

4th July 1877

It is common knowledge that good girls are seen and not heard. I, according to my father, am heard and not seen. I'm a deadly combination of excess volume and a lack of height. Father says that I have too many thoughts and opinions, and so, he gave me this journal, that I might learn not to say the things I think to others, having already written them down. Anthony, my uncle's son, told me he would bet £100 that I would die an old maid, or at the very least, a widow, for all my husbands would kill themselves upon me opening my mouth. I say that is overly harsh, as I have been told that I would be quite beautiful, if not for my loud mouth, so I think perhaps I might trap a young man into marrying me before I have had something of any consequence to say. Besides, whether any woman would agree to marry Anthony is a commitment that many are highly doubtful of, although he himself seems rather oblivious to his unappealing nature. But enough about him, I would rather not waste ink and paper on that half-rat.

23rd August 1877

I have finally found it! When I was writing my previous entry, I was interrupted by Mr Biggins, my father's friend from university, and his wife, Mrs Biggins. Upon their arrival I put the journal away, and promptly lost it. I have only just recovered it, and, to appease my excitement, decided to make an entry in it right away. Perhaps I shall tell you about Mr Biggins; a rather old man; quite loud, and seemingly the only one who appears to appreciate my insightful comments. I must admit, he encourages my inquisitiveness quite a bit. And I, in wonderful defiance of my father, indulge him. He asks me all sorts of interesting questions, the type of questions that one would never think to ask a girl, for fear of burdening her delicate brain. I always reply as best I can, while Mrs Biggins sits obediently in the corner, admiring the silverware.

27th August 1877

I think Father may be angry with me. Today, Mr Biggins asked me what I thought of Anthony, and I, in what I felt was an admirably honest manner, said that I believed he was a man who didn't quite live up to his name. I admit I may have taken it a bit too far, but I had taken a sip or two of some port. I don't usually like drinking the stuff, but it was a special bottle, only for a special occasion. Father had received a pistol as a gift from a man he had started working with, a Mr Webley of whom I had heard little. According to him, the partnership was the start of a new era. Father always had been a bit full of himself.

Mr Biggins, who was at first confused by my answer, asked me what I meant by that. I replied that Anthony's name means 'priceless one', and Mr Biggins replied by laughing uproariously, and exclaiming what a terrible girl I was, and how much that fact of my being entertained him. Even Mrs Biggins had a ghost of a smile playing about her lips, before my father slammed his glass down loudly on the table and informed Mr and Mrs Biggins that I wasn't feeling well and that I should really be going off to bed.

And now here I sit, writing this. I fear that my father will feel the need to address my behaviour, and I really despise the way he says my name when he scolds me, which happens to be most of the time. "Ebrill", he will say, "What did I tell you about the way in which you conduct yourself around guests?". Normally I like questions; they mean that someone wants to know what I think, but this one makes my blood run cold. When he asks me that, his voice goes deeper and darker, as if he is reaching into a hidden place inside himself where he holds all his grievances against me and trying against all odds not to scream at me and shake me until I'm all limp in his hands, like a puppet he can craft into the perfect young woman. 'How much easier it would be', I suppose he thinks, 'If my daughter did not know how to think, but only to listen'.

28th August 1877

Father talked to me this morning. He asked me the question he usually does, and then answered it himself, as he usually does. It is almost as if he is afraid of when I will next open my mouth. He said that he had told me to keep my head down, and to nod and to smile and when I was asked a question, I was to say that I was not well-versed in subjects of that matter.

He went on by saying that my mother was just like me. He said that she didn't even give him an heir before she uselessly died. He said that he was almost glad because this way, the damage she could have further done to me was minimised. A blind fury seized me, and I felt an unending rage coursing through my body. My pen was in my hand. And then, it was in his neck. His eyes gaped at me, and his arms reached for me, but I stepped back, flinching. He cried aloud and some of the servants burst in and everything became a blur. They tried to catch me, I think, but maybe that is me trying to be optimistic, because if I had been hit where father's pistol was aimed, I surely would have died.

I fled into the forest surrounding the estate, my father long dead, his blood wet on my hands, mixing with my own. I was hit in the shoulder. They've found me. I must-