

BOTTOM OF THE STAIRS

by

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EXT. THE CONNER'S HOUSE - EVENING

MR.CHESTERFIELD stands on the front porch. The door swings open and MRS. CONNORS warmly smiles.

MR. CHESTERFIELD  
Good evening, Mrs. Connors.

MRS. CONNORS  
We've been expecting you...saw the ship come into port early this morning.

MR. CHESTERFIELD  
Yes, ma'am. I've read this note--

He holds up a piece of paper.

MRS. CONNORS  
Yes, I wrote that weeks ago. Been checking on your front door ever since. The winds have been harsh.

MR. CHESTERFIELD  
May I come in?

MRS. CONNORS  
Of course! My apologies. It's such a sight to see you arrive after such anticipation. May I offer you some tea?

MR. CHESTERFIELD  
Mrs. Connors, can you get straight to the point with me?

Beat

MRS. CONNORS  
Of course...I understand. Perhaps you should sit down, so I can go over all the details.

MR. CHESTERFIELD  
Mrs. Connors, I'm not so sure I can sit...

MRS. CONNORS  
Okay. Your wife is in the other room resting. I need to speak quietly and quickly. She's an intelligent woman.

MR. CHESTERFIELD  
Yes.

MRS. CONNORS

Rebecca had fallen ill...I found her at the bottom of the steps that led up to the side of the cliff. It was a storm the night before I found her, a miracle she even survived. Still can't get a clear answer out of her as to what she was doing there, but I suspect...Mr. Chesterfield, I suspect your wife of being suicidal, I'm afraid to say.

MR. CHESTERFIELD

Suicidal?

MRS. CONNORS

I know, I know. The events leading up to the morning I found Rebecca at the bottom of the stairs, well, there was a slow, digression, one would say, of her mental capabilities...please, I know this is alarming as can be, but you must hear me out fully. (beat) After you had gone, Rebecca began to change. Not at first, but after a few days I began to notice her mood change. She seemed emotionally depressed. I understood this at first, as you had only just left but after the following week her mood worsened.

MR. CHESTERFIELD

Worsened? How?

MRS. CONNORS

She had become distant and sadder. She stopped smiling and she refused to see me as much. Normally, we would go for our morning walk together but one day she said she was under the weather and did not have the energy to go. We never walked together again. All of this seemed very believable to me but then...

MR. CHESTERFIELD

Then...go on!

MRS. CONNORS

I saw Rebecca talking to herself. Forgive me, but I needed to know she was okay and I went over to your house one day and knocked on the door for twenty minutes or so. Finally, I went around to the back and peered through the porch window and saw Rebecca rocking back and forth in her rocking chair, talking to herself and as I watched closer, she turned her head and began talking to someone in thin air.

MR. CHESTERFIELD

Thin air? Do you mean, no one at all?

MRS. CONNORS

No one at all...I am sorry. (beat) Her condition worsened and I actually spied on her setting the table for guests and conducting dinner all alone as if she were with people!

MR. CHESTERFIELD

Dear God woman! Are you saying my wife has gone mad?!

MRS. CONNORS

I am only stating the facts, please calm down, she musn't know you are here just yet. When I found her at the bottom of the stairs, she had broken her leg and fractured her jaw. She has recovered quite amiably but she is delicate. Very delicate. Rebecca is not the same Rebecca as you remember her. You need to heed my words carefully and prepare yourself.