



Cambridge IGCSE™

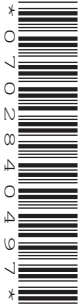
DRAMA

0411/12

Paper 1

May/June 2021

PRE-RELEASE MATERIAL



This material must be given to candidates on receipt by the centre.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The questions in Paper 1 will be based on the stimuli and the play extract provided in this booklet.
- You may do any appropriate preparatory work. It is recommended that you perform the extract, at least informally.
- You will **not** be allowed to take this copy of the material **or** any other notes or preparation into the examination.
- A copy of the pre-release material will be provided with the question paper.

This document has **28** pages.

STIMULI

Choose **one** of the following three stimuli and devise a piece of drama based on it. You should work in groups of between two and six performers. Your piece should last approximately 15 minutes.

In the written examination, you will be asked questions about your piece that will cover both practical and theoretical issues.

Stimulus 1

Greek myth: *The fall of Icarus*

Stimulus 2

Proverbial wisdom: *When the going gets tough, the tough get going*

Stimulus 3

Photograph: *High School Students playing basketball in school gym*



EXTRACT

Taken from *The Watsons*, by Laura Wade.

These notes are intended to help you understand the context of the drama.

The extract is taken from Laura Wade's play, *The Watsons*. The play was first performed in November 2018 at the Minerva Theatre, Chichester, England. The play takes place in the early 1800s.

This contemporary play is adapted from an unfinished novel by Jane Austen (1775–1817). The playwright gives a new dramatic twist to Jane Austen's story through the introduction of a present-day writer, who emerges in the action and transforms the way the plot develops.

The play is in two Acts, and the extract consists of the whole of Act One.

Characters:

EMMA WATSON	the heroine, the youngest Watson sister
ELIZABETH WATSON	Emma's eldest sister
MARGARET WATSON	the middle Watson sister
ROBERT WATSON	Emma's elder brother
MRS ROBERT	Robert's wife, Mary
MR WATSON	Father of Robert, Elizabeth, Emma and Margaret
NANNY	The Watsons' servant
TOM MUSGRAVE	a gentleman
LORD OSBORNE	a young lord
LADY OSBORNE	mother of Lord Osborne
MISS OSBORNE	younger sister of Lord Osborne
MR HOWARD	a clergyman
CHARLES HOWARD	Mr Howard's nephew and ward; ten years old
MRS EDWARDS	Emma's chaperone
MR EDWARDS	her husband
FEMALE SERVANT	
LAURA	a writer
OFFICERS OF THE MILITIA	
GUESTS AT AN ASSEMBLY	

ACT ONE

A bedroom: dimly lit and stuffy, the room of an invalid. MR WATSON sleeps feverishly in the bed.

EMMA comes in and stands in the middle of the room, dressed for a ball.

- EMMA: –? 5
- ELIZABETH, by the bed, looks at her.*
- ELIZABETH: Oh yes. Yes, very fine. You don't look at all like a Watson.
EMMA: Do not say so. Should I change it?
ELIZABETH: No, I meant it as a compliment. It is altogether more fashionable than anything I might have to wear. Margaret and I have been dancing in the same two dresses these five years. Last assembly we were so desperate for a change that we swapped, and mine – my favourite – came back to me covered in gravy and Margaret no clue how it got there. 10
- EMMA: Mischief between sisters. 15
ELIZABETH: Have you forgotten how it is in a family? Perhaps it hadn't started when you left us, you were what,
EMMA: Five?
ELIZABETH: Then you must harden yourself. With a sister like Margaret, mischief is the least of it. 20
Dear Emma, might I say something?
EMMA: Yes?
ELIZABETH: Your hair.
EMMA: It's not right, is it?
ELIZABETH: It's not everything it could be. 25
EMMA: I don't know how to do it.
ELIZABETH: Of course not, you've never had to do it yourself. Here:
- ELIZABETH indicates a chair and EMMA sits on it. ELIZABETH stands behind her and starts to braid and pin her hair.*
- EMMA: You must have had your own maid, did you? 30
ELIZABETH: Yes.
And here we have more to do, and only one servant for all of it. I suppose my aunt brought you up to be rather refined. I have observed it ever since you came home, and I am afraid it will not be for your happiness. How bewildering it must be for you. 35
EMMA: Don't. I am determined to bear it well.
ELIZABETH: Everyone is very excited to look at you tonight. In town this morning no one talked to me of anything else.
EMMA: I wish you had not made a point of my going to this ball – I wish you were going instead of me. I would happily stay at home with Father. 40
ELIZABETH: No, Emma, I am not so selfish as that, though you must have a sweet temper to suggest it. I should not be surprised if you were to be thought one of the prettiest girls in the room; there is a great deal in novelty. 45

The assembly room gradually appears through the next section. MR and MRS EDWARDS appear first: middle-aged townspeople, wealthy

merchant-class. He leads her to a seat where she arranges herself and examines EMMA with interest.

- MRS EDWARDS: I dare say it will be a very good ball. You will go early, so Mrs. Edwards may get a good place by the fire. 50
- MRS EDWARDS: Miss Emma Watson! But so little of the Watson countenance: my dear, do you perceive the least resemblance?
- EMMA: So your aunt remarried, did she, and sent you back to your family? 55
- ELIZABETH: Yes mam.
- ELIZABETH: Mr Edwards will retire to the card table, and if he does not lose all his money, you will stay as late as you can wish for. If he does, he will hurry you home perhaps, but you are sure of some comfortable soup.
- The OFFICERS OF THE MILITIA appear and spread themselves through the room.* 60
- EMMA: Mrs Edwards will let you roam as long as you stay in sight. And among so many officers you will hardly want partners.
- ELIZABETH: Officers? 65
- ELIZABETH: Yes, the regiment stay in Stanton through the winter. Emma, you look alarmed.
- MRS EDWARDS: And what is the name of your aunt's new husband?
- EMMA: Captain O'Brien.
- MRS EDWARDS: *Captain*, well! Nothing like your officers for captivating the ladies. There is no resisting a cockade, my dear.
- EMMA: And who should I look out for if I'm not inclined to swoon at a soldier? 70
- ELIZABETH: You will certainly be noticed by Tom Musgrave.
- TOM MUSGRAVE *appears, bows.*
- TOM MUSGRAVE: Miss Emma Watson: the reports of your beauty, which I feared excessive, were if anything too restrained.
- ELIZABETH: I would advise you not to encourage him. He pays attention to every new girl; but he is a great flirt, and never means anything serious. 75
- EMMA: Tell me about Tom Musgrave.
- ELIZABETH: A young man of very good fortune, quite independent, remarkably agreeable. Most of the girls hereabout are in love with him, or have been. 80
- TOM MUSGRAVE: How comes it that we have not the pleasure of seeing your sisters this evening?
- EMMA: Elizabeth is the only one at home, and she could not leave my father.
- TOM MUSGRAVE: Miss Watson the only one at home? It seems but the day before yesterday that I saw them both in town. 85
- ELIZABETH: Poor Margaret is possessed with the notion of him being in love with her – this is the second time this year that she has gone to spend a month with Robert and Mary to egg him on by her absence.
- EMMA: All the way to Croydon, in the hope that he'll notice?
- ELIZABETH: You do not know Margaret. There is nothing she would not do to get married. 90
- EMMA: And does she love him, truly?
- ELIZABETH: He has eight or nine hundred a year, and she would fancy herself in love for a good deal less than that.
- TOM MUSGRAVE: We shall have a famous ball. The Osbornes are certainly coming; you may depend upon it, for I was with Lord Osborne this morning. 95
- EMMA: But to be so bent on marriage, to pursue a man merely for the sake of situation, is a sort of thing that shocks me; I cannot understand it.

Murmurs start to go around the assembly room, now pretty full:

- BALL GUESTS: The Osbornes are coming... 100
 ELIZABETH: You know we must marry. Father cannot provide for us, and it is very bad to grow old and be poor and laughed at.
 EMMA: Would you prefer a marriage without affection? I would rather be teacher at a school than marry a man I did not like.
 ELIZABETH: I would rather do anything than be teacher at a school. I have been at school, Emma; you haven't. I think I could like any good-humoured man with a comfortable income. 105
 EMMA: Eight or nine hundred a year, say.
 ELIZABETH: Oh not Tom. I was the first he paid attention to when he came here six years ago. Some people say that he has never seemed to like any girl so well since. 110
 BALL GUESTS: The Osbornes are coming...
 ELIZABETH *and* TOM *circle each other.*
 EMMA: Yet it was not a match?
 ELIZABETH: He came into his money when he was very young. Father says it has given him rather an unsettled turn. 115
 EMMA: Your account of him, Elizabeth, gives me very little inclination for his acquaintance.
 ELIZABETH: No, I defy you not to be delighted with him if he takes notice of you.
Everyone turns to look as a group of fashionably dressed people come into the assembly room. 120
 Look: the Osbornes!
 EMMA: Who are the Osbornes?
 ELIZABETH: Our grandest family.
 LADY OSBORNE, LORD OSBORNE, MISS OSBORNE, MR HOWARD *and* CHARLES *stand in tableau. The whole assembly bows to them, and they bow back stiffly.* 125
 Terrifyingly grand. But their coming gives a credit to our assembly. Great people have always their charm.
 An OFFICER *springs forward and offers his hand to MISS OSBORNE. She takes it and comes further into the room, cueing the breakup of the tableau, the awkward moment over.* 130
 There's Miss Osborne – isn't she beautiful?
 And Lady Osborne, the mother.
 EMMA: And that awkward-looking young man? 135
 ELIZABETH: Lord Osborne. In truth, they add nothing to the pleasure of the evening: they come so late and leave so early. Father says he wouldn't mind if they came later and left earlier.
 LADY OSBORNE: Henry, why do you refuse to dance?
 LORD OSBORNE: With whom do you suggest I dance in this company? 140
 LADY OSBORNE: Anyone, just to see you enjoy yourself.
 LORD OSBORNE: We don't come here for enjoyment, mother.
 EMMA: And that gentleman and the little boy?
 CHARLES: Oh uncle, it's starting, it's starting!
 ELIZABETH: That's Mr Howard and his nephew. 145

- CHARLES: Miss Osborne promised to dance with me the first two dances.
 MR HOWARD: Have you your gloves?
 CHARLES: Yes sir.
 ELIZABETH: Mr Howard is rector of the parish next to father's. He was Lord Osborne's tutor, I know nothing of him more than that. 150
- EMMA: He has a nice face.
 ELIZABETH: With a clergyman's living he will need one.
 EMMA: Not married?
 ELIZABETH: As I say, Emma; *clergyman*. You might set your sights higher while this dress is still good. 155
- ELIZABETH has finished EMMA's hair, and stands her up, removing the chair afterwards.*
- There: all done. Yes, you'll do very well.
- Musicians are heard tuning up. CHARLES runs up to MISS OSBORNE and taps her on the arm.* 160
- MISS OSBORNE: Ah, Charles. Forgive me but I'm dancing with Captain Beresford this time. I'll dance with you later.
 CHARLES: Oh.
 ELIZABETH: Bring me stories. I must know what you think of Mr Musgrave. And tell me if he mentions Margaret. 165
- ELIZABETH pushes MR WATSON's bed off, calling over her shoulder.*
- The dancers move into the space left by the bed, and form two lines.*
- EMMA: You're sure you won't go instead of me? Your pleasure would be greater than mine; I am a stranger here. 170
 ELIZABETH: No, Emma, I insist, do not think of me. I shall be quite happy sitting at home. In the dark...
- And we're at the assembly. The music begins and the dancers bow to each other.* 175
- EMMA notices CHARLES back with his uncle, clearly upset.*
- MR HOWARD: Now Charles, courage courage.
 CHARLES: I do not mind it, she said she'll dance with me later.
- EMMA holds out a hand to CHARLES.*
- EMMA: I shall be very happy to dance with you, sir, if you like it. 180
 CHARLES: Oh I do, I do like it!
 EMMA: Quickly, then.
- EMMA and CHARLES run and join the end of the two lines of dancers and the dance begins immediately.*
- LORD OSBORNE: Who is that pretty girl dancing with Charles? 185
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Miss Emma Watson, my lord.
 LORD OSBORNE: Why haven't we seen her before?

Another conversation, this time between MR HOWARD and LADY OSBORNE.

LADY OSBORNE: She wasn't properly introduced? 190
 MR HOWARD: It all happened quite naturally between her and the boy.
 LORD OSBORNE: Why do not you dance with her?
 LADY OSBORNE: She'll be trouble when she marries, you can see it in her eyes.
 MR HOWARD: She looks to me a sweet girl.
 LADY OSBORNE: She is certainly a curiosity. 195
 It is extremely hot in here, and I haven't anything to drink.
 MR HOWARD: Beg your pardon, Lady Osborne, allow me.

MR HOWARD *moves away to find a drink for LADY OSBORNE.*

LORD OSBORNE: I want you to dance with her and I will come and stand by you.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: I was determining on it this very moment, my lord; I'll be introduced 200
 and dance with her directly.
 LORD OSBORNE: Aye, do; and if you find she does not want much talking to, you may
 introduce me by and by.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: If she is like her sisters, she will only want to be listened to.

The dance finishes and EMMA and CHARLES bow to each other. 205

CHARLES *takes EMMA by the hand and leads her to MR HOWARD, who is carrying a drink for LADY OSBORNE.*

CHARLES: Uncle! Do look at my partner; she is so pretty!
 MR HOWARD: I can't thank you enough for your kindness to
 EMMA: Please think nothing of it. I like to dance. 210
 MR HOWARD: But forgive me, we haven't had the pleasure...
 EMMA [To CHARLES.]: Mr Howard, will you introduce me?
 CHARLES: Uncle, this is Miss Emma Watson. He's called Mr Howard too so you'd
 better call me Charles or we'll be confused who you're talking to.

EMMA *bows to MR HOWARD.* 215

EMMA: Mr Howard. Beautifully done, Charles.
 MR HOWARD: Miss Watson. Daughter of the Reverend Watson?
 EMMA: The youngest daughter, yes.
 MR HOWARD: Then I know your father. As you can see I am engaged on a mission 220
 for Lady Osborne. But if you are not too fatigued by your exertions
 with Charles, might I request the honour of your hand in the two next
 dances?
 EMMA: Thank you, yes.
 MR HOWARD: One moment.

MR HOWARD *moves off.* 225

CHARLES: Fatigued, we've hardly started. What o'clock is it?
 EMMA: Eleven.
 CHARLES: And I am not at all sleepy. Uncle said I should be asleep before ten.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Your goodness to Charles, Miss Watson, brings all his friends upon 230
 you.
 EMMA: Charles, another introduction?
 CHARLES: It's Tom Musgrave, everyone knows him.

EMMA *bows*.

- EMMA: The famous Tom Musgrave.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Famous indeed? 235
 EMMA: I shouldn't flatter so far as to say infamous.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: You have a lively wit, Miss Emma.
 CHARLES: When shall you come to Osborne Castle?
 EMMA: I am not acquainted with the family, Charles.
 CHARLES: You must come anyway. They've got a stuffed fox and a badger; 240
 anyone would think they were alive.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Now Charles, I have just come from the card room, where I'm certain
 I saw a plate of muffins being brought in.
 CHARLES: Muffins!
 TOM MUSGRAVE: I should go now, before Lord Osborne eats them all. 245
 CHARLES: Oh but I'm supposed to stay with
 EMMA: Thank you Charles, off you go.

CHARLES *goes*. TOM *and* EMMA *smile at each other*.

- TOM MUSGRAVE: Miss Emma Watson.
 EMMA: I cannot think of a day when I've heard my name so many times. Will 250
 they all tire of looking at me soon?
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Who could tire of looking at you, Miss Emma?
 EMMA: Ha. Certainly not your friend over there – does he always stare so?
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Lord Osborne? His manners are awkward, but he's decent enough.

LORD OSBORNE *sees* EMMA *and* TOM *looking at him and moves closer*. 255

- EMMA: He's coming.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: I came on purpose to ask you to dance – may I have the pleasure?
 EMMA: Forgive me, I'm already engaged.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Charles Howard mustn't have you the whole evening, we can never 260
 suffer this.
 EMMA: I am not dancing with Charles, sir.

The band strikes up. MR HOWARD *comes back, and takes* EMMA *by the hand, just as* LORD OSBORNE *is arriving to be introduced*.

MR HOWARD *and* EMMA *go to dance*. LORD OSBORNE *falters, hovers awkwardly*. 265

- TOM MUSGRAVE: She is dancing with Howard, my lord.
 LORD OSBORNE: I wanted you to dance with her so I could come and stand by you.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: You could stand by Howard.
 LORD OSBORNE: Howard hasn't any conversation; he neither shoots nor rides. 270
 No, I shall be off. How long do you stay, till sunrise?
 TOM MUSGRAVE: No, faith, my lord. I have had quite enough of it, I shall leave with you.

EMMA *and* MR HOWARD *pass close to* LORD OSBORNE *and* TOM MUSGRAVE *to hear this*:

- LORD OSBORNE: Stay and dance with Miss Watson. 275
 Let me see you soon at the castle, and bring me word how she looks by daylight.

ELIZABETH *appears, bringing the Watsons' parlour with her. The dance continues.*

- ELIZABETH: He said that? He really said that? 280
 EMMA: I heard it, clear as a bell.
 ELIZABETH: My word, Emma. Lord Osborne took notice of you! What did you think of him?
 EMMA: He would be handsome though he were not a lord, and perhaps better bred. There is a carelessness about him, and little desire to please anyone but himself. 285
 ELIZABETH: And you didn't dance at all with Tom Musgrave?
 EMMA: Never once, though he did ask.
 ELIZABETH: But you must have liked him, you must have been struck with him altogether? 290
 EMMA: He is ridiculous enough to entertain me, but his company gives me no other agreeable emotion.
 ELIZABETH: My dearest Emma! You are like nobody else in the world. I should like to know the man you do think agreeable.
 EMMA: I liked Mr Howard. He has a cheerful, gentleman-like air. 295

MR HOWARD *leaves, and the other guests disperse. EMMA comes face to face with LADY OSBORNE for a moment.*

- ELIZABETH: I should have been frightened out of my wits to be noticed by the Osbornes.
 EMMA: They are like so many families of that class; charming among themselves, but fish out of water in a town assembly, afraid that too much enjoyment would betray them as less grand than we thought. 300
 ELIZABETH: It seems to me a shame to have so much and not enjoy it. I suppose you must have been much among people of that kind in your former life. 305
 EMMA: I fear I was one of them.

LADY OSBORNE *leaves with her entourage.*

EMMA *sees that ELIZABETH is folding a pile of underwear. She goes to help her.*

- ELIZABETH: And now look at you: folding petticoats in the parlour – no Emma, you mustn't. 310
 EMMA: Let me; it will be done sooner. Do you usually do this here?
 ELIZABETH: There is so little space. If we do it in the scullery all our clothes smell of meat. Worse if she's burned something.

NANNY *brings in a tablecloth, plates and cutlery.* 315

- EMMA: But what if someone should call?
 ELIZABETH: Everyone knows we dine at three, no one will call.
 NANNY: Shall I lay the cloth, Miss?
 ELIZABETH: Yes, sorry. Thank you, Nanny.

NANNY *lays a cloth and sets the table for two people.* 320

I'm afraid we have nothing but fried beef, but won't it be snug, just us two?

- Now tell me about Mr Howard. I can only think of him discussing sermons with father and looking serious.
- EMMA: He did ask after father, he said he 325
- EMMA hears a sound outside, the approaching gallop of two horses.*
- What's that?
- ELIZABETH *listens.*
- ELIZABETH: A horse. 330
 EMMA: Two horses.
 ELIZABETH: Stopped.
 Nanny, go and see.
 EMMA: Don't let anyone in.
 ELIZABETH: But it might be
 EMMA: Look! 335
- EMMA gestures to the piles of laundry and the dinner table.*
- They freeze, listening for a moment. Footsteps are heard in the hallway.*
- Quick!
- ELIZABETH *grabs an armful of laundry, just as TOM MUSGRAVE and LORD OSBORNE stride in.* 340
- TOM MUSGRAVE: Miss Watson, how delightful to find you at home.
- TOM looks around, clocks the laundry and the table with a tiny smirk, but ploughs on.*
- I don't believe you know my friend Lord Osborne. 345
- ELIZABETH *bows, despite her armful of linen. LORD OSBORNE bows back.*
- ELIZABETH: My lord.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Nor Miss Emma Watson, my lord.
- EMMA and LORD OSBORNE *bow to each other.* 350
- EMMA: We have seen each other, but not yet been introduced.
 ELIZABETH [*Indicating chairs.*]: Please –
- LORD OSBORNE *looks at the room.*
- LORD OSBORNE: We have trespassed upon your dinner.
 EMMA: The table is set but I assure you we are not on the point of dining. 355
- ELIZABETH and EMMA *sit. TOM sits down.*
- TOM MUSGRAVE: We forget, do not we, my lord? The custom at the castle is to eat at six or seven, later sometimes.

LORD OSBORNE *has nothing to add, but sits.*

TOM *looks to* LORD OSBORNE, *nods: say something.* LORD OSBORNE *looks to* ELIZABETH. 360

LORD OSBORNE: How is your father is he very ill?
 ELIZABETH: I beg your pardon, my lord?
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Lord Osborne was inquiring after your father's health.
 ELIZABETH: Thank you my lord, he is not at all well. 365
 EMMA: It is a surprise to see you today, Mr Musgrave.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: I love to give surprises; how so?
 EMMA: I thought it the custom to visit the ladies one had danced with the morning after a ball, rather than those one hadn't.

TOM *laughs.* 370

TOM MUSGRAVE: There, my lord: I told you Miss Emma has a lively wit.
 Has Mr Howard called this morning?
 EMMA: He has not.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: No doubt a visit will soon be forthcoming.
 TOM *nods to* LORD OSBORNE *to speak to* EMMA. *He takes a deep breath and tries.* 375

LORD OSBORNE: Have you walked – been walking this morning?
 EMMA: No, my lord; we thought it too dirty.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: You should wear half-boots. Nothing sets off a neat ankle more than a half-boot. 380

LORD OSBORNE: Nankeen galoshes with black laces very well.
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Do not you like half-boots?
 EMMA: Yes; but unless they are so stout as to injure their beauty, they are not fit for country walking.

LORD OSBORNE: Ladies should ride in dirty weather. 385
 TOM MUSGRAVE: Do you ride?
 EMMA: No.

LORD OSBORNE: I wonder every lady does not; a woman never looks better than on horseback.
 EMMA: Every lady may not have the inclination, or the means. 390

LORD OSBORNE: If they knew how much it became them, they would all have the inclination; and I fancy when once they had the inclination, the means would soon follow.
 EMMA: My lord, there are some circumstances which even women cannot control. Female economy will do a great deal but it cannot turn a small income into a large one. It cannot conjure me a horse. 395

EMMA *smiles at* LORD OSBORNE. *He looks back at her with a new understanding.*

NANNY *creeps in and goes to* ELIZABETH, *attempting subtlety.*

NANNY: Please, mam, the clock has long struck; shall I serve the dinner? 400

LORD OSBORNE *leaps to his feet.*

LORD OSBORNE: We must go, Musgrave.
 ELIZABETH: I am sorry it happens so, but you know what early hours we keep.

MUSGRAVE *and* LORD OSBORNE *move towards the door, then LORD OSBORNE doubles back.* 405

LORD OSBORNE: Forgive me, Miss Watson, I have forgotten to enquire after the health of your father.

EMMA: We were sorry to tell you earlier that he's not at all well.

TOM MUSGRAVE: Come, my lord, we will leave the ladies to their – what is it today, Nanny? 410

NANNY: Beef, sir.

TOM MUSGRAVE: Good day, ladies. Enjoy your beef.

The gentlemen bow and depart. ELIZABETH and EMMA look at each other, incredulous.

ELIZABETH: Here's an unaccountable honour! Who would have thought of Lord Osborne's calling on you? 415

EMMA: I would rather have known he wished the visit without presuming to make it.

NANNY brings in the dish of beef and sets it down. ELIZABETH sits down and starts to serve food onto their plates. 420

ELIZABETH: Why do you say so? Are not you flattered?

EMMA: No, of course, of course.

ELIZABETH: I am glad Nanny had not yet brought the dinner: it would have looked so awkward. 425

He is very handsome, is not he? But Tom Musgrave looks all to nothing the smartest and most fashionable of the two.

EMMA is about to sit down when she hears a voice (ELIZABETH doesn't).

MR HOWARD: Miss Watson!

ELIZABETH: I wonder that Mr Howard didn't call on you today. I think it very ill-mannered. 430

MR HOWARD runs on, lifting his hat in greeting. EMMA picks up a basket, and with a lighting change, is outside, in town.

MR HOWARD: Miss Watson! Good morning.

EMMA: Mr Howard. 435

MR HOWARD: I am glad to see you, what brings you to town today?

Over the next exchange, members of the company pass EMMA, handing her parcels, bags and packets until she is quite weighed down.

EMMA: Errands for my sister. My brother and my sister-in-law arrive tomorrow, and there is much consternation over the visit. You would think we were receiving the Duchess of Devonshire. 440

MR HOWARD: They live in Devonshire, do they?

EMMA: No sir, they live in Croydon. But she is very particular and must have the best of everything from, it would seem, every shop in town. 445

EMMA shows MR HOWARD her shopping list.

- MR HOWARD: Miss Emma, I must apologise: I failed to call on you the day after the assembly and you must have thought it rude. Young Charles scolded me very much.
- EMMA: Did he? 450
- MR HOWARD: In truth I had every intention of coming, only I was called to the bedside of Mrs Lefroy, after which I feared interrupting your dinner.
- EMMA: Your former pupil and his friend have not your delicacy.
- MR HOWARD: Lord Osborne called on you?
- EMMA: And Mr Musgrave, yes. 455
- MR HOWARD: Then I am doubly sorry: their presence must have made my negligence more conspicuous still. Might I now make myself amends by escorting you home? I have a pair of hands I can lend if that would be useful.
- EMMA: It would save me hiring a carriage, thank you. 460
- MR HOWARD *takes most of the packages from EMMA, leaving her with only the basket.*
- MR HOWARD: There. I am truly sorry if Lord Osborne's visit caused you distress. No doubt it was some mischief of Musgrave's. 465
- EMMA: I think you are much among the Osbornes.
- MR HOWARD: My church is on the estate, and my living paid by Lady Osborne.
- EMMA: You are quite part of the family.
- MR HOWARD: I am often invited to dine, and Charles treats Osborne Castle as his own enormous dolls' house, but I would not say that the Osbornes and I are intimate. 470
- Or not intimate if intimacy implies a kindred sensibility. Do you understand my meaning, Miss Watson?
- EMMA: I am not certain I do.
- MR HOWARD: I hope you will not think me too severe when I say I see things at the castle which cause me grave discomfort. An idleness, a lack of purpose. They spend all their evenings at cards, their dinners are the most extravagant I have seen – and most of the dishes go back untouched. The house has a grand library but Miss Osborne reads only light novels, and Lord Osborne would rather ride out with the hunt. 480
- The estate is not well-managed, and Lady Osborne little interested in overseeing it.
- I think I can speak plainly to you without fear of –
- EMMA: Yes. I didn't take you for a Calvinist.
- MR HOWARD: You're teasing me. 485
- EMMA: A little. But I hope your scruples, though admirable, do not prevent you from enjoying your time at the castle just a little.
- MR HOWARD: Perhaps a little. Though may I say, were I rich – which I never shall be, except in God's love – I hope I would use my good luck to more virtuous effect. 490
- EMMA: Which of us can say truly how we might behave under different circumstances?
- MR HOWARD: That is well said, Miss Emma. Your thoughts are a credit to you; you are a parson's daughter.
- MRS ROBERT: Emma Watson! 495
- EMMA's attention is grabbed by MRS ROBERT's voice, and she turns to see MRS ROBERT, MARGARET and ROBERT standing in the parlour, examining her with interest.

MARGARET:	Dear sister!	
MRS ROBERT:	We see you at last.	500
	<i>A FEMALE SERVANT takes the parcels from MR HOWARD, and carries them to a pile, which is added to over the next scene by NANNY and the same FEMALE SERVANT bringing in a large number of boxes and trunks: MRS ROBERT, ROBERT and MARGARET's luggage.</i>	505
	MR HOWARD <i>leaves.</i>	
MARGARET:	I cannot say there is anything of the Watson countenance in you. Do not say so – Emma is every bit a Watson; Everything about her is as Watson as Watson can be.	
	MARGARET <i>comes forward and takes EMMA's hands.</i>	510
EMMA:	I am sure we shall be great friends. I have been inconsolable since you left us – how long ago was it? Fourteen years.	
	ELIZABETH <i>comes in, also carrying luggage.</i>	
ROBERT:	Your road through the village is infamous, Elizabeth, worse than it ever was. It ought to be indicted.	515
ELIZABETH:	No one bothers to mend it since it leads only to our house and nowhere beyond.	
MRS ROBERT:	My dear, when we are master and mistress here, we will see to the road, do not you worry.	520
ELIZABETH:	I hope you will find things tolerably comfortable, Mary.	
MRS ROBERT:	My good creature, use no ceremony with me, I entreat you. I am one of those who always take things as they find them. Are you fond of the country, Emma? How do you like Stanton?	
EMMA:	Very much.	525
MRS ROBERT:	Have you ever been in Croydon?	
EMMA:	I have not.	
MRS ROBERT:	I assure you we have very good society there. I do not much attend the balls, they are rather too <i>mixed</i> ; but our parties are very select and good. I had seven tables in my drawing-room last week. I am sorry we have not been able to make it agreeable to Margaret this autumn.	530
MARGARET:	Dearest Mary, you know what inducements I had to bring me home.	
MRS ROBERT:	The most ridiculous detour she made us take on the way.	
MARGARET:	I wanted Tom Musgrave to see me arriving.	535
MRS ROBERT:	But he did not.	
MARGARET:	Had he been out riding he would have.	
MRS ROBERT:	So the detour counted for nothing, We will still have to write.	
MARGARET:	Spare me, I entreat you. You met Mr Musgrave, did you, Emma?	
EMMA:	Yes.	540
MARGARET:	And do not you think him the most extraordinary creature you ever met?	
	ROBERT <i>comes closer to EMMA.</i>	
ROBERT:	So, Emma, you are quite a stranger among us. A pretty piece of work your Aunt Turner has made of it! After keeping you at a distance from	545

- your family for such a length of time as must do away all natural affection between us, and breeding you up (I suppose) in a superior style, to find yourself, instead of heiress of eight or nine thousand pounds, returned upon our hands without a sixpence. A woman should never be trusted with money. I always said Aunt Turner should have settled something on you as soon as her husband died. 550
- EMMA: But that would have been trusting *me* with money, and I am a woman too.
- ROBERT: I hope the old fool will smart for it.
- EMMA: That is a charming gown, Mary. 555
- MRS ROBERT: [*‘Oh this old thing?’*]: Do you like it? I would not make you wait, so I put on the first thing I met with. My dear Mr. Watson, you have not put any fresh powder in your hair.
- ROBERT: I think there is powder enough in my hair for my wife and sisters. Do be satisfied with being fine yourself, and leave your husband alone. 560
It will be a sad breakup when Father dies. Pity you can none of you find husbands! You must come to Croydon and see what you can do there. I believe if Margaret had had a thousand or fifteen hundred pounds, there was a young man who would have thought of her.
- EMMA: Since I haven’t sixpence, what young man would think of me? 565
- NANNY *comes in, with LORD OSBORNE behind her.*
- NANNY: Lord Osborne, miss.
- MARGARET: *Lord Osborne?*
- LORD OSBORNE *balks at the number of people in the room.*
- LORD OSBORNE: Forgive me, I have trespassed upon a party. 570
- EMMA: Not at all – please.
- ELIZABETH: Are you acquainted with our brother, Robert Watson?
- LORD OSBORNE: Mr Watson.
- ROBERT *and LORD OSBORNE bow to each other.*
- ELIZABETH: And Mrs Robert Watson. 575
- MRS ROBERT *bows.* MARGARET *waves.*
- MRS ROBERT: My lord.
- ELIZABETH: Oh and Margaret.
- MARGARET *bows.* LORD OSBORNE *barely notices.*
- MARGARET: Lord Osborne. 580
- LORD OSBORNE: Forgive me, I came on purpose to speak to Miss Emma.
- EMMA: My lord?
- LORD OSBORNE: In private, if I may.
- MRS ROBERT: Oh good heavens! Margaret! Elizabeth!
- MARGARET: What? What? 585
- MRS ROBERT: Lord Osborne wishes to speak to Emma *in private*; come along, Robert.
- ROBERT: I was about to sit down.
- MRS ROBERT: God’s sake, man, you can sit anywhere. Out! Out!
- ELIZABETH: Emma? Are you 590
- EMMA: Thank you; yes.

MRS ROBERT *drags* MARGARET *out, followed by* ELIZABETH and ROBERT.

- MARGARET: But why does he want to speak to Emma? He doesn't even know her.
- When the others have gone, EMMA and LORD OSBORNE look at each other.* 595
- LORD OSBORNE: Miss Emma, I
I
- EMMA: They may not leave us for long, my lord.
- LORD OSBORNE: Yes. 600
Would you come to the window, I
- EMMA goes towards the window. LORD OSBORNE is looking out intently.*
- EMMA: If you look out you
No you can't. You can't see Osborne Castle from here. 605
- LORD OSBORNE: No, in fact I think we're in, um. Something of a dip.
Yes, right, that does rather – I was going to start with the castle and talk about, um
Because I am aware that I
That I don't always 610
Dear god, Osborne!
- He pulls himself together.*
- EMMA: Miss Emma. A gentleman in my position must concern himself with the future of his family, of his estate. The Castle from which I take my name. Until now it is a duty that has not sat happily with me. I know so few women, and of those, so few with the taste and manners one looks for in the next Lady Osborne. In London, I have had little joy in meeting any woman with whom I could imagine a long life, or even a short life, should one of us be taken by sickness or – 615
- EMMA: Yes. 620
- LORD OSBORNE: And as for country girls, the only thing coarser than their complexion is their conversation.
- EMMA: You are severe on my sex, my lord.
- LORD OSBORNE: With good reason, Miss Emma.
- The FEMALE SERVANT reappears, goes to the pile of luggage and picks up a box. LORD OSBORNE is distracted.* 625
- EMMA: Go on.
- LORD OSBORNE: But your arrival has brought a change to my mind. Since I first saw you, Miss Emma, I have been certain of one thing. That a life with you, as master and mistress of Osborne Castle, with all that involves and entails, would in many ways be bearable. 630
- EMMA: Yes?
- LORD OSBORNE: That is, Miss Emma, if you would consent to be my wife.
What do you say?
- EMMA: I say yes. 635
- The SERVANT turns around in horror, drops the box she's carrying.*

SERVANT:	<i>No!</i>	
	EMMA and LORD OSBORNE <i>turn around in shock.</i>	
EMMA:	What?	
LORD OSBORNE:	Hello?	640
SERVANT:	You can't, he's	
EMMA:	I beg your pardon?	
LORD OSBORNE:	What, he's what?	
SERVANT:	I'm sorry, I	
	I'm sorry, Miss Emma, mam	645
	Oh god	
	I'm sorry, only	
	Isn't it the custom to make a gentleman wait?	
EMMA:	Whose custom?	
SERVANT:	Here in Surrey I believe it's considered actually <i>rude</i> to give what might be a hasty answer. Unsuitably keen.	650
LORD OSBORNE:	What if she is keen?	
EMMA:	Yes?	
SERVANT:	It flatters the lady's pride to allow her time not to seem desperate. Time to consider her options.	655
LORD OSBORNE:	What options?	
EMMA:	Thank you very much.	
LORD OSBORNE:	I didn't mean	
EMMA:	That I don't have other options?	
SERVANT	[<i>Flailing.</i>]: I believe, my lord, it's a well a truth universally acknowledged that a single man in possession of a good fortune must be in want of a wife who um who has absolutely definitely has taken the time to consider his proposal at the very least overnight. So she's really sure of her answer.	660
	For you to be sure of her answer, too. You know how capricious women are. Otherwise you'd think maybe she'd only said yes because she was flattered or surprised or she'd misheard you, even, but was too polite to say.	665
LORD OSBORNE:	Yes, yes I do see.	
EMMA:	My lord this is unnecessary.	670
LORD OSBORNE:	I will return in the morning and beg a considered answer from you.	
EMMA:	It will be the same	
	LORD OSBORNE <i>bows and EMMA walks him towards the door.</i>	
LORD OSBORNE:	Do not say so – we must observe the custom. Good day, Miss Emma.	
EMMA:	Yes, goodbye.	675
	LORD OSBORNE <i>leaves. EMMA turns back to see the SERVANT attempting to slink out in the other direction.</i>	
	Hey!	
	<i>The SERVANT freezes, turns.</i>	
SERVANT	[<i>To herself.</i>]: Hey? Is that right?	680
EMMA:	Is this how you behave at my brother's house?	
SERVANT:	I've never been to your brother's house.	
EMMA:	You're their servant.	
SERVANT:	I'm actually not.	

EMMA:	You arrived with them.	685
SERVANT:	At the same time, yes, technically.	
EMMA:	I don't understand, who	
SERVANT:	You must know you can't marry him.	
EMMA:	Why not? And what concern is it of y	
SERVANT:	You don't love him.	690
EMMA:	I might come to love him later.	
SERVANT:	You said to Elizabeth you'd never marry someone you didn't love.	
EMMA:	What alternative is there? A lifetime chained to my family – have you seen my family, our little house, my sister in law? I wasn't brought up to be poor, to be dependent on	695
SERVANT:	How do you know what I said to Elizabeth?	
SERVANT:	That needn't concern you right now. These are not the droids you're looking for.	
EMMA:	What?	
SERVANT:	Did he say anything about loving you?	700
EMMA:	He was nervous.	
SERVANT:	He's an idiot, Emma. He's awkward and strange.	
EMMA:	For an aristocrat, he's not particularly strange.	
SERVANT:	You want to make a man like that your hero?	
EMMA:	I'll be comfortable.	705
SERVANT:	You'll be miserable.	
EMMA:	Miserable in Osborne Castle?	
SERVANT:	It is large enough we need rarely be in the same room.	
EMMA:	If I marry Lord Osborne I will live as I have been used to – plenty of servants and not worrying about the price of sugar and a horse to ride and a gallery to walk in when it's wet.	710
SERVANT:	I might never have a chance this good again.	
SERVANT:	You're nineteen – there'll be other offers.	
EMMA:	Nineteen is nearly twenty and twenty is nearly twenty-one and before I know it I shall be twenty-eight like Elizabeth, which is nearly thirty.	715
SERVANT:	What if I could get you something better?	
EMMA:	<i>You?</i>	
SERVANT:	Yes.	
EMMA:	What could <i>you</i> do about it?	
SERVANT:	OK, look	720
EMMA:	I'm going to have to tell you.	
SERVANT:	OK I think I'm going to have to tell you.	
EMMA:	What?	
SERVANT:	I'm going to try telling you and see how it	
EMMA:	Ugh! This is so unprofessional.	725
SERVANT:	OK.	
EMMA:	Have you ever heard of a person called Jane Austen?	
SERVANT:	No.	
EMMA:	OK. Jane Austen is an author.	
SERVANT:	Oh, how dreadful!	730
EMMA:	Sorry?	
SERVANT:	I feel so sorry for them. To be quite alone in the world. Mother might have died when I was a baby but at least we still have father. To be without any parents at all must be	
EMMA:	Not an <i>orphan</i> . An <i>author</i> . A writer.	735
SERVANT:	Oh. Of?	
EMMA:	Books. Great, great books.	
SERVANT:	A woman?	

- SERVANT: Yes. A parson's daughter, like you, but a very celebrated author – not as much as she should have been during her lifetime, but since then 740
- EMMA: She isn't alive?
- SERVANT: That sort of depends where we are in time.
- EMMA: I don't understand.
- SERVANT: The thing is – Jane Austen isn't just any author, she's *your* author. 745
- EMMA: Mine?
- SERVANT: The author of all this, this world, this
This is a book – well now it's a play.
- EMMA: A play?
- EMMA *looks all around for an audience, peers out into the auditorium.* 750
- SERVANT: Don't worry about them for now.
Jane Austen created this world but she didn't finish it.
- EMMA: Why?
- SERVANT: Nobody knows – it happens to writers. Something interrupts you, a life event or. Something gets in the way so you put it in the bottom drawer then before you know it two hundred years have passed 755
- EMMA: Two hundred years?
- SERVANT: That's a joke. Sorry, too soon.
Sometimes you just can't work out how to write something so you stop, you leave it unfinished. 760
And that's where I come in, because here I am, now, picking up the baton. Badly.
I'm, um, Laura.
- EMMA: Um Laura? 765
- LAURA: Laura. I'm Laura. I'm also an author. Playwright.
- EMMA: You're a writer.
- LAURA: Yes.
- EMMA: Not a servant.
- LAURA: No. 770
- EMMA: And you're not Jane Austen, who isn't here.
- LAURA: Oh I can show you.
- LAURA *reaches into her pocket, pulls out a ten pound note.*
- She's on some of our money now, look.
- She hands the note to EMMA.* 775
- There she is. Jane Austen.
- EMMA *looks at the picture of Jane Austen on the note.*
- EMMA: She looks perfectly ordinary.
- LAURA: It's part of her charm. Though we don't really know if that's an accurate portrait. 780
- EMMA *reads the writing on the note.*
- EMMA: *Ten pounds?* How does a servant get ten pounds?
- LAURA: Not a servant.
- EMMA: Aren't you frightened someone will steal it?

LAURA:	It's not that much where I come from. Look, the thing is, the important thing is that Jane Austen wrote this world that we're standing in. This world is a book, a story. And you are a character in it.	785
EMMA:	Someone's writing a story about me?	
LAURA:	No, this. <i>This</i> is the story. All of this here, everything. And you're a character. Do you understand what I'm saying? This is fiction. And you're part of it. You're a character.	790
	A character not a person.	795
EMMA:	I'm a person, of course I	
LAURA:	No, you're a character. You're written.	
EMMA:	You mean I'm not real?	800
LAURA:	No. You're the heroine. It's your story, so that's good.	
EMMA:	Are you real?	
LAURA:	Yes.	
EMMA:	You're real but I'm not real.	805
LAURA:	This is a lot to take in, I know.	
EMMA:	[<i>Re the bank note.</i>]: Is she real?	
LAURA:	She was.	
EMMA:	This picture of a person – you're saying this picture is more real than I am.	810
LAURA:	She created you. She decided what you would do, up to the point where I came in.	
EMMA:	I decide what I do.	
LAURA:	It may feel like that.	
EMMA:	So I These words I'm saying	815
LAURA:	Yes.	
EMMA:	These <i>thoughts</i>	
LAURA:	Yes.	
EMMA:	When I move my hand	820
LAURA:	It's all her. Well her first, now me.	
EMMA:	But <i>I'm</i> the one thinking, I'm When I touch my arm I can feel it.	
LAURA:	Yes it's a good arm.	825
EMMA:	Can I sit down?	
LAURA:	Yes.	
EMMA:	Is the chair real?	
LAURA:	Yes.	
EMMA:	Lucky chair.	830
LAURA:	I mean, no, it's fictional but No, sit down, you look	
	EMMA <i>sits down.</i>	
	This is a shock.	
EMMA:	I don't feel like I'm not real.	835
LAURA:	You're a well-written character, Jane Austen was	
EMMA:	No, this is nonsense. This is nonsense, I'm not I'm not not r Who are you, why am I even listening, this is nonsense.	

- LAURA: Maybe you need some time to
EMMA: If I wasn't real I couldn't decide to walk out of this 840
That's what a real person would do, just walk away because you're
clearly some kind of a
Lunatic or
- EMMA makes a decision, stands up, walks out.*
- LAURA: Emma. 845
EMMA: I'm walking out.
LAURA: OK.
- LAURA waits. After a moment she stands up, goes to the clock and
winds it forward by twenty minutes.*
- A moment later, EMMA returns, mud around the hem of her skirt.* 850
- EMMA: How did you get on?
I walked up the lane. A little way past the house I got to the end.
There's nothing there.
- LAURA: No, I haven't written that bit yet.
EMMA: I didn't know what nothing looked like before. 855
LAURA: It's just because nothing's happened there yet. We can borrow some
fields from a Thomas Hardy or something.
- EMMA: I feel sick.
LAURA: I didn't mean to frighten you.
EMMA: Why did you tell me? I don't want to know. 860
It feels like the first time I knew what dying was. I was so small. Four,
maybe. Maybe five. I asked my nanny what happens when you die –
I think our cat had died or a hamster – and she told me. You're just
not there any more, you've gone. It doesn't hurt any more because
you're not there. Your body's there, but you've gone from inside it, 865
and eventually even your body
But how does it *feel*? It doesn't feel, she said. But how does it feel
not to feel? The idea that you're not anywhere, the impossibility of
understanding it and really just wanting to go back to not knowing
because how can you walk about when you know? Four years old. 870
Except none of that happened, did it, because I'm not real.
- LAURA: No, that's my memory, actually. It was my mum, I didn't have a nanny.
EMMA: Why've I got your memory?
LAURA: It's a thing writers do, we use our own experience for material. At least
you know it's authentic. 875
- EMMA: Are all of my memories yours?
LAURA: No, Jane's done most of it, I think.
The memories aren't important, the important thing is for us to look
forward, find your story. That's why I wanted to write you. You were
in a kind of limbo, unfinished, but when I read you I thought you were 880
too special to walk away from. I wanted to know what was going to
happen to you and share you with people because I just thought you
were *great*.
- EMMA: Don't flatter me, this is my life
LAURA: OK but we've got to find a way to work together. I've never done this 885
before either, we're going to have to work it out together so I can carry
on writing you even though you know I am.
Otherwise – well I don't know what happens otherwise.

EMMA looks at LAURA, thinking. A long moment.

MARGARET, ELIZABETH and MRS ROBERT burst in. LAURA moves away and tries to look busy. 890

MARGARET: I'm dying with suspense, I can't bear it!
 EMMA: What?
 MRS ROBERT: What did he say?
 EMMA: Who? 895
 MRS ROBERT: Lord Osborne.
 ELIZABETH: Sorry, we couldn't wait.
 MARGARET: We saw him ride off: what happened?
 EMMA: He asked me to marry him.
 ELIZABETH: Oh Emma. 900
 MRS ROBERT: Thank goodness! We're all saved!
 MARGARET: We'll all get better husbands now.
 EMMA: If I say yes.

This lands.

MARGARET: If you say 905
 ELIZABETH: What did you say to him?
 EMMA: I said I'd think about it.
 MRS ROBERT: You would *think* about it?
 EMMA: You know the old custom, that one should think about it overnight?
 MRS ROBERT: Don't be ridiculous there's no such thing. 910
 EMMA: Yes, so he doesn't think you're too eager.
 MRS ROBERT: You're telling me that Lord Osborne, the not remotely deformed present incumbent of Osborne Castle which has twenty bedrooms and a hothouse where they grow *actual pineapples*, that he was here and asked for your hand and you let him leave without giving him the strongest possible encouragement? 915
 EMMA: I wasn't completely certain so I thought I should think about it.
 MRS ROBERT: Wicked girl, you'll ruin us all. Wait until your brother hears of this. We must write, we must write to him now. Robert can ride over with a letter. 920
 EMMA: He is coming in the morning, we can give him my answer then.
 MRS ROBERT: This is all extremely vexing.

MRS ROBERT catches sight of LAURA.

LAURA: You: what are you doing?
 Me, mam? Dusting, mam. 925

MRS ROBERT turns on ELIZABETH.

MRS ROBERT: I think it profligate of you, Elizabeth, to engage another servant at a time like this.
 ELIZABETH: I did not engage her, she came with you.
 MRS ROBERT: No. 930
 ELIZABETH: That's your servant.
 MRS ROBERT: She met us at the garden gate to bring in our luggage. I thought perhaps Nanny'd been replaced, but when I got indoors and realised you had *two* servants I was shocked.
 ELIZABETH: What is your name, please? 935
 LAURA: Laura, mam.

- ELIZABETH: If I didn't engage you, and you weren't brought here with Robert's party, what are you doing here?
- LAURA *doesn't know what to say.*
- EMMA: I engaged her. 940
 Forgive me, Elizabeth – I should have asked but you were so busy. She's only temporary and she's very cheap. I thought we should have an extra pair of hands while Mary is here.
- MRS ROBERT: Dear Emma – I understand. You knew I was a woman of refinement and sought to make my visit more comfortable, for which I thank you. But I always wish to be treated quite *en famille* when I come to Stanton. 945
- EMMA: [To LAURA.] I am sorry, but you'll have to go.
 No! I need her. We need her.
 I think we *really* need her. I mean I don't know what happens to us if she goes. 950
- MRS ROBERT: No servant is indispensable, Emma.
 [To EMMA, *quietly.*] Or it certainly doesn't do to let them think so.
- EMMA: It was for father, really, I was thinking. Someone to empty his bedpan. It's too much for Nanny with all her other work so we have to take turns at it. Those sores on his back need dressing several times a day or they start to smell. 955
- MRS ROBERT *looks at LAURA, thinking.*
- MRS ROBERT [To LAURA.]: You may stay for the present.
 I suggest Emma, you consider very carefully your answer to Lord Osborne. More lives than yours depend on it. Come, Elizabeth. 960
- MRS ROBERT *sweeps out, followed by ELIZABETH.*
- MARGARET: Oh Emma you're in such trouble.
 MRS ROBERT [Off.]: Margaret!
- MARGARET *leaves, following the others.* 965
- EMMA: That woman is insufferable. Why is she so foul?
 LAURA: Because she's unhappy. She married for status, not for love.
- LAURA *lets this land.*
- EMMA: Shall we talk about your prospects?
 Do they include getting away from all this? 970
- LAURA: Yes, of course. As soon as possible.
- EMMA: What if Captain O'Brien were suddenly taken ill and died and Aunt Turner felt lonely and wanted me back?
 Could he do that? Or trip while cleaning his musket and accidentally blow his face off? 975
- LAURA: Dramatic. Not very Jane Austen, sadly.
 I think marriage might be your best way out.
- EMMA: Is that very Jane Austen?
- LAURA: Very.
- EMMA: What I don't understand 980
- LAURA: Yes?
- EMMA: Is why can I see you when I couldn't see her?

LAURA: No, good question. This isn't my period so I needed to immerse myself, go undercover, get the smell of it. So I wrote myself in.

EMMA: You made yourself a character? 985

LAURA: I thought I could be a fly on the wall: they say servants see everything, don't they?
Believe me, I had zero intention of speaking up, but you were about to make a mistake, so I had to. It's all very embarrassing, let's crack on, shall we? 990

EMMA: Fine.

LAURA: Prospect one: Mr Howard.

EMMA: No. No, he's

LAURA: You really liked him at the dance. He walked you home from town.

EMMA: It's just he's so *good*, isn't he? 995

LAURA: You mean boring?

EMMA: Pious.

LAURA: Well he's a parson. I don't think that means he's parsimonious.

EMMA: That's the rest of my life, is it? The wife of a parson.

LAURA: OK, but who else have we got? 1000

EMMA: Lord Osborne?

LAURA: Parking Lord Osborne for the moment.

EMMA: Tom Musgrave?

LAURA: No, he's the cad.

EMMA: The what? 1005

LAURA: The rogue. Frank Churchill. Mr Elliot. Wickham.
Jane Austen likes to put in a young man who's terribly charming but turns out to be a scoundrel. The heroine never marries him. He'll probably elope with Margaret or something.

EMMA: He's very handsome. 1010

LAURA: You don't fancy him, do you?

EMMA: You tell me.

LAURA: The point is he isn't positioned to be a serious contender.
Which leaves Charles Howard

EMMA: The *child*? 1015

LAURA: No, exactly. Or one of the officers

EMMA: Ugh

LAURA: might bubble up and become an individual, do something to make you notice.

EMMA: No, I can't bear them. The way they puff around like peacocks. 1020

LAURA: Yes she's woven that into you quite strongly, hating the officers.
So it's Howard, isn't it? It must be.

EMMA: Forgive me, but
You are a woman of means.

LAURA: Not really, I'm a writer. 1025

EMMA: You carry ten pounds as if it were nothing. You know the expectations I grew up with, you must see how mean I'd find a parson's living. I know it isn't admirable and believe me I am not proud to confess it. But I could never be satisfied, it would never be enough.

LAURA: I hear you, I really do. But Jane Austen wanted it to be Howard. 1030

EMMA: How do you know?

LAURA: It was written down, she told her sister the plan. Including that Emma Watson would decline an offer of marriage from Lord Osborne, and eventually marry Howard.
Jane Austen did the same thing, you know. She accepted a proposal from a young man, a wealthy young man who might have given her a very comfortable life but she changed her mind overnight and in the morning she told him so. 1035

EMMA:	Why?	
LAURA:	She said that 'anything is to be preferred or endured rather than marrying without affection.'	1040
	She must have wanted to prove Lord Osborne unsuitable, because she would never let her heroine marry the second best man in the book. So if she intended Howard for you, I think we should trust her.	
EMMA:	Can I ask something?	1045
LAURA:	Sure.	
EMMA:	When did you start writing me?	
LAURA:	About when Mrs Robert and Margaret turned up. I came in with them.	
EMMA:	Yes. So you were watching me for a very short time then you spoke up because I was about to make a mistake.	1050
LAURA:	Yes.	
EMMA:	How?	
LAURA:	Sorry?	
EMMA:	How did I nearly make a mistake if you were writing me? How did I surprise you?	1055
LAURA:	Um	
EMMA:	Why didn't you know what I was going to say?	
LAURA:	Because	
	Um because	
	It's hard to explain, it's	1060
	<i>EMMA knows she's onto something.</i>	
EMMA:	Try.	
LAURA:	Perhaps I hadn't quite taken the reins yet? Or I hadn't realised quite how hard the reins needed to be gripped?	
	It's a funny thing with writing, you're in control of it but the characters can still surprise you sometimes, they come out with all sorts of funny and you look at it and think gosh, I wasn't expecting that but it doesn't necessarily mean you didn't in some way	1065
EMMA:	My question,	
LAURA:	Sorry, yes	1070
EMMA:	Because you're having to spend a lot of time persuading me to do what you want me to do,	
LAURA:	Yes well you're not a character I created	
EMMA:	But my question, if you ever feel like giving me a straight answer, is to what extent can I in fact do what I want and you can't stop me?	1075
	<i>NANNY comes in.</i>	
NANNY:	Pardon mam, but there's someone here to see you.	
	<i>LADY OSBORNE comes in, with MISS OSBORNE. EMMA bows.</i>	
EMMA:	Lady Osborne.	
LADY OSBORNE:	I'm not here for you, I want her.	1080
	<i>LADY OSBORNE points at LAURA.</i>	
LAURA:	Me?	
EMMA:	The servant?	
LADY OSBORNE:	We want to talk to you.	
	<i>LADY OSBORNE looks off</i>	1085

- TOM MUSGRAVE: Are the others coming?
Here, Lady Osborne.
- TOM *comes in, with LORD OSBORNE, MARGARET and ELIZABETH.*
- Come in, come in.
- They're followed by HOWARD and CHARLES, then ROBERT and MRS ROBERT, the EDWARDSSES, the OFFICERS OF THE MILITIA and all of the guests from the assembly.* 1090
- So that's everyone, then.*
- LADY OSBORNE: We know who you are.
- The characters stand en masse, looking at LAURA.* 1095
- LAURA: Right.
This is a game changer.
- LADY OSBORNE: It would seem that some of us couldn't help overhearing.
- MARGARET: Sorry, that was me.
- LADY OSBORNE: You can imagine our surprise – our consternation, even – at discovering that arrangements are not as we thought. 1100
- MRS ROBERT: That we are not as we thought.
- ROBERT: The very nature of our existence
- TOM MUSGRAVE: Our non-existence
- MR HOWARD: Rather difficult, actually, from a religious point of view. 1105
- MISS OSBORNE: Planes of reality and all that.
- LORD OSBORNE: Bit baffling.
- TOM MUSGRAVE: "I'm a character?"
- LADY OSBORNE: However we might any of us feel about these revelations, we thought we ought to come to you and give you our input. 1110
- LAURA: Your *input*?
- ROBERT: Given that most mistakes happen at the planning stage,
- CHARLES: The conception.
- MRS ROBERT: And it will affect all of us, whatever you decide.
- ELIZABETH: We just thought we should all be in the meeting. 1115
- LAURA: Sorry, this is
That's not how it works. This isn't a committee, I can't write with
- LADY OSBORNE: Well you can't expect us just to go along with whatever you want now that we know the truth, can you?
- A phone rings. The characters look around, confused – it's not a sound they've ever heard before. LAURA freezes, knowing exactly what it is.* 1120
- CHARLES: What on earth's
It's coming from her.
- LAURA takes a mobile phone out of her pocket and sees the number on the display.* 1125
- LAURA: Shit.
- She answers it, as the characters look on in amazement.*

[*Into phone, incredibly bright.*] Daniel! Hi, how are you? How's rehearsal?... 1130
 Oh no I'm sorry I didn't
 No it didn't tell me you'd called, I've really got to get an upgrade
 The play?

LAURA *looks at the characters.*

Yes it's going well. The characters are really talking. 1135

She laughs then stops.

I might need a bit longer.
 No, I know
 No of course. You can't put out a season brochure without having read it, can you? 1140
 I can send you the Jane Austen bit again if you
 God no, there's nothing to worry about no, it's going to get done, it's nearly
 nearly
 Yes
 Yes 1145
 At the latest, got it.
 OK, great. Bye, lots of love, yeah bye.

LAURA *hangs up.*

She takes a deep breath, looks at the characters. They look back at her. 1150

OK.

Blackout.

Interval.

[Ends]

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