

THE REMAINS OF THE DAY

Screenplay Based on the Novel by
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1. EXT. DARLINGTON HALL FROM THE PARK. DAY. 1.

Darlington Hall is a large Georgian English country house. It stands in a park which extends to the horizon. Our first view of the house is from a rise, so that we look down at it almost in aerial perspective, for it has been sited in a natural amphitheatre.

In front of Darlington Hall there is a wide expanse of gravel onto which cars may drive, adjoining a meadow. A large tent fills up most of the graveled area. There are many cars and lorries parked on the grass. PEOPLE move into and out of this tent.

An English country house sale is in progress. We hear the AUCTIONEER. The camera goes inside the tent. At one end of it pictures and pieces of furniture are being sold. There is a rather sparse crowd of BIDDERS. Most of the people present seem to be curious SPECTATORS.

Among the BIDDERS we see LEWIS, a tall American in his fifties. Whenever something he wants is offered for sale, after the first sporadic bidding he keeps his hand in the air in a rather lordly fashion, intimidating his competitors until they drop out.

The lot being presented is an exception to this - a life-sized portrait of an elaborately dressed, bearded and be-ruffed gentleman nonchalantly holding a plumed hat in one hand. This is one of the star lots and there is much more interest from other BIDDERS. But LEWIS coolly keeps his hand in the air until the picture is knocked down to him. The camera moves in on his hand until it fills the screen. We see that though outwardly unperturbed, LEWIS is in fact excited and apprehensive. As the gavel falls we FADE OUT.

Over this auction, MAIN TITLES appear.

2. INT. FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM. DUST SHEETED. 1958. 2.
DAY.

STEVENS (63) comes into the room. The large windows are open. He closes one of them and draws the heavy curtains.

MISS KENTON V.O.

It is seven years since I last wrote to you. I have again left my husband, and sad to say, my marriage seems to be finally over. I am staying with a friend at her boarding house in Xmouth.

He moves to another window and stands a moment, looking down, before shutting it.

HIS POV

A long lawn. The Summerhouse. Fields and woods in the far distance. Perhaps a monument, a bridge, or a folly completes this private and privileged world.

MISS KENTON V.O.

I often think of you. I often think of Darlington Hall. Is the view from the Rose Bedroom the same? The lawn, the summerhouse, the Downs in the distance?

3. INT. DARLINGTON HALL SERVICE WING. DAY. 3.

The green baize door that separates the world of the English country house into spheres belonging to master or to those who serve him.

There is a small round window in it so that the servants passing through either do not collide with one another, causing heavily laden trays to be dashed on the floor, or

perhaps more importantly, so that they do not happen to intrude on their employer's privacy, or that of his guests. STEVENS pushes through the door.

It leads to a cramped, poorly lit passageway, bare of decoration or carpet. Narrow stairs ascend from it to the garret bedrooms of housemaids, or descend to the working areas - comparable to the plan of a busy factory, where the workers toil in shifts far from the air-conditioned offices of the owner, unseen and almost unknown.

MISS KENTON V.O.

...I suppose you have a completely different staff now and a new housekeeper. How well I remember the good old days when I held that position. They were among the happiest years of my life.

4. INT. UNDERBELLY OF DARLINGTON HALL. DAY. 4.

STEVENS makes his way through this factory, now somewhat shut down. He may pass through the areas most closely linked to his own duties - Butler's Parlour, Butler's Pantry, Still Room, Servants Hall, until he reaches those more closely linked with the duties of the housekeeper - Housekeeper's Room, the Women's Staircase, the Housemaid's Room, etc. He reaches the kitchen, and the domain of the cook, with its Scullery, Bake House, Dry Larder, Fish Larder, Meat Larder, Dairy Scullery, Dairy...

5. INT. KITCHEN. DAY. 5.

STEVENS enters the kitchen. This splendid room is built like a college Hall, with great wooden trusses supporting a high-gabled roof. The kitchen is outfitted with every imaginable device for the preparation of the large and elaborate meals of the turn of the century upon which country house life depended. Now only a corner of it is needed, and in this corner a small modern gas range has been installed.

COOK is grumbling to herself while simultaneously cooking breakfast and getting the tray together.

STEVENS

(entering) Good morning, Mrs. Clements...
Where is Rosemary?

COOK

Madam has called in sick again. That's the third time this month.

(MORE)

COOK (contd)

(He helps her with making toast.) It's no use having these girls come in from the village, Mr. Stevens. Their minds are always somewhere else - and not only their minds, I may say, so every morning there is this rumpus with you and me having to take on their work on top of our own.

STEVENS

It's an unsatisfactory situation. (placing toast in rack)

He goes out with the tray, COOK still grumbling to herself.

6. INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM. DAY.

6.

MR. LEWIS (55) is reading The Times while STEVENS serves his breakfast (a very serious English breakfast). STEVENS notices that a piece of toast is burned, and with enormous sleight of hand, almost like a magician, slides it out of sight and replaces it with another one. But just then LEWIS lays aside his paper -

LEWIS

Burned again?

STEVENS

(in apology) ...The rule in the kitchen here, sir, has always been that Cook cooks the cooked breakfast while her assistant toasts the toast.

LEWIS

I guess the answer is a pop-up toaster.

STEVENS

I'm afraid, sir, we need not a gadget but a revised staff plan.

LEWIS

Ah. A staff plan. I didn't know we had one.

STEVENS

A faulty one, unfortunately, sir. The ability to draw up a good staff plan is the corner stone of any decent butler's skills. (While he is talking, LEWIS leans back to look at him - puzzled, amused, but also impressed.) If in the present case the staff plan is at fault, blame can be laid at no one's door but my own. However,
(MORE)

STEVENS (contd)

it is only fair to say that there is an extenuating circumstance: we don't have a housekeeper, Mr. Lewis.

LEWIS

By all means, let's get such a person. I leave it to you. In all that sort of business, I'm in your hands.

STEVENS

Mr. Lewis, you were kind enough to suggest that I go on a little holiday, take a trip around the country...

LEWIS

Oh yes absolutely certainly, take a break. See the world. When did you last see the world? Tell me.

STEVENS

Well, sir, the world always used to come to this house, in a manner of speaking, if I may say so.

LEWIS

You may say so. I tell you what, take the Bentley: you belong in that Bentley, Stevens. You and that car were made for each other. The Bentley: great idea. I'll pay for the gas, of course: excuse me, the petrol.

STEVENS

Thank you very much, sir. I intend to drive to the West Country, where I understand we have some splendid scenery. (pouring coffee) And I might incidentally be able to solve our staff problem while I am in that part of the country. (LEWIS looks at him inquiringly.) A former housekeeper, at present resident in Xmouth, has indicated to me that she might be prepared to return.

LEWIS

I see: a girl friend. A former attachment. Is that it?

STEVENS

No, sir. But a most able housekeeper.

LEWIS

Able to do what?...Just kidding, Stevens.
(MORE)

LEWIS (contd)

(returning to The Times) You know what I like best in your papers? The obituaries. Every son of a bitch gets a stately funeral oration. It's not an art we have in the United States.

STEVENS goes into the adjoining servery.

7. INT. SMALL SERVING ROOM. DAY. 7.

STEVENS is in a small serving room off the Breakfast Room where LEWIS is enjoying his obituaries. He is putting away some fine bits of a china service. One of the plates has a chip in it; another has not been washed satisfactorily. STEVENS sighs, then washes it himself in the small sink there, dries it, and puts it away. He goes out.

STEVENS goes through a door in the wall. The door closes.

MISS KENTON V.O.

I don't know what my future is. Ever since Catherine, my daughter, got married last year, my life has been empty.

8. INT. BACKSTAIRS SERVANTS QUARTERS. DAY. 8.

STEVENS on the landing -

MISS KENTON V.O.

The years stretch before me and if only I knew how to fill them. Yet I would like to be useful again.

A door bangs. STEVENS looks up a flight of stairs, then he climbs them and opens a door.

9. INT. HOUSEKEEPER'S BEDROOM. DAY. 9.

MISS KENTON V.O.

...They were among the happiest years of my life...

The room is empty, apart from a few boxes. A window is open, causing a draught. STEVENS shuts the window and leaves the room.

10. EXT. STABLE YARD AND GARAGES. DAY. 10.

STEVENS, wearing a thick tweed three-piece suit, is stowing his modest suitcase into the Bentley. He is ready for his journey. LEWIS, carrying a camera, comes to see him depart.

LEWIS

(exclaiming in true admiration) My Lord, what a suit! Where did you get it?

STEVENS

Lord Darlington was kind enough to pass it on to me in '36, sir. Of course the tailor was obliged to shorten the trousers for me.

LEWIS

He didn't have any more like that, did he, you could pass on to me? May I? (He appreciatively feels the material.) I guess a suit like that is indestructible.

STEVENS

I have never had much occasion to wear it.

LEWIS

Now is the occasion when you're off on your romantic pursuit -

STEVENS

(po-faced) In search of a possible house-keeper...But are you sure, sir, that I won't be needed here? I feel most uneasy. It's the first time in nine years that I have left the house unattended.

LEWIS

It's not going to fall down in those few days and, if it does, I'll be in London anyway. And who knows when you'll have the chance again, once my wife gets here for good and gets the place going with all her parties and charities...Would you mind terribly, Stevens, if I took your photograph - with the car? in all that tweed?

STEVENS is deprecating, feeling unworthy to have his picture taken, but LEWIS gently and courteously insists. He poses him beside the car, and STEVENS takes up his position with immense dignity.

LEWIS

(while taking picture) I think this is going to be one for the archives - historical. One for my Muniments Room, Stevens. One more. Not so solemn this time. Give us a smile. You're off on your secret rendezvous in the West Country. (STEVENS obliges with a wintry smile.) There. That's wonderful. Thank you, Stevens.

STEVENS

Thank you, sir.

They shake hands and STEVENS gets into the car.

LEWIS

Have a good trip. Oh yes, and I hope things go well with the lady.

STEVENS puts the car into gear.

11. EXT. COUNTRY ROAD LEADING TO TRUNK ROAD. DAY. 11.

STEVENS cautiously drives up to the entrance to the main road in the Bentley. After an excessively careful scrutiny of the passing traffic, he eases his car out into the more humdrum vehicles hurtling along.

12. INT. BOARDING HOUSE, XMOUTH.* DAY. 12.

MISS KENTON (neat, nice-looking, around 48, is handed a letter as she enters the very modest boarding-house. She opens the letter, wants to read it at once, but unwilling to do so with other BOARDERS watching her, she begins to ascend the stairs to her small, plain room, reading as she goes:

STEVENS V.O.

...I propose to reach Xmouth on Thursday the third of October around 4 p.m. and would be grateful for a line from you to reach me care of the post office at _____ near _____, where I am planning to stop...

MISS KENTON sits down on her bed and reads:

...You may remember Mr. Lewis, the American gentleman who attended the conference of '35 and who has now purchased Darlington Hall from his lordship's heirs. He has taken up his residence here and will soon be joined by his family, but I regret to say that we are woefully understaffed for a house this size...Your letter has evoked many memories...

MISS KENTON, sitting on her bed, holding the letter thoughtfully.

*This is not Exmouth, Devon, but whatever place you choose to stand in for Weymouth.

FADE IN:

13. EXT. STABLE YARD OF DARLINGTON HALL. 1935. DAY. 13.

The hunt. A number of RIDERS on horses. Hounds. STEVENS (in his 40's) and UNDERBUTLERS with trays of whisky. The RIDERS bending to drink. Hounds barking. The horses' hooves.

LORD DARLINGTON raising a glass. Some of the RIDERS call to him to join the hunt. He smiles and declines.

In the distance a bicycle approaches the house via the service road. MISS KENTON gets off and wheels it. She is about 25, brisk, trim, and confident, in coat, skirt, and hat.

14. EXT. FRONT OF DARLINGTON HALL. DAY. 14.

We see the house down in its bowl of green. There are a great many automobiles standing in front of it on the gravel. Figures below move about: CHAUFFEURS, SERVANTS, GUESTS.

The hunt at full tilt comes round from the side of the house out of the stable yard and rides up the steep hill after the baying hounds, past the camera, and away.

STEVENS V.O.

I may say that, after your departure, no housekeeper ever managed to reach your high standard in any department. I well remember your first arrival. I believe it was the day of the Middleton meet. You presented the most excellent references I have ever seen which proved to be well-deserved indeed, although at first I must confess I did have my doubts on account of your youth...

15. INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY. DAY. 15.

STEVENS and MISS KENTON are sitting, STEVENS looking at her references.

STEVENS

And how big a staff is there at Granchester Lodge?

MISS KENTON

Seven, Mr. Stevens.

STEVENS

And the name of the butler?

MISS KENTON

Benn. Thomas Benn.

STEVENS

Benn...yes. Well, as I'm sure you've already observed, this is a much larger house with a much larger staff. Do you think that you can make the adjustment?

MISS KENTON

I enjoy the work, Mr. Stevens. And the responsibility.

STEVENS

Yes. Good.

Pause.

No gentlemen callers allowed, of course.

She is expressionless.

...You'll excuse my mentioning it, but we've had trouble of that sort before. From inside the house too: the previous housekeeper took it into her head to marry the under-butler. (MISS KENTON remains expressionless.) Of course, if two members of staff happen to - eh - fall in love and decide to marry, there is nothing one can say; but what I find a major irritation are those persons - and, no offence intended, housekeepers are particularly guilty here - persons who are simply going from post to post looking for romance.

MISS KENTON

(nodding in complete agreement) I know from my own experience that nothing is more disturbing to the order of a house than people marrying each other.

He looks at her with approval, feeling that they will have a good understanding with each other.

16. INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

16.

LORD DARLINGTON is looking at his shelves. STEVENS enters.

STEVENS

Might I have a word with you, m'lord?

DARLINGTON

Of course.

STEVENS

The matter of the housekeeper and the under-butler, m'lord - who...ran off together last month -

DARLINGTON

Ah yes. Bad business. How are you managing?

STEVENS

I believe I have found two first rate replacements...A Miss Kenton. A young woman with excellent references. Very pleasing demeanour. Appears to be very able.

DARLINGTON fingers a book.

And a man with considerable experience of butlering. But now of a certain age and happy to take on the post of under-butler.

DARLINGTON

Name?

STEVENS

Stevens, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Stevens?

STEVENS

Yes.

DARLINGTON

That's your name.

STEVENS

He's my father, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Oh, really? Couldn't do better, I'm sure. I'd like to see him sometime.

STEVENS

He's at the door, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Oh, yes. Good. Bring him in.

STEVENS opens the door. FATHER comes into the room.

Mr. Stevens. How do you do?

FATHER

M'lord.

DARLINGTON

Very good man here, your son. Does the house great service. Don't know what we'd do without him. Proud of him, are you?

FATHER

Very proud, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Quite right. Yes, very glad to have you with us.

STEVENS begins to lead FATHER away.

Oh Stevens, what are we at dinner tonight - twenty-seven - twenty-eight?

STEVENS

Twenty-nine, m'lord.

17. INT. BACKSTAIRS. DAY.

17.

STEVENS leading FATHER down passages and up stairs. He is carrying two of FATHER's bags.

MAIDS scurrying. Bells ringing. STEVENS stops and calls to CHARLIE, a footman.

STEVENS

Charlie! Fasten that jacket!

CHARLIE

Yes, sir. Sorry, sir.

STEVENS and FATHER climb a further staircase to the attic, reach a room, go in.

18. INT. FATHER'S ROOM. DAY.

18.

FATHER and STEVENS are in the room. There is an iron bedstead, an old washstand with a basin and jug, a pine chest-of-drawers, a rush-bottom chair, a threadbare mat on the linoleum floor, and a tiny coal-grate to take the chill off.

STEVENS

This is your room.

FATHER looks around the room. The ceiling is so low that FATHER can't stand up straight.

FATHER

I'll take the bags.

STEVENS gives him the bags. FATHER puts them down and looks out of the small window.

FATHER

Big house.

STEVENS

It sleeps forty.

FATHER remains still, looking out of the window, his back to STEVENS.

STEVENS

How is your health?

FATHER turns to look at him.

FATHER

What?

STEVENS

How is your health?

FATHER

Why do you ask?

STEVENS

I was thinking of your arthritis.

FATHER

I don't think of my arthritis, why should you.

STEVENS

You've got all you want then?

He looks around the room where there is nothing to satisfy anyone's wants.

FATHER has begun to put away his very small stock of clothes. As he does so -

FATHER

I got all I want. I'm not here to complain and grumble, like some of them.

19. INT. BACKSTAIRS CORRIDOR. DAY.

19.

STEVENS is walking along the corridor when MISS KENTON appears at the far end and calls.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens.

He turns.

MISS KENTON

This jug. It seems to be quite out of place here.

STEVENS takes the jug and looks at it.

STEVENS

It belongs to the first floor landing - front of the house. Well spotted, Miss Kenton.

She wants to ask something more, to prolong the conversation, has already opened her mouth to do so - but he is too busy, hurries away on one of his many tasks. He moves lightly, gracefully, but with military precision.

20. INT. SERVERY. NIGHT.

20.

The essential link between Kitchen and Dining Room. The food is kept warm in a big steel hot-cupboard, and final adjustments are made to the dishes before they are served. STEVENS and FOOTMEN are in the act of changing courses - say, from fish to the main.

The door leading into the dining room continually swings open and shut again as the dirty dishes come out and clean ones go in. When it does, we get a glimpse from time to time of LORD DARLINGTON's party of twenty-eight GUESTS through the crack and hear a sort of muffled roar of conversation.

STEVENS is the general in command here, sending his divisions into action as required. He gives brisk commands, oversees everything, misses nothing. The Servery is situated between the China Cupboard and the Butler's Pantry, and there is a great deal of coming and going.

21. INT. BUTLER'S PARLOUR. EARLY EVENING.

21.

STEVENS is sitting at his table doing accounts. The room is by no means without its little comforts - on the contrary. Here he might wear his bedroom slippers, take a drink, even smoke a cigar by a nice little fire in the fireplace.

MISS KENTON knocks and enters with a vase of flowers.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, I thought these would brighten your parlour a little.

STEVENS

I beg your pardon?

MISS KENTON

I thought they might cheer things up for you.

STEVENS

Very kind of you.

MISS KENTON

It's a shame more sun doesn't get in here. The walls are even a little damp, don't you think? I know mine are.

STEVENS

(who has already turned back to his accounts) Condensation, that's all.

MISS KENTON places the vase in front of him on his table, and although he shows himself very preoccupied, she lingers.

MISS KENTON

...If you like, Mr. Stevens, I could bring in some more cuttings for you.

STEVENS

Thank you, Miss Kenton, but I regard this room as my private place of work and prefer to keep distractions to a minimum.

MISS KENTON

(amused) Would you call flowers a distraction then, Mr. Stevens?

STEVENS

I appreciate your kindness, Miss Kenton, but I'm happy to keep things as they are... And since you are here, there was a matter I wanted to mention to you. Just a small matter...I happened to be walking past the kitchen yesterday when I heard you calling to someone named William...May I ask who it was you were addressing by that name?

MISS KENTON

Why, Mr. Stevens, I should think I was addressing your father. There are no other Williams in this house, I take it.

After an impressive pause:

STEVENS

...May I ask you in future, Miss Kenton, to address my father as "Mr. Stevens"?

(MORE)

STEVENS (contd)

If you are speaking of him to a third party, then you may wish to call him "Mr. Stevens senior" to distinguish him from myself. I'm most grateful to you, Miss Kenton.

Although he ostentatiously returns to his accounts, she does not make the expected withdrawal. After a moment -

MISS KENTON

I don't quite understand what you're getting at, Mr. Stevens. I am the house-keeper in this house while your father is the under-butler. In other houses I was accustomed to address under-servants by their Christian names.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, if you would stop to think for a moment, I'm sure you will realize how inappropriate it is for someone such as yourself to address as "William" someone such as my father.

MISS KENTON

(colour and temper rising) Well, I'm sure, Mr. Stevens, it must have been very galling for your father to be called William by "someone such as myself."

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, all I'm saying is that you should have noticed by now that my father is a person from whom, if you cared to be more observant, you may learn many things.

MISS KENTON

I'm most grateful for your advice, Mr. Stevens - but do please tell me just what marvellous things might I learn from your father?

STEVENS

I would have thought it obvious for anyone with eyes to see, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

You have already kindly pointed out, Mr. Stevens, that I have no eyes to see.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, let me tell you, that if you are not prepared to learn from those with
(MORE)

STEVENS (contd)

greater experience, then you will never achieve that professionalism which is I think - yes I do think - within your reach...For instance, I might point out that you are still often unsure of what goes where and which item is which.

A pause.

MISS KENTON

(somewhat deflated) I had a little difficulty at first, but that surely is only normal.

STEVENS

Ah, there you are, Miss Kenton. My father arrived in this house a week after you did, and you may have observed that his house knowledge is perfect and was so almost from the day he set foot in Darlington Hall.

After another pause, MISS KENTON begins her retreat with what dignity she can still muster:

MISS KENTON

I'm sure Mr. Stevens senior is very good at his job, but I assure you, Mr. Stevens, I'm very good at mine. Now, if you would please excuse me.

22. INT. SERVANTS HALL. NIGHT.

22.

The large room where the SERVANTS take their meals, and in which the grander ones among them may be seen from time to time relaxing, having their tea, and sitting in front of the fire.

The walls are hung with prints from upstairs that Lord Darlington has discarded. Over the sideboard or chimney-piece there might be a photograph of King George and Queen Mary.

The STAFF is at dinner. STEVENS is at the head of the table, carving. MISS KENTON is seated at the other end, FATHER somewhere in the middle (the placement is as strictly according to rank as it is in the upstairs dining room). There are HOUSEMAIDS, FOOTMEN, etc. Cook and Kitchenmaids take their meals separately in the kitchen; at present they are serving in the Servants Hall so that KITCHENMAIDS come in and out with various dishes, which are prepared by COOK in the kitchen (thus establishing connection between kitchen and Servants Hall).

STEVENS' command over this table is as authoritative as over the rest of the household. Carving, he hands down plates, keeps an eye on the demeanour of the younger staff, initiates and guides themes of conversation.

There is some tittering among the HOUSEMAIDS at the antics of one of the footmen, a handsome young man called CHARLIE. He is doing his best to amuse them - e.g. he might pretend to be juggling the plates as they are passed down the table, or caricaturing the act of carving. STEVENS of course soon detects these antics, and puts a stop to them with a well-directed cold stare.

CHARLIE

(when his plate reaches him, in a whisper to be overheard by the HOUSEMAIDS) Lovely colour of meat: rosy as a baby's you-know-what.

HOUSEMAIDS go into convulsions; one of them has to stuff her napkin into her mouth. MISS KENTON takes note and passes down a warning.

STEVENS

(to KITCHEN MAID who has entered with another dish) My compliments to Cook, if you will, Betty... (to CHARLIE) Now I'm sure you've said something wonderfully witty, Charlie, which you might like to share with the rest of us who were not fortunate enough to hear you.

CHARLIE

(speaking up quite boldly) I said how the sprouts is done just the way I like them, Mr. Stevens. Crisp, like; not mushy.

STEVENS

The sprouts are done, Charlie, not is done. You'll pardon the correction as I would have done at your age for the sake of my education. I'm sure even you, Charlie, have ambition to rise in your profession.

CHARLIE

Oh yes, Mr. Stevens: I'd like to be a butler to be called Mister and not Charlie, and sit in my own pantry by my own fire, smoking my cigar.

Everyone looks at STEVENS - and when, after a short pause, he laughs, they also laugh.

STEVENS

...I wonder if you have any idea what it takes to be a butler, Mister Charlie...

FATHER, who has his head down over his plate, engrossed in eating, suddenly speaks up, his voice sounding as from the tomb:

FATHER

It takes dignity, that's what it takes.

STEVENS

Thank you, Father. Exactly: Dignity. This is the official definition as given in our quarterly, The Gentleman's Gentleman: "A great butler has to be possessed of a dignity in keeping with his position."

FATHER

(in his sepulchral voice) There was this English butler out in India - one day he goes in the dining room and what's he see under the table: a tiger. Not turning an hair, he goes to the drawing room - "Excuse me, m'lord - (gives imitation of polite cough) - and whispering so as not to upset the ladies: "I'm very sorry, m'lord, there appears to be a tiger in the dining room. Perhaps his lordship will permit use of the twelve-bores?" They go on drinking their tea and then there's three gun-shots. They don't think nothing of it - this being out in India where they're used to anything - and when the butler is back to refresh the tea-pots, he says, cool as a cucumber: "Dinner will be served at the usual time, m'lord, and I am pleased to say there will be no discernible traces left of the recent occurrence by that time."

The last phrase delights him and he repeats it, choking with laughter. Just then one of the service-bells rings -

MISS KENTON

(looking up at the board, to FATHER) It's for you, Mr. Stevens. (to STEVENS) It's for Mr. Stevens senior, Mr. Stevens.

FATHER gets up and goes out.

23.

INT. LONG CORRIDOR OF BEDROOM DOORS. NIGHT.

23.

We see FATHER going down this corridor. His step is rather shuffling and uncertain, an old man's tired tread. But as

he approaches the room to which he has been summoned, we see him straighten his shoulders and pull himself together. He raps on the door discreetly and goes in, leaving it ajar. The camera moves up to the door.

Inside the bedroom we see one of the male guests, YOUNG CARDINAL, in a dressing gown seated on the bed holding a hand out under the bed light. FATHER attempts to withdraw a splinter from the palm with his pen knife. CARDINAL jumps, but says nothing.

24. INT. SERVANTS HALL. NIGHT. 24.

The STAFF are still at dinner:

STEVENS

Now, Mr. Charlie, I'll tell you someone who has it: Dignity. My father. In any discussion about the qualities that make a great butler, his name always came up first. There's one story they told about him when he was at Loughborough House, with Lord Fainlight, where he served for fifteen years at the height of his career. One day, the chauffeur being on leave and some guests wishing to see the countryside, my father was enlisted to drive them.

FADE IN:

25. INT. LIMOUSINE (1920 VINTAGE). DAY. 25.

FATHER (younger, more hale and hearty) is driving with raucous GUESTS rolling around in the back seat.

STEVENS V.O.

These guests were presumably gentlemen but they had had a drop too much at luncheon and they sat in the back singing some very coarse songs and they ordered Father to go right and then left and then the other way round and they insulted all the villagers they saw through the window and then they started to call Lord Fainlight, Father's employer, all the names under the sun - and at that Father stops the car dead -

26. EXT. CAR ON COUNTRY ROAD. DAY. 26.

Car stops dead. FATHER gets out of the driving seat and opens the rear door.

27. INT. CAR. PASSENGERS POV. DAY. 27.

FATHER at the open door. His figure looms. He stands

without speaking, looking down at the three GUESTS.

Silence. The GUESTS stare up at him.

GUEST 1

(quavering) Are we...not going on with the journey?

FATHER remains still, framing the doorway.

GUEST 2

I suppose we have been...uh...talking a little out of turn. Please accept our apologies.

FATHER remains still, blocking out the light. He slowly closes the door, gets back into the driving seat and drives away. The three GUESTS are silent.

DISSOLVE

28. INT. GRAND STAIRCASE. DARLINGTON HALL. DAY. 28.

Darlington Hall's grand staircase, one of the most beautiful and imposing features of the house. The very high walls are a brilliant blue-green, decorated with rococo plaster decorations. A skylight lets in the sun, which falls steeply down on the bent figure of FATHER: he is slowly making his way down the stairs with a brush and dustpan, stopping at every step.

At the landing he stops work and shambles off, perhaps bound for the toilet, abandoning his dustpan and brush.

MISS KENTON, busy on some household mission, looks over the banister from the above floor. Glancing down, she sees the dustpan and brush.

She hurries down the stairs, looks about, picks the offending articles up, stands there uncertainly for a moment, then puts them down again.

29. INT. LIBRARY. DAY. 29.

STEVENS is up on a ladder, making some adjustment to the lines of books. MISS KENTON comes in.

MISS KENTON

Excuse me, Mr. Stevens, but if you're searching for your dustpan it is out on the landing.

STEVENS

My dustpan?

MISS KENTON
Your dustpan. You've left it out on the landing.

STEVENS
I haven't been using a dustpan.

MISS KENTON
Oh, really? Then it must have been somebody else.

STEVENS
I don't follow you.

MISS KENTON
It's my mistake, no doubt; one of many.

She goes. He listens to her steps fading away, climbs down, opens the door and goes out into the hall -

30. INT. THE HALL AND STAIRCASE. DAY.

30.

STEVENS sees the dustpan and brush sitting in the middle of the landing of the splendid staircase. He starts to go up surreptitiously to remove them - keeping a look-out for MISS KENTON in case she sees him. But the person he sees coming down the stairs is LORD DARLINGTON, who reaches the offending articles before STEVENS does. DARLINGTON steps around them without comment. STEVENS quickly swoops them up and they seem magically to disappear, almost like the burnt piece of toast. He murmurs apologetically.

31. INT. THE SALOON. NIGHT.

31.

LORD DARLINGTON has had several GUESTS to dinner and now they are sitting about afterwards. STEVENS and FATHER are serving the party with brandy, whisky, and so forth.

The GUESTS are all Establishment figures, people of weight and importance, e.g. an ecclesiastic, a newspaper publisher, a Foreign Office official. Also present, a much younger man we glimpsed before having a splinter removed - REGINALD CARDINAL, godson to LORD DARLINGTON. Since we shall be meeting these guests again - they are DARLINGTON's cronies, and they will also be delegates at the conference - let us call them: MR. SPENCER, SIR LEONARD BAX, VISCOUNT BIGGE, MR. TRIMMER, CANON TUFNELL.

LORD DARLINGTON
When I fought in the war, I thought it was to preserve justice in the world. As far as I understood, I wasn't taking part in a vendetta against the German race.

SIR LEONARD

Unfortunately, our French so-called allies do not share our ideas of fair play toward a defeated enemy.

DARLINGTON

That is why it is imperative to have a Frenchman of some importance present at our conference. I have invited Monsieur René Dupont to join us as the French delegate -

LORD BIGGE

Réne Dupont! He'll never come.

DARLINGTON

(with quiet satisfaction) I'm glad to say I have just had news of his acceptance.

General exclamations.

SPENCER

But Dupont is fanatically anti-German. I remember a speech he gave in Geneva in '33 that made me ashamed to be seen as an ally of the French. I mean to say, that's not the English way of carrying on.

STEVENS is passing amongst the GUESTS, FATHER serves LORD DARLINGTON. DARLINGTON glances up for a moment as he takes his brandy and notices there is a large drop suspended from the end of FATHER's nose. DARLINGTON shows no trace of having noticed this and returns to the conversation.

DARLINGTON

No, it is not. And it is precisely the purpose of our conference to discuss these matters informally, far away from the to-do of a large international conference. Here, in the friendly and relaxed atmosphere of one's home, we may have a chance to bring round others, like the French, to our own point of view.

CANON TUFNELL

And that of the Germans.

DARLINGTON

And that of the Germans.

CARDINAL

(after struggling with his own shyness, nervousness and youth) But, sir, how can we associate ourselves with the Germans? With the Nazis? They've torn up and trampled on every treaty and are a worse threat than ever to the whole of Europe! Not to speak of their brutal dictatorship at home -

DARLINGTON

My dear boy, the last time I was in Berlin I saw at last a happy German people - with jobs, and bread, pride in their country, love of their leader -

CARDINAL

(stammering in agitation) What about the - the Jews?

TRIMMER

You can't believe everything you read in the newspapers.

Everyone agrees that all that is highly exaggerated, just propaganda. Although STEVENS has noticed the drop on FATHER's nose, he continues throughout this scene to serve with his usual finesse and aplomb.

Now he withdraws, with FATHER, to whom, once they are outside, he hands a handkerchief.

32. INT. THE BILLIARDS ROOM. DAY. 32.

STEVENS arranging Lord Darlington's trophies in a glass cabinet. MISS KENTON comes in.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, was it his lordship's wish that the Chinaman on the upstairs landing should be exchanged with the one outside the door?

STEVENS

The Chinaman?

MISS KENTON

Yes. The upstairs Chinaman is now outside this door. Come and see for yourself.

STEVENS

I'm busy at the moment.

MISS KENTON

All you have to do is pop your head outside this door and see for yourself. It won't take a minute.

STEVENS

I will look into the matter in due course, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

You think it might be a fantasy - a fantasy on my part? Due to my inexperience?

STEVENS

I am busy in this room, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

I shall wait outside.

She goes out, closing the door.

STEVENS continues to arrange the trophies. He stops, listens. He goes to the door, listens; he stoops to look through the key-hole.

33. INT. OUTSIDE BILLIARDS ROOM. DAY. 33.

MISS KENTON is waiting outside the door, arms folded.

34. INT. INSIDE BILLIARDS ROOM. DAY. 34.

STEVENS retreats from the door. He goes to the French windows and looks out. It is raining. If he wishes to escape from here, he will have to negotiate large puddles. He looks at the door of the room, walks quickly to it, opens it, strides into the hall.

35. INT. THE HALL. DAY. 35.

MISS KENTON's face, startled, as STEVENS strides by fast.

MISS KENTON overtakes him and stops in front of him. He stops. She points to a Chinaman on a table. (A Chinaman is a large china figure of a Chinaman with a nodding head.)

MISS KENTON

Look at it. Is that or is it not the wrong Chinaman?

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, I'm very busy and I'm surprised that you have nothing better to do than stand in corridors all day.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, look at that Chinaman and tell me the truth.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, I would ask you to keep your voice down. What would employees below think to hear us shouting at the top of our voices about Chinamen?

MISS KENTON

And I would ask you, Mr. Stevens, to turn around and look at the Chinaman.

He turns slowly and looks at the Chinaman. He looks back at her.

STEVENS

It is a small mistake. A trivial mistake.

MISS KENTON

Your father is entrusted with more than a man of his age can cope with. I'm concerned for him.

STEVENS

Let me pass.

She continues to block his way.

MISS KENTON

It was your father who left the dustpan in the middle of the hall, it is he who is leaving polish on the cutlery, it is he who has confused the Chinaman - you must recognize this before he commits a major error -

STEVENS

I'm afraid you can't talk to me like this, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

I'm afraid I must, Mr. Stevens. I'm giving you serious advice: Your father should be relieved of a number of his duties. For his own good. Whatever your father once was, he no longer has the same ability, or strength. He should not, for example, be asked to go on carrying heavy trays. His hands tremble. One day at dinner he may drop a tray into a lady's lap.

STEVENS

I thank you for your advice. Now perhaps you will allow me to go about my business.

MISS KENTON

Oh, I never meant to keep you from your business, Mr. Stevens.

He walks away. She looks after him.

36. INT. SUMMERHOUSE. DAY.

The Summerhouse is a pretty pavilion in the style of Robert Adams built on a little bridge over a slow-moving stream flowing through the Park. It is approached on either side by a flight of shallow steps.

Inside there is a table for working and for serving tea, and some chairs with cushions.

LORD DARLINGTON is with MR. SPENCER and SIR LEONARD BAX.

SPENCER

It is essential to be absolutely clear before the arrival of your Frenchman - what's his name again? -

DARLINGTON

Dupont. René Dupont. Yes, we must be in a position to convince him that full

(MORE)

DARLINGTON (contd)
 acceptance of Germany's reasonable demands
 is no more than - eh - civilized. We are
 expecting the American delegate, Congressman
 Lewis, to arrive on the same day as Mr. Dupont.

SIR LEONARD
 Who is he, this American?

DARLINGTON
 Rather an unknown quantity. He is a
 young Congressman from Pennsylvania, and
 I believe the heir to one of those
 American fortunes -

SIR LEONARD
 Meat-packing?

SPENCER
 Or in trolley-cars?

SIR LEONARD
 Or dry-goods? What are dry-goods?

SPENCER
 Evidently something that Americans make
 a lot of money in.

They laugh.

DARLINGTON
 I think Mr. Lewis' fortune comes from
 cosmetics, actually.

37. EXT. THE SUMMERHOUSE. THE LAWN. DAY.

37.

FATHER approaching with tray across the lawn.

He climbs the low steps towards the Summerhouse, slips.
 The tray falls. He falls, hits his head; the teapot,
 cups, sandwiches and cakes scatter; the teapot breaks.

FATHER lies still.

DARLINGTON rushes out of the Summerhouse. He calls for
 a cushion and rug. SPENCER and SIR LEONARD bring them.
 DARLINGTON turns FATHER on his side, puts the cushion
 under his head and the rug over him. STEVENS runs from
 the house.

38. INT. FATHER'S ROOM. EVENING.

38.

MISS KENTON sitting at his bedside with a glass of milk.
 FATHER has a bandage on his forehead. He opens his eyes,
 looks at her.

FATHER

Where's Jim?

MISS KENTON

Jim?

FATHER

My son. Mr. Stevens. (He takes and sips the glass of milk.) His name's Jim.

MISS KENTON

Is it? (She tries it out:) Jim. Doesn't really suit him.

FATHER

He'll have to get those steps put right.

MISS KENTON

Those steps to the Summerhouse - they're very awkward.

FATHER

I'll have to tell him. They've got to be put right.

39. INT. THE HALL: LIBRARY DOOR. DAY.

39.

LORD DARLINGTON seen through the open door studying the spines of books on his shelves. He pulls out a volume as STEVENS comes into the hall.

DARLINGTON

Oh, Stevens...

DARLINGTON strolls back into the library with his book. STEVENS follows, closes the door.

STEVENS

M'lord?

DARLINGTON

Your father feeling better?

STEVENS

He has made a full recovery, I am happy to say.

DARLINGTON

Oh good, good. Glad to hear it...
(some nervous turning of pages) But none of us wish to see anything of that sort happen ever again, do we? I mean, your father collapsing and all that.

STEVENS

Indeed not, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

And of course it could happen anywhere.
And at any time...Look here, Stevens,
the first of the foreign delegates will
be arriving here in less than a fortnight.

STEVENS

We are well prepared, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

What happens within this house during
the conference may have considerable
repercussions: on the whole course Europe
is taking. Yes, it means a great deal -
and I may as well tell you, Stevens, it
means a great deal to me personally.
(some pacing to and fro) ...I had a German
friend - Herr Karl-Heinz Bremann. We
fought on opposite sides of the war.
But we always said, when this wretched
business is over, we'll sit down and have
a drink together, like gentlemen. The
Versailles Treaty made a liar of me -
Yes, Stevens, a liar. Because the terms
we, the victor, imposed were so harsh
that Germany was simply finished. One
doesn't do that to a defeated foe. Once
you've got your man on the canvas, that
ought to be the end of it...My friend
Bremann was ruined by inflation, he was
unable to get employment in post-war
Germany, and in the end he killed himself.
Shot himself in a railway carriage between
Hamburg and Berlin. In 1927.

A pause to allow DARLINGTON to work on not showing too
much emotion.

Ever since that time I've felt it to be
my duty, my job, Stevens, to hold out a
helping hand to Germany: to give her a
fair chance...So you see, Stevens, this
conference is crucial, and we really can't
run the risk of any accidents...Look here,
there's no question of your father leaving
us. You're simply being asked to reconsider
his duties.

STEVENS

Yes, m'lord. I fully understand.

DARLINGTON

Good. I'll leave you to think about it then, Stevens.

40. EXT. THE HOUSE. DAWN. 40.

The house in early morning light. Mist rises from the ground. It is a beautiful, fairy-tale picture.

41. EXT. BACK OF HOUSE. DAWN. 41.

FATHER at his window, standing still, looking out.

FATHER'S POV from out of his window, by contrast, is not a fairy-tale picture. He looks down on the jumble of roofs and utilitarian courtyards and non-public spaces where he has spent most of his long life. There are a few early morning risers already at work - perhaps the LAMPMAN creeping away, or a SCULLERY BOY running with a bucket of coal.

FATHER does not turn his gaze away from these familiar sights. If anything, he no longer sees them.

42. INT. BACKSTAIRS. DAWN. 42.

STEVENS climbing the stairs. He knocks on FATHER's door and goes in.

43. INT. FATHER'S ROOM. DAWN. 43.

Pale light. FATHER is sitting dressed in full footman's uniform on the edge of the bed.

STEVENS

I might have known you'd be up and ready for the day.

FATHER

I've been up for two hours.

STEVENS

That's not much sleep.

FATHER

It's all the sleep I need.

He gets up from the bed, grasps the back of the chair and stands as upright as the sloping ceiling of his room will allow.

STEVENS

I have come to talk to you about something.

FATHER

Well, talk then. I haven't got all morning.

STEVENS

I'll come straight to the point.

FATHER

Do and be done with it. Some of us have work to be getting on with.

STEVENS

You are no longer young.

FATHER stands, staring at him.

There is a very important international conference in this house next week. People of great stature will be his lordship's guests. We all have to put our best foot forward.

FATHER continues to stare at him.

It has been decided that you should no longer wait at table.

Silence.

FATHER

I have waited at table every day for the last fifty-four years.

STEVENS

It has also been decided that you must no longer carry laden trays. (He takes a piece of paper from his pocket) Here is a revised list of your duties.

He offers the piece of paper to FATHER. FATHER does not take it. STEVENS puts the paper on the bed. FATHER remains still, clutching the back of the chair.

FATHER

I fell because of those steps. They're crooked. Why don't you get them put right before someone else does the same thing?

STEVENS

You will study the revised list of your duties?

FATHER

Get those steps put right. You don't want all those "gentlemen of stature" tripping up and breaking their necks, do you?

STEVENS

Indeed I don't. Well, good morning, Father.

STEVENS goes out. FATHER remains still, clutching the chair.

44. INT. FIRST FLOOR BEDROOM CORRIDOR. EARLY EVENING. 44.

The bedroom doors are ajar. The house is silent. The evening sunlight falls in orange shafts across the corridor.

MISS KENTON is standing silhouetted against a window, looking down.

She hears footsteps, turns, calls to STEVENS. He joins her by the window and they look down and see:

45. EXT. THE SUMMERHOUSE. THE LAWN. THEIR POV. EARLY EVENING. 45.

Shadows of the poplar trees across the lawn. Last light of sunset around the Summerhouse.

FATHER standing by the steps. He walks slowly up the steps. At the top he turns and comes back down, a little faster. He turns, stands still, looks at the steps.

He climbs them, very deliberately. He walks across the grass to the Summerhouse, stops, turns, walks slowly back, his eyes never leaving the ground, down the steps, across the lawn to the house.

STEVENS and MISS KENTON remain still in the empty bedroom, in the last light of the day, not looking at each other.

46. INT. THE SERVANTS HALL. DAY. 46.

STEVENS is addressing the whole STAFF, including FATHER and MISS KENTON. He is holding a sheet of paper. He puts on glasses and reads:

STEVENS

History could well be made under this roof over the next few days. You can each and every one of you take great pride in the role you will play on this

(MORE)

STEVENS (contd)
 momentous occasion. Imagine yourself
 the head of a battalion, even if you're
 only filling the hot water bottles.
 Each one of you has his own particular
 duty (looking up and catching MISS KENTON's
 eye) - or her duty, as the cap fits...
 Polished brass, brilliant silver,
 mahogany gleaming like a mirror - that
 will be our welcome to these foreign
 visitors, to let them know they are in
 England where order and tradition still
 prevail.

He looks around the hall at the STAFF. They stare back
 at him.

(taking off his glasses) Get on with
 it then.

47. INT. ENTIRE HOUSE. UPSTAIRS AND BACKSTAIRS. 47.
DAY.

PREPARATIONS FOR THE CONFERENCE:

- (A) Food arriving from London and Scotland.
- (B) Sheets, etc. being laundered in laundry room.
- (C) MISS KENTON overseeing CHAMBERMAIDS in bedrooms.
- (D) STEVENS examining a pile of dinner plates on a
 sideboard, watched by FOOTMEN. The plates he
 considers not up to the mark he puts to one side.

48. INT. THE HALL. DAY. 48.

STEVENS and FATHER in a corner of the hall. They are
 standing by a trolley loaded with cleaning utensils,
 mops and brushes, etc.

STEVENS
 You have what we can call a roving
 commission. In other words you can
 exercise your own judgement - within
 certain limits of course. You have
 your mops...here...

FATHER
 These are my mops.

STEVENS
 And your brushes -

FATHER

I have my brushes and I have my mops.
What do you want me to do with them?

STEVENS

I think you know what to do with them
well enough. Look for dust and dirt.

FATHER

And if I find any dust or dirt, I give
them a good going-over with this mop?

STEVENS

That's right.

FATHER pushes the trolley across the hall vigorously.

49. INT. BACK STAIRS CORRIDOR. DAY.

49.

MISS KENTON and STEVENS meet in a bright streak of light
from a window in the dark corridor.

STEVENS

Ah, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

Yes, Mr. Stevens?

STEVENS

The bed linen for the upper floor will
need to be ready by the day after tomorrow.

MISS KENTON

I know that.

STEVENS

Ah, good.

MISS KENTON

I know that, Mr. Stevens. It's my job.
I don't bother you about your job, why
do you bother me about mine?

STEVENS

There's no need to be so bad tempered -

FATHER comes between them, pushing his trolley. They wait
till he passes.

MISS KENTON

This is the fifth time in the past two
days that you have made quite unnecessary
remarks to me about my job. You seem to
have a great deal of time on your hands,
Mr. Stevens -

STEVENS

If you actually believe I have time on my hands, Miss Kenton, it shows more clearly than ever your great inexperience.

MISS KENTON

You're always going on about my "great inexperience." Point out one defect in my work.

STEVENS

I never said -

MISS KENTON

You can't. Because if you could, you would. But you can't. I think what you really need is some fresh air, Mr. Stevens.

She stamps away. He goes on to the kitchen door. She turns and calls.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens!

She walks down the corridor to STEVENS.

From now on I would prefer it if you did not speak to me directly at all.

STEVENS

What are you talking about?

MISS KENTON

If it's necessary to send a message to me, please do it through a messenger. Or else write me a note. I'm sure our working relationship will be a great deal easier.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton -

MISS KENTON

Thank you so much.

She walks away.

50. INT. THE HALL, STAIRS. DAY.

50.

STEVENS opens the door to LEWIS (32). FOOTMEN carry the bags and usher LEWIS upstairs.

STEVENS knocks on the library door and goes in.

51. INT. LORD DARLINGTON'S STUDY. DAY.

51.

DARLINGTON is standing thoughtfully by the window, looking out at his godson, CARDINAL, who is pacing up and down with a briefcase, studiously frowning over a paper in his hand.

STEVENS

M'lord, Mr. Lewis, the gentleman from America, has arrived.

DARLINGTON

What, already? He wasn't expected until tomorrow.

STEVENS

Everything is ready for his accommodation. I have already spoken to Miss Kenton, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Hm? What? Oh, good show, Stevens.

But he is distracted, gazing out at CARDINAL. STEVENS also looks out at the young man.

DARLINGTON

My godson, Cardinal, tells me he's shortly to become engaged to be married.

STEVENS

Indeed, m'lord? I offer my congratulations.

DARLINGTON

Thank you, Stevens. I feel very responsible for the boy. Not only is he my godson but his father, Sir David, was my closest friend, as you know. Now that he is gone, I feel - well, in place of a father to young Cardinal.

DARLINGTON returns to his desk, frowning. He sits and pretends to be looking up an entry in Who's Who. STEVENS, through long familiarity with DARLINGTON's nonchalant turning of a book's pages when he has something difficult to say, waits to hear what it may be.

DARLINGTON

(without looking up) Stevens, I have something somewhat irregular to ask you to do.

STEVENS

M'lord?

DARLINGTON

I'm sorry to bring up a thing like this now, but I can't see how on earth to make it go away.

STEVENS waits as DARLINGTON studies Who's Who.

DARLINGTON
The facts of life, Stevens.

STEVENS
M'lord?

DARLINGTON
Is he aware of the facts of life? Birds
and bees. Someone has to tell him.

STEVENS looks out of the window a moment, then down at
his feet.

DARLINGTON
Let me put my cards on the table, Stevens.
I'm so frightfully busy with this con-
ference - of course, you're so busy too
- but in a way, it would be easier for
you. I mean, less awkward. You could
talk to him more man to man. I'd find
the task a bit daunting, I'm afraid.
Might not get it done before Reginald's
wedding day. I'd be grateful if you'd
even try.

Another pause -

STEVENS
I shall do my best, m'lord.

DARLINGTON
That's awfully decent. I knew I could
rely on you. Be an awful lot off my mind.

STEVENS starts for the door, but before he reaches it -

DARLINGTON
There's no need to make a song and dance
of it. Just convey the basic facts and be
done with it. Let me know how you get on.

52. EXT. PARK. DAY.

52.

CARDINAL sits on a seat in the park with his briefcase
open on his lap, studying something inside.

STEVENS approaches through the bushes discreetly, coming
up behind the bench. He coughs to get CARDINAL's
attention, but fails to break his concentration. He
steps forward a foot or so, throwing his shadow over the
briefcase, and coughs again. This so startles CARDINAL
that he upsets the briefcase, scattering the papers.

He and STEVENS retrieve them; some are scattered by the wind. STEVENS apologizes as he hands them back. CARDINAL puts them away and shutting the briefcase, sits down with it again on his lap. STEVENS adopts an impersonal tone -

STEVENS

It must be pleasant, sir, to be here among the flowers and shrubs, the birds - bees... (gesturing vaguely to the air)

CARDINAL

I don't know too much about flowers and birds...I know about fish, though; fresh water and salt.

STEVENS

Excuse me, sir, but I have a message to convey to you.

CARDINAL

(eagerly) From his lordship?

STEVENS nods. CARDINAL opens his briefcase, takes out a notepad and pencil, shuts it, and sits poised to take notes.

CARDINAL

Fire away, Stevens.

STEVENS

His lordship wishes you to know, sir, that ladies and gentlemen differ in several key respects. He feels you might not be in possession of certain facts -

CARDINAL

(stung) His lordship is always under-estimating me. I've done extensive reading and background work on this whole area.

STEVENS

Is that so, sir?

CARDINAL

I've briefed myself very well indeed, Stevens. I've thought of virtually nothing else for the past month.

STEVENS

In that case, sir, perhaps my message is rather redundant. However, if I might just draw your attention - those geese, sir? (CARDINAL is rather bewildered as he looks in the direction indicated.) And indeed this entire realm of Nature - though
(MORE)

STEVENS (contd)
not at present, sir, in its full glory: that will be with the arrival of spring, when we shall see a change - a very special sort of change...

CARDINAL
Oh, rather - but as the French say, "revenons à nos moutons" - let's get back to our sheep -

Now it is STEVENS' turn to be bewildered - "Sheep, sir?"

CARDINAL
It means let's get back to the subject in hand.

STEVENS
Quite, sir. The subject in hand.

CARDINAL
This attaché case (he taps it with his fingertips) is chock-full of my notes on that subject, on every possible permutation of it the human mind can invent...Unless of course his lordship has come up with an entirely new angle he wants me to think about?

STEVENS
I can't imagine he has, sir.

CARDINAL
No more can I, Stevens. I suppose you've been wondering why I never let go of this case.

STEVENS averts his eyes from the attaché case.

CARDINAL
Well, now you know. Imagine if the wrong person opened it.

STEVENS
That would be most awkward, sir.

CARDINAL
You're right. It's not a very edifying show. The main protagonists take up their positions: his lordship on one side, the Frenchman Dupont on the other. But how does the American fit in I wonder. What is his function?

They might see DARLINGTON, SPENCER, SIR LEONARD BAX, and LEWIS walking together in the Park.

STEVENS

I can't imagine, sir. Good afternoon,
sir. I'll be on my way again.

STEVENS withdraws. CARDINAL looks after him, puzzled,
then returns to watching the three strolling figures.

53. EXT. PARK. DAY.

53.

LEWIS is walking with DARLINGTON, SPENCER, and SIR LEONARD
BAX.

DARLINGTON

One has to be fair: Germany is a great
nation entitled to take her place with the
other great nations - with Italy and France -

SPENCER

To us the intransigent attitude of the French
towards the Germans is completely inexplicable.

SIR LEONARD

One might even say despicable.

LEWIS

(with interest) What's the date of this house?

DARLINGTON

The original structure is Tudor - some of
it even earlier, in fact. Convent of nuns
here until Henry VIII turned them out. Place
was entirely rebuilt when the first baron
acquired it in the early eighteenth century.

LEWIS looks around him in fascination, then continues:

LEWIS

...You, unlike the French, have always had
the English channel between yourselves and
the Germans. And it's not just Germans
now - it's Nazis.

DARLINGTON waves this aside - "merely another political
party" - then points out an interesting feature of the
house to the very interested LEWIS.

53a. INT. DARLINGTON FAMILY CHAPEL. DAY.

53a.

On the morning the Conference convenes LORD DARLINGTON
and one or two ENGLISH DELEGATES, plus CARDINAL, go to
a morning service.

They kneel in prayer, then sit in a raised gallery looking
down into the chapel.

They are joined by the SERVANTS, led by STEVENS and MISS KENTON. The Staff come in by what almost appears to be a hole in the floor - climbing up the Servant's Stair from down below. They take their places on pews along the chapel walls, men on one side, women on the other.

When they are seated, CANON TUFNELL invokes God for the success of the congregation's great ~~endeavour~~. LORD DARLINGTON bows his head.

54. INT. ENTIRE HOUSE/UPSTAIRS AND BACKSTAIRS. DAY. 54.

GUESTS ARRIVING.

Two GERMAN LADIES with LADIES' MAIDS. GENTLEMEN with FOOTMEN.

Trunks being carried from cars.

An ITALIAN GENTLEMAN with a VALET, a SECRETARY and two BODYGUARDS.

As ever more GUESTS and GUESTS' SERVANTS arrive at Darlington Hall, there is ever more activity in getting ready for them, seeing to their comfort, and so forth.

GUESTS ringing bells.

Close-up of bells ringing in Servants' quarters.

SERVANTS hurrying up the back stairs, along corridors to answer bells.

Teas being made and brought up to drawing rooms and bedrooms.

Evening clothes going for pressing.

MAIDS drawing baths.

KITCHEN MAIDS and HELPERS doing assembly line work to prepare for dinner - chopping, kneading dough, plucking game, etc.

Wine coming up from cellar under STEVENS' supervision; decanting of bottles.

55. INT. BACKSTAIRS CORRIDOR. DAY.

55.

STEVENS calls to MISS KENTON. She turns to him.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, the Italian gentleman has brought two bodyguards. One sleeps while the other is on duty. They -

MISS KENTON

Put it in writing, Mr. Stevens.

She walks away. He looks after her. A footman, CHARLIE, comes round the corner.

CHARLIE

Mr. Stevens, Mr. Dupont has arrived.

56. INT. DUPONT'S BEDROOM. DAY.

56.

DUPONT, STEVENS, Dupont's VALET.

DUPONT has a short grey beard and wears a monocle. A FOOTMAN puts down his suitcase.

DUPONT

Butler, I have sore feet. I need a basin with warm water and salts.

STEVENS

Yes, sir.

He turns to the VALET.

I shall ask Miss Kenton, the housekeeper, to take the necessary action.

DUPONT translates for VALET.

LEWIS comes bustling in. He and DUPONT greet each other as old acquaintances.

DUPONT

When did you arrive, Mr. Lewis?

LEWIS

I came yesterday - a day early. If you and I could have a word together fairly soon -

STEVENS is on his way out -

DUPONT

Warm water and salt, as soon as possible. (to LEWIS) I have terrible blisters due to some infernal sightseeing they made me do in London. I had already seen the Tower of London.

As STEVENS shuts the door, he hears:

LEWIS

By arriving unexpectedly early, I discovered that things are not going in a direction you would entirely approve.

57. INT. MISS KENTON'S ROOM. DAY.

57.

Outside, STEVENS slips a note under the door. Inside, she snatches it up as though it were a billet doux. But all it says is about water and salt for Dupont's feet. She crumples up the note and tosses it away.

58. INT. THE SALOON. DAY.

58.

The DELEGATES - 20 or so, some accompanied by TRANSLATORS and SECRETARIES - are seated on a semi-circle of gold chairs in the Saloon, the largest room in the house, built in the eighteenth century for county balls and other entertainments. The group numbers about 50 persons in all. CARDINAL sits in the back row taking notes.

LORD DARLINGTON addresses the DELEGATES, as STEVENS and two UNDER-BUTLERS serve coffee from trays.

DARLINGTON

German rearmament is an accomplished fact to be accepted and indeed welcomed. It is in our own interest to have a free, equal and strong Germany instead of the prostrate nation upon whom an unfair peace was imposed seventeen years ago.

Close-up DUPONT - is his pained expression due to his feet or to the speech?

STEVENS goes out.

59. INT. SERVERY. DAY.

59.

STEVENS examining coffee trays. He gives one cup to a FOOTMAN.

STEVENS
This won't do. Change it.

60. INT. SALOON. DAY.

60.

STEVENS comes in with more coffee followed by UNDER-BUTLERS.

SPENCER is talking:

SPENCER
We therefore consider it our duty to assist Germany in her virile struggle for economic recovery, including support of her foreign policy and a voluntary withdrawal of French troops from the Ruhr...

DUPONT approaches STEVENS and whispers:

DUPONT
Butler, I need more water. I need another basin to bathe my feet.

STEVENS opens the door for him. They go out.

61. INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR. DAY.

61.

They walk along a corridor to the Billards Room.

LEWIS comes after them, calling to DUPONT for a word in private.

DUPONT
My dear, I'm in agony. I blame myself.
Too tight shoes. Vanity.

62. INT. BILLARDS ROOM. DAY.

62.

LEWIS has followed them in.

STEVENS
Would you wait here, sir.

DUPONT
I shall wait.

As STEVENS begins to go out, he hears (partly through closed door from outside) -

LEWIS

You and I will have to do some maneuvering of our own - if we want to restrain the Germans, and I think we do. You heard all that about "voluntary" withdrawal of your troops from the Ruhr...

A footman, CHARLIE, comes into the room.

CHARLIE

Mr. Stevens.

STEVENS

What is it?

CHARLIE looks at him.

I'll speak to you outside.

They go out.

63. INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR. DAY.

63.

CHARLIE and STEVENS outside the Billiards Room door.

CHARLIE

Your father has been taken ill, sir.

CHARLIE looks grim, and nods to STEVENS to indicate that he should follow him. They quickly climb the back stairs to the First Floor Corridor.

64. INT. FIRST FLOOR CORRIDOR. DAY.

64.

STEVENS comes into the corridor and stops because of what he sees at the other end of the corridor. He turns to CHARLIE and gives a curt order.

STEVENS

Take a basin of hot water and salts into the Billiards Room for Monsieur Dupont.

CHARLIE goes and STEVENS hurries along the corridor.

At the other end of the corridor, in front of a large window, is the frozen figure of FATHER. He is on one knee, bowed before the trolley, gripping it. Two CHAMBERMAIDS stand watching.

STEVENS goes up to FATHER. He tries to release his grip on the trolley. The grip is immovable. He tries again and fails. FATHER's eyes are closed. Very slowly, STEVENS loosens the fingers, one by one.

He lays him on the carpet, gently.

65. INT. FATHER'S BEDROOM. DAY.

65.

MISS KENTON and STEVENS lifting FATHER onto the bed.
He lies still.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, I have more time than you
at the moment. I'll look after him.
I've called the doctor.

STEVENS

Thank you. Thank you very much.

66. INT. SALOON. DAY.

66.

A break in the proceedings. Tea and spirits are being
served. STEVENS leads and unobtrusively directs his TEAM
of UNDER-BUTLERS and FOOTMEN.

Young CARDINAL is with SIR LEONARD BAX and the GERMAN
BARONESS.

CARDINAL

You were in Berlin recently, sir?

SIR LEONARD

I was indeed.

CARDINAL

What was your impression?

SIR LEONARD

I couldn't believe my eyes. Cheering
crowds everywhere and storm-troopers
marching in their smart brown boots,
flinging up their legs in the most
extraordinary way. [I wonder how they
do that?]

BARONESS

And did you see the Fuehrer?

SIR LEONARD

Ah. The Fuehrer. What can I say. The
Fuehrer.

BARONESS

Foreigners don't always understand about
our Fuehrer. He is not a politician.
He is a mystic, Sir Leonard; a very great
soul.

67. INT. THE HALL. DAY.

67.

STEVENS comes into the hall. DOCTOR is putting on his coat.

DOCTOR

Oh, yes. Hello, Stevens. Your father's not so good. If he deteriorates call me immediately, will you?

STEVENS

Yes, sir. Thank you, sir.

DOCTOR

How old is he?

STEVENS

Seventy-five.

DOCTOR

I see. Well, if he deteriorates, call me immediately.

68. INT. MAIN STAIRCASE. DAY.

68.

DUPONT and LEWIS are coming down the stairs together. They stop on a landing for a moment in mid conversation, their voices low.

LEWIS

...And what if the Germans march into the Rhineland?

DUPONT

The Rhineland is a demilitarized zone - Germany has no intention of marching in! And even if she had - which I don't believe for a second - we have 13 divisions sitting on her border.

LEWIS

Yes - and if the British have in the meantime signed an alliance with the Germans? Which is exactly what they're plotting here and why you and I were asked to come a day late. Poor English sheep - they think they're manipulating you but it's they who are being manipulated, from Berlin...

As LEWIS is confiding his doubts about the British, the camera moves down from the two men on the stairs and we see STEVENS immediately underneath them in the alcove made by the rising steps. He overhears what they are saying and frowns, but when the other two resume their descent, STEVENS slips through a door in the wall.

69. INT. FATHER'S ROOM. LATE AFTERNOON.

69.

FATHER is asleep. A CHAMBERMAID sits with him. STEVENS comes in. The CHAMBERMAID immediately shakes FATHER's shoulder.

STEVENS

What are you doing?

CHAMBERMAID

He said to wake him if you came in.

STEVENS

Don't be silly.

CHAMBERMAID

No, really, honestly, he said I had to wake him. He said I had to.

She continues to shake FATHER. He opens his eyes.

STEVENS

You can go and have a rest now, Ellen.

CHAMBERMAID goes.

STEVENS

How are you feeling, Father?

FATHER gazes at him.

FATHER

Everything in hand downstairs?

STEVENS

We're preparing dinner. It's the last dinner of the conference. So you can imagine the atmosphere in the kitchen.

FATHER

But is everything in hand?

STEVENS

Yes, yes. I think we're up to scratch. But how are you feeling? Are you feeling any better?

FATHER takes his hands from under the bedclothes and stares at the backs of his hands.

FATHER

I hope I've been a good father to you.

STEVENS is embarrassed.

STEVENS

I'm glad you're feeling better. I have to go down now. A lot to see to.

FATHER

I'm proud of you. I hope I've been a good father to you.

STEVENS stands.

STEVENS

I have so much to do, Father. But we'll talk again in the morning.

FATHER

There's something I have to tell you.

STEVENS

What?

FATHER

I fell out of love with your mother. Your mother was a bitch. I loved her once but love went out of me when I found out what a bitch she was. Your mother was a bitch.

Silence.

STEVENS

I'm glad you're feeling better.

He leaves the room.

70. INT. SERVANTS HALL. EVENING.

70.

Bells ringing, babble of voices, English and foreign. SECRETARIES, VALETS, MAIDS, ETC. bustling in and out.

The ITALIAN BODYGUARDS.

71. INT. THE KITCHEN. NIGHT.

71.

Pandemonium. The COOK shouting, STEVENS checking the dishes.

72. INT. DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

72.

All the DELEGATES are seated at the table, presided over by DARLINGTON, who sits in the center of one of the long sides. GERMAN BARONESS is on his right, with SPENCER on her other side. DUPONT sits immediately across from DARLINGTON, and LEWIS a few seats down from him.

A sumptuous banquet has been served and we are now at the end of the meal. Champagne is being poured by UNDER-BUTLERS. STEVENS, in command of his troops, who perform brilliantly, moves about as needed.

BARONESS

...On this last day of our conference, permit me to say how impressed I have been with the spirit of goodwill that
(MORE)

BARONESS (contd)
 has prevailed. Goodwill for Germany!
 With tears in my eyes I see that everyone
 here has recognized our right to be once
 again a strong nation. And with my hand
 on my heart I declare that Germany needs
 peace and desires only peace! Peace with
 England (turning to DARLINGTON) - Peace
 with France! (turning toward DUPONT)

Everyone applauds and looks expectantly toward DUPONT.
 He rises slowly and impressively to his feet. Everyone
 hangs on his words:

DUPONT
 I too have been impressed - yes, deeply
 impressed by the genuine desire for peace
 manifested at this conference. Unlike our
 colleague from America, we in Europe know
 the horrors of war, and whether we are
 French - or English - or Italian - or
 German, our one desire is never to have
 to experience them again...Impressed, I
 may say touched, by the words of goodwill
 and friendship I have heard here, I promise
 you that I shall do my utmost to change the
 policy of my country toward that nation
 which was once our foe but is now, I may
 venture to say, our friend...

He turns toward BARONESS, who may kiss her fingertips at
 him.

Rapping of table, cries of "Hear, hear." DUPONT holds up
 his hand for silence.

DUPONT
 There is a small thing I wish to remove
 from my chest, though some of you may say
 it is not good manners to remove such things
 from one's chest at the dinner table.

Laughter.

It concerns our American colleague,
 Congressman Lewis.

All look at LEWIS who remains cool - except for DUPONT
 who never looks once in his direction.

Throughout this conference, dedicated to
 the cause of peace and harmony among nations,
 this gentleman has endeavoured to sow
 (MORE)

DUPONT (contd)

discontent and suspicion and to turn my mind against our allies. I cannot imagine that the American government would endorse the views expressed to me by Congressman Lewis - views, ladies and gentlemen, which would lead not to the peace we all, with the Baroness, so ardently desire, but to strife and dissension! To War!

A gasp - then cries of "Shame," etc. M. DUPONT sits down. Amid the cries of "Shame," LEWIS rises and, slightly smiling, waits for silence:

LEWIS

No, ladies and gentlemen, I don't want war any more than you do. But on the other hand neither would I care for peace at any price. Because some prices you may find are too outrageously high to pay. But let's not get into that one now [we may all have to soon enough]. Now let me only ask you to raise your glasses, ladies and gentlemen, to Lord Darlington for his magnificent hospitality.

All do so, with enthusiasm. But at the end of the toast LEWIS does not sit down:

LEWIS

Lord Darlington is a classic English gentleman of the old school: decent, honourable, well-meaning. And so are all of you here - all decent, honourable gentlemen, and it has been a pleasure and a privilege for me to visit with you. But - excuse me, I have to say it - you are all of you amateurs, and international affairs are no longer for gentlemen amateurs. Have you any idea what sort of place the world is becoming all around you? The days when you could act out of your noble instincts are over. (with light sarcasm) Europe has become the arena of Reälpolitik - the politics of Reality or, if you like (returning to his previous courteous and non-combative tone), real politics, and what you need is not gentlemen politicians but real ones. You need professionals to run your affairs, or you're headed for disaster. Another toast, gentlemen: to the professionals.

He raises his glass. Nobody moves. LEWIS drinks and sits. DARLINGTON stands.

DARLINGTON

I have no wish to enter into a quarrel on our last evening together. But I must say this. What Congressman Lewis describes as "amateurism," I would describe as "honour."

Applause. CHARLIE enters the room, goes to STEVENS and whispers.

DARLINGTON

And I suggest that his "professionalism" means greed and power rather than the desire to see justice and goodness prevail in the world. We are here to repudiate force in international affairs in favour of reason and negotiation. We want to build a partnership in European society in which Germany can freely join with us and play the part of good Europeans.

Applause. STEVENS goes out. We might hear some more of the speech:

I have never concealed from myself that in asking what we did from Germany, we asked a hard, an unfair thing, which was a complete break with the tradition of this country...

73. INT. FATHER'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

73.

FATHER in bed. MRS. MORTIMER (the cook) and MISS KENTON. STEVENS comes in.

MRS. MORTIMER

Oh, Mr. Stevens, he's gone very poorly.

MISS KENTON

His pulse is very weak.

STEVENS touches FATHER's forehead.

MRS. MORTIMER

I think he's had a stroke. I've seen two in my time, and I think it's a stroke.

She cries.

STEVENS

I must...go down. When the doctor comes -

MISS KENTON

I'll tell you.

STEVENS

Thank you.

He goes.

74. INT. SMOKING ROOM. NIGHT.

74.

Great conviviality. The room appears to be a forest of black dinner jackets, grey hair, and cigar smoke.

The BARONESS and the only other WOMAN DELEGATE mingle with the MEN. BARONESS too is smoking.

STEVENS and UNDERBUTLERS are circulating with trays. CARDINAL takes a drink from STEVENS' tray.

CARDINAL

I'd really like to continue our little talk some time. About Nature, Stevens. You're right, I should come back in the spring when everything's - what's the word? - burgeoning...I'll have another drop of that if you don't mind - thanks - I say, Stevens, are you all right?

STEVENS

Quite all right, thank you, sir.

CARDINAL

My main interest has always been in fish. When I was small, I kept all sorts of tropical fish in a tank. I harboured quite a little passion for them. I say, Stevens, are you sure you're all right there?

STEVENS

Perfectly all right, thank you, sir.

CARDINAL

Not feeling unwell, are you?

STEVENS

Not at all, sir. Please excuse me.

He moves on with his tray, in the direction of LORD DARLINGTON who is talking to LEWIS.

LEWIS

(holding out his hand) ...No hard feelings, sir?

DARLINGTON

(grasping his hand) My dear chap, I always enjoy a good clean fight: giving as good as one gets, what?

LEWIS

(looking around admiringly) ...I have this dream, Lord Darlington, that one day I'll make my home in England and live in a place just like this...

DARLINGTON

Some families are having to sell. Upkeep.
Death duties.

Here STEVENS comes up, and after one look at his face,
LORD DARLINGTON leads him aside.

DARLINGTON

Stevens, are you all right?

STEVENS

Yes, m'lord. Thank you, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Coming down with a cold or something?

STEVENS quickly takes out handkerchief and wipes his tears
away.

STEVENS

I'm very sorry, m'lord. The strains of
a hard day.

DARLINGTON

Yes, it's been hard work for both of us.

Someone calls DARLINGTON, he turns. MISS KENTON opens the
door and signals to STEVENS. He goes towards her. DUPONT
intercepts him.

DUPONT

Butler, I need another basin, salt water.
My feet are a curse. I am in pain.

STEVENS

I will deal with it, sir.

75. INT. ALCOVE OFF GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR. NIGHT. 75.

MISS KENTON standing. STEVENS comes to her. (She might
lead him into an empty room to tell him the bad news.)

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, I'm very sorry, your father
passed away four minutes ago.

STEVENS

Oh, I see.

MISS KENTON

I am so sorry...I wish there was something
I could say.

Pause.

MISS KENTON
Will you come up and see him?

STEVENS
I'm very busy just now, Miss Kenton.
In a little while, perhaps.

MISS KENTON
In that case, will you permit me to
close his eyes?

STEVENS
I would be most grateful.

She turns and walks up the stairs.

Miss Kenton.

She looks down.

My father would have wished me to carry
on with my work. I know that.

MISS KENTON
Of course.

STEVENS
I can't let him down.

MISS KENTON
No, of course. (pause) Of course.

76. INT. SMOKING ROOM. NIGHT.

76.

STEVENS comes in, takes a tray from an UNDERBUTLER,
offers whisky. DUPONT goes to him.

DUPONT
Where am I to find the salt water, butler?

STEVENS
Assistance is not available at this
precise moment, sir.

DUPONT
You've run out of water? Or salt?

STEVENS
A doctor is coming.

DUPONT
Oh, you called a doctor? Very good.
Well done.

The GERMAN BARONESS calls to STEVENS.

BARONESS

Stevens - at one point during dinner -
I would have sworn you were at least
three people. Magnificent planning!

She laughs. He smiles.

STEVENS

I am delighted to be of service, Madam.

CHARLIE murmurs into STEVENS' ear.

CHARLIE

Miss Kenton would like a word with you,
sir.

STEVENS goes to the door. DUPONT follows.

DUPONT

Is the doctor here, butler?

STEVENS

I'm just going to find out, sir.

DUPONT

I am in pain.

STEVENS goes into the hall, followed by DUPONT.

77. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT.

77.

MISS KENTON is standing there.

MISS KENTON

Doctor Meredith is here.

DUPONT

Ah. Good, good.

STEVENS

If you will follow me, sir.

78. INT. BILLIARDS ROOM. NIGHT.

78.

STEVENS stoking the fire. DUPONT sits and removes his
shoes and socks.

STEVENS

Rather cold in here, sir. I'll send the
doctor in to you.

DUPONT

Thank you very much, butler. Well done.

79. INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR. NIGHT. 79.

MISS KENTON waiting by green baize door. STEVENS joins her. They go through and up servants' staircase together.

80. INT. FATHER'S ROOM. NIGHT. 80.

DOCTOR MEREDITH is there. STEVENS comes into the room. MISS KENTON remains standing by the door.

DOCTOR MEREDITH

My condolences, Stevens. It was a stroke. A severe stroke. He wouldn't have suffered much pain.

STEVENS

Thank you for telling me.

MISS KENTON

My condolences, Mr. Stevens.

STEVENS

Thank you. That is most kind of you...
Doctor, there is a distinguished foreign
gentleman in the billiards room in need
of your attention.

DOCTOR MEREDITH

Urgent?

STEVENS

His feet.

DOCTOR MEREDITH

Feet?

STEVENS

Yes. Shall I take you to him?

DOCTOR MEREDITH

If it's urgent.

STEVENS

Oh, yes. It is urgent. The gentleman is in pain.

STEVENS and the DOCTOR leave the room.

MISS KENTON stands alone with FATHER's body. She might straighten the coverlet. His arms are crossed on his chest. In death his face has not relaxed, but is still formidable. His craggy features resemble those of a great general, or stern bishop, or Puritan Parliamentarian.

The other SERVANTS, led by MRS. MORTIMER, the cook, come in to pay their respects. MRS. MORTIMER, just emerging from her night's work, dabs at her eyes with the edge of a greasy apron.

81. EXT./INT. BRANCH POST OFFICE. 1958. DAY. 81.

STEVENS, parking his car and entering post office, asks for a letter which is handed to him.

POSTMASTER

...You are touring in these parts, sir?

STEVENS

I'm on my way to Xmouth.

POSTMASTER

Lovely place, by all accounts. And you would be coming from - ?

STEVENS

Oxfordshire.

POSTMASTER

Oh yes? Whereabouts in Oxfordshire?

STEVENS

(reluctantly) Darlington.

POSTMASTER

Darlington. Darlington. That rings a bell. Wasn't there a Lord Darlington...

STEVENS is on his way out with the letter -

Wasn't he some sort of Nazi? Got us in the war, they say?

STEVENS

I'm the butler at Darlington Hall and my employer is Mr. Lewis, an American gentleman. I had no acquaintance with the former owner.

He goes out and gets back into the car, watched by POSTMASTER.

82. INT. CAR ON ROAD. DAY. 82.

STEVENS, driving away from post office, pulls up as soon as he is out of town, to take out and read his letter. There is a fine view of some rugged countryside. He opens the envelope:

MISS KENTON V.O.

...I shall be glad to meet you at the Sea View Hotel in Xmouth situated opposite the pier...Oh Mr. Stevens, we shall have so much to talk about and I have many questions to ask you. Is Mrs. Mortimer still with you? And what about all the gardeners - I don't suppose nowadays it is possible to keep so many. Do you have any idea what became of the two German girls, Elsa and Irma? I often think of their arrival at Darlington Hall - it must have been a year after the big conference. How glad they were to be with us and no wonder, knowing what we do now...

During the questions MISS KENTON asks STEVENS in her letter, we see in a quick series of brief flashbacks:

MRS. MORTIMER presiding in the long-ago kitchen at Darlington Hall.

Gardens of the house in their prime. MEN working there.

LORD DARLINGTON standing in the door of the Summerhouse, looking abstracted. A GARDENER passes and touches his cap. DARLINGTON nods.

TWO HOUSEMAIDS plumping up pillows in a guest bedroom, laughing. One of them hits the other with the goosedown pillow.

83. INT. DARLINGTON HALL: LIBRARY. 1936. DAY. 83.

LORD DARLINGTON amongst his books. There is a knock on the door.

MISS KENTON comes in.

MISS KENTON

You rang, m'lord?

DARLINGTON

I hear the young ladies from Germany have arrived.

MISS KENTON

Yes, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

I'd like to say hello to them. Practise my German.

MISS KENTON

They speak excellent English.

DARLINGTON

Good, good. Ask them to come in.

She opens the door. They walk in.

MISS KENTON

This is Elsa and this is Irma.

The GIRLS bob.

DARLINGTON (in German)

Did you have a good journey? (to MISS KENTON) Just asking them if they had a good journey.

ELSA (in English)

It was long, my lord.

DARLINGTON (in German)

But you have arrived safely. What do
(MORE)

DARLINGTON (contd)
 you think of the weather? (to MISS
 KENTON) Asking them what they think
 of the weather.

ELSA (in English)
 We are very grateful to you, my lord,
 for letting us come here. Our parents
 are very grateful.

DARLINGTON
 Not at all, not at all. Miss Kenton
 will look after you. Won't you?

MISS KENTON
 Oh indeed, m'lord.

DARLINGTON
 Welcome to Darlington Hall.

He repeats the sentence in German and laughs.

84. EXT. THE HOUSE. DAY.

84.

Three large cars arriving. SIR GEOFFREY WREN jumps out
 of the first car. He wears a black shirted uniform.
 Other black uniformed FIGURES get out of the cars.
 DARLINGTON comes out of the house and greets WREN.

STEVENS greets BENN (35), Sir Geoffrey's man. While
 FOOTMEN take charge of luggage, etc., STEVENS shows BENN
 up to his room in the servants' quarters.

85. INT. BACKSTAIRS CORRIDOR. DAY.

85.

On their way, STEVENS and BENN meet MISS KENTON. BENN
 greets her with great enthusiasm.

MISS KENTON
 Why, Mr. Benn! I thought you were still
 at Granchester Lodge.

BENN
 No, I've been with Sir Geoffrey these
 past six months. (looking at her)
 with pleasure) You haven't changed one
 bit, Miss Kenton.

She is busy and has to hurry away, promising a good talk
 later on.

86. INT. BACKSTAIRS CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

86.

STEVENS leading UNDERBUTLERS towards the dining room.

They carry trays, push trolleys, etc. They enter the dining room by a side door.

87. INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM. NIGHT. 87.

STEVENS and the UNDERBUTLER come in. WREN and his FRIENDS have taken complete charge of the conversation, overriding any objections DARLINGTON and his other GUESTS might raise.

WREN

You speak of jews, negroes, gypsies, and so on and so forth. But one has to regard the racial laws of the Fascists as a sanitary measure - much overdue, in my opinion. (overriding reply) You can't run a country without a penal system. Here we call them prisons, there they call them concentration camps. What's the difference?

STEVENS and his TEAM are serving. WREN turns out to be a very fussy vegetarian. He questions STEVENS about the soup.

STEVENS

I believe it's a mushroom stock, sir. Mushroom skins and ends. Onion, celery... No meat at all. Cold water, and then Cook adds sherry.

WREN tastes it carefully, is evidently satisfied, and continues the conversation.

WREN

(leaning across to DARLINGTON) I hear you have one of those Labour fellows standing from your constituency.

WREN'S FRIEND

Over there, they've got rid of all that trade union rubbish, and believe me: no workers strike in Germany. And the trains run on time.

WREN

No wonder this country is going down the drain. It's internally diseased.

STEVENS brings the soup tureen back and offers more to WREN.

WREN

I will, thank you, Stevens. The croutons. I think there may be some butter here. Do you know?

STEVENS

I'm sorry, sir. There may well be.

STEVENS returns to the Servery with the tureen.

88. INT. BUTLER'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

88.

MR. BENN and STEVENS are seated comfortably by the fire.

BENN

(appreciatively) Cosy little nest you've made for yourself here...It seems to me, Mr. Stevens, you must be a well-contented man.

STEVENS

In my philosophy, Mr. Benn, a man cannot call himself well-contented until he has done all he can to be of service to his employer.

BENN gives a rather ambiguous "Ah."

STEVENS

Of course this assumes that one's employer is a superior person not only in rank - or wealth - but in moral stature.

BENN

And in your opinion what's going on up there has "moral stature"?...I wish I could be sure of that but I'm not. I've heard some very fishy things, Mr. Stevens, very fishy.

STEVENS

I hear nothing, Mr. Benn.

As BENN expresses surprise, STEVENS goes on to explain:

To listen to the gentlemen's conversation would distract me from my work.

MISS KENTON brings them some soda for their whisky. MR. BENN rises, thanks her, asks her to join them. She hesitates, looking at STEVENS who says he is sure she must be very busy. She goes.

STEVENS

Of course, Mr. Benn, I couldn't be satisfied in my work if I didn't have full confidence in my employer's principles.

BENN

Good-looking woman.

STEVENS

What?

BENN

Miss Kenton. Things were never the same after she left Granchester Lodge. I handed in my notice six months later.

STEVENS

(spontaneously, before quite realizing what he is saying) Yes, I'd be lost without her. (but when BENN looks at him curiously, he qualifies:) A first-rate housekeeper is essential in a house like this where great affairs are decided between these walls.

BENN looks skeptical (he might say "Ah" again, or some such ambiguous sound).

88a. INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

88a.

ELSA and IRMA are dusting here, when LORD DARLINGTON enters. They greet him respectfully. He bends an abstracted gaze on them, as though it were not them he sees but some image of them in his mind. They withdraw.

He takes up a book he has been reading. It is "Foundations of the 19th Century" by Houston Chamberlain. (This has some very high-falutin, pseudo-scientific or pseudo-philosophical theories of race and was enormously popular in Germany, especially in the '30's when it ran into its 24th edition). DARLINGTON frowns as he reads, trying to take in and understand these difficult ideas. (V.O. of a relevant extract)

89. INT. DARLINGTON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT.

89.

DARLINGTON is still poring over the same book - or it is lying there while he ponders. STEVENS enters.

DARLINGTON

Ah...Stevens... (perhaps more leafing through book) ... we have...some refugee girls on the staff at the moment, I believe?

STEVENS

We do, m'lord. The two housemaids, Elsa and Irma.

DARLINGTON

You'll have to let them go, I'm afraid.

STEVENS

Let them go?

DARLINGTON

It's regrettable, Stevens, but we have no choice. You've got to see the whole thing in context. I have the well-being of my guests to consider.

STEVENS

But, m'lord, may I say that they work extremely well. They're intelligent, polite, clean...

DARLINGTON

I'm sorry, Stevens, but I've looked into the matter very carefully. There are larger issues at stake. I'm sorry, but there it is. They're Jews.

90. INT. MISS KENTON'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

90.

MISS KENTON and STEVENS are sitting by the fire with their mugs of cocoa. But it is not a peaceful scene; she has just put her mug down in angry incredulity:

MISS KENTON

I'm amazed that you can sit there as though you were discussing orders for the larder. I simply can't believe it! You're saying that Elsa and Irma are to be dismissed because they're Jewish?

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, his lordship has made his decision and there is nothing for you and I to discuss.

MISS KENTON

You realize that if those girls have no work, they could be sent back to Germany?

STEVENS

I'm afraid it's out of our hands.

MISS KENTON

I'm telling you, Mr. Stevens, if you dismiss my girls tomorrow, it will be wrong - a sin as any sin ever was one.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, there are many things you and I don't understand in this world of today, whereas his lordship has fully studied the larger issues at stake. Concerning, say, the nature of Jewry.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, I warn you, if those girls go, I shall leave this house.

STEVENS stands stunned for a moment, then collects himself:

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, we've both had a hard day and it's high time we were turning in. I thank you for the cocoa - as always, it was delicious.

He is relieved to get away. She sits alone by the fire, her head bent.

91. INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY. DAY.

91.

STEVENS at his table. MISS KENTON and the GERMAN GIRLS come in.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, you don't have to stay if you don't wish to.

MISS KENTON

I'll stay.

The GIRLS stand, sobbing, looking at STEVENS.

STEVENS

I am very sorry to say that his lordship has decided to cut down on staff. I am afraid we shall have to let you both go... You have worked very well and we have given you excellent references. Here they are.

He taps the references on the table.

IRMA (in German)
But it's so lovely here.

STEVENS
What does she say?

ELSA
She says it's so lovely here.

IRMA begins to cry quietly.

STEVENS
But I have spoken this morning to
Mr. Wellington - the butler at Railton
House in Surrey. He thinks there is
every possibility of placing you there.
Here is the address and directions and
here is the address of a hostel in London
where you will stay tonight.

He points to two envelopes.

Here are your wages...and here -

He takes money from his wallet.

- is a little extra for you. I am very
sorry to see you go.

ELSA
Thank you, Mr. Stevens.

IRMA
(whispering) Thank you, Mr. Stevens.

The GIRLS pick up all the papers and MISS KENTON goes out
with them.

92. INT. HOUSEKEEPER'S PARLOUR. LATE AFTERNOON. 92.

STEVENS and MISS KENTON sitting at the table with a
young woman (LIZZIE HULL). STEVENS is examining her
papers.

STEVENS
Well...Miss Hull...this reference, I
have to tell you, is quite...reserved.
Why exactly did you leave your last
employment?

LIZZIE
Oh...they didn't want me any more.

STEVENS
Why not?

LIZZIE

I don't know.

MISS KENTON

They say she works well.

STEVENS

But if so...?

LIZZIE

They just didn't want me any more.

Pause.

But I can work.

STEVENS

Would you please wait outside?

LIZZIE goes out, closing the door.

STEVENS

Unsuitable.

MISS KENTON

Not at all.

STEVENS

What?

MISS KENTON

I want her. She'll be under my supervision. She'll do well.

STEVENS

I don't think she's suitable.

MISS KENTON

She'll do well. I'll see to it.

STEVENS

Then it's entirely your responsibility.
(looking at her, sly, teasing) But didn't
you say you were leaving? Because of the
German girls?

MISS KENTON sits silent and ashamed.

MISS KENTON

...I'm not leaving.

STEVENS

Oh?

MISS KENTON

I've nowhere to go. I have no family.
I'm a coward.

STEVENS

No, no - I think -

MISS KENTON

Yes. I am a coward. I'm frightened of leaving. That's the truth. All I see out in the world...is loneliness. It frightens me. That's all my high principles are worth, Mr. Stevens. I'm ashamed of myself.

Silence.

STEVENS

You mean...a great deal to this house. You are...extremely important to this house, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

Am I?

A pause during which she seems to be waiting for something more. But he says:

STEVENS

Well, if you're really sure about that young woman, call her back in.

She does so.

STEVENS

(to LIZZIE) You will be directly responsible to Miss Kenton here. She'll explain the rules of the house to you. Number one: no gentleman callers, or other such.

He leaves.

93. EXT./INT. CAR AND COUNTRYSIDE. 1958. DAY. 93.

STEVENS in his tweed travelling suit is driving the Bentley.

MISS KENTON V.O.

Do you remember the girl Lizzie Hull who you said wouldn't do and then she came on so well? She was really good material, I knew it from the first. I hope things turned out well for her and that she's happy though you never can tell...

It is sunset. There is not a soul on the road which curves across bleak open moorland. In gathering darkness, the car goes between high hedges; the road begins to climb steeply.

Suddenly the car gives a sputtering sound, then comes to a stop. After some pottering, STEVENS realizes that he has run out of petrol. Under his breath, he lets out a stronger expletive than one would expect of him.

Arming himself with a torch, he leaves the car to find some human habitation. When he gets to the top of the hill, he sees the lights of a village some way down below. He begins to descend along the path, guiding himself with his torch. It is dark and dismal.

He hears some sound and calls "Hallo!" Out of the shadows a man, MR. TAYLOR, emerges on a bicycle. STEVENS shines his torch on him and TAYLOR his bicycle lamp on STEVENS. By these lights, there is some explanation between them which ends in STEVENS perching, rather incongruously in his grand suit, on the back of TAYLOR's bicycle.

94. INT. VILLAGE PUB. NIGHT.

94.

The Blue Boar. STEVENS is the center of a group of admiring VILLAGERS, including MR. and MRS. TAYLOR, the owners. All have tankards of beer.

Another VILLAGER enters. He walks up to STEVENS, and stands almost at attention, as though reporting to an officer in the Army.

ANDREWS

The name's Andrews, sir. A very good evening to you. I'm very sorry to hear about your mishap but I hope you're not too put out to be spending the night here in Moscombe.

STEVENS

Thank you, Mr. Andrews - but I feel most obliged to Mr. Taylor for having rescued me.

Another VILLAGER enters and stands at attention:

SMITH

Smith is the name, sir. Harry Smith. Very pleased you could stop. It's a privilege to have you here in Moscombe.

He too sits down. The circle around STEVENS looks at him expectantly. Finally TAYLOR raises his tankard to him:

TAYLOR

Your health, sir.

MRS. TAYLOR

Dr. Carlisle usually drops in around this time. He'll be very pleased to meet you. He's a gentleman like yourself.

SMITH

I don't know what you call a gentleman, but it seems to me it's a name every man in this country has a right to.

They all wink at each other.

TAYLOR

There's Harry Smith now, sir, giving you an earful of his philosophy.

Laughter.

SMITH

It's one of the privileges of being born English, that you can express your opinion freely, and vote in your member of parliament or vote him out. That's what we fought Hitler for and won.

TAYLOR

Have you had much to do with politics yourself, sir?

STEVENS

My concern was more with international affairs. Foreign policy, that is to say.

After an awed hush -

TAYLOR

Excuse me, sir, but have you ever met Mr. Churchill?

STEVENS

Mr. Churchill? He did come to the house occasionally.

ANDREWS

And Mr. Eden?

STEVENS

Oh yes, I saw him often.

TAYLOR

Lord Halifax?

STEVENS only has time to nod - a rap on the door and DR. CARLISLE enters. He is greeted with pleasure. He shakes hands with STEVENS.

CARLISLE

Richard Carlisle. Rotten bit of luck about your car but nice to have you with us.

STEVENS

Thank you. Everyone has been most kind.

TAYLOR

Gentleman was just telling us he's had a lot to do with foreign affairs.

CARLISLE

(regarding STEVENS searchingly) Is that so indeed?

STEVENS

...In an unofficial capacity.

MRS. TAYLOR

He knows Mr. Churchill.

ANDREWS

And Mr. Eden and Lord Halifax.

CARLISLE

Really?

STEVENS

It has been my good fortune to have consorted with many men of influence - from Europe and America.

Appreciative murmurs. CARLISLE continues to regard him speculatively.

STEVENS

...I really ought to be retiring to the room you have so kindly put at my disposal. I feel quite exhausted.

He rises and so does everyone else, respectfully.

TAYLOR

And no wonder - running out of petrol
and on top of it having to hear Mr.
Harry Smith's political opinions.

CARLISLE

(to STEVENS) I have a visit to make in
Stanbury first thing in the morning.
I'd be happy to give you a lift up to
your car. Save you the walk. And we
can pick up a can of petrol on the way.

STEVENS

That is most kind but I don't wish to
put you to any inconvenience.

CARLISLE

None at all. Would 7.30 be all right
for you?

STEVENS

(not looking too happy) That would be
most helpful.

Amid calls of goodnight, TAYLOR lights STEVENS upstairs.

95. INT. TAYLOR STAIRS AND BEDROOM. NIGHT. 95.

TAYLOR

You'll enjoy talking to Dr. Carlisle.
You'll excuse our Harry Smith - he will
go on about his politics. Mind the step,
sir.

They have reached the room. It is small, plain, very neat,
with some photographs and a boy's possessions such as a
cricket-bat, etc.

TAYLOR

...I'm not saying he's not right.
Democracy is what we fought Hitler for
and there's quite a few lads we lost
in this village fighting in the war.
Including our own boy here. (shows
him the photograph of boy in soldier's
uniform) Yes sir, at Dunkirk...Would I
get you another blanket? Oh all right,
sir. I'll say goodnight then.

STEVENS, alone in the room, looks again at the photograph
and some other possessions of the dead son. Voices from
below, raised in political argument...

FADE IN:

96. INT. SMOKING ROOM/DARLINGTON HALL. 1937. 96.

Past midnight. LORD DARLINGTON, SIR LEONARD BAX,
CANON TUFNELL, MR. SPENCER.

STEVENS comes in. They stop talking and look at him.

DARLINGTON

Oh, Stevens. Mr. Spencer would like
a word with you.

STEVENS goes to him.

SPENCER

My good man, I have a question for
you. Do you suppose the debt situation
regarding America is a significant
factor in the present low levels of
trade? Or do you suppose this is a
red heering and that the bandonment
of the gold standard is at the root
of the problem?

He smiles.

STEVENS doesn't blink. He plays the part expected of him
with absolute aplomb:

STEVENS

I'm very sorry, sir, but I am unable
to be of assistance in this matter.

SPENCER

Oh dear, what a pity. Well then, perhaps
you can help us on another matter.
Would you say that the currency problem
in Europe would be alleviated by an arms
agreement between the French and the
Bolsheviks?

STEVENS

I'm sorry, sir, but I am unable to be
of assistance in this matter.

Suppressed laughter.

DARLINGTON

(acutely embarrassed) Very well, Stevens,
that will be all.

SPENCER

One moment, Darlington, I have another question to put to our good man here... My good fellow, do you share our opinion that M. Daladier's recent speech on the situation in North Africa was simply a ruse to scupper the nationalist fringe of his own domestic party?

STEVENS

(continuing dead-pan, speaking his assigned part with absolute aplomb)
I'm sorry, sir, but I am unable to be of assistance in this matter.

SPENCER

You see, gentlemen, our man here is unable to assist us in these matters.

Laughter.

And yet we still go along with the notion that this nation's decisions be left in the hands of our good man here and a few millions like him. You may as well ask a committee of the mother's union to organise a war campaign.

Laughter.

DARLINGTON

Thank you, Stevens.

STEVENS goes out, completely unruffled.

97. INT. LORD DARLINGTON'S DRESSING ROOM. MORNING. 97.

Large window looking over the park in background.

LORD DARLINGTON is dressing. STEVENS comes in.

STEVENS

You called for me, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

I did, yes. Look here, Stevens - it was dreadful - the ordeal we put you through last night.

STEVENS

Not at all, m'lord. I was only too happy to be of service.

DARLINGTON

It was dreadful. Please accept my apologies. But you see, Stevens, the thing was, Mr. Spencer had a point to prove to Canon Tufnell, who had been talking a lot of old fashioned nonsense.

VALET comes in with shaving gear. DARLINGTON sits down and VALET begins to shave him.

DARLINGTON

About the will of the people being the wisest arbitrator and so on. But the fact is, Stevens, democracy is finished. It doesn't work. What was it Mr. Spencer said last night? He put it rather well.

STEVENS

He compared the present parliamentary system to a committee of a mother's union organising a war campaign.

DARLINGTON

Exactly. Look at Germany and Italy. They've set their houses in order. How? Through strong leadership. If you look at Italy and Germany you see something that works. None of this democracy rubbish there.

Silence. STEVENS stands impassively and the VALET continues to shave equally impassively.

DARLINGTON

Anyway, that was the point Mr. Spencer was trying to make.

DISSOLVE

98. INT./EXT. CAR/COUNTRYSIDE. 1958. DAY. 98.

DR. CARLISLE is driving STEVENS to where the Bentley is parked. They drive through the village and through the countryside, now revealed by daylight.

CARLISLE

And what did you make of the citizens of Moscombe? Not such a bad bunch, are they?

STEVENS

Mr. and Mrs. Taylor were extremely kind.

CARLISLE

(after a pause) I say, I hope you don't think me very rude. But you aren't a manservant of some sort, are you?

STEVENS

I am indeed, sir. In fact, I'm the butler of Darlington Hall, near Oxford... It wasn't my intention to deceive anyone, sir.

CARLISLE

(amused) Oh no need to explain - I can quite see how it happened. Anyone would take you for at least a lord or a duke... Darlington: wasn't there a Lord Darlington involved in all that appeasement business that got us into the war?

STEVENS

I'm sorry, sir, I never knew that Lord Darlington. My employer is an American gentleman, Mr. Lewis.

They reach the Bentley and DR. CARLISLE exclaims what a handsome vehicle it is. They get out and start to fill petrol out of the can they have brought. All this during the continuation of their conversation:

CARLISLE

Yes, Lord Darlington was among those who tried to make a deal with Hitler. And then there was a case after the war where he sued a newspaper for libel - the Express, was it? News Chronicle?

STEVENS

I wouldn't know, sir.

CARLISLE

Anyway, he lost. He was lucky really not to have been tried as a collaborator.

Close-up STEVENS, registering conflicting strong emotions. They continue to be busy with the car. After some interval -

STEVENS

Excuse me, sir. I must confess that I failed to tell you the truth. I did know Lord Darlington - and I can declare that he was a truly good man, a gentleman through and through, to whom I'm proud to have given my best years of service.

A silence. CARLISLE regards him with respect. STEVENS might now be ready to get into the car.

CARLISLE

...But did you agree with his opinions?

STEVENS

Sir, I was his butler. I was there to serve him, not to agree or disagree.

CARLISLE

You trusted him.

STEVENS

Yes, sir, I did, completely... (in a lowered sad voice) At the end of his life, his lordship himself admitted that he had been mistaken.

CARLISLE

But what about you? Where do you stand on all that? If a mistake was to be made, wouldn't you rather have made your own? Try the ignition.

STEVENS does so and the car starts up successfully.

STEVENS

In a very small way, I did make my own mistake. But I might still have a chance to set mine right. In fact, I'm on my way to try and do so now and I'm most grateful for your help, sir.

CARLISLE

Well, good luck to you.

They say goodbye and STEVENS drives off.

99. EXT. THE FRONT ENTRANCE/DARLINGTON HALL. 1938. 99.
DAY.

A car arriving. LORD HALIFAX gets out.

100. INT. THE LIBRARY. DAY. 100.

DARLINGTON standing. STEVENS comes in.

STEVENS

Lord Halifax is here, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Ah.

101. INT. THE HALL. DAY.

101.

DARLINGTON walks across the hall and shakes hands with LORD HALIFAX.

HALIFAX

Is he here?

DARLINGTON

Not here yet, no.

HALIFAX

I'm not at all certain this is a good idea.

They go into the library.

102. EXT. THE FRONT ENTRANCE. DAY.

102.

A large car arriving. GERMAN AMBASSADOR gets out. He has some ASSISTANTS and STAFF, who follow in another, smaller car.

103. INT. LIBRARY. DAY.

103.

DARLINGTON and HALIFAX. STEVENS comes in.

STEVENS

His Excellency the German Ambassador is here, m'lord.

DARLINGTON and HALIFAX turn to greet him. We hear the party approaching over the marble floor.

DARLINGTON

Ah.

HALIFAX is still shaking his head dubiously ("I don't know what you've put me up to here").

104. INT. THE HALL. DAY.

104.

STEVENS comes out of the library and closes the door. He walks across the hall.

105. INT. LORD DARLINGTON'S BEDROOM. DAY.

105.

STEVENS polishing objects. He looks out of the large window across the park:

THE PARK: HIS POV

Horses moving.

STEVENS stops polishing and moves closer to the window:

THE PARK: HIS POV

The figure of MISS KENTON walking by the side of the lake.

106. INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY. DAY. 106.

STEVENS is ironing the morning's newspapers. (He does this to set the newsprint, to prevent it from smearing.)

107. INT. LIBRARY. DAY. 107.

STEVENS enters with freshly ironed newspapers on a tray, to give them to DARLINGTON.

DARLINGTON

Oh Stevens - Lord Halifax was very impressed with the silver. I told him it was all your doing. Sent his compliments. Well done.

STEVENS

Thank you, m'lord.

He moves toward the door.

DARLINGTON

Oh, Stevens - I've been meaning to ask you. That business last year - about the Jewish maids? I suppose there is no way of tracing them, is there?

STEVENS

It would be difficult, m'lord.

DARLINGTON

Try anyway, Stevens. One would like to do something for them. It was wrong, what occurred. I'm sorry about it. Very sorry.

108. EXT./INT. PARK/SUMMERHOUSE. DAY. 108.

STEVENS, walking toward Summerhouse, sees MISS KENTON inside, mending a cushion. He joins her and busies himself with collecting crockery.

STEVENS

...His lordship asked about the Jewish girls.

MISS KENTON

Elsa and Irma?

STEVENS

He wondered where they were. He said it was wrong to dismiss them.

She lowers her sewing to stare at him.

STEVENS

I thought you'd like to know, since I remember you were as distressed about it as I was.

MISS KENTON

As you were? As I recall, you thought it was only right and proper that they should be sent packing.

STEVENS

Now really, Miss Kenton, that's most unfair. Of course I was upset, very much so. It's not the sort of thing I like to see happen in this house.

MISS KENTON

I wish you'd told me that at the time. It would have helped me so much if I'd known you felt the same way I did... Why, Mr. Stevens, why, why do you always have to hide what you feel?

He stares at her in astonishment - but they are interrupted by the arrival of LIZZIE. She asks MISS KENTON about some task, then relieves STEVENS of the crockery he has collected - "I'll do that, Mr. Stevens" - and walks off, very graceful and efficient.

STEVENS

I take my hat off to you. That girl's come on very well. You were right about her and I was wrong.

MISS KENTON

Look at that smile on your face. That tells an interesting story in itself.

STEVENS

What story is that?

She has gathered up her sewing and they leave the Summer-house together and walk through the park.

109. EXT. PARK. DAY.

109.

MISS KENTON

Well, she's a very pretty girl, don't you think?

STEVENS

Is she?

MISS KENTON

You don't like pretty girls to be on the staff. I've noticed. Might it be that our Mr. Stevens fears distraction? Can it be that our Mr. Stevens is flesh and blood after all and cannot trust himself?

STEVENS

You know what I'm doing, Miss Kenton? I'm placing my thoughts elsewhere while you chatter away.

MISS KENTON

But why is that guilty smile still on your face?

STEVENS

It's not a guilty smile at all. I'm simply amused by the nonsense you sometimes talk.

MISS KENTON

It is a guilty smile. You can hardly bear to look at her. That's why you didn't want to take her on. She was too pretty.

STEVENS

You must be right, Miss Kenton. You always are.

They walk on.

110. EXT. PARK. EVENING.

110.

MISS KENTON is gathering some flowers. Around a bend in the path, she hears whispering and tittering in the bushes.

She discovers LIZZIE in the arms of CHARLIE. They break apart when they see her.

MISS KENTON

...Aren't you supposed to be turning down the beds, Lizzie?...Well, you'd better go and do it then, hadn't you?

She walks away with her flowers. When she is out of sight -

CHARLIE

Have you told her yet?... (in Miss Kenton's voice) Well, you'd better go and do it then, hadn't you?

LIZZIE

Charlie, what can I say to her? She wouldn't understand about us.

CHARLIE

Why wouldn't she?

LIZZIE

She's old - I mean, she must be at least 30.

CHARLIE

Perhaps she doesn't feel all that old. For instance, who do you think those pretty flowers are for she's been picking? ...Give us a kiss.

111. INT. BUTLER'S PARLOUR. EVENING.

111.

STEVENS sitting in an armchair reading a book. MISS KENTON comes in with a vase of flowers.

MISS KENTON

Flowers.

She puts them down and looks at him.

You're reading. Very dim in here. Can you see?

STEVENS

Yes, thank you.

MISS KENTON

This room is like a prison cell. Honestly. It's like the cell of a condemned man waiting to be executed.

He continues reading, his foot slightly tapping with irritation.

What are you reading?

STEVENS

A book.

MISS KENTON

Yes, but what sort of book?

He looks up at her. She goes towards him. He shuts the book, stands, and holds it to his chest.

MISS KENTON

What's the book? Are you shy about your book? Show it to me. Is it racy?

STEVENS

Racy?

MISS KENTON

Are you reading a racy book?

STEVENS

You don't think "racy" books are to be found on his lordship's shelves, do you?

MISS KENTON

How would I know? What is it? Let me see it. Let me see your book.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, please leave me alone.

She smiles and moves closer to him. He wards her off.

MISS KENTON

Why won't you show me your book?

STEVENS

This is my private time. You are invading it.

MISS KENTON

Oh, is that so? I am invading your private time, am I?

She moves closer.

What's in that book? Come on. Let me see. Or are you protecting me? Is that what you're doing? Would I be shocked? Would it ruin my character?

They both stand quite still.

Let me see it.

She gently begins to take the book from him, lifting his fingers one at a time from the book. This takes place in silence, their bodies very close.

She opens the book and flicks through it.

MISS KENTON

Oh dear, it's not scandalous at all. It's just a sentimental old love story.

They look at each other.

STEVENS

I read these books - any books - to develop my command and knowledge of the English language. I read to further my education.

Pause.

And now, Miss Kenton, I really must ask you not to disturb the very few moments of spare time I have to myself.

She flings out, abandoning the flowers. They lie wilting and drooping where she has left them.

112. INT. HOUSEKEEPER'S PARLOUR. DAY. 112.

Urged on by CHARLIE, LIZZIE knocks and goes in. MISS KENTON is sitting there despondently.

MISS KENTON

What is it, Lizzie?

LIZZIE

Miss Kenton, I'm wanting to give in my notice please.

MISS KENTON is startled.

LIZZIE

(in a rush) It's Charlie and me - we're going to get married.

Silence.

MISS KENTON

...Lizzie, have you thought about this carefully?

LIZZIE

(looking stubborn) Yes, Miss Kenton, I have.

MISS KENTON

You've been getting on very well here, and I think you have a fine career before you, if you stick to it.

LIZZIE

(more stubborn) Charlie and me's getting married. Charlie and I...

MISS KENTON

I wish I knew what to say to you. I've seen it happen before - a girl rushing into marriage, only to be disappointed in the end...And what about money?

LIZZIE

(with spirit) We don't have any but who cares - we have love and who wants anything else.

MISS KENTON

You'll find that it's not easy to live poor.

LIZZIE

We've got one another, that's all anyone can ever want.

MISS KENTON

(with lowered head and lowered voice)
Very well, Lizzie, if you're so sure.

LIZZIE

Oh I'm sure all right, Miss Kenton.
We both are.

She goes out. CHARLIE is waiting - she nods, he kisses her, and they go dancing off together down the corridor. They are jubilant.

113. INT. HOUSEKEEPER'S PARLOUR. NIGHT.

113.

STEVENS and MISS KENTON are having their usual evening cocoa.

STEVENS

(briskly) We've done all we could for them. I told him I had my eye on him possibly as an under-butler in a year or so - but no, Mr. Charlie knows best.

MISS KENTON

(looking down into her cocoa) She's sure to be let down.

STEVENS

It's no use crying over spilt milk. And we have something far more important to discuss, Miss Kenton: next week's meeting.

MISS KENTON

Do we have to discuss it tonight?

He is surprised.

MISS KENTON

I'm tired, Mr. Stevens. I've had a very busy day. Don't you realise that? (with rising hysteria) I'm very tired. I'm very very tired - don't you understand?

STEVENS

(offended) I owe you an apology, Miss Kenton. I thought these quiet evening discussions were useful to us in our work but I now see that they are a burden to you.

MISS KENTON

I was only saying I was tired tonight -

STEVENS

(putting down his mug) No. You're right. Our meetings are too much on top of a very busy day and we had better discontinue them.

MISS KENTON

(protesting vigorously) Oh no - they're very useful - it's only tonight -

But he has already got up and is going out.

STEVENS

Thank you kindly for the cocoa.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens -

STEVENS

In future we shall communicate only during the course of the day - if necessary by written messages. I wish you a very goodnight.

She rallies, goes to the door, calls after him:

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens!...I shall be taking my day off tomorrow!

He freezes in his tracks.

I'll be back in the house by 9.30.

He pulls himself together sufficiently to say -

STEVENS

Certainly, certainly.

He continues on his way, upright and apparently unperturbed.

114. INT. WINDOW HIGH UP BACK OF THE HOUSE. DAY. 114.

STEVENS looking down.

POV

MISS KENTON riding away from the house on her bicycle.

115. INT. LORD DARLINGTON'S BEDROOM. NIGHT. 115.

STEVENS knocks and enters. He brings DARLINGTON some nourishing hot drink on a tray.

There is a State Bed with red velvet hangings, the whole crowned with a gilded coronet. But instead of sleeping in this, DARLINGTON sleeps on a metal cot at its foot. He is sitting on this camp bed dressed in a thick old dressing gown to ward off the cold. Perhaps he has a jumper on over his pajamas. He stares blankly into space, only rousing himself to take the offered drink. He looks bowed, old, forlorn.

STEVENS

Will there be anything else, m'lord?

He has to say it twice before he is heard.

DARLINGTON

What? Oh - Stevens. No. No, thank you, Stevens. Goodnight.

STEVENS

Goodnight, m'lord.

DARLINGTON passes his hand over his face in a weary gesture, as though wanting to wipe out thoughts that are too much for him.

116. INT. SERVANTS QUARTERS. NIGHT. 116.

STEVENS wandering around. At one point he might knock on the door of the Housekeeper's Parlour. Getting no answer, he timidly opens it. But the room is empty.

117. INT. VILLAGE PUB SALOON. NIGHT. 117.

In contrast to the noisy public bar next door, it is a quiet, refined place, with a few staid COUPLES sitting at tables. They include MISS KENTON and MR. BENN.

BENN

I'm glad to be out of it, I tell you.
There was something about Sir Geoffrey
and his blackshirts gave me the creeps.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens always says it's up to us
to run the house and leave the rest where
it belongs.

BENN makes a face.

MISS KENTON

You don't agree, Mr. Benn. (intro-
spectively, half to herself) No more
do I, really.

BENN

If I see something I don't like, I want
to be in a position to say "Stuff it,"
if you'll pardon the expression, Miss
Kenton. But I suppose I'm not a real
professional, like Mr. Stevens.

MISS KENTON

It's Mr. Stevens' whole life.

BENN

Well, it's not mine, and to tell you
the truth, I don't want to go back in
service.

MISS KENTON

What would you do instead, Mr. Benn?

BENN

Tom is the name.

MISS KENTON

(blushing) Tom. What employment would
you take up?

BENN

I'd really like to be on my own. Start
a little shop, newspapers and tobacco,
or even a boarding house, down in the
West Country where I come from. Xmouth
- that's a good place for a boarding
house, by the sea. Would I get you
another shandy, Miss Kenton?

MISS KENTON

(hesitating, looking at her watch)
...It's almost 9.30.

BENN

Go on, it's your day off, isn't it?
You're not in the army that you have to
be back in barracks.

She agrees, he goes to the bar. While he is gone, she
looks at her watch again, fidgets uneasily, is thoughtful
- with thoughts far away from Mr. Benn.

118. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT.

118.

STEVENS still wandering around. He looks at a clock, which says 10.30, then he winds it. Then he winds another one.

119. EXT. VILLAGE STREETS. NIGHT.

119.

BENN and MISS KENTON emerge from the saloon at closing-time, with other CUSTOMERS. They seem to be on more intimate terms than before. He gives her his arm and they wander off into the darkness. She is more relaxed with BENN than with STEVENS; she is more herself, and not always on guard.

BENN

What about yourself then, Sarah?
"Sarah" - that's a very serious sort of name.

MISS KENTON

(shyly) They used to call me Sally - that's when my Mum was still alive.

BENN

Sally is nice. Is it your intention to remain in service?

MISS KENTON

It's a good profession, once you get to a responsible position. Mr. Stevens says we're very fortunate -

BENN

We're not talking about Mr. Stevens, we're talking about you. Supposing someone was to ask you if you'd like to come in on a boarding-house, by the sea - what would you say?

They have reached the place where she kept her bicycle. She prepares to go.

MISS KENTON

Well, I don't know, it's a theoretical question, so I haven't given it any thought really, Mr. Benn. Tom.

BENN

Supposing it wasn't theoretical - what would you say then, Sally?

MISS KENTON

It's years since anyone has called me that. It feels funny.

BENN

Nice, though?

MISS KENTON

Oh yes.

He makes her stand still, turns to her. She looks at him with a young, perplexed gaze. He takes charge - takes her in his arms - kisses her. At first she is stiff, but then she responds, with surprising warmth - until she suddenly stops, withdraws, gets on her bicycle and rides away.

120. INT. THE HALL. EVENING.

120.

The doorbell rings. STEVENS opens the door. It is young CARDINAL. He is older looking, more mature and business-like.

CARDINAL

Hello, Stevens. How are you? In a bit of a mess with arrangements. Do you think his lordship would put me up for the night?

STEVENS

I shall tell him you're here, Mr. Cardinal.

CARDINAL

Hope it's not too inconvenient. Nothing special on tonight, is there?

STEVENS

His lordship is expecting some gentlemen to call after dinner.

CARDINAL

Oh. Well, I'd better keep my head down. I've got my column to write anyway.

STEVENS

You're in good time to join his lordship for dinner.

CARDINAL

Oh, good. Splendid. And how is my godfather? Fit?

STEVENS

Very well, sir. May I give you some refreshment?

CARDINAL

A drop of Scotch would go down well. Who is he expecting tonight?

STEVENS
I'm unable to help you, sir.

CARDINAL
No idea at all?

STEVENS
No idea, sir.

CARDINAL
Better keep my head down all the same.
Don't you think?

121. INT. MISS KENTON'S BEDROOM. EVENING.

121.

MISS KENTON sitting upright and quite still in her armchair.

A knock on the door.

MISS KENTON
Come in.

STEVENS comes in.

STEVENS
Mr. Cardinal has turned up out of the blue. He'll be requiring his usual room tonight.

MISS KENTON
I shall see to it before I leave.

STEVENS
You're going out this evening?

MISS KENTON
I am indeed. It's Thursday.

STEVENS
Yes, of course. It slipped my mind.

MISS KENTON
Is something the matter?

STEVENS
Not at all. Some visitors are expected - but that needn't involve you.

MISS KENTON
We agreed that Thursday is my day off. But of course if you should need me, urgently -

She waits for him to say he does, but instead:

STEVENS

It's quite all right.

He turns to the door.

MISS KENTON

I have something to tell you.

He turns back.

My friend - the man I'm going to meet tonight - you know him: Mr. Benn.

STEVENS

Oh yes. Benn.

MISS KENTON

He has asked me to marry him.

STEVENS

Ah.

MISS KENTON

I am thinking about it.

STEVENS

I see.

MISS KENTON

He is moving back to the West Country next month.

STEVENS

Mmmmnn-hmmnn?

MISS KENTON

I'm still thinking about it. I thought you should be informed of the situation.

STEVENS

Thank you. Yes. Well, I hope you have a pleasant evening.

122. INT. BUTLER'S PANTRY. NIGHT.

122.

STEVENS is decanting wine for the evening meal. He is with a FOOTMAN, putting claret through a muslin. STEVENS samples the wine, might say "That's a real drop of good."

There are urgent footsteps outside. He sees MISS KENTON glaring at him from the doorway.

STEVENS

Oh you haven't left yet, Miss Kenton?

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, do I understand that you want me to stay on duty this evening?

STEVENS

Not at all, Miss Kenton. As you pointed out, it is your Thursday.

He continues with his work, and she leaves him, stamping along the corridor.

123. INT. FAMILY DINING ROOM. NIGHT. 123.

This is a small dining room used by LORD DARLINGTON when he is alone or entertaining a few intimates. It is the same room in which LEWIS has his breakfast at the beginning of the film.

STEVENS enters with a tray on which there is a platter of roast beef. He serves DARLINGTON and CARDINAL.

CARDINAL

Something special tonight?

DARLINGTON

Eh?

CARDINAL

Your visitors this evening. Are they special?

DARLINGTON

Can't tell you, my boy. Strictly confidential.

CARDINAL

So I can't sit in on it?

DARLINGTON

Sit in on what?

CARDINAL

Whatever it is that's going to take place here tonight.

DARLINGTON

Absolutely not. Can't have someone like you sticking your nose in - a journalist, a what-d'you-call-it? A newshound. Wouldn't do at all. Once you've finished your food you'd better make yourself scarce.

CARDINAL

Well, it sounds pretty special to me.

STEVENS pours more wine and leaves the room, closing the door.

124. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT. 124.

STEVENS outside the door. DARLINGTON's voice from the dining room:

DARLINGTON
But it's not your business, my boy!
It's not your business!

125. EXT. THE DRIVE. NIGHT. 125.

Cars arriving. Two police cars and a large Daimler (or whatever). The POLICE get out and ring the bell of the house.

The PRIME MINISTER and FOREIGN SECRETARY* get out of the Daimler, accompanied by a SECRETARY and a Foreign Office OFFICIAL.

(*Note: The Foreign Secretary by this time was LORD HALIFAX [whom we met earlier].)

126 INT. THE HALL. NIGHT. 126.

STEVENS opens the front door. They come into the hall. DARLINGTON crosses the hall to greet them. Various "good evenings." DARLINGTON takes them into the library, closing the door.

127. INT. SMOKING ROOM. NIGHT. 127.

CARDINAL is trying to write his piece for the paper. He hears cars arrive, bells ring, doors opening and shutting. All this invisible activity inspires him with a sense of impotent despair. He moves around, feeling caged, longing to but unable to interfere.

Sound of another car arriving. Its doors slamming. A sense of urgency and secrecy.

128. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT. 128.

STEVENS opens the front door. GERMAN AMBASSADOR comes in followed by a SECRETARY or AIDE.

STEVENS takes GERMAN AMBASSADOR's coat, handing it to a FOOTMAN. He then takes the coat of the SECRETARY, handing that over as well. The AIDE might smooth down the jacket of his dark suit, as if assuring himself that he is still armed.

STEVENS leads the two GERMANS into an adjoining anteroom hung with small paintings and goes to announce them to

LORD DARLINGTON. GERMAN AMBASSADOR gives a cursory look at pictures, strolling around the room.

STEVENS returns and leads GERMANS to Library door, which opens suddenly to reveal LORD DARLINGTON, who advances towards them in welcome. He ushers his guests into the Library, giving STEVENS a look as if indicating that that is all for now. The door shuts firmly.

128a. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT.

128a.

Later. STEVENS is standing alone. A bell rings: STEVENS enters the Library. Throughout the succeeding scene the camera stays on STEVENS, following him about the room.

129. INT. DRAWING ROOM. NIGHT.

129.

Amid dim lamps, the occupants are sitting in various armchairs and sofas. STEVENS refills glasses unobtrusively.

They speak in low, unemphatic voices: gentlemen engaged in civilized conversation.

Each of these following observations is greeted with "Quite," "Exactly," "Hear, hear," and other such sounds of perfect agreement from the others:

P.M.

We don't intend to involve the whole British Empire in a war because of a quarrel in a faraway country between people of whom we know nothing.

FOREIGN OFFICE OFFICIAL

To my mind, the whole of Czechoslovakia is not worth the bones of a single British Grenadier.

FOREIGN SECRETARY

Unfortunately, we have a small, noisy and corrupt war group here, who don't realise that you Germans are after all only marching into your own backyard.

GERMAN AMBASSADOR

The Fuehrer is a man of peace to the depths of his soul, but he will not allow a small, second-rate country to thumb its nose at the one-thousand year German Reich.

His task accomplished, STEVENS withdraws as unobtrusively as he entered.

130. EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE AND PORTER'S LODGE. NIGHT. 130.

POLICE on guard.

131. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT. 131.

STEVENS standing. It is two hours later. The Library door remains closed. A distant bell.

132. INT. BACKSTAIRS. NIGHT. 132.

STEVENS approaching the back door of the house. He opens it.

A POLICEMAN stands with MISS KENTON.

POLICEMAN

Could you confirm that this lady is on the staff here, sir?

STEVENS

Yes, of course. She's the housekeeper.

POLICEMAN

Just security, miss.

She comes in. STEVENS bolts the door.

133. INT. BACK DOOR AND CORRIDORS. NIGHT.

133.

STEVENS

I trust you had a pleasant evening?

She doesn't speak. He turns to her.

Did you have a pleasant evening?

MISS KENTON

Yes, thank you.

She walks on, stops, turns.

Would you like to know what took place?

STEVENS

I have to return upstairs. There are events of the utmost importance taking place in this house tonight.

MISS KENTON

Ah. When are there not? I accepted his proposal.

STEVENS

His...?

MISS KENTON

Mr. Benn's proposal of marriage.

STEVENS

Oh. Congratulations.

MISS KENTON

I'm prepared to serve out my notice. But if you were able to release me earlier, I'd be grateful. Mr. Benn is planning to leave for the West Country in two weeks time.

STEVENS

I'll do my best. Excuse me.

He goes towards the stairs towards the front of house.
She calls:

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens!

He stops.

Am I to take it, that after all the years I have been in this house, you have nothing else to say to me?

STEVENS

You have my warmest congratulations.

MISS KENTON

Did you know that you have been a very important figure - for Mr. Benn and me?

STEVENS

In what way?

MISS KENTON

I tell him all sorts of things about you. I tell him stories about you. About your habits. About your... mannerisms. He finds it very funny. Especially when I show him how you pinch your nose when you put pepper on your food. That always has us in stitches.

STEVENS

Does it really? Please excuse me.

134. INT. THE HALL. NIGHT.

134.

STEVENS comes into the hall. CARDINAL is standing at the door of the smoking room, an empty decanter in his hand.

CARDINAL

Hate to bother you, Stevens. Couldn't trouble you for a little more brandy, could I? This decanter appears to be empty.

STEVENS

You said you had a column to write, Mr. Cardinal. Is it entirely wise?

CARDINAL

Oh, just a little more, old chap.

STEVENS

Very well.

135. INT. BACKSTAIRS. NIGHT.

135.

STEVENS coming from wine cellar with bottle of brandy.

He looks up another flight of stairs and stops. The door to Miss Kenton's room is half open.

Movement in the room. A curtain pulled.

Silence.

He goes on.

136. INT. SMOKING ROOM. NIGHT.

136.

STEVENS pouring CARDINAL brandy.

CARDINAL

Thanks. Care to join me in a little drink?

STEVENS

No, thank you, sir. No, thank you.

CARDINAL looks at him closely.

CARDINAL

You all right?

STEVENS

Yes, perfectly all right, thank you.

CARDINAL

Not feeling unwell, are you?

STEVENS

No, no. A little tired perhaps.

CARDINAL

I should think you are tired. What is it - about one o'clock? Why don't you sit down? Look, I didn't come here tonight by accident. You know that. I had a tip-off, you see, about what's going on now, across the hall...Oh, do sit down, for God's sake. Don't just stand there holding that blasted tray.

STEVENS sits.

That's better. Now tell me, I don't suppose the Prime Minister is in the Library, is he?

STEVENS

The Prime Minister, sir?

CARDINAL

Listen, over in the Library - and you don't have to confirm it - are our Prime Minister, our Foreign Secretary and the German Ambassador...Have you any idea what they are discussing in there?

STEVENS

No, sir.

CARDINAL

His lordship is trying to persuade the Prime Minister to enter into a pact with that bunch of criminals in Berlin.

STEVENS

I'm certain that his lordship is acting from the highest and noblest motives.

CARDINAL

But that's what's so abominable! That they should take these high and noble motives and twist them to their own foul ends...Over the last few years his lordship has probably been the single most useful pawn the Nazis have had in this country - and just because he is good and honourable...I wish I weren't so drunk and could make you understand.

STEVENS

I do understand, sir. His lordship is working to ensure peace in our time.

CARDINAL

(bitterly) Yes, peace in our time - on their beastly terms. Remember that American - three years ago - here at that conference? Called Lord Darlington an amateur, out of his depth. He was right...Listen, Stevens, I hardly need to tell you what I feel toward his lordship. I care for him deeply. Deeply. And I know you do too.

STEVENS

I do indeed, sir.

CARDINAL

So aren't you as desperate as I am to see him make this terrible mistake?

STEVENS

I have absolute trust in his lordship's judgment. And if I may say so, I'm proud to serve, in my own very humble capacity of course, his lordship's endeavours to make a better world.

CARDINAL

(after staring at him incredulously)
You're as deluded as he is. God help you both and help us all.

A distant bell.

STEVENS

I am required, sir. Excuse me.

137. INT. DRAWING ROOM. NIGHT.

137.

Cigars burning in the dim light. STEVENS enters.

DARLINGTON

Oh, Stevens. Bring us a bottle of Dow 1913, will you?

STEVENS

Yes, m'lord.

As he withdraws, he might hear:

GERMAN AMBASSADOR

You'll enjoy Munich, Prime Minister.
It's a very jolly place. Our Bavarians have a good sense of humour.

FOREIGN SECRETARY

Ah yes, the famous beer halls. If one happens to like beer.

Mild sounds of amusement.

138. INT. BACKSTAIRS. NIGHT.

138.

STEVENS going down towards the wine cellar. MISS KENTON's door opens. She stands in the light.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens, you mustn't take anything I said to heart. I was very foolish a little while ago.

STEVENS

I have not taken anything you said to heart, Miss Kenton. In fact, I can't recall anything you did say.

MISS KENTON

I was just being very foolish.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, I hardly have the time to stand there exchanging pleasantries with you. I suggest you retire for the night. You must be very tired.

He continues on his way to the cellar. Suddenly he stops - and turns back. But she has gone and her door is shut. From behind it, he hears sounds that may be sobbing. But he has no time to investigate; he has to go to the cellar.

139. INT. WINE CELLAR. NIGHT. 139.

STEVENS finds the bottle of Dow 1913. He is not himself - he fumbles more than usual, and at one point (for the second time in the film) utters an unexpectedly strong expletive as he drops this bottle on the stone floor, shattering it.

140. INT. BACKSTAIRS. NIGHT. 140

STEVENS climbs the cellar stairs with another bottle. He passes MISS KENTON's door. He listens: the sound he hears is unmistakably sobbing. After some hesitation, he knocks and goes in.

141. INT. MISS KENTON'S ROOM. NIGHT. 141.

At his entrance she looks up. She is in tears. He moves toward her. She looks at him hopefully.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton...

MISS KENTON

Yes, Mr. Stevens...?

A pause. He clears his throat.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton, I had been wanting to tell you...

He appears to be struggling to say something, so that one wonders: what is coming? But when he continues:

...The little alcove outside the breakfast room?

Her mouth drops open.

It's the new girl of course, but I find it has not been dusted for some time.

MISS KENTON
(wiping her eyes) I'll see to it,
Mr. Stevens.

A pause. He would like to say more, something else, something very different: but, looking at the bottle in his hand, he realises he cannot tarry.

STEVENS
I know you would have wanted to be
informed.

He goes out.

She puts her head down and sobs.

142. EXT. SEA VIEW HOTEL. 1958. DAY. 142.

STEVENS in his tweed suit drives up in the Bentley, gets out, goes in.

143. INT. SEA VIEW HOTEL: TEA LOUNGE. DAY. 143.

STEVENS is directed to the Tea Lounge where he sits down to wait. He takes out a by now much folded and refolded letter and re-reads:

MISS KENTON V.O.
...How well I remember the good old days
...They were among the happiest years of
my life....I often think of you...

144. INT. BOARDING HOUSE. DAY. 144.

In her room, MISS KENTON has carefully put on her hat. She gives a last check-up on herself in the mirror, then goes down the stairs.

She sees BENN (58) talking to the LANDLADY who directs his attention to MISS KENTON coming down the stairs. When she reaches him -

BENN
Hallo, Sally.

MISS KENTON
Hallo, Tom.

BENN
...Could we talk for a moment?...Just
for a moment.

Somewhat reluctantly, she leads the way to the lounge and they sit down together.

BENN

Nice place this. It's just the sort of quiet little boarding house I had in mind for us...Well, like other things, it didn't work out.

MISS KENTON

What did you want to say, Tom?

BENN

I went to see Catherine yesterday. She had some interesting news.

She looks at him. He nods.

Yes, she's expecting. We're going to be grandparents, Sal.

MISS KENTON

Oh my goodness.

They look at each other and both smile.

BENN

She wants us both over for tea on Sunday ...I'll come and get you, shall I? We can go together on the bus.

She doesn't say yes, she doesn't say no. (She might say "We'll see.")

BENN

The house feels that empty, Sal, I can't tell you.

MISS KENTON

You've cut yourself shaving.

BENN

(ruefully touching spot on his cheek)
Yes, I can't do anything right these days.

Out of habit, she might straighten his collar or whatever in a somewhat irritated wifely solicitude.

145. INT. TEA LOUNGE. DAY.

145.

STEVENS puts away the letter. He looks at the time; he is very nervous. The WAITRESS comes up to ask wouldn't he like some tea while he is waiting? He looks at the time again and agrees.

Suddenly he sees MISS KENTON coming toward him. He rises.

MISS KENTON

Mr. Stevens.

STEVENS

Miss Kenton - Mrs. Benn. How nice to see you again.

MISS KENTON

I was delayed - I'm sorry.

STEVENS

That's quite all right. I've just ordered tea.

MISS KENTON

Oh lovely.

STEVENS

Would you have some cake?

MISS KENTON

No, thank you...Oh yes, why not.
(she laughs) Since it's a special occasion.

He orders from the WAITRESS, then turns back to MISS KENTON:

STEVENS

It's been a long time...You haven't changed. (as she smiles in protest)
Well, just a little.

MISS KENTON

I'd have known you anywhere, Mr. Stevens.

They regard each other with great pleasure.

FADE OUT

146. INT. THE SAME. LATE AFTERNOON.

146.

Some hours have passed. Outside the light has changed. They are still sitting there, now deep in conversation.

MISS KENTON

...We read about the suit for libel.
It was a shame.

STEVENS

When his lordship went to court, he sincerely believed he would get justice. Instead the newspaper increased its
(MORE)

STEVENS (contd)
circulation, and his lordship's good name was destroyed for ever. And afterwards, in his last years, well, Mrs. Benn, his heart was broken. I would take him tea in the library and he would be sitting there, alone. Sometimes he didn't even see me, he was so deep in his own thoughts. He'd be talking to himself, his lips moving as though he was arguing with someone...Only there was no one. No one came to see him any more, you see.

MISS KENTON
What about his godson, young Mr. Cardinal?

STEVENS
Mr. Cardinal was killed in the war.

MISS KENTON
Oh I'm very sorry.

A silence.

STEVENS
I know you remember Darlington Hall in its best days - and that's the way his lordship deserves to be remembered... And perhaps the good days are starting again now that Mr. Lewis has taken up residence and Mrs. Lewis is expected to arrive from America shortly.

MISS KENTON
They're very fortunate to have you there to run the house for them.

STEVENS
But we have problems. Staff problems, Miss Kenton. [I beg your pardon, Mrs. Benn.]

MISS KENTON
Yes, you mentioned it in your letter.

A silence, expectant on his part, embarrassed on hers.

MISS KENTON
...I'll tell you frankly, Mr. Stevens: I had been thinking of going back in service, but now the situation has changed for me. (He waits; she continues) If I take up any work, it will have to be here
(MORE)

MISS KENTON (contd)
in the West Country. You see, Catherine
- our daughter - is expecting a baby and
of course I would like to be near her.

STEVENS
Of course.

MISS KENTON
And then to be near our grandchild and
watch him grow up. (smiling) Or her -

STEVENS
Naturally.

MISS KENTON
- if it's a little girl.

He tries to smile with her.

147. EXT. PIER. EVENING.

147.

STEVENS and MISS KENTON have come strolling out here.
At some point they sit down on a bench. It is sunset
and there is quite a crowd. Everyone is waiting for the
pier lights to be switched on.

STEVENS
...Mrs. Benn, we may not meet again for
a long time. Can I ask you something -
rather personal?

MISS KENTON
We are old friends, Mr. Stevens.

STEVENS
It's just that you have left your husband
a number of times, and although you've
always gone back, it does seem that you
have not been totally happy.

After a pause:

MISS KENTON
...When I left Darlington Hall, all those
years ago, I never realised I was really,
truly leaving. I believe I thought of it
as simply another ruse, Mr. Stevens, to
annoy you. It was a shock to come out
here and find myself actually married.
For a long time, I was very unhappy...
But then Catherine was born, the years
went by, and one day I realised I loved
my husband. You see, there is no one,
Mr. Stevens, no one in the world who needs
me as much as he does.

After another pause:

MISS KENTON

But still there are times when I think
"what a terrible mistake I've made with
my life."

STEVENS

I suppose each one of us has these
thoughts from time to time.

MISS KENTON

Yes and then I get to wondering about
a different life I might have had. For
instance, I get to thinking about a life
I might have had with you, Mr. Stevens.

He looks up at this. He does not look at but away from
her, into space, or into himself. He might say, "Yes.
Well." She might repeat in the same tone "Yes. Well,"
before continuing:

MISS KENTON

And that's when I get upset over some
trivial little thing at home - you know
I have a temper, Mr. Stevens. (when he
tries to deprecate this) Oh yes I do,
I'm sorry to say. But each time I realise
my rightful place is with my husband...
After all, there's no turning back the
clock now. One can't be forever dwelling
on what might have been. Don't you agree,
Mr. Stevens?

A cheer goes up as the pier lights are switched on. It
is not yet quite dark, the last of the sunset still lingers
on sea and sky.

MISS KENTON

People always cheer when they turn on
the lights in the evening. Every time.

STEVENS

I wonder why. (He speaks to hide his
emotion, at the same time taking out
his handkerchief.)

MISS KENTON

They do say that for many people the
remains of the day is the best part,
the part they most look forward to.

STEVENS

(blowing his nose) Is that so?

A silence.

MISS KENTON

What do you most look forward to, Mr. Stevens?

STEVENS

(rallying) Getting back to Darlington Hall, principally, and straightening out our staff problems.

MISS KENTON

Oh you were always able to do that, Mr. Stevens. And you had quite a few to straighten out, as I remember.

They both laugh.

STEVENS

Well, it always was work, work and more work, and will continue to be so, I have no doubt.

Both laugh again - then stop and are silent for quite some time. At last she says:

MISS KENTON

...Well, I suppose it's time to be getting back.

STEVENS

Let me take you in the car.

MISS KENTON

Oh no, it's too far out of your way... But if you'd drop me to the bus stop, that would be very kind.

He motions to the WAITRESS.

148. EXT. BUS STOP. EVENING.

148.

The Bentley draws up at the bus stop. They both get out. It has started raining.

MISS KENTON

It's coming down again.

STEVENS

The weather report did say we would be having light showers in the evening.

MISS KENTON

As per usual...Don't you wait, Mr. Stevens. That bus is always late.

But he does wait. After a while he says:

STEVENS

Now, Mrs. Benn, you must take good care of yourself.

MISS KENTON

And you, Mr. Stevens, promise me that... Here it comes.

The bus has loomed into sight.

STEVENS

I will.

As the bus approaches -

And you must try to do all you can to make these years happy ones for yourself and your husband.

She nods, unable to speak.

We may never meet again, Mrs. Benn, that's why I'm permitting myself to be so... personal.

MISS KENTON

Thank you, Mr. Stevens. And thank you very much for coming. It was so very kind of you. It was so nice to see you again.

She gives him her hand to shake. He holds it; maybe he holds it between both of his.

STEVENS

It was a great pleasure to see you again, Mrs. Benn.

He is still holding her hand, but since the bus is ready to depart, he has to let go.

She gets on the bus - turns from the platform to look at him: He stands there, looking shrunken, miserable, forsaken. The bus picks up speed, so that even if she were tempted to get off and go back to him, it would no longer be possible.

He turns away - just then, a would-be PASSENGER comes running up and exclaims with annoyance at having missed the bus. But when he turns for sympathetic comment to STEVENS, the sight of the latter's face makes him ask

instead whether he is all right, mate? For STEVENS looks just as he did when his father died and Lord Darlington asked him if he was all right. As he did then, he says that yes, he is all right; he might mutter something about the cold and the rain, which brings on the usual imprecation on the English weather from the PASSENGER.

STEVENS goes to his car and gets in. But he does not start the car; he sits in the driver's seat, staring ahead of him at the windscreen, where the rain trickles down and obscures his view like tears.

149. EXT. DARLINGTON HALL. DAY. 149.

Fine view of the house. Several GARDENERS and OUTDOOR HELPERS moving about at their tasks. WINDOW WASHERS at work.

150. EXT. STABLE YARD AND KITCHEN COURT. DAY. 150.

Workmen's vehicles parked. PAINTERS in overalls having a teabreak, laughing and smoking. A sense of activity and rehabilitation.

151. INT. MAIN STAIRCASE AND PUBLIC ROOMS. DAY. 151.

LEWIS, dressed casually, comes down the blue stairs. He meets STEVENS at the bottom.

LEWIS

My Lord, Stevens, you're getting things going here.

STEVENS

I've had to bring in another three girls from the village, but I think I can promise that the house will be in good shape by the time Mrs. Lewis arrives.

They walk together through the house, ending up in the Saloon. These rooms look more or less like they did in Lord Darlington's time, if somewhat denuded of pictures and furniture. The Saloon now has handsome modern overstuffed sofas and easy chairs and modern looking lamps. There might be a big oil portrait of MRS. LEWIS and TWO CHILDREN prominently displayed. TWO DECORATORS are cutting some slipcovers.

STEVENS pulls the curtains open, going from window to window. LEWIS jumps ahead of him with his long stride, opens some himself, then flings open a window as well. He stands in the middle of the room - his room - surveying it approvingly.

STEVENS

I'm expecting a possible new housekeeper this afternoon. Mrs. Muspratt. Excellent references: she was the matron at a boys' preparatory school in Sussex.

LEWIS

Ah, then she'll know how to keep us in good order... (looking into the Dining Room) This is where the banquet was in '35. Where we all stood up and delivered ourselves of our principles. God knows what I said: What did I say, Stevens?

STEVENS

(coming up and looking in) I'm sorry, sir, I was too busy with the service to listen to the speeches.

LEWIS

I probably spoke a lot of nonsense. It's better not to remember what we said twenty years ago. History has such a way of proving us wrong.

But STEVENS is too busy for further conversation. He moves past LEWIS into the Dining Room and begins pulling open the heavy curtains there and flinging up the casements to let in light and fresh air.