

'MARGINS OF THE SEA'

Screenplay by John H. Coffman

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FADE IN...

EXTERIOR: MALATA ISLAND. DAY.

AERIAL SHOT: Malata Island with its distinctive hill-top Pinnacle of Granite...Closer view of a Chinese flax Plantation. There are, also, living quarters, and out-buildings, etc. (Breezes stir; birds sing and cicada hum.)

EXT: PINNACLE HILL. DAY.

Two EUROPEAN MEN labour at carrying a simple pine-wood coffin up a hillside by rough-hewn handles. They follow an uneven, rarely trod path.

Short, over-weight and middle-aged Hispanic LUIS, the pallbearer at the lower end of the coffin, sets his end down.

The noonday Sun is merciless.

GEOFFREY RENOARD, Canadian, age 34, of medium build, puts his end down to wait. They catch their breath. He rests for a moment.

Renouard looks up to the summit of the hill...

They continue on with their labours...'BOY', the six-year-old son of a Fijian couple follows with a Kowhai-tree Sapling wrapped in burlap. He stays a safe distance below them.

Well below and farther away, two FIELD-HANDS take a break from harvesting Chinese flax ('Ramey') to watch the ghoulish scene,

EXT: HOUSE ON MAINLAND. DAY.

A VICTORIAN HOUSE with a commanding hillside view eastward of the Pacific Ocean. The house is rich with several bedrooms and related comforts; a library, parlour, smoking room, and the usual domestic spaces. Most notable is a wide veranda, which runs along the back of the house, and faces the Sea.

There are four people on the Veranda; one woman and three older men. There is, also, one pair of binoculars, and a black umbrella.

EXT: VERANDA. DAY.

FELICIA MOORSOM, age 26, a British woman with strikingly beautiful features stares east to a distant horizon.

WILLIE DUNSTER, a New Zealander, age 40, offers her a pair of binoculars, while holding an umbrella over her head.

WILLIE

"Here, Miss. Use these."

MISS MOORSOM

"Thank you, Willie"

A light rain begins to fall...

Willie Dunster's Uncle, MR GEORGE DUNSTER (age 68) and Miss Moorsom's Father-PROFESSOR BERNARD MOORSOM (age 60) are idle in the background; the Professor smoking a cold pipe.

A servant appears with another umbrella and holds it over George Dunster's head.

Mr Dunster leans to shout at his friend standing next to him.

MR DUNSTER

"My Nephew remembers important things like brolies, what. He is a good boy!"

Professor Moorsom smiles...

Willie shuts his eyes in embarrassment.

Miss Moorsom is oblivious to everything, but what she sees through the binoculars. Her eyes are emerald with gold flakes.

MISS MOORSOM

"How very interesting. Is it far?"

Willie opens his eyes and looks at her.

WILLIE

"Goodness, you don't mean to say you can actually see it?"

Felicia looks at the binoculars. She looks to Willie.

MISS MOORSOM

"Isn't that what these are for, to see things from afar?"

WILLIE

"It's not a very big island, comparatively speaking. It lies just below the horizon. There is a haze sometimes. But you can't really see it from here. It's too far."

Felicia looks into the binoculars again.

MISS MOORSOM

"I can see it plain as day."

Prof Moorsom removes his pipe.

PROF MOORSOM

"Perhaps - if I might suggest - there may be a rational explanation. It is overcast here, and appears to be quite sunny out there. Is it at all possible that this condition has created a sort of barometric lens and we are witness to one of Mother Nature's wonderful, but wholly explainable mysteries?"

Willie stares helplessly through the binoculars.
He shrugs his shoulders...

WILLIE

"I can't see it..."

He hands the binoculars back to Miss Moorsom.
She offers them to her Father...

MISS MOORSOM

"Father. Please. Will you have a look?"

Prof Moorsom raises the binoculars to his bushy eye-brows.

MISS MOORSOM

"Not there, Papa...There."

She gently points him in the right direction.

MISS MOORSOM

"Now, what do you see?"

Moorsom makes a show of peering into the lens and adjusting the focus...

PROF.MOORSOM

"Hmm...Ah, yes. My theory is correct."

WILLIE

"Do you see something, Professor?"

PROF. MOORSOM

"An island, of course. What do you call it, Willie?"

WILLIE

"This is amazing!"

Miss Moorsom smiles...

MISS MOORSOM

"He's not serious... Papa, you're a loveable parent and an incorrigible liar..."

She relieves him of the binoculars...

PROF. MOORSOM

"But Felicia, my dear..."

She makes conversation from behind the binoculars.

MISS MOORSOM

"What's it called, Willie - this invisible island?"

WILLIE

"It's Malata, Miss Moorsom - Malata Island."

MISS MOORSOM

"What a lovely name. Malata. How often is there a ferry?"

WILLIE

"Oh, there's no ferry. It's not inhabited. That is, except for a plantation owner and his gang."

Felicia leans to the railing, as if her Earth had shifted.

Her companions chat softly behind her.

Presently, the Professor's Sister, MRS MOORSOM, age 52, appears on the veranda. She approaches the party.

MRS MOORSOM

"It's raining. Again. How delightful."

All except Miss Moorsom look her way.

PROF MOORSOM

"Emma, you've decided to join us after all. You haven't met William, George's nephew..."

Willie smiles and holds out his hand to her...

PROF MOORSOM

"Willie, this is my sister Emma."

Mrs Moorsom takes the offered hand.

MRS MOORSOM

"Very nice to meet you, Willie."

PROF MOORSOM

"Are we feeling better?"

She releases Willie's hand.

MRS MOORSOM

"Why, yes, dear brother. Much better. In fact, I was just collating some of your notes..." (To the Dunsters)
"My Brother rarely relaxes; he's always working. Always writing..."

Miss Moorsom lowers the binoculars to listen.

WILLIE

"Oh, are you writing another book, Professor?"

MRS MOORSOM

"We have a series of speaking engagements in London and Paris set for March..."

PROF MOORSOM

"And time enough for our current interests..."

A Maid comes to them from the house...

MAID

"If you please, Mrs Dunster has asked me to say that afternoon tea is ready in the small dining room."

The Professor takes Mr Dunster by the arm and speaks loudly to his hard-of-hearing friend...

PROF MOORSOM

"AFTERNOON TEA, GEORGE."

Willie leads the party along the veranda into the house.

After a moment Felicia Moorsom turns and follows.

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. Day.

It is late in the afternoon. A simple Brick Oven serves as an incinerator for unwanted combustibles. Smoke billows skyward...Geoffrey Renouard pokes at flames inside this incinerator with an iron poker. He is alone at first...Luis appears. Renouard speaks without looking at him.

RENOUARD

"A mild, clear night tonight. Yet, quiet as the grave. Are your men hiding?"

Luis shakes his shaggy head in reference to his field-hands.

LUIS

"Madre mia. Some superstitious bastards - Pardon, Senor...Talking, how you say...rubbish?"

Renouard turns to Luis.

RENOUARD

"Luis, you are talking about your own men..."

LUIS

"I do not say for any man what I cannot say to the face..."

Renouard smiles and pokes the burning contents.

Luis moves closer with some other business at-hand.

LUIS

"Por favor, Maestro. I cannot take it. Muchas gracias"

Luis holds a Gold Ring in his fingers.

LUIS

"It does not fit..."

RENOUARD

"It doesn't? How very strange. It fit this morning."

LUIS

"I think, the ring, maybe it shrinks. Or my finger is too big. I cannot say. Please, take it back."

Renouard holds out his hand, and accepts the returned ring. He tucks the gold ring into his poor wallet.

RENOUARD

"That's fine... In any case, tell the Men they must come out and enjoy themselves. Break out some extra beer for them, will you? No work for five days. We're on schedule. Tell them it's a Holiday. Make something up...God's truth; this sitting around in the dark is queer..."

LUIS

"Si, Senor. I will say it is fiesta time. Cervesa. Comida...Is good idea. Make ev'ry man happy."

RENOUARD

"Splendid."

LUIS

"I go tell them now."

Luis hurries off on his appointed errand...

Renouard watches him for a moment, and then turns to look at the boy, who stands at a safe distance watching him.

Boy appears from the shadows and hurries after Luis...

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

The next day: The SCHOONER '*Janet of Malata*' plies her way toward the Mainland...The Sea is moderately choppy with sou'wester breezes. She presents a fine, but labouring figure of a working vessel... Sails strain, rigging clacks in the breeze...

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Renouard comes up from below deck. He looks aft to where his skipper mans the helm.

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

CAPTAIN HENERY, a Maori chap, whose countenance is mapped, weather-beaten, years beyond his true age of 40...A light sea-spray has salted the Captain's dark brown shirtfront and collar.

Geoffrey Renouard approaches.

Capt. Henery does not look at him. Rarely more than a half dozen words pass between them while at Sea. Little more than information and directions are exchanged.

Renouard looks down at Capt. Henery's feet. He looks up.

RENOUARD

"You reckon, Captain?"

The Captain continues to watch the horizon.

CAPT. HENERY

"They fit, I reckon."

RENOUARD

"Good. Aren't you interested in where they came from? I don't mind telling you..."

Captain Henery glances at his boss for a moment, and then to the distant horizon.

CAPT. HENERY

"Well, it's not my birthday. It must be a Christmas gift. Therefore, I guess it's none of my business where they came from. A horse is a horse. A gift is a gift."

RENOUARD

"Honestly, I don't mind telling you. You know that assistant I hired..."

CAPT. HENERY

(Cuts him off)

"...Sir. If you don't mind, I have work to do. We're carrying a heavy load. I only have two eyes and two ears. Like to concentrate on the task at hand - staying afloat and making headway. No offence..."

RENOUARD

"Well, of course, which brings me to my purpose. It is your tea break. Go have yourself a feed. There's beef stew and potatoes. With Luis's regards. And there's fresh baked bread..."

CAPT. HENERY

"Who baked the bread?"

RENOUARD

"It might've been me."

Renouard holds the wheel and grins...Henery laughs and turns to go...He stops and turns back...

CAPT. HENERY

"Oh. Thank you, Sir. For these..."

RENOUARD

"You are welcome. I'd hate to see them go to waste."

CAPT. HENERY

"Good heel, good leather. And they fit fine."

Capt Henery turns and clumps away in his new boots.

He stops and talks to his sole crew, 19 year old Maori TANE, who is coiling rope.

Renouard smiles a weary smile.

EXT: AUCKLAND DOCKS. DAY.

Just five o'clock, the 'Janet of Malata' is at Auckland Wharf being off-loaded by crane and pulley. Capt. Henery and Tane are on-board wrestling with heavy bales of plant fibre...Three Stevedores receive the bales on the dock and load a horse-drawn flatbed wagon for transfer to a dockside warehouse.

Willie Dunster watches the operation. He counts the cargo as it is off-loaded. Renouard stands beside him.

The final bale is off-loaded.

WILLIE

"I counted forty-one bales. Is that it?"

RENOUARD

"That's enough for the time being. Still have a few left on the island. I might return with 'em. Haven't decided if it's worth the trouble. This lot almost swamped us."

Willie marks a sheet of paper on a clipboard.

WILLIE

"Oh joy. A quite good harvest, was it?"

RENOUARD

"Very. Perfect growing conditions."

WILLIE

"They'll love you in Liverpool, won't they, Sir?"

Willie leads the way to the dockside offices of *Dunster & Co.* He stops en route to turn and ask.

WILLIE

"I, ah, suppose you'll be sleeping aboard tonight"

RENOUARD

"No, I'm looking for a hot bath and a good meal. Why?"

Willie grins.

WILLIE

"Business first..."

INT: DUNSTER & COMPANY WAREHOUSE. DAY.

The door opens. Willie ushers Renouard in ahead of him.

The room they have entered is a large office. There is a counter for filling out paperwork. Behind this are two desks and a row of mail cubicles on the wall to the side. Some of which are filled with letters.

Willie Dunster goes behind the counter and lays out a clipboard and sheaf of documents to be filled-in by the customer.

He smiles at Geoffrey.

WILLIE

"Geoffrey, I have a proposition for you..."

Geoffrey stands at the counter, examining his bill-of-lading.

RENOUARD

"Can I get my mail first?"

WILLIE

"Well, of course"

Willie goes to collect Renouard's mail.

He returns and gives Renouard a handful of envelopes, which are put in a soft leather valise at his side.

RENOUARD

"Okay, what's your proposition?"

EXT: DUNSTER COVE. DAY.

The Schooner rocks gently at-anchor in Dunster Cove.

Henery and Tane are seen rowing to shore in the rowboat.

They haul the boat up a sandy beach, and leave it tied to a large half-buried driftwood tree. At the top of the beach is a small boat shed. Beyond, among bushes, traces of an over-grown stone path, (this leads up to a private road.)

EXT: CITY STREET. DAY.

Later, Renouard walks into a 3-storie white-stone Building - The first level being offices of the 'WEEKLY JOURNAL.' He carries a Box wrapped in plain brown paper and twine. (Hurricane lamp)

INT: HALLWAY. DAY.

Renouard walks down a hallway of the newspaper building.

The air is dry and dusty. Electric lights are as dim as the late afternoon shadows outside.

He passes two doors. He stops at the third door, which is larger, and has a brass sign bearing the occupant's name and title, '*Maxwell Ford - Chief Editor*'

Renouard opens the door and enters. He shuts the door behind him.

INT: NEWSPAPER OFFICE. DAY.

Minutes later, Renouard is engaged in conversation with his friend MAX FORD, a 45-year-old slightly over-weight New Zealander, sitting at a large flat desk proofing news-copy with a red pencil. Max comments while engaged.

MAX

"Excellent! So, you did dine at old Dunster's last night..."

RENOUARD

"That's right...Young Dunster asked me as I was leaving his office. It seemed like a sudden stroke of genius for him. He fairly danced when I assented. He even sent a cab to Devonport to fetch me. Thank God for that. He was quite insistent. Told me his Uncle had mentioned the granting of the Malata concession as being his last act of official life."

There is a counter between them. Max looks up and smiles.

MAX

"Very touching"

RENOUARD

"You think so? The old goat was civil to me, but didn't show any interest in how I was getting on with the Plantation. Frankly, it was baffling why I was there at all. I am hardly on the social register."

MAX

(Sotto voce)

"Your pulse would barely register."

RENOUARD

"Pardon?"

The Editor waves away his comment.

RENOUARD

"There were special guests visiting from London. People they wanted me to meet. God knows why..."

MAX

"I was asked. Only I couldn't go. I had a previous engagement. But, Geoffrey, when did you arrive?"

Renouard is silent for a moment. He wakes from his thoughts.

RENOUARD

"Me? Oh, yesterday before sunset. I'm anchored up at Dunster Cove...Willie insisted..."

Renouard thinks for a moment. Max returns to his copy-proofing.

RENOUARD

"Isn't he a strange one? Have you ever watched him reading his mail?"

MAX

"Who? Willie? No, I haven't."

RENOUARD

"You've never noticed how he hunches his back and how he holds the paper with both hands. His bulging eyes, his nose. He looks like some sort of breathing apparatus."

Max drops his red pencil and smiles.

MAX

"That's a new one. I have never heard anyone liken Willie Dunster to a breathing apparatus..."

RENOUARD

"Probably not... You are used to seeing him. And the other faces. I don't know how it is but when I come to town, the appearance of people in the street strikes me with such force."

MAX

"And you are not charmed."

RENOUARD

"Well, no. Not as a rule. The effect is forcible...without being clear..."

Max smiles and would speak...Renouard raises a hand to cut him off...

RENOUARD

"...I know. I know. You think it's because of my solitary way of life."

MAX

"Yes, Geoffrey. It is demoralising. You don't see any of us for months at a stretch. How long ago was your last visit?"

RENOUARD

"Not long. Four months."

MAX

"Four months...The time before was six months."

RENOUARD

"I have been busy. And I am used to being alone."

MAX

"Yes, I know that. But, Geoffrey, solitude works like a sort of poison. Soon you become insensitive to people in general - including your friends."

Renouard studies a scenic calendar on the wall. (December 1915)
He turns and looks at Max.

RENOUARD

"True. It is a fact that when I am at home in Malata,
I see no one. Not consciously...I take the plantation boys for
granted."

Max smiles.

MAX

"Here we take the people in the streets for granted.
Call it sanity. But you need your friends, and the people you
work with."

The Editor picks up his pencil, and resumes marking the copy
sheet...Renouard returns to the counter.

RENOUARD

"Are you busy?"

MAX

"Naw. Just finished. Social paragraphs."

RENOUARD

"How timely."

MAX

"As you are well aware, in this office we know
everything about everyone. Including waifs and strays from
back home, down South, and across the Pacific...By the way,
how is that assistant you hired?"

Renouard does not answer. He is distracted by thoughts again.

MAX

"You did hire someone, didn't you?" (He smiles) "And without my vetting him..."

RENOUARD

"Yes, yes...I hired an assistant only to stop your bloody preaching at me about solitude."

MAX

"And have you nothing to tell me about him?"

Renouard reflects for a moment, and looks at his watch.

MAX

"You haven't brought him along by any chance? I don't know if I've ever met the man. What's his name, this new assistant?"

RENOUARD

"His name is Walter...And no, I didn't bring him with me..."

MAX

"Ah, Walter is it?"

RENOUARD

"Listen, Max. I wish you could tell me why Willie'd want me to meet those dinosaurs his Uncle likes to entertain. Everyone knows that I am no Society man..."

MAX

"God help us! Geoffrey Renard is not a Society man. What shall we do? Will there ever be any justice in this world? Still, our Willie Dunster never does a thing without a reason."

Max smiles at him.

RENOUARD

"I wish you had been there. Willie passed me around like I was some rare gem he'd found on the beach..."

MAX

"And the gem complains of mishandling."

RENOUARD

"Christ, I wanted to kill him..."

Max realises his friend is unusually upset for some reason.

MAX

"Geoffrey...You are likely the most famous person Willie Dunster knows personally...Besides his Uncle."

The Editor shoves his paper-work into a drawer in the desk. He gets to his feet and retrieves his coat from a hat-rack.

RENOUARD

"Famous! Me?... That's a joke. He kept stressing that his Uncle's guests from London were celebrities like I was meant to dance a jig or something."

MAX

"What did you do?"

Max pulls on his coat.

RENOUARD

"Me?...Well, nothing really."

MAX

(Interjects)

"Don't tell me you faded away like a wallflower?"

RENOUARD

"No, dammit to hell! I shook everybody's hand like any civil person would do...Don't you start in on me again."

Max chuckles and steps over to his friend. He clasps his shoulder.

MAX

"I know how disconcerting it can be meeting such a woman."

RENOUARD

"What such woman?"

MAX

"Professor Moorsom's lovely daughter. I hear that she is quite striking...Charming in every way, they say"... (He smiles) "Well, my friend, have you anything to impart to our readers regarding these well-bred Londoners?"

Geoffrey pulls away from the Editor.

RENOUARD

"I have to go. I have a previous engagement."

MAX

(Smiles)

"Hogwash. I don't believe you..."

RENOUARD

"I don't care what you believe."

Max Ford takes his arm to manoeuvre him to the door.

MAX

"Let's go for a walk. We have a choice between a late beer and an early coffee...Where are you staying? I should say, where do you bathe? Hotel Abernathy?"

RENOUARD

"Of course. But honestly, I have to..."

MAX

"The Abernathy is fine with me..."

Max opens the office door, and pushes Geoffrey into the hallway, grabbing a hat from a hat-rack next to the door.

EXT: CITY STREET. DAY.

Renouard and Max spill into Queen Street from the newspaper building.

Max walks at Renouard's side smiling. Geoffrey is absent in his own thoughts.

MAX

"Geoffrey, by any chance have you seen our new Post Office? It opened in November - as big as Heaven and as grand as the Parthenon. Greek columns, marble floors...We just might run into Pallas Athena there..."

RENOUARD

"Uh...Who?"

MAX

"Our new Post Office. It's not far from here. We could take a little detour. You might be impressed."

RENOUARD

"No thanks. I get my mail at Dunster's"

MAX

(Smiles)

"Righto, I forgot."

They come to a corner and wait for horse-drawn and motorized traffic to pass...The Editor tips his hat at a passing FEMALE acquaintance. Geoffrey is oblivious to where they are...

RENOUARD

"I look ridiculous in a coat and tie!"

MAX

"Top shelf. You are a man for all Seasons."

Geoffrey steps off the kerb into the path of a horse and cab...Max quickly grabs his collar and pulls him back...

MAX

"Let's not get ourselves killed while crossing the street, shall we?"

EXT: HOTEL. DAY.

Ornate, Victorian-style facade of Hotel Abernathy. Horse and motorised vehicles pass on street. Pedestrians hurry along...And caught-up amongst them, Max and Geoffrey.

INT: HOTEL LOBBY/PUB. DAY.

Geoffrey and Max march through the lobby, to the Restaurant and the adjacent Pub.

The Pub is 'packed to the rafters.' A dozen MEN in business suits stand at the bar talking loud and laughing...

MAX

"Good Lord! Is it five o'clock already?"

He and Geoffrey look at the crowd in dismay.

In a corner, a COUPLE leave a small table and head for the exit.

MAX

"Oh, look over there. A free table. Hurry! Let's grab it before someone else."

They go to the table in the corner. Renouard sits down.

MAX

"Guard this table with your life. I'll get us a jug o' stout. Maybe a plate of fried potatoes and mayonnaise? See what they can muster up."

Max hurries away to negotiate his way through the crowd.

INT: HOTEL/PUB.DAY.

Max happily pushes into the throng of thirsty drinkers...A voice calls out behind him.

WILLIE

"Max! Hey, Max. Over here!"

Max smiles and shrugs his shoulders at being indisposed. He remains in the crowd jostling to get to the bar to order.

INT: HOTEL/PUB. DAY.

Back at the small table, Geoffrey sits quietly.

He blinks; looks around, considers his situation; looks forward again. His eyes shut. (Distant strains of sweet VIOLIN MUSIC rises from outside.)

Max happily makes his way through the crowd to the corner table where he left Geoffrey ten minutes before. He has two steins and a pitcher of beer in his hands...His smile fades...

The table is empty. Geoffrey is gone.

WILLIE (O.S.)

"Max..."

Max turns to greet the familiar voice.

Willie shoulders his way through the crowd toward Max...

WILLIE

"Here. You're not drinking alone, are you?"

MAX

"No, Willie. I hadn't planned to..."

Max puts his burden on the table. He fills a glass and holds it out to Willie.

WILLIE

"No, thanks. Did Geoffrey Renurd come see you?"

MAX

"Yes, indeed. Today as a matter of fact..."

WILLIE

"Where's he? This relates to him, as well."

MAX

"At this moment in time, I haven't a clue."

WILLIE

"Some recent develments 'bout our friends fun London..."

MAX

"Oh? Your friends. I haven't met them yet...Sit down. Relax. He won't get far."

EXT: CITY STREET. DAY.

Renouard hurriedly passes a small crowd gathered across on the footpath outside the Hotel to listen to a Boy play violin...

EXT: CITY DOCKS. DAY.

Ten minutes later, Renouard engages the services of a tall twenty-year-old man, DOUGLAS, who has been fishing off the city wharf.

The young man gets to his feet. They shake hands.

Renouard speaks (inaudible) and shows him five fingers to indicate the number of days work he is offering...Douglas is enthusiastic.

Renouard writes something down on a piece of paper for him. It is directions to Captain Henery's house. Douglas looks at it and nods his head enthusiastically.

EXT: SCHOONER. OPEN SEA.NIGHT.

At dusk, the Schooner 'Janet' cuts through calm seas. All sails unfurled to scoop up every timid breeze. Gradually the sky is changing hue and the watery World grows dark. Moon shines.

EXT: SCHOONER. SAME TIME.

Capt Henery mans the helm with the trace of a smile to his face.

Geoffrey sits in a canvas chair on deck nearby. He has a mug of mulled wine in his hands, and is talking about his adventures on shore...

RENOUARD

"...And this lovely young lady came along and sat down...We chatted into the wee hours right there on old Dunster's veranda...Hardly had two winks o' sleep...But, you know, it's good to blow off a bit of steam now and then..."

Renouard becomes quiet with thought...Capt Henery smiles...

CAPT. HENERY

"Do you like the mulled wine? We don't usually drink it in Summer. It's for cold nights around the fire...An old family recipe...from Wales." (He smiles.)

Renouard blinks. He is oblivious to the joke.

Near the bow, the two younger crewmembers; Tane and Douglas, share a bottle of beer...

TANE

"I've never seen 'em talk so much."

DOUGLAS

"They certainly are generous."

TANE

"Don't think this is normal. It ain't"

Something catches Tane's eyes. He motions with the beer bottle.

TANE

"Look! Dolphins..."

Renouard stirs and smiles...

RENOUARD

"Anyway, she asked me - she said, 'Geoffrey, are you French?... My name, you see, threw her off. She wasn't surprised when I... told her...I was a Canuck. Hmmm... That was it... My brief adventure on shore...And you? How was your day, my Captain?"

CAPT. HENERY

"Oh, family business...I'll tell you about it later."

EXT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

Later, Captain Henery is at the helm...

CAPT. HENERY

"Tane. Douglas. Come here."

Tane and Douglas hurry to him...

CAPT. HENERY

"Tane, I need you to take the helm for a minute while Douglas and me take Master to his bunk."

Tane replaces his boss at the wheel.

CAPT. HENERY

"Doug, come with me. We'll give him a hand"

Henery and Douglas go to Geoffrey.

Henery shakes him. He helps Renouard to his feet.

CAPT. HENERY

"Doug, take the other arm. Master ain't drunk. He's just knackered from a busy day."

CAPT. HENERY

"Sir, we'll help you to your bunk."

RENOUARD

"Pardon?...Oh. Thank you. I can walk."

CAPT. HENERY

"This way, Sir..."

RENOUARD

"I can walk just fine."

They want to insure that he clasps the railing on each side while finding his footing in the dark.

He shakes them off...

RENOUARD

"Christ all-mighty! Leave it. I'm okay. Thank you."

Douglas and the Captain release his arms.

Renouard heavily clumps down below deck.

EXT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

The bowsprit of the 'Janet,' cuts through moderately choppy and luminous swells...

Later, the Skipper makes a decision...He summons his Crew with a brief whistle...Tane and Douglas gather around him.

CAPT. HENERY

"Tane, I need you to take the helm, eh...You'll know what to do. We're going to tack about. Douglas you can help. You know what I mean?"

DOUGLAS

"Yes, Sir. We're changing course."

CAPT. HENERY

"That's right. But we're not just changing our course. We're making a full hundred and eighty degree turn."

Tane is bewildered.

TANE

"We're going back?"

CAPT. HENERY

(To Douglas)

"Don't fret, young man. You'll get your pay... Tane, make the turn smooth-like, slow and easy. Can you do that for me?...Douglas, you'll have to run to keep up. Are you ready? Come on."

Captain Henery steps away from the wheel, and Tane takes it.

The Skipper hurries to the rope that secures the mainsail at an angle. The new crewman is right behind him. He unties the thick rope...Douglas applies his considerable strength to hold the spar down during the process.

INT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

Renouard sleeps peacefully in his bunk...

Soft moonlight pours in through the porthole and moves slowly, remodelling Renouard's face as the vessel slowly tacks about.

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE. NIGHT. (DEAM/FLASHBACK)

From a wicker chair on the veranda, Renouard watches the beautiful, graceful form of Felicia Moorsom approach...

She is dressed in a satiny blue-grey dress that moves like liquid across the surface of her body...

Miss Moorsom walks barefoot; serene, confident. Open smile.

She arrives and stands before him.

MISS MOORSOM

"Do you mind if I sit? We haven't properly met...So much confusion in crowds. I have wanted to pick your brain all evening...At last we're alone."

Renouard stares for a moment at the sculpted face above him.

Felicia cocks her head.

RENOUARD

"Ah, yes! Please do...Though, I don't know that there's much to pick, Miss Moorsom."

Felicia smiles at what she takes for humour.

MISS MOORSOM

"Call me Felicia, please."

She descends into the wicker chair beside him...like an otter turning in water...Renouard watches her.

(MOS) Felicia Moorsom's lips move in conversation; her very body is articulate... She leans forward, back, to the sides. She laughs, sighs, sways, and turns to him in a sort of dance.

INT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

In his bunk, Geoffrey's eyes open. He looks at the porthole, confused. And then, remembers where he is...He shuts his eyes, and drifts off again...

INT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Geoffrey Renouard opens his eyes and slowly rises to the surface of his senses. Late morning sunlight shines on his face through a porthole...

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

The 'Janet' gently rocks anchored in the Cove. It is late Sunday morning. (A church bell rings in the distance.)

Someone (Max Ford) is rowing out from shore to the vessel...

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Tane takes a moment from stitching a sail...to watch shore. He is slightly obscured from the fo'c'sle passageway...

The fo'c'sle door opens and Renouard clammers out on deck in his bare feet.

RENOUARD

"Hey, has anyone seen my shoes?"

No one is there.

Geoffrey looks around in confusion.

There is only the familiar sound of water slapping the sides of the schooner. And not far off, the same shoreline he had sailed away from the night before.

RENOUARD

"I must be dreaming..."

(Presently, there's the distinctive splashing sound of oars biting into waves and rising take another bite.)

Renouard notices the ladder at the stern start to shake. Someone is climbing aboard.

Geoffrey steps toward it, but stops in his tracks. He is arrested by the sudden appearance of a familiar, but unexpected face.

Max Ford appears.

MAX

(Calls out)

"Diogenes...There you are."

Max Ford climbs over the stern into the schooner...He holds up a brown paper-wrapped box by its twine.

MAX

"You left your lamp in my office. Here, take it."

RENOUARD

"What on Earth?"

Geoffrey relieves the Editor of the lamp.

MAX

"Good morning, Sleepy-head...I have come to take you to breakfast. My shout... The hotel said you had not checked out. So, I assumed you'd spent the night in the arms of 'Janet'...I have some interesting news for you."

RENOUARD

"I need to wash up and shave first. What's the news?"

MAX

"Might I suggest we go straight to the hotel where you might freshen up?"

RENOUARD

"Jesus...Mad rush! Let me find some shoes first."

MAX

"Oh, there's no rush. But leave the lamp. There are no honest men where we're going."

Geoffrey turns back to him.

RENOUARD

"And where's that?"

MAX

"For breakfast. Now, hop-to. Our chariot waits."

Geoffrey turns and disappears below deck.

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Tane watches the two men row away to shore in the small boat.

EXT: BOAT. DAY.

Max Ford sits in the stern and pulls on the oars.

Geoffrey is relaxed, smiling. Max speaks belaboured by his physical efforts...

MAX

"I'm surprised you haven't shoved-off..."

RENOUARD

"Yes. I should have. Something happened..."

MAX

"Are my suspicions correct? Is it the Dunster House that keeps you?...Just as well."

RENOUARD

"What nonsense! Here I have free moorage courtesy of the shipping firm..."

MAX

"That's what I mean... I am only thinking about your future. Didn't you say you were finished off-loading?"

RENOUARD

"Yes. But I still have some bales back on Malata..." (He muses.) "I was returning for them. And I don't know what happened..."

Max raises the oars to speak at length...

MAX

"All to be transhipped to Liverpool. To be used for research of the highest value...The pursuit of cheap, good quality silk from plant fibres...All founded on sound science. A new science...And, my friend, you are going up against Arghan Company, a veritable Goliath of the textiles...But, you know all this..."

RENOUARD

"Where is this conversation headed?"

MAX

"My friend, you will be a rich man one day."

Max starts rowing again...

RENOUARD

"That's a joke...I'm no richer now, than when I started three years ago."

MAX

"Here's an opportunity, perhaps...You ought to see if you might interest Professor Moorsom in your brave little enterprise. Especially, since Willie is letting you in on this other matter..."

RENOUARD

"What other matter is Willie letting me in on?"

MAX

"This is why I have arranged to take you to breakfast...We'll talk about it later...But I'll wager Professor Moorsom is not above making a bit of money. From a well-placed investment, I mean...Whew, this rowing is a job and half..."

RENOUARD

"You think I should do business with him?"

The oars go up, Max wipes his face with a handkerchief...

MAX

"Yes...I very much encourage you to talk to the man."

RENOUARD

"But I thought you said Moorsom was some sort of philosopher?"

MAX

"Yes. He is a writer of popular books on philosophical subjects. He's quite well-known back home."

RENOUARD

"I don't have much time for reading these days."

MAX

"This happy accident could present a unique opportunity for you."

RENOUARD

"What happy accident are we talking about?"

Max Ford does not answer. He dips the oars again and starts pulling with a grin on his face.

After some thought, Geoffrey speaks without looking at Max.

RENOUARD

"Not, perhaps, a bad idea. I'll have to call in on Willie in any case...to thank him for the other night."

EXT: CAFE. DAY.

Later, Max Ford and Geoffrey Renouard sit at a table in the back patio of a cafe having a late breakfast. Geoffrey has changed shirts.

Max ravenously consumes eggs Benedict, fried potatoes and toast. There is a teapot before his plate.

Geoffrey has a cup of black coffee before him. He watches Max eat...

EXT: CAFE. DAY.

Minutes later, Max finishes his breakfast, and pours more tea into his cup.

RENOUARD

"You will eat yourself to death one day..."

MAX

(Laughs)

"And you will starve... But let's not cross swords so early in the day. We've more important business..."

RENOUARD

"Something about the Moorsoms..."

Max looks around for eaves-droppers. He smiles.

MAX

"You would never guess. Willie's eyes fairly popped out of his head when he told me."

RENOUARD

"Dammit, Max, will you come straight out with it before I die of old age?"

MAX

"It is a search party. They are searching for a man."
Max leans back and waits for this news to have its affect...
Geoffrey studies his face for cracks. He then laughs out loud.

RENOUARD

"A *search party*... I hope they brought torches."

MAX

"This is serious business. They've come halfway round the world."

RENOUARD

"I suppose they'll want to borrow my new lamp."

MAX

"Geoff, listen. The man they are searching for is Miss Moorsom's fiancé."

RENOUARD

"Her fiancé...I see...And you have been enlisted to help find this...unfortunate fellow. He must have had second thoughts about marriage. Imagine being tethered to such a woman...You'd have to fight duels every week to defend her honour... Oh, I suppose we don't do that anymore. We're civilised now..."

MAX

"...That's not at all the case."

Max looks around to check for spies. He leans in again.

MAX

"You already know that Professor Moorsom is here *incognito*. I think I told you."

RENOUARD

"Perhaps you did. I don't pay attention to gossip..."

MAX

"Well, they simply do not want people asking embarrassing questions. Perfectly understandable...I promised not to write about them before they've found their man and fled away home again."

RENOUARD

"Of course, my lips are sealed...It must take more than cold feet to make a man run all the way to New Zealand."

MAX

"Ha!...Well, it seems this young man has become involved in a scandal back home."

RENOUARD

"Oh?"

MAX

"Not that kind of scandal...More of a commercial misunderstanding. He became implicated in missing funds..."

RENOUARD

"Oh, I see... The man's a crook..."

MAX

"No... Actually, it wasn't him. A fellow employee confessed later to the crime. This fellow-Arthur is his name - had nothing to do with it. He was totally innocent."

RENOUARD

"So, he runs away...The very act of running makes him look guilty as Hell. He's a fool."

MAX

"It was, no doubt, to spare Miss Moorsom being soiled by association with the scandal..."

RENOUARD

"Oh, what a work is Man...How noble in spirit..."

MAX

"...That is life in London, my friend. And you are much the Cynic...These people need our help. Miss Moorsom and the Professor...Willie has enlisted in their cause. As well as I...We thought you might have some advice."

RENOUARD

"Why didn't they ask me when I was around to dinner the other night? I spent hours talking to Miss Moorsom and not a single word was mentioned about missing persons."

MAX

"I'm sure you can understand their hesitation..."

RENOUARD

"Surely this Arthur would have kept in touch with his Fiancée..."

MAX

"Geoff, we don't know everything about the case. The whys and the wherefores are none of our business. All I know is that Miss Moorsom wishes to inform her Fiancé that his name has been cleared; and that he is a free man. She wants to take him home. To this end I have gladly enlisted. I thought consulting an experienced traveller and practical man might shed some light..."

RENOUARD

"I get the picture. What have you done so far?"

The waitress comes out to their table. She tops-up Geoffrey's half cup of cold coffee...

WAITRESS

"Do you need more hot water, Mr Ford? Will there be anything else?"

MAX

"Thank you, no, Geraldine. We have had sufficient. We'll be off soon. Just add the bill to my tab if you don't mind. Cheers, dear."

The waitress leaves them.

Renouard mulls things over in his head, paying little attention to the banter around him.

RENOUARD

"You sure you've told me everything?... There's something missing. Some vital bits of information I need before I can help you."

MAX

"For example?"

RENOUARD

"For example, what do you know about the man's character? And how do they know he came out here to New Zealand?"

MAX

"Oh, that. Professor Moorsom told Willie that there was a letter with a postmark from Auckland...When the scandal broke his friends turned their backs on him. The only true friend he had was an old retired butler he knew. Apparently, they corresponded, and one letter was intercepted by the old codger's nurse. There was only the name 'Arthur' on the letter. No address. Only a postmark from New Zealand."

RENOUARD

"Surely this butler would have known where to forward his mail..."

MAX

"Of course, he did. Unfortunately the poor bugger took it to the grave with him. He died before anyone could interview him. He turned out to be a most trustworthy friend..."

RENOUARD

"It sounds like a detective story you'd read in a magazine."

MAX

"Yes, it does. And what we need to do is think like detectives. The question is: what can this young man possibly be up to?"

RENOUARD

"What kind of man is he? Do we know?"

Max Ford shrugs his shoulders.

RENOUARD

"Surely, this Arthur character is one of *their* Class. How else would he know Miss Moorsom? What's he look like? Is there a photograph to show around?"

MAX

"We thought of that... They said they were in such a hurry to catch the Steamer that they plumb forgot. What we did was telegraph a description to the Police in every city and parish of any size on the North Island...To start with..."

RENOUARD

"What a mad search party. How on Earth do you forget to bring a picture of the person you are searching for?"

MAX

"Don't be so hard-nosed. You mean to tell me you've never forgotten something important?"

RENOUARD

"Well, of course I have. But..."

MAX

"And you were able to turn the ship around to fetch it..."

No response from brooding Geoffrey.

MAX

"Hey, where on earth is our other mystery man? We need more heads to help us properly investigate... Too bad you didn't bring him along...your new assistant."

RENOUARD

"Who? Walter?...No use to us now. But never mind..."
(Pauses) "Tell you what I think. This...fugitive fiancé...is simply lying low. He wants to be inconspicuous. Anyone with common sense would know to stay clear of towns and cities. He could be out mustering sheep, or humping his swag somewhere. Might even be prospecting at some lonely back of beyond... Hard to say for sure knowing nothing about him..." (Smiles)
"He worked in a *bank*?"

MAX

"Back to square one..."

RENOUARD

"It's a big World out there. On the other hand, he could be lying dead drunk in some roadside pub... For all we know."

Max looks at his watch.

MAX

"But alas, I have to get back to the 'Jungle.' Where will you be later?"

RENOUARD

"I need to pick up some supplies. I might be pre-occupied for a bit..."

MAX

"Will you have a talk to Professor Moorsom?"

RENOUARD

"About this missing Fiancé? ...Sure, I said I'd help."

MAX

"*And* about your business plans. I'm certain Professor Moorsom would take an interest in your enterprise. Maybe we can go up there together. I am most keen on meeting the man."

RENOUARD

"Oh, I see... Well, I'll track you down. Maybe tomorrow..."

Max turns to go.

RENOUARD

"Oh, Max."

Max stops and turns back.

RENOUARD

"I have a hunch this guy isn't worth the gum on a postage stamp... Still, I'll do all I can to help locate him... See you later."

EXT: BEACH. DAY.

In the early afternoon, Renouard crunches along to his rowboat. He carries paper bags and a parcel...He places the purchases in the bow, and his leather satchel on a seat. He unties and stores the rope in the boat...Huffing, puffing, and cursing under his breath, he manages to drag the boat down the beach to the translucent sea wash...He wades in, getting his pant legs wet - and climbs aboard. He grabs the oars. Turns the boat in the right direction and begins to pull himself over to the 'Janet.'

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Late in afternoon: Tane lay asleep in a hammock.

Having managed to board and safely deposit his items on the deck, Renouard quietly carries his things past the sleeping crew-man and goes below deck.

INT: SCHOONER. DAY.

In the small kitchen space, he unloads the food items, and rummages around for pots and pans.

He fills a coffee pot with water and sets this on a burner on a small gas stove. He lights the burner with a stick match.

Later, Tane and Renouard are having a lunch of ham, fried potatoes, green peas, and buttered rolls. This feast is washed down with black coffee...Tane finishes and pushes the empty plate away.

TANE

"Thank you, Sir. It was a very nice meal."

RENOUARD

"Glad you enjoyed it."

TANE

"Henery and Douglas don't know what they missed."

RENOUARD

"No, they don't. Where did Henery go in such haste?"

TANE

"Oh, yeah. He asked me to apologise. The Missus gave birth to a bouncing baby girl..."

RENOUARD

"A baby! Captain Henery is Father of a new baby girl... Isn't that wonderful?"

TANE

"Yeah. He has three more. All girls..."

Geoffrey smiles. He is about to turn when he remembers something...

RENOUARD

"Oh, by the way... I picked up mail for us from Dunster's office. You got one. It's here somewhere."

Renouard grabs his leather pouch from nearby, and ferrets through it and brings out a handful of letters.

He shuffles through them and hands one to Tane.

Geoffrey hands it to him.

TANE

"Thank you, Sir."

Tane leaves the table and goes up on deck to read it.

Renouard shuffles through the remaining correspondence. Most are addressed to (INSERT) 'Geoffrey A. Renouard, c/o - W. Dunster & Company, Auckland, New Zealand'...

Geoffrey is little interested in these business letters for the time being...He finds an unusual piece of mail addressed to his assistant.

(INSERT)-'H. Walter, Esq. c/o - Malata Island, New Zealand'

Renouard turns the envelope over to look on the back. There is no return address.

Tane appears in the entrance. He sounds upset.

TANE

"Mr Ren...Sir...Um...It's my poor old Dad. He has taken ill. I need to send some money, But I don't have no money. Jesus."

Geoffrey looks at him.

RENOUARD

"First thing is not to worry...I will advance you some money. You've worked for it."

TANE

"That would help him so much. Thank you, Sir. Thank you for that."

RENOUARD

"It's no bother. It's your money, and I need to go into town again. You need to get to the train station...We'll go together. Stop at a bank..."

EXT: BEACH. DAY.

Five minutes later, they march along the beach...Geoffrey's white pant legs are rolled-up. He carries his shoes in his hand, and hat on his head.

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Late afternoon, Renouard presses a button that rings a bell inside the main entrance. He holds a bouquet of flowers.

There is a Christmas wreath on the door...

Geoffrey studies this for a moment. It dawns on him what it is as the door opens.

A middle-aged Maori MAID holds the door.

MAID

"I'm sorry for the wait, Sir... May I help you?"

RENOUARD

"G'day. Is Willie about?"

MAID

"I don't think so. He usually plays bowls at this hour on Sundays..."

RENOUARD

"You mind if I wait for him?"

She opens the door wider.

MAID

"I s'pose it's alright. Shall I summon Mr Dunster, Sir?"

RENOUARD

"Yes, that would help..."

INT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Geoffrey enters into house...He smiles and hands the Maid the bouquet of flowers.

MAID

"Thank you, Sir...Should I put them in a vase?"

RENOUARD

"As you like. They're for you...Merry Christmas."

MAID

(Laughs)

"Christmas was last month! Thank you, Sir, but I couldn't accept a gift...I will put them in a vase for Willie."

RENOUARD

"For Willie! Heavens, no...There for you."

MAID

"I'm afraid I can't, Sir."

The Maid shuts the door and takes the flowers from him.

Professor Moorsom comes around a corner to see who is at the door.

PROF MOORSOM

"Oh, it's you, Geoffrey. I thought I heard a familiar voice...Come in. You're just the person I was hoping to meet. Please..."

The Maid shows the flowers to Moorsom.

PROF MOORSOM

"Flowers are a nice touch."

RENOUARD

"I tried to bribe the help, but it didn't work. She saw through me... So, they're for the House...A little token of my appreciation for the lovely dinner the other night. I am supposed to be saying all this to Willie. I guess he's not here..."

PROF MOORSOM

(To the Maid)"Would you mind putting them in water, my dear?... (To Geoffrey) "Well, Fortune has brought you to us... We were just going to have a spot of tea...Or would you prefer coffee?"

Prof Moorsom leads Geoffrey to the Veranda.

PROF MOORSOM

"Take a seat...I will go inform everyone that we have another guest."

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE/VERANDA. DAY.

Geoffrey relaxes in a white wicker chair...He shuts his eyes...A shadow falls across him. He opens his eyes.

It is Professor Moorsom blocking his Sun.

PROF MOORSOM

"Splendid. You have made yourself comfortable...No, don't get up. We'll join you."

A Servant brings a couple of chairs to where Mr Renouard is seated...The Professor goes into the house again.

Felicia Moorsom and her Aunt appear, Felicia smiling broadly when she sees Mr Renouard...

Felicia touches her Aunt's arm, and starts towards Renouard, her figure subtly moving with each barefoot step. She has the unhurried movements of a model of fashionable clothing. Her light summer dress caresses her statuesque figure.

Renouard inhales and forgets to exhale. He loses the faculty of speech. He smiles.

Miss Moorsom coolly offers him her hand.

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey...It's so nice to see you again. I prayed you'd come for at least one more visit before going back to your island paradise...How are you?"

Renouard now remembers to breathe. He discovers his tongue.

RENOUARD

"Yes. I could not forego expressing my thanks...for the other evening, Miss Moorsom...I am fine. And you?"

MISS MOORSOM

"Please, don't get up..."

A Servant moves chairs closer...Miss Moorsom takes the one beside the guest of honour.

Another Servant sets the table. A large white teapot, tea cups; cream and sugar. Last but not least, Lamington cakes.

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE/VERANDA. DAY.

Soon, Prof Moorsom and Miss Moorsom sit comfortably and allow a Servant to pour tea for the Party...These rituals of service are performed in silence, while the party watches and smiles...Prof Moorsom breaks the silence.

PROF MOORSOM

"But where is Mrs Dunster?...WHERE IS YOUR WIFE, GEORGE?"

MRS MOORSOM

"Mrs Dunster asked us to pardon her. She wishes to have her tea inside - in the shade."

MR DUNSTER

"Pardon? Oh, yes...My wife is happy where she is... Blasted hot today"...(To Servant) "Thank you, Edward. That'll do..."

Renouard stirs sugar into his tea.

PROF MOORSOM

"There is fresh cream. Feel free..."

All eyes turn to the brilliant entrepreneur from Malata Island. They smile.

Geoffrey finishes stirring his tea and looks around self-consciously...

PROF MOORSOM

"Has Willie informed you our purpose in New Zealand?...Though personally, I've managed to include this junket with respects to visit a dear old friend..."

Professor Moorsom looks toward his old friend - George Dunster. Dunster cups an ear to catch what he might have missed.

PROF MOORSOM

(Louder)

"Just telling Geoffrey how we came to visit Dorothea and yourself, George..."

MR DUNSTER

"A LOVELY STORY...CARRY ON."

Mr Dunster relaxes and leans back.

Moorsom smiles at Renouard and waits...

RENOUARD

"Well...Actually, it was Max Ford. A local newspaperman...Perhaps Willie mentioned him to you...He told me a bit about the case..."

PROF MOORSOM

"We have heard the name and look forward to attaching a face to the name."

MISS MOORSOM

"Yes, I personally look forward to making Mr Ford's acquaintance. The kindness he and Willie have shown has been beyond all expectations."

PROF MOORSOM

(Adds)

"Those two men have indeed got the ball rolling. We are more than grateful..."

MISS MOORSOM

"We are humbled by the generosity we have experienced so far..."

Mrs Moorsom smiles and leans forward to take her tea...

MRS MOORSOM

"New Zealanders do have a reputation for hard work and good manners."

The Professor leans forward to direct the conversation.

PROF MOORSOM

"Geoffrey...could you make an educated guess as to where my daughter's fiancé might have disappeared?"

Felicia looks down, embarrassed by her father's direct manner. She glances up again and smiles.

RENOUARD

"Well...Guessing is feeling around in the dark...Not very useful..."

PROF MOORSOM

"I might have expected this young man to have disappeared into a city the size of London...But to travel half-way around the World...Could he have gone 'bush,' as they say?"

Geoffrey thinks about this.

RENOUARD

"Very likely...Your man would not wish to attract any undue attention. Hiding in the bush -despite the usual inconvenience- is about as safe as you could hope for... In which case, he could be anywhere. There's plenty of work on farms and in shearing sheds. He could also be trying his luck on the South Island...if he's adventurous. It depends on his personality."

Geoffrey braves looking directly at Miss Moorsom...

RENOUARD

"If your fiancé is anything like half a dozen other young men, well...Roughing it in the bush, or working as a hired hand somewhere, he'll have to come to town now and then for provisions. That's a certainty."

MISS MOORSOM

"You assume that Arthur to be younger than yourself, Mr Renwar."

This comment takes Renouard by surprise.

PROF MOORSOM

"Arthur *is* younger than Geoffrey, my dear. You, as well...But we are getting off the subject."

MISS MOORSOM

"Where could he have gone? We've come so far..."

PROF MOORSOM

"Be patient, my dear."

RENOUARD

"Yes, you must be patient. He'll show up sooner or later."

Felicia turns and looks at Mr Renouard.

MISS MOORSOM

"Mr Renouard, personally, I have all the time in the World. It is Father who has other commitments. Am I forced to be selfish?"

PROF MOORSOM

"Tosh! Now, don't be silly..." (To Renouard) "Geoffrey, I have a few speaking engagements in late March... Here we are in January... Besides, nothing is set in granite. We shall be patient. We *must* be patient..." (Turns away) "George, you look ready to go inside..." (Louder) "GEORGE..."

Mr Dunster opens his eyes, startled to hear his name called. Professor Moorsom stands to his feet; waves a hand at Dunster.

PROF MOORSOM

"Come, my friend. We're going inside. Too much sun."

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Hours later, Felicia and Geoffrey sit on the Veranda in near silence... They gaze into a world of trees, sky, and ocean...

SERIES OF SOUNDS ATTRACT THEIR ATTENTION:

1. (An unseen dog is heard barking in the distance.) Felicia and Geoffrey turn to look in that direction.
2. (A high-pitched woman's laugh comes from somewhere below the trees, at the road.) Geoffrey and Felicia look forward again.
3. (A church bell rings, silencing the dog.) Felicia and Geoffrey turn their heads toward that.
4. (From the opposite distance comes the sound of a rifle being fired.) The couple quickly look in that direction... Trees below them erupt with birds... Mr Renouard and Miss Moorsom watch them fly overhead and away.
5. The two look down and out to a peaceful Sea once more.

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE/VERANDA. DAY.

Felicia and Geoffrey stand at the railing, looking out over trees to the World beyond...

RENOUARD

"The World is a vast place, Miss Moorsom. It's easy to get lost... You must wait. Be patient. That will be your virtue."

Miss Moorsom looks to him and smiles. Renouard looks away.

RENOUARD

"Temperature has dropped some..."

Felicia smiles...

MISS MOORSOM

"Thank you for your suggestions. That gives me strength." (She leans to him) "Geoffrey...I would dearly love to hear more from your adventures. Would you mind?"

RENOUARD

"No. Not at all...Um, I really don't know where to begin..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Please...Tell me about Borneo. Willie said you led a group of oil prospectors into the wild interior searching for what he called, 'Black Gold.'"

RENOUARD

"What? Willie said that? We must forgive Willie for his gift of the gab. He does seem to possess a vivid imagination..."

MISS MOORSOM

"You mean it's not true?"

RENOUARD

"Oh, it's true that I went to Borneo with oil prospectors. I wasn't leading them. I was an employee just like the rest. We had the local Natives to help us. And I didn't go into the Interior...I stayed pretty close to the Coast...The others went on without me...I was sick with malaria..."

Renouard becomes quiet for a moment, distant.

MISS MOORSOM

"What was it like?"

RENOUARD

"Malaria?"

MISS MOORSOM

"No. I mean, what were the people, the Natives, like?"

Geoffrey shrugs his shoulders. He does not like the subject.

RENOUARD

"Well, Miss Moorsom...People are the same everywhere...To be honest..."

She cocks her head.

MISS MOORSOM

"How so?"

RENOUARD

"The word wretched comes to mind..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Wretched?"

RENOUARD

"And stupid...I'm sorry, Miss Moorsom. It's been a long day...Can we talk about something else?"

MISS MOORSOM

"Certainly. But why speak at all?"

The Sun is setting to the West...The World is hushed in awe.

INT: SCHOONER. FO'C'SLE.NIGHT.

Later, Renouard lay asleep in his bunk...He wakes suddenly and bumps his head against the wall panelling beside him. He has been asleep and dreaming.

Geoffrey glances around confused in darkness...

EXT: COVE. DAY.

In the Morning, Renouard rows to shore, confidently - like a man with all the time in the World.

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Twenty minutes later, Renouard stands at the front door of Dunster House. He has just knocked. He waits.

The door opens.

Renouard hesitates - is it a maid that has opened the door? He then enters smiling...They've been expecting him...

INT: HOTEL LOBBY. DAY.

One morning some days later, Renouard is standing at the front desk of the Abernathy Hotel.

A 25 year old male FRONT DESK CLERK steps up to him.

CLERK

"Good morning, Mr Renard. How are we today?"

Renouard drops a key on the counter. Smiles.

RENOUARD

"We are checking out of room 210. Here's the key."

He hands the key to the front desk clerk.

CLERK

"Thank you, Mr Renard. I will have your bags brought down immediately..."

RENOUARD

"I have my bags with me..."

CLERK

"Oh yes. I see. Well, have a good safe trip back to your island... Oh. Hang on, I'll check for messages."

Front Desk Clerk steps away and checks for messages.

CLERK

"I'm afraid there is nothing.."

RENOUARD

"Good. If someone does come looking for me, tell him I'll catch him up later..."

CLERK

"Is everything alright, Mr Renard?"

RENOUARD

"Why, yes. They couldn't be better."

CLERK

"You are checking into another hotel?"

RENOUARD

"To be closer to where I'm anchored...Good day."

CLERK

"Thank you, Mr Renard."

RENOUARD

"Thank you, Mr Fox"

Geoffrey picks up his suitcase and valise and walks away...The Clerk watches him leave confused by his being addressed as Mr Fox..

Halfway to the main entrance, Geoffrey stops and looks to where the restaurant lay beyond an archway. He checks the time on his wristwatch...

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT. DAY.

Renouard settles into a seat at the 'elbow' end of the bar - away from the large imposing mirror.

A 20 year old WAITRESS offers him a menu...He waves it away.

RENOUARD

"Just coffee, thanks. Black."

The Waitress brings a cup and a coffee pot and pours the dark liquid.

The customer is staring at a calendar on the wall behind the bar.

The Calendar features a colour-tinted photographic image of a Chinese woman in traditional garb, smiling at the camera. The date displayed below is January, 1913.

The Waitress appears and is pouring coffee into a mug.

WAITRESS

"Pretty, isn't she?"

Geoffrey smiles...

The Waitress leaves...

Geoffrey's eyes become unfocussed, as he begins to recall an event from the recent past...

EXT: CITY/SHORELINE. NIGHT. (FLASHBACK)

It is Midnight. Renouard is following someone. He tries not to attract attention - even though the streets seem to be empty. He casually steps from the lamppost light to a tree's shadow, and then to a lamplight again in the pursuit of his prey...

Presently, three 20-something PEOPLE of Chinese descent cross the street and pass in front of him carrying paraffin lamps and one (newly-invented) battery flashlight.

These People cross railway tracks that run parallel to the street...They head down toward a beach.

Renouard watches for a moment...

There are a dozen lights moving up the beach toward a dark headland. Three more are going to join the others.

RENOUARD

"What's this?"

Geoffrey remembers his quest, and looks toward the footpath ahead.

Fifty metres away, Renouard's prey disappears into shadow, and reappears, a moment later in lamplight farther away. Again, he disappears into shadow.

Renouard hurries to try to close the gap between them...

(Suddenly, there is a loud metallic sound) and the headlight of a TRAIN blinds him. He throws a hand over his eyes...

After the train has passed, he realises he has lost his prey.

Geoffrey then turns his attention to the mysterious people on the beach.

A few more excited ones pass him by, and he turns to follow them...He finds he is walking on sand.

In the distance what looks like fireflies converge on deep shadows under a dark cliff. Gentle surf along the beach itself is almost self-luminous. He looks up a sky full of stars...

INT: HOTEL RESTAURANT.DAY. (FLASHBACK ENDS)

Renouard looks up from stars in his cup of black coffee.

He realises that he has been staring at electric lights reflected in the coffee. He is disturbed by this vivid daydream...He shivers and smiles.

The Waitress is there...

WAITRESS

"Would you like me to freshen up your coffee?"

RENOUARD

"No thanks. Marjorie, is it?"

He stands, slaps a coin on the bar. Waitress watches him go.

WAITRESS

(To herself)

"No...It's Chloe. Marjorie had a baby."

EXT: CITY STREET. DAY.

The next day, Renouard goes into a Pawn Shop. There is Chinese calligraphy on the store-front...

INT: PAWN SHOP. DAY.

Renouard studies objects in an antique glass case.

INSERT: A large gemstone and silver Brooch...

RENOUARD

"The Brooch. How much is the Brooch?"

The proprietor is an elderly CHINESE man, reflected in the glass.

OLD CHINESE MAN (O.S.)

"Ah, yes. This one is expensive. Have cheaper."

RENOUARD

"Damn the cost! I like it. How much?"

The ancient Chinese face smiles...

INT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Felicia Moorsom lay in bed on her side, knees up in a foetal position. She is fully dressed, but barefoot.

There comes a knock on the bedroom door.

MISS MOORSOM

"Come in, Papa"

Prof Moorsom enters his Daughter's room...

Felicia wrights herself and puts her naked feet to the floor.

PROF MOORSOM

"Licia, the maid asked me about an undergarment hanging in a bathroom..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh, yes. My chemise. I prefer to wash it myself.

Prof Moorsom goes to his Daughter.

PROF MOORSOM

"My child, are you unwell?"

MISS MOORSOM

(Sighs) "Oh Papa. Nothing happens...The days roll on. One into another...I sleep, I shower, I dress, I read. And the rest of my day is punctuated by meals...I can't even remember what month it is, let alone the day..."

His Daughter smiles and blinks away a tear...Father sits on the bed beside her...

PROF MOORSOM

"It's the second Sunday of January..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh, Papa. Where is my betrothed? Has he simply vanished from the face of the Earth? I fear for him. How can I help him, if I can't even find him?"

Prof Moorsom puts an arm around his Daughter...

PROF MOORSOM

"There, there, Little Bird. We'll find your Arthur soon enough. Many hands make lighter work. We have added a few more scouts to the search party lately. And it shouldn't be long before a breakthrough... Patience, dearest, patience...Can we smile once?"

Felicia wipes the tear away...and smiles broadly her resolve.

PROF MOORSOM

"Come. Make an appearance downstairs. You should see Willie in his suit and tie. And a rose in the lapel."

Miss Moorsom smiles appreciatively, and then laughs.

MISS MOORSOM

"Willie in a suit and tie?"

PROF MOORSOM

"Yes. Odd as it may sound. Willie is wearing a suit and tie. He is off to some soirée with the local Newspaperman - what's his name? Geoffrey's friend."

MISS MOORSOM

"Yes, Max Ford...Geoffrey speaks highly of him. Is he here? I have been so looking forward to meeting him...How exciting!"

Miss Moorsom rises and hurries out the open door...

Prof Moorsom follows at his own pace.

INT: STAIRWAY/LOUNGE. DAY.

Miss Moorsom has checked her over-zealous speed and descends the stairs at a normal pace.

She stops halfway and smiles graciously.

Below her in the lounge, Willie is about to go out the front door. He pats his pockets out of habit. The door is open.

MISS MOORSOM

(Calls out)

"Willie...What a lovely suit! Are you getting married?"

Willie turns to Felicia and laughs...Miss Moorsom eagerly continues to the landing...She steps forward. Willie comes to meet her halfway.

WILLIE

"Hardly, Miss Moorsom. Just going to a poetry recital this afternoon and a concert later. Maxwell Ford invited me..."

MISS MOORSOM

"How wonderful for you...Is he here, Willie, is Mr Ford here? I am just dying to meet him...I haven't thanked him for all his help."

WILLIE

"Ah, no, he's not here. I told him I'd meet him at his office. I have a taxi waiting to take me to the ferry..."

MISS MOORSOM

"You look fabulous, Willie"

WILLIE

"Thank you, Miss...Well, I must be going...It takes a good five minutes to walk to the bottom of the drive..."

MISS MOORSOM

"How long does it take to get to Max Ford's office?"

Willie looks at a pocket watch on a chain.

WILLIE

"Oh, an hour at best...with cab and the ferry...Tell you what. I'll bring Max back with me for a drink..."

Prof Moorsom has joined his daughter at the bottom of the stairway.

PROF MOORSOM

"That would be splendid, Willie. We look forward to it. You had better get a move on or you'll miss your ferry."

Willie pats his breast-pocket; then hurries out the door.

PROF MOORSOM

"You haven't eaten yet...And I haven't had lunch. Shall we see what's in the kitchen?"

Felicia looks around. It suddenly dawns on her that they are alone.

MISS MOORSOM

"My God, it's so quiet. Where is everyone?"

PROF MOORSOM

"It just occurred to me that our friend Geoffrey hasn't been around lately. He didn't come round yesterday, did he?"

MISS MOORSOM

"And what a relief...I like him well enough. But entertaining him every day....It is a bit much, don't you think?"

PROF MOORSOM

"But, my dear, I thought you were fond of him. He does offer good and practical advice..."

MISS MOORSOM

"I know that. And I am more than grateful... Come. Let's forage a bit. I'm famished..."

Father and Daughter disappear through an archway...

EXT: DUNSTER COVE. DAY.

The Schooner is silhouetted against pale Sunset colours.

INT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Meanwhile, Geoffrey shaves with a straight razor as best he can; studying his progress in a small mirror that hangs in the Schooner's galley...He has a towel wrapped around him.

The motion of the vessel and the smallness of the mirror make shaving difficult. He nicks himself with the razor...

RENOUARD

"Well...shit. I'm bleeding."

He laughs.

Minutes later, he fusses over his hair, trying to get every strand to stay where he wills it.

At last, Renouard smiles into the mirror satisfied...

RENOUARD

(Sings)

"Tonight...Is the night...My love...Tonight."

Renouard smiles to himself and labours at tying a fat red tie...

He next pulls on a new and slightly too large dinner jacket...

Renouard examines his face in the mirror...

Geoffrey writes on a small card...He looks at what he has written...He laughs, crumples the card and tosses it away.

He takes a rucksack and packs it with a small wool blanket, a bottle of wine, a slender flashlight...On top of these things he places the gift-wrapped box containing the Brooch...and shuts the flap.

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Renouard heads to the stern of the vessel, easily matching his footsteps to the slow movements of the vessel.

He climbs over the transom and starts down to the waiting rowboat. Halfway there he slips on a rung and grabs hold tight. At the same moment the gift box pops out of the rucksack, bounces off a step, and tumbles into the Sea.

For a moment he considers jumping in after it...In stead, he disappears behind the stern and enters the boat...

EXT/INT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Later, he is at the front door of Dunster House.

He composes himself, inhales, and raises his hand to knock. Suddenly, the door flies open.

Renouard is taken by surprise... A MALE SERVANT is standing there...

MALE SERVANT

"Oh! Someone is here. Beg your pardon, Sir. I was just going out...Do come in...They are expecting you..."

RENOUARD

"Oh? I see. Thank you"

The servant steps aside, as Geoffrey enters...

MALE SERVANT

"Go straight in" (He calls out)"Professor Moorsom, you've a visitor..." (To Renouard) "Pardon my haste. I am late...Everyone's in the small lounge. Go right ahead."

The servant leaves...The Professor enters...

PROF MOORSOM

"Ahhh. Geoffrey, it's you...We're in the lounge. It is an informal affair. We pretty much fend for ourselves on Sundays..."

INT: DUNSTER HOUSE. DAY.

Moorsom leads him into a lounge, where Mr & Mrs Dunster chat with elegantly dressed LADY VERA THROCKMORTEN, age a youthful eighty.

PROF MOORSOM

"Look who's here, everyone..."

Mrs Dunster and Lady Throckmorton look up. Mr Dunster smiles beside them...

MRS DUNSTER

"Oh, good. Geoffrey is here. This is the gentleman anchored in our cove...GEORGE...GEOFFREY'S HERE."

MR DUNSTER

"THAT IS SPLENDID, WHAT"

Geoffrey smiles.

PROF MOORSOM

"Felicia and her Aunt are preparing our tea...You seem to have burdened yourself"

RENOUARD

"Oh, a little something..."

Geoffrey digs in his bag, and produces the bottle of red wine. Moorsom takes it...They move to the others, smiling.

PROF MOORSOM

"How fortunate. It completely slipped my mind. Thank you, my friend... (He turns) "You may have met, Lady Throckmorton, from the dinner party... You remember Geoffrey, don't you, my dear?"

LADY THROCKMORTEN

"Yes, I remember you. I'm Vera."

She shuts her eyes and offers her cheek for him to kiss. Geoffrey does so, unabashed.

PROF MOORSOM

"Shall we move to the dining room? I'll tell them that we're *all* here... Willie may miss the party. He had an Evening engagement with your friend..."

RENOUARD

"My friend?"

PROF MOORSOM

"Excuse me. I will go open this to let it breathe... Yes, with your friend from the local paper... Be back in a jiff."

MRS DUNSTER

(Smiles)

"Well, if some kind Gentleman could be persuaded to offer us old ladies a hand we will go in to the dining room... GEORGE, WE ARE GOING TO EAT NOW."

Renouard takes Lady Throckmorton's hand to help her to her feet. He smiles.

LADY THROCKMORTEN

"Thank you, dear..."

She links arms with him, while Mrs Dunster helps her husband to his feet...They move through an archway toward one of the dining rooms.

Before them, on a lovely Rimu dining table spread with newspapers - a sumptuous picnic awaits. Sliced ham, chicken, cheese; potatoes, olives, and tomatoes; loaves of bread, butter, and various condiments in crockery jars.

The Guests take their seats, chattering happily.

INT: DUNSTER HOUSE. EVENING.

An hour later, the Sun is setting when Felicia and her Aunt start to clear the table...

Soon, Renouard smiles to himself... Something rouses him from a pleasant daydream. He looks around and realises he is alone.

Off he goes in search of the others... A door is just closing....Geoffrey goes through this one and comes out into another dining area...Further on, he finds another lounge. The Veranda lay beyond three large windows and a screened doorway.

Renouard notices Prof Moorsom on the Veranda...

Moorsom is smoking a pipe, which refuses to stay lit. The Professor is lighting it again when Geoffrey joins him.

They are silent for a moment. Moorsom makes yet another futile attempt at lighting his pipe. The match is waved out.

PROF MOORSOM

"I needed some fresh air...Aids the digestion..."

Geoffrey smiles good-naturedly...

PROF MOORSOM

"Felicia tells me you did your studies in London. My late son was in your school - did you know? I can imagine that

had he lived and you had ever met, you'd have understood each other. He, too, was a man of action..."

Renouard listens politely. He then, surveys the Veranda.

He spies Felicia half-way along reading in the light of a window...

The Professor nods in her direction.

PROF MOORSOM

"I really wish you would drop a few sensible words in that quarter..."

Renouard wakens with surprise to the serious turn of a friendly chat.

RENOUARD

"You are having me on."

PROF MOORSOM

"My dear young man, it's no subject for jokes."

RENOUARD

"What are you saying?"

PROF MOORSOM

"I mean that you are capable of calm judgement, am I correct? Well, the atmosphere here is simply detestable. All of us have knuckled in to sentiment...Perhaps your deliberate opinion could influence her..."

RENOUARD

"You want your daughter to give up."

PROF MOORSOM

"Heaven only knows what I want."

RENOUARD

"Surely the man must be worth it. It'd be foolhardy to give up so soon."

Moorsom turns to Geoffrey...

PROF MOORSOM

"My daughter's future is in question here."

RENOUARD

"Is that so?"

Moorsom regards Geoffrey for a minute. He grins and confides.

PROF MOORSOM

"A word to the wise. Do not produce children if your wish is to live to a ripe old age..."

Moorsom shoves his pipe in his pocket and heads back to the bright rectangle entrance to the house.

Geoffrey turns toward Miss Moorsom.

Felicia is reading a small hardback titled, 'La Vie de Jesus' by Ernest Renan...

He carefully plants himself in the wicker chair next to hers. It creaks.

RENOUARD

"Oh, I'm sorry. I don't mean to intrude."

Felicia puts aside the book and laughs.

MISS MOORSOM

"If you hadn't have joined me, I'd have felt insulted."

RENOUARD

"You are quite fast with cleaning up..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Auntie is cleaning up alone. I was chased away. She is a born organizer and has little patience for those who aren't."

Renouard takes up a brandy snifter from the table. He examines the brown liquid. He sniffs it.

RENOUARD

"Here we are...Brandy?"

MISS MOORSOM

"Yes, once in a blue moon. Would you care for some?"

She is about to go and get him a glass.

RENOUARD

"No, please. I would pop like a balloon."

He hands the glass to her...She finishes the little that remains.

MISS MOORSOM

(Laughs)

"There... Now, what were we talking about? Not balloons."

Miss Moorsom inhales the warmth of the brandy.

RENOUARD

"Oh, Felicia, did I tell you? I have my mother and a sister going to London soon... for an extended visit from Montreal. I hope it wouldn't trouble you to pay them a visit... when you return..."

MISS MOORSOM

"I would love to, Geoffrey. But that 'when' may be a while yet."

Renouard glances away...Then back to her.

RENOUARD

"Miss Moorsom...Felicia. Are you becoming weary?"

Miss Moorsom sits up and leans to Geoffrey.

MISS MOORSOM

"If you mean, am I getting bored? Perhaps, a bit...If you were to ask - am I growing heart-weary? You don't know me."

RENOUARD

"I guess not"

MISS MOORSOM

"This, Mr Renouard, is a work of reparation. I stand for the truth here. I cannot think only of myself..." (She smiles) "I saw you huddled with the Professor. He is a typical doting father. What else could he be? He worries about his little girl. He thinks that I am becoming melancholic."

RENOUARD

"Does he?"

Felicia sits back. Regards him.

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey, I am *not* depressed. Rather, I had some bad news the other day. Was it yesterday? Never mind...In any case, I was contemplative - turning things over in my head..."

RENOUARD

"What bad news?"

She leans forward again...

MISS MOORSOM

"Yesterday I received a letter from the widow of my Fiancé's friend. I expected that she would have received some kind of...communication...Arthur wouldn't have known that his friend had passed away... However, there has been no letter since we left...That was more than two months ago. All very disconcerting...I mean...I don't know what to think. And when I don't know what to think, I do a lot of thinking. In bed.. Poor Daddy..."

RENOUARD

"You may be right. It's just a setback, surely."

MISS MOORSOM

"You want to know the whole truth?"

RENOUARD

"Not necessarily. Sometimes it's better to talk of other things. You know, besides our fears and troubles."

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh...There he is. Father... He's spying on us. Don't look...Goodness gracious. Caught red-handed."

She smiles broadly, mischievously...

MISS MOORSOM

"I've an idea...We'll show him who's melancholic...*Laugh.*"

RENOUARD

"Pardon?"

MISS MOORSOM

"Laugh...You know how to laugh. Like this..."

Felicia starts to laugh tentatively. She then leans forward to encourage Geoffrey to join her.

He starts to make what sounds like a large bird trapped in a dead man's rib-cage.

Miss Moorsom starts laughing louder.

Suddenly, the laughter inside Renouard takes wing, and bursts forth...

Moments later, Felicia waves to Father...

MISS MOORSOM

"That's good, that's good. He's gone now. Thank you..."

Geoffrey's laughter dies by degrees until he seems to deflate. He wipes tears from his eyes, and is able to breathe normally again.

Miss Moorsom is amazed at the transformation.

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh, Geoffrey, what a joy..."

RENOUARD

"That was good. I needed it myself."

MISS MOORSOM

"Laughter is the best medicine...What were we talking about?"

RENOUARD

"Oh. Before I forget...I have something in my bag. Something new. It's called a flashlight. I bought it today...And I'm certain the Dunsters can lend us a lamp."

MISS MOORSOM

"For what, Geoffrey?"

RENOUARD

"I, also, brought a wool blanket... So we could relax... We're going to the beach. There's something I want to show you."

MISS MOORSOM

"Something you want to show me?"

RENOUARD

"Something special"

MISS MOORSOM

"Now?"

RENOUARD

"At Midnight. Or thereabouts."

MISS MOORSOM

"Midnight! What could be so special?"

RENOUARD

"You might be surprised. Or, maybe not... Something you've probably seen before...But, maybe not."

Felicia is puzzled...She suddenly smiles broadly. She is clearly fighting the desire to burst-out laughing again.

Geoffrey watches her with growing confusion.

MISS MOORSOM

(Laughs out)

"I'm sorry, Geoffrey...Don't mind me...I have a wicked sense of humour at times...Carry on...What were you saying?...Wait. This is a guessing game, I take it...Let me see. We are going to a beach with a flashlight and a lamp...I know. We're going on a starfish safari?"

RENOUARD

"Yes. Much better, though...More than just starfish...And do you know how many feet a starfish has? Hundreds!"

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey, your range of interests never fails to impress...But, darling, everyone has seen tide-pools."

RENOUARD

"Not like these...And I discovered them quite by accident. You'd laugh...I was following this chap, you see. It was late...and I'd followed him along a bit of road...Suddenly, I could hear the surf, and see the waves shining..."
(Laughs)"Regrettably, I had no swimming costume..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Hold on a second...You were following someone? Who were you following?"

RENOUARD

"Oh, it was nobody. Just some poor chap down on his luck... Well, there were all these Chinese people...They just seemed to appear out of nowhere..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Wait. Back up a bit...Who was this poor chap you were following? Did you know him?"

RENOUARD

"Not exactly. You see, I thought maybe I could give him hand-up somehow... However, I lost track of him on this particular night...What I discovered was something else...Something quite wonderful..."

Felicia shakes her head.

MISS MOORSOM

"Wait. Now I'm getting lost...Okay, you were following some poor chap...And then?"

RENOUARD

"People appeared out of nowhere. All carrying lamps and flashlights...They crossed in front of me and over railroad tracks...And then, down to this beach...I followed them to a place below a cliff to tidal pools..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh, yes. Tide pools and starfish...And other lovely little creatures of the Sea...But what I want to know..."

RENOUARD

"But have you seen them in moonlight? They are like nothing you have ever seen during the day. A whole new world awaits you..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey, I want to hear about this poor chap you were following. Who was he?"

(At this moment, loud Voices rise from within the house.)

Felicia and Geoffrey look toward the entrance to the house.

Suddenly, three Men burst onto the Veranda talking excitedly...They are Willie Dunster; Max Ford; and following close behind, the Professor...

WILLIE/MAX

(Overlapping speech)

"...We were having a drink with Max's poet friend afterwards/When we found out that we'd missed the ferry to Devonport/It was such a coincidence/Unbelievable/ Honestly/But where is Miss Moorsom? We have good news/Wonderful news/we must tell Geoffrey, too/Is he here?"

Willie is jovially inebriated. He squints and staggers...He catches sight of Miss Moorsom's white dress in a wicker chair...

WILLIE

"There she is..."

Willie takes Max Ford by the arm...

WILLIE

"Come on, Max. There's someone I want you to meet..." (He calls out)"Hallo, Miss Moorsom, have we got news for you!"

Willie and Max halt, and, as if rehearsed, chime together...

WILLIE & MAX

(Simultaneously)

"HE HAS BEEN FOUND!"

They both laugh with delight.

Mrs Moorsom comes out onto the veranda, wiping her hands on an apron. She steps up beside her brother.

MRS MOORSOM

"What's going on?"

Moorsom turns to her.

PROF MOORSOM

"Arthur has been located, it seems."

Felicia and Geoffrey look at each other.

Geoffrey gets to his feet...

Renouard gets to his feet and comes around into the light to stand beside his seated Goddess...

RENOUARD

"Max, is it true? Has Miss Moorsom's fiancé been found?"

MAX

"You're here, too! Just the man..."

Max eagerly steps forward...

MAX

"Yes. He is found, I tell you..."

Miss Moorsom is standing. She takes Geoffrey's hand.

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh, Geoffrey. Do you hear that...Just when I was beginning to despair. It is a miracle! Oh, Papa..."

MAX

"It's true, Miss Moorsom... Oh, I'm sorry. We haven't met. Allow me to introduce myself..."

MISS MOORSOM

"I know who you are, Mr Ford. We've been like ships in the night...And finally, you've come to rescue me. But, where is he?"

MAX

"We've got him! Well, almost... But we've solved the mystery...And this letter, Ladies and Gentlemen, is how we did it..."

Max takes a folded envelope from his pocket and pulls a piece of foolscap from it...He waves this in the air.

Miss Moorsom drops Geoffrey's hand and steps forward.

Renouard remains where he is with growing dismay.

MISS MOORSOM

"That's the letter I got the other day."

MAX

"Yes. Willie showed it to me. But not until I'd spilled my beer on him...He had forgotten that the letter was in his pocket...And by sheer luck. Anyway..."

Willie smiles sweetly, and taps his temple with an index finger.

MAX

"I looked at it and a light went on in my head. What a revelation! 'Of course!' I said to myself, 'Who else would know?' None of you good people. I had to get here as soon as possible..."

Renouard steps forward...

RENOUARD

"Max, you are going in circles. What does this letter have to do with it?"

Geoffrey casually leans close to Felicia, his hand touching her.

They look like the perfect couple.

MAX

"You, my friend. You are the Man of the Hour!...Didn't you say that your new assistant calls himself Walter? Well just listen to this...This letter came from the old butler's wife. In it she wrote to Miss Moorsom..."

Max holds the page up to his face to read aloud...

MAX

"Ahem...the correspondent writes, 'All I can tell you is that my poor husband directed his letters to an H. Walter...'"

Renouard, unnoticed, gasps and slowly shuts his eyes...Max suddenly claps Geoffrey on the shoulder.

MAX

"What a fine fellow, Geoffrey. Your solitary ways of life will end by leaving you no more discrimination than a fool...Fancy that! Living with the Gentleman all these months and never guessing..."

Max glances around for Miss Moorsom. She is nowhere to be seen.

MAX

"I hope to goodness you haven't been leading our unlucky Arthur a *dog's life*."

Renouard is becoming nauseous. He pulls away...

MAX

"What's the matter, Geoffrey? You didn't let him slip through your fingers, I hope. You have him on the island, haven't you?"

RENOUARD

"Yes...I have him there."

Max turns and smiles at Prof Moorsom, Mrs Moorsom, and Mrs Dunster...

INT: DUNSTER HOUSE. EVENING.

Miss Moorsom hugs a dark redwood post that forms part of the stairway. She cries softly...She wipes her tears and takes the first step...and continues up the stairs.

EXT: DUNSTER HOUSE. EVENING.

Geoffrey stares at the floor, at a loss for words.

Max is as pleased as punch with himself and the turn of events.

Willie has lost his shine...He stumbles forward...

WILLIE

"Aha!...But you haven't got him here...No! You haven't got him yet."

Max Ford suddenly sobers. He fairly bristles at this abuse.

MAX

"What is that, Willie? Don't be such an ass! Of course, we don't have him here, just yet."

Geoffrey wants to disappear, runaway, or, at least, awaken from this dream...But he is intercepted by the Professor and Mrs Moorsom, who want to hug him and thank him...

MAX

"My friend, you are so generous. I wish I could be there to see this happy re-union with my own two eyes. Oh, good fortune...You, Geoffrey, will be my eyes and ears..."

Renouard disengages from Max and hastens from the Veranda...

EXT. COACH ROAD. EVENING.

Minute later, Renouard hurries along the coach road.

He sheds tears and laughs at the same time...

RENOUARD

(To himself)

"Jesus, now what?"

He comes to a halt. and thinks for a moment...

EXT. DUNSTER COVE - ROADSIDE. NIGHT.

Minutes later, he plunges through bushes on the side of the road, and stumbles down the stone steps that lead to the beach below.

EXT: BEACH. EVENING.

Geoffrey emerges onto the beach not far from his overturned rowboat.

He stops to catch his breath, and calm his agitated pulse.

Renouard hears singing to his left.

P.O.V. Down the beach there is a campfire burning. Three SAMOAN YOUTHS are singing...

He hurries toward them.

RENOUARD

(Calls)

"Ahoy...Hello...See that schooner out there. That's mine. You all know the ropes and rigging, right?"

The three Twenty-something SAMOAN MALES nod.

RENOUARD

"Which of you is looking for some good honest work?"

They just smile amongst themselves at the dishevelled pakeha.

RENOUARD

"I will pay you seven days wages for two days crewing on my boat. You won't get better than that."

The Men get to their feet. They are dressed in traditional Samoan lava-lavas.

RENOUARD

"I can only use one of you. You work it out amongst you."

After some whispering, two sit down again.

RENOUARD

"I am Geoffrey Renouard...What do they call you?"

SAMOAN YOUTH

"They call me Pippi."

RENOUARD

"Good. Come along, Pippi..."

Geoffrey hurries along the beach with Pippi scurrying to keep up...

RENOUARD

"Do you know the tall white boy who fishes from the Docks?"

PIPPI

"I know a pakeha boy name Douglas."

RENOUARD

"Yes. Douglas. That'll be the one...You know where we might find him? We need to tell him that we're sailing in the morning..."

Renouard and Pippi turn the rowboat upright, and drag it to the water's edge...Pippi goes off down the beach in search of Douglas...

Five minutes later, Renouard is rowing with all his strength.

EXT: SCHOONER. EVENING.

Renouard flies over the transom ladder at the stern, stumbles and hastens toward the fo'c'sle entrance. He comes to a sudden halt...He stands mid-deck and looks up at a sky of diamonds.

INT: SCHOONER. EVENING.

Later, below deck, Renouard lights his new hurricane lamp. He pulls a drawer open and takes out a handful of the recent letters. He finds the envelope addressed to his late assistant. He starts to open the letter, then stops to consider.

EXT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

Renouard stands at the gunwales on starboard and tears the envelope and its letter into small pieces... He throws the mutilated correspondence into the night. A breeze rises to catch it.

Renouard paces the deck, agitated...

He crashes through the doorway down below deck to try again to find some rest.

EXT: DUNSTER COVE. DAY.

(OVERHEAD ANGLE) Late in the morning, the row-boat shuttles Geoffrey's guests to the schooner.

EXT: OPEN SEA. DAY.

By late morning, the Schooner 'Janet of Malata' has set sail. Clouds gather on the coast she is leaving. She is making good headway...

EXT: SCHOONER. DAY.

Renouard mans the helm, while Douglas and Pipi are coiling ropes, organising sundry rigging...

On deck, the Professor smokes his pipe; and Mrs Moorsom reads a Spectator magazine, while lounging on deck in folding chairs...Miss Moorsom lay in a hammock, which has been strung up mid-deck. She watches the sails overhead.

Later, Renouard, Prof Moorsom and Mrs Moorsom eat sandwiches and pass a flask of tea around.

Miss Moorsom has moved to a deck chair...She has said very little for several hours. There is a vague smile on her face.

MRS MOORSOM

(Calls to her)

"Licia, dear. Come have a bite to eat. It's lovely."

MISS MOORSOM

"I will in a bit. Not just yet."

MRS MOORSOM

"We'll save you some."

Late in the afternoon, Douglas is now at the helm. He sees Malata Island on the horizon...

DOUGLAS

(Calls)

"There it is, Sir...The Island."

A pale grey and green landmass breaks the straight line of the horizon against a dimming sky...

Geoffrey, Mrs Moorsom and the Professor excitedly go forward to look from the bow...Miss Moorsom sleeps in her hammock.

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. EVENING.

An hour later, the Schooner lay anchored off the coast of Malata...The Sun has just set...

INT: SCHOONER. EVENING.

Below deck, Renouard clears away dishes from another humble meal he and the elder Moorsoms have had. He hums...

Again, it is as though Felicia Moorsom was a ghost somewhere on board - not fully present.

Geoffrey sits down with them again, and sips his cup of tea.

MRS MOORSOM

"Isn't it wonderful to think of the immense joy in store for them tomorrow?...Finally, we will be able to get on with our lives again. Mission accomplished..."

The Professor nods and lights his pipe...smiling in accord.

RENOUARD

"Tomorrow is another day."

The 'Janet' rocks gently. Small waves lap her sides. Rigging clacks. Her masts creak.

MRS MOORSOM

"Since we must sleep on board tonight, I suggest we take turns changing here - early to bed, early to rise and all that - I trust you won't mind if I kick you out for the time being. You'll get your turn..."

EXT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

Later, a lamp illuminates Miss Moorsom as she stands gazing into the night sky.

Renouard appears at her side.

RENOUARD

"It's late."

Felicia is startled...

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh! Why yes, of course." (She smiles) "So Geoffrey - this is Malata...I can smell it. Like something half-remembered. A dream?"

RENOUARD

"We'll be able to land at first light...We should get some rest."

She turns to him.

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey, you've no idea how grateful I am...It is your company that has sustained me through the ordeal..."

RENOUARD

"Oh, no, Felicia. I should thank you..."

MISS MOORSOM

"I shall miss you."

Miss Moorsom takes him in her arms and embraces him. He reciprocates, holding his breath and feeling a hammer beat an anvil in his chest.

After a moment, Felicia pulls away from him...and looks into his eyes.

MISS MOORSOM

"You smell like your island."

RENOUARD

"Miss Moorsom, can I say something?"

MISS MOORSOM

"Mr Renwar, please understand... Two hearts beat in this breast...And it is your generosity that has..."

RENOUARD

"Felicia, please..."

MISS MOORSOM

"I know. It's late. We must get some rest."

Her exquisite features disappear from the nimbus of light.

RENOUARD

(Soto voce)

"Felicia!"

Geoffrey hears the fo'c'sle door open and close.

He looks in that direction...The lantern flame gutters.

EXT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

Deep in the dead of night the Schooner 'Janet' lolls gently. Rigging clacks. Naked masts creak.

The Crew of the Janet sleeps on deck...Douglas against a large coil of rope; Pippi in the hammock hanging nearby.

Away from his Crew, Renouard lay awake under a blanket on a bedroll to starboard. He has waited for the right moment on this perfectly calm moonless night.

Renouard rises quietly and removes his long underwear.

He creeps softly forward to the bow and holding a line, lowers himself into the sea without a splash.

He swims a safe distance from the schooner, and then strikes out boldly for landfall.

There are no lights on shore, but Geoffrey knows his way.

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. NIGHT.

At about 11:00 O'clock Luis is making his final rounds before going to bed. He carries a lantern with him.

He goes down to the bottom of the bungalow garden. The water laps the shore in the darkness just beyond.

Luis breathes the air and turns to go. (There is a sound; a shell cracking underfoot.) Luis stops. He holds a lantern up and peers into the night.

Suddenly, a white ghost flies at him from the darkness.

Luis stumbles backward...

LUIS

"Madre Dios!"

Luis crosses himself..

RENOUARD

"Shhh. Quiet...It's only me."

LUIS

"Maestro. Is that you?"

Renouard quickly takes him by the shoulders.

RENOUARD

(Whispers)

"Shush...Now, listen to what I say."

A few words are audible...

RENOUARD

"Guests visiting...Of utmost importance...Without fail...Comprende?"

There is a moment of silence...

RENOUARD

"Do you understand what I'm saying? No preparations are to be made 'til we land in the morning. You must tell them that Mr Walter has gone off on a trading schooner up the coast."

LUIS

"Si...Si, Senor."

RENOUARD

"No mistakes..."

LUIS

"Si. No mistakes... I will go tell Boy to help you in morning with luggages...Make sure he not forget."

RENOUARD

"No, Luis...You have not seen me."

The full import of his boss's words come to Luis. He is not happy about having to lie.

LUIS

"Comprende."

RENOUARD

"More rests on our little secret than I can explain right now."

Luis nods...Renouard turns and walks toward the water. Luis follows...

LUIS

"Senor Ren..."

Geoffrey stops...

LUIS

"It is no secret. It is lying..."

RENOUARD

"That's right. It is lying. But it's not on your head..."
(He pauses) "What is it? I have to go."

LUIS

"Aye! What a long swim...Maybe you drown."

RENOUARD

"Then you can say of me and of Mr Walter what you will. The dead don't mind."

The white ghost wades into the inky foam and disappears.

Luis watches...He shakes his head...

EXT: MALATA BAY. NIGHT.

Five minutes later, Renouard is halfway, the Schooner before him...He becomes fatigued as his body loses heat in the cool ocean currents...With all his strength he reaches the Schooner and struggles for the loop of rope he left hanging...He manages to grab it and pull himself up to the stern...He hangs on for dear life - gasping for air.

INT: SCHOONER. NIGHT.

Below deck, Miss Moorsom lay eyes closed in Renouard's bunk...But something wakes her. She opens her eyes, and listens for a moment. Then, rolls over and settles into sleep again.

EXT: MALATA BAY. DAY.

Renouard rows his guests to the pebble beach where he had waded ashore some six hours earlier.

Minutes later, the Moorsoms lift skirts and turn-up cuffs to wade ashore...

Renouard hurries before them...

Luis hurries down through the garden to meet him...He looks worried.

RENOUARD

"Good morning, Luis!" (He then whispers)"Do you have a bad case of conscience, or did you see a ghost?...All right. I will tell them myself. Once and for all." (Louder) "Send someone to fetch our things, would you?"

Miss Moorsom, her Father and Auntie come up from the beach.

Behind them, Douglas takes the rowboat back out to the Schooner...

Luis hurries back up the garden path...

RENOUARD

"I'm afraid I must apologise...My man has just informed me that Mr Walter has gone in a trading schooner up the coast..."

The Guests greet this information with unbelieving silence.

RENOUARD

"All I can do is beg you to make yourselves at home...It isn't much...But it's all I can offer...Up the beach, through the garden...Shall we?"

Mrs Moorsom and Miss Moorsom follow the two Men...

PROF MOORSOM

"How elusive the poor fellow has become...Rather unexpected..."

RENOUARD

"Such bad timing... A trip has to be made every year to engage labour...Terribly sorry about the inconvenience, Professor."

Moorsom waves a hand.

PROF MOORSOM

"Yes, yes. I understand. These things happen."

They make their way through the veggie garden. Felicia is barefoot... She carries her shoes.

She goes on ahead of everyone; eager to reach the Bungalow. In order to sit down or lie down and burst into a thousand little pieces in private.

EXT: BUNGALOW. DAY.

Luis waits with his BOY and two middle-aged FIJIAN INDIANS.

LUIS

"Welcome to our...little house. Your luggages will be brought soon. Please come in and...please enjoy..."

RENOUARD

"Thank you, Luis. We are just a bit weary from the journey. Some refreshments would be in order...My friends, this is my gang foreman - Luis...Ask Luis for anything you need. We are your humble servant."

Luis smiles embarrassed at being the centre of attention.

Renouard relaxes and begins to appreciate being back home.

RENOUARD

"Thank you, Luis."

Luis snaps his fingers to get the domestic help in motion...And he follows them down through the garden, while the guests and host enter the large bungalow.

INT: BUNGALOW. DAY.

Late in the afternoon, it starts to drizzle with rain.

Renouard hurries in through the entrance...He pats water from his clothing and stamps his feet.

RENOUARD

"Rainy out here at times...Usually sunny, though."

EXT: BUNGALOW/VERANDA. NIGHT.

The Moorsoms stand gazing up at a starry night sky...They have just had there supper. The Professor smokes his pipe. Not a word is spoken...

INT: BUNGALOW. DAY.

Next morning is sunny. After breakfast they are individually busy in each their own pursuits.

Miss Moorsom and her Aunt sit at a round dining, Mrs Moorsom playing a game of solitaire, while Felicia sews a button on one of father's shirts.

Prof Moorsom examines books on book-shelves along one wall.

PROF MOORSOM

"An impressive little library... Literature. Poetry. Some Classics. And, as you would expect, agricultural subjects...Well done...More or less."

MRS MOORSOM

"All books. No piano. What a shame..."

PROF MOORSOM

"No piano in Paradise. We are shocked."

Miss Moorsom laughs aloud...Geoffrey comes into the Bungalow with a smile.

RENOUARD

"You are up early this morning...Have you all had sufficient breakfast? Sorry I wasn't able to join you. I am very busy..."

Geoffrey avoids looking at Felicia.

PROF MOORSOM

"Oh, yes. Very nice...Don't mind us. We can fend for ourselves. We might go for a stroll later"

RENOUARD

"Do that. Have Luis show you around. I'm sure you'll find it interesting. The silk plants, I mean...He'll tell you everything you need to know. We'll have tea together later."

PROF MOORSOM

"Quite a library, Geoffrey"

RENOUARD

"Feel free. Take what you like...See you later"

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. DAY.

The Moorsoms have donned borrowed boots... They slog through damp soil following Luis and two Field-Hands touring rows of mature Chinese flax plants, which stand a good six feet tall.

Prof Moorsom carries a white parasol with the sun directly overhead. He bends and examines the long leaves, commenting...

PROF MOORSOM

"You know, Emma, Geoffrey might be considered young for the field of finance and industry...I don't know if he realises what he's up against. He seems so unsophisticated. In a business sense..."

MRS MOORSOM

"*Unsophisticated!* He is almost a country bumpkin."

MISS MOORSOM

"Aunt Emma! Father! Shame on you...Don't you feel the least conscience to be talking behind our Host's back?"

MRS MOORSOM

(Smiles)

"Then you agree with us, as to your friend's naiveté.

MISS MOORSOM

"Of course not...Well, maybe. Sometimes...No! I don't agree. And we're his guests. Shame on you..."

EXT: PLANTATION. DAY.

Two FIELD-HANDS tie off harvested plants to prepare for transport...

Two more load tied plants on a small wagon...LINDA, the Donkey waits, harnessed to the wagon.

LUIS

"Es Bueno. Ven, mi carina."

Luis holds the Donkey by her bridle and leads her away with ease.

EXT: BUNGALOW'S VERANDA. DAY.

A week later, Mrs Moorsom is hanging clothing to dry on a line strung on the Veranda outside their quarters.

Felicia sits in a chair staring into space...

Renouard comes to the Bungalow. He feels happy and courageous enough to make small talk.

RENOUARD

"Good afternoon. I see you are busy with your washing. They should dry quickly in this weather."

MRS MOORSOM

"Mr Renouard, haven't you something comforting to say?... Yes, our clothes will dry today. Thank God we brought so few! We wash them every day."

Felicia Moorsom turns to him...

MISS MOORSOM

"Aunt Emma. Are you finished? Go away please."

Emma Moorsom pegs the last piece and leaves without further word.

MISS MOORSOM

"Sorry about Auntie's impertinence. She means well... No, actually she doesn't mean well..."

RENOUARD

"She's damn right! It *is* intolerable, this situation. I don't know what to tell you. Still no word when the Trader will be back...I'm terribly sorry."

MISS MOORSOM

(Smiles)

"Let's not talk about it."

Geoffrey has moved to sit on the top step to the veranda. He and she look toward the garden without talking.

TIMELAPSE: the Sun flies across the sky and descends into the Underworld. Night reigns again...

EXT: VERANDA. DAY.

The next morning, Renouard lay in a hammock at the far end of the veranda. His eyes are shut...He hears steps) And he opens his eyes, His foreman is stands quietly before him..

RENOUARD

"What is it now, Luis? What's the matter?"

LUIS

"The Gentleman - when I take him his bath water - he speak to me. He want to know when Mr Walter come back."

Renouard drops his feet and sits up in his hammock...

RENOUARD

"Tell me. Be honest. Is it still here? Still hanging around?"

LUIS

"The stupid wild boys say so...Superstichus bastards...They drive poor Luis...loco."

RENOUARD

"Shhh...All right, Luis. I will talk to them later... What did you say to the Gentleman?"

LUIS

"Nada...I say I don' know and I clear out..."

RENOUARD

"Luis, we are behind on re-planting...We all need to pitch-in. I'll be over in a little while..."

Luis hurries away.

EXT: PLANTATION. DAY.

Late morning Geoffrey is walking along a row of flax-plants that are ready for harvesting...He spies the Professor's white parasol ahead moving to and fro among mature six foot plants.

Geoffrey quickly ducks out of sight.

EXT: VERANDA. DAY.

Later, the Professor and Geoffrey have just had a late lunch together in the Moorsom's quarters...They find themselves alone together.

The Professor smiles.

PROF MOORSOM

"Good food. Fresh air. Two decades ago I would've killed for a chance to live such a life."

RENOUARD

"It's hardly worth murder."

PROF MOORSOM

"A figure of speech...Oh, Geoffrey, I've been meaning to ask. Is it true, what my sister tells me, that your plantation boys have been disturbed by a ghost?"

Geoffrey is momentarily silent...

RENOUARD

"Oh...Well, my foreman had some trouble with them in my absence..."

PROF MOORSOM

"With ghosts?"

RENOUARD

"No. I mean, with my field hands...Some of them anyway. They funk working in a certain field on the slope of the hill."

PROF MOORSOM

"A ghost on Malata Island! That is splendid indeed."

RENOUARD

(Smiles)

"You're having me on..."

PROF MOORSOM

"To the contrary...It means our whole conception of the psychology of ghosts must be revised..."

RENOUARD

"Hold on. You're a man of science and letters. You don't actually believe in ghosts..."

PROF MOORSOM

(Continuing)

"...This Island has been inhabited probably since the dawn of Civilization..."

RENOUARD

"But the psychology of *ghosts*, Professor?"

PROF MOORSOM

(Continuing)

"...How did a ghost get here? By air or by sea? And why did it leave its native haunts. Was he expelled from a community of spirits?"

No longer smiling, Geoffrey cannot respond. He is dumb-founded by the Professor's interest in such an irrational belief.

PROF MOORSOM

"...For that matter, is it, in fact, a *he-ghost*. Mightn't it be a *she-ghost*? Why not? I would venture that female ghosts are more out and about, don't you think?"

RENOUARD

"I don't know...Two Tahitian boys started the rumour..."

PROF MOORSOM

"Let us investigate the matter. Ghosts are a rare find..."

Renouard stands to his feet.

RENOUARD

"What? You're not serious!"

PROF MOORSOM

"Oh, I'm dead serious. If you'll pardon the pun"

RENOUARD

"I'm sorry. But I find this all too...strange. And I really don't have time for this...nonsense..."

Renouard turns and goes out to the Veranda.

Prof Moorsom soon joins him.

Geoffrey looks at him embarrassed.

RENOUARD

"I need to apologise...I think."

PROF MOORSOM

"Not to me. I received no insult or injury. We're all a little touchy lately..."

RENOUARD

"This has been such a waste of your time."

PROF MOORSOM

"I don't know that time can be wasted..."

The Professor puts a hand on Geoffrey's shoulder...

PROF MOORSOM

"...But I *will* tell you what this is. It is an awful waste of *life*. I mean, for all of us...Life is short. Think of that, my friend."

Moorsom takes his parasol from nearby; he opens it, and goes down the steps into the Sun.

Renouard rubs the back of his neck, and paces the veranda... Thinking, thinking...Worrying...

He stops and looks out toward the Garden...

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. DAY.

In the afternoon Geoffrey goes some distance from the Bungalow for peace of mind.

Renouard lay very still in the shade of a tree, his eyes shut.

TIMELAPSE: Shadows run...Geoffrey yawns. His eyes open. He smiles.

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. DAY.

Miss Moorsom descends the steps from the Veranda.

She is the last person Geoffrey wants to see. He looks around for a place to hide...

It is too late. She sees him and starts toward him.

Renouard is up and meets her halfway.

MISS MOORSOM

"Mr Renouard, I cannot keep still any longer. Is there time to walk to the other side of the island and be back before dark?"

RENOUARD

"No, Miss Moorsom. But I can show you a view from the central hill which your father has not seen."

MISS MOORSOM

(Smiles)

"Oh, how intriguing."

RENOUARD

"Yes. Pinnacle Hill, we call it..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Would it be difficult to climb in these shoes?"

Felicia looks at her shoes, and up again. Geoffrey smiles and shakes his head.

MISS MOORSOM

"Good. Lead on..."

Geoffrey leads her out to the dirt road.

Pinnacle Hill dominates the view before them...

RENOUARD

"You go first. I'll direct you. Straight ahead and then turn left where it branches."

They head off down the dirt road, passing three tall Palm Trees. (Cicadas herald their passing by intermittent silence.)

EXT: PINNACLE HILL. DAY.

Felicia and Geoffrey climb up the hill on the same goat path that Luis and he used in their grim task several weeks earlier.

Miss Moorsom is quite fit and relishes the exercise.

Renouard watches the hem of Felicia's dress cut back and forth across her calves...

After some time the slope levels out a bit, and the going is easier...Miss Moorsom pushes on...

Renouard stops to catch his breath... He hurries to catch up.

EXT: PINNACLE HILL. DAY.

Miss Moorsom breathes harder in the last leg of the climb...She hears laughter. She stops and looks down at her trailing companion...

Renouard is laughing. He catches himself, wipes a teary eye...and waves her on...

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey, what did I miss?"

He catches up...

RENOUARD

"Sorry. It was nonsense... Not far. Keep going."

They make it to the top and lean against the rock pinnacle to unwind...Felicia leans away from the rock and surveys the view to the West.

MISS MOORSOM

"You swear that my Father didn't race up here before us?"

RENOUARD

"We're the first...I promise you."

MISS MOORSOM

"How fascinating. Water, water. And more water."

RENOUARD

"We are on an island."

MISS MOORSOM

"And what a delightful discovery."

She turns to him and smiles...She leans close and searches his eyes...She then leans away.

MISS MOORSOM

"Geoffrey, you are. Absolutely mad...Now, let's see what else there is on this island of yours."

Miss Moorsom leaves him to stroll around the rock pinnacle.

EXT: PINNACLE HILL. DAY.

The view from the Hill is magnificent. Long white clouds trace the mainland to the West...The view to the East offers an unbroken blue sky over an aquamarine expanse of ocean to a pale horizon...

Felicia is charmed by the broad perspective...

The island bears witness to human cultivation in straight rows...Beyond the plantation is untamed wildness.

Further on, Miss Moorsom finds something puzzling. A Tree Sapling all by itself. The Sapling's branches are bare. It seems to be struggling in its unhappy location.

She touches the bare branches...

MISS MOORSOM

"Poor, Darling. What an odd place for a tree."

Felicia contemplates for a moment. Sea-breezes cool her brow.

(Soon a distant sound of a donkey braying reaches her ears.)

INTERCUT: A wagon laden with bundles Chinese flax hitched to a DONKEY. A MAN tries to pull her forward, while another Man tries to push the wagon.

Miss Moorsom turns her gaze to the West.

POV: Two sailing vessels head toward a distant Mainland, where Auckland must be.

Miss Moorsom takes a couple steps to look toward the East.

There are no sails coming from that quarter either. Only a vast blue loneliness...

Suddenly a feeling of being lost engulfs her. She blinks a couple tears down her cheeks.

Felicia stands up straight and tall to master her emotions. She wipes a tear from her cheek.

EXT: HILLTOP. DAY.

On the other side of Pinnacle rock, Geoffrey luxuriates in a cool breeze. His eyes are shut; his breathing slows.

Miss Moorsom appears before him...

MISS MOORSOM

"Mr Renouard. There is something strange in all this. Tell me, where is he? Where is Arthur?"

Renouard opens his eyes. He looks past her..

RENOUARD

"On the other side of this rock. I buried him there myself."

Felicia feels her heart stop...and start again.

MISS MOORSOM

"Say again...No, I did hear you!"

Miss Moorsom looks away, then back again...

MISS MOORSOM

"*You buried him?...Am I dreaming?...That's what I thought you said...You buried him?...My Arthur? Wait! Lemme think...No, I cannot believe I'm dreaming...Maybe I've gone mad.*"

Renouard stares down at the ground. Miss Moorsom stares away unfocussed. Her complexion deepens. (The braying Donkey is heard again.)

MISS MOORSOM

(She snaps)

"*Your cunty men are hurting that dumb animal...*"

She struggles to master her emotions...

MISS MOORSOM

"What sort of man are you? You buried my husband?...Is Arthur another of your victims?...Is that why you lied to us?...Did you fasten some atrocious quarrel upon him and...?"

RENOUARD

"No! I would never do anything like that..."

Miss Moorsom turns abruptly and starts around the rock...

Renouard follows...She stops and turns to him...

MISS MOORSOM

"You buried Arthur on the other side of this rock?"

Geoffrey follows her...

RENOUARD

"...Not my greatest enemy would even hint that I'd kill a man for no reason..."

She turns to him suddenly...

MISS MOORSOM

"Then you would kill a man *for a reason*? What could such a gentle soul have ever done to you?"

RENOUARD

"No, damn it!...I noticed this guy..."

Miss Moorsom turns away...

RENOUARD

"Wait. Listen to me...I beg of you."

MISS MOORSOM

"Of course, you'd lie and deceive..."

Miss Moorsom turns away...

RENOUARD

"Please...I saw him in a hotel. He had come from up-country, I was told...I saw him sitting there lonely in a corner, like a sick crow. On impulse I went over to talk to him. He wasn't very impressive. He was pitiful...It didn't take long for me to guess that he was drugging himself. Not drinking, as others thought...He was using opium."

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh! Now you murder him..."

RENOUARD

"No! It's true. I promise you... Please listen...One night I followed him..."

MISS MOORSOM

"You are lying!"

RENOUARD

"I swear it."

MISS MOORSOM

(A tear falls...)

"He was in your care."

RENOUARD

"I'm sorry..."

MISS MOORSOM

"You have ripped the heart from my lungs."

She turns and hurries away...Renouard hurries after her...

RENOUARD

"Listen to me...I cannot begrudge the love you bear your fiancé..."

They step unwittingly on Arthur's grave.

MISS MOORSOM

"Leave me alone"

Miss Moorsom turns away. Tears trickle from her eyes. She wipes them with a hand.

RENOUARD

"And yet, I am jealous of the very air you breathe..."

MISS MOORSOM

"...Then, kill me, too! Where is he buried, here?"

RENOUARD

(Continuing)

"...of the soil you tread on...and of a World that sees you and hears you...And yet, you're not mine..."

MISS MOORSOM

"...Is this dead tree meant to be Arthur's headstone?"

RENOUARD

"What?...No. The rock itself... I don't recall why I put a tree there. It doesn't matter. I love someone. That's all that matters..."

Felicia collapses to the ground caressing the dirt and weeping.

Geoffrey hurries to her aid. He attempts to help her up. She pushes him off, and continues weeping.

Geoffrey watches helplessly... He steps away and gazes out to Sea...

An expanse of blue Sea stretches far to a hazy horizon that anticipates land-fall... (Felicia sighs...)

Felicia gets to her feet... She wipes tears away and regards him for a moment...Geoffrey smiles at her...

RENOUARD

"Ca va?"

Felicia takes a step toward him...and stops.

MISS MOORSOM

"I don't love you...To me you are lower than a tadpole. Still, I need you to tell me more about Arthur."

RENOUARD

"Well...I rather liked him. For some reason I proposed he should come to be my assistant...He said he believed this would save him..."

Miss Moorsom permits a little smile.

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh, dear sweet Arthur. Go on..."

RENOUARD

"It did *not* save him from death...which came for him as if from nowhere, nothing...A mere kick in the ribs by a donkey...But a crack'd rib never killed a man..."

MISS MOORSOM

"Oh God, this is tragic!"

RENOUARD

"That's the story...He wasn't well from the start. He rallied a little one night and said he wanted to tell me something...I'm sorry...I'm not a man who takes an interest in other men's hard-luck..."

MISS MOORSOM

"You hate people..."

RENOUARD

"Not true...I just keep to myself..."

MISS MOORSOM

"How very different you both are..."

EXT: HILLSIDE. DAY.

Miss Moorsom goes into action...

MISS MOORSOM

"Don't follow me."

AERIAL ANGLE: She starts down the steep path.

Renouard watches Felicia descend and shrink below him...

Geoffrey starts and hurries to catch her...skirting the path and coming around to block her descent...

She is exasperated!

MISS MOORSOM

"Why, oh why, is it...that treachery, lies, and baseness must cross my path at every turn?"

RENOUARD

"I need to talk to you"

MISS MOORSOM

"Mr Renwar, we have talked and talked and have come to no conclusion but this...*You love me*...How pointless..."

RENOUARD

"Felicia, a woman like you and a man like me do not often come together on this Earth."

They have come to a more level shoulder...Felicia notices a rock ledge...She goes and sits on it...

MISS MOORSOM

"Alright... Speak your peace. Keep in mind the Sun will be going down soon."

Geoffrey goes to plead his case.

RENOUARD

"If you'd only believe me..."

MISS MOORSOM

"After what you've done?"

Geoffrey falls to his knees and starts kissing her hands.

Felicia rises abruptly...

MISS MOORSOM

"Stop that...You are being ridiculous...Have you no dignity?"

Hurt washes over him. He stands. Levels on her...

RENOUARD

"Do you grieve for your own dignity? That man - that fiancé of yours - was a mediocre Soul at best and would have given you a miserable existence."

This remark ignites something within her. She stares at him for a moment, calming the storm of emotion brewing inside.

MISS MOORSOM

"Can you not imagine why I have devoted myself to finding Arthur? Don't you know that reparation was due? Call it a *sacred debt*. To redeem Arthur's reputation...And in the eyes of the world, nothing could have achieved that more than for him to have married a Moorsom...I am talking about the shaping of a Man's *Destiny*."

Renouard bristles with indignation...

RENOUARD

"Oh...you really are a piece of work, aren't you? You and your father... All wind and wrack...Bubble and froth..."

MISS MOORSOM

"What did you say? My father?"

RENOUARD

(Continuing)

"O *Eternal Love*...Your very Soul is made of foam."

Miss Moorsom is alarmed by this cruel attack...She turns and starts away...

Renouard runs to her...Grovels at her feet.

RENOUARD

"Oh, God. I'm so sorry! I didn't mean that...Please, forgive me!"

Geoffrey takes her hand. She pulls away.

MISS MOORSOM

"*Stop that!*"

RENOUARD

"Smile on me...What could I do without your consent? You don't conquer a wraith, cold mist, or stuff of dreams...It must come to you and cling to your heart."

Miss Moorsom turns to him, intrigued...

MISS MOORSOM

"What was that?"

RENOUARD

"You don't conquer a wraith..."

MISS MOORSOM

"No, that last bit."

RENOUARD

"It must come to you and cling to your heart."

MISS MOORSOM

"Clever. I like that...Mister Renwar, though you can have no claim to my consideration after you have proved to be such a rake, I will tell you that I am perhaps *not* the extraordinary being you think I am."

Geoffrey goes down on one knee, as if to propose marriage...He remembers something, and stands to his feet...She watches curiously, as he searches his pockets...

He then remembers, and finds it in his poor wallet...He goes to his knee again...and extends his fist, which he opens...Geoffrey has Arthur's gold ring in his palm.

Miss Moorsom recognises it immediately...She is shocked.

MISS MOORSOM

"Assez! J'ai horreur de tout cela...Go away, Geoffrey. I am going to be sick...No, wait...You stay. I'll go."

Miss Moorsom stumbles-off down the hillside...

Renouard soon sets out to follow...Loosened dirt and gravel signal his intentions.

Miss Moorsom stops...She shouts without looking back.

MISS MOORSOM

"Don't follow me!"

Felicia removes her shoes, and continues down the path...

Geoffrey sits on a half-buried boulder and watches for a moment... Renouard calls-out to her...

RENOUARD

"And your dream is to influence a Man's Destiny?"

EXT: HILLSIDE/ROAD. DAY.

Five minutes later, Miss Moorsom makes it to the road, limping and passes the three Palm Trees...

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. DAWN.

The Sun rises, deep purple becoming violet hues. (Birdsong heralds the coming day.)

EXT: GARDEN. DAY.

Geoffrey lay asleep among carrot plants. He stirs and yawns. He pushes himself to a sitting position...He is wrapped in an old quilt...He looks around confused.

A few minutes later Renouard kneels at a water trough splashing his face.

(He hears someone coming.) He gets to his feet.

Luis comes into the garden with a mug of black coffee...

LUIS

"I do not disturb you in the night."

RENOUARD

"Thanks. Is everyone up?"

LUIS

"Si. The Gentleman ask for you. He say they go back Auckland today."

RENOUARD

"Yes, of course. You take your orders from the Gentleman. Can you spare a man to help crew the Janet?"

LUIS

"I think so."

RENOUARD

"Thank you, Luis. You're a good man."

Renouard sips his much-appreciated black coffee...Moorsom appears with his folded white parasol underarm.

PROF MOORSOM

"Good morning...I am happy to report we have miraculously found last-minute passage through the Suez. We should be able to meet the mail boat due in Marseilles on the last day of March...This will suit me excellently."

Moorsom draws near and lowers his voice.

PROF MOORSOM

"I am deeply grateful to you, my friend."

RENOUARD

"I don't understand. Why are you grateful to me?"

PROF MOORSOM

"I am grateful for what you have done - and for being what you are..." (He laughs and confides) "I won't thank you for your hospitality. Don't be offended - that I am thankful to escape it...About the other matter. We'll just say that Arthur died...Nothing more...And so, my friend...*Auf wiedersehen.*"

With this the Professor turns and goes back the way he came, whistling.

EXT.INT: BUNGALOW. DAY.

Later that morning, Renouard shuts and secures weather-boards to the windows of his own quarters...He withdraws inside and locks the front door...Craving total darkness, he blows the flame out in his new Lamp...

EXT: BUNGALOW. DAY.

In the late afternoon Luis comes looking for his Master.

He comes along the veranda and finds the windows boarded and the door locked...He knocks...

There is a plate of untouched eggs and stewed tomatoes beside the door.

The door opens.

Luis is dismayed by the haggard look of the face in the doorway...

RENOUARD

"What?"

LUIS

"Senor Ren, you not take breakfast? You are sick?"

Geoffrey blinks. His hair is dishevelled, his eyes red.

RENOUARD

"Oh yes, Luis...I was coming to look for you. I want you to listen carefully to what I have to say. No questions."

Luis listens and nods...

RENOUARD

"I want you to pay out the men their wages from the cash in the safe...There should be enough...You know the Tasman

Trader is scheduled to call in on its way to Auckland tomorrow...Wait here!"

Renouard shuts the door in Luis' face.

A minute later, he opens it again, and steps out. He has discarded the blanket. But still wears the clothes he slept in the night before.

He hands Luis a sheet of paper...

RENOUARD

"Give this to the Captain Rogers... I've signed it...He can fill in the amount and present it to the Bank... Ask him if he would do a great favour for an old friend...And carry the men wherever they might wish to go. Most live in Auckland...Some live further South..."

Luis is obviously confused by these instructions...

RENOUARD

(Adds)

"Luis, I'm shutting down operations here."

LUIS

"Escuse, Senor. Why you shut plantation?"

Geoffrey leans to him, as if to share a secret...

RENOUARD

"Luis, this place is haunted."

LUIS

(Laughs)

"Senor, you make joke...Is good one."

RENOUARD

"No, Luis. I am dead serious...Everyone must leave the Island. Including you..."

LUIS

"But, Senor. What you do?"

RENOUARD

"I finish up here, Luis. When you have all gone...Now, go tell your men the happy news..."

Renouard starts to turn back into the Bungalow...He stops and turns back to his foreman.

RENOUARD

"Oh, Luis, I'm not hungry. Will you have Boy take away this plate of food before it attracts flies?"

LUIS

"Oh, Senor...I take it. Boy, he help the Gentleman and the Ladies..."

RENOUARD

"What! Are they still here?"

LUIS

"Maestro. We had to load flax...We kill two birds..."

Luis smiles proudly...

Renouard becomes angry. This is a face Luis does not expect.

RENOUARD

"Who told you to load the flax?"

LUIS

"You did, Senor. Last week. You don' remember?"

Renouard runs from the Bungalow...

EXT: SCHOONER/DOCKSIDE. DAY.

The Professor is the first to be assisted by Douglas into the Schooner...Boy passes a small suit-case to him...He hurries away passing Miss Moorsom on her way along the dock...Geoffrey hastens to intercept her as she is about to board...He offers her his hand. Accepting his hand, she smiles and puts her best face forward...

MISS MOORSOM

"Goodbye to you, Geoffrey."

RENOUARD

"Will you condescend to remember me?"

Miss Moorsom is incredulous.

MISS MOORSOM

"That is a strange request for you to make."

RENOUARD

"Is it? *Impudent*, maybe..."

MISS MOORSOM

"After the lies and deceit, you ask me to remember you? ...*I sincerely hope not...*"

Suddenly, he pulls her tightly to him...and speaks to her face.

RENOUARD

"You will. I promise!"

Geoffrey releases her and hurries away, brushing blindly past Mrs Moorsom...

EXT: PINNACLE HILL. DAY.

Some weeks later, the lone Kowhai Tree at the top of Pinnacle Hill has sprouted a single Green Leaf. Rain starts to fall...

EXT: OPEN SEA. DAY.

The prow of the Schooner 'Janet', as she cuts a course to Malata Island...

EXT: MALATA ISLAND. DAY.

Various angles: Malata Island has returned to her natural state. Flax plants have grown taller than ever allowed... Grasses, shrubs and vines are taking over. Man-made structures; the Bungalow, the workers' quarters, and out-buildings have their doors and windows wide open...Vines and grasses are taking over these places, as well...(There is a cacophony of bird calls.)

EXT: GARDEN. DAY.

The Garden has become a wild cornucopia of produce...

LINDA, the Donkey, feasts on carrots, salad greens and other lovely produce... (Human Voices rise in the middle-distance.) Linda raises her head and locates the source..

Linda watches and listens... (The Voices are some distance apart at first, calling out)

CAPT HENERY - MAXWELL FORD -CREWMAN TANE

"Hey, Renwaa"..."Geoffreyy"..."Master Ren"

EXT: PLANTATION. DAY.

The three Men are soon conferring... Tane sadly shows a single sandal he has found...Max shakes his head in sorrow...Only the Captain remains optimistic...

CAPT HENERY

"We've scoured this island three times and come up with nothing..." *to Tane) "I'm not convinced the Master has met some bad end...Someone would have found the body by now...I reckon he's hopped some strange freighter somewhere. A tropical Paradise. Or Europe. Maybe all the way back to Canada...Why not?"

Max Ford offers...

MAX

"P'raps you're right. Geoffrey was far too clever to have become victim of outrageous fortune."

Henery smiles and consults his Pocket-Watch...He turns and they follow...

CAPT HENERY

"Getting late. Best get a move on..."

Max and Tane start toward the dock...Captain Henery looks one last time around...He pauses to focus on something...

A phantom breeze plays with the hair at his neck and 'whispers' in his ear...He suddenly sees something out-of-the-ordinary.

A faded, almost gossamer red silk scarf appears from among grasses and drifts along on a breeze.

Tane and Max have stopped to wait for Capt. Henery. They are in conversation...

TANE

"Ghosts, no...But I believe in Tanewha..." (pr. Tanayfa)

MAX

"Do you? A young educated man like you?"

TANE

"I'm no fool..."

Just then, they notice Captain Henery running toward them.

CAPT HENERY

(He shouts)

"Don't stop! Keep going..."

Henery stops and looks down at his boots...He looks up and waves them on...

Tane turns and starts away, not waiting for Max...

Max grins and watches Henery hurrying towards him. He laughs.

Capt Henery is barefoot...He reaches Max out of breath...

CAPT. HENERY

"We have to go...Now. Come on, Max. Move..."

MAX

"What's the mad rush? (He laughs) "Let me guess. Did we forget our boots?"

Henery manages to tow Max along by the arm.

HENERY

"I have other boots on the boat..."

Henery and Max hurry along - Tane is in the distance ahead.

In the FOREGROUND, the Deadman's Boots 'watch' the receding figures...

EXT: SCHOONER/MALATA ISLAND. DAY.

Later, Sunset reveals the Schooner 'Janet of Malata' in full sail, making for the Mainland...

Silhouette of Malata Island against setting Sun...

FADE OUT...

THE END