

MIDDLETON MANOR
(Excerpt)

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FADE IN:

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

An empty chair sits behind a steel table. We hear a door open and the sound of footsteps as three people enter the room.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
No, no, that's where we sit. You sit there.

CALVIN (O.S.)
Oh! Right, right. Of course. My apologies.

CALVIN MIDDLETON enters the frame. 32, tall, thin and with an elegant English accent. If it wasn't for his filthy appearance in the tattered tuxedo he wears, he would be a rather fetching fellow.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
(pointing to the chair)
Here?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
Yes. There.

CALVIN
Right. Of course.

Calvin sits, making himself comfortable. He seems rather calm for a man being interrogated by two detectives.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
Sorry. This is a first for me. Go easy on me.
(beat)
Might I have some tea?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
No.

CALVIN
Oh. Well that's poor manners.

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Maybe later. We're not here to drink tea, we're here to get the whole story about what happened.

CALVIN
Ah. Right, yes, obviously. That.

MALE VOICE

Could you state your full name for the record, please.

CALVIN

Calvin Augustus Donovan Middleton.

MALE VOICE

You're Irish?

CALVIN

On my mother's side, yes. She was born in Cork but emigrated when she was seventeen after she met my father when he- is this relevant?

FEMALE VOICE

(cold)

It's not. Could we proceed?

CALVIN

Of course. Where were we? Oh yes! One of you was getting me tea.

FEMALE VOICE

Tell us about Reginald Brinkwood.

CALVIN

(scoffing)

That old penguin! What do you want to know about him?

FEMALE VOICE

What's your relationship to him?

CALVIN

If it were up to me, I wouldn't have any relation to him. He's about as personable as an old boot but not half as intelligent. He's never liked me much, never knew why. And to tell you the truth, I'm not too fond of him either. 'Reggie' I like to call him. He hates it. His face gets all red and he puffs out his chest, becomes very primal you know, brows furrowed-

(imitating)

"My name is Refinald sir, not Reggie, that's a name for commoners."

(back to himself)

(MORE)

CALVIN (CONT'D)

I can't say I wasn't pleased when-
wait a moment now... I'm getting
ahead of myself. Sorry, I'm
getting a little foggy and I tend
to ramble when I haven't had any
tea.

FEMALE VOICE

Constable, could you go get our
guest some tea please.

CONSTABLE

But we haven't-

FEMALE VOICE

Thank you, Constable.

Calvin's eyes follow the CONSTABLE (MALE VOICE), as he
begrudgingly leaves to fetch tea.

CALVIN

Thank you, Constable. Earl Grey if
you please. One sugar.

FEMALE VOICE

Now, let's start from the
beginning.

CALVIN

The beginning... Well. 'I was born
a poor black child-'

FEMALE VOICE

Mr. Middleton. I am not amused. If
you could please keep the comedy to
a minimum, this will all go much
more smoothly. Now, let's start
with your arrival to Hampshire
three days ago.

CALVIN

Ah, yes. That's as good a place as
any to start...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: CALVIN'S APARTMENT - MANHATTAN - MORNING

"Modest" would not be a word to describe this beautiful,
industrial-styled loft. Neither would "audacious." The proper
verbiage would be found somewhere in-between. As the early
morning sun shines through large windows. We make our way

through the apartment as Calvin continues.

CALVIN (V.O.)

It was a beautiful day. The kind
with endless possibilities for
those go-getters out there.

As we move through the living room, discarded clothing is strewn over an armchair, an empty champagne bottle floats in a silver bucket on the coffee table with half-drunk flutes around it. A phone RINGS.

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

For me, it should have been the
kind of morning that starts in the
afternoon. But that wasn't to be.

As we make our way into Calvin's bedroom with the remains of last night's wardrobe on the floor. Under a mountain of sheets and pillows, Calvin sleeps. The phone on his bedside table continues to ring.

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

One of the most frightful ways to
be aroused in the morning is by the
ringing of a telephone. I say that
this is one of the most frightful
ways. Couple the ringing phone with
a dreadful hangover and you will
have *the* most frightful way to be
aroused. When you add a screaming
Aunt on the other end of the line
to the equation, then you'll
have... by God, I don't know what
you'll have but whatever it is, I
had it. And as I said, it was
frightful.

A hand reaches out from the sheets, picks up the receiver and brings it under the covers.

CALVIN (CONT'D)

Hello?

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE INTERROGATION ROOM - DAY

Back to Calvin.

CALVIN

Now, my lovely Aunt Ursula - Are
you familiar with my Aunt Ursula?

(MORE)

CALVIN (CONT'D)
 No? Pity. - She is usually very pleasant and in high spirits but this morning she was not pleasant but very spirited.

A cup of tea is put down in front of Calvin.

CALVIN (CONT'D)
 Thank you.
 (taking a sip)
 Mmm. That's dreadful.

CUT TO:

INT. CALVIN'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - MORNING

Under the covers we hear-

CALVIN
 Hello?

URSULA
 (BOOMING)
 Calvin!

Calvin jumps from out of the covers holding the receiver far from his ear.

URSULA (CONT'D)
 Have I just woken you?

CALVIN
 Of course not. I've just returned from my morning jog.

URSULA
 Morning jog my foot! You've been out all night gallivanting again haven't you?

CALVIN
 You say that as if it's a bad thing?

URSULA
 It bloody well is when you've a plane to catch that leaves in less than two hours.

Calvin's valet JOYCE, (50's), in a clean cut suit places a tray on the bedside table with tea, toast, bacon, eggs and a large green smoothie like beverage.

CALVIN

I'll catch the next one.

He sips the green beverage and it seems to hit him with a jolt. Calvin's expressions go from disgust, to acceptance and finally to approval. He is coming back to life.

URSULA

You will do no such thing! You will march yourself down to the airport and get on that plane!

CALVIN

(eating his breakfast)
Marching there seems a bit much, don't you think?

URSULA

Then saunter! I don't care which walking attitude you take, just get there! I've already rung your man Joyce and he has packed your things.

Joyce walks in with a suitcase and places it beside the bed.

URSULA (CONT'D)

George's wedding is in three days and there are things that need doing. So I need you here as soon as possible. George will pick you up at the airport, then the two of you will proceed straight to the Manor. Do you hear me?

CALVIN

Yes, Auntie.

URSULA

Don't you call me 'Auntie'. Now get dressed and get a move on. And remember, straight to the manor!

Calvin returns the phone to the receiver.

CALVIN

It seems I have been summoned back to the homeland, Joyce. Is everything ready?

JOYCE

I've packed a bag with your best garments and toiletries and I have a car waiting for you outside.

Calvin jumps out of bed.

CALVIN

I'd be lost without you Joyce. Do
you have big plans while I'm away?

As Calvin makes his way to the bathroom. We stay with Joyce
as he picks up last night's leavings.

JOYCE

A few. A have an old friend in town
and there are some odds and ends
that still need sorting having to
do with the Providence contracts.

CALVIN (O.S.)

(from the bathroom)

No work, Joyce! I forbid it. A
little R&R will do you some good.
Have fun with your friend. Go
dancing. Get drunk. Kiss a girl.
But absolutely, unequivocally no w-
(poking his head out)
Have you seen my loofah?

JOYCE

It's next to the rubber ducky, sir.

BACK TO THE INTERROGATION.

CONSTABLE (O.S.)

Rubber ducky?

CALVIN

Yes. It was a gift from a... let's
call her a friend. It all started
when I took her to-

FEMALE VOICE

Can we move on?

CALVIN

He was the one who asked.

BACK TO THE STORY.

INT. AIRPLANE - FIRST CLASS - DAY

CALVIN (V.O.)

I made my flight with only moments
to spare.

(MORE)

CALVIN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 I was the last person to board.
 Board first class... well you know
 how it is.

Calvin sits comfortably in his large chair. The seat next to him is vacant. As passengers walk by, a pretty RED HEAD clocks Calvin as she passes.

CONSTABLE (O.S.)
 I've never flown first class.

CALVIN (V.O.)
 Really? I highly recommend it. It's
 the only way to fly. I have a
 little trick about flying too if
 you'd like to hear it. I loath long
 plane rides when I have to sit next
 to a chatty businessman informing
 me of his recent whatnot meeting. I
 discovered a solution to this
 problem some time ago. I purchase
 my seat as well as the one next to
 it, insuring a peaceful and quiet
 flight. I know most people don't
 have the money to do that. But when
 one has the means... Where was I?
 Ah yes. I settled myself in and
 looked for a flight attendant.

Calvin flags down a FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

CALVIN
 Excuse me, miss? Could I trouble
 you for a cocktail? I think a nice
 mixer would be the remedy to take
 the edge off such a long flight.
 Don't you think?

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 Of course sir, what can I get for
 you?

CALVIN
 A nice G&T would be marvelous,
 thank you.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
 Of course.

Just as she leaves, CHARLOTTE (30's) the pretty red head, slips into the seat next to Calvin.

CHARLOTTE

Hi. I saw no one was sitting here
and it's just so cramped back
there, so I figured. Why not?

Calvin is taken aback by her beauty and moxy.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I take it you have no objections.

Calvin opens his mouth, trying to speak but no words come
out.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Then we're in agreement.

The Flight Attendant returns with Calvin's drink. She hands
it to him as she notices Charlotte.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

I'm sorry miss, you need a first
class ticket to sit here. You'll
have to return to your seat.

CHARLOTTE

Oh no, it's quite all right. My
friend here doesn't mind. Do you?

The two look to Calvin. He looks over the situation.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT

You'll have to go back miss.

CALVIN

No I don't think that will be
necessary. You will find that both
seats are in my name and I have no
problem with this lady sitting
here.

The Flight Attendant rolls her eyes and is about to leave
when-

CHARLOTTE

I'll have a whiskey if you don't
mind.

The Flight Attendant leaves in a huff.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

(to Calvin)

Thanks. Coach is just awful.

CALVIN

What kind of gentleman would I be
if I didn't offer a seat to a woman
in need?

CHARLOTTE

Well I appreciate it. I'm
Charlotte.

CALVIN

Calvin.

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