

( [redacted] husband, I will [redacted] of your first employer.

**Governess:** You will [redacted]

**Mrs Conray:** Sit down!

*The governess [redacted] she grasps [redacted] puts it to her mouth, [redacted] hearing [redacted]*

(continued) I'll give you [redacted]

**Governess:** [redacted] you want?

**Mrs Conray:** Yes, [redacted] man in [redacted]

*The governess [redacted] locked. She rubs her left wrist against her neck.*

( [redacted] night dawns. Or should [redacted] falls. A dashing young man in Weymouth Street –

**Governess:** [redacted] God's [redacted]

*A das [redacted]*

**Mrs Conray:** ... who [redacted] advertisement in the press requesting [redacted] of a governess, and, neither [redacted] nor travelled, you answered it –

*The governess [redacted] sheading three decades and [redacted] neurotic twitches. So it's [redacted] in the capital, who approaches her potential first employer.*

Scene Three.

1840

Weymouth Street.

**Employer:** Yes, it was almost exactly two years ago that my brother, poor chap, passed away.

**Governess:** Oh how awful –

*The Employer is determined to make an impression and knows how to do so.*

**Employer:** Yes, he and his wife were out in India. Both succumbed to typhoid. Damned water was contaminated. What they tell me.

*As well as being thoroughly impressed by the young man, the governess can't help but be distracted by the room, overwhelmed by its size and magnificence.*

*(continued)* And there was no one else. No other relation. The upshot? I became sole guardian to my niece and nephew, little Flora and Miles. Bad luck for them, eh?

*He laughs and she copies.*

*(continued)* Well, at first, the whole thing was a great worry. Naturally I wished to do what I could for the poor chicks, but I'm alone, you understand, with neither the right sort of experience nor, to be frank, a grain of patience for such things.

*He laughs, she copies.*

*(continued)* So I sent them down to Bly, my other house. I thought the country really the proper place for children. I went down myself a few times to see how they were getting on, took a couple of my best people with me to help out, my valet and so on, but my affairs here take up all my time as you can no doubt imagine, and I travel a good deal.

**Governess:** Yes. *(Admiring his trophies)* Such extraordinary items...

*He straddles a chair.*

**Employer:** So, my dear, if you took the post, you'd be in supreme authority at Bly – in charge of the children naturally, as well as the below-stairs people. There's a housekeeper, Mrs Grose – my mother's old maid – immensely capable. There's a cook, a couple of housemaids, an old pony, a gardener, and Luke the errand boy. Little Flora's at home all the time, and Miles... Well, we had the misfortune to lose our last governess. *(Responding to her inquisitive expression)* Yes. A most respectable young woman, very like yourself – managed the children quite beautifully, but unfortunately she...died.

*The governess is shocked.*

*(continued)* It was all, to be frank, greatly awkward, and meant that I had to arrange a school for the boy. He's young of course, but I didn't know what else to do. Anyway, he'll be coming home for the summer holiday any day now. You look worried. Does the prospect strike you as terribly dull – all serious duty and no company? *(Bringing his chair closer)* I see it in your face.

**Governess:** Well...

**Employer:** It's true that for several applicants, the conditions have seemed prohibitive. But Bly is a very cheerful place, you know, and healthy and secure. I'm certain for a fact you'd get on tremendously well with Mrs Grose. *(Closer)* And, my dear, your acceptance of my offer would do me, personally, such a very great favour. I would be *(kissing her hand)* forever in your debt. *(Looking into her eyes)* I'd gratefully incur such an obligation to you. *(He sits back in his chair, sprawling magnificently)*. In fact, I'd be prepared, in addition to board and lodging, to pay you a pound and ten shillings a week.