

THE RIDING OFFICER

Episode 1, "Clarissa"

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SCENE 1. INT. RIDING OFFICER PREMISES DAY 1 EVENING

WELCOME TO WHAT IS ABOUT TO BECOME **EDGAR RICE PAPER'S** ABODE – A WOOD-PANELLED OLD, UNKEMPT HOUSE WITH STAIRS TO THE BACK AND A MAIN ENTRANCE BESIDE THE STAIRS, A KITCHEN TOWARDS THE BACK. MAIN ACTION TAKES PLACE AROUND THE FIRE AND THE DRIFTWOOD DESK, WHERE THERE ARE CHAIRS. A SAFE OR LOCKABLE CABINET EXISTS BEHIND THE DESK.

WE HEAR MURMURS VOICES OFF SCREEN AS THE DOOR OPENS, ILLUMINATING THE DESK WITH GAS LIGHT FROM OUTSIDE AS THE NEWCOMERS ENTER...

FIRST IS **ERIC THA'KNOWS** (38), SHORT, SLIGHTLY SCRUFFY AND GENERALLY DIM-BUT-CAPABLE LONGTERM FRIEND AND FORMER BATMAN TO FORMER ARMY CAPTAIN **EDGAR RICE PAPER** (40), UNKEMPT BUT WITH A MILITARY PRESENCE.

EDGAR

...so this is it, eh?

ERIC

Aye sir, this is it. Downstairs the office and dining area, upstairs the bedroom and ablutions hole.

ERIC LIGHTS LAMPS PLACED AROUND ROOM

EDGAR

Is it well drained?

ERIC

Well we're quite close to the sea here, so it either gets caught by the tide or washed down with the rest of the village's... business.

EDGAR

Ironic, then, that we're here to make sure their business is known to us, wouldn't you say?

PLACING HIS BAGS ON THE DESK AND LOOKING AROUND, WE FINALLY GET A LOOK AT CAPTAIN EDGAR RICE PAPER, FORMER SOLDIER IN THE NAPOLEONIC WARS AND SON OF THIS TOWN. HE'S A TALL MAN, WELL BUILT WITH THE STATURE OF SOMEONE WHO HAS HAD DISCIPLINE DRUMMED INTO HIM – IT DIDN'T COME FROM BIRTH.

So, I'm home, back in Robin Hood's Bay. What is it, 15 years?

Never thought I'd ever come back.

Is Jacob Snowy still around?

ERIC

Snowy?? No, he joined up not long after us, but ducked out early, sir.

EDGAR

Really? That's a shame, I'd love to have had a drink with him before we got started.

What happened to him?

ERIC

Well, I don't think anyone is sure – tea, sir? – but the story goes that he was lost in the Yorkshire Triangle, and never seen again.

ERIC PREPARES A BREW FOR EDGAR. HIS ABILITY IN THIS AREA IS INCOMPARABLY BAD.

EDGAR

Sorry: "Yorkshire Triangle"...?

ERIC

Oh, of course, you won't know about it. Remember Tipper
Buckton?

EDGAR

The farmer?

ERIC

Aye, him. Well, he became something of a local celebrity for a
time a few years ago, it seems. While we were dragging injured
comrades through Spain, he was rubbing shoulders with the
great and good – at Lord Carshalton's invitation, naturally – at
various events in London and the Home Counties.

EDGAR

Are you quite sure about this? It seems...

ERIC

Unlikely, sir? That's just what I said. Apparently Buckton had
discovered what Sir Isaac Newton later described as a "delta of
paranormal activity" here in Yorkshire, North Riding way.

EDGAR

So what has this got to do with Jacob Snowy?

ERIC

Well, that's where he's said to be found.

EDGAR

You mean he wasn't killed in action?

ERIC

No sir! They say he went AWOL from barracks. No one has seen him since.

EDGAR

You mentioned Isaac Newton...?

TAKES CUP OF TEA FROM **ERIC**. TASTES IT, GINGERLY, BEFORE DRIBBLING IT BACK INTO HIS CUP.

ERIC

Well, he sent a colleague, some scientific chap, to Buckton's land to investigate... never seen again. Both of them missing in the Yorkshire Triangle.

They might still be there, wandering around together, Jacob Snowy and that scientist, trying to find their way out of a field between Crabladder, Banjostring and Fannyride.

EDGAR

Unlikely, surely? After all, they're pretty small villages. In fact, there's only one house in Fannyride, the size of a box. You'd have to be pretty small to get lost in there.

I don't know about Crabladder, as it always seemed quite... unkempt. But I've been to Banjostring too. Cut myself quite badly there, as I recall, gushed with blood. Felt quite limp afterwards, actually.

And Buckton owns the land?

ERIC

Yes, sir.

EDGAR

You don't suppose – as farmers are prone to do – that he just shot them both for trespassing, do you?

ERIC

And then enjoyed free drinks and hospitality in London?

Wouldn't that be a little unfair?

EDGAR

Life's like that, Eric. Take me, for instance. There I was, successfully dealing with piracy and slavery on the south coast, endearing myself to the bosom of various Cornish beauties when I find I've been drafted as Carshalton's new riding officer!

EDGAR NOTICES **ERIC** CHECKING IF HE'S DRANK HIS TEA. TRIES ANOTHER SIP.

ERIC

He's a shrewd man, sir. After what happened to your predecessor, and his complete failure to collect more than a pound in tax, Carshalton had to act decisively.

EDGAR

Perhaps. But let this be a lesson to you, Eric Tha'knows: don't be too successful. You did the right thing, coming back here when we were demobbed. I had to go and make a name for myself, didn't I?

ERIC

Well, you were a hero sir. Nelson wrote of you in dispatches!

EDGAR

Hero? I only did what I had to, what anyone else would have done.

THROWS TEA OVER SHOULDER.

That decisive action you mention, that's just Carshalton making himself look good – at my expense. He might seem a decent sort, but we know him from years back, Eric, remember that.

STANDS, BEGINS UNPACKING A FEW ITEMS

ERIC

Aye sir. And Clarissa, too.

EDGAR FREEZES

EDGAR

Clarissa? She's here?

ERIC

Living back up at the manor. You'll be able to see her in the morning, you've an appointment with his lordship.

I'd better see about some horses.

ERIC LEAVES.

EDGAR

SITS DOWN, TINKERING WITH HIS HAT/QUILL/SOMETHING. OH, AND HE BREAKS INTO LOCAL DIALECT. THE MASK SLIPS.

Well, well, well. Clarissa Constance Carshalton. Perhaps something good will come of this after all...

CUT TO:

SCENE 2 EXT. CARSHALTON MANOR DAY 2, MORNING

ARRIVING AT CARSHALTON MANOR, **EDGAR** SECURES HIS MOUNT AND APPROACHES THE DOOR. HE DOESN'T HAVE TIME TO KNOCK WHEN IT IS OPENED. ALTHOUGH TALL HIMSELF, NOTHING PREPARES **EDGAR** FOR THE IMMENSE PRESENCE OF **HODGEKIN** (60), TRUSTED BUTLER TO THE CARSHALTONS.

EDGAR

Hello, I'm here to see Lord Carshalton.

He lives here.

IT IS AT THIS POINT THAT WE LEARN THAT **HODGEKIN** DOESN'T SPEAK TO GUESTS. HE PREFERS TO ISSUE WITHERING GLANCES.

My name is Edgar Rice Paper. His lordship has appointed me the new Riding Officer for East Riding.

(PAUSE)

I have an appointment.

THE DOOR OPENS FURTHER AS **HODGEKIN** INVITES THE GUEST INSIDE.

CUT TO:

SCENE 3 INT. CARSHALTON MANOR ANTEROOM DAY 2 MORNING

**EDGAR SHOWN THROUGH TO LORD
CARSHALTON'S STUDY.**

CUT TO:

SCENE 4 INT. CARSHALTON MANOR OFFICE DAY 2 MORNING

WHERE HE FINDS **CLARISSA CONSTANCE CARSHALTON (38)**, SAT BEHIND HER FATHER'S DESK IN HIS WELL-DECORATED OFFICE/STUDY. AN ATTRACTIVE WOMAN, INTELLIGENT AND ELEGANT.

CLARISSA

Three years ago our village celebrated your success in the war with France. I've just heard that they're booking you a trip back there by boat at the weekend. For some reason you're not very popular any more...

EDGAR

VISIBLY STUNNED, **EDGAR** ATTEMPTS TO COMPOSE HIMSELF. NEVER HAD HE EXPECTED TO SEE CLARISSA APPARENTLY SITTING IN FOR HER FATHER.

I can't think why. Perhaps it's this new cologne?

CLARISSA

Perhaps. Unlikely though. Please...

CLARISSA GESTURES TO **EDGAR** TO TAKE A SEAT BEFORE HER AT THE DESK.

Your father was a renowned smuggler, we both know that. He almost single-handedly built the local economy – an economy that now threatens the strength of London.

EDGAR

What? You're telling me this one-pub seaside village has an economy to rival London? It's really that strong now?

CLARISSA

Amazing, isn't it? Yes, while you've been tackling pirates in Cornwall, Robin Hood's Bay has become the second largest economy in the country. The women wear imported silks and furs, the men drink some of the finest beers from France and Prussia, simply because no one has managed to deal with the smuggling or collect duty on anything they make selling their ill-gotten goods.

Sadly your predecessors – James Victor Smith, and more recently Fruity Stangoe – were too old, slow, stupid, weak, leechy, cross-dressing, yellow-bellied, pickled, frigid, ginger, unimportant, and impotent or all of the above to manage to collect any realistic quantities of duty. That's why I suggested you to Daddy.

EDGAR

You suggested me? Well, I'm honoured that my name came to mind.

CLARISSA

Oh, I-we've been following your career with interest, Edgar.

THEY LOCK EYES FOR A MOMENT, BEFORE **CLARISSA** BREAKS AWAY. IN A ROMANTIC MOVIE, THIS WOULD BE A MOMENT OF INTENSITY, PERHAPS WITH SOME COQUETTISH EYELASH FLAPPING.

AS WE'RE IN YORKSHIRE, IT SHOULD JUST
SMOULDER A LITTLE INSTEAD, LEST LORD
CASRHSALTON WALK IN AND LABEL RICE PAPER
A "NANCY".

ON THE DESK IS AN ENVELOPE, WHICH
CLARISSA PASSES TO **EDGAR**.

Your orders are enclosed. Daddy also asked me to make sure
you made time to visit Mr Forsythe in Whitby as soon as
possible to check the details of your appointment as the new
riding officer before the next edition of the gazette goes to
print.

Unfortunately, Daddy would have arranged it but he had to go
to London early this morning. We're expecting him back in time
for tomorrow night.

EDGAR

What happens tomorrow night?

CLARISSA

Why Edgar, how could you have forgotten? It's my birthday
party.

You've received the invitation, haven't you?

CLOSEUP ON AN UNCOMFORTABLE-YET-
AFFIRMATIVE **EDGAR** AND CUT BACK TO...

SCENE 5 INT. RIDING OFFICER PREMISES DAY 3 AFTERNOON

EDGAR DANCES/PRANCES AROUND THE ROOM, APPARENTLY SERENADING A SMALL BOX IN HIS HAND.

FX: WE HEAR THE SOUND OF HOOVES ECHOING OUTSIDE, PRE-EMPTING THE DOOR OPENING)

EDGAR

Oh Clarissa, Clarissa, Clarissa! I'll sweep you off your feet you enchanting woman!

HE GETS ON ONE KNEE AND OFFERS THE BOX TO THIN AIR

EDGAR

Happy birthday, Clarissa!

ERIC ENTERS ON CUE

ERIC

No, sir. It's me, Eric. Frankly I'm baffled you thought otherwise.

I'm not even a blonde, Edgar!

LIKE A FLASH, **EDGAR** IS SAT BACK IN HIS CHAIR, FEET UP ON THE DESK; HE HOLDS A DOCUMENT, PRETENDING TO READ IT

EDGAR

Hmm? Oh, it's you. Did you get it?

ERIC

I certainly did – freshly printed in Whitby this morning sir!

ERIC WIELDS A NEWSPAPER

EDGAR

Pass it here, let me see! Well look at that, they splashed out on an etching of me!

ERIC

That's Lord Carshalton, Edgar.

EDGAR

Eh?

ERIC

The picture, it's of Lord Carshalton. You don't get one until you're sacked or killed. It's an expensive do, making an etching. Not worth the money when the subjects life expectancy has suddenly dropped.

EDGAR

Oh. Well that won't be any time soon, I can assure you.

Here, read it out to me.

EDGAR PASSES THE PAPER BACK TO ERIC

ERIC

Alright then. "Local jaws dropped this week when Edgar Rice Paper, of the Robin Hood's Bay parish, was appointed Chief Riding Officer for the Whitby to Scarborough coast.

Despite his decorated military career, Rice Paper's appointment has been described in London as 'insane' given his ties to

notorious local businessman, the late Mulberry Rice Paper. Lord Carshalton of Whitby has meanwhile given assurances that Rice Paper will be a success in the control of smuggling operations on the North Riding coast.”

EDGAR

Well, not too bad. I didn't expect a newspaper report, to be honest.

ERIC

Not such a positive one, anyway. Especially not after you assaulted that Forsythe chap! What were you thinking?

EDGAR

You know fine well that beskirted fellow impugned my good character. And I didn't assault him, I was doing my job.

ERIC

Well at least we know now that bringing a kilt into England isn't *strictly* smuggling.

At least, not when it's worn.

EDGAR

So, what about the other matter - did you find him?

ERIC

I certainly did.

EDGAR

Yes, I thought I could hear the clop-clop of hooves; although I did wonder if it was Mrs Dry next door exercising her right to wear clogs.

ERIC

She never does that on a Friday. Well, only when they're freshly smuggl – um, ahhh, imported...

No, I found your horse – however unfortunately I was unable to reach him before he bolted.

EDGAR

What?

ERIC

As a result, I was forced – as your deputy – to seize an alternative in the name of the crown, and set off in pursuit.

EDGAR

(Sitting up in chair)

Really? I'm impressed, you're slipping right back into your role as my batman! So he's outside?

ERIC

...while in pursuit, I subsequently discovered that when trying to calm and retrieve a thoroughbred stallion given to your senior officer for catching smugglers and tax avoiders as a birthday

present, you probably shouldn't try and catch him on the back of a mule.

EDGAR

ON HIS FEET, PACING, ANXIOUS

WHAT?! You chased after my horse – the one YOU lost – on a donkey?

Why exactly do you think he's called "Lightning"?

ERIC

I assumed he liked the rain.

EDGAR

Damn it Eric! My second day on the job, you've lost my horse and the village hates us! Not only that but you've confused the fact that I got this job on my birthday – the horse comes with the job!

ERIC

I did think that it was rather strange that Lord Carshalton should give the son of a smuggler a horse. Then again I thought it strange that the son of a smuggler as notorious as your dad should be given a job as a riding officer at all.

EDGAR

Eric, it's not my birthday.

ERIC

Really sir? It's just there was a letter here for you last night when we arrived.

EDGAR

You didn't read it properly, did you? It wasn't birthday greetings, it was an invitation, to Miss Carshalton's party tonight.

ERIC

I never could read a woman's handwriting, sir.

EDGAR

Well never mind. We've received a second envelope since, one that gives us the chance to strike early at the local smuggling economy and make a real difference.

Fetch me a drink and fill my finest pipe, Eric. I've plans to make!

ERIC

Really, sir?

EDGAR

WAVES AN OFFICIAL-LOOKING SHEET OF PAPER

Absolutely! I've received notice here of an impending delivery of a selection of highly sought after, illicit French lithographs, featuring the nude forms of a string of notorious Parisienne harlots, from Suzanne du Suc to Analise Anale.

ERIC

Bloody hell!

EDGAR

Indeed - it's filthy stuff, and according to these instructions direct from London, we're to intercept this evening!

EXT FX: KNOCK AT DOOR

MRS DRY

(O.O.V.) Coo-eeee!

EDGAR

Ah. The clogless Mrs Dry is outside, Eric. Let her in, there's a good chap.

ERIC DOES, WITH THE APLOMB OF SOMEONE WHO HAS OPENED A DOOR OR TWO IN HIS TIME. MRS DRY (50) ENTERS. SHE'S THEIR NEIGHBOUR, A FISHWIFE, REGULAR SUPPLIER OF TEA AND BUTTIES AND, UNKNOWN TO EDGAR, CO-ORDINATOR OF MANY SMUGGLING OPERATIONS.

MRS DRY

Oh hello there young Mr Rice Paper. How are things today?

Caught any smugglers?

ERIC SMIRKS. EDGAR NOTICES THIS.

EDGAR

Sadly, Mrs Dry, we've barely managed to catch a horse, isn't that right Eric?

ERIC

Yes, sir.

I'll stick some tea on, sir.

EDGAR

So Mrs Dry, to what do I owe this most rare of pleasures? We've been here a day and already you've visited twelve times...

MRS DRY

Well, I heard a rumour that there's bit of an operation on tonight...

EDGAR

A rumour? Really? I find that hard to believe. Even Eric doesn't know yet, and the orders came from Lord Carshalton himself.

MRS DRY

Something to do with France, was it?

**EDGAR SAYS NOTHING, BUT EXCHANGES
GLANCES WITH ERIC**

MRS DRY

So it's true then! Your first test as riding officer!

EDGAR

Yes, we'll manage it though, Mrs Dry, don't you worry. So, was that all?

MRS DRY

Well, my cousin Henry has been making sausages, and I had a few left over so I thought you might like to try them?

EDGAR

Really? That's smashing!

ERIC RETURNS FROM PREPARING THE TEAS

MRS DRY

Yes, they're fresh off the grill – a little spicy, I'm told, but certainly not the wörsst sausages you'll taste this side of Berlin – I mean Birmingham!

MRS DRY OFFERS THE SAUSAGES. EDGAR AND ERIC TAKE ONE EACH.

ERIC

Delicious!

EDGAR

Do you know, I've never tasted a sausage like this? What did you say it was called?

MRS DRY

Bratw- um Bradford Best. Our Heiny, lives in Bradford, you see.

EDGAR

"Heiny"?

Bit of a strange name, isn't it? Sounds almost... German?

MRS DRY

Um...It's short for "hindquarters". He's a butcher, see, forever playing with pigs trotters as a boy, you know. We all knew he'd end up as a butcher, what with his dad and his brothers.

EDGAR

Oh, so a family of butchers?

MRS DRY

You might say that, yes.

EDGAR

Well, pass on our compliments, Mrs Dry, your cousin makes possibly the finest sausages I've ever tasted!

ERIC STEPS UP WITH THE TEAS.

Well I hope you'll join us for a cup of tea. It's from the batch that you dropped off earlier this week. Very relaxing, I think you'll agree.

MRS DRY

Oh yes, that's one of my favourites!

MRS DRY TAKES CUP

So, Clarissa Carshalton, eh, Mr Rice Paper? You two go back don't you? Have you got her a birthday gift?

EDGAR

Ah, just a small something I made myself.

MRS DRY

Well, you should be well in there, a fit, strapping military man like yourself. Far more suitable riding officer material than old Fruity Stangoe.

ERIC

Oh dear.

EDGAR

What's that?

ERIC

Oh, I always get sad when I hear about what happened to old Fruity. Always brings a tear to my eyes.

EDGAR

Given that Fruity Stangoe was hurled off a cliff by a bucking mule after stopping for a piss, I suspect the tears in his eyes were a little more genuine.

EDGAR NOTICES THE PAPERWORK ON HIS DESK

Anyway, Mrs Dry – I'm afraid I do have some work to be pressing on with before tonight's operation, so if you wouldn't mind, you will have to excuse me.

EDGAR SITS. MRS DRY REMAINS.

EDGAR

So if you wouldn't mind...?

MRS DRY

Don't mind me, love

EDGAR

This is of course highly secretive work Eric and I are undertaking...

MRS DRY

Oh you know me, Edgar, I'll be the soul of discretion.

EDGAR

I do know you, Mrs Dry, and I would prefer if it you made your way.

MRS DRY

Well I'm still drinking my tea, dear.

EDGAR IS NOW QUITE ANGRY, AND STANDS

EDGAR

Just take the bloody cup and piss off!!

MRS DRY

Well there's no need to be so rude, you only had to ask.

MRS DRY FLOUNCES OUT INDIGNANTLY

EDGAR

That woman!

TAKING A SEAT, **EDGAR** DRAWS UP A BRIEF LIST.

Right. Eric, we've got three hours to formulate a plan to position ourselves both on the beach for the receipt of the aforementioned illicit French lithographs, make it to Clarissa's birthday and retrieve Lightning...

TAKING THE INITIATIVE, **ERIC** PULLS UP A CHAIR,
OPENS MAP

ERIC

Right then. I thought if we could cover these two key observation points...

EDGAR

So off you go and retrieve him!

ERIC

Right you are sir...

ERIC LEAVES, SHEEPISHLY

EDGAR

EDGAR SPEAKS TO HIMSELF. HE'S LIKE THAT.
AND WHEN HE'S ALONE, THE LOCAL ACCENT
PENETRATES!

This evening will go down as my first success against the smugglers – plus I get to spend time with the delightful Clarissa Carshalton. What could go wrong?

SCENE 6 INT. RIDING OFFICER PREMISES DAY 2 NIGHT/DAY 3 VERY

EARLY MORNING

THE DOOR SWINGS OPEN; **EDGAR** STUMBLES IN, CLUTCHING A BOTTLE OF WHISKEY.

EDGAR

Clarissa... no, don't go... load of rubbish... Bloody smugglers, probably in the Yorkshire Triangle...

EDGAR IS SLUMPED AT HIS DESK, STILL MUMBLING, AS **ERIC** ENTERS THROUGH THE INTERNAL DOOR

ERIC

Good evening, sir?

EDGAR

Sausages!

ERIC

Sir? Are you alright? Should I get you a glass of...

ERIC NOTICES THE BOTTLE. LUCKILY HE IS RELIABLY EQUIPPED WITH SOME BASIC SKILLS, OF WHICH OBSERVATION IS ONE.

... oh.

TEA MAKING IS NOT.

Cup of tea, sir?

EDGAR

Why not? I might as well. It might even help me forget.

ERIC

Knowing Mrs Dry it probably will...

So do you want to tell me about it sir?

EDGAR

Oh Eric, it was a disaster, but it started so well! I intercepted the landing at the beach, saw off three masked smugglers – one of which seemed quite familiar, I must add – and even ventured into the water to retrieve the lithographs.

ERIC

Sounds like a successful evening, to be honest.

EDGAR

And up to that point, it was. In fact I'd venture to claim success up to and including the point where I failed to notice that the box of lithographs was by astronomical coincidence decorated with exactly the same design as I'd been working on for Clarissa's birthday present.

ERIC

No!

EDGAR

Yes... and exactly the same size.

CUT TO:

SCENE 7 INT. CARSHALTON MANOR FOYER, DAY 2, NIGHT

(FLASHBACK)

EDGAR ENTERS INTO A PARTY FILLED-ROOM, FULL OF GUESTS IN THEIR BEST GOWNS. HE LOOKS AROUND, AND SEES CLARISSA CONSTANCE CARSHALTON, ACCEPTING GIFTS FROM VARIOUS FRIENDS AND PERHAPS BUDDING SUITORS.

HANDING HODGEKIN HIS COAT (FOLLOWED BY CONTEMPTUOUS SNEER FROM THE SILENT BUTLER) EDGAR STEPS FORWARD WITH A WOODEN BOX, THE CLOSEUP OF WHICH REVEALS A SERIES OF CONCENTRIC HEARTS.

EXCHANGING SMILES, EDGAR APPROACHES HIS LOVE, KISSES HER HAND, AND KNEELS AS HE PROFFERS THE GIFT.

WE SEE HER SMILE AS SHE OPENS THE BOX, THEN CUT BACK TO EDGAR AS HIS FACE FALLS AND THE PARTY IS FILLED WITH SCREAMS, ENDLESS, HYSTERICAL SCREAMS...

CUT TO:

**SCENE 8 INT. RIDING OFFICER PREMISES DAY 2 NIGHT/DAY 3 VERY
EARLY MORNING**

EDGAR

The resulting embarrassment and fracas can only be described as “life threatening” – suffice to say any designs I might have had on Clarissa have been severely discouraged.

FX EXT: KNOCK AT THE DOOR

Who on earth could that be at this time?

ERIC GOES TO DOOR, ANSWERS – IT IS LORD CARSHALTON (60), LORD CARSHALTON – LOCAL MP, LANDOWNER, MAGISTRATE AND VERY OFTEN THE RECEIVER OF SMUGGLED GOODS, DESPITE BEING IN CHARGE OF ALSO SENTENCING SMUGGLERS AND ACTING AS EDGAR’S SUPERIOR. HE HAS A SOMEWHAT BOOMING VOICE AND GREAT PRESENCE.

ERIC

My lord!

CARSHALTON

Is Rice Paper here?

EDGAR HEARS THE VOICE, AND ATTEMPTS TO HIDE

ERIC

Indeed, my lord, come on in.

LORD CARSHALTON

THE PEER LOOKS AROUND, PERPLEXED.

Rice Paper?

EDGAR

EDGAR STUMBLES TO HIS FEET

LORD CARSHALTON! Shhh! Sorry, Lord Carshalton. Apologies, my lord, I'm a little drunk. Couldn't quite bring myself to accept my earlier mistake.

(PAUSE)

Got pissed instead.

CARSHALTON

Never mind, never mind. I'm sure we'll be able to sort something out, eh?

EDGAR

"Eh"? But...

CARSHALTON

Oh don't you worry about Clarissa, such a needlessly sensitive thing most the time, but then aren't all women, heh heh heh?

CARSHALTON HAS A SMUG, CONDESCENDING LAUGH

No, as I didn't get the chance to tell you before you understandably left so quickly, I thought I should put your mind at rest.

EDGAR

At rest, sir?

CARSHALTON

Indeed, Rice Paper! You've performed sterling work in intercepting this shipment, and your expedience in shipping material as illicit as this direct to the local magistrate – i.e. me – will be relayed to our masters in London!

EDGAR

So... everything is alright?

CARSHALTON

Alright? Of course! I knew you were the man for the job!

Now you must both excuse me, it is very late and I have yet another trip to London in the morning.

CARSHALTON LEAVES.

EDGAR IS SHOCKED AND AWED, JAW DROPPED

EDGAR

Did I just dream that?

ERIC

Perhaps we both did, sir.

EDGAR

His face was etched with demonic rage just an hour ago... and then he comes and tells me everything is alright!

**EDGAR RETURNS TO USUAL SEAT/DESK, AND
POURS ANOTHER DRINK**

EDGAR

Well, that certainly sobered me up.

Good to know the lithographs are safely put away...

ERIC

...in Lord Carshalton's study, presumably...

EDGAR

Eric, you don't seriously believe that Lord Carshalton has taken the smuggled goods as his own possessions do you? You heard him yourself; he's making a report to London!

ERIC

Just a thought - after all, he did seem very grateful just now... and in a very good mood too. I wouldn't be surprised to learn that he's off home to enjoy those lithographs, what with Lady Carshalton being less than comely...

EDGAR

Well, you have a point there. Although I think you complement her unnecessarily. Fearsome, I would say.

Still, she gave birth to a handsome girl in Clarissa.

ERIC

True... but of course, you know how they say you should look at a girl's mother to see how she will look when she's older...?

EDGAR

(PAUSE OF REALISATION) Yes...

EDGAR OPENS HIS DRAWER

As we're new on the job, I thought it might be beneficial to us
both if I kept one of those lithographs.

Purely for research, you understand...

ERIC AND EDGAR SCRAMBLE TO LOOK

ERIC

Blimey! What do they call her?

EDGAR

Hmm, I can't quite make it out... I think the inscription says

"Philippa Fellatiôn"...?

END OF EPISODE