

AGAINST MY HEART

a stage play

by
Robert Myers

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CHARACTERS

Fanny - An English actress.

Bill - A former slave.

Frances - Fanny's daughter, also known as 'Fan.'

Charles - Fanny's father.

Pierce - Fanny's American husband.

Elizabeth - Fanny's friend, an American abolitionist.

Jack - A male slave.

Psyche - A female slave.

...I have suffered
With those that I saw suffer: a brave vessel--
Who had, no doubt, some noble creature in her--
Dashed all to pieces! O, the cry did knock
Against my very heart

- Miranda, I.2
"The Tempest"

This play is a work of historical fiction, based in part on events in the life of Fanny Kemble and on her writings, especially her *Journal of a Residence on a Georgian Plantation*. It was written with the generous support of an Individual Artist's Commission from the New York State Council on the Arts. The play received a reading and development from the "Percolating Playwriting Series" at Theatre in the Square in Marietta, Georgia. The reading was directed by Jason Mindanakis.

ACT ONE

(A FAINT RUMBLING OF THUNDER IN THE DISTANCE. Lights up on FANNY KEMBLE, who sits at a table on the stage of Covent Garden Theatre in London in September, 1862, a letter in her hand. On the table are a script, a mirror and a newspaper. As she reads the letter, lights go up on an escaped slave, BILL, a well-dressed man in his mid-twenties. He is addressing a pro-Union meeting of textile workers near Manchester, England the evening before. Seated on the stage beside him in Manchester, listening intently to his speech, is a middle-aged woman, FANNY'S friend, ELIZABETH.)

BILL

My name is Andrew Jackson. William Andrew Jackson, but I go by Bill. I'm not a learned man like Dr. Martin Delany nor a polished orator like Mr. Frederick Douglass, though I did practice in front of the looking glass before I came out this evening. Those of you who came to hear the tale of my escape will no doubt be disappointed. My story is not dramatic like Mr. Henry Brown's. I won't bring out the cargo box I escaped in and climb inside or display a diorama with pictures of whipping posts and advertisements of auctions for field hands or show you the shackles I wore when I swam through a river brimming with alligators. I will simply relate my story, which is neither hair-raising nor bone-chilling. And you, workers of Manchester, will decide if the sacrifices you are making on our behalf... living on relief, not receiving a penny in pay as the mills sit idle... are justified by our suffering. I've never picked any cotton or threshed any rice or banged any anvils in the burning sun. I was not whipped, and I wore no rags. In fact, I had a fine uniform with shiny brass buttons and leather boots and gold epaulets. I was a coachman, and not just any coachman. I worked for Mr. Jefferson Davis, the President of the Confederacy, and I was treated as well as any slave could be. He used to tell me, "You're like a member of the family, Bill," by which I suppose he meant the family dog. I was a prized ornament that held the door as he conferred with ministers and senators and other civilized gentlemen. But they forgot a dog has ears, too. I heard them describe how they punished recalcitrant... that's a word I learned from them... recalcitrant slaves and listened to their laughter when they spoke of men's faces chewed apart by bloodhounds. They talked about how to trick boys who owned no slaves at all into fighting their war for them, of burning their entire cotton crop to ruin your economy here in England,

BILL (Contd)

of sending spies to convince you this war is not about slavery so you would press your Parliament to recognize the Rebels. Their agents are spreading lies even as we speak. I beseech you, do not desert us now in our hour of greatest need, just when President Lincoln has promised us emancipation... As for the story of my own escape, I know it's an indispensable ... that's another word I learned from them... indispensable part of my performance here this evening. But, as I said, I didn't stow away on a ship or run through the swamp or swim across any rivers. No. The way I escaped is Mr. Davis let me look at the books in his library, even though it's strictly forbidden. I suppose he found my curiosity amusing and harmless. So I learned to read. And then I taught myself to write. And one day I wrote myself a pass that said, "My coachman, William Andrew Jackson, has my permission to go wherever he wishes." Signed, "Jefferson Davis." I showed it to a sentry on the road north of Richmond, and he let me go on through. And I walked until I was out of sight, and then I took off running, and I didn't stop until I reached Philadelphia. From there I boarded a boat for Liverpool, which is how I'm addressing you here tonight in Manchester. On behalf of all present and former slaves, I would like to thank you, workers of Great Britain, whose support for our great cause has never wavered!

(ELIZABETH joins in the HEARTY APPLAUSE.)

(FANNY'S daughter, FRANCES, stylishly dressed in her mid-twenties, enters Covent Garden Theatre. She is carrying a dress box and a wet umbrella.)

FRANCES

They said to tell you an hour.

FANNY

Is anyone outside?

FRANCES

There's a line down to Regent Street.

FANNY

For me?

FRANCES

Don't try to be modest.

FANNY

(Glancing in the mirror)

I can't believe people will pay to hear an aging matron read a play.

FRANCES

According to the *Times*, you're a living legend.

FANNY

Fortunate, since the British public prefers its actors alive.
(She puts the mirror on the table)

Is it raining?

FRANCES

You mean it actually stops sometimes?
(She puts down her box)

What are you reading tonight?

FANNY

"The Tempest." Your grandfather's version from '41. It was the first play you ever saw. Do you remember it?

FRANCES

I remember he had a silver cape and a stick like a pitchfork that scared me to death.

FANNY

The set was a schooner he dragged up here from the Thames. It listed so wildly during the storm scene you threw up on your father's jacket. I told him, "I think we've bred a theatre critic."

FRANCES

How long has it been since you performed here?

FANNY

I made my debut here in 1829.

FRANCES

You must've been terrified.

FANNY

I hardly had time to be terrified. One evening mother looked up from a pile of bills and suggested I learn a soliloquy. The next day I was reciting Juliet for father in the parlor, and two weeks later I was standing here on opening night. No one even bothered to teach me how to make a proper entrance.

FRANCES

The audience obviously liked you.

FANNY

They liked the story. Not "Romeo and Juliet," but Charles and Fanny Kemble, the daughter who takes the stage to save her father's theatre from ruin

FRANCES

You did save it, didn't you?

FANNY

For a time. Then he had the brilliant idea to take us to America.

FRANCES

Father told me you were mesmerizing onstage.

FANNY

I'm surprised Pierce ever discussed my acting with you.

FRANCES

He said the first time he saw you perform he broke into tears.

FANNY

I guess that makes your father the only person ever to weep at "The Taming of the Shrew." To be honest, I hate acting.

FRANCES

Hate it?

FANNY

There's no art to acting, as far as I can tell. It's nothing but clever expounding.

(Indicating the box)

What did you get?

FRANCES

Just a dress.

(She takes it from box and holds it up.)

FANNY

It's lovely.

FRANCES

They do amazing things here with our Sea Island cotton.

FANNY

(Examining the dress)

London milliners are magicians, better than the French.

FRANCES

The salesgirl said this was the last one. There's no more material, because of the embargo. I don't understand why the British insist on boycotting our cotton.

FANNY

They have a strong aversion to unpaid labor.

FRANCES

But our countries have so much in common.

FANNY

The confederacy is not a country, Fan.

FRANCES

(Indicating the newspaper)

Your Chancellor Gladstone seems to believe we are.

FANNY

Fortunately, Mr. Gladstone doesn't represent the breadth of British opinion.

FRANCES

None of the papers support this preposterous emancipation proclamation.

FANNY

Which part of it do you find preposterous?

FRANCES

If our peculiar institution is as horrible as Lincoln claims, why is he planning to free only the slaves in the southern states?

FANNY

He's trying to end a dreadful practice without destroying your entire country.

FRANCES

He's encouraging insurrections while our men are away fighting the war.

FANNY

You're not afraid of your own slaves, are you?

FRANCES

Our slaves are well treated.

FANNY

I'm aware of how they are treated.

FRANCES

We are civilized people, unlike our enemies. When I went to visit father in New York, a Yankee lieutenant stood in the cell with us the entire time.

FANNY

Pierce was arrested for espionage. He's a friend of Jefferson Davis.

FRANCES

His only crime is he loves his country. And so do I.

FANNY

I thought we agreed we wouldn't discuss this subject.

FRANCES

You brought it up.

FANNY

Apparently even here we can't escape the war.

(She folds the dress)

Tell me, Fan, did you miss me?

FRANCES

Miss you?

FANNY

All the years we spent apart, did you miss me?

FRANCES

Of course I did. At first. Then I got used to it.

FANNY

I never got used to it. I'd wake up thinking it was my leg that was missing, then I'd reach down and touch my thigh and realize it was you.

FRANCES

Father said you enjoyed humiliating him.

FANNY

I tried to comply with his strictures.

FRANCES

You make it sound like training a horse.

FANNY

He asked me to quit the stage, and I did.

FRANCES

You just said you hated acting.

FANNY

I kept my opinions to myself, which is not easy for an Englishwoman.

FRANCES

Your books are full of nasty gibes at Americans.

FANNY

I was young, and Americans are such easy targets.

FRANCES

I read the diary you wrote on Butler Island.

FANNY

It's not a diary. They're letters I sent to Elizabeth.

FRANCES

They're full of exaggerations.

FANNY

I went to a boarding school in France, Fan. I'd never seen anything like that in my life.

FRANCES

No one was mistreated on Butler Island.

FANNY

Your father made me promise I wouldn't publish them, and I didn't.

FRANCES

Nothing like that ever happened. I was with you.

FANNY

You were two years old, Fan.

(Beat)

Do you remember that trip we took together up the Rhine? Just before you went to live with your father in Philadelphia.

FRANCES

When I fell in love with Franz Liszt?

FANNY

You and me and Elizabeth and every other female on the boat.

FRANCES

But I was the only one little enough to sit in his lap.

FANNY

He had that extravagant hair and played those scherzos that made us all delirious.

FRANCES

I remember his huge fingers racing across the keyboard and the castles up on the cliffs.

FANNY

We were happy on that trip, weren't we?

FRANCES

We were.

FANNY

I'm glad we're finally friends again. You know no mother ever willingly gives up her daughter.

FRANCES

I never did stop missing you, mother.

FANNY

Maybe when I finish this tour of England we can take another trip up the Rhine.

FRANCES

I should go back to the hotel, if I can make my way through your admirers.

FANNY

Are you going to wear your new dress tonight?

FRANCES

Do you think I should?

FANNY

Only if you promise not to distract all the men in my audience.

(As FRANCES collects the box and the umbrella)

I forgot to tell you. Elizabeth is coming tonight.

FRANCES

Elizabeth Sedgwick? What's she doing in England?

FANNY

I received a letter from her yesterday. She's sponsoring a speaking tour.

FRANCES

Speaking? About what?

FANNY

To the textile workers in Manchester. There's a piece about it in the "Times."

FRANCES

What's she speaking about?

FANNY

You know, she's involved in... abolition.

FRANCES

Abolition?

FANNY

She's here about the cotton boycott.

FRANCES

She's supporting the cotton boycott?

FANNY

Yes.

FRANCES

You don't expect me to speak to her, do you?

FANNY

She adores you. She's known you since you were a little girl.

FRANCES

I'm not a little girl.

FANNY

I know you're not. But can't you put your feelings aside about the war for one night.

FRANCES

She's trying to convince the British to help destroy the South.

FANNY

She's my dearest friend in America.

FRANCES

I don't have friends who are abolitionists, mother.

(FRANCES turns and exits.)

(FANNY picks up the script and looks at it. After a few moments her father, CHARLES, enters.)

CHARLES

How are you, Fanny?

FANNY

You're here, father?

CHARLES

Of course I'm here. We're getting ready to go on, child. What's the matter?

FANNY

I'm scared.

CHARLES

Scared of what?

FANNY

Suppose I forget my lines?

CHARLES

I'll be on stage with you.

FANNY

What if they laugh?

CHARLES

They won't laugh. It's a tragedy.

FANNY

But what if they do, how should I react?

CHARLES

Stick out your tongue, lift up your skirt, laugh back.

FANNY

I'm serious, father. I looked out into the house. There are more people than I've ever seen in my life.

CHARLES

You'll be fine, Fanny.

FANNY

Don't you get nervous?

CHARLES

Every actor gets nervous. It's part of performing.

FANNY

What do you do about it?

CHARLES

Pretend they're cabbages.

FANNY

Cabbages?

CHARLES

Imagine Covent Garden really is a garden with rows of big green heads of cabbage.

(He laughs. She laughs nervously with him.)

FANNY

What should I do with this?

CHARLES

It's your train.

FANNY

Can I hold it in my hand?

CHARLES

You let it drape behind your dress.

FANNY

Suppose I trip on it?

CHARLES

Just say your lines.

FANNY

(As she prepares to "go on stage")

I look awful, don't I?

CHARLES

You look like an angel.

(FANNY walks Downstage and speaks in the character of JULIET in her debut performance at Covent Garden, 1829. CHARLES plays ROMEO.)

FANNY

Deny thy father and refuse thy name;
Or, if thou wilt not, be but sworn my love,
And I'll no longer be a Capulet.

CHARLES

(Aside)

Shall I hear more, or shall I speak at this?

FANNY

'Tis but thy name that is my enemy;
Thou art thyself, though not a Montague.
What's Montague? it is nor hand, nor foot,
Nor arm, nor face, nor any other part
Belonging to a man. O, be some other name!
What's in a name? that which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet;
So Romeo would, were he not Romeo call'd
Retain that dear perfection which he owes
Without that title. Romeo, doff thy name,
And for thy name, which is no part of thee,
Take all myself.

CHARLES

I take thee at thy word:
Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized;
Henceforth, I never will be Romeo.

FANNY

What man art thou, that, thus bescreen'd in night
So stumbles on my counsel?

CHARLES

By a name
I know not how to tell thee who I am:
My name, dear saint, is hateful to myself,
Because it is an enemy to thee;
Had I it written, I would tear the word.

FANNY

My ears have yet not drunk a hundred words
Of thy tongue's uttering, yet I know the sound:
Art thou not Romeo, and a Montague?

CHARLES

Neither, fair maid, if either thee dislike.

FANNY

How camest thou hither, tell me, and wherefore?
The orchard walls are high and hard to climb,
And the place death, considering who thou art,
If any of my kinsmen find thee here.

CHARLES

With love's light wings did I o'er-perch these walls,
For stony limits cannot hold love out:
And what love can do, that dares love attempt.
Therefore thy kinsmen are no let to me.

FANNY

Three words, dear Romeo, and good night indeed.
If that thy bent of love be honorable,
Thy purpose marriage, send me word to-morrow,
By one that I'll produce to come to thee,
Where and what time thou wilt perform the rite,
And all my fortunes at thy foot I'll lay,
And follow thee my lord throughout the world.

NURSE (Voice Off)

Madam!

FANNY

I come, anon. -- But if thou mean'st not well,
I do beseech thee--

NURSE (Voice Off)

Madam!

CHARLES

So thrive my soul, --

FANNY

A thousand times good night!

CHARLES

A thousand times worse to want thy light.

(CHARLES exits. SOUND OF APPLAUSE. FANNY
curtsies as lights and APPLAUSE fade.)

(CHARLES sits reading the newspaper.
After several moments, FANNY
approaches.)

FANNY

Well?

CHARLES

Positive. Extremely positive.

FANNY

What do they say?

CHARLES

They say you did an admirable job, for a novice.

FANNY

What else does it say?

CHARLES

The usual. Who was there, the applause level when you made your
entrance, what happened during the curtain call.

FANNY

And the performance?

CHARLES

Very positive.

FANNY

Aren't you going to read it?

CHARLES

I've found it's better not to. You end up reacting to what they
write, even if they're wrong, which they always are.

FANNY

You read it.

CHARLES

I have no choice. I'm the theatre manager. I have to answer to the investors. Besides, I'm used to the petty carping of dilletantes. They can be quite cruel.

FANNY

I thought you said it was positive.

CHARLES

It is, on the whole.

FANNY

Then let me see it.

(Takes the paper from his hand, scans it
and reads.)

"The young Mrs. Kemble's physique is agreeable and not devoid of grace." That hardly sounds like ringing praise.

CHARLES

Naturally your eyes alighted on the least adulatory phrase.

FANNY

(Continuing to read)

"She possesses an expressive countenance..."

CHARLES

You do have demonstrative features.

FANNY

...and overly large extremities."

(Looking at her hands)

Are my extremities large?

CHARLES

Perfectly proportionate. He must have been seated at an odd angle.

FANNY

(Reading)

"She never wants of self-possession, and her voice is generally distinct..."

CHARLES

Your Aunt Sarah also admired your vocal instrument.

FANNY

(Continuing to read)

...in spite of a pronounced drawl."

CHARLES

They're paid to find flaws.

FANNY

Do I have a drawl?

CHARLES

Real or imagined flaws.

FANNY

I do have a drawl.

CHARLES

Fortunately, you don't perform for the papers. What matters is the audience, and they loved you.

FANNY

You watched them while we were performing?

CHARLES

I stole glances during scenes.

FANNY

All I saw was bonnets and bald heads that looked like...

(She laughs)

...cabbages.

CHARLES

I told you.

FANNY

I had to hold my breath not to burst out laughing, father.

CHARLES

It's better than being nervous, isn't it?

FANNY

I never got down to their eyes. How did they look?

CHARLES

Mesmerized.

FANNY

They liked me?

CHARLES

They applauded on their feet for fifteen minutes, Fanny. Mendelssohn is coming tomorrow, we're invited for dinner at Lady Dacre's on Friday. Half of London wants to meet you.

FANNY

You'll be able to keep the theatre?

CHARLES

We're sold out until the end of the month. The partners are already planning a provincial tour.

FANNY

Will mother come with us?

CHARLES

You know how she hates to travel. It's better to leave her here to run Covent Garden.

FANNY

She told me my performance was uninspired.

CHARLES

We'll have to add some roles to your repertory. "Venice Preserved" perhaps. That's a perennial crowd-pleaser. And Portia. You're a bit young, but no one will mind.

FANNY

She thinks I lost whatever knack I had in rehearsals.

CHARLES

Lady Townley in "The Provoked Husband" would be a perfect part. It's a slight piece, but London loves anything with a whiff of scandal.

FANNY

She said if I gained any more weight I'd look like a bosc pear.

CHARLES

Edinburgh would be a logical venue, though the Scots are notoriously frigid. You'll draw in Dublin, too, though you'll also draw snickers playing "Romeo and Juliet" with your father.

FANNY

Do you think I lack the ability to excite emotion?

CHARLES

I think your mother would make an excellent theatre critic.

FANNY

She is right. I'm not an actor.

CHARLES

She's the one who said you could do it, Fanny. Your mother just doesn't want you to live the life she did, becoming the lap dog of London society.

FANNY

Neither do I.

CHARLES

After our run here, we'll go on tour, then. We'll do the provinces and Dublin. Maybe we'll even try America.

FANNY

America?

CHARLES

They do have theatres there, and patrons who can pay. Your Aunt Elizabeth made a big splash in Philadelphia performing for President Washington and a band of Iroquois Indians.

FANNY

We're going to perform Shakespeare in the colonies for savages?

CHARLES

They're preferable to the savages we're performing for here. Think of them as cabbages with painted faces and feathers in their hair.

FANNY

Sounds like an adventure.

CHARLES

A very profitable adventure. And every shilling we earn will be out of reach of our creditors. The Americans will adore you. I'm sure of it

FANNY

My hands really are rather large, aren't they?

CHARLES

If you don't stop reading reviews, Fanny. I'll bring your mother with us to America.

(Lights fade. CHARLES exits.)

(FANNY sits alone after a performance in the dressing room of the Chestnut Theatre in Philadelphia. She picks up a pen and begins to write in her diary.)

FANNY

(Speaking as she writes)

Tuesday, February 9th, 1832. The Chestnut Street Theatre, Philadelphia. Yesterday in New York, I rose (oh horror) at a quarter of five. And at half past ten, our commodious steamboat left the river to proceed across the State of New Jersey to the Delaware River. When we disembarked, some slippery planks half immersed in mud were the road to the coaches. These machines are shaped like boats, with three seats, the middle one having a leathern strap, which lifts away to permit the egress of occupants. Into the one facing the horses, we put ourselves, and presently two young ladies occupied the opposite one, and away walloped the four horses, and we after them, over the wickedest road that ever wheel humbled upon. Our companions seemed nothing dismayed by these wondrous performances but laughed and talked incessantly at the top of their lungs with the national nasal twang. They were pretty, but I wish they could have held their tongues for two minutes. The few cottages we passed reminded me of those in France and Ireland with the same desolate, untended looks. At four o'clock we reached Philadelphia and were conveyed to the Mansion House, the best reputed inn in town. I rose at eight this morning and took a walk with father. The city, which is regularly built with streets intersecting at right angles, is perfect silence compared to New York. The theatre is pretty, not large but well sized, and favorably constructed for the voice. When I came home, the hotel manager, Mr. Head, allowed me a pianoforte, but in bringing it into the room, the stupid slave broke one of the legs off. After dinner I practised, invented a substitute for the coques de perle in my Bianca dress, then lay down to rest before going to the theatre. Our performance went well, but father said I was ungracious in acknowledging the audience's greeting. I did curtsy three times, but certainly they can't expect the same obeisance I pay in London. Besides, they were most unapplausive, and excitement is reciprocal. As our maidservants say in London, 'One needs to know, ma'm, whether one is givin' satisfaction or no.'

(FANNY rises and exits her dressing room.)

(As FANNY departs the dressing room in Philadelphia, she is met by a young man, PIERCE, who is carrying a bouquet of flowers behind his back.)

PIERCE

Good evening.

FANNY

Good evening.

PIERCE

I can barely believe I'm speaking to you.

FANNY

You suffer from elocutionary debilities, or you don't trust your eyes?

PIERCE

I'm awestruck that you're more beautiful offstage than on.

(Hands her the flowers)

A tiny token of my profound admiration.

FANNY

You're the most emotive person in Philadelphia, Mr...

PIERCE

Butler. Pierce Butler. You found the reception here restrained?

FANNY

Somber, bordering on the funereal.

PIERCE

They were simply being attentive. No one in this city has ever seen anything like you.

FANNY

There are no young women in Philadelphia?

PIERCE

None like you.

FANNY

Englishwomen, you mean?

PIERCE

Women who carry themselves as you do. Brash, well-spoken ones with minds of their own.

FANNY

I'm afraid you're confusing me with the parts I play.

PIERCE

Isn't that the point of theater, Miss Kemble? Don't tell me "The Taming of the Shrew" was all an act.

FANNY

It's never entirely an act.

PIERCE

Then there's some of Kate in you?

FANNY

But very little artistry. I simply remember I have the misfortune of being born a member of the weaker sex, and I play myself.

PIERCE

I could've sworn you were only playing at being weaker.

FANNY

The fact that Kate and the audience know she's lying to Petrucchio doesn't mean she has any power.

PIERCE

It was an extraordinary performance. The more intransigent you became the more ravishing I found you.

FANNY

I see you've regained your powers of articulation, Mr. Butler. Are you from Philadelphia?

PIERCE

My father is a surgeon here.

FANNY

And you?

PIERCE

I'm an investor. I've heard you're fond of horses.

FANNY

I find them brash and beautiful, with minds of their owns. And ravishing even if they're not intransigent.

PIERCE

I have a friend who owns a stable near Germantown.

FANNY

Are you inviting me to go riding?

PIERCE

I wouldn't want to appear forward.

FANNY

It's a trifle tardy to be worried about that.

PIERCE

Forgive me, I don't know the proper etiquette when asking...

FANNY

... for a rendezvous with an actress? You shouldn't believe all the tales you hear about the theatre.

PIERCE

I'm sure some are bald-faced lies.

FANNY

I see you share my high opinion of performers.

PIERCE

Would you do me the honor of accompanying me on a ride tomorrow, Miss Kemble?

FANNY

You'll have to speak to my father. He manages my career, equestrian and otherwise.

PIERCE

If you don't mind my asking, how did you end up in acting?

FANNY

You don't end up in it. You're born into the theatre, like the Roman Church, and spend your life trying to escape.

PIERCE

You make it sound like a form of bondage.

FANNY

Think of it as indentured servitude. You can't quit until you've paid for the theatre that burned down ten years ago.

PIERCE

How odd that you can enchant others without taking any pleasure yourself.

FANNY

It's a paradox not uncommon to various situations.

PIERCE

Such as...?

FANNY

Saddlehorses... and wives. Although acting, unlike the latter, is not devoid of enjoyment.

PIERCE

Do you have a favorite role?

FANNY

I adore Portia. For three hours I get to play a brilliant woman who submits to a man everyone knows is her inferior.

PIERCE

I can't wait to see it.

FANNY

Unfortunately, we won't be doing it until next week in Baltimore.

PIERCE

I have to be in Baltimore on business.

(Enter CHARLES.)

FANNY

Father, this is Mr. Butler. My father Charles. Mr. Butler is an investor.

PIERCE

I enjoyed tonight's performance, sir.

FANNY

He liked it so much he's coming to see us in "The Merchant of Venice" in Baltimore.

PIERCE

Your daughter is an extraordinary artist.

(Handing CHARLES a letter)

I'm a friend of Henry Berkley's...

FANNY

You've been holding out on me. Henry Berkeley is the most unprincipled, and agreeable, man in London.

PIERCE

I was wondering if...

FANNY

...he might take me riding tomorrow... as a favor to Henry.

CHARLES

(Looking at the letter)

I have no objection...

FANNY

I knew you wouldn't, father.

PIERCE

Philadelphia is also quite charmed with you, sir.

CHARLES

I don't delude myself that anyone comes to the theatre to see me, Mr. Butler.

FANNY

Father's not only congenial, he's modest.

PIERCE

May I call at your hotel in the morning?

FANNY

Why don't you come at eleven.

(PIERCE bows, turns and leaves.)

CHARLES

(Eyeing the flowers)

Nice looking young man.

FANNY

And very well-mannered for an American.

CHARLES

According to Henry, he's quite well-to-do. Any idea what he invests in?

FANNY

Not a clue. What do men usually invest in, father?