

An Unsound Mind

Written by Rolf Söderlind

Based on a novella by Rolf Söderlind

Based on a true story

8 Lydwell Road,

Torquay, Devon

TQ1 1SN

07990 568 300
soderlind@btinternet.com

FADE IN:

EXT. TEXT RUNS OVER SCREEN SHOWING WAVES CRASHING ONTO A
ROCKY SHORE - DAY

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could
utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

Extract from In Memoriam, Alfred Lord Tennyson

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. WINDSOR COURT, A MANSION IN TORQUAY, DEVON, IN 1933 -
DAY

AMANDA ACKROYD, a 25-year-old brunette native to Devon,
stands in the entrance hall and beckons MAIRI CRAIG, 20, a
Scottish lass with reddish blonde hair who is a new employee
at Windsor Court, to get ready for a Sunday morning walk to
the sea front.

AMANDA
Hurry on, get your coat and hat. We
only have a couple of hours.

Mairi sprints to the entrance hall to fetch her brown coat
and matching hat.

MAIRI
I need to post this letter home.
Just to let pa know I have arrived.

She leaves an envelope on the window sill in the entrance
hall while putting on her coat. Amanda looks at the address
on the letter with a raised eyebrow, but says nothing.

MAIRI (glances at
Amanda's blue tweed)
I like your coat.

Amanda turns to Mairi with a smile so disarming it makes her smile, too.

AMANDA
I'll show you the sea. Cannot believe you haven't seen the sea yet.

MAIRI
Aye, but I saw it when MR CLIFFORD picked me up at the railway train station yesterday.

AMANDA
You only caught a glimpse of it from the motor car. Come on. I'll show the way.

EXT. WINDSOR COURT DRIVEWAY - DAY

Amanda leads the way in the morning sun past flower beds down the gravelled driveway of the two-storey grey stone house owned by Mr and Mrs CLIFFORD. Mr Clifford, a tall, dapper man in his late thirties, impeccably dressed, with dark hair and a pencil-thin moustache, steps out from the entrance.

MR CLIFFORD
Mrs Ackroyd, please make sure to be back in time for lunch and look after Mairi.

AMANDA (turns around with a smile)
Don't worry Mr Clifford. I shall bring Mairi back safe and sound.

MAIRI (glancing at Amanda)
So what's it like to work for these people?

AMANDA
He is a true gentleman, is Mr Clifford. But his wife is different. She wants to find faults.

AMANDA (stops and looks Mairi in the eye)
You must stand up to her or she will treat you like dirt.
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I stood up to her once and since then she treats me with respect. I have been a cook here for four years now. You want to stay? Put in the hours but above all stand your ground against that woman.

MAIRI

Aye. I do hope to stay here for a year or two. Pa expects it of me.

She turns around and looks back on Windsor Court.

MAIRI

I really like this house. Just look at that imposing entrance door with the brass doorbell in the middle, then the parquet floors, the high ceilings, twelve fire places, lead mullion windows, the gardens.

AMANDA

Yes, it's a fine house, well looked after.

MAIRI

Och, it is a world apart from my home in Scotland, a world apart.

AMANDA

So how was your journey? I mean, coming here all the way from Scotland. That must have been some journey.

MAIRI

It took most of the day. I soon finished the sandwiches and fruit that I had brought with me. I had to change trains in London and had troubles finding the right platform. Never seen so many people before.

AMANDA

Lordy. I've never been to London. No occasion to. Will probably never go there either. Never left Devon.

MAIRI

Have ye not? Anyway, by the time the train pulled into Torquay I worried that nobody would come and pick me up.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

But Mr Clifford was there waiting for me as promised with his motorcar.

AMANDA

I am glad he was there for you. By the way, he is a councillor, unfortunately a Tory, but also a member of a law firm. He is an important man here in Torquay, is Mr Clifford.

MAIRI

I find it hard to believe that I am here in Torquay, hundreds of miles away from home, far from our coal miners' village in Lanarkshire. Yet, here I am on a Sunday in April and the weather is much nicer here than in Scotland.

The two young women saunter down the road past a field where farm hands are toiling away. They encounter the occasional motor car and horse-drawn cart on their way to Anstey's Cove. Here a narrow foot path called the Bishop's Walk takes them up a steep hill with a vertiginous drop to the rocks on the sea below. From the top they have a fabulous view of the English Channel with the sky meeting the blue sea on the horizon.

AMANDA

Cross the channel and you'll come to France and if you turn to starboard you sail into the Atlantic Ocean and, beyond it, America!

MAIRI

Really? Must say I like the salty smell of the sea, it smells of adventure. It is as if I could see forever from here.

But Mairi suddenly finds herself staring down at the rocks, 150 feet below her, with the waves crashing over them in a white foam. Feeling dizzy, she grabs Amanda by the shoulder to steady herself.

AMANDA

Are you all right?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MAIRI

I felt unwell looking down the hill. What a scary, lonely place. Imagine dying down there. It makes me shiver. Let's move on.

AMANDA

It's steep. Wouldn't want to take a tumble down them cliffs.

Amanda, a natural leader full of life and vigour, again walks ahead and Mairi is happy to follow her, mindful not to look at the cliffs below again. The women walk down the coastal Ilsham Marine Drive past a few houses on the right-hand side and onto the Torquay seafront where Mairi is astonished at the number of people sitting on park benches enjoying the sun or walking on pavements along the sea among trees on this lazy Sunday morning. She walks up to a tree that is of a kind she has never seen before.

AMANDA

It's a palm tree. We have many of them here because of the warm climate.

Mairi touches the palm tree and sniffs at it.

MAIRI

It smells like any old tree, not much to write home about. But I must say I admire those two women over there by the lamp post. They look so elegant. Everyone here seems to be better dressed than me. I'm just a lass from Scotland, the daughter of a coal miner.

AMANDA

You could do with a better coat, but they are expensive. Never mind, now let's have an ice cream.

She buys vanilla ice cream cones for both of them from a street parlour.

MAIRI

Thanks, but are you sure I shouldn't pay for mine?

AMANDA

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Don't even think of it. As the most senior servant in the house I earn more than you do.

MAIRI

Is that why Mr Clifford referred to you by your surname? I mean, I heard him call you Mrs Ackroyd. He doesn't call me Miss Craig. I don't mind, but still.

AMANDA

Yes well, I am treated better because of my position in this house. I cook for them so they show respect.

MAIRI

Aye, but why Mrs Ackroyd? You cannae be married. You don't wear a wedding ring.

AMANDA

It's a courtesy title acknowledging my position in the household. You've got a lot to learn, but I will help you. You've met SARAH, who does all the sewing and looks after the children. Her surname is COLLINGWOOD, but she is always referred to by the Cliffords as Sarah.

They sit down on a bench next to a flower bed dotted with daffodils and crocuses.

AMANDA

We could go to the pictures one evening. There is also a library up the road in the town centre if you want to borrow books.

MAIRI

Och. I've never been to a cinema! It would be fun to go and see one of them American films I've read about in the paper. And I certainly like reading novels.

They rise and Amanda shows Mairi a post box. She takes out the envelope from her pocket and slips it into the post box with a satisfied look on her face. They then make their way to the harbour with all the wooden sail boats, including a single-mast 35-foot sloop.

AMANDA

That's Mr Clifford's boat by the way. See that teak deck? Isn't it beautiful?

MAIRI

I know nothing about boats, but it's big so it must be seaworthy. Do the Cliffords go out sailing a lot?

AMANDA

No, Mrs Clifford gets seasick. But he sets out on day trips on the bay with business friends, mostly on Saturdays.

Mairi notices that some boats are fishing vessels. The sharp stench from the lobster pots drying in the sun catches her by surprise and is almost overwhelming. Seagulls wheel across the sky, screaming as they look for food. She grimaces.

MAIRI

I could do without them seagulls.

Amanda spots the time on the harbour clock tower.

AMANDA

Oh, my goodness! It's noon. We must be back in half an hour. We'll have to hurry. Mrs Clifford is a right tartar if she catches you coming back late.

Now they start to walk up the hilly Babbacombe Road, leaving the harbour behind them and heading for Windsor Court. Amanda turns to Mairi.

AMANDA

That letter to your father?

MAIRI

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Yes? What about it?

AMANDA

I noticed you had addressed it care of the Post Office in your village. Why didn't you address it to your home?

MAIRI (bites her lip)

Och, My ma and I don't get along. If she had spotted my letter first, chances are she would have thrown it on the fire and my father would never have seen it. He is dear to me.

Amanda gives her a lingering look. Mairi stares at the road ahead. They continue to walk back to the house, now in an awkward silence.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Sarah, a stout, middle-aged lady with a kind but resigned face, stands by the entrance door at Windsor Court, hoping to see Amanda and the new girl emerge from down the road. MRS CLIFFORD, a dark-haired woman in her thirties who could look attractive were it not for that air of dissatisfaction in her face, appears next to Sarah with her little boys.

MRS CLIFFORD

Are they running late? They'd better not be.

SARAH

They should be here in the next five minutes, Madam. Mrs Ackroyd is never late.

MRS CLIFFORD (nods in approval)

James and John, we need to get you properly dressed.

She walks upstairs, followed by the boys, who are not yet of school age.

EXT. WINDSOR COURT DRIVEWAY - DAY

Amanda and Mairi appear down the road, quickening the pace as they enter the driveway.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Sarah returns to the kitchen with a sigh of relief. Amanda catches up with her there.

AMANDA

The Sunday roast seems to be about ready. Thanks for standing in for me, Sarah. Now, let me get on with the vegetables. Oh, and Mairi, here is your white apron and hat.

She presents Mairi with a lace-edged pinny to go over her black maid's uniform and a little starched piece of decorative headgear. Mairi goes to the hall and looks herself in a mirror. She smiles.

MAIRI

Oh, the hat is so bonnie.

AMANDA

Mairi. Lay the table now please and then sound the dinner gong.

MAIRI

Aye Amanda.

The new maid already knows her way around the kitchen, a long and narrow room at the back of the house, with the cooker at the near end to the left and cupboards, a work bench and the kitchen sink lining the walls, along with a walk-in larder and a table with chairs at the far end.

SARAH

Good luck Mairi. I'm off to the nursery to eat with the boys.

Sarah leaves the kitchen with food and drinks on a tray for her and the children upstairs.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

The dining room is round the corner from the kitchen. Mairi lays the table for Mr and Mrs Clifford at both ends. She takes a deep breath, anxious to please. She notices a brass bell on the table, the far side, where the lady of the house always sits. Having laid the table, she sounds the Victorian dinner gong on the floor by the wall. Mr Clifford enters the dining room and greets Mairi with a jovial smile.

MR CLIFFORD

Good afternoon Mairi. I hope you are settling in well. How do you find Torquay?

MAIRI (blushes, but finds her voice at last)

Oh, I like Torquay a lot thanks, Sir. Amanda, I mean Mrs Ackroyd, bought me an ice cream.

MR CLIFFORD

That was most kind of her. Mrs Ackroyd is obviously looking after you. I am pleased.

Mairi beams at his encouraging words, but her heart sinks at the sight of a stern-looking Mrs Clifford, who wears a black dress that matches her permed dark hair. The mistress, all pearls and pursed lips, gives the new house parlourmaid a curt nod and a not-too-subtle glance over. Mairi serves Mr Clifford first as instructed, then Mrs Clifford without setting a foot wrong. Relieved, she then goes back to the kitchen to await further orders.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Amanda is cleaning up in the kitchen, Mairi helps her and they sip tea. Suddenly a bell rings out.

AMANDA

That's Mrs Clifford calling you. Better go there now and clear the table for the dessert.

INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

MRS CLIFFORD
What kept you?

MAIRI
Sorry Madam, I didn't know what the bell meant at first, but Mrs Ackroyd explained it to me.

MRS CLIFFORD
Well, next time be quicker about it.

Her husband squirms, but says nothing. Mairi removes the plates, cutlery and glasses to the kitchen for washing up.

MR CLIFFORD
Come on Edith, give her a chance.

His wife glares at him. Mairi returns to the dining room to serve pudding and then sits down with Amanda to have a much-deserved Sunday roast lunch in the kitchen.

INT. UPSTAIRS AT WINDSOR COURT - NIGHT.

In the evening Mairi stands in front of the mirror in the bedroom she shares with Sarah in the western wing, next door to Amanda's bedroom. Mairi studies her thick reddish blonde hair whose locks seem to live a life of their own, her green eyes, high cheek bones and slim figure. She looks pleased in general but grimaces at the mole in her left eyebrow.

Sarah enters the bedroom.

SARAH
Do you like what you see in the mirror?

MAIRI
Not too bad, but I hate that mole. I've heard that a doctor could remove it, but I don't have the means to pay for such an operation.

SARAH
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

But the mole makes you more of a personality.

MAIRI

Really? I didn't think of it that way. One day I hope to find a handsome man who will want to marry me, have children, a home of my own, Sarah, maybe that man is here in Torquay. Who knows?

SARAH

Goodness, I once wanted to get married, but it never worked out. Now it is too late for me. Let's go to bed.

The two women share a double bed.

MAIRI

I've never shared a bed with someone else before, not even with my little brothers.

SARAH

You will find it a blessing in winter, when the coal fire in the room has died in the night and stormy weather from the Atlantic hits Torquay. That's when we can warm each other with our bodies.

They say good night and switch off the bedside lamps.

EXT. BISHOP'S WALK - NIGHT

Eerie darkness falls over Bishop's Walk and a strong wind from southwest sends enormous waves crashing into the cliffs below. Dark silhouettes of seagulls scale the sky like menacing shadows with piercing screams. Mairi stands on the foot path staring down the abyss, terrified beyond belief and wanting to scream, but paralysed by fear. Not a sound comes from her mouth. Suddenly her mother, MRS CRAIG, with that accusing look in her dark eyes, appears out of nowhere and pushes her daughter over the edge of the crumbling cliff face.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

SARAH
What's the matter with you? Stop
tossing around. I am trying to
sleep.

Mairi sits up with a start, sweat on her forehead.

MAIRI
I had a nightmare. Thank God it's
over.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

It is in the morning before breakfast and Mairi is coming down the stairway at the rear of the house reserved for servants. She wears a simple apron for house-cleaning over her black skirt and blouse. She walks through the rear hall past the kitchen, where Amanda is already at work preparing breakfast, and is greeted in the front hall by Mrs Clifford, who wears a grey skirt with a black blouse and her trademark pearl necklace.

MRS CLIFFORD
Good morning Mairi. Did you sleep
well?

MAIRI
Good morning Madam, yes, sort of.

MRS CLIFFORD
Well, you better pay attention
because I shall now show you your
duties in the house. It's not just
about serving meals.

MAIRI
Of course Madam. I want to learn
everything about my duties. But, I
was wondering, who am I replacing
in this household please? What
happened to the girl who was here
before me?

Mrs Clifford's back appears to stiffen, but she does not lose her composure.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MRS CLIFFORD

No problem at all. I sacked her. I don't suffer fools gladly. Her name is not important, but she came from Wales. Let's hope Scotland will do better for England, shall we?

MAIRI

Yes Madam.

MRS CLIFFORD

You will have responsibility for all the housework and helping Mrs Ackroyd in the kitchen. Of course, whenever there is extra work, such as preparing fruit for Christmas, jam-making or fruit bottling, I help with it.

Mrs Clifford gives Mairi a searching look, perhaps expecting a grateful smile from Mairi, but sees none.

MAIRI

One reason why I applied for the job, which I found in a newspaper advertisement, was good outings. Madam, could you please explain what the perks are?

MRS CLIFFORD

Outings? Oh yes, that's what it's about for servants these days. Outings. Mrs Ackroyd and you take turns in being off in the afternoon and the evening. On Sundays you can both go out at the same time as you did yesterday as long as you've made arrangements with Sarah.

MAIRI

Aye, the bairns. How old are the wee ones?

MRS CLIFFORD

Thanks, glad you should mention them. Three and five years old. Well behaved children, my dear.

They walk upstairs, using the main stairway in the front hall. Mrs Clifford shows Mairi the children's bedroom, the nursery, which is down the corridor from the bedroom occupied by her and Sarah. Beyond that bedroom is the master bedroom, which is where the owners of the house sleep next to the family bathroom. A door shuts the master bedroom and the main bathroom off from the rest of the corridor, indeed the house.

MRS CLIFFORD

Your duties include changing bed sheets in our bedrooms whenever necessary, and you also need to vacuum-clean the floors. Mairi, is that understood?

MAIRI

Of course Madam. I must say I've never seen a vacuum cleaner before. Where I come from we simply strew old tea-leaves on the floor.

MRS CLIFFORD

Tea-leaves?

MAIRI

Aye Madam, Tea-leaves, strained but not dry. They collect the dust and we use a broom to sweep them up. Works well.

MRS CLIFFORD

It must be hard for someone from Scotland to face modern life in England. You've got a lot to learn, Mairi, but handling a vacuum cleaner should be easy enough even for a country girl like you.

Mairi is quiet, but the look on her face shows she has clearly noticed the insult.

MRS CLIFFORD

Any questions so far? Am I talking too fast?

MAIRI

Not at all, Madam.

MRS CLIFFORD

Now let's go downstairs again and I will show you the rest of the house.

Mrs Clifford takes Mairi to the living room, which stands out with its dark blue curtains, stately furniture and crystal chandelier. They now enter the much smaller eastern wing, where on the ground floor to the right is Mr Clifford's study and, beyond it, the morning room.

MRS CLIFFORD

This is where you will serve breakfast, in just a few minutes actually if you are ready for it.

MAIRI

Aye Madam, but how come it's called the morning room?

MRS CLIFFORD

You don't know much now do you? This room is the sun pocket of the house. This is the eastern wing remember? This is where the sun rises, at least here in England.

Mairi is about to say something, visibly feeling the sting of the comment, but keeps her mouth shut. Mrs Clifford takes her upstairs where there are two bedrooms and a bathroom for whenever guests visit and stay the night.

MRS CLIFFORD

There is obviously no need for you to clean these two rooms every day. But they must be spotless whenever guests arrive. Do you understand? Are you sure I am not speaking too fast?

MAIRI (through clinched teeth)
(Not at all, Madam.)

MRS CLIFFORD

Oh, another thing about outings. Once every two weeks in the evening each girl is allowed to invite her young man for tea if she has one.

MAIRI

Madam, that would be nice.

MRS CLIFFORD

But there are a few rules that must be kept.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I must be asked at least two days before and the menfolk must be gone by 10 o'clock.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mrs Clifford sits down in an armchair in the living room and asks Mairi to switch on the wireless so she can listen to the news.

MRS CLIFFORD

I suppose you've never seen one of these before. Turn the left-hand knob clockwise.

MAIRI

My father bought one of these years ago. He does enjoy listening to the news on the BBC in the evening.

Mrs Clifford appears not to hear that last comment.

MRS CLIFFORD

Now run along and help Mrs Ackroyd prepare breakfast.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Mairi goes straight to her room rather than the kitchen. She bursts into hot, angry tears and having nobody to vent her frustration on but herself, she pulls at her hair until it hurts. Mairi hears a knock on the door.

AMANDA (enters the room)
Are you all right?

MAIRI

I want to go home. I cannae stay here. That woman's horrid. Amanda sits down with her friend, taking her hands in hers.

AMANDA

Problems with the mistress? I told you to stand up to her.

MAIRI

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

She gave me some useful information, but I was unprepared for her humiliating comments. She kept belittling me, trying to make out that I am a complete dimwit. It's so unfair.

AMANDA

Please calm down and help me with the breakfast. The mistress wants you to fail. Don't give her the satisfaction.

MAIRI

I won't fail. I will not fail my father. My position is a dependent one, and Mrs Clifford is clearly not going to allow me to forget it. But I will speak my mind.

INT. MORNING ROOM - DAY

Mairi serves breakfast for the Cliffords and their sons for the first time, not without trepidation under the critical eyes of Mrs Clifford, but Mr Clifford gives her a reassuring smile and it all goes well.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mairi joins Amanda and Sarah in the kitchen, sits down by the kitchen table and helps herself to tea and a roll.

MAIRI

So, how long have you worked here then, Sarah?

SARAH

Oh, just over two years, for my sins. But I like it here. You just have to make sure to please Mrs Clifford.

MAIRI

Aye, so I've gathered. Must be a wee bit careful around her. She seems to be difficult to please.

They sip tea in silence for a moment. An old clock on a wall is heard ticking.

MAIRI

By the way, Mrs Clifford has told me that the maid before me was from Wales, but she wouldn't say anything else. You two must have worked with her. Can you tell me about her?

Amanda gives her a quick look and shuts the kitchen door.

AMANDA

This is a banned subject. We don't discuss it. We don't discuss the inner goings-on of the family.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

It is late in the evening and the Cliffords are having drinks on a couch in front of the fireplace in the living room.

MR CLIFFORD

Finally, the house has gone to bed. So what do you make of her?

MRS CLIFFORD (smirks and has a sip of her sherry)
Well, she could have done a lot worse.

Putting down her glass on the coffee table and leaning forward, she turns her gaze onto her husband.

MRS CLIFFORD

I have seen how you look at her. You don't fool me, Raymond.

Mr Clifford put down his whisky tumbler too.

MR CLIFFORD

I beg your pardon. What are you insinuating, that I desire Mairi? She is only twenty, much too young for me.

His wife sits up straight, pursing her lips and fixing him with a look of stern reproach.

MRS CLIFFORD
That didn't stop you from desiring
Abigail, who was just twenty-two.
Don't pretend that you are
innocent.

She looks away in disgust.

MRS CLIFFORD
Well, things were different in my
family. My father kept a distance
from the servants at home, and
rightly so. They are not our
equals. I will not have you demean
yourself and me again. It will not
do and I won't stand for it.

Mr Clifford rises and starts to pace back and forth in front of the fireplace, where the shadows of the flames play an enigmatic game on the walls and ceiling. Outside an easterly wind is growing stronger, sending tree crowns swaying in the dark.

MR CLIFFORD
All right Edith. We gave Abigail
her notice. It's in the past for
crying out loud!

Mrs Clifford, having got the reaction she wanted, calmly settles back into her chair.

MRS CLIFFORD
No reason to get upset. I am only
making observations and sharing
them with you. I've seen Mairi
blush when she looks at you.
Raymond, I want you to stay clear
of that girl. No small talk. Don't
give her ideas above her station. I
shall say no more.

INT. MR CLIFFORD'S STUDY - DAY

Mairi is vacuum-cleaning Mr Clifford's study on the following morning after serving breakfast. She stops to admire the well-stocked book shelves. Her eyes search the spines of the books for anything she might recognise. She runs her fingers across the spine of an Agatha Christie book. She is brought back to her duties by Mrs Clifford, who has been watching her from the doorway for some time.

MRS CLIFFORD

What do you think you are doing?
You are supposed to work, not stare
at books. Leave my husband's study
now!

The new parlourmaid from Scotland steels herself and walks up to Mrs Clifford, who involuntarily steps back. They are about the same height.

MAIRI

Madam, I come from a simple
background, but I have been brought
up to say please and thank you, and
to believe that ladies have a
responsibility to behave as good
employers, providing an example to
their servants. I shall speak as I
am spoken to, please remember that.

Mrs Clifford is clearly taken aback; she pales, glances around the room as though seeking help, then abruptly turns and leaves the study.

EXT. WINDSOR COURT GARDEN - DAY

Amanda and Mairi sit on their favourite bench in the back garden in late April, drinking tea after clearing away everything after lunch.

AMANDA

So, you've been with us for a week
now and you've had a run-in with
Mrs Clifford. How do you feel?

MAIRI

I thought she was going to sack me
on the spot when I talked back the
other day. I'm surprised I'm still
here.

AMANDA

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

You seem to be getting along better with her now. Good on you.

MAIRI

Thanks, but I still worry she might seek revenge one day. By the way, I do like your cooking.

AMANDA

Well, I'm a cook, it's my job.

MAIRI

But I really meant what I said, your Yorkshire pudding is the best I have tasted. You're a much better cook than my ma.

AMANDA

Why thank you, Mairi. Speaking of your mother, why did you decide to leave home and come all the way here to work?"

MAIRI

Well, I don't think I will ever like working for Mrs Clifford, but I moved here because I wanted to get around and learn new things. I used to work in the post office at home, but pa suggested I go for this job, which I had seen in an advertisement in the paper.

Amanda looks her deep in the eye.

AMANDA

Didn't you also want to get away from your mother? I do remember what you said about the address on your letter home.

Mairi turns away from Amanda, and will say no more.

INT. HOME IN SCOTLAND - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mairi enters her family home, a terraced house in a village in Lanarkshire near the railway station.

MAIRI

Anybody home? The post office closed early today. What's for dinner? Great if we could have stovies.

But the moment she comes inside her mother, MRS CRAIG, steps forward and slaps her in the face.

MRS CRAIG
You've stolen money from my purse,
you filthy little thief!

Mairi, looking stunned because of the blow, raises her arms in self-defence.

MAIRI
I haven't stolen anything, ma.
Maybe you forgot to count how much
money you had!

Mrs Craig, a big woman with a wild tangle of wiry curls, slaps her again and starts to pull her hair. Mairi screams in pain and kicks her mother in the knee, causing the woman to moan in agony. The father, MR CRAIG, alerted by the altercation from the living room, comes rushing and separates them.

MR CRAIG
Not again, women! Stop this
nonsense. I am sure the missing
money is somewhere in the house.

EXT. PORCH OF TERRACED HOME - NIGHT

After dinner, Mairi sits with her father in the porch outside and they speak quietly.

MAIRI
Pa, I didn't steal anything.

MR CRAIG
Of course you didn't. But your ma
holds a grudge against you. We both
know that.

MAIRI
But why? She treats my little
brothers like princes, but she
can't stand me. I cannae understand
her problem with me.

Mairi's father looks at his hands, so full of callouses, before speaking again.

MR CRAIG (MORE)

(CONT'D)

I don't want to pass judgment on you and your ma. I do love both of you, but I also know you're both stubborn as mules.

He turns his lined face towards her.

MR CRAIG

Now, I know you like working at the post office, but maybe you should consider leaving Scotland, move to England somewhere, work as a maid in a big house. Give yourself a break, learn new things.

Mairi brightens up at the thought of leaving home.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

At the post office the following morning, Mairi skims through the national papers. The POSTMASTER takes an interest.

POSTMASTER

I say, you are looking at job advertisements. You don't want to work at the post office anymore?

MAIRI

I am sorry, Sir, but pa says I should learn new things, move to England.

POSTMASTER

Well, I won't stand in your way, Mairi. I shall give you a good reference if you find a job you want.

MAIRI

Thanks Sir. I think I would like to work as a housemaid, not on the lowest rung of the ladder such as a scullerymaid. But house parlourmaid seems just right.

POSTMASTER

The pay won't be great, maybe around 10 to 15 shillings a week, but you'd be getting free food and lodging. Also look for good outings, things like time off every day.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MAIRI

Good outings? Here is one. House
parlourmaid sought at Windsor Court
in a place called Torquay in Devon.
Never heard of it, but I shall
apply for the job.

EXT. AT TRAIN STATION NEAR MAIRI'S HOME - DAY

Mairi's father embraces his daughter at the train station.

MR CRAIG

I hope you've packed everything
now. You got the sandwiches, the
fruit for the long journey?

MAIRI

Yes pa. All is there in my bag. Oh,
I hear the train coming. Och, this
is all so exciting!

MRS CRAIG comes running to the platform and hugs her
daughter.

MRS CRAIG

You'll be back, Mairi, sooner than
you think. The English won't have
you down there. You don't have
manners. That's just the way it is.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. WINDSOR COURT GARDEN - DAY

AMANDA

Mairi? I am talking to you.

MAIRI

Oh, sorry. My mind was elsewhere.

AMANDA

I could tell. We need to go inside
now and start preparing afternoon
tea.

Mairi fetches cups and plates from a cupboard in the kitchen
while Amanda heats water on the cooker and prepares scones,
clotted cream and jam.

INT. TRAIN STATION IN TORQUAY - DAY - FLASHBACK

A train comes into the station in Torquay where Mr Clifford is standing, looking intently at travellers pouring out of the carriages as if he is searching for someone. A pretty young woman wearing a brown coat and matching hat comes off the train clutching a bag and looks around in bewilderment. She stands out from the crowd because of her reddish blonde hair.

MR CLIFFORD (walks up to
her)
Mairi Craig?

She gives the dapper gentleman a shy look.

MAIRI
Yes Sir, that's me. You must be Mr
Clifford.

MR CLIFFORD
Indeed I am. I say, you are a
pretty girl, aren't you Mairi?

Mairi blushes. She follows him from the platform to the motor car park, where he opens the passenger door to his blue vehicle for her. They are off to Windsor Court.

MR CLIFFORD
Mairi, must say I find your accent
beguiling and you've got lovely
hair. Nice to meet you at last. I
hope you will like it here in
Torquay, working in my house.

MAIRI
Thanks Sir. I like your motor car.

Mr CLIFFORD
It's a Vauxhall, latest model.

Mr Clifford drives along the sea front and Mairi enjoys the scenery, the boats in the harbour and the houses in the hills.

MR CLIFFORD
Did you have a good journey?

MAIRI
Aye Sir. So much to see in the
countryside from the railway train.
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I brought some food with me and a book to read and I dozed off for a while.

She looks out again, observing traffic.

MAIRI
I've never seen so many motor cars.

MR CLIFFORD
This is nothing compared to London.

MAIRI
Och, you've been to London, Sir? I only stopped at a train station there, didn't see the place.

MR CLIFFORD
Once, on business. Been to Trafalgar Square and so on. Big Ben has a mighty sound.

They fall silent, but she glances at him a few times as he drives up Babbacombe Road towards the house and he recognises her attention with a smile.

MR CLIFFORD
Are you hungry, Mairi?

MAIRI
Aye Sir. Am I too late for supper?

MR CLIFFORD
Oh no, still plenty of time, but I'm sure Mrs Ackroyd, the cook, can fix you a sandwich and a cup of tea in the meantime.

END OF FLASHBACK

INT. MR CLIFFORD'S STUDY - NIGHT

Mrs Clifford enters Mr Clifford's study where he sits at his desk and writes a letter.

MR CLIFFORD
Is there a problem, Edith?

MRS CLIFFORD
(gives him a meaningful stare.)
The problem is Mairi.
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MR CLIFFORD
What has she done now?

Mrs Clifford points at the book shelves.

MRS CLIFFORD
I caught her trying to steal a book
in this room the other day. She was
pulling out a book from your
shelves. I swear. I saw it.

Mr Clifford rises and walks up to the shelves.

MR CLIFFORD
Well, the books are all there,
nothing is missing.

MRS CLIFFORD
That's because I caught her red-
handed! She might steal money next.
Who knows? I can't believe you
hired her. Sack her! Scots always
mean trouble. Hadrian's Wall was
built for a reason, you know.

They hear steps in the hall outside the study and keep quiet
until they fade away.

MR CLIFFORD
Come on Edith. Maybe she was just
curious. You keep looking for
faults with Mairi, but there is no
cause for getting rid of her. As
you know it's hard to find good
servants these days.

MRS CLIFFORD
That is precisely my point. Nothing
will ever be the same after the
war. More people can read and
write. They have access to the
popular press, and now to the
wireless and cinema. They get
ideas.

Mrs Clifford sits down in a chair next to Mr Clifford at his
desk and takes a deep breath before she continues.

MRS CLIFFORD
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

So yes, it's difficult to find good servants and you had to get a pretty girl from Scotland with ideas, you fool.

MR CLIFFORD

But Mairi had reasonable expectations in her application. I have no problems with her.

MRS CLIFFORD

Well, as her mistress it's my job to keep an eye on her. And you stay away from small talk with that girl. I already warned you, Raymond. Don't disappoint me.

He reaches out to hug her. She reluctantly gives in to his embrace.

MR CLIFFORD

I comprehend perfectly and I won't disappoint you, Edith.

INT. MRS CLIFFORD'S SISTER IN TOTNES - DAY

Mrs Clifford (Edith) is visiting her sister Violet in Totnes and they sit down for tea in the living room. A housemaid serves the tea and biscuits and then withdraws.

VIOLET

You look troubled, Edith. Why?

EDITH

It's Mairi, that new maid from Scotland. She talked back at me the other day when I found her rummaging through Raymond's belongings in his study looking for things to steal.

VIOLET

Dear me. That doesn't sound right.

EDITH

It is unforgivable of a domestic servant to berate her mistress. Mairi clearly has ideas above her station.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

VIOLET
But have you told Raymond?

EDITH
About the argument? No way. It would be such an embarrassment to tell him.

VIOLET
But didn't you have a problem once with that cook in your house?

EDITH
You mean Mrs Ackroyd? We had an argument but we resolved it. We have mutual respect, Mrs Ackroyd and I. But this rebellious Scottish girl is way beyond showing respect.

She has a sip of tea.

EDITH
Anyway, Raymond wouldn't listen to me when I said that Mairi was trying to steal a book from his study. He seems to be besotted by her, just like he adored Abigail.

VIOLET
God forbid. We can't have a repeat of that!

EDITH
Sometimes I feel I have married beneath myself. Yes, Raymond is a skilled solicitor and a shrewd politician, but he is nouveau riche unlike our family.

VIOLET
Oh dear, have another biscuit.

EDITH
I hate the fact that he pulls the strings, being the bread winner and in charge of the household economy. I only wish that he had been more like our father. He knew how to treat servants. He knew they are beneath us.

VIOLET
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Ah yes, papa, bless his memory, would never have put up with this folly.

EDITH

You know, Violet? I have seen those wandering eyes of his. Just can't stop himself, behaving like a cad. I shall have to catch that vile servant girl out somehow. Mairi indeed has to go.

Violet nods.

EDITH

And, if I have to twist the knife, I can always remind him of Abigail. I know it causes him pain. I'll never forget that evening when I had gone to the scullery to look for something and found them together in a deep embrace.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Mairi is about to walk to the town centre and visit the library and informs Amanda in the kitchen about her plan.

MAIRI

I'll be gone for two hours at the most. Please make sure you listen for the door bell and the telephone while I am away.

AMANDA

No problem. By the way, why walk when you can borrow my bicycle? It will be much quicker.

MAIRI

Och, thanks so much, Amanda. Where is your bicycle?

AMANDA

Leaning against the wall by the kitchen door.

Mairi finds the bicycle and is off.

INT. TORQUAY TOWN LIBRARY - DAY

Mairi enters the library, is struck by the silence and marvels at all the books on display in rows of shelves. She approaches a desk where TRISTAN WILLIAMS, a handsome young man in a blue shirt, grey tie and black trousers, sits and flicks through a card index.

MAIRI

Excuse me. My name is Mairi Craig.
I would like to borrow a book, but
how do I go about doing it, please.

The young man looks up and she can read in his eyes that he warms to her at once.

TRISTAN

Hello, I'm Tristan Williams, the
librarian. Let me take you through
the procedure. Write down your
details on this form, please. It
will make you a member so you can
borrow books.

Mairi fills out the form and returns it to Tristan, who issues her with a library card.

TRISTAN

So, what do you fancy, Miss Craig?

MAIRI

Difficult question. Maybe I should
start with Agatha Christie since
she was born here.

TRISTAN

Good choice, how about "The
Mysterious Affair at Styles"? It is
her first book. The main character
is Monsieur Poirot, a Belgian
detective who solves murder
mysteries.

Mairi eyes the book cover and touches it.

MAIRI

I'll start with this book, thanks.

She is about to leave, heading towards the door, but turns around to say goodbye.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MAIRI

It was a pleasure to meet you, Mr Williams.

He winks at her.

TRISTAN

The pleasure is all mine. But I have never seen you before. You must be new here. I have never heard anyone with your accent before.

MAIRI

I am from Scotland and, yes, I am new here. I work as a house parlourmaid at Windsor Court up the road.

TRISTAN

Gosh, that big stone house? Nice place. Hope to see you again soon, Miss Craig.

Mairi cycles uphill with a big smile on her face and the book in the bicycle basket.

EXT. AMANDA AND MAIRI IN THE GARDEN - DAY

Amanda and Mairi again sit on the bench in the garden during a break, reading books and drinking lemonade they've brought with them. They occasionally glance at the two gardeners, STEVE and JIM, who are hard at work.

MAIRI

Where do Steve and Jim live?

AMANDA

Oh, they live nearby and cycle to work whenever the garden needs tending.

MAIRI

Amanda, is this the life you want for yourself? Always working for the Cliffords, like Sarah seems prepared to do?

AMANDA

Oh no! I want to get married, have children. I do have a boyfriend.
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I might invite him for tea one evening so you get to see him.

MAIRI

Aye, what's his name? Is he from here?

AMANDA

His name is Steve, like one of them gardeners and blond as well. He's from Paignton like me. He works as a cook in a hotel there, so we're both into food.

MAIRI

I see. By the way, thanks for lending me the bicycle. Met the librarian, a handsome man in his mid-20s. Tristan is his name, Tristan Williams. He's got thick dark hair. Want to run my fingers through his hair.

AMANDA

Really? That's nice to hear. Will you meet him again?

MAIRI

When I return the book obviously. I shall read it as quickly as possible.

AMANDA (giggles)

I bet you will. Speaking of men, haven't you noticed that Mr Clifford has got his eyes on you?

MAIRI (blushes)

Maybe.

AMANDA

He likes young women, but be careful. Don't step on Mrs Clifford's toes.

MAIRI

Aye. But does it happen that men who own a house marry a servant girl?

AMANDA

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Oh yes! Let me tell you a story, a legendary one. There once was a land owner in Sussex whose name was Sir Harry. He used to be a famous rake, a friend of the Prince Regent and a lover of Lady Emma Hamilton.

MAIRI

When was this then?

AMANDA

Oh, about a hundred years ago. The thing is that Sir Harry, in his later years, overheard a girl singing on his estate at Uppark. His housekeeper, when asked about the singer, told him it was one of the dairy maid's helpers. And when the old dairy maid retired she was replaced by Mary Ann Bullock, the girl he had heard singing.

Mairi puts down her book, eager to hear the full story.

AMANDA

Sir Harry asked the girl to marry him, although she was fifty years younger. It must have shocked her to get such a proposition, but he got her interested. He said: "Don't answer me now, but if you will have me, cut a slice out of the leg of mutton that is coming up for my dinner tonight."

MAIRI

And then what?

AMANDA

Well, the mutton arrived with a slice cut out, much to the irritation of the cook, but to the delight of Sir Harry. Mary Ann was sent off to Paris where she learnt to read and write. They married in 1825. Sir Harry was said to have told his gamekeeper: "I've made a fool of myself."

MAIRI (smiles)

Aye, like my father says.

There is no fool like an old fool. But was it a happy marriage?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

AMANDA

I've heard it was. Mary Ann cared for him until his death many years and he left her all his possessions. Fancy!

MAIRI

Och. Like a fairy tale.

AMANDA

Another story. A landowner in Nottinghamshire fell in love with a housemaid, a young woman nicknamed Polly if I remember. People who came for a visit didn't know her background. They saw her as the lady of the manor. She gave her husband seven sons, but I'm afraid six of them died in the Great War.

MAIRI

Six of them died?

Mairi falls silent and reads her book for a while, but can't leave the subject of wealthy men proposing to young women.

MAIRI

Hang on a minute! Let me guess. Mr Clifford had an affair with that Welsh girl, right?

AMANDA

You mean Abigail?

MAIRI

Oh, was that her name?

AMANDA

Mairi, you are being naughty. You made me say it. You must keep this secret to yourself.

MAIRI (a cheeky smile)
Call me Madame Poirot.

AMANDA

Madame what?

MAIRI (grins in triumph)
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I've borrowed this book by the crime writer Agatha Christie at the library. Surely you must know of her. She writes about a detective called Monsieur Poirot. Now I feel like a detective too.

Amanda rises from the bench and stands over Mairi, wagging a finger at her.

AMANDA

I will tell you what happened, but you must never spread a word about it or we can kiss goodbye to our work in this house. Promise me that, Mairi!

MAIRI

Aye Amanda. Please tell me.

AMANDA

All right. Here's what happened. Mrs Clifford caught them in a romantic situation somewhere in the house. Abigail was sacked but given compensation, really a bribe of £20 to shut up. She told me just before she left. Fancy £20!

MAIRI

I could buy many coats for £20.

AMANDA

Sure you could. By the way, Abigail looks a bit like you, which could mean them alarm bells are ringing in the head of Mrs Clifford again. Not another pretty house parlourmaid falling for her husband. Not your fault.

Mairi, feeling a blush of pride at this compliment on her looks, sweeps back a lock with her hand. Amanda sits down again and, after due reflection, continues.

AMANDA

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

The only problem was Abigail received no reference from the Cliffords, which means she will have difficulties finding another job, having worked here for a full year with no record to show for it. She certainly needed the money, but she won't last long without an income. I understand she went back to live with her parents in Wales.

MAIRI

I hear you. Must keep a distance from Mr Clifford so his wife doesn't start thinking that we're having an affair. Being fired without a reference would be the worst thing that could happen to me. My father would be so disappointed.

Amanda returns to reading her book, but Mairi sits in deep thought for a long while before speaking.

MAIRI

It must have been dreadful to live here when Mr Clifford was found out. I mean, you all lived in this same house and there's nowhere to hide.

AMANDA

Gosh, there was tension in the house because Mrs Clifford suspected that Mr Clifford was having an affair with Abigail, and then came the rows that followed the moment she had caught them together.

MAIRI

But when did all this happen? It can't have been long ago.

Amanda counts the days on her fingers.

AMANDA

Ah yes, Abigail left four weeks ago.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Mrs Clifford continued to make life a misery for her husband, but she started to calm down soon after Abigail had been given her marching orders.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

One Sunday morning after breakfast Mairi is wandering from room to room in the house, which is empty except for herself and Amanda. Silence prevails save for the ticking of a clock in the big hall as Mairi walks from the kitchen and up the main stairway past old sepia brown family photos on the left wall. She stops at what must, by the look of them, be Mrs Clifford's late parents around the turn of the century. They are dressed up and stare solemnly at the camera. She continues up the stairs to the landing where she strides down to the master bedroom. She makes the bed for the Cliffords. A picture from their wedding some years ago adorns a chest of drawers. The mistress looks happy. Mairi pulls out a piece of cloth from her apron to wipe the dust from the mantel piece over the fire place. She pops downstairs again, to the kitchen where Amanda is cleaning up after breakfast.

MAIRI

I still worry sick about getting sacked by Mrs Clifford. I think she is biding her time, still holding a grudge against me for talking back at her. I can see the evil eye.

AMANDA

That may be. But she would need Mr Clifford's consent, and I just don't see it coming if you ask me.

Amanda wipes the cooker with a cloth.

AMANDA

Anyway, we'd better get prepared for church. The Clifford's will be back soon with Sarah and the boys. It's our turn to be virtuous Christians as you know.

MAIRI

Don't you believe in God, Amanda?

AMANDA (smirks)

I only believe in what I can see.

EXT. WALK TO CHURCH - DAY

It is a ten-minute walk down Warberry Hill to St Matthias Church, a grey 19th century stone building in Wellwood.

AMANDA

Do you go to church in Lanarkshire?

MAIRI

Of course we do, but I must say this church is much bigger than the one at home.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mairi cranes her neck to marvel at the off-white arches as well as the dark-wood panelling in the ceiling. They sit down near the front on the left-hand side and Mairi notices that the VICAR, a short man in his sixties with a shock of white hair, has seen her. He gives her a gentle nod, which she shyly returns. The organ, situated to the right of the altar, comes to life with a rousing chord and everyone rise to sing a hymn - O worship the King all glorious above.

MAIRI (whispers to Amanda)

Goodness, the sound of that organ!

Mairi admires the limestone pillars and the colourful stained glass windows on the left-hand side of the altar with their depictions of Moses with the Ten Commandments and the coat of arms of Queen Victoria.

MAIRI (whispers a prayer)

Oh Lord in heaven, please forgive me for my shortcomings and please make Mrs Clifford treat me with kindness.

INT. WINDSOR HOUSE - DAY

Things are busy for Amanda and Mairi at lunch time because Mr Clifford has invited two close Tory confidants from the council with their wives. Amanda has to cook Sunday roast for four more people than normal and the dining table is full. Everyone has a jolly good time and as the three couples finish their meals Mairi enters to clear away the plates ahead of pudding. Mairi hasn't quite got the hang of it yet to pile several plates up her arm and one, a beautiful white-and-blue plate, slips through her hand and goes crashing to the floor.

MRS CLIFFORD
 Mairi! Would you be more careful!
 You just broke a piece of fine
 china, the cost of which will come
 straight out of your wages.

MAIRI
 Awfully sorry, Madam.

Mairi picks up the pieces and retreats to the kitchen where
 Amanda gives her a comforting hug.

MAIRI
 I wish I hadn't dropped that plate.
 I wonder how much it will cost to
 replace.

AMANDA
 Probably less than the pride you
 lost.

MAIRI
 I feel terribly useless. You must
 understand.

AMANDA
 Look, You did all right on the
 whole serving lunch for so many
 people. Don't stop believing in
 yourself.

The men stay in the dining room after luncheon for political
 discussions over coffee, cognac and cigars while the women
 retreat to the living room for coffee and sherry. Mr
 Clifford, sitting back comfortably with his fingertips
 together, eyes MR PARKER, a dandy with a red silk vest and a
 pin-stripe dark suit, and MR TAYLOR, a fair-haired councillor
 who at fifty is the oldest of the three gentlemen.

MR CLIFFORD
 Anything new?

MR PARKER (arranging his
 moustache with exquisite
 care.)
 Well, what do we make of
 Mosley? Should we talk to
 him or not?
 (MORE)

(CONT'D)

MR CLIFFORD

Ah yes, Oswald Mosley. I understand he is looking into making Plymouth headquarters in the West Country for his British Union of Fascists.

MR TAYLOR (adjusting his gold-rimmed pince-nez.)
Well, what with national unemployment at more than twenty-two percent, Mosley might attract voters with his protectionist, nationalist policies.

Mr Clifford puffs on his cigar.

MR CLIFFORD

Quite so, quite so, old boy, but I somehow dislike those black shirts that Mr Mosley employs at his rallies. They remind me of Hitler's brown shirts and there is something distinctively primitive and anti-intellectual about them.

Mairi, pouring more coffee and cognac, smiles at Mr Clifford.

MR CLIFFORD

Also, we're starting to come out of the depression and unemployment will start to drop. Mark my words.

Mairi disappears into the kitchen.

MR PARKER

Pretty girl, that new maid. I adore her Scottish accent. She would make the most trivial subject sound erotic.

MR CLIFFORD grins at the comment.

MR CLIFFORD

By the way, will you join me on the boat on Saturday morning? It's good weather for sailing now.

MR TAYLOR

Most kind of you. We're both up for it, aren't we?"

Mr Parker nods in agreement.

The luncheon is over and the guests prepare to leave. They all troop out through the hall. The throb of the motor comes through the open window and the guests all climb into their black chauffeur-driven saloon, its tyres crunching on the gravel driveway as the driver engages first gear and releases the clutch.

INT. MAIRI IN MR CLIFFORD'S STUDY - DAY

It is late in the afternoon after Sunday lunch and Mairi realises that she has forgotten to vacuum the floor in Mr Clifford's study. She takes out the vacuum cleaner from the storage space underneath the stairs and crosses the hall into his study, where he is reading documents at his desk.

MR CLIFFORD (with a broad grin)
Why Mairi, I'm pleased to see you going about your duties even on a Sunday afternoon.

MAIRI
Sorry Sir. I can come back later. Didn't mean to disturb you.

Mairi turns around to leave the study, but Mr Clifford gestures for her to stay.

MR CLIFFORD
By all means, carry on and stay a while. My wife has gone for a walk with the boys. I love the sight of you. Mr Parker adored your accent. You lift the spirits in this house.

MAIRI (blushes)
Thanks Sir. I'll be out of here before you know it.

Mairi turns on the vacuum cleaner and gets on with it. But she feels his eyes are on her and this unwelcome interest makes her visibly uncomfortable. She avoids eye contact for fear of encouraging him. Mairi switches off the vacuum cleaner and wipes dust off the book shelves and the window sill - those eyes of his still on her. By chance, Mairi looks through the window and to her horror spots Madam in the driveway with the boys.

MAIRI
Must leave now, Sir. Am in a hurry.

She gives him a quick glance before hurrying back to the hall with the vacuum cleaner, putting it back under the stairs as she hears the key in the door. Mairi sprints back to the rear hall, past the kitchen and up the servants' narrow stairway to the landing, closing the door to the bedroom behind her. From downstairs comes the voices of Mrs Clifford and her sons going about their business. She takes a deep breath.

INT. CINEMA IN TORQUAY - NIGHT

Amanda and Mairi are about to buy tickets and sweets at the pictures in the evening as a reward to themselves after all the hard work during the Sunday luncheon.

AMANDA

Have you ever tasted a Mars bar?

MAIRI

What is it?

She gives the black-and-red wrapping a suspicious look.

AMANDA

Oh, it's a new sweet, chocolate with nougat and caramel. I'll treat you to one. Now, let's go inside and watch the film.

They sit down halfway back in the cinema and Mairi is amazed at how big the silk screen is.

MAIRI

So, what's this picture we're going to see?

AMANDA

It's "All Quiet on the Western Front", about the Great War. I know we really had wanted to see something romantic in technicolour, but this war film was the only one available tonight afraid.

The Pathé newsreel opens with King George V appearing at some recent official function in London. Mairi turns to Amanda.

MAIRI

What's this? I thought we were going to see a film about the war?

AMANDA

Shhh. This is the newsreel. Always comes up before the big picture.

The next news item is about the Reichstag fire in Berlin on February 27. Dark views are shown of the interior of the badly damaged parliamentary building. Firemen look around and play water hoses on the remains. Exterior shots show fire damage to the glass roof. The war film begins, but halfway through it Mairi leaves the cinema abruptly, while Amanda stays behind to watch it to the end.

EXT. OUTSIDE CINEMA - NIGHT

Amanda catches up with Mairi in the street after the cinema.

AMANDA

Look, I know this wasn't a love story, but we paid good money to see this film - it's a shame you missed the end. It was dramatic, yes, but I guess one can learn from watching it.

Mairi, who has been waiting outside deep in thought, has tears in her eyes.

MAIRI

What can we learn from this slaughter? That it should never happen again? Aye, but I can't stomach watching such meaningless killing, young men shooting each other to pieces in a relentless trench war.

INT. TEA HOUSE IN TORQUAY - NIGHT

Amanda and Mairi stop at a tea house. Seated by a window overlooking the bustling Union Street, they give their orders to a young waitress.

AMANDA

Mairi, you've been here more than three weeks now. Do you like Torquay?

The parlourmaid's face lights up.

MAIRI

Och, I do like it very much. There is a pub in my village, but not a tea house like this. So many people out and about.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

And I like the library and the cinema, just depends on what's showing. But I could eat a Mars bar every day.

AMANDA

I suppose this is a lively place for you but I grew up around here and Torquay can be really dull, especially in winter when the house-owners from London are gone. A lot of them keep a holiday home here you know. Started in Victorian times.

MAIRI

You mean people who live in London can afford to have another home down here?

AMANDA

Some, yes. But in winter this tea house is shut.

Mairi looks out the window with dreamy eyes.

MAIRI

There must be an opportunity for women like you and me, something better, where we get more respect. I just don't see it happening any time soon, and I remain worried about my job here.

The waitress returns with tea, scones, clotted cream and strawberry jam on a tray.

MAIRI

So great to have someone else serve us for once.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - NIGHT

Coming home, Amanda and Mairi run into Mr Clifford in the hall and he is curious to know what film they watched.

AMANDA

All Quiet on the Western Front, Sir. Except Mairi stormed out halfway through the film.

MR CLIFFORD (looks at
Mairi while lighting his
pipe)
You stormed out?

MAIRI
Aye Sir. I couldn't bear watching
that slaughter of men. But we saw
newsreels before the film and I
thought the fire in the Reichstag a
weird thing to watch. Why would
anyone want to burn down a
parliament building?

MR CLIFFORD
Good question Mairi. Still showing
it are they? I guess they do
because Hitler is very much in the
news.

MAIRI
I read that Mr Hitler came to power
in Germany following elections in
January. He has since taken over
the country completely.

MR CLIFFORD (looks
astounded)
You seem to read a lot.

MAIRI
Aye Sir, gives me comfort.

MR CLIFFORD
Comfort against what?

MAIRI
This cruel world, Sir. I'm talking
about literature, not newspapers,
but I read them too. I'm proud that
I can read and write. Not everyone
is able to.

Mrs Clifford enters the room and the discussion freezes on
the spot.

MRS CLIFFORD
So you girls came home in one piece
after the cinema. Shouldn't you go
to bed?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

AMANDA
Yes Madam.

Mairi says nothing, her mind being elsewhere.

MR CLIFFORD
We were just discussing Hitler.
They saw that newsreel about the
Reichstag fire.

MRS CLIFFORD
Oh Hitler, at least he creates
work. People should work more.

She gives Mairi a meaningful glance, but the maid is still
lost in thought and does not notice it.

MR CLIFFORD
The question is whether or not a
strong Germany is in our favour.
After all, we fought the huns in
the war and we wouldn't want them
to rearm. We don't want another
war. I was in the Royal Navy in the
war.

The young women look at him with sudden interest.

AMANDA
Did you see battle, Sir?

MR CLIFFORD
I did shore duty, but I once came
under attack from a Zeppelin
airship. It was quite an
experience, being bombed. I opened
fire with my rifle of course, but
the thing flew away. I am happy to
be alive. Joined the Navy in 1917
as a teenager. Served in Plymouth,
at Devonport Naval Base to be
exact.

AMANDA
Sir, that must have been terribly
exciting.

Mr Clifford smiles at the cook, but Mrs Clifford cringes.

MAIRI
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

The Germans will rearm and attack us again if they want to. We cannae stop them. They're bad people.

Everyone looks at Mairi with astonishment. Mairi herself appears to be taken by surprise at her own comment.

MRS CLIFFORD
Now off to bed, girls. You need your sleep.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The Cliffords have gone to bed but are awake.

MR CLIFFORD
There is more to that girl than meets the eye.

MRS CLIFFORD
I told you not to engage in small talk with her.

MR CLIFFORD
But she was with Mrs Ackroyd and we had a civilised discussion.

MRS CLIFFORD
Civilised? She didn't even recognise my presence in the room!

Mr Clifford turns off the light and says goodnight but Mrs Clifford is not finished with him.

MRS CLIFFORD
One more thing. I wish you wouldn't glorify your experience in the war. You were just a navy recruit in the most junior position, but you made it seem as if you had single-handedly fought off a Zeppelin. Pathetic.

MR CLIFFORD
All right. But the girls liked my little story. No harm in that.

INT. WINDSOR COURT KITCHEN - DAY

Mairi is having breakfast with Amanda in the kitchen after having served the Cliffords and their children in the morning room. Amanda is teasing Mairi.

AMANDA
Mr Clifford likes you. I've seen how he looks at you. Are you going to make a move?

MAIRI (gives her an angry look)
I'm in enough trouble with Mrs Clifford as it is, thanks to you.

Amanda throws her hands into the air.

AMANDA
Drat, I was only giving you sound advice. If you overdid it when you talked back, that's your problem.

MAIRI
Yes, my problem it is. Amanda, there is something I didn't tell you about yesterday afternoon, after the guests were gone.

AMANDA
You look worried, what is it?

MAIRI (sighs deeply)
I went to Mr Clifford's study to vacuum the floor and he was sitting there at his desk, which is fine. It's his study. But he kept following me around with his eyes. He had a leery grin on his face that made me feel so uncomfortable it's not true.

Amanda puts a hand to her mouth and subsequently shakes her head in apparent disbelief.

AMANDA
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Really? I never knew that Mr Clifford could be like that, what's the word, predatory? He always struck me as a true gentleman. Puts Abigail in a different light, doesn't it? He really did actively seduce her then. It wasn't as if they were drawn to each other over a period of time, which I always thought.

MAIRI

I didn't realise he had a creepy side either. But he did have one glass of hock and two glasses of cognac during the luncheon. I suppose people can change their manners after some alcohol.

Mairi has a sip of tea before continuing.

MAIRI

Oh, and through the window I saw Mrs Clifford coming up the driveway with her little boys. I left the study in a hurry. Sure didn't want her to catch me with her husband alone. Not with Abigail in fresh memory.

AMANDA

Yes, better be careful. You did well not to encourage him and what a scene Mrs Clifford would have created had you not been so quick to get out of that room.

Sarah joins them in the kitchen.

SARAH

Oh stop it. Stop making a lot of fuss about Mrs Clifford. We all work for her. We are in the same boat, all three of us.

AMANDA

I know. We live in a grim world, what with the depression. So much unemployment. We should all count our blessings that we've got work.

Sarah and Mairi make noises of agreement.

INT. HOME IN SCOTLAND - DAY - FLASHBACK

Mairi stands in front of the mirror in the hall at home and studies her face from different angles. Her mother walks up from behind with an expression of dismay in her face.

MAIRI

Ma, do you think I could buy lipstick?

MRS CRAIG

Out of the question. Stop looking yourself in the mirror, girl! Try to be useful in the household for a change. The floor in the living room needs cleaning. Get on with it.

MAIRI

Aye ma, but I was only having a look at myself. No harm in that. I'll ask pa about a lipstick when he gets home.

MRS CRAIG

You think you're pretty. Well, I don't think so. You are just a vain, lazy lass who needs a beating from time to time. Now get on with that floor or I'll get the cane.

MAIRI

Ma, why do you hate me so much? Why can't you leave me alone?

MRS CRAIG

All right. Time for the cane.

MAIRI

Ma, no, please don't!

Mairi's mother fetches the cane from the wardrobe, grabs her daughter by the shoulder and proceeds to whip her on the backside until she screams in pain.

MRS CRAIG

Next time it will be on your bare skin. Now get on with that floor.

Mairi snivels, pulls herself together and fetches the mop from the cleaning cupboard.

MAIRI
I hate you, ma. I hate you.

Mrs Craig turns around and prepares to give Mairi another whipping, but the door opens and Mr Craig enters.

MR CRAIG
I am home early from work. What's going on here?

Mairi runs to her father and seeks shelter in his arms.

MR CRAIG
Brenda, have you been beating her again?

Mrs Craig shrugs, unrepentant.

END OF FLASHBACK

EXT. TORQUAY TOWN CENTRE - DAY

Mairi borrows Amanda's bicycle again to ride down to the library and return the book, hoping to see Tristan. She cycles through a street crossing, looking out for cars. She leans the bicycle against a post and walks up to the library entrance, only to find out that it is shut on Tuesday afternoons. She grabs the bicycle and is about to ride up the hill again when she spots Tristan, wearing a grey flat cap and matching clothes walking with a blonde girl in a smart red dress down the street. Mairi hides behind a tree until they have turned round the corner. She winces and rides uphill with tears in her eyes.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Mairi comes into the kitchen after having parked the bicycle to resume her duties.

AMANDA
Did you see that handsome librarian again?

MAIRI
What librarian? Did I ever mention a librarian?

Mairi begins to take out cups and plates for afternoon tea from a cupboard with great determination. Amanda gives her a lingering look, but knows better than to push Mairi.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - NIGHT

In the evening Amanda and Mairi chat over a cup of tea in the kitchen.

AMANDA

You know I mentioned Steve, my boyfriend. He is coming for tea on Tuesday evening. I've got permission from Mrs Clifford. You'll get a chance to see him.

MAIRI (speaking without conviction)
That would be nice.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Mairi is mopping the floor in the living room the following morning when Mrs Clifford calls on her from the hall. With a sinking feeling in her chest she joins the mistress.

MAIRI

Is there something wrong, Madam?

Mrs Clifford gives her that withering look she has got used to.

MRS CLIFFORD

The floor isn't clean. There is dust in the corners everywhere. Clean it!

Mairi looks around but can't see any dust.

MAIRI

But Madam, I just mopped it and it is a bit dark here in the hall. You know that.

MRS CLIFFORD

So you are making excuses? Finish the living room and then come back here and start all over in the hall until I am satisfied with your work. I don't care how long it takes. Understood?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MAIRI
Aye Madam.

MRS CLIFFORD
Oh, and Mairi, you'd better clean the kitchen floor again and again. There is still dirt in the grout between the tiles. Do you need tea-leaves to do a proper job? We could gather some after tea time today. We could all join in.

Mrs Clifford laughs, full of glee.

MAIRI
It will be done, Madam. But you could be more polite, like saying please, if you remember what we talked about.

Madam leaves the hall in a huff.

EXT. TORQUAY TOWN CENTRE - DAY

After lunch Mairi rides back to the library, knowing she must return the book or be fined. Walking inside, she finds Tristan there talking to an elderly woman and queues up behind her. Tristan has noticed she is there of course and he finishes his conversation with the woman as quickly as possible.

TRISTAN
Hi Miss Craig, so nice to see you again. How was the book?

MAIRI
Not very good afraid, Mr Williams. I came to return it. Here it is. I won't be borrowing books again.

TRISTAN
Is something the matter?

Mairi turns around and hastens towards the exit, but Tristan runs after her and blocks the door.

TRISTAN
I'm overjoyed to see you again, Miss Craig. What's happening here?

MAIRI
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I came to return the book yesterday afternoon and saw you walking away with a woman in red. I didn't know you had a girlfriend.

TRISTAN

Oh, you mean Jane. That's my sister.

MAIRI

Your sister?

TRISTAN

Yes, I had just shut the library and she came to fetch me because we were going to buy a birthday present for our mother. She will be sixty tomorrow. I swear, Jane is my sister. I don't have a girlfriend.

Mairi looks relieved.

TRISTAN

Do you have a boyfriend, Miss Craig?

MAIRI (blushes)

Of course not. I must make my apologies for acting silly.

She takes a deep breath before continuing.

MAIRI

Please call me Mairi.

TRISTAN

Thanks Mairi, and you should call me Tristan.

MAIRI

Thanks Tristan. By the way, would you like to come for tea at Windsor Court one evening soon? We're allowed to invite menfolk once in a while. If you agree I could ask the mistress for a convenient hour, usually on Tuesday evenings.

Tristan takes her hand in his and the contact sends a surge of pleasure through her body that leaves her momentarily breathless.

TRISTAN

Of course, Mairi. I'd be delighted.

Mairi borrows another book by Agatha Christie and finds herself practically flying back up the hill beaming all over and crying tears of joy in between this time.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

One morning after breakfast Mrs Clifford runs into Mrs Ackroyd in the hall and asks her to come to her husband's study. Amanda follows her with curiosity and they sit down in the room, Mrs Clifford in her husband's chair and the cook in another.

MRS CLIFFORD

I shall go straight to the point,
Mrs Ackroyd.

She launches into what sounds like a well-rehearsed speech.

MRS CLIFFORD

It's about Mairi. I'm not happy with her service. She doesn't keep the floors as clean as they should be. She is untidy and sloppy in general and she doesn't make the beds properly. She has on occasion also been rude to me and I have seen how she casts longing eyes on my dear husband.

She pauses to gauge the reaction from her cook, who is silent and appears to be confused.

MRS CLIFFORD

Now, I seem to have difficulties persuading my husband to take action as a result of my complaints.

AMANDA (interrupts Mrs
Clifford)
Take action?

MRS CLIFFORD

Dismissal.
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I am talking about sending Mairi on her way back to Scotland on the railway train, third-class of course.

Amanda puts a hand to her mouth.

AMANDA

With all respect, Mrs Clifford, but that sounds harsh to me.

Mrs Clifford shrugs and looks out the window before she continues with a solemn voice.

MRS CLIFFORD

Well, sometimes we have to take resolute steps to correct a problem. You know how quickly we dealt with Abigail. But I have asked you here because I want to know your opinion on the house parlourmaid. She works directly under you. Can you trust her?

AMANDA

I honestly don't know what you want from me, Mrs Clifford.

MRS CLIFFORD

My point is, if you have even the slightest complaint about her I could add it to my list and present it to Mr Clifford. He can just about bat away my grievances, but if you share some of my views he'd have to recognise we have a serious problem with the house parlourmaid.

Amanda is stunned, speechless at first, but then she speaks with conviction.

AMANDA

Mrs Clifford. I'm sorry, but I can't say that I have got any problems with Mairi. Like any other maid new to the job she had a lot to learn and made mistakes in the first few days, but now she has settled in and I enjoy working with her.

Mrs Clifford looks more dissatisfied than she normally does.

MRS CLIFFORD
Thank you Mrs Ackroyd. That will be all. And this discussion stays between you and me, understood?

AMANDA
Of course Mrs Clifford. Now if I am excused I need to get back to the kitchen.

MRS CLIFFORD
Off you go then.

INT. WINDSOR COURT KITCHEN - DAY

Amanda does an inventory of the larder to see what is running out as Sarah enters. Mairi is elsewhere.

AMANDA (speaking quickly)
We are short of potatoes, celery and carrots, oh, and onions too. I shall speak to the greengrocer.

Sarah observes the cook and realises she is upset.

SARAH
What's wrong, Amanda? Is there something bothering you?

AMANDA
Goodness, is it that visible? I must calm down before Mairi is back.

SARAH
Is this something to do with her?

Amanda nods and sits down at the kitchen table before she continues.

AMANDA
I just had the most shocking conversation with Mrs Clifford. I promised not to share it with anyone, but I simply must tell you, Sarah, so you know the situation.

SARAH
What situation? Is Mairi going to be sacked?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

AMANDA

No, at least not yet, but Mrs Clifford was trying to spin a yarn that Mairi is useless. It was beyond the pale. She summoned me to Mr Clifford's study and wanted my support in her efforts to have Mairi kicked out. That woman is dangerous. She is deliberately seeking to undermine Mairi's standing in the household.

SARAH

Goodness.

AMANDA

Well, the mistress would not get any support from the kitchen. Imagine Mairi, often bubbly but oversensitive at times, sacked and sent home without references? It would break the poor girl's heart.

SARAH

I gather you want me to keep this to myself.

AMANDA (nods eagerly)
Absolutely. Mairi mustn't find out. She would be terribly upset and worried if she realised what is going on in the mind of that wicked woman.

SARAH

Yes, she is certainly hard to please, but I do get along with her.

AMANDA

Well, at your age you don't pose a threat to her, I mean in terms of getting the attention of Mr Clifford. But you do remember I told you about the moment I stood up to her?

SARAH

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Oh yes, Mrs Clifford complained about your cooking, saying it wasn't savoury enough, and suggested ways of improvement.

Amanda smiles grimly at the memory.

AMANDA

Yes, the mistress had written down a recipe of her own for steak and kidney pie that she insisted that I should use. But some of the ingredients had been wrong or the measurements not right and I explained all this to her. She backed off. But it was a typical example of her attempts to control everything and find faults in other people. She is a nasty piece of work in general, but as we've noticed she really dotes on her sons.

INT. TORQUAY CINEMA - NIGHT

Mairi can't stop tapping her feet in time to the beat. She is at the cinema on a Sunday night with Tristan. They are watching an American technicolour film titled "King of Jazz" that features crooner Bing Crosby.

MAIRI (whispers in
Tristan's ear.)
Och, first time in my
life I hear jazz music.
It blows me away. I have
even spotted negro
musicians in the band.
Thanks for taking me,
Tristan.

Tristan takes her hand in his and nuzzles her ear. The contact sent shivers down her spine and she cuddles up to him in the seats.

EXT. TORQUAY CENTRE - NIGHT

They leave the cinema hand in hand. Mairi looks at the stars and at Tristan. He looks at her only, takes a deep breath of fresh air.

TRISTAN

You liked the film then, Mairi?

MAIRI

Och, I loved it. Didn't you notice how I couldn't keep my feet still during those fast tunes? This was something new to me as I mentioned and I wouldn't mind seeing another film with that Bing Crosby. He has a wonderful voice.

TRISTAN

Yes indeed, but there are critics who oppose the influx of American films. They condemn what they call the 'Americanisation' of British culture, but I wouldn't be too worried about that. I like America. They helped us in the war you know.

The mentioning of the war does not go down well with Mairi but she does her best not to let it show. They come to a street corner where their ways part. Tristan is going to catch the bus to his home in Paignton while Mairi is headed up the road to Windsor Court. They look at each other in some kind of waiting game. Finally, Tristan takes her in his arms and hugs her.

TRISTAN

Good night my Scottish princess.

MAIRI

Good night my prince.

As she walks away she stops for a final look at him and he turns around as well. They wave at each other in mutual warmth and delight.

INT. WINDSOR COURT, KITCHEN - NIGHT

It is a Tuesday evening and menfolk are allowed in for tea with their loved one at Windsor Court. Mairi opens the tradesmen's entrance, the back door down the hall from the kitchen, as STEVE rings the bell. He has blond hair and casual manners. Mrs Clifford joins her.

MRS CLIFFORD

Well, hello Steve, good to see you again.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I like your brown jacket and those beige trousers, you dress well.

AMANDA

Steve dear, this is Mairi, our new house parlourmaid. She hails from Scotland.

STEVE

Really, all the way from Scotland? I've never met anyone from Scotland before. How do you do?

They shake hands and all three sit down at the kitchen table. Mrs Clifford leaves the room.

MAIRI

So, are you getting married?

STEVE

Oh, let's not get ahead of ourselves.

AMANDA

But it's certainly something that's on our mind.

She speaks with a degree of resolve that isn't lost on Mairi.

MAIRI

Who would do the cooking?

Amanda and Steve glance at each other and seem to find the situation hilarious. He gives her a look that appears to ask for permission to speak for both of them.

STEVE

All right. If or when we get married I suppose Amanda will do the cooking. I will come home after cooking all day and I guess Amanda will be looking after the household and, one day, the children if we are blessed.

Mairi smiles.

INT. WINDSOR COURT, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Steve has left and it is bedtime, but Mairi steals away to the living room where she knows Mrs Clifford is sitting reading a book - her husband is in his study.

MAIRI
Madam, before we all go to bed, may
I ask if I could have a young man
over for tea one evening soon?

Mrs Clifford looks up from the book and frowns.

MRS CLIFFORD
How long have you known him?

MAIRI
Oh, about two weeks. He is the
librarian. His name is Tristan
Williams. We went to the cinema
together the other night.

MRS CLIFFORD
You shouldn't rush into these
things, you know.

Mairi looks bewildered.

MAIRI
But to get to know him I need to
see him and I'm sure he would love
to meet you.

MRS CLIFFORD
Let me think about it.

MAIRI
But Madam, What is there to think
about? I thought this was an
unquestionable right for us
servants.

MRS CLIFFORD
You have to earn it. Ask again in a
few months. Now off to bed.

She returns to reading her book, a smug smile on her face.

INT. WINDSOR COURT, BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mairi runs upstairs to her bedroom and starts pulling at her hair in frustration just as Sarah enters.

SARAH
What on earth are you doing? Stop it.

Mairi stops pulling her hair and instead cries at Sarah's shoulder.

MAIRI
You and Amanda are the only women who seem to understand me.

SARAH
Now calm down and tell me what the matter is.

MAIRI
Mrs Clifford won't let me invite the librarian for tea. She just told me I have to earn it, wait a few months. She is using my yearning for happiness against me. This is so unfair. She is so cruel.

SARAH
But you can still see him on the town, can't you?

MAIRI
Yes of course, but I wanted to show him Windsor Court, show him where I live and work. I should have the same right as Amanda to invite a boyfriend for tea.

Sarah and Mairi go to bed but lie awake for a while, whispering in the dark so as not to wake up anyone in the house. Their voices cannot be heard.

MAIRI
I left home to get away from ma, who can be so vicious. Now ma has been replaced by another nasty woman out to get me. I think Mrs Clifford wants to make life here so miserable for me that I quit my job.

SARAH
But would you want to quit?

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

MAIRI

No, my father wants me to stay here at least a year. Where does all this end?

INT. MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mrs Clifford walks upstairs to the master bedroom with a broad grin on her face.

MR CLIFFORD

Well, you look happy enough.

MRS CLIFFORD

Life is full of surprises. The trick is to use them to your advantage.

MR CLIFFORD

What's that supposed to mean?

MRS CLIFFORD

Wait and see.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

The following afternoon Mairi cycles to the town centre to see Tristan, who is at his desk flicking through a card index just like he did when they first met. He beams up at the sight of her.

TRISTAN

Hi Mairi, how are you?

MAIRI

Could be better. And you, Tristan?

TRISTAN

Oh, I am just fine, but you don't look well. What is the matter?

MAIRI

It's about Mrs Clifford.

Suddenly tears well up in Mairi's eyes.

MAIRI

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

She won't let me invite you for tea, says I have to earn it as if it were a privilege based on how hard I work. But Amanda is allowed to have her boyfriend over for tea. It's so unfair.

Tears stream down Mairi's cheeks. She tries to hug Tristan, but he takes a step back, shocked by the sudden explosion of bitter emotions.

TRISTAN

I am sorry to hear that, but please pull yourself together, Mairi. I can't have you creating a scene in my work place.

MAIRI

So you don't want to listen to my sorrows? Don't you care about my well-being? Don't you understand? That cow is evil, she is hounding me no end.

TRISTAN

Of course I do understand your concern. Don't be silly. But maybe you're overreacting and this is at any rate the wrong time for us to discuss your problems with Mrs Clifford.

MAIRI

But I am worried that she will try to have me sacked. She is just waiting for an opportunity.

TRISTAN

Look, people are coming through the door and I must welcome them. Let's talk tomorrow after work, all right?

MAIRI

It's not all right!

EXT. TORQUAY - DAY

Mairi runs out the door and cycles up the hill again. She stops, climbs off the bicycle by the roadside and sits down in the ditch, crying with her face in her hands. A couple walks past Mairi, ignoring her.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - NIGHT

Mairi looks tense but she soldiers on and does her work to perfection, serving dinner while ignoring the critical gaze of her tormentor, Mrs Clifford. Amanda observes her with concern in the kitchen.

AMANDA

Mairi, what's the matter with you?
Did you see Tristan again?

MAIRI

Don't want to talk about it.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Mr Clifford, smoking his pipe as usual, sits in the study with his wife on Friday morning after breakfast. He counts bank notes on the desk and presents her with a number of bills.

MR CLIFFORD

I'm leaving ten pounds in this drawer for you to pay the monthly bills today. I would normally do it myself as you know, but I am pretty busy with all these meetings this morning so it would be great if you could take care of the bills for once.

MRS CLIFFORD

Yes darling, no problem. I will see to it and get Mrs Ackroyd to post the letters with the money.

MR CLIFFORD

What's the matter with Mairi by the way? She seems so reticent all of a sudden.

MRS CLIFFORD (shrugs)

Well, I don't know what's eating her. She is a trouble-maker anyway so God knows what she's been up to. I might ask Mrs Ackroyd.

MR CLIFFORD

Yes, please do. Maybe she's homesick or something. She's so far away from her family you know.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Maybe we should encourage her to write home more.

Mrs Clifford snorts with derision and gives her husband a long look.

MRS CLIFFORD

I wouldn't worry about that lass. I'd be more than happy to send her on her way back to Scotland, if only to cure her homesickness.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Mrs Clifford goes back to her husband's study around lunch time and opens the drawer where he has left the money for the bills. She counts the bank notes once, then again looking confused. But then she becomes annoyed and heads for the kitchen where Amanda and Mairi are preparing lunch. Mrs Clifford storms into the kitchen and points an accusing finger at them.

MRS CLIFFORD

Girls! There is a pound note missing from my husband's study. Someone must have stolen it. I don't suspect Sarah, but one of you must have taken it. The guilty person better return the stolen money by tea time or I shall call the police. I am supposed to pay the bills, but there one pound missing from the drawer. I won't stand for thieving under my roof!

The mistress glares at Mairi before leaving the kitchen with a triumphant smile on her face. Amanda and Mairi, shaken by her abrupt appearance, look at each other.

AMANDA

What was that all about?

MAIRI (visibly upset)

Maybe she has made up an excuse to get at me, to get rid of me. I told you I have seen her evil eye. I need to find out.

Mairi runs after Mrs Clifford into the hall and catches up with her in the dining room.

INT. WINDSOR COURT, DINING ROOM - DAY

MAIRI

Madam, are you suggesting that I stole a pound note?

MRS CLIFFORD

You know what you did. Just confess and put the pound note back in my husband's drawer. Then we shall discuss your future at Windsor Court. It looks increasingly bleak, you little minx.

MAIRI

You cannae speak to me like that. You are a horrible woman, just like ma!

A minute later Mairi is back in the kitchen in tears and Amanda hugs her.

AMANDA

What's the matter dear?

MAIRI

I haven't stolen anything. I cannae give back money I haven't got. A pound is twice my weekly wages.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Mairi runs upstairs into the bedroom she shares with Sarah and quickly writes letters to her father and Tristan. Having completed them, she calms down and looks determined.

Amanda enters the bedroom with a concerned look on her face.

AMANDA

Mairi? What are you going to do? I didn't steal any money and I don't think you did either. You weren't even in Mr Clifford's study. I can vouch for that. I'd be your witness.

MAIRI

Amanda, don't you understand? She is never going to give up. She will always find a reason to have me sacked and ruin my life because she sees me as another Abigail.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

And she wants to teach Mr Clifford a lesson. I am sure of that.

AMANDA

Well, you may have a point there, but what are you going to do now?

MAIRI

Everything in my mind has been a blur for some time and I know all this has to stop. It has got to stop. My dear Amanda, I enjoyed my time with you, but it's time for me to leave. Never ever shall I be accused of theft again. Forget about me, never think of me.

Amanda is so taken aback by Mairi's words that the maid is already out of the bedroom, down the servants' stairway and through the back door before she has a chance to even reply, let alone persuade her friend to stay.

EXT. WELLSWOOD - DAY

Mairi rushes to the post office in Wellswood by the church down the road, posts the letters and then walks with relentless resolve in her step towards Anstey's Cove.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Amanda runs to the study where Mrs Clifford is writing letters.

AMANDA

Madam, Mairi has left us. Your accusation must have upset her.

Mrs Clifford looks up from her writing with a grotesque smile on her face.

MRS CLIFFORD

She's left us? Did she return the missing money? If not, this clearly shows she absconded as the thief she was. I wouldn't worry too much about her. Anyway, I want you to take these letters to the post office. It is important.

AMANDA (winces)
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Yes, of course I will,
but she has left without
her bag, without her
belongings. I'm worried
about what she's up to.
She said she had not
stolen anything.

Mr Clifford comes in the door, having returned from work
early because of it being Friday.

MR CLIFFORD
What's going on? Who stole what?

Mrs Clifford rises and hugs her husband.

MRS CLIFFORD
Not to worry, darling. I found a
pound note missing from your drawer
and I asked the girls if one of
them had taken it with the result
that Mairi has absconded. I told
you she was no good and now we
don't have to worry about sacking
her. It seems she sacked herself.

Mr Clifford gives his wife an incredulous look and shakes his
head.

MR CLIFFORD
Nothing was stolen for God's sake!
I took the pound note out of the
drawer because I realised you
wouldn't need all that money to pay
the bills. That's what's what.

Mrs Clifford and Mrs Ackroyd look at him in shock.

MR CLIFFORD
Mrs Ackroyd, please leave us. My
wife and I need to discuss this in
private.

INT. WINDSOR COURT KITCHEN - DAY

Amanda is back in the kitchen on her own, worried sick about
Mairi. Sarah joins her.

SARAH
What is this accusation about?

AMANDA
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

About stealing a pound banknote. Mairi is terribly upset. I offered to be her witness that she had not gone to Mr Clifford's office today. Mairi can't have been thinking straight or she wouldn't have gone away.

SARAH
Oh dear.

AMANDA
And now we hear that nothing was stolen at all. Mr Clifford says he took the missing pound note himself from the drawer. Now Mrs Clifford is in trouble with her husband for a change.

SARAH
And where is Mairi now?

AMANDA (winces)
That's my worry. She left without any belongings. God knows what's going on in her mind. We've only worked together for a month but I thought I knew her well, vulnerable, cagey at times, but also a sweet, witty girl. I'm worried sick about her.

EXT. HOME IN SCOTLAND - DAY

The following afternoon, a Saturday, the postmaster, a middle-aged man with thinning hair, knocks on the door at Mr Craig's terraced home in the Lanarkshire village and presents him with a telegram from the police in Torquay.

POSTMASTER
Something about next of kin.

Mr Craig, who has just come home from the coal mine and was cleaning his lunch box, gives the sheet of paper a wary look. Sitting down to read the telegram, his face starts to turn ashen, and the coal miner lets out a howl filled with sorrow, alarming Brenda who comes running to see what is going on.

MRS CRAIG
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

What's happened? Something to do with Mairi?

MR CRAIG
Read the telegram.

He passes it on to his wife who reads it with consternation.

MRS CRAIG
I knew she was going to turn out bad. I just knew it.

MR CRAIG
Spare me your thoughts, woman. I'll catch the railway train to Torquay on Monday. Just need to tell the manager I'm off for family reasons. The inquest I understand is on Tuesday morning.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Also on Saturday afternoon, the door bell rings at Windsor Court. Sarah goes to open it and finds herself facing a POLICE OFFICER.

SARAH
Goodness, Sir, what can we do for you?

POLICE OFFICER
I hate to disturb you, but I would like a word with Mr Clifford if he is around, please?

SARAH
Yes, he is here. Actually, he just came back from a sailing trip on the bay. Let me get him for you. Please come inside, Sir.

Amanda comes to the door and is shocked to see a police officer in the hall.

AMANDA
Oh no, is it about Mairi, Sir?

POLICE OFFICER
I have news about Mairi Craig, yes, but I need to speak to Mr Clifford first.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

SARAH (goes to the stairs
and shouts)
Mr Clifford? Please come
downstairs. A police
officer wants to speak
with you.

Mr Clifford comes rushing downstairs and greets the police officer.

MR CLIFFORD
I understand you wish to speak to
me. Let's go to my study.

The two men retreat to the study. Meanwhile, Mrs Clifford is also coming downstairs and stands in the hall with Amanda and Sarah.

AMANDA
He has news about Mairi. Oh God, I
hope she is safe.

Mrs Clifford looks pale but doesn't utter a word. Mr Clifford, a shattered look on his face, returns to the hall with the police officer.

MR CLIFFORD
I am afraid there is bad news.
Terrible news, in fact. Mairi was
found dead on the cliffs beneath
Bishop's Walk this morning by two
boys walking their dog. It would
appear that she jumped to her death
yesterday afternoon.

Amanda wails, Sarah supports herself against the door and Mrs Clifford appears struck by thunder.

MR CLIFFORD
I have been asked to come with the
police officer to the morgue and
identify the body.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - NIGHT

It is early evening and Mr Clifford, having just returned from the morgue, walks into the hall where Mrs Clifford, Amanda and Sarah are waiting for word.

MRS CLIFFORD
What did she look like?

MR CLIFFORD
I really don't want to talk about
it. I need a stiff whisky.

He walks straight to the cocktail cabinet in the dining room. Mrs Clifford disappears upstairs while Amanda and Sarah return to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Amanda and Sarah drink tea in the kitchen and the atmosphere is depressed.

AMANDA
So she stormed out of the house
yesterday afternoon and went
straight to Anstey's Cove and up
Bishop's Walk where she committed
suicide.

Sarah shakes her head in disbelief.

SARAH
I had a late-night talk with Mairi
last week after she had a run-in
with Mrs Clifford. The girl really
sounded depressed and this was
before the accusation about theft
was made.

AMANDA
I blame myself for having taken
Mairi to Bishop's Walk in the first
place, when she was new here. She
was terrified by that steep drop
and in some weird way she must have
been drawn to it. Poor Mairi,
always so sensitive about things.

They are silent for a moment and the only sound in the kitchen is that of the ticking clock on the wall. Mr Clifford suddenly appears in the door.

MR CLIFFORD
I am taking the boys to a neighbour
first thing tomorrow. A friend of
ours will be baby-sitting them for
a few days.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

There is so much sadness in the house now and I don't want the little ones to experience it first-hand.

Amanda and Sarah nod.

MR CLIFFORD

Maybe the two of you should go to bed soon. We'll all go to church together tomorrow for the first service.

AMANDA

Yes Mr Clifford. Good night.

He leaves the kitchen and Amanda eyes the clock on the wall.

AMANDA

Oh dear! We have to go to Sunday service tomorrow and the vicar, I'm sure, will say a few words about Mairi. I'm not sure I can take it. I miss her so badly. She was like a little sister to me, she was, you know.

INT. CHURCH - DAY

Mrs Clifford, ashen-faced, stumbles into St Matthias Church, supported by her husband. They are followed by Amanda and Sarah. Heads are turned as they sit down at the back of the church just as the service is about to begin. After the initial singing of a hymn, the vicar addresses his little flock.

VICAR

I noticed Mairi a few times as a church goer. She had lovely curly hair and I felt she listened to my sermons with sincerity.

He pauses to observe the congregation, noticing that Mrs Ackroyd and Sarah have tears streaming down their cheeks. The Cliffords stare into the distance, seemingly unable to fathom the situation.

VICAR

I must now address the painful question of suicide. The Lord giveth and the Lord taketh.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

It is not for us to take our lives.
It is a sin to commit suicide and
anyone who does commit that sin
cannot be buried in sacred ground.

Parts of the congregation gasp in disbelief.

AMANDA (in a loud voice)
This is not right!

VICAR
Please calm yourselves dear. This
is a church. Respect the dignity of
the church.

Sarah, shaking her head, takes Amanda by the hand and escorts her out the door.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

The Cliffords, back from church, sit in the study and contemplate what is going to happen next.

MR CLIFFORD
So, there will be an inquest in St Marychurch on Tuesday and questions will be asked, but for now we need to get an advert in the paper for a new house parlourmaid.

MRS CLIFFORD
Maybe we should wait a while, until the newspaper attention goes away.

MR CLIFFORD
Yes, there will be headlines in the press this coming week. Sarah tells me journalists from papers as far as London, even Yorkshire and Scotland, have rang Windsor Court seeking more information after the police issued their press release. But we will not be making any comments to the press.

MRS CLIFFORD
I am worried that the newspaper headlines will put people off seeking work in a house of death.

MR CLIFFORD
(MORE)

(CONT'D)

We'll offer good wages. Everyone has a price.

Mrs Clifford (gives him a stern look).)
The next house parlourmaid we hire must be middle-aged, just like Sarah. Because of your penchant for young women, we've been going from one disaster after the other first with Abigail and then this Mairi.

She spits out this last name as if it were contaminated. Mr Clifford rises in anger and paces back and forth in the room.

MR CLIFFORD

I think I can control myself, Edith, but don't you try to put any blame for the suicide of this Scottish girl on me. The blame is squarely yours and never forget it. You need to change your ways around servants.

MRS CLIFFORD

But how could I have predicted that the stupid girl would go and throw herself to her death just like that? I heard from Mrs Ackroyd that she had troubles with her mother. The girl obviously wasn't quite right in the head.

She rises and prepares to leave the study, but Mr Clifford stops her, puts his hands on her shoulders and stares her in the eye.

MR CLIFFORD

But why were you so quick to blame her? You could have waited until I came home and explained what had happened. But you had an axe to grind didn't you! It's still all about Abigail, isn't it?

MRS CLIFFORD

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

You know how humiliated I felt at the time, but now my worry is that the coroner will somehow accuse me of causing the death of that Scottish girl. I didn't accuse her directly!

She bursts into tears and Mr Clifford takes her in a gentle embrace.

MR CLIFFORD

I understand darling. There are so many aspects to this tragedy and it's certainly not all your fault, but you must be more careful in your dealings with servants from now on. And I will take your advice on what sort of woman we hire next.

INT. HOME IN SCOTLAND - DAY

On Monday morning, just as Mr Craig is about to leave for the train station, the postmaster comes hurrying to his home with a letter written care of the Post Office.

MR CRAIG (opens letter)
Oh God, oh God!

MRS CRAIG
What? Another telegram?

MR CRAIG
No, a letter this time and I recognise the handwriting. Oh God, how my daughter must have suffered.

MRS CRAIG
She was my daughter too.

MR CRAIG (glances
bitterly at his wife)
I only wish you had let
it show, just once, that
you loved Mairi.

MRS CRAIG
Look, I tried to teach her manners.
You were always too soft on her.

INT. ST MARYCHURCH INQUEST - DAY

People gather at the inquest in St Marychurch town hall. Among the attendants are the Cliffords, Amanda, Sarah, Mr Craig, Mr Williams the librarian and a gaggle of journalists. The Cliffords seek out Mairi's father in the entrance hall.

MR CLIFFORD

Good morning Mr Craig, I am glad you were able to make it here for the inquest. My wife and I offer our condolences on the death of your daughter.

MR CRAIG

Thank you Mr Clifford. We meet under the most unfortunate circumstances.

Mr Craig gives Mrs Clifford a cold stare. She looks as if she is about to enter a tiger cage. Everyone takes a seat in the town hall. The coroner, MR JOHNSON, invites the police officer in charge of the investigation to give testimony.

POLICE OFFICER

Mairi Craig's body was found on Saturday morning by two boys accompanied by a dog, the creature being the one that discovered the body. The deceased must have walked up Bishop's Walk at Anstey's Cove on Friday afternoon and jumped to her death 150 feet down onto the cliffs on the water's edge. It's a steep drop, practically vertical. It was a matter of seconds and she must have reached a speed of more than sixty miles an hour when she hit the rocks head first.

People in the town hall wince upon hearing the grim details. The journalists take notes eagerly.

POLICE OFFICER

Her injuries were severe and the position of the body was difficult, which meant it took five hours for the rescuers to bring it up from the cliffs to the foot path on Bishop's Walk.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

The forensic report shows she suffered lacerations, a dislocated spine, a fractured skull and a broken neck, the last injury being the immediate cause of death. Her nose was crushed as well.

Everyone in the room gasps.

AMANDA (whispers to Sarah)
At least it was quick.

The police officer sits down. Sarah rises and asks for permission to speak. The coroner gives her the nod.

SARAH
I spoke at length with Mairi one evening last week and she was in tears over her treatment by Mrs Clifford, who can be overly demanding if you don't mind me saying so.

Sarah pauses to cast a shy look at Mrs Clifford who ignores her, seemingly locked in her own thoughts.

SARAH
She also felt down on her luck and was depressed in general. I was worried about her, but didn't think she was that bad off.

Mr Clifford raises his hand and is given permission to speak, too.

MR CLIFFORD
Mairi could be shy and reticent at times, but I never noticed any serious problems with her. In fact, she was a delight to have as house parlourmaid. She will be sorely missed.

Mr Clifford gives his wife a meaningful glance.

MR JOHNSON
I understand Mairi took her life after being accused, directly or indirectly, of stealing a one-pound note. The accusation of theft was made in the kitchen by Mrs Clifford.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

Who else was there please?

AMANDA

I was there with Mairi when Mrs Clifford entered and said a pound note was missing from Mr Clifford's study. The mistress said somebody in the house must have taken it.

MR JOHNSON

What is your comment, Mrs Clifford?

MRS CLIFFORD

We've had a lot of trouble in the house lately, but I didn't specifically suspect that Mairi had taken the money.

MR JOHNSON

Is that true, Mrs Ackroyd?

AMANDA

Mairi followed Mrs Clifford to the hall but I don't know what they said there. All I know is Mairi came back to the kitchen, protested her innocence, went to her room and wrote some letters before leaving the house for good. And then we learned from Mr Clifford that nothing had been stolen.

Mr Johnson gives Mrs Clifford a quizzical look.

MRS CLIFFORD

Of course I am sorry I said what I said, but I seriously thought someone had stolen money.

MR JOHNSON

Did you put it to Mairi more severely than Mrs Ackroyd?

Mrs Clifford shakes her head.

MR JOHNSON

It is a grave matter to accuse someone of stealing.

He utters the words with a serious air of consideration. Mrs Clifford rises in anger and speaks with a defiant voice.

MRS CLIFFORD

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

I did not accuse anyone specifically. I swear I didn't.

At this point Mr Craig is on his feet and waves a letter in the air with a grim look on his face.

MR CRAIG

This is Mairi's last letter to me. It is a suicide note. She posted it in Wellswood before going up Bishop's Walk where she died. I had thought my most precious daughter was happy in her situation here, but this her last letter to me tells a different story.

He hands the letter to the coroner who accepts with a raised eyebrow and reads it slowly and with increasing concern in his voice:

MR JOHNSON

"Dear pa, Hope you are fine. Don't let this letter cause you any anxiety, only, you see, today Mrs Clifford accused me of stealing a pound note, and deliberately told me that I had done it. She never liked me you see, just like ma. Well, old man, I am just about fed up. I'm down here doing my best. This is the second time I've been accused of stealing after ma accused me at home if you remember. It will be my last. I am innocent, but life isn't fair. By the time you see this I shall be gone for ever. Pa, beloved, this is the only way out. You know I love you. Don't worry, best of luck, your ever loving daughter. Mairi."

People in the audience flinch, some sob. Mrs Clifford looks frightened, caught out. Tristan Williams rises, pale-faced.

TRISTAN

Sir, I also received a letter from Mairi yesterday.

He hands it to the coroner who reads it, too.

MR JOHNSON

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

"Dear Tristan, my prince. Please forgive me for taking my life, but above all forget me. I was going to buy a new coat, but I won't need it now. Life isn't for weak ones like me. Please tell everyone to forget me. I'm a failure as I am sure you realised when I came to you crying at the library. I'm sorry for creating a scene. I'm just a stupid girl. I've no right to be happy."

Mr Johnson's eyes sweep over the audience, where some, even journalists, have been moved to tears. Mrs Clifford hides her face in her hands.

MR JOHNSON

Mairi has spoken twice from the other side, from her grave. In the face of these letters, I have no doubt in my own mind that she had intended to commit suicide consequent on her being accused of stealing. It is a matter of profound regret that Mrs Clifford used those words, and only shows how very careful one must be in accusing people before it is proven that a crime has been committed. Everyone is innocent until proven guilty.

He turns to Mrs Clifford with a stern look in his eyes. She struggles to meet his gaze.

MR JOHNSON

Mrs Clifford. No crime has been committed. But you will have to live for the rest of your life with a sense of guilt for the self-inflicted death of a fine young woman. I hereby return a verdict of suicide while of an unsound mind.

INT. WINDSOR COURT - DAY

Back at Windsor Court after the inquest, Amanda cooks lunch for the Cliffords and Sarah serves it for all four of them in the dining room.

MR CLIFFORD

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

These have been awful days for all of us and I thought we should have lunch together for a change. I am as distressed as everyone else.

AMANDA

Sir, the coroner talked about an unsound mind. Does it mean Mairi had gone mad?

MR CLIFFORD

Of course not, but she must have been temporarily confused. Mairi was obviously not happy. The accusation didn't help. Something must have snapped in her mind.

He glances at his wife who still seems to be locked up in a protective shell. She remains silent.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

After lunch, they all retreat, again unusually, to the living room for coffee and cognac for Mr Clifford, sherry for the women. Mr Clifford addresses the two servants.

MR CLIFFORD

So what happens now? I have noticed that both of you are unhappy with the situation following the unfortunate demise of poor Mairi. I can fully understand it if you want to leave us, but jobs are scarce and you should consider that too. My wife and I would like you to stay.

He turns to his wife for support, but her mind still appears to be vacant. He again turns his attention to the servants.

SARAH

I am happy to stay, Sir. I don't see myself finding a man and getting married at my age, and I do adore the little boys. I want to be there for them. If you don't mind.

MR CLIFFORD

Sarah, we are most grateful for your continued commitment.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

We value your services and our sons love you. I'll make it up for you, no doubt, in terms of remuneration.

Mrs Clifford remains lost in thought and seems incapable of following the discussion. All she does is clutch her pearl necklace nervously.

MR CLIFFORD

Mrs Ackroyd? What about you, please? You've been with us for something like four years and we enjoy your cooking as always and respect your integrity and commitment to your duties. What is your pleasure?

Amanda thinks long and hard before speaking.

AMANDA

Sir, this is a good job, but there is now a dark shadow resting on this house, the dark shadow of Mairi, my friend and colleague. She wasn't buried in a cemetery and it bothers me. I'll hand in my resignation. I shan't work here anymore, but thanks for these years, Sir.

Mrs Clifford suddenly breaks into a hysterical laughter that startles and frightens everyone in the room. She rises and walks up to Amanda.

MRS CLIFFORD

Mrs Ackroyd, do you see her in the night as well?

The lady of the house collapses on the floor in tears.

EXT. ANSTEY'S COVE, WAVES CRASHING ONTO A ROCKY SHORE, SAME AS AT THE BEGINNING - DAY - V/O

The verdict in the Mairi Craig case was reported by newspapers all over England, even The Times, and newspapers as far north as Scotland, all keen to report a classic upstairs-downstairs drama.

The Cliffords ended up hiring two middle-aged women as house parlourmaid and cook. Sarah had found her own weekly wages doubled. It had warmed her heart to feel appreciated, although she would never forget Mairi, the bubbly, sometimes sad house parlourmaid with that quirky accent.

Amanda married Steve, her boyfriend, in a church in Paignton and they had three children. She would never visit the church in Wellswood or Windsor Court again.

Mrs Clifford, whose bad conscience left her no rest, was frequently terrified by sounds and visions in the night to the point where she would stay with her sister most of the time except on holidays such as Christmas and Easter. They sold the house two years later and moved to Totnes, near her sister.

Mr Clifford went on to become a celebrated commander in the Royal Navy in the Second World War, making up for his modest reputation in the Great War, while Mrs Clifford engaged in charity.

In 1943, on the 10th anniversary of Mairi's suicide, they invested £25,000 in a charity providing education to young women in service with the purpose of improving their career opportunities, giving them a better chance to succeed in life.

(MORE)

(CONT'D)

They did so after consulting Amanda and Sarah. The charity was named the Mairi Craig Trust.

FADE OUT.