

CREATION

Written by

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Note:

Our story alternates between Past and Present

"Present" means the fall of 1858 when Darwin was 49. The children are: ETTY (15) George (14) Betty (11) Franky (10) Lenny (8) and Horace (6).

"Past" means the summer of 1850, when Darwin was 41. The children are: Willy (11), Annie (9) ETTY (6) George (5), Betty (3) Franky (2y) and baby Lenny.

1

1 INT. DARK ROOM. THE PAST. DAY 1

In darkness, chemicals wash over a copper plate. Strange silvery patterns evolve in the half-light.

2 EXT. TERRA DEL FUEGO. DAY 2

Our POV rotates downwards onto an irregular shape.

This shape is grey-green and crammed with detail which emerges as we draw close - like a continent seen from outer space.

A fruit fly lands on it and we now recognise the shape as a patch of lichen.

A number of other fruit flies are grazing there.

Wider. The lichen is on a rock. A black lizard climbs over the horizon - stalking flies.

A slow advance. A sudden rush. A fly is snapped up and mashed between toothless gums.

The lizard is fixing its beady gaze on the next potential

victim when...

A shadow falls, the lizard tries to flee. A seabird grabs the lizard in its claws. Death is sudden and bloody.

The bird settles to eat.

Whizz...Thunk. A sharpened stick flies out of nowhere and impales the bird through its wing.

The wounded bird falls between boulders, flapping helplessly.

The rest of the flock take to their air, calling and wheeling as...

A crowd of local savages come racing over the larger horizon of the rocks armed with primitive bows and arrows, spears, rocks and throwing-sticks...

A child grabs the injured bird and kills it.

An adult biffs the child on the head and steals the bird.

The rest of the savages leap among the jagged rocks smiting each other, shouting and snarling among the whirling flock of birds.

AND WE CUT TO

2

3 EXT. COASTLINE. DAY

3

A POV shot through a telescope: The whirling birds the strange half-animal forms of the savages.

The whole scene is jerky, out of focus and inaudible at this great distance like a very old silent movie.

CHARLES DARWIN (V.O.)

In Terra del Fuego. The "land of fire" - A blighted and loveless country on the earths furthest rim - there lives a community of the dirtiest, the rudest, the least civilised beings you can imagine.

The telescope focusses. The image becomes a little clearer

The flock of boobies fly out to sea.

The savages follow as far as the top of the cliffs, where they stop in sudden amazement, staring at a distant sailing ship.

DARWIN (V.O.)

They were all completely naked, the men as well as the women, with hair down to their bottoms. They spoke in grunts and they never washed their hands and faces! In many respects they resembled wild animals, except that animals are kinder to their children.

A savage child makes a comment and gets biffed on the head again.

Strange, foreign cries of the sailors are faintly audible over the water, as the anchor is dropped with a rattle and a splash. A small boat is lowered.

DARWIN

One day, Captain Fitzroy went ashore to meet them.

The slow rhythm of the oars.

Sailors and savages clutch their weapons, watching each other in breathless anticipation.

3

A door opens and a figure in black, hurries past, clutching a number of prepared photographic plates in their light proof cases.

TECHNICIAN

Not long now. I shall be with you immediately...

ANNIE DARWIN, wearing in a checkered dress, aged about 9 years old, sits looking straight at camera.

She has short hair and a pretty oval face

On her lap there is a posy of artificial flowers, in the background an improbable vista of jagged mountain.

PHOTOGRAPHER (O.S.)

Ready now. Very still please.

ANNIE

Will this hurt, papa?

DARWIN

No. It is only a beam of light.

ANNIE

How can light make a picture.

DARWIN

Well they prepare a copper plate with chemicals on it. The chemicals are sort of energized by the light reflecting off your face.

Then silver sticks onto the plate according to where the light is brightest.

ANNIE

Betty was worried it would hurt.What a little duck she is.

DARWIN

So as I was saying, Captain Fitzroy went ashore to interview the Fuegians....

6 EXT. SHORE. TIERRA DEL FUEGO. DAY

6

Waves lap on the black pebbly beach, where a young naval captain FITZROY with mutton chop sideboards disembarks lightly from his jolly-boat.

4

DARWIN (V.O.)

After some discussion persuaded three of the savages` children to come home with him.

The "discussion" is more in the nature of heated bargaining for slaves.

Fitzroy finally produces enough cloth and axe-heads to secure the deal.

The unwilling children pushed away by their parents and grabbed by sailors who bundle them, biting crying and kicking, into the waiting boat.

DARWIN (V.O.)

Their names were Jemmy Buttons,
York Minster and Fuegia Basket.

7 INT. BELOW DECKS. DAY.

7

Below decks: a slapstick struggle with soap and scrubbing brushes - much biting kicking and howling - as sailors scrub the children clean.

SAILORS

Ow! Shite! Hold still ye maggot!

DARWIN

The captain had them washed and got their hair cut, then dressed them in proper clothes, and taught them proper table manners.

8 INT. CAPTAIN'S CABIN. DAY

8

The children, cleaned and dressed, seem happy enough in their new situation.

They sit at the captain's table clumsily sawing with a knife and chasing Brussel sprouts around a plate with their cutlery.

A sprout shoots off the table

9 EXT. SHIP'S DECK. DAY

9

Splosh! A weighted canvas body bag is tipped overboard.

The rough unshaven seamen crew all remove their hats, some of them cry openly.

5

DARWIN

York Minster died of the smallpox
but the other two learned English

and went to meet the queen.

10 **EXT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY** 10

A fanfare as the gates swing open as a coach-and-four rattles through.

11 **INT. BUCKINGHAM PALACE. DAY** 11

Jemmy Buttons, looking very smart in velvet suit with silver buttons gives proper bow and shakes the Royal hand.

Fuegia Basket curtsies.

Queen Victoria remains out of shot but her attendants hand out presents off a purple silk cushion: A Bible for Fuegia and a telescope for Jemmy

12 **EXT. SHORE OF TIERRA DEL FUEGO. DAY.** 12

Hairy savages reassemble on the cliff tops

DARWIN

Two years later. Captain Fitzroy and I took them back, in the company of a young Parson, hoping they would bring the other savages to god and to teach the others by example.

The hairy savages squint from the cliffs to sea....

Another boat, the Beagle, has anchored in their bay.

Captain Fitzroy is being rowed ashore with Darwin, plus a very young parson and the two young Fuegians, who are happy and agitated to see their homeland again.

DARWIN

And what do you think happened?

13 **INT. DAGUERROTYPE STUDIO. THE PAST. DAY.** 13

Annie suspects there is a joke coming and cant help her mouth from twitching the corners.

DARWIN

(laughing)

Correct! A complete and total failure!

6

14 EXT. ROCKY CREVICES. TERRA DEL FUEGO. DAY

14

At the first sight of their countrymen, Jemmy and Fuegia rip off their clothes, drop the bible and the telescope, and run to join them, yelling like nut-cases.

HAIRY SAVAGES

YAAAAAH!!

JEMMY/ FUEGIA

Yaah!! Yahh!!

The benighted young parson scrambles after them, collecting their discarded garments from among the rain-swept rocks.

PARSON

Jemmy! Fuegia

The telescope is smashed. The Bible lies abandoned - the wind catching its soggy pages and whirling them off in the storm.

15 INT. DAGUERROTYPE STUDIO. DAY.

15

Darwin still laughing, dabs his eyes

ANNIE

(laughing)

Yaaah!

The photographer disappears behind black curtains.

TECHNICIAN

Very still now. No more talking please

Annie composes her face in an expression of angelic seriousness.

A glass dome above her head glows snapdragon blue

Close on Darwin watching his daughter, his eyes still damp with tears of laughter.

Electricity hums. The strange blue light glows brighter, brighter... Brighter.

The image of his daughter imprints on Darwin's memory. Just so. Forever.

16 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DINING ROOM. THE PRESENT. EVENING.

16

Servants are laying a table for dinner

Gas lamps and the coal fire struggle to illuminate the lofty room.

7

Mrs Davies the Welsh cook, bangs the dinner gong and shouts across the darkening garden outside.

MR DAVIES (O.S.)

Children! Franky! Horace! Dinner!

Darwins attractive wife Emma adjusts the lamps and the boys run in, Franky aged 10 Lenny aged 8 Horace aged 6.

LENNY

Mama mama.

EMMA

Yes. What is it

LENNY

Horace says he's six feet tall.

EMMA

Have you all washed your hands.

HORACE

He said I have to be or I can't join the army.

EMMA

First things first. An officer must always tuck his shirt in.

Their elder sisters Betty and ETTY take their places at table

BETTY

The boys made a camp with a camp-fire

LENNY

Oh! Sneak!

EMMA

Where's the campfire.

BETTY

In the summer house but Brodie
put it out.

Parslow enters with the tureen

EMMA

Thank-you Parslow. Where is Mr
Darwin?

PARSLOW

He was killing pigeons Ma'am

EMMA

Will everybody sit down please.

8

As they are pulling in their chairs, Darwin enters, drying
his hands on his trousers.

He's aged ten years since we last saw him and has lost his
former air of gaiety.

He sits, with a distracted nod to the family.

PARSLOW

Soup du jour, sir

The children smile at Parslow's air of earnest formality
but the atmosphere even among the younger kids is sombre
and subdued.

DARWIN

Thank you Parslow

He butters some bread and starts eating. Emma clears her
throat.

DARWIN.

Oh.

The children bow their heads. The bread stick in darwins
mouth. Emma says grace.

EMMA

Lord God who watches over all
that we do. Bless this family and

the food we eat. In Jesus name.
Amen.

Everyone repeats the "Amen" except Darwin.

EMMA

I hear Mr Hooker is coming
tomorrow.

The children prick up their ears at this. They like Hooker

DARWIN

He won't stay long.

EMMA

Did he say what it was about?

DARWIN

I think this is not the time to
discuss it.

EMMA

Maybe the time to discuss it was
before you invited him.

DARWIN

He sent a telegram. I'm sorry if
it inconveniences you.

9

Emma purses her lips and turns her attention back to the
children

EMMA

Eat your soup now.

Darwin takes a couple of spoonfuls, pauses, as a wave of
nausea sweeps over him, then pushes away the dish.

DARWIN

(To Parslow)

Tell Mr Davies it was delicious,
but my stomach is not quite right
yet.

(To Emma)

Excuse me.

He gets up and leaves. As soon as he has gone, the children
natural talkativeness reasserts itself.

CHILDREN

Can we take Mr Hooker to the
Chalk pits. Why can't he stay.
Can we pick blackberries?

EMMA

I think he is just here to work

17 EXT. DOWN HOUSE. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. NIGHT.

17

A branch taps gently against the window pane, like an
insistent guest demanding to be admitted.

The coal fire burns low in the grate - wind in the chimney
rattling the damper

Firelight flickers on a collection of finches in a glass
case, on a bird skeleton, on a fossil, and on numerous
specimen bottles containing the fleshy parts of barnacles
preserved in spirit-of-wine.

Darwin sits immobile in his chair, regarding a locked,
black lacquered steel trunk, on the floor under his work
table.

A voice speaks behind him.

ANNIE

Aren't you going to open it?

He turns and sees her sitting on the day bed - the same
little bright eyed girl from the daguerrotype studio.

She's the same age as she was then and wearing the same
checkered dress - though Darwin himself has aged ten years.

10

DARWIN

Maybe best if I just burn the
whole lot.

ANNIE

(horrified)

No papa - You can't. I'm in it.

DARWIN

Don't be absurd. Of course you're
not.

ANNIE

The story of me when I was small.
You showed me the pages.

DARWIN

Ah yes.

ANNIE

"The natural History of babies"
...Remember?

DARWIN

Of course I remember.

He continues to stare at the shiny black box, his hand
fluttering lightly - a nervous tic.

Music seeps in - a soothing Chopin Nocturne and....

18 INT. DOWN HOUSE DRAWING ROOM. THE PAST. NIGHT

18

Darwin aged 40 - bright-eyed and inquisitive leans over to
examine something, offering it his finger tip while making
little tut tut tut noises.

In the cot is a one-month old baby.

DARWIN

Annie. Annie. Annie.

The piano music continuing over, as her fist closes round
the end of his finger, then tries to pull it towards her
mouth.

He pulls it away from her and she frowns.

He offers it again and the tug of war becomes a game.

Baby Annie laughs.

Darwin writes something in his notebook. Then tucks his
pencil behind his ear and tries out various facial
expressions - scowling, smiling - to gauge the baby's
response.

11

Emma turns on the piano-stool.

EMMA

(affectionately)

What are you doing?

DARWIN

Just playing.

She comes over and, leaning against him, reads from his notebook.

EMMA

"Six weeks: Gurgles. Holds tight
to my finger. Tries to suck.
Smiles at my smile"

The baby lets out a long yodel of pleasure

DARWIN

I should add that she is musical.

EMMA

I hope you do not plan to treat
all our children as little
animacules to be included in your
experiments.

DARWIN

Do you mean there will be more.

EMMA

I assumed that's what you wanted.
Of course, if the idea doesn't
appeal then...

DARWIN

Appeal? Dearest cousin. I am
making plans for an army!

He takes Emma in his arms. She gives a little squeak -
caught off balance then laughing as he waltzes her around
the room, singing.

19 EXT. WOODS AND MEADOW. THE PAST. DAY

19

An army of children - the Darwin family - run across the
screen from left to right. The little kids first,
scampering through the hay meadow off into the trees.

Household servants follow, carrying blankets, hampers and
parasols.

The red haired Scottish nursemaid Brodie, shouts ahead to
the little ones.

BRODIE

Careful! Not too far ahead now.

The children ignore her so she pick up her skirts and races after them.

The Adults follow in their wake - Charles and Emma Darwin plus two younger men aged about 30 - Joe Hooker and the Rev Innes

20 EXT. RIVER BANK. THE PAST. DAY**20**

They have set up their picnic on a river bank.

Emma is reading.

Joseph Hooker is teaching the boys to fish. He has spectacles and long wispy side-whiskers: a battered panama on his head and his trousers rolled up to his knees.

HOOKER

Give it time to take a bite.

The fishing float moves a little

HOOKER

He's Nibbling. Nibbling. Oh
Bother. No-one move.

He's dropped his spectacles in the shallows.

George (aged 5) feels a jerk on the line. He squeals and drops the rod. The fish takes off upriver. Will goes after the dropped rod.

On shore, Annie runs up with a collecting box to show her father

ANNIE

I've got one.

She opens the box to show him a little black beetle.

The local parson, Innes, inclines his head to inspect it

ANNIE

What should I feed it?

MR INNES

A leaf I should think. What plant
did you find him on?

ANNIE

In the mud under that log.

Innes looks to Darwin for advice

13

MR INNES

...Or a piece of bark maybe.

Darwin peers at the insect

DARWIN

Cycrus caraboides. You can see
from the mandibles he's a hunter.
He feeds on slugs and snails.

INNES

Oh.

Annie runs off, calling to the other children

ANNIE

Etty! Willy! Find me some slugs.
He's hungry!

INNES

When I said I knew something of
insects.....

DARWIN

Oh tush.... I studied Theology
for a year but yet I know
exceedingly little of the bible.

INNES

Then once I am properly installed
at Down I shall take pleasure in
instructing you.

DARWIN

I should look forward to that
immensely.

Emma, knowing her husband's ambivalence towards religion,
casts him a slightly arch, amused look. Innes notices this,
though he pretends not to.

Hooker returns from the river, looking slightly damp, with the rod which he has managed to retrieve

HOOKER

Everyone's a bit wet. Sorry, but the fish are surely biting. More worms, boys, more worms.

George is looking under stones

HOOKER

Try over there, Georgey, we've used all these ones up.

They move off, joining Annie and the other in their hunt for crawling things. The air above them is heavy and sparkling with pollen.

14

21 EXT. OCEAN. NIGHT

21

A sailing ship sails past, trailing phosphorescence in its wake.

DARWIN (V.O.)

On the Beagle, quite, often we would drop a flask in the ocean and find it teeming with living particles which glowed in the night

22 INT. SHIP'S CABIN. NIGHT

22

The figure in silhouette of young Darwin inspects a flask of sea water, glowing in the darkness.

He takes a few drops on a watch glass and places them on the illuminated stage of his microscope.

Under the microscope, against a black background, millions of tiny swimming animals.

23 EXT. BY THE RIVER BANK. THE PAST. DAY

23

Cut to the air above the picnickers - alive with glittering particles - against the dark trees behind.

DARWIN

....so much beauty for so little

purpose.

EMMA

Surely not without purpose. They were helping to light the ship's way were they not.

Darwin smiles at the idea, turns to Innes

DARWIN

Are you familiar with the works of Thomas Malthus, Mr Innes?.

INNES

He married his first cousin didn't he?

EMMA

So did Charles.... So did I.

INNES

Oh, I was not at all suggesting....

Emma waves it away. Just teasing

15

DARWIN

He made the point that if every trout, say, has a hundred offspring And so on and so on through the generations. Then the planet would be knee deep in trout in just a few decades.

INNES

Of course most of the eggs are destroyed and eaten so the numbers remain stable. That is the beauty of God's plan.

Emma gives Darwin a "So there" look and hands Innes a sandwich.

EMMA

Cheese and cucumber

INNES

Thank-you

Somewhere in the woods, Annie has found a treasure trove of

worms and slugs.

ANNIE (O.S. DISTANT)

Over herethere are millions!

DARWIN

It doesn't strike you as an exceedingly wasteful plan - these myriad lives created only to be immediately extinguished.

EMMA

(a gentle warning)

Charles....

INNES

(confidently)

They are providing food for others.

DARWIN

You think they are happy about it?

INNES

Happy?

Close up on a writing worm. Hooker is instructing George how to put a worm on a hook.

HOOKER

Through his bottom and up through his mouth - perfect

16

DARWIN

....To be doing Gods will.

EMMA

(to Innes)

Please ignore him. After two glasses of claret he tends to become mischievous.

DARWIN

No I'm serious. If thousands are destroyed that a few may live their lives, is not the general sum total of happiness not in some kind of massive deficit?

INNES

Well far be it from me to speculate on the mind of God, far less the happiness of an earthworm ha ha ha. But it seems to me that nature is at peace...and most of her denizens are content.

EMMA

Amen.

INNES

(to Darwin)
You don't agree.

DARWIN

I think it is a battlefield. A constant and shifting struggle for survival between everything and everything else.

EMMA

I really do think men have a problem with natural beauty. They cannot ever just accept it for what it is.
(Calls off)
Children! Sandwiches!
(Then)
Tell me of your wife Mr Innes.

Darwin lies back on the rug and turns his head away from the sun.

The base of a tangled hedgerow is just a few feet away.

Looking into its tangled depths he sees something gleaming white - the skull of a sheep with briars growing through the eye sockets.

17

24 EXT. BASE OF THE HEDGEROW. TIME-LAPSE. NIGHT

24

The sheep's skull is half-decomposed.

In fast forward we see maggots pecking the remnants of flesh from the bone, birds feeding on the maggots.

A bird becomes trapped among the briars. It flaps madly upsetting a nest.

Eggs and blind featherless hatchlings fall down through the dark web of branches where they are devoured by voles and rats, then slugs, then worms

All the times tendrils and vines are growing, the skull - bleached white - now encased in a cage of thick spiny branches, fizzing with insect life, where ants and ground beetles feast on the carcasses of slugs and....

25 INT. DARWIN'S BEDROOM. THE PRESENT. DAWN 25

Darwin wakes in sudden terror.

Dawn light illuminates the wallpaper in front of him - a William Morris design of interweaving vines.

Emma, is asleep in her night-cap at his side.

Darwin lies for a while in the semi darkness, until his hand, fluttering on the coverlet, becomes still at last.

26 INT. SCULLERY. THE PAST. DAY. 26

Light and noise.

Crash of gleaming copperware, clattering of water in the pipes as the servants prepare Sunday breakfast

The cook, Mrs Davies looks out through a steamed up window to see the angular figure of Charles Darwin, bent almost double inspecting a tiny segment of lawn.

Brodie joins Mrs Davies at the window.

MRS DAVIES

What is he doing now, exactly?

BRODIE

Cutting the grass with nail scissors.

MRS DAVIES

Such a shame he never had a proper job. At least your Mr Thackeray had his books to write.

18

27 INT. DOWN HOUSE. THE PAST. DAY 27

Children thunder up and down the stairs between Brodie who is doing a final check on grooming and Emma who is marshalling them in the hall.

28 INT. HALLWAY. THE PAST. DAY

28

EMMA

Chop chop Georgie. Socks! And you have not buttoned your trousers.

Baby Lenny starts crying and she goes to comfort him

29 INT. GIRLS' BEDROOM. THE PAST. DAY.

29

Brodie is arranging hair and tying ribbons for Annie (9) Etty (6) and Betty (3)

ANNIE

Did you never think of getting married Miss Brodie.

BRODIE

Once. But he went to Australia and I missed my chance.

Willy passes the door, his hair in need of brushing.

BRODIE

Master William. Hairbrush.

William comes in. Brodie brushes the back of his hair.

WILLY

Ow. Ow!

BRODIE

Well what do you expect. It is a birds nest.

WILLY

Papa says God doesn't care if we are neat.

BRODIE

(brushing)

Your father is a very wise man but has a small understanding of religion. No-one can read what goes down in Gods great book of

accounts.Fingernails.

Willy presents them for checking.

19

BRODIE

You can go.

30 INT. HALLWAY. THE PAST. DAY.

30

The children come racing and swinging and clattering down the stairs.

Emma, holding the baby in one arm, steers a tricycle out of the way, clearing a path to the door

EMMA

Mrs Davies, Will you ask Jenny to wear a bonnet. I would not like people to think her fast.

George aged 5 tugs at her skirt

WILLY

Can I bring my mouse for a blessing?

EMMA

What mouse?

George (5) pulls it out from his pocket. Its dead, muddy and bloody

GEORGE

Elsie caught it in the barn. We need to pray for his soul

EMMA

Mice don't have souls. Leave it on the window sill. Everyone come now or we shall be late.

31 EXT. LANEWAY. DOWN HOUSE. THE PAST. DAY

31

Pealing of church bells

Mist rises from the ploughed fields and hangs among the ancient oaks.

A little procession heads down the lane. The Darwins - Charles and Emma - plus their servants and children (older now, for we have flipped into the present), all in their Sunday best.

The trees are bare. Their breath condenses as they walk.

32 EXT. VILLAGE SQUARE. THE PRESENT. DAY

32

The ancient flint church stands in the centre of Downe (sic) village, opposite the George and Dragon pub.

20

A massive and venerable Yew tree casts its shade over a number of gravestones one of them inscribed "to Mary Darwin born Sept 1842 died Oct 1842."

Beyond the church fence, villagers greet each other before heading inside. The great majority of the village have turned out, from Squire Lubbock through the tradesmen and domestic servants from the village to the clodhoppers (farm labourers) in their colored smocks.

Rev Innes is welcoming his large flock at the gate.

EMMA

Reverend Innes.

INNES

(smiling)

Ma'am. Welcome. Welcome

Then his eye moves on to Charles Darwin and his smile falters, his expression turning slightly cold.

Darwin tips his hat rather stiffly and walks away, through the throng of parishioners, leaving his family to file into the church without him.

33 EXT. WOODLAND. PRESENT. DAY

33

Darwin walks across the meadow and into the woods.

A flock of crows take flight from the rookery in the bare trees overhead.

In darkness, a furious struggle, squawking and frantically beating wings.

Darwin seizes on a dove and backs out of the dovecote, the silhouette of his upper torso taking shape in the square hole in the floor.

He climbs down the ladder, passes the captive bird down to Parslow, then climbs back up and pushes his upper body into the dovecote again, in search of the next victim.

The dovecote is a substantial affair on four pillars with a ladder in the centre.

Outside the dovecote, the boys are racing around playing at soldiers. (Franky 10, Lenny 8, Horace 6)

21

Parslow has a number of the birds in cages

DARWIN

Ring the two milky pouters. We'll sacrifice the tumblers and skeletonize them. Then...

He looks up as a coach appears in the lane. The boys immediately break off from their game and run after it, shouting.

BOYS

It's Mr Hooker. It's Mr Hooker!

Darwin tries to wipe the bird shit off his hands and succeeds only in getting it on his sleeve.

His breathing quickens. He seems at a loss. Parslow is awaiting further instructions

PARSLOW

Then... what Sir?

DARWIN

Just. ...to the shed with them. I shall clean myself up.

He hurries off.

The coach pulls up and Hooker alights - ten years older than when we saw him catching fish, but still with the same hallmark side whiskers and wire-rimmed spectacles, the same springy step and ready grin.

Already he is being mobbed by the younger boys - Lenny, Franky, and Horace - who clearly adore him.

BOYS (AD LIB)

- We're the Light Brigade Horace is a Russian.

HOOKER

Good choice Horace. I shall be Lord Raglan and watch the slaughter from a safe distance.

BOYS

- Will you give us a piggy-back?
- Lenny cut his foot on a nail.
There was lots of blood!

Emma emerges from the front door. She smiles, pleased to see Hooker despite her misgivings.

22

Then her smile falters as another man emerges from the coach behind him.

HOOKER

Emma. Forgive the short notice.
You know Thomas Huxley.

EMMA

Only by reputation

HUXLEY

Mrs Darwin.

HOOKER

He insisted on coming and I could not refuse him.

EMMA

Tell papa his visitors are here.

LENNY

He knows already.

HORACE

He went that way.

Emma smiles brightly, covering for her embarrassment at her husband's increasingly erratic behavior.

EMMA

Anyway. Come in please. Come in.

Hooker heads towards the house, the boy still clustered around him.

FRANKY

Sir, Is it true when you were in the Himalayas you were imprisoned by the king of Sikkim?

HOOKER

Absolutely true.

LENNY

And he thought you were a spy for stealing his rhododendrons?

HOOKER

That's approximately true.

FRANKY

....and he wouldn't let you leave unless you agreed to marry his fattest daughter.

23

HOOKER

Yes. (Conspiratorial)but you are never to tell my wife that!

EMMA

Children leave Mr Hooker alone now. I'm sure he has more important things to discuss.

HOOKER

Not really, but I think Mr Huxley does....

Huxley has seen Darwin, washing his hands by the "skeletonizing shed".

Huxley hangs back to introduce himself as Hooker steers Emma off into the house.

HOOKER

I have my heart set on a cup of tea and one of Mrs Davies' scones.

Emma looks anxiously after Huxley but allows herself to be gently side-lined.

37 INT. KITCHEN. THE PRESENT. DAY .

37

Emma is by the kitchen window, rearranging tea things on a tray.

The sky outside is dark and lowering.

Through the window she can see Darwin heading off down the sand walk - head bowed, walking stick in hand - deep in conversation with Huxley.

She drops a tea-cup which smashes on the stone floor.

MRS DAVIES

I'll do that ma'am. Please. Let me do it.

38 EXT. DOWN HOUSE. THE SAND WALK. THE PRESENT. DAY.

38

The Sand-walk is a gravel walking path between the garden and the fields, flanked by mature oaks and ancient willows.

HUXLEY

We're reforming the Linnean. The committee will comprise myself, Lyell, Huxley...yourself of course if you are willing.

24

Darwin grunts noncommittally. The Crunch crunch of their feet is punctuated by the regular stomp of his metal-shod walking stick.

HUXLEY

We intend to reclaim science as a profession - wrest it away from the country parsons and beetle-

collectors. Your book will be our rallying point.

DARWIN.

You know it is not yet any fit state to publish.

HUXLEY

I have read your detailed abstract. The argument is complete and utterly compelling. All that is lacking is the detail and we know you have that in abundance. Your barnacle work has established you as the pre-eminent authority on marine life.

DARWIN.

On one small mollusc!

HOOKER

In which the whole story of creation can be read. Do not pretend to me that was not your intention.

DARWIN.

Honestly....

HUXLEY

A "family tree" of barnacles stretching back 300 million years to the time it was a free swimming prawn!.

DARWIN.

There are many gaps.

HOOKER

Of course with gaps! But that is the very point. If we but had the complete fossil record we could trace all life back to one speck of protoplasm. The branching of forms in ever more complex succession...until.

DARWIN.

Yes yes, but one cannot infer too much.

HOOKER

Mr Darwin. Either you are being disingenuous or you do not fully understand your own accomplishment. You have killed God.

DARWIN.

Mr Huxley

HUXLEY

....and good riddance to the bearded malicious old bugger!

DARWIN

(interrupts)

Please I must beg of you....

HUXLEY

No. I must beg of you sir. Joseph Hooker we know is too nice a chap to do it. You are a fine and brilliant man who hates to give offence - an admirable quality - wish I had it myself. But what do we believe? What do we know to be true. Will you light the way or leave us all to flounder in the mire for another decade.

He stops and lowers himself onto a bench, teeth clenched.

HOOKER

Are you alright?

DARWIN.

A touch of indigestion. It will pass.

It's clearly worse than that, but Huxley, refusing to be distracted, blithely ignores it and sits down beside him till the worst of it passes.

HUXLEY

It is time to write your book Mr Darwin. Write it brilliantly as we all know you can. Strike hard and fast with a blow that is utterly conclusive.

DARWIN

(in pain)
Sir, you are talking like a
revolutionary and really...

HUXLEY

It is a revolution. And not
before time.

(MORE)

26

HUXLEY (cont'd)

Goodbye to the lot of em - damned
bishops and Archbishops with
their threats of eternal
punishment.

DARWIN

And you'd replace Gods Laws with
what.

HUXLEY

The laws of logic. The laws of
nature.

DARWIN

Knowing, as we do, that most
capital crimes are her everyday
practises: Theft, rape, murder,
adultery, infanticide....

Huxley waves it away

DARWIN

We live in a society bound
together by the church. An
improbable sort of barque I grant
you but at least it floats. You
suggest we change all that at a
stroke. You wish me to rebuild,
plank by plank, the very vessel
we are sailing in.

39 **EXT. DOWN HOUSE. DAY.**

39

The Coach to London has pulled up outside the front gate.
Huxley is aboard. Darwin is talking with the coachman

Hooker comes down the path in his black coat, carrying his
Gladstone bag.

EMMA

Mr Hooker.

He turns. He has already said his good-byes.

EMMA

I beg you, please don't push him.

HOOKER

No-one can push Charles. You know how fixed he is. Bit of a barnacle himself ... his own words.

EMMA

And if you prize him from his rock he will die. I know you all mean well but....

27

COACHMAN

(Impatiently)

All aboard!

Hooker gets aboard. Huxley leans out of a window and waves cheerily to the whey-faced Darwin

HUXLEY

We'll meet again, Mr Darwin

40 **INT. THE LANEWAY. DAY**

40

The coach pulls away.

Looking back though the rear window Hooker sees Emma with the boys clustered around her skirts.

HUXLEY

What did she say to you?

HOOKER

That it was killing him.

HUXLEY

A mighty slow death considering the time he's spent. We'll be dead and buried ourselves if he prevaricates much longer.

Huxley takes off his spectacles and polishes them, embarrassed by Huxley's directness, inspecting his own

conscience in the bevelled glass.

41 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. NIGHT

41

In the darkened study, with his specimens and books all around him, Darwin kneels by the box.

Steeling himself, he unlocks the padlock and opens the lid and takes out the papers and notebooks which are stored there.

The bulk of it is a single manuscript, accumulated over many years, divided into 14 chapters with pages of notes interleaved.

The Chapters are headed. Variation under domestication, variation under nature, Struggle for Existence, Natural Selection....

A noise behind him almost makes him jump out of his skin.

Its Annie, ten years old in her checked dress, as she will always be in his imagination.

28

ANNIE

Why are you scared?

DARWIN

Like you said. You're in it.

ANNIE

Its only a book, silly.

He sits there regarding the open box, paralysed by indecision. Annie tenderly smooths his hair, rearranging his collar.

DARWIN

What are you doing, Annie?

ANNIE

I'm making you beautiful.

DARWIN

I have to work.

Though the soft touch of her little hands is almost too real for him to bear and he closes his eyes

ANNIE

Breath in, papa. Breathe out. Now
Tell me a story.

DARWIN

I have no time....

ANNIE

About Jenny. Please?

The sound of a wave breaking. Wind stirs Darwin's hair

He opens his eyes and he is

42 EXT. ENGLISH BEACHSIDE. THE PAST DAY

42

Sitting with Annie ten years ago on an English pebble
beach.

She has collected a pile of shells and is arranging them in
"families".

The dialogue is continuous

DARWIN

Why do you always ask for Jenny?
Its so sad.

ANNIE

That's why I like it. It makes me
cry.

29

She looks up from her shells and smiles winningly.

Darwin looks out to sea, at the bright crashing line of
surf, and begins the familiar, much-told tale:

DARWIN

Once upon a time there was a
family of Orang-u-tangs living in
the jungles of darkest Borneo

43 EXT. JUNGLES OF BORNEO. DAY

43

Our POV moves between dark tropical trees to find a group
of Orangutans flopping around grooming each other.

As with the land of the Fuegian savages, there is something slightly artificial about these jungles, as though the trees really belong in Kew gardens, and the naked jungle warriors, whom we now see stalking through them, are on loan from the museum of mankind.

DARWIN

Their eldest daughter was the most loving, caring and trusting Orang of all.

We follow a young nimble female, swinging through the trees, revelling in her own gymnastic ability, until she stops - hearing something: the sound of human speech.

DARWIN

But these qualities in themselves cannot guarantee an ape's survival. Sometimes, quite the reverse.

Native hunters are creeping through the undergrowth

A warning screech from one of the Orang-u-tangs posted as lookouts.

Most of the apes flee up into the canopy. Jenny stays where she is, fascinated, just a moment longer than is prudent.

DARWIN

When she realized her danger it was too late.

As she turns to flee a weighted net is thrown on top of her. The hunters pounce.

DARWIN

They put her in a bag and carried her off....

30

ANNIE

" much to her loving parent's sorrow."

DARWIN

Exactly.

The family screech and hoot, anguished, as the hunters head back off through the trees.

44 EXT. MARKET-PLACE. DAY

44

Exotic coins and bank-notes pass from hand to hand: from the tribal chief to the sultan, in his overlarge turban, from the sultan to the trader in his solar topee and stained white suit.

DARWIN

The hunters sold her to the Sultan who promptly sold her to a visiting Englishman who packed her aboard a sailing ship and brought her to London zoo.

Jenny is taken out of a bamboo cage and put into a metal cage.

45 INT. CARGO SHIP. DAY

45

The cage is lowered by a crane. Jenny looks out from her swaying prison at spinning grey skies and brick warehouses.

46 INT. CAGE. LONDON ZOO. DAY

46

Now she sits disconsolately in a corner of her permanent enclosure.

She has been dressed, ridiculously and poignantly in a smock and a bonnet.

A group of onlookers are trying to get a reaction out of her. Eventually they give up and move on.

DARWIN

In London she had many admirers - of whom your father was but one.

Darwin moves forwards from the shadows, where he has been observing and taking notes.

As the other humans move away he attempts to start a conversation with Jenny in her own language, much in the way he communicated with baby Annie.

31

DARWIN

Hoo hoo hoo hoo.

Jenny regards him sceptically then looks away.

DARWIN.

HOO!!

She startles and looks at him aggressively.

DARWIN

Hm?

He reaches in his pocket. This gets her interest. She comes closer, expecting food.

Darwin takes out a sprig of verbena - a strongly scented herb.

He holds it in front of his nose and inhales, making contented expressions of pleasure.

Jenny watches.

Darwin holds the verbena towards Jenny.

Cautiously she extends a hand through the bars.

Their fingers touch in space, like God Giving life to Adam. For Darwin it's a breakthrough - a moment of connection.

Jenny eats the verbena and spits it out, shrieking angrily.

CHARLES

Wait, sorry, wait - I've got something else here for you

He reaches in his pocket. She cocks her head, alert.

With the air of a conjurer, he pulls out:

A child's hand mirror, flashing as it catches the sun through the skylights.

CHARLES

(pleasurable surprise)

Ahhhh!!

He shows Jenny her own reflection and, then hands the mirror through the bars.

Jenny takes the mirror, bites it, discovers it is inedible, and smashes it on the ground.

Charles makes a sad, whining sound

CHARLES

Hew Hew Hew...

32

JENNY

(pouting)

Hmph.

Meaning: "OK then, I'm sorry."

It's such a complex human reaction - grudging contrition - that Charles laughs aloud with pleasure.

Jenny laughs.

Charles takes out a mouth organ and plays a snatch of Chopin.

Jenny covers her ears and chatters. "Not listening not listening!"

Charles, insulted, stops playing.

Jenny laughs waves a hand as if to say: "Play, if it amuses you. I'm must kidding."

47 EXT. THE BEACH. THE PAST. DAY

47

The salt wind. The dazzling light. The slow pulse of the surf.

Darwin has paused in his narrative.

ANNIE

Go on papa.

DARWIN

Go on what.

ANNIE

The bit where she gets sick and dies.

DARWIN

No. Why do you want to hear that bit?

ANNIE

I just like it. It makes me cry.

Darwin smiles, his own eyes filling with tears.

Then a door opens, softly, in the sky.

48 INT. THE STUDY. THE PRESENT. NIGHT

48

It opens wider to reveal Emma's elegant profile, framed against the gaslight of the hallway.

33

Her POV: the black box is unlocked and open, its contents strewn around the floor at darwins feet.

Darwin is sitting on the floor of the study holding in his hand a magazine, published by the Society for the useful Distribution of Knowledge, with a picture of Jenny on the cover

EMMA

Are you coming to bed?

DARWIN

Presently.

He doesn't move. She comes in

EMMA

What did Huxley want?

DARWIN

He thinks I should write it and be done with it. He feels it is a question of moral courage ...or the lack of it.

EMMA

You did not tell him about your health.

DARWIN

His theory is that I am making myself ill by holding back. That I should lance the boil. Plunge in and hang the consequences.

EMMA

Thank the Lord he is not a surgeon.

Darwin takes a breath and plunges in himself:

DARWIN

I've concluded he is right. Bite the gag. Speed is everything. It will all be over in a matter of months.

Emma is horrified.

EMMA

It is not mere months that concern me Charles. Nor even years or decades...

Its said quietly but with genuine anguish. To Emma it is as though her life partner has announced he's contemplating suicide.

34

EMMA

Do you really care so little for
your immortal soul - for the
knowledge that you and I may
never be together, in all of
eternity.

DARWIN

(softly)

You know that what concerns you
concerns me also. What do think
has held me in limbo all these
years.

Emma has. They both know it. She turns abruptly from the door and hurries away.

49 INT. BEDROOM. THE PRESENT. NIGHT.

49

Emma has been crying. She lies in bed pretending to sleep.

Darwin gets into bed behind her. He wants desperately to reach out a hand to touch her, to comfort her, but he cannot do it for fear of weakening his own fragile resolve.

DARWIN

Dearest Emma. You know This is
not a decision made lightly....

50 INT. DARWINS STUDY. THE PRESENT. DAWN

50

In the dawn light, Darwin is writing a letter to his wife.

DARWIN (V.O.)

.... It has been a very slow and gradual process, like the raising of continents.

51 EXT. GARDEN. THE PRESENT. DAY.

51

EMMA stands alone in the wintry garden, a white apron over her black dress, reading.

DARWIN (V.O)

What else can I say to you, except that it seems the process is now complete.

A tear tracks down the curve of Emma's cheek as she folds the letter, puts it in her pocket and return to the business of dead-heading flowers.

In voice over we hear singing.

35

CONGREGATION

All things bright and beautiful,
all creatures great and small.
All things wise and wonderful,
The lord God made them all.

52 EXT. DOWN VILLAGE CHURCH . THE PAST. DAY.

52

Move in through the graveyard, past the ancient yew..

CONGREGATION (OS)

Each little flower that opens,
Each little bird that sings,
He made their glowing colors,
He made their tiny wings.

53 INT. DOWNE VILLAGE CHURCH. THE PAST. DAY.

53

The church is packed for the Sunday Morning service

The Darwin family stand in the front row.

Emma, the servants and the rest of the family are singing lustily: Parslow - a somewhat pompous operatic tenor, Brodie and Innes both loudly Scottish (Innes out of tune), Annie by Darwin's side, trilling along in a tuneful little descant.

She notices her father is not singing and offers him her hymn book with the words.

Darwin smiles and returns it. It's not that he doesn't know the lyrics, it's just that he can't bring himself to say them.

DARWIN FAMILY

All things bright and beautiful
all creatures great and small.
All things wise and wonderful the
Lord God made them all.

The organ, played by Mrs Innes, wheezes to a pause. Innes himself mounts the pulpit.

INNES

Let us pray.

Everyone bows their heads in prayer.

INNES (CONT'D)

Lord God we know the world is
governed by Thy plan.

Darwin is immediately not listening.

36

He looks along the row of his children, standing dutifully in a line between Charles and Emma.

George, aged 5, is studying the woodlice which are nesting between the pages of his hymnal

INNES (O.S)

Extending even to the merest
creatures thou hast made, such
that even a sparrow falls not to
the ground without thy will.

Darwin, stands watching the play of light from the stained glass window on his shoes. Then raises his head

INNES

Teach us that all misfortune.
All sickness and death, all the
trials and miseries of which we
daily complain are intended for
our good, being not the vagaries
of an uncaring universe but the
corrections of a wize and
affectionate parent

Innes looks up sternly and sees the Darwin's head raised
among the sea of down-turned heads.

Their eyes meet briefly in a sort of challenge, and in that
moment, Darwin somehow knows with absolutely certainty that
religious faith has left him.

With a whispered word to the beadle standing next to him to
take the collection Darwin slips out from the pew and heads
off up the aisle.

DARWIN

Excuse me

He's intending to be quiet and subtle but the creaking
boards under his feet loudly announce his departure.

Innes raises his voice above the fusillade.

INNES

Turn with me now to the book of
Job, Chapter Two verse twelve

The congregation, not daring to raise their heads, watch
Darwin's sturdy walking shoes departing down the aisle.

54 EXT. THE CHURCH. THE PAST. DAY.

54

The rise and fall of Innes's voice continues in the
background as Darwin walks out from the porch, emerging
from shadow into sunlight.

37

A summers day. He feels like a weight has been lifted.

The church beadle comes out behind him.

BEADLE

Are you all right, sir?

DARWIN

Never better. Thank-you.

He heads off up the gravel path

55 INT WOODLANDS. THE PRESENT. DAY

55

The faint and Distant sound of church singing filters through the misty woods. The black wet trunks of trees catch the sunlight.

Frosty dew highlights Mistletoe and holly and dead bracken and the sudden red flash of a robin.

Darwin cuts a strange dark angular figure, walking along the narrow track a single step at a time.

He pauses breathing, and listens.

His quick eye catches the robin seizing a worm.

Further on. A pheasant breaks cover. A hare stands upright in a clearing then bounds away.

Darwin looks down and takes another step, placing his feet carefully, silently so as not to disturb the wildlife.

Cut to a different pair of much newer shoes in exactly the same spot.

56 INT. WOODLANDS. THE PAST. DAY

56

Darwin is ten years younger, pacing in the same, measured way through summer woodland.

There's a noise behind him and he turns, finger to his lips for silence.

Annie turns away from him and passes the sign down the line of children: Eddy, George, Betty and Franky, in decreasing order of height.

ANNIE

Shh

FRANKY

(to ANNIE)

What are we looking at?

The question comes back up the line

DARWIN

A weasel.

The children bunch up to gaze on a strange and wonderful sight.

In a little sun-dappled clearing a weasel is turning loop the loops in a strange spiralling dance for the benefit of...

...a young rabbit, which sits utterly hypnotized by the performance.

At first its strange and amusing, then the dance becomes more sinister. The weasel advancing by tiny increments as it tumbles in the air, finally

ANNIE

NO!

The weasel seizes the bunny rabbit by the back of the neck and shakes it savagely.

The rabbit shrieks and spasms.

Annie is beside herself, drumming the ground with her feet in a fever of fear and pity.

The rabbit is still in its dearth throes, its neck broken, its back legs still jerking

ANNIE

No! No! Stop it. Daddy. Stop it.
Make it stop.

The rabbit is already dead.

DARWIN

Annie, Annie, Annie.

He sinks to his knees, heedless of the mud on his Sunday best worsted, embracing her.

The others are shocked and amazed by the rabbits death, but none of them distressed as Annie. They are country children and death is an everyday event

GEORGE

The chickens do that too when
cookie kills them

ANNIE
(tearful furious)
Chickens are different!
(To her father)
(MORE)

39

ANNIE (cont'd)
Why didn't you do something. You
should have stopped it!

DARWIN
The weasel has to eat. Its the
way of the world. Annie

ANNIE
Its not fair. Its not fair.

DARWIN
No, its not fair at all.

Patting her and stroking her as the little sobs subside.

The weasel is dragging the dead rabbit back to its lair.

DARWIN
....but still it is
extraordinary, do you not think,
that a weasel should learn to
dance the polka.

Despite herself the concept amuses Annie. Chest still
heaving with sobs - she dries her eyes and smiles at him
through her tears.

57 **INT. DOWN HOUSE. BEDROOMS. THE PAST .NIGHT .**

57

Piano music - Chopin - plays softly over as Charles and
Emma do the rounds of their large brood of children,
turning out lamps and kissing sleeping heads, taking a doll
from one sleeping child's embrace, a sword from another.
Shooing a cat and her kittens from the bedroom.

EMMA
Good-night Lenny.

DARWIN
Good-night Frankie

EMMA

Good-night Betty.

Darwin watches his wife, a sensuous figure, stooped over the sleeping child, a lock of hair falling forwards as she kisses her.

DARWIN

Good-night George

EMMA

Good-night Etty.

DARWIN

Good-night Willy

40

DARWIN AND EMMA

Good-night Annie

She's sound asleep. Finally Charles and Emma are alone together in the blissfully silent house.

Emma smiles

EMMA

Dear Charles

DARWIN

Dearest Emma

He takes her hand and leads her to their bedroom.

58 **EXT. THE BEACH. THE PAST. DAY**

58

Emma lies on a rug, her head is in Darwin's lap. She is reading aloud from a new book of poems by Wordsworth.

EMMA

"Loving she is, and tractable
though wild.
And innocence hath privilege in
her.
To dignify arch looks and
laughing eyes;
And feats of cunning; and the
pretty round
Of trespasses, affected to
provoke Mock chastisement, and
partnership in play"

She puts the book down

DARWIN

(smiling)

Then we were wrong. She is not
unique after all.

Darwin is watching Annie dancing in front of the surf ,
turning cartwheels - a wild dancing sprite of the sea,
oblivious to the cold, shouting and singing:

59 THE BEACH. LATER

59

Later, Near the cliff, Darwin is "geologising"

He's excited, breathless and windswept, shouting over the
sound of the nearby surf as he clambers over the huge
assorted boulders pointing out the geological strata to his
kids who are more interested in clambering.

41

DARWIN

This is Devonian, about 400
million years ago. Rocks like
this might have fishes in them,
trilobites, tree ferns, corals
maybe....

He knock off a corner of rock with his geological hammer,
then moves on

ETTY

Is this a bit?

DARWIN

No that is Cretaceous ETTY. It
was made a hundred millions years
ago, when this cliff was a coral
reef and Down village was a swamp
full of great crocodiles.

Tap tap tap with his hammer as the boys scramble upwards,
playing at mountaineers.

DARWIN

We might find oysters and sponges
imprinted in it, or dinosaurs if
we were lucky...

GEORGE

What's a dinosaur?

ETTY

Professor Owen invented them.

DARWIN

They are the giant lizards which lived on earth before there were any humans.

BETTY

But they weren't real

DARWIN

Of course they are, Betty. Did I never tell you of the skeletons I found in South America

(to Etty)

Do you remember Mr Martell?

ETTY

No.

Annie arrives, hopping nimbly over the rocks still in her wet swimsuit

42

ANNIE

Yes you do. When he came to tea and showed us drawings of his Iguanodon. And George burnt his fingers roasting chestnuts.

ETTY

Oh yes.

ANNIE

She doesn't remember.

DARWIN

You should have your clothes on Annie. You are quite blue.

ANNIE

Savages don't swear clothes.

She runs to the top of a great fallen rock, spreads her arms out, and yells to the sky.

ANNIE

I'm a Fuegan.

DARWIN

Well don't fall and hurt
yourself. Your mother would never
forgive me.

Annie gives a shout and disappears head over heels.

DARWIN

Annie!

ANNIE

I've found one!

In the rubble at the base of the rocks she has landed,
unhurt and quite by accident on a perfect specimen of a
fossilized trilobite.

60 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. DAY

60

The black box lies open with all its secrets strewn around
the office.

Stacks of paper - a stack for every chapter - are held down
with paperweights - a fossil, a skull, a specimen bottle.

Darwin squares a stack of blank paper between his hands,
then reaches for his pen.

61 INT. VILLAGE SCHOOL. THE PAST . DAY.

61

Annie reaches for her pen.

43

Reverend Innes is giving the children their writing
lessons, according to "Mulhauser's technique"

INNES

First positions.

The children assume the position as if in some militaristic
drill.

INNES

Second positions.

Grips are adjusted, pens are dipped.

INNES

Assume the distance.

The children lean back fractionally, so their elbows are just back from the edge of the desk.

INNES

.....and begin.

The Children start to copy the sentence which Innes has written on the blackboard.

Annie reads the sentence and hesitates: "And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested"

62 INT DARWIN'S STUDY. DAY.

62

Darwin massages his cramped hand then takes a blank sheet of notepaper.

DARWIN

Dearest Hooker. I am one week into the great project and I feel at last that it is real. Its title is "On the Origin of Species." As I write these words why does it feel as though I am confessing to a murder...

A paper stirs in the breeze and he pins it with the nearest object to hand - Annie's trilobite.

His eye rests on it a moment

CUT TO

63 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PAST . DAY

63

The corrugated gray surface, greatly magnified.

The Darwin of ten years ago is examining the trilobite with a watchmakers eyeglass.

44

There is a small mirror above his desk, angled so as to give him a view of the path leading round from the front of the house.

Innes appears briefly in it, preceded by Annie, who is trotting to keep pace with him and crying.

Darwin, intent on his work, notices neither of them

From downstairs he hears the door knocker then Brodie's voice, then Emma's overlapping with half-heard fragments of Innes's Scottish brogue.

INNES (O.S.)

I thought you needed to know why
I had to chastise her.

Darwin remains immersed, examining each detail of the trilobite, comparing it with other specimens in books and in boxes.

INNES (O.S.)

....It is not fair to the other
nor to Annie herself that her
head be filled with these ideas....

EMMA

Are you listening, Annie?

Annie sobs louder, incoherent in her grief.

Darwin finally focusses on the sounds, recognizes her distress and gets up to investigate.

64 EXT .UPPER HALLWAY. DAY.

64

He reaches the top of the stairs. Annie is directly below him, slumped, still sobbing at the foot of the stairs.

Emma has ushered Innes to the porch out of sight.

INNES (O.S)

I shall bid you good day then

The front door closes. Darwin comes downstairs

DARWIN

What happened?

ANNIE

Nothing.

DARWIN

Its not nothing. (To Annie) Why

are your knees bleeding?

45

EMMA

Mr Innes had to have words with her. It is sorted now.

DARWIN

Words are very well. I am asking what happened to her knees.

ANNIE

Mr Innes sent me to the corner and made me kneel on rock-salt.

DARWIN

What!

ANNIE

(in a rush)

I said there were dinosaurs and he said there wasn't dinosaurs but there were because you saw them.

EMMA

(interrupting)

Annie. Let me talk to your father. He told her to kneel til she repented...

DARWIN

Repented what?

EMMA

The bleeding is due to her own stubborn-ness. It is finished now.

DARWIN

It is by no means finished. Where is my coat. Its intolerable

EMMA

Charles. Please.

Charles ignores her, Forcing his arm into the sleeve of his coat.

EMMA

Mr Innes is a dear friend and

neighbor. I beg you at least appraise yourself the facts. She contradicted him repeatedly. The fault was Annie's Mr Innes was quite within his rights.

46

DARWIN

(his arm is stuck)

In his rights to torture our children for expressing the plain truth.

Brodie appears and Darwin ushers Annie towards her

DARWIN

...Please take her to kitchen.

EMMA

It is not the truth as he sees it

DARWIN

Well damn how he sees it. Damn the pair of them and all their works

EMMA

Charles listen to yourself. Listen

Blocking his path as he heads for the door. Her palm flat on his lapel, soothing, reasoning with him

DARWIN

Emma please. I will not have Innes tell me what I can and cannot tell my children.

EMMA

It is what I have told them every night at bedtime. It is the instruction my aunt and your brother and most of our family live by. It is what all of the village believe ...or try to. Charles. Must our children be revolutionaries at nine years of age. Write to him with your concerns - our concerns - about the manner of the punishment but please do not set yourself against him. Think of my feelings on this. I beg you.

Finally his outrage has spent itself, neutralized by her gentle persistence and the deep affection he holds for her.

DARWIN

You're right of course.... I'm
sorry.

He embraces her.

Emma is reassured, she cannot see the conflict written all over Darwin's face.

47

65 INT. STUDY. DAY. (THE PRESENT)

65

The conflicted expression has hardened, the furrows in Darwin's brow etched deeper, as he dips his pen and begins the second chapter.

From the floor below we can hear Emma practising a piece of music on the piano - Chopin's revolutionary etude: a rippling, brooding arpeggio running up and down the keyboard, redolent of an angry sea.

Darwin's pen scratches doggedly over the paper.

66 INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

66

In the bedroom, in his nightgown, Darwin scrubs the ink stains off his fingers with a pumice stone.

Emma passes behind him, preparing for bed. He glances at her in the mirror

DARWIN

You're still angry with me.

EMMA

No. Why?

DARWIN

I can always tell by your playing.

EMMA

Not angry. I'm sad.

67 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. DAY

67

Darwin sits at his desk, writing and editing, his hand clamped on the pen.

A voice speaks from nowhere

ANNIE

Talk to her.

DARWIN

(still writing)
And say what? She does not want to hear it.

ANNIE

Then write to her.

DARWIN

(irritably)
That is what I am doing Annie, I am writing all of it.

48

68 **EXT. DARWIN'S STUDY. DAY**

68

Emma, passing the open door glimpses Darwin talking angrily to himself as he writes.

DARWIN

....and then she can read it, and we can all be free of this! Now, please, Annie no more interruptions!

69 **EXT. GARDEN. DAWN**

69

The music continues, louder.

A frosty coating of dew covers the lawn.

Footprints lead to a strange wooden tower in the garden. Parslow stands outside, shivering in the grey morning light.

Darwin shouts from inside.

DARWIN

Pull!

Parslow pulls a lever.

There's the sound of crashing water, a yell of pain from inside the tower.

Ravens rise, calling, from the surrounding trees.

70 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. DAY 70

Darwin dips his pen, scores out some text from his previous draft and writes again.

The music continues from downstairs, louder and more insistent than before.

71 LOUNGE ROOM. THE PRESENT. DAY 71

Emmas hands race back and forwards along the piano keyboard.

72 INT DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT 72

Darwin's pen scratches across the pages, making a noise like fingernails on a blackboard.

The music from downstairs seeming to drive into his skull
49

He speaks aloud the words he is writing, in an effort to drown out the piano music.

DARWIN (THOUGHT VOICE)

... In time small variations become extreme...

Strange detailed drawings of barnacles are strewn across his desk, seeming to change and transmute before his eyes.

DARWIN (V.O.)

...Organs change their very function, the oviduct becomes a cement gland.

He stops. His hand is shaking too much to write.

ANNIE

What's an oviduct?

DARWIN

Nothing that need concern you.

ANNIE

(sulkily)

I know what it is anyway.

Darwin gets up abruptly from his desk.

73 INT. WATER TOWER. DAY 73

DARWIN

Pull!

Darwin stands naked, clutching to two hand rails for support as a great tub of freezing water tilts and pours its contents on top of him.

Darwin yells

74 EXT DOVECOTE 74

Birds rush out from the dovecote

75 INT. STUDY 75

Darwin dips his pen and writes

DARWIN

....What was once a free-swimming creature now finds itself glued by its head to a rock, flailing for food with its legs...,

50

The Revolutionary etude is continuous now - real or imagined.

76 UNDER THE SEA 76

Surf crashes.

Underwater, among the swirling seaweed, fragile sea creatures being torn this way and that by the raging surf

77 INT. MALVERN SPA TREATMENT ROOM. DAY 77

Annie screams and kicks her legs, overwhelmed by water in some dark place.

Pull back to reveal:

78 INT. HELL.

78

A vision of hell:

The water is fire.

The barnacles are people.

The people are Annie, Emma and Darwin.

79 INT. BEDROOM. NIGHT

79

Darwin wakes in a panic and sits up in bed. He raises his right arm and looks down at his inky writing hand fluttering in the moonlight, like an organ with a will all of its own

Emma is a sleep. There's a crucifix on the wall above her bed. On the bedside table there's a bible.

EMMA

" ...About the midst of this valley I perceived the mouth of hell to be; and it stood also hard by the wayside. Now, thought Christian, what shall I do?

80 INT. NURSERY. THE PRESENT. NIGHT

80

The children are gathered around Emma who is reading a bedtime story to them by lamplight.

Emma is in the centre of a circle of little attentive faces.

51

She's aware of Darwin, standing in the darkened corridor beyond the door, drawn to the cosy little group but unable to join it.

She lets him be. Continues reading

EMMA

And ever and anon the flame and
smoke would come out in such
abundance with sparks and hideous
noises, that he was forced to put
up his sword, and betake himself
to another weapon, called "All
Prayer"..."

81 INT. ETTY'S ROOM NIGHT.

81

The older girls ETTY and BETTY finish their prayers and
jump into bed in their night-gowns

Emma comes in to take away their lamp.

ETTY

Is Daddy not coming to kiss us
good-night

EMMA

He is still a little bit ill from
working ...maybe tomorrow.

BETTY

That's what you said last night.

Emma turns out the light. In the darkness ETTY says.

ETTY

I think when Annie died he
stopped loving us.

Emma returns to her bedside

EMMA

Oh come now, ETTY. You know
that's not true. He is just a
little bit ill - and a little bit
busy.

82 INT. BOILER ROOM. DAY

82

In the bowels of Down House the house, we find Darwin
wrapped in wet towels sweating in front of the wood-burning
stove.

As he gazes into the leaping flames, Annie appears at his

shoulder.

52

ANNIE

Is there really such a place as hell.

DARWIN

No of course not. How can there be?
If he is supposed to be loving and forgiving - what on earth is the sense punishing all these millions of souls.

ANNIE

But just suppose if there was. And all this was punishment.

DARWIN

All what?

No reply.

DARWIN

I don't know what you mean. All what?

83 INT THE WATER TOWER. DAY

83

Darwin stands, legs apart in the water tower bracing himself like a colossus against the full force of the deluge.

DARWIN

Pull!

84 EXT THE WATER TOWER. DAY

84

The gardener, splitting logs, watches Darwin stagger from the tower with a rug wrapped around him, and make his way back to the house.

85 INT. DARWIN'S BEDROOM. DAY.

85

Darwin lowers himself into bed, inky and tousled. He seems prematurely aged, crippled by the gruelling process of writing the book.

As he lies there, unable to sleep lines of written text seems to appear behind his closed eyes, or in the tangled vines of the wallpaper.

Emma speaks from the other side of the bed.

EMMA

Talk to Mr Innes. Please. You are clearly not well

53

DARWIN

He is what? A physician now

EMMA

You know what I mean. I think he can help you.

Charles remains stubbornly silent, his hand fluttering over the coverlet.

EMMA

I am taking the children to Maer for a while, to visit their cousins.

(Beat)

I worry for you, Charles. Please talk to him

86 INT DARWIN'S STUDY. DAY

86

Fire flares in the grate as Darwin compares the skeletons of various pigeons.

He starts a new Chapter: "changes under domestication"

87 INT. THE DOVECOTE. THE PRESENT. DAY

87

Pigeons mate and coo in the dusty twilight.

88 EXT. THE DOVECOTE. THE PRESENT. DAY

88

Parslow picks up two of them, casually wrings their necks and heads off with them to the skeletonizing shed.

89 INT. DARWINS STUDY. THE PRESENT. DAY 89

Darwin Looks out of the study window, searching for inspiration.

He sees Emma and the children getting into a coach with their baggage.

90 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. NIGHT. 90

Darwin sits at his desk.

He has written the chapter heading and nothing else.

Parslow knocks and looks in

PARSLOW

Will you be eating sir.

54

DARWIN

No thank you.

Parslow leaves. Darwin addresses the empty room.

DARWIN

Annie?Annie.

She will not come.

91 EXT. THE BEACH. THE PAST. DAY 91

Annie dancing in the surf. One minute she is there and the next she has vanished, lost among the churning waves.

Darwin leaps top his feet shouting

DARWIN

Annie!

Raucous male laughter takes us to

92 INT. PUBLIC HOUSE. THE PAST. EVENING. 92

The George and Dragon on a Saturday night. The air loud with laughter and thick with pipe smoke.

Clodhoppers crowd the snug, many of them roaring drunk,

with their florid complexions, stained and broken teeth.

Darwin trying, to slip in discreetly is spied by a group of locals who hail him and gather around him, wedging him into a corner with their overloud loud talk and laughter.

THATCHER

Mr Darwin! Mr Darwin! I was explaining to Mr Goodman here your interest in breeding. Mr Darwin is our foremost scholar in the village.

DARWIN

No. No I am but one of many. There is Squire Lubbock, and the reverend Innes

The Thatcher waves them away as lesser talents.

THATCHER

....he is also a noted explorer, the author of many books..

DARWIN

...which no-one has read.

55

THATCHER

...a fellow of the Royal society and a prodigious expert on clams...oysters?

DARWIN

Barnacles.

THATCHER

Mr Goodman, now, is the foremost pigeon fancier in all the southern counties. Kent champion two years running. I swear he can give you any beak or plumage in four generations. Head and tail in five.

DARWIN

How do you do it?

GOODMAN

By breeding cousin with cousin. I find it the fastest way to alter

the strain - provided you do not
weaken it in other ways.

Darwin takes a slug of whiskey

93 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. NIGHT

93

He is drinking in his office.

The clock strikes twelve. The page in front of him remains
stubbornly blank

Darwin is rising from his desk when he sees something move.

In one of the bottles on his desk, a fleshy marine specimen
seems to have come to life.

It writhes blindly in its bottle of formalin, making a
sound like a baby crying.

Darwin, recoiling in horror, pushes himself back from his
desk. The castors on his chair trundle back from his desk.

Behind him he hears a tapping and turns to see that all the
birds in his big glass display case of Galapagos finches
have started to beat against the inside the crowded glass
case. They flutter, frenzied, tapping with their beaks on
the inside of the glass, which shatters as...

One by one the bottled specimens explode, discharging their
contents onto the floor.

A lamp falls over. The room is filled with birds the floor
awash with formalin and broken glass.

56

The Study seems to tilt like the cabin of a ship in a storm
and.

94 INT. DARWIN'S BEDROOM. THE PRESENT. DAWN

94

Darwin wakes from the nightmare asleep at his desk, the
whiskey bottle a quarter empty, ink on his hands and his
shirt cuffs

He gets up and puts on his shoes.

95 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DRAWING ROOM. THE PRESENT. DAWN .

95

The scullery maid, lighting the fire, looks round and sees Darwin.

He walks past her without a word and heads out into the garden.

96 EXT. DOWN HOUSE GARDEN. THE PRESENT. DAWN 96

Darwin heads across the lawn, takes a key from his belt and opens the door of the skeletonizing shed.

97 INT. SKELETONIZING SHED. THE PRESENT. DAWN 97

In the grey light he takes in the corpses of doves from the dovecote.

Some have been skinned, their pelts curing on frames, their carcasses steeping in a buckets chemicals which remove the flesh from the bones.

Previously he regarded this place as a sort of laboratory. Now it seems a place of horror.

The door opens behind him. Its Parslow.

DARWIN

Get rid of them.

PARSLOW

Which ones sir?

DARWIN

All of them. All of it.

98 INT. DOVECOTE. THE PRESENT. DAWN 98

Darwin reaches into the dovecote and starts grabbing pigeons at random, dragging them out and flinging them into the air.

57

DARWIN

Go. Go!

99 EXT. DOWN HOUSE. THE PRESENT. DAWN. 99

Displaced doves beat the air.

Darwin climbs down the ladder, grabs an axe and attacks the wooden stanchions supporting the dovecote

Parslow comes running over from the skeletonizing shed, calling:

PARSLOW

Sir. Mr Darwin.

Darwin stands back, hair wild, eyes crazed, his sleeves covered in bird shit.

PARSLOW

Please rest sir. I'll have John Lewis remove it. Have some breakfast now and rest. Shall I call the doctor?

DARWIN

God know.

PARSLOW

Or the water tower.

DARWIN

A pox on all of them!

100 **INT. ANNIE'S ROOM. THE PAST. DAY**
100

The local doctor Henry Holland takes out various concoctions from his medical bag and arranges them on the dresser.

We are in the past. Annie is in bed with a fever.

Emma is pregnant.

DOCTOR

Calomel then, twice daily.

DARWIN

I will not give it to her.

EMMA

Charles....

DOCTOR

Mrs Darwin, it is nothing but chloride of mercury. I have prescribed it often in children as young as two.

DARWIN

Not to any of mine I hope. On the Beagle I dropped some on a microscope slide and all my animacules died of it.

DOCTOR

Well animacules are not persons. Presumably they would die if you dose them with Madeira wine.

DARWIN

On Madeira they thrived most excellently, as did Captain Fitzroy, while it lasted.

Annie enjoys the joke and gives Darwin a weak smile. The doctor regards her balefully

DOCTOR

Or if she would submit to be bled.

ANNIE

Please no.

DARWIN

I will write to Dr Gully again.

DOCTOR

(sceptical)
The hydro-therapist?

DARWIN

I have always found his treatments most effective.

DOCTOR

...no matter that they defy all sense of logic.

He is packing up his bottles and his lancets

DARWIN

Logic is not everything.

Emma shoots him a look. Til now scientific logic has been his guiding principle.

DOCTOR

Then I shall bid you good day.

DARWIN

Parslow will bring your carriage.
I will be down presently

The doctor leaves the room. Emma is in a terrible quandary

59

DARWIN

I should take her to Malvern.

EMMA

I think it is better she is here.

DARWIN

Gully can care for her properly
there. She can be treated daily,
as I was.

EMMA

Charles no. She is better with
us. With her family. Please do
not take her away from me.

101 **INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. THE PRESENT. DAY**

101

Parslow enters to find his master staring vacantly into
space.

The page in front of him is still blank.

The study is in chaos. It seems as though the contents of
the black box have multiplied and spread out to colonize
every corner of the room.

PARSLOW

Post for you sir.

He leaves it by Darwins elbow and backs out.

After a while Darwin seems to rouse himself.

He picks up the largest envelope, postmarked Malaysia, and
slits it with a letter knife.

The sender is a Mr Wallace. There's a covering letter and a
twenty page attachment Darwin reads, and lets out a sudden
loud bellow of laughter.

DARWIN

Ha!!

102 **EXT. DOWN HOUSE. THE PRESENT. DAY.**

102

Darwin sits in sunshine at the rear of the house, rugged up against the cold. Looking frail still, but oddly at peace.

INNES

Ah, there you are Mr Darwin.

Darwin looks up blinking in the sunlight to see the stocky, dark-suited figure of Mr Innes.

60

INNES

May I join you.

DARWIN

By odd means

He makes some space on the bench. Innes hesitates, unable to read Darwin's feelings towards him. The smile is welcoming enough but there is something not altogether balanced about it

INNES

Mrs Darwin informed me you would be alone andperhaps a need to counsel.

He sees an envelope on the ground and stoops to retrieve it.

INNES

You dropped this. What a beautiful postage stamp.

DARWIN

Yes. It is from the Spice islands.

INNES

I do rather envy your wide circle of correspondents. In my youth I always wanted to travel.

DARWIN

You are still young. You could be

a missionary and follow in Mr Livingstone's footsteps.

INNES

Yes, although I have always felt there is quite enough evil at home without looking for it abroad.

(Then, casually)

Mrs Darwin told me of the book you are writing.

DARWIN

Not any more, thank goodness

INNES

You have finished it?

DARWIN

It has been finished for me. My correspondent in the spice islands has arrived independently at exactly the same idea, expressed in a mere twenty pages.

(MORE)

61

DARWIN (cont'd)

There's brevity for you. I had so far covered two hundred and fifty and come to a dead end. So finally I am rid of the project.

Innes is relieved to hear it

INNES

The Lord moves in mysterious ways.

DARWIN

He does indeed Mr Innes. I was reflecting only the other day on the fact that he has endowed us in his blessed generosity with not one but nine hundred species of intestinal worm each with its own unique method of infiltrating the blood supply and burrowing through the mucosa.

Innes shifts uncomfortably.

DARWIN

And then again on the great love
he shows for butterflies by
inventing a wasp to lay eggs
inside the living flesh of
caterpillars

INNES

Well. It is not for us to guess
at His reasons.

DARWIN

No. We can leave that for Mr
Wallace now. Should I advise him
to stay overseas do you think? If
he shows his face in Kent he may
be required to kneel on rock
salt.

Innes rises. He's a short man, acutely aware of any threats
to his dignity, and he's had enough of this mockery

INNES

I once valued our friendship Mr
Darwin. I had hoped it might be
possible to restore it. Clearly
in your present mood that is not
going to be possible. My regards
to Mrs Darwin

He starts off round the corner of the house.

62

Darwin listens to his footsteps receding, then turns his
face back to the sun. When he opens his eyes sees a figure
standing in the lawn.

It is Annie, plain as day, scowling at him angrily.

DARWIN

What? I am forestalled by Mr
Wallace. That is the simple fact
of it. What reason do you have to
be angry?!

She shoots him a look of hatred then turns away from him
and runs off towards the meadow.

Darwin, instantly remorseful, gets to his feet and hurries
after her.

DARWIN

Annie!

He reaches the centre of the lawn and stopped by a sudden intense pain in the gut which strikes him like a blow and fells him to his knees.

He lies their gasping, his vision clouding as the pages of the Wallace letter slip from his grasp and are scattered to the wind.

A view from high above: spiralling downwards on the Darwin garden, as household servants emerge from various quarters and hurry to his assistance.

103 INT. DARWIN'S BEDROOM. THE PRESENT. DAY.

103

There are some faint stains on the plasterwork of the bedroom ceiling. Like lichen on a rock. Like an archipelago of islands.

Darwin lies, pale and weak, looking upwards from a sea of white blankets.

The door opens and he turns his head. Its Emma.

EMMA

You have a visitor.

DARWIN

No. No. I will not be bled or lectured to.

She gives him a pinched look, then Hooker pushes in behind her.

63

HOOKER

It is me. Thank God you are still with us. Word came from London you had suffered an apoplectic stroke.

DARWIN

No. Simply the great relief of liberation. Did you read the Wallace abstract.

Hooker bats the idea away

HOOKER

It is a letter. You have a book

DARWIN

...barely half of it

HOOKER

You have a book. What is not already on the page is most certainly inside your head and I intend to extract it, if it kills us both.

DARWIN

You have been talking to Huxley.

HOOKER

No. Had I done so he would have hastened here himself armed with every instrument of torture known to her majesty's navy.

(Then)

Charles I have read the first Chapters. It is brilliant. You must continue.

DARWIN

I cannot. Seriously Joseph, I am completely blocked. All my old symptoms have returned with a vengeance. The sweats the shakes the abdominal pains. The whole endeavour was cursed from the outset.

Hooker takes darwins hand, presses it to stop it from trembling

HOOKER

Charles. It was you who opened my eyes to the wonders of science. So let me open yours. You have an illness. You have had it as long as I have known you.

(MORE)

64

HOOKEE (cont'd)

It is clearly made worse in times of overwork but the nature of the work is irrelevant. This is not

visited on you by God or the devil. This is a set of physical symptoms. Go to Malvern and get treated.

DARWIN

Not Malvern

HOOKER

Why not. What is there to be scared of there. He has worked for you in the past it will work again. Then come back and finish the book. Your enemies are already toasting their good fortune but they shall not prevail.

DARWIN

What are you talking about. I have no enemies.

HOOKER

They are legion, believe me, and they are implacable. We are all of us fighting a battle against fear and superstition but we can win this battle. We must win it. You can win it for all of us. Go to malvern, then come back and finish it.

104 INT. DOWN HOUSE. THE PAST. DAY.
104

Upstairs, Servants are packing for a journey.

The vigorous Darwin of the past moves swiftly from room to room, gathering his things. Hat and gloves, books, spectacles, papers.

Emma, eight months pregnant, tries to keep up with him

EMMA

Charles, please reconsider

CHARLES

Emma it is weeks now, months. She is getting worse, not better.

EMMA

Then I am coming with you.

65

DARWIN

You cannot come. How can you possibly come in your condition.

EMMA

It is not so far.

DARWIN

It is two days by coach and train. Who will look after the others.

EMMA

I do not care for the others. I care for Annie!

Etty, coming upon then unexpectedly, hears this and is instantly heartbroken.

EMMA is devastated by the slip but is presently too overwrought to retract it.

DARWIN

Leave us please, Etty.

Parslow has gathered up Annie from her room and is carrying her downstairs, pale and sickly-looking, with Brodie fussing behind.

BRODIE

Make sure she is tucked in. Watch her shawl

ANNIE

I don't need to go.

At the bottom of the stairs, Darwin takes Annie from Parslow's arms

DARWIN

The coach is outside. I will carry her from here.

EMMA

Annie...

ANNIE

Mama...

She clasps Emma's hand. Darwin keeps heading for the door.
Emma holds fast to Annie's hand and follows behind

DARWIN

You will see Mamma when you are
better. Say goodbye now.

66

Parslow holds the door open. The coach is at the Gate. Emma
stops on the threshold, unable to let go her daughter's hand
and suddenly deeply convinced that she is making a mistake
here.

EMMA

Wait. I am coming with you

DARWIN

Please, Emma

EMMA

Wait there.

She hurries back inside. Darwin makes a decision and heads
for the coach.

105 **EXT. DOWN HOUSE. DAY**
105

Down the path and through the open gate with the servants
following.

DARWIN

Get aboard. Brodie

ANNIE

(shouts back)
Mama!

The garden gate clangs shut behind them.

106 **INT. DOWN HOUSE STAIRWELL/ UPPER HALLWAY. THE PAST. DAY**
106

Emma looks out of the upstairs window, realizes they plan
to leave without her and hurries downstairs again.

107 INT. COACH. THE PAST. DAY
107

Charles bundles Annie inside.

DARWIN

(to the coachman)
Go. Go.

EMMA

(calls)
Wait!

DARWIN

Go now!

ANNIE

Mama!!

67

The coach sets off. Emma runs to the gate calling desperately.

EMMA

Charles. Please God. No. Annie!

108 INT. COACH. THE PRESENT
108

Charles, feeble and debilitated, levers himself into the coach with Parslow assisting and slumps back in the leather upholstery.

Servants gather at the gate. Some of them tearful, not expecting him to return

109 EXT. STEAM TRAIN. THE PRESENT. DAY.
109

A steam train comes charging past trailing plumes of black smoke, striking sparks from the track with its wheels.

110 INT. CARRIAGE. THE PRESENT. DAY.
110

The sickly Darwin of the present sits hunched and nauseous, with Parslow sitting beside him with his suitcase on his lap.

Every jolt of the train sends a spasm of pain through Darwin's guts.

The people sitting opposite - a woman, a child, and a man - regard Darwin in silence. Whatever he suffers from its not good and they are worried about getting infected with it

They plunge into a tunnel. The carriage fills with smoke. Parslow gets up and tries to close the window but it won't budge. A burning ember flies inside and lands on Darwin's leg.

Darwin is too weak to lift a finger. Parslow slaps the ember and extinguishes it.

111 EXT. STATION. MALVERN.

111

The train wheezes to a halt. The doors open and the train disgorges its cargo of sick people, come to Malvern for treatment - a coughing child, a woman with one side of her face aflame with shingles - the halt the lame and the afflicted.

68

112 EXT. HORSE AND CART. DAY

112

Darwin sits in the back as the attendant drives them through Malvern.

DARWIN

Tell him not this way.

PARSLOW

(loudly)

Hello there. Stop. Can we go by the other route

ATTENDANT

The Worcester Road is shorter.

DARWIN

...by the low road.

PARSLOW

He wishes to go by the other route.

ATTENDANT

(with a sigh)
As you will sir.

He backs up the horses and turns the cart around

113 INT. GULLY'S CLINIC. DAY
113

Dr Gully is the chief physician at Malvern spa. His marble-tiled consulting rooms resound with the sound of rumbling pipes and dripping water.

Darwin reclines on a leather couch, watching the watery play of light on the ceiling.

A door opens and Dr Gully comes in, accompanied by two assistants.

Gully is a small dapper man wearing an apron over his shirt and tie. His trousers are tucked into calf-length Wellington boots.

He greets Darwin cheerfully, effusively.

MR GULLY

Mr Darwin, old friend. Mr Darwin.
It has been too long I fear. Tut
tut tut tut. What have we now
what have we now?

He clasps Darwin's hand, feeling his pulse at the wrist, then commands him to open his mouth

69

GULLY

tongue...

Darwin shows him.

MR GULLY

Ugh. Shirt up. Let me feel your
liver.

Darwin untucks his shirt. Gully prods at Darwin's belly.
Darwin winces.

DR GULLY

Pulse hectic, togue furred, liver
tender and enlarged.

Darwin's ink stained fingers speak volumes.

DR GULLY

No doubt you have been exercising your brain every hour that God gave you.

DARWIN

I was persuaded to write book.

DR GULLY

Madness there are far too many of those already. Are you Sleeping?

DARWIN

Poorly.

DR GULLY

I suppose never taking the 50C dilution of Chelidonium.

DARWIN

(shakes his head)

I had the gardener build a water tower. It no longer has any effect.

GULLY

Of course not. Your gardener is not a hydrotherapist. What on earth possessed you ?

DARWIN

I feared I was dying.

DR GULLY

Oh come come come. We shall not have that talk here.

Half turning to his assistant, who is staking notes.

70

GULLY

A smart spinal scrub. Cold douche daily at 7.00. Wrapping in towels and sweating by the lamp.

Then, to Darwin:

DR GULLY

No red meat, no reading, no
mental agitation of any kind. We
shall soon have you right old
friend, we shall have you right.

114 INT. TREATMENT ROOMS. DAY 114

Music over:

Darwin sits in a deep metal bath while one of Gully's
assistants scrubs his spine with a loofah.

115 INT. DOUCHE. DAY 115

Darwin stands in a shaft of light, grabbing onto the hand
rails as the icy flood continues to crash down on his
shoulders, splintering and fracturing in the shaft of
light.

116 INT. TREATMENT ROOMS. DAY 116

Two assistants bind him tight in damp linen sheets, til he
is immobilised like a cocoon, with his legs together and
his hands by his side.

They pick him up and lie him down, quite rigid beside
another pod like creature, similarly swaddled, with a red
face and a beard.

BEARDED STRANGER

Mr Darwin is it?

Darwin nods, unable to turn his head, or make any gesture
with his hands.

The stranger continues to talk to him nonetheless.

BEARDED STRANGE

William Carter of Southampton. I
read your Beagle account many
years ago. Former naval man
myself. What brings you here?
Myself, a Bilious fever with
blood per rectum, but I have
every faith in Gully. The man is
a miracle worker.

117 INT. TREATMENT ROOM. DAY

117

Darwin sits with a blanket draped over his shoulders, under the merciless glare of a heat lamp.

Sweat pours off him and forms puddles at his feet.

118 EXT. TERRACE. DAY.

118

A bright sunny day. Darwin, looking weak but purged, sits on the terrace, sipping a glass of foul-tasting mineral water and looking out over the stone houses, fields and valleys of Malvern.

Gully sits with him, interviewing him.

GULLY

What action do you most associate with the symptoms. Eating? Strong emotion? Strenuous Exercise?

DARWIN

Does the exercise of memory count as an action.

GULLY

Memory of what.

DARWIN

My eldest daughter. You remember her.

GULLY

Of course. Of course. You must accept there was nothing more we could do.

DARWIN

I know that. I know.

A long, awkward silence, neither of them wants to recapitulate the events of Annie's death.

GULLY

You say you were writing about her.

DARWIN

No. It is a scientific text. But I had reached a point, beyond which it was impossible to

progress. She had been my
companion throughout. Now it
seemed she was ahead of me in a
place I could not follow.

72

GULLY

Of course. Plainly she is in
heaven.

DARWIN

That is what my wife believes. It
is a great consolation to her

GULLY

But not to you.

DARWIN

Emma and I have become ...divided
on it.

GULLY

Does it affect your marital
relations.

DARWIN

We have none ...to speak of.

GULLY

(a beat)

Are you familiar with the
writings of DeQuincy."There is no
such thing known to the mind as
forgetting."

DARWIN

I don't know what it means.

GULLY

He suggests we have thoughts
which do not actually enter the
realm of consciousness. Nervous
fibres exist after all throughout
the whole body. Is it not
possible that certain primal
feelings manifest in some
physical way. Eczema. Boils. A
fever. Might some blocked passion
imitate a gall-stone? Or even
manufacture one.

DARWIN

Well, until someone devises a machine to read nervous impulses, or a telescope to look inside the body I suppose we can only guess at it.

GULLY

We can Mr Darwin. We can look inside you. If you find yourself open to it, there is a way of seeing.

73

119 EXT. STREETS OF MALVERN. NIGHT
119

Darwin wanders the cobbled streets of Malvern, pausing occasionally to consult a hand-written address.

It is starting to rain as, finally, he arrives at the address he is looking for. A substantial terraced house.

Darwin descends a stone staircase to the imposing front door, and rings the bell.

As he waits for an answer a woman appears, unseen in the rain streaked window above, observing him.

Darwin rings again. A moment later the woman answers the door.

DARWIN

Mrs St John?

MRS ST JOHN

Mr Darwin. Come in.

120 INT. MRS ST JOHN HOUSE. NIGHT
120

The room is large and hot, crowded with pot plants, and bric-a-brac. Various fringed lamp-shades, a dancing Shiva, a framed picture of Lourdes, and some illustrations from the Tarot. None of this inspires Darwin with confidence.

ST JOHN

Just leave your coat on the table. Sit down here. Show me your palm.

The husky voice and the plunging décollete troubles Darwin, who hesitates.

DARWIN

Sorry. I'm confused. What is it you do exactly.

MRS ST JOHN

I envision what's inside your belly, dear. That's what you wanted, isn't it.

DARWIN

Envision how? When Gully described you I fancied some scientific instrument....

MRS ST JOHN

Depends what you class an instrument. In more resistant cases I might use a pendulum...

74

He frowns. She smiles.

MRS ST JOHN

Its ten shillings for a reading by the way. In advance.

DARWIN

Well. I have a ten shilling note here in my wallet.

He doesn't take it out.

DARWIN

If you can tell me the numbers on it we can begin.

Mr St John' face hardens.

MRS ST JOHN

(coldly)

I'm a professional lady Mr Darwin. I don't do party tricks.

DARWIN

I am a professional man. And I asking for no more than I ask of all my colleagues - a

demonstration of competence.

MRS ST JOHN

It is you who are here to be tested, Sir, not me.

DARWIN

Then I am sorry to have wasted your time.

He puts his jacket back on and heads for the door.

121 INT. HALLWAY. NIGHT.

121

Mrs St John follows him. As he reaches for the doorhandle, and opens it, she says:

MRS ST JOHN

She's with you, you know that.

Darwin turns.

MRS ST JOHN

Your little girl. I saw her from the window standing at the top of the steps.

DARWIN

How dare you.

75

MRS ST JOHN

Pardon?

DARWIN

...prey on people's grief like this.

MRS ST JOHN

I have done no such thing.

DARWIN

(furious)

Do you take me for an idiot? Clearly Gully has appraised you of my history.

MRS ST JOHN

I beg to inform you he did no such thing!

DARWIN

It is chicanery of the very
lowest order and I despise it
utterly!

MRS ST JOHN

Get out.

122 EXT. THE HOUSE. DAY
122

Darwin steps outside and she slams the door on him. Darwin continues to rant at the closed door, standing in the pouring rain without his umbrella.

He gets to the top of the steps, and looks around, trying to get his bearings.

In a pool of lamp-light at the far end of the street a figure stands watching him.

Darwin squints at her through the rain, which is falling harder now.

The figure is Annie.

She looks at him crossly, then heads off up a cobbled side-street.

Darwin follows.

123 EXT. MALVERN. SIDE STREETS. VARIOUS. NIGHT
123

Darwin pursues his daughter up narrow cobbled lanes.

DARWIN

Annie. Annie!

76

The rain is getting heavier, turning the gutters into rivers.

Water overflows the drains and culverts and rushes over the cobbles, making them slick and treacherous.

Darwin hurries down darkened lanes and alleys, the sound of rushing water echoing all around, the little girl always

ahead of him.

A DRUNK MAN in oilskins comes barreling past him, head down, cursing the weather.

A child's ball goes floating downhill in the current.

Darwin loses Annie, then he sees her again, at the top of a steep flight of stone steps.

Darwin, drenched chases after her.

124 EXT. WORCESTER ROAD. NIGHT.

124

At the top of the steps he stops for breath and he looks around.

There is no sign of Annie but he knows this street - The Worcester Road - a row of Grey Georgian houses, their backs against the hill, their sloping front gardens looking out over the rooftops of Malvern.

Most of the street is in darkness but the house directly opposite has lights in the window.

He knows this house also.

He hesitates, then crosses the street towards it.

125 EXT. GUEST HOUSE. NIGHT

125

Soaked to the skin, he raps with the brass door-knocker, then waits for someone to answer.

Muffled voices. Then a man answers from within.

LANDLORD (O.S.)

Hello?

DARWIN

Is Mrs Carey still the landlady here.

LANDLORD

No.

The door opens on a chain.

DARWIN

My daughter Annie ...lodged here
some years ago. Can I come in?

The man closes the door to release the chain, then opens it
again to admit Darwin.

DARWIN

I know this is an intrusion. I
wonder - could I visit the room
she stayed in?

The landlord doesn't know what to make of this

LANDLORD

Wait here. I'll get the missus.

He leaves Darwin dripping in the hallway which he goes and
consults with his wife in the lighted parlour.

Darwin looks around. This place is all too familiar to him -
the bevelled gold-rimmed mirror, the carved mock-Tudor coat-
stand.

Muffled conversation off.

There are crutches and walking sticks among the umbrellas.
Lavender potpourri in a brass dish. A wheel-chair in one
corner, a picture of the pieta above the door.

Finally, the land-lady emerges from her parlour.

LANDLADY

Which room?

DARWIN

Fourteen. I would only be there
ten minutes. I am happy to pay.

She goes into an alcove and emerges with a key.

LANDLADY

Up one flight and along the
corridor to the right.

DARWIN

I remember.

LANDLADY

Try not to touch anything.

126 INT. GUESTHOUSE. THE PRESENT. NIGHT. 126

Darwin, climbs the stairs to the Landing.

78

127 INT. GUESTHOUSE. THE PAST DAY 127

The younger Darwin flees up the stairs.

128 INT. GUESTHOUSE. THE PRESENT. NIGHT. 128

The older Darwin, reaches the top of the stairs and walks along the corridor to the right.

129 INT. GUESTHOUSE. THE PAST DAY 129

The younger Darwin, races along the corridor.

130 INT. GUESTHOUSE. THE PRESENT NIGHT. 130

The older Darwin, hesitates, chest pounding, outside the door of number 14, then unlocks it as...

131 INT. GUESTHOUSE. THE PAST. DAY 131

The younger Darwin bursts into room 14 and takes in the scene.

The room is full if light. A maid is bundling soiled sheets. Brodie is there with a harrassed-looking Dr Gully.

They turn as he enters.

Annie lies on the bed between them, her breathing fast and shallow. She manages a weak smile.

DARWIN

Is she any better? Does she want
for anything?

Gully stands up from the bed. His expression tells us hope is fading. Annie's pale sunken cheeks and caked lips confirm it.

Darwin kneels by her bedside, clasps her little hand is his

own.

DARWIN

Darling Annie. I am here now.

Annie lets out a reedy whine of appreciation and strokes his lapel "making him beautiful"

Brodie cannot bear it and bursts into tears.

132 INT. ROOM 14. THE PAST NIGHT. 132

Annie sleeps.

79

Darwin sits up, writing to Emma, crying as he writes.

DARWIN (V.O.)

Dearest Emma. I think it best for you to know how every hour passes. It's a relief for me to tell you. Whilst writing to you I can cry tranquilly.

133 INT. ROOM 14. THE PAST DAY. 133

A local surgeon lays out various instruments, including a glass syringe with a long needle.

Annie struggles and whimpers. Brodie comforts her

DARWIN (V.O.)

Mr Coates the Surgeon came today to draw off Annie's water. This did not hurt her, but she struggled with surprising strength against being uncovered.

BRODIE

There there. It will all soon be over.

134 EXT. CHURCH AT MALVERN. ENTRANCE. DAY 134

Darwin enters through the heavy stone entrance.

135 INT. THE CHURCH AT MALVERN. DAY 135

The relatives of the sick, stand or sit among the pews,
arriving, praying, departing

Darwin kneels awkwardly in front of the altar, clasps his
hands together and prays:

DARWIN

Save her. I will believe
whatever. Forever. Please save
her

He looks up at the image of Christ on the cross, hoping
against all reason, for some sense of epiphany.

It's not working. He feels nothing embarrassment at the
cheapness of the gesture.

136 INT GUEST HOUSE. ROOM 14. THE PAST .NIGHT

136

Darwin sits alone with Annie who is babbling incoherently.
He can't make out anything she says

80

DARWIN (V.O.)

Our dear child has taken a turn
for the worse. She talked a great
deal but we could seldom make out
anything. Much of what she says
we cannot make out from the
roughness of her poor mouth.

137 INT. GUEST HOUSE. ROOM 14 NIGHT

137

Dr Gully leaves, the surgeon arrives. The maids squeeze
between the two medical men, bundling sheets

DARWIN (V.O.)

Today she vomited rather much
again. Dr Coates has been to draw
off more water.

Brodie and the maid roll Annie on her side and cut off the
tail of her shirt, then roll her on her back again, with a
pillow between her two bony knees.

DARWIN

Is that good, my lovely

ANNIE

(suddenly lucid)
Beautifully good. I am making
custards.

DARWIN (V.O.)

Gully thinks her in imminent
danger.

138 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DAY.

138

Heavily pregnant Emma sits in the drawing room, crying and
reading Darwin's latest letter.

DARWIN (V.O.)

We sponged her with water and
vinegar, made her sweet with
chloride of lime....I fear we
must prepare ourselves for the
worst

139 INT. ANNIE'S ROOM. GUEST HOUSE. DAY.

139

It is midnight Darwin, exhausted, keeps a lonely Vigil by
Annie's bedside. Each breath seems like it will be her
last.

Suddenly she speaks: faintly but audibly:

81

ANNIE

The rabbit.

DARWIN

What?

ANNIE

The rabbit taught him the polka.

DARWIN

I don't understand my love.

ANNIE

Tell me about Jenny.

Darwin bends low to hear her more clearly.

DARWIN

What about her.

ANNIE

When she died

DARWIN

I don't want to talk about death
my love.

ANNIE

But tell me. I like it.

DARWIN

Well. What the keeper told me
was. When she was very sick with
pneumonia, lying very still, he
tried to feed her but she shook
her head, looking at him as
though to say: "Its nice of you
but really you shouldn't bother".
And as he bent down to take the
spoon away she brought her arms
around his neck and kissed him.
And then she was dead.

Annie smiles, puts her hands around her fathers neck and
dies.

140 INT. TRAIN THE PAST DAY
140

Darwin sits, his face wet with tears, reading, through
blurred vision, a letter from Emma.

EMMA (V.O.)

I was in the garden looking at
our poor darling's little flower
bed when John Griffiths drove up
with your letter.

82

141 INT. DARWIN'S BEDROOM. NIGHT

141

Emma goes to bed, utterly drained.

EMMA (V.O.)

When I went to bed I felt as if
it had all happened long ago.
When the blow comes it wipes out
all that preceded it.

142 INT. DARWIN'S BEDROOM. DAY. 142

She opens the curtains on a bright day. The other children are playing in the garden

EMMA (V.O.)

My feeling of longing for our lost treasure makes me feel painfully indifferent to the other children, but I shall get right before long.

143 INT. TRAIN CARRIAGE. THE PRESENT. DAY 143

Darwin sits in the train, Heading home from malvern.

He is looking across the carriage at his younger self, re-reading the letter and weeping uncontrollably.

144 EXT DOWN HOUSE. LOUNGE. THE PRESENT. NIGHT 144

Torrential rain crashes down on the house, the garden, the ancient trees and the outbuildings, flooding the path and the lane beyond the gate.

Darwin pays the coachman and hurries inside

145 INT. DOWN HOUSE. LOUNGE ROOM. 145

Emma is playing a beautiful slow Nocturne.

The rain outside drown out all other side.

She doesn't notice the figure of Darwin until he appears, like a ghost, reflected in the polished wood of the piano.

She turns with a start and sees him, still in his dripping coat, hair plastered over his brow

DARWIN

Sorry. I startled you.

83

EMMA

Take your coat off by the fire there. What time is it?

Darwin stays where he is, dripping on the carpet

DARWIN

We need to talk. I need to talk
to you.

EMMA

Of course, but dry your hair. I
shall call for a towel.

As she moves to the bell-pull he grabs her wrist

DARWIN

I went back to Worcester Road. I
saw Annie.

EMMA

Charles. No.

DARWIN

Let me tell you.

EMMA

I don't want to hear it. This
must stop.

DARWIN

You don't understand.

EMMA

I do! Do you think me deaf and
blind. You have lived with her
and spoken with her every day
since she died.

Parslow comes in with firewood then sees Emma yelling at
darwin and hurriedly retreats, spilling logs in the
hallway.

EMMA

She is more real to you than I
am. She's dead Charles.

DARWIN

I know that.

EMMA

Then what is wrong with you that
even our poor daughter cannot be
left in her grave but you
would....

DARWIN

I know she is dead. I know it. It is you who will not accept the fact, preferring to think of her in heaven.

This again! The unspoken argument which has been brewing for a decade, never before expressed so bluntly. Emma heads for the door

EMMA

Get away from me!

She heads into the hallway, he follows her ranting

DARWIN

Snowy white wings and dancing with the angels. Is that your idea of honesty.

Servants scramble out of sight and out of earshot

EMMA

Why did you come back. I will not hear this!

Emma picks up her skirts and hurries up the stairs. Darwin pursues her.

On the landing, Betty and Horace, wide eyed and terrified are bundled into the nursery by Brodie as Charles thunders up the stair.

DARWIN

You have to Emma, everything these was between us is gone. The boat is wrecked and sunk now. We have to hold to something else.

EMMA

To what. Your ghosts? Your theories? What Charles.

CHARLES

To the truth of what we know it.

She slams the bedroom door on him and bolts it.

DARWIN

Open this door Emma. The truth,
how wonderful and extraordinary
our daughter was....

EMMA

(through the door)

I know that. I do not need you to
say it. Of course I know.

85

Charles throws his shoulder to the door and bursts through
it. Emma screams

CHARLES

But free of the fantasy, free of
the rest, the silly vain hope
that we will be reunited in
heaven and the nagging unspoken
belief that I killed her!

In the lower hallway all the servants hear this

In the nursery, Brodie, aghast, covers the childrens ears

In the bedroom, Emma has nowhere left to run

EMMA

I have never said that

CHARLES

Say it now. Say it. And all the
rest that follows. That I should
have kept Annie warm that day on
the beach. I should not have
taken her to Malvern. I should
have let you come.

Tears spring to her eyes and to his. The fury has gone from
both of them, leaving sadness and pity

EMMA

I should have insisted.

CHARLES

No. It was me. I took her from
you It was my fault.

EMMA

I could have followed. I was her
mother what was I thinking of.

CHARLES

We thought she would live. You were not to know.

He moves to her, she startles, then lets him enfold her in his damp coat

EMMA

I did. I did know. I knew when you left that I would never see her again. I hated you for taking her.

CHARLES

I hated myself. I knew that none of them could save her.

(MORE)

86

CHARLES (cont'd)

All I could do was watch hopelessly and weep for her - then flee the place in terror, not even waiting to see our poor dear daughter buried. She was our treasure and I failed her. We both did. We should never have married each other.

EMMA

What are you saying?

CHARLES

The unspeakable . I am saying that you and I, in making our perfect child, endowed her with the very weakness which killed her. Emma. That is what I couldn't write. That is what forestalled me all these years. It wasn't you I was angry with, it wasn't Innes and it wasn't God. I was angry with my theory. It was the truth I was angry with. It is the truth.

Weeping, she shakes her head in furious denial. He kisses her hair, her eyes, her tear-streaked cheeks...

146 INT/ EXT BEDROOM, THE PRESENT. NIGHT 146

Rain continues to batter the house outside

Inside Darwin and Emma make love, with a kind of wild desperation, their clothes strewn all over the floor, clinging to each other like castaways in a storm.

147 INT OFFICE. THE PRESENT. DAY 147

Darwin enters his office. The chaos that existed here previously has been tidied away into files and boxes.

Darwin opens the black box, takes out the files, places them on his desk, then sits down and begins to write

148 INT. STUDY. NIGHT. 148

Darwin sits at his desk. Writing. He is possessed of a new sense of calm and purpose, the pen gliding fluently across the page.

87

Night turns to day and then to night again. Darwin completes the Chapter headed "variation under domestication" and begins on a fresh sheet of paper.

149 EXT. THE GARDEN. DOWN HOUSE. THE PRESENT. DAY 149

Crocuses are pushing up through the flower beds. Tiny green buds have started to emerge from the dead black branches

150 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. DOWN HOUSE. THE PRESENT. DAY 150

Still Darwin writes

ANNIE

Tell me a story.

DARWIN

I'm busy Annie.

ANNIE

(petulantly)

I'll go away again, then you'll

be sorry.

DARWIN

All right, come here, come here.

She comes and sits on his lap.

DARWIN

Once there was a man
Who, while travelling in South
America, came upon a beautiful
and dangerous idea.

151 INT. SOUTH AMERICAN JUNGLES. DAY

151

Darwin is in the south American jungle, trying to coax down from the trees, some small squeaking creature - a tousled looking abandoned chick.

DARWIN

Here, here. Come on, come on then

The creature draws closer, eyes like gimlets in the dark foliage.

DARWIN

...I wont hurt you.

He reaches into the dark recesses of the forest. Darwin grabs it and stuffs it, squawking into his collecting bag.

88

152 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY NIGHT

152

Darwin comes in, empties the bag into a black box with perforations and closes the lid

DARWIN

He knew his wife wouldn't care for this creature so when he came home he locked it in a box, where it couldn't run around and do any damage.

153 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. DAY

153

Darwin works at his desk. There's a plaintive cooing sound

coming from the box next to his feet.

DARWIN

But every so often he'd open the lid and feed it, just because he couldn't bear to let it die.

Finally he opens the lid and offers the creature a biscuit.

It has grown a bit larger and made itself a nest. It takes the biscuit and peeps gratefully.

154 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DAY
154

Darwin goes to the box and opens it. There's nothing there but an empty nest and some broken eggshells.

DARWIN

One day he opened the box and discovered it wasn't in there at all. It had escaped with all its babies, who were nesting all over the house making a terrible mess.

155 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DAY. VARIOUS
155

The Darwin's, their children and their servants run around the house finding birds everywhere.

There is bird-shit on the curtains and the antimacassars, birds nesting in the sewing basket, the bread bin and the dress-up box.

Every time you open a cupboard, angry birds fly out and flap angrily around the room.

Mayhem. The house is in uproar.

89

DARWIN

But finally they caught them all, and bundled them in a blanket and he asked his wife to dispose of them as she saw fit.

156 INT. STUDY. CONTUNUOUS

156

Annie listens entranced. Darwin pauses

ANNIE

And what did she do?

DARWIN

I don't know but I fancy she took them out in the garden and set them free.

157 EXT. DOWN HOUSE. GARDEN DAY. 157

Emma and Brodie come out carrying a huge white linen bag between them.

They shake it out in the garden and birds come pouring out of it.

High shot, looking down on EMMA as she watches the birds wheeling round and round in the sky above.

158 INT. DARWIN'S STUDY. DAY 158

Darwin sits in his study window, watching a great flock of birds wheeling in the sky outside, the whole flock forming an ever-changing shape from the movement of its tiny component parts.

159 INT DARWIN'S STUDY. NIGHT 159

Darwin puts down his pen, waking, as if from a dream.

The manuscript is finished.

The music of Chopin filters up from downstairs.

160 INT. DRAWING ROOM. DAY 160

Emma is playing by candle-light. Darwin places the manuscript on top of the piano.

She stops abruptly. The last chord resonates in the musky air.

DARWIN

Done. I have finally got it out of the air and into these pages. Will you read it and decide what must be done with it. I confess I no longer know and I am very tired.

She takes his hand and squeezes it.

161 INT. DOWN HOUSE. BEDROOM. 161

Darwin undresses.

162 INT. DOWN HOUSE DINING ROOM 162

Emma sits at the table and begins to read.

163 INT. DOWN HOUSE. BATHROOM 163

Darwin gets out of the bath and towels himself dry.

164 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DINING ROOM 164

Emma lights a candle from the one before and continues to read.

165 INT. DOWN HOUSE. BEDROOM. NIGHT. 165

Charles lowers himself into the bed, sleep washes over him like a wave.

166 INT. DOWN HOUSE. DINING ROOM. NIGHT. 166

Still Emma reads.

DARWIN (V.O.)

Thus, from the war of nature, from famine and death, the most exalted objects we can conceive directly follow. There is a grandeur in this view of life ...in which endless forms most beautiful and wonderful have been and are being evolved.

Outside the sky is growing lighter.

167 INT. DOWN HOUSE. BEDROOM. DAY. 167

Charles wakes.

91

He opens the curtains on a clear autumn day. The house is unusually quiet.

168 INT. DOWN HOUSE. TOP OF THE STAIRS. DAY. 168

The grandfather clock on the landing strikes mid-day.

Darwin goes downstairs.

169 INT. DRAWING ROOM. DAY. 169

He enters the drawing room. There is no sign of Emma nor of his manuscript.

He goes to the window and sees her at the bottom of the garden standing over a bonfire, burning something.

170 EXT. GARDEN. DOWN HOUSE. DAY. 170

Darwin goes outside.

DARWIN

Emma?

She looks up from the fire. Darwin crosses the lawn to her. She's burning leaves and dead-heads from the flower garden.

DARWIN

Did you read it?

EMMA

Yes.

DARWIN

And....

EMMA

I wrapped it and put it on the table there.

There's a brown paper parcel on the garden table where they

like to sit under the big Cyprus tree.

Darwin picks it up, it is addressed to John Murray,
Publisher, stamped and sealed with sealing wax.

EMMA

You're right. True or not it must
all be said. Probably most of it
is true. God help us.

Darwin kisses her.

92

EMMA

Careful. I have soot all over my
hands.

171 **EXT. BOTTOM OF THE DRIVE.**

171

Darwin stands with the brown paper package, turning it over
in his hands.

DARWIN (V.O.)

Dear Hooker, I have today
despatched to John Murray the
completed manuscript. Who knows
if anyone will buy it and how
they will respond. No doubt many
will wish al diabolo altogether.
But least it is out in the world
now and no longer torturing me.

John Griffiths, the postman, comes up the hill from the
village.

Darwin gives him the manuscript. The Postman puts it in his
satchel and heads on up the lane.

Darwin turns back and walks up towards the house.

As he does so a little figure, Annie takes his hand, and
together they continue on home, Annie skipping happily by
her father's side.

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Darwin's "Origin of Species" was sold out on its day of
publication.

A classic to this day, it was reprinted six times before his death; and his burial, with full Christian honours, in Westminster Abbey.

THE END