

ANNE AND HORTENSE

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AFTERNOON- OUTSIDE OF AN ABANDONED CHURCH

ANNE and HORTENSE jump out of a carriage on the side of the road and run into the forest giggling. They run inside and fall down to the floor, still laughing. They lay on their backs, heads facing each other.

HORTENSE

Well, what now?

ANNE

Anything.

AFTERNOON- ARMAND & HORTENSES' ESTATE

A servant opens the door to let ARMAND out of the carriage. Just then, THE EARL'S carriage goes by. THE EARL and ARMAND make eye contact, THE EARL quickly closes the curtain in the carriage as it continues on. ARMAND walks away in a huff, entering the estate.

ARMAND

Where is she?

MAID

Hortense, sir?

ARMAND

Who the fuck else would I be looking for, you cunt?

HORTENSE

I- yes, I have not seen her today.

ARMAND

FIND HER!

Armand searches from room to room of the estate and begins throwing objects at the wall in a fit of rage. A SERVANT BOY begins to walk in, realizes what is going on, and quickly tries to scurry out of the room.

ARMAND

YOU!

SERVANT BOY

(Points to himself)

ARMAND

Yes, you. Can you hold a gun?

The SERVANT BOY shakes his head yes. They both walk out of the house and move quickly to the carriage. The carriage heads down the road in the direction THE EARL was headed.

AFTERNOON- THE EARL'S CARRIAGE

THE EARL looks out the window and quickly closes the curtain, turning to the two other men in the carriage who look at him with concern.

THE EARL

Ah, his Royal Repugnancy has crawled out of his cave today!

HENRY

Who?

THE EARL

The man who has accused me of laying with his wife more times than he probably prays.

HENRY

Have you?

THE EARL

No, but I would.

They all laugh.

HENRY

Have you invited him to shoot?

THE EARL

I'm sure the man would have some religious objection to the concept.

GEORGE

But apparently, no objection to kicking out the teeth of his maids.

THE EARL

Right you are!

The carriage moves through the town and out into the country. The carriage comes to a stop on the side of the road, DRIVER opens the carriage door.

THE EARL

No, you idiot. You can't leave the carriage here unless you want to be

looted by a bunch of poor leeches.

DRIVER

Yessir, sorry.

THE EARL

Okay, yes, well... I forgive you.

The driver quickly recloses the carriage door, gets back into the driver's seat, and clumsily maneuvers it farther into the wooded area. The men get out of the carriage and begin walking to the open field in front of them.

AFTERNOON- INSIDE OF AN ABANDONED CHURCH

ANNE brings the horses from the carriage and takes them down to a covered area, ties them up, and feeds them. ANNE comes inside and begins organizing a bag of belongings while HORTENSE is laying on the ground staring up at the sky through a hole in the roof.

ANNE

(Pulls out two swords)

Why did you bring these?

HORTENSE

For protection.

ANNE

If we get caught with these we're dead.

HORTENSE

If we're caught at all we're dead... I know how to use it.

ANNE

Are you serious? You?

HORTENSE

You might think yourself quite funny right now, but as a matter of fact, I do.

ANNE pauses for a moment to think.

ANNE

Show me.

HORTENSE

Right now?

ANNE

Yes. I want to be able able to protect you too. We aren't to leave until tomorrow either way and we need something to pass the time.

HORTENSE

I know something we can do to pass the time.

ANNE

I'm being serious.

HORTENSE

It's not easy. You can't just learn in one afternoon-

ANNE

But it's a start.

HORTENSE

Alright. You know I can't say no to you. We need more space. Let's go outside.

AFTERNOON- ARMAND'S CARRIAGE

The SERVANT BOY and ARMAND sit across from each other, frequently making eye contact and then looking away. They do not notice they have already passed the Earl's carriage because it was well-hidden.

ARMAND

Do you like school, boy?

SERVANT BOY

I don't go to school, sir. I work for you.

ARMAND

Oh... Right.

AFTERNOON- OUTSIDE OF THE ABANDONED CHURCH

The two women are standing facing each other, in a clearing, just outside the edge of the forest.

HORTENSE

Let's take that again. Stand with your hips square. Keep both hands firmly on the sword. Use your entire body's

momentum to swing.

ANNE

Like this?

ANNE attempts to swing the sword. It is weak.

HORTENSE

Well, It's... better. Lead with a dominant leg and try to hit me.

HORTENSE holds up her sword to block and Anne swings harder this time.

HORTENSE

Yes! Much better. What more important than simply swinging is sparring and being able to hold your own.

ANNE

What, you want me to fight you?

HORTENSE

Yes, I do.

ANNE

I don't know, I don't want to hurt you.

HORTENSE

I think I will be fine, Anne.

Both practice blocking each other's attacks, sparring back and forth. ANNE delivers a hard blow, surprising HORTENSE. As she pulls back, her sword accidentally and just barely grazes HORTENSE's cheek, drawing blood. HORTENSE moves her hand to her cheek. ANNE drops her sword and runs over.

ANNE

Oh, heavens are you okay? I'm so stupid I don't know-

HORTENSE

Anne, it's okay, it's really just a small cut.

ANNE

No, you're bleeding... Please.

ANNE grabs HORTENSE'S arm and brings her inside. They sit down, but it is almost dark and hard to see.

ANNE

I can't see. Just give me one minute,
I'm so sorry.

HORTENSE

Anne, you barely scratched me. It
probably won't even scar.

ANNE begins to make a fire under the area open to the sky in
the church.

ANNE

It could've been much worse. It was
such a stupid idea to have you try and
teach me how to fight with a weapon.

HORTENSE

You're so hard on yourself. You really
were picking it up quickly. So
quickly, in fact, you managed to get a
swipe at me.

ANNE ignores the joke. She lights a lamp with the fire and
sets it close to Hortense. Anne rips off a piece of her dress
and blots it with alcohol, bringing it to HORTENSE'S cheek.

ANNE

I'm sorry, I know it burns.

HORTENSE

No, It's- fine.

HORTENSE winces and a water droplet falls on her cheek. She
looks up as more fall down through a hole in the ceiling. It
is beginning to rain hard.

ANNE

Oh, great. The fire.

They both move away from the hole in the roof, finding
somewhere dry to sit. ANNE continues to tend to the small
scratch on HORTENSE'S cheek.

AFTERNOON- ARMAND'S CARRIAGE

ARMAND and the SERVANT BOY go farther down the hill. They go
past a carriage by the road. ARMAND bangs his cane on the
roof of the carriage.

ARMAND

STOP! STOP, YOU PILLOCK!

The carriage comes to a stop. The driver opens the door for them. ARMAND falls out and to the ground into the wet and muddy ground. The SERVANT BOY offers a hand to tell him up, both of them fall to ground. ARMAND climbs over the boy, pushing him further into the ground to get up. The driver tries to get into the carriage to wait out of the rain.

ARMAND

What are you doing? Sit there and wait!

ARMAND points to the driver's seat at the top of the carriage. The driver hops back up and waits in the rain. ARMAND and the SERVANT BOY start walking down the pathway into the forest, continually slipping and falling.

AFTERNOON- THE FIELDS

The men run from the fields and to the carriage. They try getting it out of the mud but it won't budge. The men stand under some trees, passing around a flask. Their words are slurred from the alcohol.

THE EARL

Well it looks like we're stuck here for the moment. This rain came out of no where.

HENRY

I can shoot the rain out of the sky!

HENRY shoots a stray bullet into the sky. They all cheer. GEORGE shoots into the sky as well, they all laugh and cheer again.

THE EARL

No but seriously don't do that again. I heard of a priest during my time in France who died from a stray bullet at a party.

HENRY

Right. I shot it in that direction so if it does hit someone, it will just be a peasant or farmer.

HENRY points unknowingly in the direction of the church just a bit down the road.

THE EARL

Oh, okay. Right, good thinking!

THE EARL looks in the direction HENRY points and sees smoke rising in the distance.

THE EARL

Looks like there might be some people with a fire over there. Isn't that where the old convent is? Is it still in use?

HENRY

I think so. I can go.

THE EARL

What, and scare off the women? No, no, I will go and see if they can provide lodging for the night. They might have never seen a man before.

GEORGE

What about the clergymen?

THE EARL

Uh, I doubt clergymen are in a women's convent, you dunce. I'll fire my gun to give the go ahead to come.

HENRY

And if you don't come back?

THE EARL

Then I've run off with a pious women.

The men go sit back in the carriage and THE EARL begins walking towards the church.

EVENING- THE CHURCH

ANNE is finishing up cleaning HORTENSE'S wound. ANNE leans in and kisses HORTENSE. Just then, ARMAND runs into the room and the SERVANT BOY follows.

ARMAND

WHERE IS HE?

ANNE and HORTENSE break apart

HORTENSE

My husband- we were just-

ARMAND

I knew you were a sinner, but this is

pure work of the devil. Not only did your evil rat bastard of a husband kidnap my wife, you used the work of the devil to seduce my wife herself. You, boy, point your gun at the short one.

ANNE and HORTENSE both put their hands up. The SERVANT BOY points his gun at HORTENSE

ARMAND

No you fucking buffoon, the one that's not my wife.

The SERVANT BOY quickly points his gun at the other one.

ARMAND

I will give you ten seconds to answer. Where. Is. Your. Husband.

ANNE

I-I- you must be mistaken

ARMAND

Ten

ANNE

We got lost in the woods and-

ARMAND

Nine, eight,

HORTENSE

ARMAND, PLEASE-

ARMAND

Seven, six,

ANNE

Look, let's just talk about this-

ARMAND

Five, four

ANNE

You can't make that boy shoot-

ARMAND

Three, two

ANNE
STOP! LISTEN-

Blood sprays out the back of ARMAND'S head, he slumps and falls to the ground. The bullet lodged in the back of his head rolls across the floor. ANNE and HORTENSE run to each other and embrace.

ANNE
Are you alright?

HORTENSE
Yes, are you?

ANNE
Besides thinking I was going to die,
yes.

The two women rest their foreheads on each other and let out a laugh. ANNE turns to the SERVANT BOY who is staring in shock at the body.

ANNE
Did you do that?

The SERVANT BOY shakes his head no. HORTENSE walks over to look at the wound.

HORTENSE
No, the bullet went through the top of
his head.

They all look up through the hole in the ceiling.

ANNE
Oh, heavens, what are the odds?

HORTENSE
I- next to nothing.

ANNE and HORTENSE start laughing uncontrollably. The SERVANT BOY is holding back tears. ANNE hears a snuffle and turns to him.

ANNE
Oh, goodness. This must be so
confusing for you.

ANNE goes to her trunk and pulls out a gigantic ruby and diamond necklace. ANNE kneels down in front of the sitting

boy.

ANNE

What is your name, young man?

SERVANT BOY

Theodore

ANNE

Okay, Theodore. How would you like to never have a work a day in your life ever again.

SERVANT BOY

I don't understand-

ANNE

This necklace alone is worth enough money for you and your family to live off of for the rest of your life. If I give this to you, will you promise to never speak of what happened here? You can even leave town if you need to. Lord knows you have the money now.

The SERVANT BOY pauses and shakes his head yes.

HORTENSE

Make sure you stop crying before you leave. Tell the driver that my husband told you to head back to the carriage. We will hide the body and no one will ever find it. I'm sure the assumption will be the man finally went fully mad and ran into the woods. There will be a search tomorrow morning. You will most likely not be questioned, but if you are, say that he ordered you back to the carriage and that was the last you ever saw of him. And whatever you do, do not let the driver come down here, do not act suspicious.

The SERVANT BOY shakes his head yes.

ANNE

Pinky promise?

The SERVANT BOY holds up his pinky and they shake on it. ANNE hands over the necklace.

SERVANT BOY
When I go back-

ANNE
Yes?

SERVANT BOY
Can I sit inside the carriage?

ANNE and HORTENSE look puzzled at the question.

ANNE
...I don't see why not?

SERVANT BOY
Okay.

HORTENSE

It was nice to meet you, Theodore. I
wish you a happy life.

SERVANT BOY
Same to you, ma'am.

The SERVANT BOY runs back out into the rain and back to the carriage. ANNE turns back to HORTENSE with worry.

ANNE
Are you alright?

HORTENSE
I could ask you the same.

They both look down at the body and look at each other in agreement.

HORTENSE
Well, we've got to do something about
that.

The women drag his body into the woods and put coins over his eyes.

HORTENSE
We can't bury him tonight, the soil is
just mud.

ANNE
We can do it in the morning then. I'm
exhausted.

Both of the women come back inside, take off the outer layers of their dressing, lay down, and embrace each other. ANNE falls asleep but HORTENSE is restless and decides to sit outside under a ledge to think.

EVENING- THE FOREST

The weather has only gotten worse. THE EARL trudges through the thick mud, exhausted. He is not far now from the church. THE EARL trips over something in the woods, causing him to fall over. He turns back to see what it is and realizes it's a dead body. He screams and scrambles to his feet. He continues to run forward and fall over until he reaches the church.

EVENING- OUTSIDE THE CHURCH

At the outside of the church, HORTENSE hears the yell and stays on guard, hiding under the ledge.

EVENING- OUTSIDE THE FOREST

THE EARL continues on until he reaches the church and quietly walks inside.

THE EARL

Anne?

ANNE starts to shift and wake up. She is startled to see her husband before her.

THE EARL

I don't understand... What are you doing here?... Did you kill Armand?

ANNE

Let's just take a moment, let me explain.

THE EARL is right in front of her. ANNE sits up and starts scooting away as THE EARL advances.

THE EARL

I see that there are two trunks here. And seeing as your alone, I suppose you thought you could whore yourself out to the town's favorite and richest freak and then run away with his money?

ANNE

No, I-

THE EARL starts to shake her and wrap his hands around her neck.

THE EARL

YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD OUTSMART ME,
HUMILIATE ME? YOU ARE NOTHING BUT A
STUPID LITTLE GIRL.

HORTENSE runs in with the sword. THE EARL hears her coming in and slides her foot out from under her. HORTENSE falls to the ground and drops her sword. THE EARL stands up and steps on her hand, keeping her down. HORTENSE tries to kick and hit at him. THE EARL kicks her in the side, causing HORTENSE to wheeze out in pain.

THE EARL

How could I be so ignorant as to
assume you would not convince your pet
into killing your husband for you?

HORTENSE

She is not my pet, she is my lover.

THE EARL

As if there could be such a thing in
the eyes of god. A whore is a whore is
a dead whore.

THE EARL pulls out his gun and cocks it. ANNE crawls across the floor and grabs the sword. THE EARL turns around and shoots in the wrong direction. ANNE drives the sword through his chest. THE EARL falls farther on the sword, causing ANNE to fall backwards. ANNE screams out in horror. HORTENSE pulls the body of THE EARL off of ANNE and holds out a hand for her.

MORNING- INSIDE THE CHURCH

ANNE and HORTENSE have piled both of the bodies on top of each other inside the church. They clean themselves up, change into men's clothing and pack their things back into the carriage.

ANNE

We need to leave soon.

HORTENSE

It seems like we're all ready to go.

ANNE

Would you like to do the honors?

HORTENSE

Why, thank you.

HORTENSE lights a lamp and throws it onto the dead bodies, starting a huge fire. The two women cough. ANNE holds out her hand.

ANNE

Ready?

HORTENSE takes her hand.

HORTENSE

Ready.

The two girls run up the hill and get on top of the carriage. HORTENSE whips the reigns of the horses and they set off down the road and go off into the distance.

THE END