

STEVENS

Ah, Miss Kenton.

MISS KENTON

I'm sorry. I was delayed.

STEVENS

Please sit down. So . . . I've ordered some fresh tea.

MISS KENTON

Oh, lovely.

STEVENS

Would you like some cake?

MISS KENTON

No, thank you.

STEVENS

You sure?

MISS KENTON

Oh yes. Alright then, since it's a special occasion.

STEVENS

Good. Well it has been a long time then.

MISS KENTON

Yes indeed.

STEVENS

You haven't changed at all.

MISS KENTON

Well . . .

STEVENS

A little, perhaps. We've all changed, I think.

MISS KENTON

I'd have known you anywhere, Mr. Stevens.

STEVENS

Oh. Well. Yes. How long has it been now? It must be twenty years.

MISS KENTON

Yes. Just over, I think.

STEVENS

The tea should be along.

MISS KENTON

We read about the suit for libel. It was a shame.

STEVENS

Yes.

MISS KENTON

Calling His Lordship a traitor. Those papers will print anything. They should have lost the case.

STEVENS

Yes. When His Lordship went to court, he sincerely expected he would get justice. And instead, the newspaper increased its circulation and His Lordship's good name was destroyed forever. And afterwards, in his last years, well . . . Quite honestly, Miss Kenton, his heart was broken. I would take him tea in the library and he be sitting there and sometimes he wouldn't even see me, he seemed so deep in his own thoughts. And his . . . He be talking to himself, his lips moving as though he was arguing with someone. And there was no one of course. No one came to see him anymore, you see.

MISS KENTON

What about his godson, young Mr. Cardinal?

STEVENS

Oh, Mr. Cardinal was killed in the war.

MISS KENTON

I'm very sorry.

STEVENS

Yes. I know you remember Darlington Hall in its best days, and that's how His Lordship deserves to be remembered, of course, but . . . And perhaps the good days are starting again now that Mr. Lewis has taken up residence and Mrs. Lewis is expected to arrive from America shortly.

MISS KENTON

They're very fortunate to have you there to run the house for them.

STEVENS

Well, we still have problems, Miss Kenton, - - I'm sorry Mrs. Benn. Ah, do forgive me. But we still have staff problems.

MISS KENTON

Yes. Yes, you mentioned it in your letter.

STEVENS

You see -

MISS KENTON

And, I'll tell you frankly, Mr. Stevens, I had been thinking of going back in service.

STEVENS

Good.

MISS KENTON

But now the situation has changed for me, because if I take up any work, it will have to be here in the west country, because, you see, Catherine, our daughter, is expecting a baby. And, so, of course I would like to be near her.

STEVENS

Of course.

MISS KENTON

And then, to be near our grandchild as he grows up.

STEVENS

Naturally.

MISS KENTON

Or her, if it's a little girl.

STEVENS

Yes.

MISS KENTON

When I first left Darlington Hall all those years ago, I never realized I was really, truly leaving. I believe I thought of as simply another ruse, Mr. Stevens, to annoy you. It was a shock to come out here and find myself actually married. For a long time, I was very unhappy. But then Catherine was born, the years went by and one day I realized I loved my husband. You see, there is no one, Mr. Stevens, no one in the world who needs me as much as he does. But still there are times . . . when I think what a terrible mistake I've made with my life.

STEVENS

Yes. Well I'm sure we all have these thoughts, from time to time.

MISS KENTON

Yes.