

Telegrams: Nutley.
Phone: Nutley 10.
Station: Forest Row.

Chelwood Vachery,
Nutley, Sussex.

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Gainsborough's Studio

Gainsborough is putting the finishing touches to Miss Foyle's portrait + has arranged to buy her harp -

Miss Foyle has taken advantage of her sittings to open a flirtation with the artist which he has tolerated in order to acquire her harp in exchange for the portrait -

She speaks reproachfully of the hopes + visions which Gainsborough has inspired by his behaviour -

Their interview is interrupted by Mrs Gainsborough, who asks Miss Foyle to leave, because the Duchess is waiting for her sitting -

Miss Foyle meekly consents + Mrs Gainsborough goes out - Gainsborough will not let Miss Foyle go until he has refuted her assertion of there having been love making between them - At the same time he is anxious to get rid of the girl + promises to meet her after the Fete at Ranelagh the same evening - Miss Foyle insists on being kissed on the mouth on leaving - As he is doing this the Duchess enters + is intensely angry about Gainsborough's apparent intrigue with Miss Foyle + immediately cuts short his apologies for delaying her - Then, remembering that she had promised to help Molly +

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wanted to secure Gainsborough's vote for Fox, she becomes more amiable in manner —

As the sitting commences she tells him that she has invited Molly + Peggy to Ranelagh —

While the Duchess speaks of them Gainsborough sees something in her expression that he wishes to convey to canvas + asks her what her thought was at that moment —

She replies that her thought had been on a poem that she had made the previous evening on hearing the nightingale at Chatsworth — He begs to hear it — + while she sings he paints with intense concentration + satisfaction —

As the song closes Gainsborough expresses grateful thanks the Duchess at once becomes flippant + talks about Miss Foyle + her portrait —

Gainsborough asserts that Miss Foyle's portrait doesn't matter in the least but that her's the Duchess' does + that she is the only sitter who fulfills an artists' ideal in every respect —

The Duchess suspects the genuineness of the compliment +

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+ tells him that the choice of different models, each to contribute a feature to an ideal figure is merely an excuse for artist's fickleness —

Gainsborough, throwing down his brush, declares she has spoilt his mood for work, + the Duchess at once attacks him about his behavior to Tolley — Gainsborough fiercely retorts, + the Duchess goes on to say ^{after Davis sang an Epigram about Fox's canvas,} that if he were not so cautious with his sitters, he would not have to waste so much valuable time on mere landscape —

Gainsborough angry at his favourite theme being held up to contempt, bursts into a Rhapsody in praise of Landscape —

The Duchess though secretly sympathizing adroitly changes the subject to her portrait which she asks to see —

Hitherto she has been perfectly satisfied with this, but now irritated by his opposition to all her requests, she begins criticising it + hardly knowing what to find fault with pitches upon the hat as a scapegoat —

Gainsborough in vain pleads that the hat is the keynote to the picture — The Duchess insists upon the hat being painted out

Gainsborough pleads

the Duchess insists —

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Gainsborough, having arranged his pigments, takes up his brush, makes a final protest, to which the Duchess reiterates, "Out with the hat" — Then the artist sets his brush to the canvas not on the hat but on the **FACE** of the portrait —

The Duchess calls out in horror + attempts to stop his action, she tells him that he has ruined the picture + will have a spoiled canvas thrown on his hands — but he retorts that he has a pretty serving maid with a face suitable to the design + will substitute it for the Duchess + sell the picture as a fancy work.

The Duchess, furious at the insult, threatens to tell her friends of his rudeness so that none of them will sit to him — He retorts that he will have to fall back on painting Landscapes + animals —

Even Her Grace cannot deprive him of sheep, dogs, cows + horses for sitters —

Then the humour of the situation stuns the Duchess, with a laugh, she reminds him that he has forgotten to mention pigs in his list of subjects, + she understands, his pig pictures are masterpieces —

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Telling him that he will find pigs very complacent sitters,
+ that whenever she sees little piggies at Chatsworth it will

Remind her of this interview -

She leaves the studio with a whimsical smile
unintentionally dropping her lace handkerchief as she goes out,

Gainsborough picks it up, makes as though to go after
her, + then, on second thoughts, puts it in his inner breast
pocket + goes out -

No sooner has he left, than James enters bringing in Miss
Foyle's harp,

In passing the easel on which the portrait is he notices
the ruined picture + drops the harp in consternation -

Miss Foyle entering at this moment + hearing the harp fall,
goes quickly to James + is just about to make a scene when she
in her turn sees the blackened face - Staring incredulously at
the picture, it gradually comes to her mind that the Duchess +
Gainsborough must have had a violent quarrel - Repressing
an impulse to laugh, she goes out of the room, ignoring James'
outstretched hand for a tip -

end of 1st act.