

CASUAL VIGNETTES OF GILDED VULGARITY

Written by

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'tis always been,
Shall always be-
Peers of the realm,
Whilst at the helm,
Live in perpetuity...

FADE IN:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

BANQUO (black woman, mid 20's in 1970's business suit, lays on the floor. She is recovering from being attacked. She comes-to and picks up some papers and puts them in a briefcase. She stands up for a moment then heads backwards.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

No external occurrence will ever concern them as they live where the boundaries between dreams and reality are incurably porous.

BANQUO stumbles a bit and recovers. She goes to the back of the room and sits at a desk and begins white collar work. A ghost briefly appears then disappears.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So inside they prefer to stay, as outside is bitter cold like an industrial town on a Sunday. And from here they built our foundations with dirty hands and clean conscience.

FELIX SPLENDOR (male late 20's, early 19th century Regency period) pops his head from behind a chair and walks out towards a grand chair on the opposite side of the room.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Felix Splendor, a naïve yet refined gentleman, maintains a foundation that is solidly traditional.

FELIX SPLENDOR circles chair. He wants to sit in it but is unsure of himself.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

His signature achievement was a lone act of effort that resulted in brief notoriety. The world's turned many times since and his adventure's no longer in fashion.

(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He desires audacity yet when confronted by those more daring, he retreats.

FELIX SPLENDOR stands next to the chair, he is resigned to not sitting. From the opposite side of the room, LORD SPRY (male early 30's, 1760's Georgian period) enters from behind a dark hole in curtains and begins walking across the room the chair were FLELIX SPLENDOR is standing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The dandy Lord Spry, a notorious ponce who frequents fat purses not his own, is considered quite the strapping dish.

LORD SPRY arrives at the chair and circles it once then sits down with confidence and arrogance. FELIX SPLENDOR disapproves but backs-off.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He is a cunning Marquess drowning in the ways of a libertine. His obsessive draw to harlots is not the pursuit of simple pleasure, but a visceral reaction to something catastrophically private. Opiates and drink are principles in the pantheon of addictive cohorts driving his team of shadows. He hunts with firm confidence taking all required liberties.

SWEET LADY JANE (early 20's, 1780's late Georgian period) emerges from behind the great chair. She shows LORD SPRY her ankle and he takes notice.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Sweet Lady Jane, quite nubile with noticeable gaps in her finishing, is unburdened of any particular cause or talent.

SWEET LADY JANE sits in a settle. LORD SPRY being predictably interested in her, approaches her smoothly with firm confidence.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

However, she does singularly exceed in being breathtakingly ornamental. She often sails too close to the wind and all the cads are keenly aware

LORD SPRY knowing he has intrigued her stands up. SWEET LADY JANE follows him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

But the greatest interest is given to what was witness with a footman on the back terrace; it was the less than beautiful unburdening of her ornamentation.

From the back of the room LADY MARGARET (late 30's, 1930's starlet) emerges from the back of the room arrogantly. She walks amongst the crowd feeling bullet proof.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Finding advantage in the impulsive whims of another's tongue, Lady Margaret has a definitive collection of secrets. Managing others' secrets and keeping them loosely swaddled in darkness is a solid defense against irrelevance; Lady Margaret is indeed quite relevant.

GEORGE RACKHAM (early 40's, early Edwardian period) is not wealthy but he hustles. He is by a bookshelf in the corner of the room. He is assessing how he is an outsider trying to figure out how to infiltrate socializing of the others.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

George Rackham is not well heeled, has no markers, and without the costly purchase of the lowest grade memberships, would be less than zero.

GEORGE RACKHAM arrives at the group and tries to penetrate to be part of their conversation. He is seeking acceptance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

His odds are perpetually long, and he claws to remain at the fringes. He really shouldn't be here, but he is. A well-rehearsed pretender with a pinch of cleverness, he maneuvers well enough through the right sets to endure.

THE DOWAGER (60's, mid Victorian period) emerges from behind curtains in a formal room entrance. She walks towards the great chair.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Long appointments with upper floor windows and a firm disgust for suffragettes, the Dowager has diminished into the cliché curmudgeon.

THE DOWAGER arrives at the group and surveys what is happening. She then walks right into it disrupting as letting all know she is in charge.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

She makes asinine proclamations of some greater legitimate purpose and fails to understand that her magnum opus was a simple well-placed marriage. Her life will retire having been astonishingly unremarkable.

The group is interacting with each other socially except for GEORGE RACKHAM who is not allowed but he continues to try.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

For them, every day is Saturday where time is measured only through feel...

PUSH OUT:

INT. DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

...and this is the only feeling with which they are comfortable. But there are those who have found comfort in something quite different,...

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. DRAWING ROOM TO BALLROOM - NIGHT

ULTRA WIDE

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...a genuine emotion, and they are tossed aside; considered mad and quarantined.

PUSH IN:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

ULTRA WIDE

CHARLOTTE LOUISE BEAUFORT (late early 30's, Early Regency Period) emerges from a back doorway and begins dancing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Vixen and victim, Charlotte Louise Beaufort's dramatic life is defined by shocking truths that sting but only a little.

INT. BALL ROOM - NIGHT

SPENCER PLOUGH (mid 30's, early Regency period) enters from back entrance. The two are in love and dance.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Hyperbole elevates her to entry-level fascinations and nothing more. These improved dramas in all their plainness amount to over achievements yet still she is considered exceedingly dull.

Spencer Plough, an aspiring gentleman, senses her vulnerabilities and swears upon his thin honor to be her champion. But the slow creep of time has depressed his intentions as needs have grown unavoidable.

SPENCER PLOUGH realizes he no longer loves her. BANQUO walks past in the back followed by her ghost.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

He loves no longer and now desires to escape, but he needs her - her adulation and her money. He is torn between a comfortable life absent ambition and the extremely inconvenient life required to obtain it.

CHARLOTTE LOUISE BEAUFORT realizes that he no longer loves him but she still wishes their love to be and so chases after him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Perspective has destroyed their
emotional bond. It has laid bare
that underlying conflict between
love and need.

PULL OUT:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

ULTRA WIDE

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And perspective's ally is the
abundance of time which magnifies
the pitting rust upon a lie's iron
clad rationale.

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. BALLROOM TO GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Ultra wide

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And, there are those who turn rust
to gold and reality dare not touch.
They are impervious to the waxing
and waning...

PUSH IN:

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

Two men are sitting in great chairs. A third chair is empty.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...of emotions of any sort. For
them nothing is locked nor
repressed; it is simply killed off.

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

LORD FLATBOTTOM (Late 40's, late Victorian period) emerges
from behind the third great chair. He obviously looks
around then sits.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Lord Flatbottom doesn't just miss wide the mark, he is the mark. Oblivious and satisfied, he never aimed higher than where he hit. A would-be Baron of industry who lacks inventing anything useful. He knows he would be a wild success if he tried, thus, initiative is redundant and unnecessary.

OLD FATHER WILLIAM (60's, Edwardian period) stands next to DUKE OF HARDEGE (late 60's, Restoration period). He looks at the others in the room approvingly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Old Father William, the noted Vicar of Codswallop, speaks in long gray monologues of triviality. Most essential to his being is providing divine guidance and ecclesiastic cover for those bereft character and morality.

OLD FATHER WILLIAM steps out and faces DUKE OF HARDEGE and begins forcefully instructing him on something. When finished, he returns to his station next to the Duke.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Though the respectable attention paid to him is vastly limited, the Vicar believes that eventually they must all come around.

THE COLONEL (early 40's, 1750's North American Colonel's uniform) sits in his great chair looking forward with disappointment.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The Colonel is never burdened by a mistake or some oath he had to take. A hilltop general, he predictably manages to fall short of even minor victories.

THE COLONEL gets up out of his seat and parades to the other side of the room. He stops then looks at the DUKE OF HARDEGE for approval. He receives none.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Despite the glorious nature of his failures, they are still failures.
(MORE)

NARRATOR (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Never waylaid by casualties, the
Colonel declines to accept that his
flags have dipped, and the guns are
silent.

THE COLONEL returns to his chair.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Noble recognition of his heroic
grandeur eludes his campaign for
title and effigies in stone.

THE DUKE OF HARDEGE sits in his great chair and looks
forward unflinchingly.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The 439th Duke of Hardedge, has
sociopathic tendencies confused for
stoicism. He gives no quarter to
deviation especially that which
distracts from what is most
important to him: himself.

He is an unflinching philistine
with the exception of portrait
paintings that reinforce the depth
and quality of his lineage. He
believes to be unequalled, demands
obsequious behavior from all others
and isn't concerned about their
degrees of genuineness.

BANQUO drops her book. The DUKE OF HARDEGE breaks his
forward stare and looks at her disapprovingly. Then whispers
to OLD FATHER WILLIAM who moves between the BLACK WOMAN and
the Duke.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
His affairs are endless as are his
bastards. Speculation regarding his
contributions to local orphanages
is sport for tongues during long
and frequent stretches of idle
time.

The gentlemen stand up and mill about. BANQUO leaves the room
followed by her ghost. Randomly the gentlemen approach the
DUKE OF HARDEGE looking to gain his favor.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

The gentlemen's gathering is an exclusive affair, with membership inherited from a forgotten descendant who was exceptional in some clear way. Long have these men held their seats at the high table, and are expected to last evermore. They are vacant of any intention to explore and understand their history or its possible effects. Their decomposing world view marinates in the formaldehyde of willful ignorance.

The gentlemen return to their great chairs and sit. OLD FATHER WILLIAM returns to the side of the DUKE OF HARDEGE who remains standing.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

Their only concern is simply enjoying the immense comfort and glory found upon their seats. Though not entirely absent curiosity...

A scream is heard, everyone looks in the same direction. They get up and walk towards the sound.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...they do concede great interest in a minor mishap in the back woods.

CUT TO ULTR WIDE
THEN DOLLY LEFT:

INT. GREAT HALL TO INT. WOODS - NIGHT

The only thing to move quicker than the spread of tittle-tattle is the rush of these muckrakes to another's misfortune while still fresh.

PUSH IN:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

All the characters are hovering over the dead body of BANQUO who has a sword sticking out of her back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

What occurred in the woods was another murder. Never known to waste good drama,...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...nor investigate something scandalous by half, they embed themselves in this mystery.

Keen interest is only paid to unmasking a killing savior who provided the required respite from their lives. They don't intend to elevate this hero, rather, they will release the long knives. Elevating deeds amongst themselves is never authentically celebrated, in fact they're simply not tolerated.

PULL OUT:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)

If one's station improves then others must fall and the thought of being sent down in station...

The entire woods is seen and the characters look down in unison at the dead body as if to look past her and into the ground.

DOLLY DOWN:

EXT. WOODS TO LAYERS OF ROCK - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)

...is immeasurably worse than even being sent down to hell.

PUSH IN:

INT. HELL - NIGHT

THE DEVIL sits on a throne and looks straight ahead in judgment.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 But then Heaven or Hell never
 concern them. They have long
 abandoned God, and he wouldn't
 receive them anyway, even God's
 grace has its limits.
 The Devil too has limits...

INT. HELL - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 ...and he rejects them despite
 their Faustian bargain; he does not
 wish to collect what he is owed.
 And as deep as the Devil digs into
 the blackest creases of his mind,
 he cannot conjure a punishment more
 damning than simply allowing them
 to be as they are.

THE DEVIL closes the gates of Hell.

PULL OUT:

INT. HELL - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 They have no appointments with
 life, and the Devil has closed the
 gates of death to them.

DOLLY TO:

INT. HELL TO DRAWING ROOM - NIGHT

BANQUO and her ghost are moving around the Drawing Room
 characters disrupting them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 So upon the backs of driven steeds,
 they proudly ride the road to
 Damascus...

DOLLY LEFT

INT. DRAWING ROOM TO BALLROOM - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 ...unshriven with no possibility of
 being unhorsed.

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

BANQUO is dancing with SPENCER PLOUGH. Her Ghost is watching.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Any objective reality is
perpetually denied ...

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. DRAWING ROOM TO GREAT HALL - NIGHT

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...as the cycle of murder provides
distraction...

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

BANQUO is on the DUKE OF HARDEDGE's great chair. Her Ghosts
watches. She defiantly drops her bible.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...from their ugly and divisive
lives.

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. GREAT HALL TO WOODS

NARRATOR (V.O.)
So they continue with measureless
and empty days...

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

All characters are standing around the dead body of BANQUO
who has a cleaver sticking out of her back.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...only generating new conflicts,
deeper fears, and bolder lies.

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. DRAWING ROOM NIGHT

BANQUON is sitting in the great chair defiantly with her Ghost at her side as all the Drawing Room characters look on with disapproval but afraid to do anything about it.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 Their unnatural longevity is owed
 to deflection, avoidance, and
 ignorance.

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT

BANQUO is dancing with SPENCER PLOUGH. CHARLOTTE LOUISE BEAUFOT desperately runs in to break it up.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 No amount of invented foils
 murdered in the woods, or wickermen
 sacrificed can assuage...

DOLLY LEFT:

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

BANQUO is dancing romantically with LORD FLATBOTTOM.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
 ...the uncomfortable consequences
 of their being or discharge the
 underlying terror that blackens
 their hearts:...

DOLLY LEFT:

EXT. WOODS - NIGHT

All characters are hovering over the dead body of BANQUO who has an axe buried in her back.

NARRATOR
 "To be thus is nothing but to be
 safely thus"

The transitions now become extremely fast blurring past the rooms in continued order.

There is greater disruption in the rooms amplified by the indecernable speed. This happens for 5 cycles. With each cycle speed is increased.

FADE TO BLACK:

END CREDITS

FADE IN:

INT. GREAT HALL - NIGHT

LORD FLATBOTTOM is looking around in vain. He has been abandoned.

FADE OUT.

END