



When Fanny Met Germaine

By Sian Ejiwunmi-Le Berre

Directed by Jonquil Panting

CHARACTERS
Louise-Marie
Germaine de Staël
Fanny Burney
D'Arblay
Susannah
Narbonne
La Dama
Voices 1-7
Man 1, Man 2
Woman 1, Woman 2

Read-through:

18/09/2019 1000 - 1100

Editing:

TBC

Recording:

18/09/2019 1000 – 1800
19/09/2019 1000 - 1900

Technical Team

Pete Ringrose
Ali Craig

Venue:

Studio MV6
Maida Vale Studios
Delaware Road
London W9 2LG

Production Contact:

07739 300065

☎ MV reception - 020 7765 2091

☎ Studio MV6 - 020 7765 2095

Programme Number: 19DA2206LH0

SAP Number: PAI-8249-CASH

TX Date: 7th November 2019 14:15 – 15:00

PROLOGUE

**MUSIC: SACCHARINE HARPSICHORD, SUDDENLY
INTERRUPTED BY THE UNMISTAKEABLE
SLASH-THUMP OF THE GUILLOTINE.**

FX: ROARING CHEERS FROM THE PARIS MOB.

1. LOUISE-MARIE: (V/O YELLING) HUSH!!!!

FX: CUT TO SILENCE.

2. LOUISE-MARIE: (V/O) What? You get AHEAD of yourselves!
(ROARS WITH LAUGHTER). We nah reach de
guillotine yet. Dis story gon be tell in de
proper order.

SCENE 1 **INT: A CARRIAGE** **DAY**

FX: **CARRIAGE WHEELS, BAD ROAD**

1. LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) You set? For what? A romance of course! In de correct novelish style. You know de rules? First, a suitable ‘eroine. Candidate: Miss Frances Burney. Maybe you know of ‘er? No? Never mind. We meet ‘er, as is proper, leavin’ ‘er accustomed ‘ome –**

2. FANNY: Windsor Castle, farewell! Four years bound in service as to a monastery -

3. LOUISE-MARIE: **Lady of de Robes, no less. To Queen Charlotte, and dat crazy King George.**

4. FANNY: Waiting, waiting on the Queen. My father felt the honour of the role, I felt only the endless boredom.

5. LOUISE-MARIE: **But she ‘as received de proper ladylike education in manners and accomplishment?**

6. FANNY: My understanding unwanted, my experience unheard, denied all refinement of intercourse. Not permitted to complain, should a hat-pin be stuck in my skull for four hours straight! Worst, unable to write...

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: (PEEVED) **So, complainin' of bein' nearly dead from 'avin nuttin to do in a palace, our 'eroine meks 'er way to London...**
- 2 FANNY: No, no. Not to London. I... I have delayed -
- 3 LOUISE-MARIE: **Whaaaa? No, no, she *mus* go to London and be face with de thousand challenges to 'er safety and ladylike reputation!**
- 4 FANNY: NO.
- 5 LOUISE-MARIE: **(GRUMPY) Where she go den?**
- 6 FANNY: To Mickleham.
- 7 LOUISE-MARIE: **Huh?**
- 8 FANNY: In Surrey. To my dearest sister Susannah.
- 9 LOUISE-MARIE: **To fall prey to gold-diggin' rakes on de 'unt for a rich inheritance!**
- 10 FANNY: Inheritance? I have none.
- 11 LOUISE-MARIE: **What?!**
- 12 FANNY: My pen has been my key to the world, my calling card to high company –
- 13 LOUISE-MARIE: **Aha! To be exposed to the dangers of society!**

- 1 FANNY: In a Surrey village of perhaps half a dozen families? I think the location renders such a dramatic plot improbable. Though it could be tried...
- 2 LOUISE-MARIE: **Gwaan den, Miss Clever Clogs. Show we how to introduce a ‘eroine in de true novelish style.**
- 3 FANNY: Well, um... *“Her form was elegant, her heart was liberal: her countenance announced the intelligence of her mind, and her complexion varied with every emotion of her soul.”*
- 4 LOUISE-MARIE: **(SNIFFS) Not bad. She ‘ave some experience in dis department. So: Miss Fanny Burney, authoress. Thousand of copy sold. Translated cross Europe. Must ‘a made a pretty penny!**

- 1 FANNY: I might have, indeed, if my father and friends had cared less for my reputation than my pocket, and not banned my plays from production. My novels have made thousands –
- 2 LOUISE-MARIE: **Aha!**
- 3 FANNY: For my publisher.
- 4 LOUISE-MARIE: **So... She *poor*?**
- 5 FANNY: (SIGHS)
- 6 LOUISE-MARIE: **But, but.... she pretty?**
- 7 FANNY: Meh.
- 8 LOUISE-MARIE: (ANNOYED) **Young -**
- 9 FANNY: One and forty!
- 10 LOUISE-MARIE: **Seeking love –**
- 11 FANNY: Seeking only to recover my muse.
- 12 LOUISE-MARIE: (IRRITATED) **Well, she the best we got for now. But for comparison, I present ...**

SCENE 2: INT. ROOM AT AN INN MORNING

FX: OUTSIDE: SHOUTS, HORSES, CARRIAGES,

(GERMAINE IN BED SNORING LOUDLY.)

1 LOUISE-MARIE: **My very own mistress, Madame Germaine De Staël. (MORE SNORING.) She too ugly fo mek heroine but she considered a genius by all Europe. Six and twenty. One husband in Sweden, two babies in Swiss,**

FX: A MEMORY OF THE RISING MOB.

2 LOUISE-MARIE: **Tree lovers safe in England, thanks to her saving dey head from French Revolutionary chop-chop with ‘er money and brains.**

FX: GUILLOTINE FALLS. MEMORY FADES.

A genius. Everybody say it. So explain to me, ‘ow it is possible she lose her knickers every time she travel?

3 LOUISE-MARIE: **(DELIBERATELY LOUD) Merde! Où sont les culottes de ma Dame?**

4 GERMAINE: **(WAKING WITH A START) Les cul... English! Louise-Marie!**

(GERMAINE CLIMBS OUT OF BED, UNDER...)

1 LOUISE-MARIE: **And dat me. Louise-Marie. Not me birt name, not what I used to be... but more of dat later.**

2 LOUISE-MARIE: Oui, Madame.

3 GERMAINE: English! We must practice, become acc...
accus...

4 LOUISE-MARIE: Accustomed.

5 GERMAINE: Exactement. Any letters pour moi?

6 LOUISE-MARIE: No Madame.

7 GERMAINE: Paper! Pen! INK!!!

FX: PEN SCRATCHING PAPER. ESTABLISH AND UNDER

8 LOUISE-MARIE: **My Madame Germaine, she sleep only a few hours each night. All de time she busy, busy, busy. Busy making repartee. Busy... making d'amour. Busy writin'. I make her coiffure –**

9 GERMAINE: (SCRIBBLING) My 'air. Up.

10 LOUISE-MARIE: Oui, Ma - (CORRECTING HERSELF) err, yes Madame

1 LOUISE-MARIE: - she writin'. She take 'er breakfast -

FX: FRUIT CRUNCHING. CUTLERY

2 LOUISE-MARIE: – she writin'. Book, pamphlet, letter.
Sometime she write tree at once! Like lover.
Jump from page to page like flea hop bed.

FX: HEAVY BREATHING. LOVE MAKING

3 GERMAINE: (WRITING, SIGHING DRAMATICALLY) ...*may I never become devalued in your eyes by the very sacrifices I am making to my passion for you. If my reputation is damaged forever, do not scorn the woman who has recognised no law but love.*

4 LOUISE-MARIE: **Stop dat!. (SEX NOISES STOP) A love letter. To Count Narbonne-Lara, now in England. 'E no write back. She tell 'im dat if he don't do dis or dat, she instantly gan blow out 'er brains. If she were a woman of 'er word, Madame would have an 'ead like an Emmental cheese.**

5 GERMAINE: (WITH A SCREAM OF FRUSTRATION.) Life is a choice between boredom and suffering!

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: **And Madame is never bored. Dis Narbonne, she save ‘im from de guillotine, ‘ave him baby, travel back tru Paris in de middle of de Revolution to meet him ‘ere in England – all in tree mont! All dat runnin about? For what? ‘im not grateful. And dat not ‘ow no ‘eroine behave in no novelish love story. A ‘eroine is a good girl who sit still and wait for somtin to ‘appen.**
- 2 LOUISE-MARIE: (IN THE ROOM, LOUDLY) Aha!
- 3 GERMAINE: (CROSS) Mais - qu’est-ce que tu as?
- 4 LOUISE-MARIE: (PRODUCING THEM, WITH DISTASTE) I find your... your *bloomers*, Madame.
- 5 LOUISE-MARIE (V/O) **And maybe she find what she lookin’ for too. In “Surrey”.**

SCENE 3: INT: MICKLEHAM COTTAGE DAY

FX: CHILDREN OUTSIDE. SUSANNAH IS SEWING.

1 SUSANNAH: (LAUGHING) Bravo! Well, you curtsy splendidly, Fanny. As if you've done nothing else for years.

(MUCH RUSTLING AS FANNY RISES)

2 FANNY: I barely have. My knees have seen more action than my tongue. Or my pen.

3 SUSANNAH: Won't it be too quiet here? Would you not have been more stimulated at Chelsea?

4 FANNY: (SITTING) I may have failed Father's hopes of elevating our family, Susannah, but would you really wish me back home? Transcribing his "History of Music"? Listening to our stepmother's grunting? That might have silenced me forever.

5 SUSANNAH: Never. Johnson's darling, the little girl on Garrick's knee, Sheridan's protégé, Burke's favourite ...?

6 FANNY: I seem to have lost *that* Fanny Burney.

7 SUSANNAH: Well then I have someone, *someones* who will dig her up from her grave state. We have been invaded, Fanny! By France!

- 1 FANNY: Pass me the poker, sister. I will keep the Sans Culottes at bay!
- 2 SUSANNAH: Did you not read my letters? Our little neighbourhood bursts with French émigrés, refugees from Revolution.
- 3 FANNY: I found it so incredible, I thought you had turned novelist in my stead. Surrey, a substitute for a Paris Salon? Do they not miss the opera? And the pitchforks?
- 4 SUSANNAH: They shuttle between here and London. Trying to improve the lot of their countrymen –
- 5 FANNY: Hmm.
- 6 SUSANNAH: And their finances.
- 7 FANNY: Hmmmm.
- 8 SUSANNAH: But there is quite enough left of our little French colony to rekindle your dusty mind. Just next door at Juniper Hall, we have had Bishops, Dukes and Ministers flitting like atoms. I confess it is a little hard to unravel who is whom...
- 9 FANNY: (SHOCKED) You do not visit them?
- 10 SUSANNAH: With some trepidation I have.

- 1 FANNY: Unchaperoned?
- 2 SUSANNAH: Yes, but they are soon to be joined by a lady of the highest... and in any case, now you are here, and with your literary reputation, we can visit freely and be welcomed -
- 3 FANNY: (PRIMLY) I am unsure what opinion to have of them.
- 4 SUSANNAH: But Fanny, there you will find true nobility of mind, though whatever nobility of station they once held is gone. They are very brave, and despise complaining of all they have lost.
- 5 FANNY: To despise riches, is very philosophic, Susannah, but not very practical.

FX: DOOR KNOCKING, OPENS. MAID ENTERS

- 6 SUSANNAH: Well.
- 7 FANNY: Your liberal heart supports them as much as your liberal politics. But no system can improve on that of a benevolent monarchy...
- 8 SUSANNAH: Really? You still say so? Thank you, Jane.
- 9 FANNY: Revolutionaries! Susannah! I cannot condone -

FX: GUILLOTINE. CHEERS.

- 1 SUSANNAH: (OPENING A LETTER) They are not revolutionaries, or radicals. They are Constitutionalists.
- 2 FANNY: Whichever, I'm sure they regret it now. Nothing good can come of everything being so violently overthrown.
- 3 SUSANNAH: If you say so, dear. But you must prepare to be violently overthrown yourself. Monsieur Narbonne is at the door -
- 4 FANNY: (SPRINGING UP) I cannot! I am in no state –
- 5 SUSANNAH: To invite us to dine tomorrow.
- 6 FANNY: Oh no -
- 7 SUSANNAH: He was Minister for War, Fanny! They cannot be deterred. They flatter and gratify – so very French – that plead what you like -
- 8 FANNY: I plead my.... My –
- 9 SUSANNAH: Shhh! On your feet! Silence for courtesies!

FX: **DOOR OPENS.**

- 10 SUSANNAH: Ah, Monsieur Narbonne. May I present my sister?

(THEY BOTH CURTSEY DEEPLY.)

SCENE 4: INT: JUNIPER HALL EVENING.

(A DIFFERENT KIND OF SKIRT RUSTLING.
GERMAINE AND NARBONNE ARE
CANOODLING.)

- 1 NARBONNE: But why must I describe Miss Burney *again!* -
- 2 GERMAINE: - because, Mon Cher Narbonne, you alone have
 laid eyes on her! And your description is so very
 poor, it has prepared me for *nothing*. “Small,
 and in the English style”. The celebrated Fanny
 Burney! Is she a piece of furniture or a potted
 plant?
- 3 NARBONNE: I am devastated not to satisfy.
- 4 GERMAINE: Do not speak to me. It is not your only failing. I
 find myself arrived in Surrey to a household of
 men. You leave me exposed to rumour –
- 5 NARBONNE: You expose yourself, Madame. I cannot arrange
 my seductions around the niceties of English
 manners.

(LOUISE-MARIE ENTERS WITH A
PERFUNCTORY COUGH, BUT WITHOUT
KNOCKING.)

- 6 GERMAINE: Louise-Marie?

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: Dey are here, Madame.
- 2 GERMAINE: Mon Dieu. The punctuality of the English is incroyable. Quick!
- 3 LOUISE-MARIE: Madame! Slow down!
- 4 GERMAINE: Louise-Marie! The door! Where shall I sit? Here? No, here? Like this? With a book? No! Wait! I will greet her! (RUNS) Out of my way Louise-Marie –
- 5 NARBONNE: (CALLING AFTER HER) Honestly Germaine. You conduct yourself like a puppy.
- 6 GERMAINE: (SHOUTING) Good. The more I know of man, the more I like dogs.

FX: GERMAINE OPENS THE FRONT DOOR.

- 7 GERMAINE: My 'eart explode! I am a firework all day for this moment!
- 8 FANNY/SUSANNAH: Madame Ambassadors.
- (SILENCE FOR COURTESIES.)
- 9 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) And dese two little English ladies curtsey quite proper.**
- 10 GERMAINE: No English reserve! Here, we are all France!

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) She take ‘em and kiss ‘em like a cat kiss rabbit. Dey faces! She a cannonball o’ love.**
- 2 FANNY: Madame? **(V/O) Goodness, isn’t she plain? Eyes like saucers of chocolate.**
- 3 GERMAINE: Mrs Phillips, I hear everything, of your sweetness, your kindness to my poor exiles here at Juniper Hall, mais excusez-moi, I must take your sister –
- 4 FANNY: Oh!
- 5 FANNY: **(V/O) I find myself being dragged into the garden by a force impossible to resist... a being compact, intense... and uncorsetted!**
(AS THEY GO) Susannah...?
- 6 SUSANNAH: Bienvenue en Angleterre, Madame de Staël...
- 7 FANNY: **(DISAPPEARING) Susannah!!**
- 8 NARBONNE: **(ON THE DOORSTEP) She was an only child. To share a new toy is for her an impossibility...**

- 1 GERMAINE: It was l'enfer, hell.
- 2 FANNY: Oh. A little choppy?
- 3 GERMAINE: I leave my babies. I am devasteé pour l'amour.
- 4 FANNY: Of course. Your husband?
- 5 GERMAINE: My beloved Paris desecréé, France is a monster. It is the greatest moment in history. I watch. I do what I can. I write it all, all. And you, Mlle. Burnay? What do you write this moment?
- 6 FANNY: Me? Write? No. I fear I am not, have not... I -
- 7 GERMAINE: But you write *something*, no?
- 8 FANNY: I have been at court, in service to the Queen.
- 9 GERMAINE: Ah! We live in bondage to the stories of monarchs, ne c'est pas?
- 10 FANNY: My time was not my own -
- 11 GERMAINE: And so you have write in secret? In dark corners of the night?

- 1 FANNY: Yes. Yes, I did! I have spoken to no one of this yet it was exactly as you describe! But what I did write... what I have written is secret and dark even to myself. Not a book. Not a play. Nothing good. Nothing worth keeping. What poured from me in the depths of night in my scant moments of freedom was incomprehensible, wild. I read in the morning with fear and no recognition of the ramblings of that midnight madwoman.
- 2 GERMAINE: Wonderful! This is how I always write! Free, passionate, nothing between soul and page. You let me read?
- 3 FANNY: NO! My goodness, never. I have destroyed them, Madame. Nothing remains.
- 4 GERMAINE: Nothing? Give me your hand.
- 5 FANNY: My – oh!
- (GERMAINE KISSES FANNY’S HAND..)
- 6 GERMAINE: Nothing (KISS) from this hand (KISS) should be unseen. (KISS) It joins to the heart that knows best the heart of human kind.
- 7 FANNY: (LAUGHING. THEN SERIOUS) I have a habit of burning my own work. Perhaps I have insulted my muse, and she will never visit me again?

- 1 GERMAINE: We seek her together. We bring her home to you.
- 2 FANNY: I hope so. Madame - are you not cold?
- 3 GERMAINE: I am **ice**. (THEY GIGGLE) Let us go in and eat. I love to eat!

SCENE 6. INT: JUNIPER HALL NIGHT.

FX: CHATTER OF A LARGE DINING PARTY.

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Dese refugees, dey eat like Paris aristocrat! Dey forget dem got no money no more.**
- 2 NARBONNE: Louise-Marie!! More wine!
- 3 LOUISE-MARIE: J'arrive, Monsieur.
- 4 SUSANNAH: Monsieur D'Arblay? You wish to speak? I can translate if the English eludes you.
- 5 D'ARBLAY: *(ERUPTS) "In all ranks and stations of life, 'ow strangely characters and manners differ!"*
- 6 FANNY: Excuse me, monsieur? To whom do you refer?
- 7 D'ARBLAY: It is your... It is *yourself*, Mademoiselle Burnay!
- 8 FANNY: Myself?
- 9 D'ARBLAY: Your *Evelina*! An estimable work.
- 10 FANNY: Oh! Evelina is flattered to have excited such admiration.
- 11 GERMAINE: General D'Arblay served the Marquis de Lafayette himself, Miss Burnay.

- 1 FANNY: Should ever I write a description of a French cavalryman, Mon General, you would be my inspiration. And a very kind reader also.
- 2 D'ARBLAY: It is not a kind. I am truly a reader for you. What civilised person has not read *Evelina*? Or *Cecilia*?
- 3 FANNY: I ... my family have been so fortunate in gaining the approval of... **(V/O) We Burneys are a curious lot: bred to keep company with aristocrats, yet with nothing to recommend us to them but talents which they do not approve or improve –**
- 4 GERMAINE: **(V/O) She has suffered. I see it. Wit. Intelligence. Sharp as her bones. Sensibility, imagination, reason, each subservient to the other -**
- 5 FANNY: I am flattered you have read my work and approve –
- 6 D'ARBLAY: Yes! I – I approve! I approve of all of her!
- 7 GERMAINE: Politeness is the art of *choosing* among your thoughts, Monsieur.
- 8 FANNY: **(V/O) Her fund inexhaustible of good humour and gaiety. She sees me, and ... winks!**

- 1 D'ARBLAY: *"Concealment is the foe of tranquillity." Cecilia, non?*
- 2 GERMAINE: Miss Burnay's genius lies not in dissected lines, but in the completeness of her soul, D'Arblay.
- 3 FANNY: **(V/O) I am breathless with her eloquence. The first woman I ever met with for extraordinary intellect –**
- 4 D'ARBLAY: All world prostrate before you!
- 5 FANNY: Most certainly it does not! Goodness me, no!
- 6 GERMAINE: Now you embarrass Miss Burnay, Monsieur.
- 7 D'ARBLAY: *"Generosity without delicacy, like wit without judgment, generally gives as much pain as pleasure".*
- 8 GERMAINE: M. D'Arblay. You play a game? To quote Miss Burnay's novels at her?
- 9 D'ARBLAY: No! Pas de tout! I excuse me, Mademoiselle.
- 10 FANNY: There is nothing to excuse, Monsieur. I am simply astounded at your... dedication.
- 11 GERMAINE: I want to propose!
- 12 NARBONNE: Mon Dieu Madame. Your English is execrable.

- 1 GERMAINE: Miss Burnay: let me be your tutor.
- 2 FANNY: Certainly Madame. In what?
- 3 GERMAINE: In French! Will you be mine?
- 4 NARBONNE: Better that Miss Burnay should 'elp you with English manners, non?
- 5 GERMAINE: Ah oui, exactement! In English!
- 6 FANNY: I hardly feel myself qualified to instruct Madame.
- 7 GERMAINE: Who better can teach me English than the first woman of English writing?
- 8 D'ARBLAY: Brava! Madame and Mademoiselle Burnay! Brava!
- 9 LOUISE-MARIE: **(DASTARDLY) In de novelish style, when de lovers take a step toward each other, de author put in place some obstacle to trip 'em. Watch me now.**
- 10 LOUISE-MARIE: Madame, I 'ave a letter 'ere.
- 11 LOUISE-MARIE: **Dey 'bout to lose dey appetite....**
- 12 GERMAINE: Give it to Narbonne, Louise-Marie –

1 D'ARBLAY: You teach me, also, Mademoiselle? Be my professor-in-gown? We can write the little thèmes and you correct –

2 FANNY: Thèmes?

3 GERMAINE: Essays.

4 FANNY: Ah! Perhaps, Monsieur D'Arblay -

5 GERMAINE: You want to preoccupy my maîtresse, Monsieur?

(A GROAN FROM NARBONNE. HE STANDS.)

Narbonne! Mon dieu, qu'est-ce qui ne va pas?

6 NARBONNE: (DESPAIR) Le Roi est mort. Louis... the king... is dead.

FX: **GUILLOTINE SLASH, GASPS, TEARS.**

SUDDENLY CUTTING TO:

7 LOUISE-MARIE: (V/O) **Ah, well. Let's not repeat ourself, eh?**

SCENE 7. JUNIPER HALL AFTERNOON

FX: LOUISE-MARIE, STOMPING UPSTAIRS

1 LOUISE-MARIE: (V/O CONTINUING) **Me, I speak six languages. English now, before dat French and German, den Creole as we speak in Saint Domingue, Arabic from de men who took me and before dat Wolof, at home, as a child, before I... but I na speak Wolof again. Who to hey? De wall?**

And ‘ow I learn to speak? Because I must! To do what me told and na get whipped. To be understood and na get whipped. Dis de fastest way to learn.

2 D’ARBLAY: (O/S) Louise-Marie!

3 LOUISE-MARIE: (V/O) **Not dese genius. Dey call it “scholaring”. Dey sit all over de house, WRITIN’! Upstairs, down, all different room.**

(ENTERS THE DRAWING ROOM.)

FX: FIRE CRACKLING, WINE POURING. PENS TO PAPER.

4 D’ARBLAY: (WRITING SLOWLY). Dear Miss Burnay... I...

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) So, now I cook, clean, and run about delivering dem “essay”.**
- 2 GERMAINE: (O/S) Louise-Marie! It’s ready!
- 3 LOUISE-MARIE: (SIGHS) **(V/O) See?** Coming Madame!

SCENE 8. INT: MICKLEHAM COTTAGE MORNING

(FANNY RECEIVES A NOTE.)

1 FANNY: Thank you Jane.

(OPENS NOTE. READING w/ GERMAINE. INTENSE.) *“When I first learned to read English, I began by Milton to know or renounce all at once. I follow the same system in writing my first English Letter to Miss Burney; after such an enterprise, nothing can affright me. I feel for her so tender a friendship that it melts my admiration, inspires my heart with hope of her indulgence to express sentiments so deeply felt. I entreat Miss Burney to correct the words, but preserve the sense.”*

2 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Madame! Falling in love like a runaway horse.**

3 FANNY: (FLABBERGASTED) How should I reply?

4 SUSANNAH: Fanny, you have been Junipered.

5 FANNY: Like a novel. The nice part, before any horror, disappointment, or madness.

6 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Horror, disappointment or madness. Hmmm.**

SCENE 9. INT. BEDROOM, JUNIPER HALL AFTERNOON

(BED. GERMAINE AND NARBONNE MAKE LOVE. GERMAINE WRITING.)

1 NARBONNE: Must you write *all* the time?

2 GERMAINE: If we *must* have money, I *must* write to my husband. If you *must* not be sent back to the guillotine, we *must* apply to our English friends. Doors are closing.

3 NARBONNE: I doubt your pen will keep them open. *You* could go back to your parents and children in Switzerland...

4 GERMAINE: And leave you? Never. My life is dedicated to your happiness. Don't stop.

(NARBONNE SIGHS. CONTINUES HIS EFFORTS.)

5 GERMAINE: I shall write a defence of Marie-Antoinette! As a woman, wife and mother!

6 NARBONNE: A defence of yourself might be better. Your presence in England, sans husband, children or chaperone is only slightly less popular than the guillotine.

- 1 GERMAINE: Whose fault is that? I am stifling with good behaviour. Sow good services, and good remembrances grow from them. (BEAT) Do you think she likes me?
- 2 NARBONNE: Marie-Antoinette? She detests you.
- 3 GERMAINE: Miss Burney. She has taken a fancy to me, no? As a fellow writer.
- 4 NARBONNE: Nothing and no one can resist you.
- 5 GERMAINE: One day I will write a novel like Cecilia.
- 6 NARBONNE: Longer, no doubt. You begin right now?
- 7 GERMAINE: One of these little stories of domestic life... Fanny's mind is immense, but her world is narrow.

FX: L-M STOMPING TOWARD, PUFFING.

- 8 NARBONNE: And you would do well not to broaden it!
- 9 GERMAINE: I would show her nothing but love. As I do you.
- 10 NARBONNE: That is precisely what concerns me...

FX: L-M ENTERS AS BEFORE

- 11 NARBONNE: Sacre Bleu. Again?

1 LOUISE-MARIE: Madame, you bid me bring you Mamselle Burney's essay immediately.

2 NARBONNE: You read that immediately?

3 GERMAINE: Yes. And then I must reply. But carry on.

4 NARBONNE: (GIVING UP) And to think your intelligence was once your greatest attraction.

(NARBONNE LEAVES. GERMAINE READS, CHUCKLING.)

5 GERMAINE: What? Oh, she is clever. Narbonne?

6 LOUISE-MARIE: He left, Madame.

7 GERMAINE: (WRITING) Hmmmmm? Wait a minute, take Miss Burnay a reply.

8 LOUISE-MARIE: Oui, Madame.

9 D'ARBLAY: (O/S) Louise-Marie? Take my letter to Miss Burney?

10 GERMAINE: Fetch his, then come back for mine.

FX: LOUISE-MARIE STOMPS DOWNSTAIRS.

11 LOUISE-MARIE: **See? I use up me legs to save dem from *talking!***

SCENE 10. INT: MICKLEHAM COTTAGE MORNING

(FANNY OPENS A NOTE)

1 D'ARBLAY: *“Madame de Grafigni, author of one of the best novels in our language, was, like a certain English lady adored at Juniper, the most feeling and best natured woman upon earth. But while writing perfect, she spoke most common. The reason is, said she, that I speak only what I leave out from my writing. So I ask if the author of Cecilia has anything left out from her writings, and if so, I entreat her give them to me, and then I am sure I will be the most clever fellow in the kingdom.”*

2 FANNY: (LAUGHING) Bravo Monsieur.

(SHE OPENS A SECOND NOTE)

3 GERMAINE: *Perfect grammar cannot establish any sort of equality between you and I. Then I will trust with my heart alone to supply the deficiency. Let us speak upon a grave subject: when do you come to spend a large week here in Juniper Hall? Stay night and day until our sad separation. All is ready to receive the first woman in England! My happiness depends on it. Do not deceive my heart!*

1 FANNY: (TO HERSELF, PLEASED) Beautiful in ideas, Germaine, and not so very reprehensible in idiom.

(PICKING UP PAPER AND PEN..)

2 For a final opinion, I must refer to my father, but I'm sure he can no more refuse you than I.

(SHE WRITES)

3 My dearest... Papa ...

4 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O, LAUGHING) You hear dat? De famous Miss Burney understand no more about de novelish style dan a leg o mutton! De father is de first one to trap de 'eroine, an' sell 'er, an' thwart 'er, an' prevent 'er, an' keep 'er from all 'er best wishes. How could you even have a novel wid a father who do everything de 'eroine want?**

SCENE 11. INT: MICKLEHAM COTTAGE DAY

FX: POURING RAIN AND WIND

(KERFUFFLE AND PACKING. D'ARBLAY KNOCKS ON THE DOOR, ENTERS.)

1 D'ARBLAY: Excuse me the coming in, but the weather is too bad and I am very wet and we had not hear from you in so many days, we begin to be – what is this?

2 FANNY: M. D'Arblay!

(SILENCE FOR COURTESIES)

3 D'ARBLAY: Les baggages? You is departing?

4 FANNY: M. D'Arblay! I was writing, I was going to write! I have a sore throat, or rather, my father has a sore throat, of the putrid kind, and so ... in short, M. D'Arblay, I return to London.

5 D'ARBLAY: Leave Surrey? Mais... I am devastate.

6 FANNY: Are you? I think I am devastate too.

7 D'ARBLAY: So you will not pass a large week at Juniper?

8 FANNY: My throat, I... May I be frank with you?

1 D'ARBLAY: It would distress me if you cannot, Mlle Burney.

2 FANNY: My father's response to Madame's invitation is...
he has received letters from friends... here, see
for yourself, I cannot bear to read them again.

**FX: A LETTER. HE OPENS IT. FROM IT BURSTS
OVERLAPPING VOICES -**

3 VOICE 1: ***Nothing is spoke of now but Madame De
Staël.***

4 VOICE 2: ***That intriguing woman - as if her politics were
not bad enough, she is an adulteresse!***

5 VOICE 3: ***Abandoning her husband in one country, her
children in another, to follow Narbonne to
England!***

6 VOICE 4: ***She uses Miss Burney's celebrity as a fig leaf
to her appalling reputation, a thing most
horribly prejudicial to Miss Burney's own.***

7 VOICE 5: ***She is a Jacobinical malignity, come to set
the Thames on fire.***

8 VOICE 6: ***The slightest connection with her is an evil to
be avoided at all costs. She will destroy
Fanny's reputation, with the Queen, with her
readers.***

1 VOICE 7: ***One might as well try to defend Guy Fawkes!***

FX: CLOSE LETTER. THUNDER.

2 D'ARBLAY: I see.

3 FANNY: I cannot spend a single night under her roof. I would be finished.

4 D'ARBLAY: These people, they wrong Madame Germaine. Her kindness, her humanity, her benevolence ...

5 FANNY: And I have defended her against their misinterpretations! That instance I came across her behind the gazebo....

FX: BEHIND THIS WE HEAR: NARBONNE AND GERMAINE GIGGLING AND WHISPERING

6 FANNY: She had fallen and done some damage to her gown. The gentlemanly way M. Narbonne helped her to her feet –

7 D'ARBLAY: We Frenchmen are careful of a lady's attire –

8 FANNY: Or the time they had both to retire, in the afternoon, at almost exactly the same time –

9 LOUISE-MARIE (V/O) (SNIGGERS)

10 D'ARBLAY: Ah yes. Indeed. There was that –

1 FANNY: She loves him, but she is very plain, he very handsome, her intellectual endowments must be her sole attraction.

FX: GERMAINE AND NARBONNE AT IT AGAIN.

2 LOUISE-MARIE: (LAUGHING) ***“Credulity is the sister of innocence!”*** Fanny write dat herself!

3 D’ARBLAY: French women do not expect such happy marriages as you English. Madame was married very young, and for her money only –

4 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) In novels, always money, love, money...**

5 D’ARBLAY: I would recommend my sister, my mother, or my wife to her company.

6 FANNY: You would?

7 D’ARBLAY: You believe in her, but you cannot stay?

8 FANNY: I cannot afford to.

9 D’ARBLAY: Afford?

10 FANNY: In the most vulgar sense, afford, yes.

11 D’ARBLAY: If you speak of money Miss Burnay, do not be embarrassed, for I myself ‘ave none to speak of.

- 1 FANNY: But you always *have* had it, Monsieur. You are accustomed to do what you think right, without worrying about how you will live.
- 2 D'ARBLAY: I do not understand you –
- 3 FANNY: No. How could you? How can I teach you what it is like to be poor, and have no expectation of being otherwise? You think because we converse as equals we possess equal freedoms? I have never had anything not earned by my father's labour or my own. My sole independence now is a hard-earned pension, dependent on the approval of the Queen, and that in turn depends on the respectability of my associations. Opinion -
- 4 D'ARBLAY: Miss Burney –
- 5 FANNY: My god! Without it, I am nothing! I cannot live. I cannot write, and if I did, I would lie unread! Unwanted furniture in my stepmother's house!
- 6 D'ARBLAY: But I have distressed you. I did not want -
- 7 FANNY: Nor I ...Monsieur, your coat! You are soaked through!
- 8 D'ARBLAY: It is nothing. I go. Only – I beg that my dear professor-in-gown will continue an exchange of essays with this pitiable exile as before?

1 FANNY: If you will begin by “translating” for Madame this letter, by way of explanation? Tell her I am sorry.

2 D'ARBLAY: I will. Mademoiselle.

FX: COURTESIES. DOOR OPEN. RAIN. SLAM.

3 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Don't look at me! Dat's how it goes in a novelish love story! De 'eroine fall victim to rumour, before, in de end, de lover learn dey true innocence and purity, right?**

SCENE 12. INT. JUNIPER HALL DAY

FX: DOOR CLOSING. L-M WALKING THROUGH HOUSE.

1 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) So, Miss Burney gone. I return to keepin dese geniuses clean and fed on Madame's shrinkin' purse! Everybody try to find demself some job to keep from starving. French princesses make straw hat an' embroider neckerchiefs. Dukes teach fencin' to schoolboys. Dey hoped for money from plantation in Saint Domingue, but de Revolution set we free! Slavery done!**

FX: WHIP CRACK. PARIS MOB. CHEERS.

2 **Instead of selling us, dey mus' sell dere library, paintin' an' guns. Dey is heartbroken.**

FX: SUBDUED DINING.

3 GERMAINE: **Extraordinary that a fluid so utterly lacking in taste or substance, should still claim itself the title of soup.**

4 NARBONNE: **Since we eat it with a spoon, it must be soup, I suppose. It certainly is not wine.**

5 LOUISE-MARIE: **(ENTERING) Letters from London.**

- 1 GERMAINE: To me, Louise-Marie. Mine. Mine. Yours, D'Arblay. Is that not Miss Burney's hand?
- 2 D'ARBLAY: I. Ahem, asked her to correct my English plan. A proposal for employment.
- 3 GERMAINE: (OPENING LETTERS) Indeed? You are blessed. I have had no correspondence from Miss Burney these three months. How is her father's "putrid throat"?
- 4 D'ARBLAY: I believe him... recovered, Madame.
- 5 GERMAINE: Wonderful. A woman is a minor forever in this country. Poor Miss Burney.
- 6 NARBONNE: You still deceive yourself as to why she broke with you?
- 7 GERMAINE: Political malice! From the gossip you'd think I started the revolution alone!
- 8 NARBONNE: Your politics are not your foremost fault –
- 9 GERMAINE: What have I done that *you* have not? Or that was not done for love of you?

1 NARBONNE: Your name is a byword for scandal. It does more harm to *my* reputation than could my worst enemies! Imagine what it does to Miss Burney!

2 GERMAINE: Do your worst enemies pay your wine bill, Monsieur, or cover your extravagant taste for lamb cutlets and pineapples?

3 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) She ‘as ‘im dere. Greedy-guts.**

(GERMAINE GASPS. DROPS HER LETTER AND PEN KNIFE.)

4 D'ARBLAY: Madame? Are you unwell?

5 NARBONNE: Germaine? The soup is awful but –

6 GERMAINE: (SOBBING) My husband demands my immediate return to Switzerland.

7 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) We packin' again. And me only just found her knickers.**

8 D'ARBLAY: My deepest regrets.

9 GERMAINE: Do not imagine I weep! This infection of the eye! I swear it will kill me one day.

10 D'ARBLAY: In consolation, dear Madame, my transcription of your "Passions". Here. Finished.

- 1 GERMAINE: Bless you and your fine hand. Your copying is deeply appreciated.
- 2 D'ARBLAY: Madame.
- 3 GERMAINE: Comrades! My life is a long shipwreck, from which the debris are friendship, love and glory. Do not fear! I will provide a haven until your fortunes are recovered.
- 4 NARBONNE: Think not of me, Madame. I remain here.
- 5 GERMAINE: Remain to what? Penury? Humiliation? Save your life and leave you to starve? We part, my friends, but not for long. And... before I leave, another farewell. Miss Burney –
- 6 D'ARBLAY: Madame, you –
- 7 GERMAINE: Yes! To London!
- 8 NARBONNE: My God, for what possible reason? She cannot be your friend!
- 9 GERMAINE: You men believe women capable of only the most shallow attachment. As if true friendship were only possible between yourselves! What joins you and D'Arblay that cannot exist between Miss Burney and I?

- 1 NARBONNE: The General and I fought wars together! We are comrades at arms –

- 2 GERMAINE: As are Miss Burney and I! Soldiers of the pen! No woman of the world, no WRITER, would judge me as you do!

- 3 NARBONNE: Oh Germaine.

- 4 GERMAINE: Louise-Marie? Come! I will wear my red!

SCENE 13. INT: BEDROOM, JUNIPER HALL MORNING

(LOUISE-MARIE PACKING.)

- 1 GERMAINE: Louise-Marie, come here! Who is that walking?
- 2 LOUISE-MARIE: M. D'Arblay, Madame. Carrying a rose bush.
- 3 GERMAINE: And where is he headed, carrying a rose bush?
- 4 LOUISE-MARIE: Me na know, Madame. **(V/O) But me can guess.**
- 5 GERMAINE: Forget packing! Summon the carriage!
- 6 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Now we is in a race! What novelish heroine has only one suitor? Two dog. One hare! GO!**

**SCENE 14. INT: BURNEY DRAWING ROOM,
CHELSEA**

FX: CLOCK TICKING – SLOW MOTION

1 FANNY: Is it not unseasonably warm, dear
stepmother?

2 LA DAMA: Humpf.

FX: PAGE TURNING – SLOW MOTION

3 FANNY: Is it time – should I make... tea?

4 LA DAMA: (NEGATIVE) Humpf.

SCENE 15. EXT. SURREY WOODLAND

DAY

(D'ARBLAY TRUDGES A COUNTRY
PATH.)

1 D'ARBLAY: (TO HIMSELF) Miss Burnay ...I bring
 you a bush... a rose... as
 remembrance of... Mon dieu! I am not
 dead!

SCENE 16. INT. CARRIAGE - LONDON STREETS.

DAY

FX: STREET-CALLERS, CARRIAGES.
THE WORKS.

FX: GERMAINE AND LOUISE-MARIE
CLATTERING COBBLES IN THEIR
CARRIAGE.

2 GERMAINE: Can we go no faster than SNAILS?

SCENE 17. INT. BURNEY DRAWING ROOM

FX: SOUNDTRACK TO A SLOW DEATH AS BEFORE.

1 FANNY: (DESPERATE) I think I must go out. Visit sister Charlotte –

2 LA DAMA: Humpf?

3 FANNY: Yes, indeed. I feel I must ...

(FANNY SCRAMBLES OUT THE ROOM.)

4 LA DAMA: HUMPF! HA!

SCENE 18. EXT: BURNEY HOUSE, CHELSEA

MOMENTS LATER.

FX: DOOR SLAMS. STEPS.

FX: STREET-CALLERS, CARRIAGES. THE WORKS.

5 FANNY: (WALKING) I will go mad in that house!

SCENE 19. INT. CARRIAGE, LONDON STREETS

FX: STREET-CALLERS, CARRIAGES. THE WORKS.

FX: GERMAINE'S CARRIAGE PULLS UP.

1 GERMAINE: Stop! We are here! Hurry Louise-Marie!

2 LOUISE-MARIE: I'm hurryin!

FX OUT OF CARRIAGE. RUSHING UP STEPS TO THE DOOR. KNOCKING.

SCENE 20. EXT. LONDON STREETS

**FX: STREET-CALLERS, CARRIAGES.
THE WORKS.**

(D'ARBLAY, STILL TRUDGING.)

1 D'ARBLAY: (TO HIMSELF) I carry this rose, for a rose, that you might plant it where it may grow, and bloom, as you grow and bloom in my mind.

**SCENE 21. EXT: BURNEY HOUSE, CHELSEA
DAY.**

FX: DOOR SLAMS. STEPS

**FX: STREET-CALLERS, CARRIAGES THE
WORKS.**

**FX: GERMAINE AND L-M INTO THE
CARRIAGE.**

2 GERMAINE: My God. I have faced the gorgon. Englishwomen make bad manners an artform.

3 Coachman! Four streets on!

SCENE 22. INT: CHARLOTTE'S HOUSE - SHORTLY AFTER

FX: QUIET ROOM, ACTIVITY UPSTAIRS – CHILDREN. LONDON OUTSIDE.

FX: DOOR KNOCKING.

1 FANNY: Who is that, now?

(FANNY OPENS WINDOW. GASPS.)

FX: STREET-CALLERS, CARRIAGES. THE WORKS.

2 FANNY: Madame de Staël! (PANIC) Charlotte! It is for me. Do not come down!

(SLAMS THE WINDOW SHUT. THE DOOR TO THE ROOM OPENS. GERMAINE SWISHES IN, WITH L-M.)

3 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) So, we 'ere. To bid 'appy ever after or farewell for our 'eroines. De moment of truth.**

4 GERMAINE: I have known surgeries less arduous than extracting the whereabouts of Miss Burney from her stepmother! No courtesies Fanny, shall we not embrace?

1 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Madame squeeze ‘er so ‘ard she almost squeak.**

2 FANNY: My stepmother! You have been at Chelsea?

3 GERMAINE: A most courteous reception. I told her how we had become fast friends, at Juniper Hall.

4 FANNY: And... how did she respond?

5 GERMAINE: HUMPF!

(FANNY LAUGHS.)

6 GERMAINE: Ah Miss Burney. I have missed your sweet laugh! Dare I hope that you have missed me?

7 FANNY: I would be inhuman not to, Madame.

8 GERMAINE: Inhuman? You? Never. I confess to once holding grand hopes of our friendship. A glorious summer spent in an English garden, recovering your health, soothing my wounded spirit, discussing matters of writing, the position of women, all the great ideas of our turbulent age –

9 FANNY: I had hopes for something... of that sort.

- 1 GERMAINE: But your father's ill health, eh?
- 2 FANNY: My father's... yes.
- 3 GERMAINE: People said you had been chased from my side by rumour. Impossible, I said: Miss Burney knows my heart.
- 4 FANNY: As ever you are too generous in your opinion of me, Madame. **(V/O) Poor ardent woman! So charming, so open, so delightful! When she is with me I forget all the mischiefs that might follow. This unsuspecting character fancies she has made a friend!**
- 5 GERMAINE: Miss Burney has reasons for her absence, I said, that only another such as herself could understand. Hmmm?
- 6 FANNY: **(V/O) If only the world would take more care of itself and less of its neighbours... but an absolute resolution seems formed to crush this precious acquaintance, and compel me to appear its wilful renouncer. And so I must, but...**
- 7 FANNY: I am ashamed to confess them. Madame's opinion would be so horribly altered... I could not bear it!

- 1 GERMAINE: Never! Confess me everything! “Nothing between your soul and the page”, we promised, oui? Let me be your page! Give me your hand. Can I guess what those little white hands have been about?
- 2 FANNY: Madame?
- 3 GERMAINE: Do not blush – those first moments, when life stirs within us, waiting to be brought forth. Who knows better than I? A woman?
- 4 FANNY: Madame, I am at a loss to understand you. There is nothing inside of me, stirring -
- 5 GERMAINE: You write once more? Ne c'est pas? You have begin a new novel? Will you share with me a chapter?
- 6 FANNY: A new ... Madame,, you're mistaken. I have writ nothing since last we met. Only letters – none to you, for which I beg your pardon–
- 7 GERMAINE: As I beg yours! I promised to return your muse to you. Instead I am forced home, without accomplishing my vow!

- 1 FANNY: **(V/O) What kind of woman, what kind of writer, flees the only other of her kind?**
I think the task beyond your powers. Certainly beyond mine. I am not author of my own existence, how could I hope to conjure a novel into life?
- 2 GERMAINE: Let me help you! Or have you abandoned your genius?
- 3 FANNY: I care not for genius – but I mourn my little worlds, the friends and enemies of my own creation, more than you can know –
- 4 GERMAINE: But I DO know! Who else could? So... so I come to make to you a proposal, Miss Burney. In pure admiration! Let us join our hands together!
- 5 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Oh lawd! What she do now?**
- 6 GERMAINE: Join them (KISS) and write (KISS) a novel (KISS) as ONE! (KISS)
- 7 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Madame on her knees, and Fanny she pull and twist like a rabbit in a trap. A ravishment in de novelish style but –**

- 1 GERMAINE: We will write, a great correspondence for posterity's amazement, and with two minds as one deliver a book such as the world has never seen –
- 2 FANNY: NO!!! Let go, Madame!
- 3 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) She pull away so 'ard, Madame land on her backside with her skirt up pass her knees.**
- 4 GERMAINE: Be my faithful friend, dear Fanny, as I am yours. Two of one kind, Women who live to write.
- 5 FANNY: Madame, I love to think, to watch, to listen and write. But without the activity of the latter, I cannot maintain the luxury of the former. Our association would cancel all my efforts. Though we be of one mind, Madame, we are of two worlds. You say, you live to write, but I must write, to live. On that point, I fear we must always differ.
- 6 GERMAINE: Is that all?
- 7 FANNY: It is an ocean!
- 8 GERMAINE: An ocean? To part us?

- 1 FANNY: I think it must. Your name, connected to mine, even upon a frontispiece, would silence me forever. Chain me in dependence.
- 2 GERMAINE: (DESPAIR) I wish only to liberate you, give you back your life, your love – Is it not unjust that our reputation depends more upon observance of society than upon our work?
- 3 FANNY: (HARD) I would a thousand times rather forfeit my character as an author than risk ridicule or censure as a female.
- 4 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Spoke like a proper novelish 'eroine!**
- 5 GERMAINE: A female. Ah yes. You have yet to discover, Fanny: All belongs to men, who give us homage only for the amusement of overthrowing our empire.
- 6 FANNY: I hope not.
- 7 GERMAINE: You hope? Perhaps you have reason to hope, eh?
- 8 FANNY: (EMBARRASSED) I, I cannot imagine of what you speak, Madame. I hope only to write, once more.

- 1 GERMAINE: Alors. I will ever be a willing sacrifice on the altars of love and literature. Ha! What a fool I am! Even General D'Arblay cannot require so much instruction in English that he would walk thirty miles for it!

- 2 FANNY: Thirty miles? D'Arblay? Madame, I – This conversation has become... impossible.

- 3 GERMAINE: In matters of the heart, nothing is true but the impossible. At this very moment, Miss Burney, a rosebush walks from Surrey to your front door, like the forest of Birnham to Macbeth.

- 4 FANNY: A rosebush? Macbeth? It grieves me to say, Madame, having been advised against your politics, your deportment in society, your reputation, and yet defended your character, I never thought to defend your sanity.

- 5 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O SIGH) Aaannd... dere we ave it. In novels, de story mostly hangs upon a simple misunderstanding dat traps all in its thorns. In dis case: A Rosebush. In de blink of an eye, de 'eroine becomes a madwoman.**

1 GERMAINE: On consideration, I do not think I can help you find your muse, Miss Burney. She has abandoned you. For you seem incapable of constructing even the simplest romance.

(SILENCE, GRIM, FOR COURTESIES.)

FX: DESCENDING FOOTSTEPS. DOOR SLAM.

(FANNY LEFT, GASPING.)

FX: CARRIAGE DRIVING AWAY OUTSIDE.

SCENE 23. INT: CARRIAGE MOMENTS LATER.

- 1 GERMAINE: (HOLDING BACK TEARS) Ashamed of me? Concealing our friendship to love a pauper with nothing but a good long name? A tiny nobody? I always said: "Human life begins at Barons!"
- 2 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) And what dat make me? An ant?**
- 3 GERMAINE: I should have known – she said it herself! "*A lady should never degrade herself by being put on a level with writers!*" But... I will write her a letter, apologise... and you will deliver it, Louise-Marie?
- 4 LOUISE-MARIE: (SIGHING) Yes, Madame...

SCENE 24. INT: THE BURNEY HOUSE EVENING.

1 FANNY: Good night, mother. I will sit up a little longer.

2 LA DAMA: Humpff.

(LA DAMA LEAVES THE ROOM.)

3 FANNY: **I will write to her! Apologise! Reconcile -**

(PEN TO PAPER.)

(DOOR KNOCKING. SOMEONE LET IN.)

4 FANNY: Oh who *now?* Will. This. Vexatious. Day. NEVER
END?

(DOOR OPENING)

5 FANNY: Monsieur D'Arblay!

(SILENCE FOR COURTESIES.)

6 D'ARBLAY: Miss Burnay. I bring a rose! Plant to grow! Surrey!

7 FANNY: A rosebush! But there's no garden here at Chelsea!

8 D'ARBLAY: Why then it must return with me. I watch it, thinking
of my professor in gown.

9 FANNY: Return? Monsieur, have you walked... thirty miles?

- 1 D'ARBLAY: Miss Burney, you read my plan I was been writing. To find work, money that I might stay here, in England, where I prefer to live my life... for other reason than that I cannot return to France. Indeed without my professor's approval life here has no interest for me. I abandon it completely. I beg permission to speak –
- 2 FANNY: I beg you do not. My father –
- 3 D'ARBLAY: I will speak to him. Laissez moi parler, permettez –
- 4 FANNY: No no no! Not again! What are you doing sir? Off your knee! Release my hand! I forbid you absolutely to speak of intimate things, in FRENCH!
- 5 D'ARBLAY: In English then!
- 6 FANNY: Oui, non, speak of other things!
- 7 D'ARBLAY: In French, or in English? What other things? In Fanny then: *"I revere you. I esteem and admire you above all human beings. You are the friend to whom my soul is attached as to its better half. You are the most amiable, the most perfect of women. And you are dearer to me than language has the power of expressing. Be now all my own"*.
- 8 FANNY: You quote my own books at me again? No, do not laugh, I am perfectly serious. This proposal is impossible...

1 D'ARBLAY: Then, take this letter, and read my heart. Bon nuit.

(LETTER PASSING. DOOR CLOSING SOFTLY.
FANNY BREATHING. LETTER OPEN.)

2 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Well. Dat is dat. Not 'ow I would 'ave written it myself. But dese novelish convention is 'ard to overturn, and I'm a... beginner. But... what is she doing now?"**

SCENE 25. INT. BURNEY DRAWING ROOM NIGHT

FX: SLOW CLOCK OF DEATH.

(FANNY SIGHS.)

- 1 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Well? Come on my girl! What next?**
- 2 FANNY: I labour with feelings that almost burst my heart -
- 3 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Den burst!**
- 4 FANNY: Everything that I could covet for the peculiar happiness of my peculiar mind seems here united –
- 5 LOUISE-MARIE: **Den DO somting! You love ‘im. Why you not do... Ooooooh. We in a proper novelish fix. She stuck in de correct form. Cyan move. Don’t, don’t open dem. Dem na gonna ‘elp you!**

FX: LETTER OPENS. THE RISING CHORUS, THE NOISE OF SOCIETY. FUGUE.

- 6 MAN 1: A Frenchman, a radical!
- 7 WOMAN 2: A CATHOLIC!
- 8 FANNY: He deserves a younger, prettier wife.

- 1 WOMAN 2: You risk your royal pension Fanny?
- 2 MAN 2: A married woman write for pay?
- 3 SUSANNAH: You will be perpetually poor.
- 4 MAN 1: He with his nothing, Fanny! I dare not give consent!
- 5 WOMAN 1: £100 per annum? Not enough to keep a curate.
- 6 MAN 1: UTTER PENURY!
- (FANNY SIGHS.)
- 7 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Told you not to open it. What you say now, Fanny Burney?**
- 8 FANNY: I say... I say... were he secure only of bread and water, I should gladly partake of them with him.
- 9 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O, CLAPPING) Better Fanny. Don't stop now!**
- 10 FANNY: Teach him how to be poor –
- 11 LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) £100 a year is NOT poor! But go on -**
- 12 FANNY: And live no longer on the thin soup of *opinion!* Not only judge, but *act* for myself! Yet how to bring a dream into being?

1 **LOUISE-MARIE:** **The answer lies in your hand, Fanny Burney.**

FX: **WRITING, CROSSING OUT.**

2 **LOUISE-MARIE:** **That's it! Write, Fanny Burney. Write the life you want to lead.**

3 **FANNY:** I *will* write... and first to him! A great YES! I will build us a life with my writings. My little shall provide for us both –

4 **LOUISE-MARIE:** **And you must PRINT, Fanny. Print, print, print!**

I write a likkle somtin for my Madame. In de novelish style.

FX: **L-M WRITES.**

SCENE 26. EXT. JUNIPER HALL, DRIVE DAY.

FX: HORSES AND CARRIAGE WAITING.

FX: GERMAINE WALKS FROM THE HOUSE, SOBBING. L-M RUNS OUT TO THE CARRIAGE WINDOW AS IT MOVES OFF.

1 GERMAINE: Louise-Marie. Look after them, Narbonne, the others.

2 LOUISE-MARIE: We feed em nice, Madame. Dey have one good meal a day, me mek sure of it.

3 GERMAINE: Merçi Louise-Marie. Not too much wine.

4 LOUISE-MARIE: Me ‘ave a message for you. From Miss Burney.

5 GERMAINE: Miss... give it me. (READS, W/ LOUISE-MARIE & FANNY) “I assure you earnestly, Madame, of my admiration and affection, and sensibility of your worth, and chagrin at seeing no more of you. FB”. (BEAT) Merçi Louise-Marie. Tell Miss Burney that I hold nothing against her. I leave England loving her sincerely, without the slightest ill will. We cease loving ourselves if no one loves us. I would not wish such annihilation upon her.

FX: CARRIAGE DRIVES AWAY.

LOUISE-MARIE: **(V/O) Me na know about dat. No one love me, and me not dead yet. But, dat is dat. Move on?**

SCENE 27. EXT. MICKLEHAM CHURCH MORNING

FX: COUNTRY CHURCH BELLS.

- 1 **LOUISE-MARIE:** (V/O) 28th July, 1793. Frances Burney marries General Alexandre-Jean-Baptiste Piochard D'Arblay. The bride's father does not attend. So? You satisfied with my novelish love story? What? NO? Den let dem get married again!

SCENE 28. EXT. SARDINIAN CHURCH, LONDON
MORNING

FX: LONDON STREETS, CHURCH BELLS.

1 **LOUISE-MARIE:** (V/O) 30th July 1793. Frances Burney marries General ahem D'Arblay. Again! Catholic rite dis time. And I was dere – see, dat? My name. In de marriage register. Second ting me write.

FX: HARPSICHORD FADE IN, INTERRUPTED SHARPLY

2 **LOUISE-MARIE:** Oh! You wan know what happened to Germaine? Cos even if you don marry your love at de end of de novel, you mus learn *some ting? Grow somehow?* Well, Germaine had many lovers, and wrote many book – some philosophy, some in de novelish style, and she learned not to have no woman for no friend, for many years – and when she did, she mek damn sure, dat woman weren't no writer!

FX: GUILLOTINE SLASH THUMP. MOB CHEERING.

3 **LOUISE-MARIE:** Oh. Yes. Dey chop Marie-Antoinette. Well... not everyting she write mek a difference.

- 1 GERMAINE: The mystery of existence is the connection between our faults and our misfortunes.

- 2 **LOUISE-MARIE:** **And Miss Fanny? She thought long an 'ard about de novelish style. What *is* a novel? What is it job? An she decided the job of 'er *next* novel was to build 'erself an 'er 'usband a house. She got 'erself a bunch of subscriber, before she even sit down to write. De Queen. All dem people who hated Germaine. And some oder lady writers send money for her house-novel – Maria Edgeworth, Mrs Radcliffe. A young lady call Miss Austen who was beginning to scribble some likkle story 'erself. But no one o' dem lady writer ever talk to 'er about writing again. It took some fifty year for lady novel writers to sit an talk 'bout de novelish style. Some sisters dat was, up in the wild north country...**

SCENE 29. EXT. SURREY COTTAGE DAY

FX: BIRDS, A SUMMER DAY

1 FANNY: (WRITING) “*CAMILLA: Or, a Picture of Youth. The historian of human life finds less difficulty and intricacy, with its accidents and adventures, than the investigator of the human heart with its feelings and changes. The Heart of man, is a wild, an amazing assemblage of all possible contrarities, in which one thing alone is steady – the perverseness of spirit which grafts desire on what is denied.*”

2 Monsieur? Monsieur...

END