but not coarse treatment of her person, brings Mrs Herbert
to the brink of tears.

Mr Neville Do you think murder is being prepared?

The camera steadily surveys the entire painting.
The sound of the garden. Haran calls of a peacock as Mrs Herbert
is humiliated.

Early morning session - 7am to 9am.

Shivering slightly and yawning, the draughtsman draws in the deep early morning shadow of a yew hedge. Through a covered walk on his left the long early-morning shadow of two large dogs is followed by the shadow of a woman. It is Mrs Talmann.

Mrs Talmann Good morning Mr Neville

Mr Neville Good morning Mrs Talmann

Mrs Talmann I can see that you are perhaps anticipating a later loss of time in the day by starting to draw so early.

Mr Talmann I would start earlier madam, save the morning air is damp and makes the drawing surface absorbent.

Mrs Talmann I know another place Mr Neville where it would perhaps be unadvisable to take your pen and ink. I have the privacy of the basin at twelve and since you are not too far placed from there at that time, I have no cause to think that you will be late.

Mr Neville At twelve madam it will be cool enough a place from the heat of the garden. Though from past experience it will be too dark a place to hope to wish to draw, ever in black and white.

Mrs Talmann From past experience Mr Neville - all you will need to draw is the water - and that from the culvert - although last time Mr Neville I understand you had help.

Third Session of the morning - I am till lunch.

In the gloom of the basin room which is lit only by daylight from a round window set high in the wall. When the door into the basement corridor is open daylight reveals blue and white tiles and a row of water-jugs and the basin sunk into the floor which has a foot or so of water covering its tiled bottom.

By and large the draughtsman tries to behave the same way as he behaved with Mrs Herbert. The voices are low-keyed but liable to echoe.

Mr Neville Shall we leave the dogs outside, madam?
 (aiming to kick one out)

Mrs Talmann They will sit at the door and whine, Mr Neville, which may draw the attention of those better not alerted, don't you not think Mr Neville?
How much time have we would you say?

Mr Neville A week?

Mrs Talmann You are generous with my mother's money and patience. Did you hear that a horse has been found - at Strides, which is about three miles from here on the road that if followed long enough can lead you to Southampton? I will stay dressed, you will not. Mr Clarke says the horse has been badly treated.

Mr Neville It could be said that all roads can lead to Southampton if the traveller is ingenious enough - as to a traveller's horse, I have heard of a horse that found it's way to Dover - and boarded a ship taking hay to Calais. The French don't treat horses kindly, they eat them. Was your horse partly eaten madam. And if so which part? May I leave my hat on?
(it is gloomy enough not to see clearly what is happening but it can be assumed the draughtmen is wading in the basin for there is the sound of water the movement of a hat at floor-level)

Mrs Talmann Mr Clarke is a groom, knows a horse well and knows a horse very well if it belongs to my father.
(Mrs Talmann has climbed on the step ladder that is normally used for climbing into and out of the basin, and is looking out of the round window into the garden, where the chair the draughtsman should be using at that moment is placed under a walnut tree)
Your chair looks lonely out there Mr Neville.
(close-ups of chair, and shots of chair as seen from other windows in the house, finally as seen from the viewpoint of Mrs Herbert who is staring into the garden)

Mr Neville What assumptions are we to make Mrs Talmann of a wounded horse belonging to your father found on the road to Southampton.

Mrs Talmann The first assumption I make Mr Neville is that the horse has no business there without my father - the second assumption is that why is it wounded and what does that imply for my father

Mr Neville

The third assumption no doubt will implicate me, since a saddle-less horse has found its way into this morning's drawing. Why don't you now leave the window Mrs Talmann and come to the pool's edge - don't worry, you will still stand head, shoulders and much else above the level of my head - your position of superiority will not be diminished. What of course I do find curious is that this morning early when you were surprised to find me up and on the parterre drawing your father's bay trees, you were accompanied by the stable dogs and you were carrying a bridle and a crop.

(Mrs Talmann has come down the ladder and must be standing at the basin's edge)

Since I have taken valuable time to fill the bottom of this basin with a little water, why not share it with me.

Mrs Talmann

I am cool enough Mr Neville ..

Mr Neville

Then perhaps one of your dogs ..

(there is a yelp, a struggle and a splash and ceaseless yapping which is magnified by the echoing basin-room)

(The noise can be heard from the chair under the walnut tree - eventually a soaked lap-dog is thrown out of the round window, lands on the grass and turns to bark furiously at the basin-house exterior)

1 It is raining. The draughtsman, Mr Neville, is in his room, standing at the window looking out on to the wet roofs and the park beyond. He stirs a steaming drink in a silver-cup.

2 Dressed, carrying a sheaf of papers he stands in a garden doorway looking out at the wet shrubbery.

3 Shots of the twelve chairs in the rain, including -
one - a padded chair covered in an oil-sheet
five- a hard-backed chair with a rush seat turned upside
down
nine- a chair with arms tipped forward and leant against
a tree
eleven - a hard-backed chair fallen sideways

the remainder are, in their various ways, sodden.

4 Breakfast on famille

The servants are clearing away a breakfast, Mrs Talmann and her husband are still eating. A tutor is wiping the mouth of Mrs Talmann's son. Mrs Herbert's elderly mother is being helped from the room by a maid.

Mr Neville, the draughtsman, joins Mrs Herbert at a window looking out onto the rain-soaked grounds.

Mr Neville A day wasted, Mrs Herbert. But perhaps I can with your contrivance save a little of tomorrow's time by advancing part of our contractual obligations. How soon Mrs Herbert would you be free?

Mrs Herbert There is perhaps a chance Mr Neville, that the weather may clear this afternoon. Therefore, since I have no wish to lose your services in the open air, I will be where you wish in an half an hour from now.

Mr Neville Your withdrawing-room would suit. It has three large windows through which we could look for a clearing of the sky.

(Mrs Herbert leaves the room and Mr Neville remains to stare out at the rain. Within his vision is the fourth chair under a yew tree. As the draughtsman watches, a heavy bough from the yew, no doubt affected by the wind and the rain, crashes down onto the chair which splinters beneath it.)

Mrs Herbert's Withdrawing-Room.

Mrs Herbert sits up in the bed with her hair loose. Mr Neville lies beside her with his head propped on a bolster. They are both staring at the rain on the window.

Mr Neville What is this Mrs Herbert, that I hear of a wounded horse?

Mrs Herbert Why, Mr Neville, that a horse has been found from my husband's stable, cropping the grass on the side of the road at Strides Hayling.

Mr Neville Do you understand, madam, what it was doing there?

Mrs Herbert Why, that it was cropping long grass and standing on three legs.

Mr Neville A three-legged horse, madam, is that significant?

Mrs Herbert My husband took six horses of his own to Southampton, and no doubt hired as many more on the way.

Mr Neville Far be it madam, to worry on your behalf, but I have been encouraged to sense a misadventure.

Mrs Herbert There is much more misadventure in what we do here Mr Neville than in an abandoned horse.

Mr Neville Why madam, are we on three legs, cropping grass?

Mrs Herbert Mr Neville, if for some reason my husband should not come home - the drawings which are being drawn from you with such an initial show of reluctance and at such a great expense to me - would have been commissioned in vain. What would you think of that?

Mr Neville Madam, as you must realise I am undertaking the commission at your request and at your request alone, what you intend for them must be your business. Though I must admit the touch of melodrama you too have admitted, cannot but increase my interest and not diminish it. Is it not possible for you to appreciate that if the drawings are to be given - as it were - posthumously, it might enliven them in some way, change them in some way. It will certainly change the way in which they are to be viewed in the future, don't you think?

Mrs Herbert You have hinted Mr Neville that my supposition of the failure of my husband to return is not entirely novel to you.

Mr Neville It is a proposition madam, that with various signs and nudges has been persuaded on me by other interested persons.

Mrs Herbert And who might they be Mr Neville?

Mr Neville Madam, until - if I have your permission - we -
are more certain of the hypothesis being true,
you cannot expect me to reveal what, after all,
may be a malicious surmise.
But, if you find occasion, you might ask the
opinion of Mr Clark. And tell me madam, is your
husband taken with a study of birds.

Mrs Herbert Not that I am aware of - and who is Mr Clarke?

Mr Neville Mr Clarke, madam, is your husband's groom.

At seven o'clock on a fine summer's evening the Chester Household are awaiting the return of Mr Herbert. The family and their servants and friends are grouped about the open-windows of a ground-floor banqueting-room. Those present include Mrs Herbert, Mr and Mrs Talmann, Mr Seymour, Mrs Herbert's mother and grandchild and Mr Neville, the draughtsman. Servants are still clearing away food. The assembly is seen centrally with the open windows symmetrically placed in the middle of the frame and offering a full view of the main drive. In the early part of the conversation, two men pass carrying a ladder.

Mrs Talmann I understand you will be leaving tonight Mr Neville.

Mr Neville With Mrs Herbert's permission, I will be leaving after the arrival of Mr Herbert, and after he has passed an opinion on the drawings of his house. I intend to stay with Mr Seymour tonight and if my servant has obtained a vehicle then I will leave for London in the morning.

Mr Talmann And of course Mr Neville, the sooner the better - as you no doubt expect me to say.

Mr Neville You sir, have acquainted me with your opinion on drawing, on horticulture, the Roman Church, child-bearing, the place of women in English life, the history and politics of Lubeck, the example of Mr Rubens, your personal genealogy and the training of dogs, so I am in a fair position to anticipate your opinion as to my departure.

Mr Talmann And is London to greet you with devoted hospitality?

Mr Neville Mr Talmann sir, I have been treated with as great hospitality as I could wish for in Mrs Herbert's house - she and Mrs Talmann have been at great pains to make me feel welcome - as for yourself sir, - well I am better acquainted with the monarchy and its continental origins.

Through the open windows, a figure is seen on the gravel path. Stripped to a white shirt it is Mr Clarke, Mr Herbert's groom and he is running as fast as he can towards the house. Nobody assembled has seen him. Mr Seymour sitting beside Mr Neville is diligently examining the 12 commissioned drawings which have been arranged in a portfolio.

Mr Seymour Your drawings are full of the most unexpected observation Stephen. Looking at them is akin to pursuing a complicated allegory. Are you sure this ladder was there?

Mr Neville Indisputedly

Mr Seymour And what is this? it looks like a

Mr Neville Whatever it is, it was there. Mrs Talmann will confirm it.

Mr Talmann How is that ... how will my wife confirm it?

The man on the drive running towards the house has been seen by Mrs Herbert. She watches the figure anxiously.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville is probably too encompassing in his statement - I will however confirm the sighting of a ladder - is it propped against my father's withdrawing-room, and is it partly obscured by a bay tree?

Mr Seymour It is indeed madam. You have an exact knowledge

Mr Neville As exact a knowledge as though you might have put it there madam, yourself, would you say?

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville, 'if I ever had such a mind to, I would have found it impossible to have lifted it. It would take two men.

The figure on the drive has caught the attention of Mr Talmann and he walks towards the window when the man stops, pauses and makes a hesitant attempt to summon Mr Talmann.

Mr Talmann What do you want Mr Clarke?

Mr Neville This is Mr Clarke madam.

The draughtsman speaks to Mrs Herbert who turns a scornful look at him and strains to hear what Mr Clarke and her son-in-law are discussing.

Mr Clarke Can I speak with you sir?

Mr Talmann Yes Mr Clarke, go ahead.

Mr Clarke advances and Mr Talmann takes a step or two in his direction. They talk quietly then after a pause Mr Talmann turns to the assembled group.

Mr Talmann Mr Seymour and Mr Neville. Would you come with me a moment.

The three men leave, Mrs Herbert is agitated, Mrs Talmann expressionless. The drawings on the table shuffle quietly in a stray evening breeze.

At the site of the Cedar Tree and the Stone Memorial to a Horse Mr Herbert's body lies half in and half out of the ornamental tank. The two servants, seen before momentarily as they carried the ladder in front of the dining-room window, are sitting beside the naked body. The ladder laid across one corner of the square basin is in evidence and so is a grey horse saddled and bridled. The corpse has been badly beaten across the eyes and the nose. Mr Talman, Mr Seymour and Mr Clarke emerge from a box-hedge walk and approach the tank. Mr Neville lags behind the other three, taking some considerable notice of the light, the view and the drama from a purely observational position and attitude.

The camera composition is formal, organised with precision and the lighting is dramatic. The total effect is of a tableau - a theatrical painting anticipating the history-genre paintings of the next decade.

Mr Neville is the first to notice a shirt and a wig hung on a innocuous garden-stake - with some semblance to an approximate bird-scarer.

The following action takes place in the dark of a room shielded from direct sunlight. A few stray beams penetrate the blinds. In a withdrawing room, with the curtains drawn, Mrs Herbert is standing, leaning against the wall. She is dressed in black. Mr Noyes is shown into the room by a servant.

Mr Noyes Madam it is important that I speak with you.

Mrs Herbert I cannot now Mr Noyes.

Mr Noyes I am in a position to insist.

Mrs Herbert Mr Noyes after what has happened I refuse to speak to you just now. You must see to affairs on your own or at the last resort, you must ask Mr Talmann.

Mr Noyes Madam, telling Mr Talmann what is on my mind will not help you.

Mrs Herbert What do you mean?

Mr Noyes I mean madam, that I am accused of the murder of your husband.

Mrs Herbert You are what?

Mr Noyes My accusers are your daughter and son-in-law, abetted by their acquaintance Mr Seymour and witnessed by their servants.

Mrs Herbert How can that be?

Mr Noyes I need your assistance

Mrs Herbert For what end? If my daughter feels that you are guilty of the murder of Mr Herbert - Get out. Leave me. Maria!

Mr Noyes Calling your servants is not going to help.

Mrs Herbert Maria! - what do you mean?

Mr Noyes I mean the draughtsman's contract madam.

Mrs Herbert What of it? Maria, fetch Mr Talmann.

The entry of the servant into the room throws blinding sunlight on to Mrs Herbert, such that she holds her hand to her face.

Mr Noyes (whispers) I mean your contractual obligations to Mr Neville.

Mrs Herbert What of them Mr Noyes?

Mr Noyes Madam, you are disingenuous beyond words.

Mrs Herbert Maria, don't bother to call Mr Talmann. Fetch me instead a - glass of spirit-water. Now Mr Noyes, what are you infering?

Mr Noyes I am unfairly and unscrupulously accused of the murder of your husband.

Mrs Herbert On what grounds?

Mr Noyes That I was, with the exception of your servants, the only person to know of Mr Talmann's return from Gissing on the Friday evening.

Mrs Herbert That is ridiculous, there was -

Mr Noyes - and madam, the only person in the group of people you are about to mention who was not at home awaiting the arrival of Mr Herbert.

Mrs Herbert That is no reason.

Mr Noyes There is more. Mr Herbert was wearing my riding-jacket in the tank.

Mrs Herbert Why was that?

Mr Noyes I travelled into Gissing with Mr Neville's servant to find him transport to London today, and we met Mr Herbert. He was riding without his cloak having left his baggage with his groom at Kettering. It was chilly last night you remember and I lent him my riding-jacket.

Mrs Herbert Then that is easily explained.

Mr Noyes It is madam? I did not return until this morning and Mr Talmann had his case prepared. Mr Herbert's study is littered with papers and my stick is in there. Against this conspiracy I need your protection and more -

Mrs Herbert If you are guilty, you shall have neither.

Mr Noyes Madam, with Mr Neville's contract I shall have both - for your protection and seven hundred guineas, I will trade the contract of your infidelities.

Mrs Herbert You are absurd. I will offer you no protection. Your stratagem only serves to prove the truth of my son-in-law's accusation.

Mr Noyes Madam, Mr Talmann being a pedantic man, would not wish the grandmother of his son to be seen as an adulteress, and the publication of such a contract may cause the suspicion of your husband's death to fall upon yourself.

Mrs Herbert I cannot give you money. I have no money.

Mr Noyes Natural sympathy for a widow is not going to be yours.

Mrs Herbert How is money going to protect you?

Mr Noyes I need money for my defence madam. I need money to prove my innocence.

Mrs Herbert Innocence cannot be bought Mr Noyes.

Mr Noyes Can it not?
It can, and it can also help to prove innocence.

Mrs Herbert I have no money. Seven hundred is a calculated sum?

Mr Noyes Madam, you have twelve drawings and Mr Neville has a reputation.

Mrs Herbert What for twelve drawings executed privately?

Mr Noyes Consider madam. The drawings can be construed as an embarrassment to you. And the original purpose and significance is absolved.

Mrs Herbert Those drawings Mr Noyes, have cost me too much already.

Mr Noyes Madam, they could cost you a great deal more. They could cost you possibly everything. An adulteress with a dead husband is no reputation to relish.

Mrs Herbert And Mr Neville?

Mr Noyes What of Mr Neville?

Mrs Herbert What part is he in this strategem?

Mr Noyes He is not part of my strategem.

Mrs Herbert He could be party to a future arrangement with the same intent.

Mr Noyes You paid him a fee madam, and you offered him full board on your property during the commission. To the prying eye that is as much as his is normally worth. With the contract in your hands and destroyed, why should the world think you have offered him more?

Mrs Herbert Where is that contract now?

Mr Noyes Here madam. (he takes it from his coat-pocket)
Where are the drawings?

Mrs Herbert What will be said if I no longer have the drawings?

Mr Noyes That you destroyed them, for without your husband they were valueless to you.

Mrs Herbert And what, Mr Noyes, happens when they appear in the saleroom? Your strategem is weak.

Mr Noyes Then you sold them to rid your house of something that pains you every time you see them.

Mrs Herbert That sounds like a pecuniary calculation for a weeping widow.

Mr Noyes You see madam how they cloy at you. Their management forces you to invent solutions to problems they do not yet represent.

Mrs Herbert The drawings are in the linen-press. Take them.
And let me see that contract.

Bring me that candle.

The drawings are exchanged for the contract and the contract is burnt.

Description of the Scene of the Sale of the Drawings

Mr Noyes, in possession of the draughtsman's twelve drawings, hurriedly organises a sale.

The ostensible reason for the sale is the suggestion put about publically that Mrs Herbert intends to sell the drawings to raise money for a monument to her husband to be placed in the garden of the estate.

The potential buyers are gathered in a room in the Herbert house and include the Poulenc Brothers, Mr Parkes, Mrs Clement and Mr Seymour and Mr Talmann.

In order to bolster up the price, Mr Noyes primes various of the potential buyers in different ways.

- 1) He works on Mrs Clement with an appeal of compassion that the monument should be grand and expansive.
- 2) He suggests to Mr Seymour that with the death of Mr Herbert, the estate will be sold, that he, Mr Seymour, would be given first option on a purchase, and that the drawings would be a valuable and propnetic investment for a future purchase.
- 3) He whets the appetite of the Poulenc Brothers by intimating that the drawings are associated with scandal apparent in various visual conceits and symbolic allegories.

and

- 4) By stealth, innuendo and ingenuity, he persuades Mr Talmann that there is evidence in the drawings of his wife's infidelities. Mr Talmann takes the bait and determined to surpress a potential scandal he arranges to buy the drawings out of the sale at a by now grossly inflated price.

There is a suggestion that all the members at the sale are in a conspiracy against Mr Talmann, variously antagonistic to him for reasons of his arrogance, his innocence, his money, his cuckoldry and his Germanic origin.

Description of a scene in the Talmann Bedroom

Furious at the prospect of being found a cuckold and also vaguely aware that he is the victim of a duplicity, Mr Talmann approaches his wife about the suggested infidelities and the so-called evidence of them in the drawings. He faces his wife with the supposed evidence before intending to destroy it. She deftly denies the implications and offering a different interpretation on the drawings, draws his attention to the details with which she formerly blackmailed the draughtsman. She persuades Mr Talmann not to destroy the drawings with an appeal to his avarice for a valuable artefact and to the relevance of the drawings to his new titular ownership of the Herbert Estate.

To remove all taint of the suggestion of the infidelities in the drawings he proposes to approach Mr Neville to erase the so-called evidence, at which he is ridiculed by his wife and consequently revived in his opinion as to his cuckoldry.

Description of a scene

Mr Talmann approaches Mr Neville to erase certain evidence in the twelve drawings to hide what he considers to be incriminating evidence of his wife's infidelities. After playing a little with his sensibilities, Mr Neville agrees to erase or alter the details in the drawings in agreement for a substantial sum.

The draughtsman has thus gained financially from every stage of the contract and can be considered a victim for revenge by every one of the injured parties.

Twelve weeks later - mid-autumn

Mr Neville, richly dressed and accompanied at a distance by two servants, is walking on the outskirts of the Herbert Estate. A carriage way back on the road behind him, might be his. Mr Neville, pacing a sheltered sidewalk without much obvious purpose, is met by Mrs Talmann and a companion. After an initial hesitation, they approach one another.

Mr Neville Good morning madam. Good morning sir.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville, good morning. And what Mr Neville brings you to Chester?

Mr Neville I am staying madam, at Northallerton with the Duke of Lauderdale, and at the invitation of Mr Seymour I have come to see him and to find that curiously he is out and most of his house shut up.

Mrs Talmann Mr Seymour, I understand is in London with my husband.

Mr Neville Then my visit is poorly timed.
May I enquire after your mother's health.

Mrs Talmann She is well and not well, Mr Neville.
But between those two states, she is not unhappy

Mr Neville Madam, I do not fully understand, there appears to be a contradiction.

Mrs Talmann Although my mother is understandably disturbed at my father's death, she is now, from the knowledge that her affection for my father can never now be reciprocated, she is at ease.

Mr Neville And what of yourself madam?

Mrs Talmann I am well Mr Neville. And we are thriving.
Mr van Hoyten is our new estate-manager and we are to consider a new management of the grounds in an entirely fresh approach. We are to soften the geometry that my father found to his taste, and to introduce a Dutch ease and complexion to the garden. Mr Hoyten has worked in the Hague and has presented Mr Talmann with some novel introductions which we will commence next spring.

Mr van Hoyten speaks in Dutch.

Mrs Talmann Mr Hoyten says that your drawings will assume an extra interest in the light of the changes to come.

Mr Neville It would seem then that I was in time to record the old before it was uprooted.

Mrs Talmann Maybe Mr Neville you were partly the instrument of change.

Mr Neville Surely it was the death of your father that has brought about the change.

Mrs Talmann In my mind Mr Neville and I am sure in the mind of my mother, the two events are inseparable.

Mr Neville Then I see that you are still of a mind to implicate me.

Mrs Talmann No Mr Neville, I have no mind to do that, but my father's death seems to have been the final clause and last codicil that cancelled some important contracts that deeply involved you.
Why don't you visit us Mr Neville. My mother might be interested to see you.

Mr Neville Madam, after the history of events since June, I cannot help but express surprise at your invitation.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville, I am sure that you cannot completely believe that your passage through our household was totally without some ensuing benefit to us all. My son for example, now draws a house and garden tolerably better than he did before, and he can recite a more enlightened alphabet.
Considering the results of your stay with us, you cannot be accused of anything more heinous than ambition and Mr Talmann can show you as much ambition but with far less finesse.
So why don't you visit us Mr Neville, the Duke of Lauderdale's gardener grows pomegranites - my mother has never seen a pomegranite.

Mrs Talmann conducts Mr Neville down the corridor of rooms to the withdrawing room where Mrs Herbert sits with her maid.

Mrs Talmann Mr Neville has come mother as promised, and has brought a rare gift from Northallerton, three pomegranates from Lauderdale's gardener, reared in English soil under an English sun.

Mr Neville But with the help madam, of one hundred panes of glass and a year's supply of artificial heat.

Mrs Herbert Pomegranate, Mr Neville, the gift of Hades to Persephone.

Mr Neville Madam, my scholarship is not profound.

Mrs Herbert Unusual of you Mr Neville to plead an ignorance to a subject which before you would be anxious to have us believe was an essential prerequisite of an artist's vocabulary?

Mr Neville Maybe madam, I am hesitating to acknowledge an unintended allusion.

Mrs Herbert By eating the fruit of the pomegranite Mr Neville, Hades kept Persephone in the Underworld.

Mr Neville A symbolic fruit Mrs Herbert.

Mrs Herbert And you have brought me three.

Mr Neville That was all madam, that Mr Clancy would spare me.

Mrs Talmann Maybe Mr Clancy was a contriver of allusions, Mr Neville?

Mr Neville How is that Mrs Talmann - are you acquainted with the man?

Mrs Herbert By eating the pomegranate Mr Neville, Persephone was kept concealed in the Underworld for a third of the year, for which time, Persephone's mother, Demeter, the goddess of fields, gardens and orchards refused to bless the world.

The camera takes in the view from the window of the grounds in autumn, and a montage follows of the estate, covering those areas previously made familiar by the draughtsman's drawings and incorporating details of fruit trees loaded with apples, pears, figs, berries etc. The conversation continues over the montage.

Mr Neville Certainly a tale for gardeners madam

Mrs Herbert And for those with daughters Mr Neville

Mr Neville But we have the symbolism wrongly construed madam and who knows, pomegranates grown in England may be invalid.

Mrs Talmann - plants from the hot-house, according to Mr Porringer are seldom fertile.

Mr Neville Fertile enough Mrs Talmann, to engender felicitious allusions, if not their own offspring.

Mrs Herbert And of course there are more.

Mr Neville More madam?

Mrs Herbert Mr Neville we know well your delight in the visual conceit. The juice of the pomegranate can stand for blood and in particular the blood of broken maidenhead and of murder

The camera finishes its montage of fruit and autumn images with the pomegranates on the plate in the Herbert withdrawing room. One of the fruits has been cut with a sharp knife.

Mr Neville Then thanks to your botanical scholarship Mrs Herbert you must find it cruelly apt that I was persuaded to bring such fruit.

Mrs Herbert Mr Neville, I suspect you were innocent of the insight. Like you have been innocent of much else.

Mr Neville Innocent madam. But by impute I was convinced you thought me guilty, certainly of opportunism and probably of murder.

Mrs Herbert Why should you have murdered Mr Herbert?

Mr Neville Mr Talmann believes I had reason enough.

Mrs Talmann Yes, Mr Talmann is in London still trying to find or invent a responsibility for you in the matter.

Mrs Herbert He will not forgive you your indiscretion with Sarah. But he will not disown his wife, for he will lose Chester.

Mr Neville I am sure Mr Talmann cannot be in London, for did I not see him on the carriage drive this afternoon.

Mrs Talmann I think not Mr Neville, he is in Southwark with Mr Seymour.

Mr Neville I think you must be wrong there Mrs Talmann - at least about Mr Seymour for he stopped my servant this morning in Northallerton to ask after me, and on the understanding that I was to visit you today was, according to my servant, more than pleased. I am convinced we may see him this afternoon.

Mrs Talmann I confess I am surprised Mr Neville, if that is the case. I will enquire.

With a smile and a nod to her mother, Mrs Talmann leaves the room.

Mrs Herbert

Why was it in fact that you came to see us?

Mr Neville

I was glad madam that I met Mrs Talmann and in all truth put as much a possibility as I could to see that a meeting might occur. It was out of curiosity to see the estate again, to see what appearance it put on in autumn, and I confess madam, it was out of curiosity to see you that was behind the reason why I wished to be invited to Mr Seymour's house.

Mrs Herbert

And what lies behind that curiosity Mr Neville

Mr Neville

I suspect that you do madam.

Mrs Herbert

How is that?

Mr Neville

My former contractual obligations with you Mrs Herbert, tied us together to my advantage. And at the death of your husband, it was me again who gained and you who lost

Mrs Herbert

You are very confident of that Mr Neville.

Mr Neville

And I confess that in losing, you have excited my curiosity further.

Mrs Herbert

How do you imagine my losses Mr Neville.

Mr Neville

As humiliations madam, each one exceeding the other.

Mrs Herbert

Is losing a husband a humiliation?

Mr Neville

The death of Mr Herbert, surely madam, canceled the value of your sacrifices

Mrs Herbert

What sacrifices?

Mr Neville

Surely madam it would be unnecessary for me to enumerate them.

Mrs Herbert

Maybe Mr Neville, the sacrifices to be made are yours.

And are bound up in your return here this afternoon.

Mr Neville

Madam I do not understand.

Mrs Herbert

You came here last summer to draw the house and now find the house is a draw to you.

Mr Neville

Madam, in making my arrangements here last summer I ended my speculations with the possibility of thirteen vantage-points, one of which had to be rejected to comply with the twelve drawings as commissioned. The site that was rejected was, as you know, to the east of the house and included the Cedar Trees and the monument to a horse. It was the site where your husband's body was found.

Mrs Herbert It is that irony that was uppermost, Mr Neville, in enquiring minds at the discovery of Mr Herbert's body.

Mr Neville The thirteenth site was rejected for no clear reason. It contained no clear view of the house but then that was true of several other of the drawings. Possibly it was the least characteristic of the garden's viewpoints, and was most powerful at the least advantageous times of day. And that is why, madam, with your permission I would like, if I may, to attempt to accomplish that drawing this afternoon - that is if you have no objection.

Mrs Herbert Your approach Mr Neville, is full of hesitant pleasantries.

Mr Neville Madam, that is because I am still unable to fully judge your present feelings as to past events.

Mrs Herbert Mr Neville, suffice it to say that the object of my life has changed. I am now a widow where as I was a wife. It could be construed that I was a widow whilst being a wife. I have only exchanged a false position that made me unhappy for a true position that has left me without any emotion. Of course you may accomplish your thirteenth drawing - and if it is to your satisfaction, Mr Neville, I propose a contractual obligation.

Mr Neville Madam, though I attempt the drawing for my own professional satisfaction and to lay a persistent curiosity, I have every intention, if you will allow me, of presenting the drawing to you. As a token.

Mrs Herbert As a token of what Mr Neville - compassion? Or patronage?

Mr Neville Madam you lost the other drawings through duplicity due to the evidence of written documents.

Mrs Herbert I have not lost them Mr Neville, they are in the library. They are Mr Talmann's property, but they are there if I want to see them.

Mr Neville Then what is the contract you propose Mrs Herbert?

Mrs Herbert I propose Mr Neville, that you first stay to take a midday meal with us and then when we are both ready, I will take you to see what - along with my gardener Mr Porringer, we at Chester are capable of growing. It is by way of returning your gift in kind. It is very warm in the stove-house and a delight to be there on a day like this one. It may be that we can revive for one more time a liason, outside of a contract, to our mutual satisfaction.

Description of a scene

After a meal Mrs Herbert and Mr Neville meet for the last time in the stove-house or green-house where a last mutually-agreed liason takes place. The ensuing conversation implies without over-statement that maybe Mrs Herbert is responsible for the whole conspiracy that led to her husband's death, that her daughter was a knowing accomplice, that the drama is still unfolding and is not over. If Mr Neville secretly half-acknowledges his part in the plot, he fails to acknowledge that the unfinished part of the drama might involve him again.

With a gift of a pineapple to match his gift of pomegranates, Mrs Herbert sends Mr Neville out to make a last and thirteenth drawing of the garden.

Mr Neville, accompanied by a servant carrying a chair and the pineapple walk out into the garden. It is a bright afternoon in mid-September and the gardens have undergone a seasonal change.

He follows paths that have become familiar - a yew-arch, a trellis of espaliered fruit-trees, a parterre of comfrey, a short avenue of limes, the cobbled forecourt to the ice-house, until he comes to the north side - to the large ornamental tank, the memorial to a horse and the two Cedars of Lebanon.

He finds a vantage-point and begins to draw. The light fades slowly. Items of the view in front of him and small framed details include a long distance view of two faces at a ground-floor window. Close-ups reveal them to be Mrs Talmann and Mrs Herbert.

The drawing itself is dark and rather gloomy. Further details of the view are examined, intercut with a montage of other views and details of the rest of the estate and garden, until it becomes apparent that we are being regaled with a comprehensive catalogue of the sites that have become familiar throughout the film - this time seen under more dramatic lighting circumstances.

When it is becoming almost too dark to see adequately, Mr Neville puts down his pen, and a dark figure emerges from the trees and foliage behind him.

Figure I Good evening Mr Talmann

Mr Neville Good evening, sir.
(surprised but
not alarmed)

Figure I Surely the light is now too poor to see adequately?

Mr Neville That is true, I am finished.

Figure Good. Do you think that I might see it?

Mr Neville If we had a light that might be possible.

Figure I am sure we can find a light.

As he speaks a second figure with a torch appears and approaches Mr Neville and his companion. The light increases the darkness around and throws light upon the faces of the protagonists that is reminiscent of the artificial light-effects in the opening scene. Three more figures approach, all are masked. The drawing is viewed in the light of the torch.

Figure but it is not finished Mr Neville.

Mr Neville No, Mr Talmann, it is not. You may successfully hide your face in the dark but in England at least it is not easy surely sir, for you to hide your accent?

Mr Talmann
(revealed) I did not think to hide my identity long Mr Neville which even in the eyes of the English is no especial crime - or for that matter, even in the eyes of the world, compared to the identity you care to assume with such ease.

Mr Neville And what identity might that be, Mr Talmann?

Mr Talmann The identity of a man of some talent, some honour,
a proper dealer in contracts.
A man with an eye to the improper pursuit of
dishonour to others.

Mr Neville You talk Mr Talmann like a man who has not yet
understood the idiom of today, but has learnt in
a foreign country an arcane way of speaking that
became unfashionable when my grandfather was alive.

Mr Talmann My speech is no way dependable on your view of
fashion Mr Neville. We all know that in deeds and
talent, you in your field are an innovator.

Mr Neville That Mr Talmann, must be some kind of flattery.
Have your companions come to flatter also?

2nd Figure We have come merely as curious observers Mr Neville,
to wonder why after so much as happened you return
to continue to place Mr Herbert's house on paper
- and chose to draw this particular site?

Mr Neville I might be inclined to answer those questions,
Mr Seymour - Mr William Seymour, if I did not feel
that the truthful answers I might give would in no
way be of interest to you.

Mr Talmann It is our opinion Mr Neville that in returning to
Crestor you are seeking a codicil to your original
contract - a codicil of a more permanent nature than
the last one - a lasting contract with a widow.

Mr Neville You speak of course Mr Talmann like a disinherited
man, uninterested in painting or draughtsmanship,
uninterested even in the prospect of the house you
covet from this position in the evening light.

Mr Seymour
(2nd figure
revealed) Do you think Mr Herbert would have appreciated
the prospect of his house from this position on a
summer evening.

Mr Neville As a landowner yourself Mr Seymour I leave you to
judge - for a man of property it is a view that
might be enviable. But I think you are wrong to
ascribe those enviable thoughts to me. Perhaps I
would suggest that they might be ascribed to my
friend Mr Noyes who is I think standing beside you?
A custodian of contracts, a man who was given
the custody of private agreements in black and white.

Mr Noyes How do you feel Mr Neville, that Mr Herbert felt
about such black and white contracts?

As his agent, his bailiff, his notary, I would have
thought you would be the best person to answer that.
It is curious that you gentlemen persist in asking
me questions of which you are in the best people to
supply the answers.

Mr Neville. It has of course occurred to me that you Mr Noyes could have advanced Mr Herbert the information that was so discretionably put down in black and white under your supervision. Though if I may be permitted Mr Herbert - according to your wife Mrs Talmann, sir, Mr Herbert was colour-blind, - and also blind to considerable unhappiness.

Mr Talmann Your understanding of Mrs Herbert's unhappiness could in no possible way be considered as profound. or relevant.

Mr Neville I had access to some considerable observation of her state of mind. And indeed you will not forget I was helped in that respect by her daughter, your wife sir, - and was persuaded, and persistently persuaded by both ladies to undertake the commission in the first place.

Mr Seymour And they persuaded you sir with the view that you might reconcile differences sir and not plunder them.

Mr Neville I am in no way responsible for Mr Herbert's death. The affair is a mystery to me but I have strong suspicions Mr Talmann, Mr Seymour, Mr Noyes - and if they were here with perhaps Mrs Herbert herself and Mrs Talmann - ladies who afterall entered willingly into their contracts.

continued on page

Mr Talmann We have a contract with you Mr Neville and under conditions of our choosing - though I will agree that the choice of site is yours.

Mr Neville The choice of site is indisputedly mine gentlemen.

Mr Noyes Perhaps it was Mr Herbert who chose the site - his experience might have given Mr Neville a reason to chose this particular time as well.

Mr Neville Do we have Mr Noyes as the notary, gentlemen, for if we do, you may believe that he will be false and turn any black and white contract to his advantage.

Mr Noyes The contract's first condition Mr Neville, and there is no need to write it down for you will never see it - is to cancel your eyes.

The five figures attack Mr Neville and throw him to the ground. They blind him with a torch. Mr Talmann takes off his mask.

Mr Talmann Since we now have deprived you of your access to a living - you will not have any need of any property - the shirt on your back is of no value to you.

Mr Noyes And might well decorate a statue of Bacchus - or dangle on a scarecrow to frighten off the crows.

Mr Seymour Or be scattered about an estate as ambiguous evidence of an obscure allegory.

They strip the draughtsman. Mr Noyes takes off his mask. Two figures step forward in unison.

The Poulenc
Brothers
in unison And the third condition of your contract, concomitant to the other two

Poulenc I and legally binding ...

Poulenc II and efficiently undertaken ...

Poulenc I for what is a man without property...

Poulenc II and foresight

Poulencs
in unison is your death.

They kill the draughtsman with cudgels, drag him to the sink and throw him in. The Poulencs take off their masks and hold the un-completed drawing to the torch. Mr Talmann steps forward with a sheaf of the other drawings and they are burnt.

They leave and the body of the draughtsman floats on the water.

The camera recedes and a white figure is standing under the cedar - the man hired by Mr Seymour to be a statue in his garden - he sits in the chair recently vacated by the draughtsman and he eats the remains of the pineapple - and spits it out, disgusted.

End Credits

Appendix I

Language

From the evidence of contemporary diaries like those of Celia Fiennes who was a keen observer of gardens from 1630 to 1701, and from the correspondence of the Lauderdale's who lived at Ham House in 1686, it is apparent that conversational language was considerably more archaic than has been scripted in The Draughtsman's Contract. * An exact idiom has not been striven for since

- a) it sounds phoney and/or academic
- b) a re-read is sometimes necessary to comprehend the full import of what is being said
- and c) exact idiomatic speech would probably provoke unwanted difficulties with an acting style

So, an idiom has been adopted which, in general terms, probably measures up to what a 1930's audience would expect, and basically is characterised by no apostrophed words, fully worded negatives, an exaggerated politeness which often sounds patronising and a very limited degree of familiarity.

Appendix 2

Location

Two possible locations in West London so far seriously considered.

1) Ham House.

Exactly the correct dates. Furnished and decorated in the last years of Charles II to the taste of the Lauderdale's. The Duke of Lauderdale was one of the five ministers who made up Charles II's Cabal. Complete with galleries, withdrawing-rooms, a small library, closets, staircases and outhouses all in the correctly dated style.

The gardens are usable - being in the process of reconstruction at this moment - but they are as yet rather undeveloped, somewhat limited in size and a little boring.

For sync sound there is the great problem, eight days out of ten, of low-flying aircraft going into Heathrow.

2) Chiswick House

An excellent and complete building, but thirty years too late and consequently too Palladian and not particularly domestic. There is a late Jacobean access building with an appropriate fourcourt with trees in tubs, and there are details on the exterior, which if confined, would be useful.

But the gardens are excellent - terraces, gravel-paths, long vistas, statuary, a 'canal', ha-ha, deer-house, arcades, 'rustic' huts, large Cedars of Lebanon, obelisks, dark ledges, fake bridges and follies. All of this within a square half-mile. Disadvantages - aircraft, and the gardens are well used by the public.

Both these sites are easily reached from West London, by public transport if necessary.

As is the garden of the Dutch House at Kew, which is usable and in period, though all the plants have plastic name-tags.

Appendix 3

The Characters

- Mr Talmann.** A somewhat parsimonious landowner from Lubeck, married into the Herbert family. At the accession of William of Orange, and the English alliances against Louis XIV and the threat of Catholicism, a considerable interchange began between the English, Dutch and the German States which ultimately led to the Anglo-German Hanoverian monarchy.
- Mr Talmann is about forty, has a German accent, is a fierce Protestant and retains an aggressive chauvinism for things German, but as a proto-Englishman, he is set to become more English than the English. He married for property and for affection and is fearful he will lose both especially to usurpers like the draughtsman, whom he suspects, not without reason, of Catholicism and opportunism.
- Mrs Talmann** Married for six years and aged about twenty-five. She is strong-willed and pragmatic and is certainly interested in money and property, if not because she can retain it for herself, then to keep a firm grip of it through her husband, on behalf of her son. She is a Protestant but is detached enough to preserve an ironic attitude. Firm in her allegiance and sympathy for her mother, she has like her, married a somewhat cold and self-interested man, and like her mother, but with greater self-awareness, wishes for a more demonstrative life.
- Mr Neville** A self-made but property-less painter and draughtsman, probably a Catholic. Eager for self-advancement vain and somewhat pedantic. When attacked, becomes petulant. His method of drawing is compounded of a definite interest in landscape and detail, and, having previously and often been praised for it, an ability to express order. Not particularly imaginative, he is very competent - characteristics that all please his clients, who do not make great demands on his talents and are invariably pleased with the results for they reflect their own satisfaction with their property.
- Mrs Herbert** A quiet, rather retiring woman of forty-ish. Devoted to her husband but not reciprocated. Asked to be firm, and if she feels it necessary, will force herself to act out of character. Possibly stubborn, and certainly loyal. Not a sensuous woman through experience.

Appendix 4

Music

Enclosed in the last see-through envelope in this folder is a 45rpm disc of a 'transfigured' Mozart theme by Michael Nyman (SideA)

A music scheme being considered is to take twelve such original music themes by Purcell, Handel (to keep it English - if naturalised English) Lully or (to cheat a little on dates) Bach and Mozart, and 'transfigure' them for 'The Draughtsman's Contract' - one theme for each drawing.

And use this presently recorded 'transfigured' Mozart (remixed perhaps to minimise the horn) as an overall signature - for titles and credits and as ironic accompaniment for the long montage sequence called 'Reconnaissance' in the plan of the film.

Appendix 5

The Drawings

The drawings are crucial to the plot and must develop credibly according to the chronology. The drawings must therefore be done before the shooting starts - and drawn in stages just as in the plot. Each stage must be traced, photocopied or photographed onto suitable paper and used in the shooting as the plot demands, leaving the original to be worked on and through to the finish.

Close-ups of the hand of the draughtsman drawing must be effective - there must be no fudging, since it is the drawing process which is thematically important. Since the expectations of a suitable actor being a competent and willing enough draughtsman to draw efficiently enough, are slight, they will have to be done by someone else; - and close-ups of the drawing process will have to be filmed separately.

As to problems of drawing style - some 'estate-portraitists' contemporary to the Restoration draw in a style of line-drawing that could at a push be compared to Hockney, Procter, Blake or Kitaj - meticulous, detailed drawings with the minimum of fuss and 'personality'. So a contemporary line-drawing draughtsman need not be so far wrong, any characteristics which are in the long-run considered too out of keeping, could conceivably be explained away in the script as 'eccentric' or 'distinguishing'. The drawings have not been accredited to any known draughtsman and the inference of the burning of the drawings at the end could suggest all his works have since been destroyed.