

SIDE 02: MINA and LUCY and FLORRIE

(MINA is worried about JONATHAN, who she hasn't heard in some weeks)

FLORRIE. (entering) Mrs Manners, miss, she asked me to ask you, any news, miss, o' Mr Jonathan?

MINA. No news... Florrie, you must be beginning to settle in.

FLORRIE. Yes, Miss Mina.

MINA. Are you happy here?

FLORRIE. Happy, miss?... I haven't thought to think.

MINA. I hope for you to be happy, Florrie.

FLORRIE (curtsying). Yes, miss.

MINA. Don't 'Yes, miss' me, that's not very familiar!

FLORRIE. No, miss.

MINA. Don't you think we can all work together, be – what's the cliché – one big happy family?

FLORRIE. Yes, miss.

MINA. Call me Mina! Florrie, we want but one year to a brand new century, times are changing, we'll have no more mistress and servants, I don't believe in them.

FLORRIE. No, miss. (Pause.) You will still pay my wages?

MINA. Course we will, silly goose... Florrie, Florrie, I know my sister is... a little odd sometimes. Will you help me?

FLORRIE. With Miss Lucy?

MINA. With Lucy.

FLORRIE. Yes, mi – (Uncomfortably.) Yes, Mina.

MINA. She has a shadow. (Pause.) On her lung... Such night sweats. You must have noticed how thin and frail she is and last winter she coughed up blood. Papa bought Heartwood soon as Doctor Payne made his diagnosis. Poor Papa, he did not realise how ill he was himself. Lucy always was a daddy's girl. And he'd have done anything to make her well. The sea air and so forth.

FLORRIE. Well, he was right to buy Heartwood. Whitby's air is a right famous curative. One the toffs'd bottle and patent and make a bob or two, if they could. A tonic, them sea breezes. Clear the cobwebs.

MINA. Doctor Seward, her fiancé, says we have to be very, very careful. We must keep our dear Lucy away from the chills of the evening or the dampnesses of dawn.

Enter LUCY in floods of tears.

FLORRIE. Why, Miss Lucy, whatever is the matter?

MINA. Lucy!

LUCY. Oh why oh why can't they let a girl marry three men at once, or at least as many as want her?

MINA. Three!

LUCY. Poor Edgar Holmwood asked me to marry him yesterday. He was so sweet, Mina, I broke his heart. And when he saw me cry he said he was a brute for upsetting me. And today Quincey Morris! (Sobbing.) Oh, Quincey, I am so sorry, but I am promised to Doctor Seward whom I love more than all the world.

FLORRIE. I should've thought you'd enjoy being so proposed to, Miss Lucy.

LUCY. Oh, Florrie, I am so miserable.

FLORRIE. There, there.

MINA. Oh, Lucy, don't be so silly! Don't be so shallow.

LUCY. Shallow!

MINA. Lucy, I'm sorry, I'm very tense, I'm... not quite myself... I'm... going for a walk, I'm... going past the post office. I'll stop to see if there's any mail. Florrie! Florrie, look at the mess in there. Things everywhere! Go tidy it up!

FLORRIE (beginning to go, slightly sarcastically). Yes, Mina.

MINA (exiting, calling as she does). Change the flowers in the drawing room! Straighten those chair covers in the parlour!

FLORRIE. Yes, miss!

LUCY. You mustn't mind Mina, Florrie.

FLORRIE. No, miss.

LUCY. I know that sometimes she's a little... odd.

FLORRIE. Yes, miss.

LUCY. Abrupt almost. I know she's sharp sometimes, but... she is upset. Naturally. All this time and not a scrape of the pen from Jonathan. But she means well, Florrie. We're both terribly pleased with you.

FLORRIE. Yes, miss.

LUCY. I didn't think we'd find anyone else who'd do for us.

FLORRIE. Oh, there's always someone who'll do. Your fine suitors'll find that out, Miss Lucy, never fear. You might even find yourself insulted how quick they forget you.

LUCY. I don't think so, Florrie!

FLORRIE. No, miss.

LUCY. Do change the drawing-room flowers. Those lilies are so funereal! Something pretty to cheer Mina up. (She exits.)

FLORRIE (picking up behind them). Don't believe in servants? Oh, don't believe in servants, don't you, that's very interesting. Better pinch yourself, Florrie my girl, look in the mirror, pinch yourself to see if you're real.