BRIDGERTON

"Diamond of the First Water"

Episode #101

Written by Chris Van Dusen
1 EXT. MAYFAIR, LONDON - DAY

We're SOARING over this illustrious neighborhood in all of its splendid, 1813 REGENCY GLORY! Horses draw their carriages. Distinguished gentlemen tip their hats. Fashionable ladies take their strolls. And it's all vibrance and gaiety, swagger and style, as we alight on A BOY (12), satchel on his shoulder, hurrying through these cobbledstone lanes, handing out NEWSPAPERS to highfalutin inhabitants everywhere...

2 EXT. HYDE PARK/ROTTEN ROW - DAY

To the CHIC LORDS AND LADIES promenading this lively scene.

   LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
   According to the much heralded poet Lord Byron: Of all bitches, dead or alive, a scribbling woman is the most canine.

And as they all open their papers, curious, our boy continues--

3 EXT. BOND STREET/DRESS SHOP - DAY

To the SOCIETY MATRONS AND THEIR DAUGHTERS shopping about.

   LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
   If that should be true, then this author would like to show you her teeth...

And as a mama GASPS at what she reads, our boy soldiers on--

4 EXT. PARK LANE/DANBURY HOUSE - DAY

To the tart-looking, cane-wielding lioness of a dowager known as LADY DANBURY (70s), stepping from her ornate carriage. She eyes the paper in her hands. We catch the headline: Lady Whistledown's Society Papers.

   LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
   My name is Lady Whistledown. You do not know me, and you never shall. But if you are currently reading these papers of record, then rest assured: I certainly know you...

And as an amused smile creeps over Lady Danbury's lips...

5 EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE - DAY

Delivery Boy leaves papers at the doors of every last stately home lining this beautiful square. The center of our glittering world, this is London society at its very best.
He reaches one especially GAUDY residence, tosses a paper at its brightly-colored door, moves along...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Perhaps one resides within the household of a certain Baron Featherington. Should one have a bracket for a face?

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/GIRLS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY

On a perspiring PRUDENCE FEATHERINGTON (21), as TWO MAIDS work furiously on her corset. Yanking and tugging the strings to pull it closed. Sisters PHILIPA (19) and PENELope (17) -- in their court dresses -- look on, horrified.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Three misses. Foisted upon the marriage market this season like sorrowful sows by their tasteless, tactless dear mama -- the luckless souls...

Find a dissatisfied LADY PORTIA FEATHERINGTON (40s, busybody) hovering over Prudence. As she glares at the maids:

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Tighter. Tighter.

And the maids tighten the shit out of Prudence's corset.

PENELOPE
Is she to breathe, mama?

LADY FEATHERINGTON
I was able to squeeze my waist into the size of an orange and a half when I was Prudence's age. Your sister shall do the same if she's to finally impress the Queen.

Penelope comes over to her sister, all encouraging...

PENELOPE
Do not worry, Prudence. It will all be over in a matter of... hours.

PRUDENCE
The only thing I shall worry about, Penelope, is if I am to go before Her Majesty looking anything like you in that ill-fitting frock.
   (to the maids)
   TIGHTER!
EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE - DAY

Back with our boy, now approaching THE GRANDEST HOME. All English roses and wisteria out here, as even his eyes go wide at the sheer beauty and luxury of the place, too.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Or perhaps one is more fortunate. Admirably proportioned, impressively refined? Then perhaps... One is a Bridgerton...

A BUMBLEBEE lands on the gold-plated knocker affixed to this home's glossy green door. As our boy drops his paper, goes...

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/GRAND HALL - DAY

Who. The fuck. Lives here?? All gilded elegance and dazzling opulence, in the most astonishing of ways. As we move past THE BRIDGERTON FAMILY PORTRAITS suspended above a grand, central staircase spanning two levels (a la Althorp)...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
A total of eight children in this most prolific of broods. The rather industrious viscountess and late viscount having produced four perfectly handsome sons and four perfectly beautiful daughters. Yes. Perfect, indeed.

Find ELOISE (17), FRANCESCA (16) AND HYACINTH BRIDGERTON (10), on the ground floor, in heavy-looking, elaborate gowns of their own. As Eloise scratches at her getup...

ELOISE
I am already roasting!

FRANCESCA
Are you to complain the entire day, Eloise?

ELOISE
Surely I cannot be expected to bear these fashions the entire day.

HYACINTH
I feel like a princess. Do I look like one?

ELOISE
Do you truly wish to know what I think you look like?

And it's all good-natured and playful and FUN in here.
GREGORY (O.S.)
On your left!

GREGORY BRIDGERTON (12) suddenly comes running past Hyacinth, on her right, grabbing her HAIR RIBBON--

HYACINTH

Gregory!!

And she runs after him. When BENEDICT (26) and COLIN BRIDGERTON (19) approach Eloise and Francesca.

BENEDICT
Is our dear sister still not ready?

FRANCESCA
She has only been readying herself the entire night.

ELOISE
You mean her entire life. Where is Anthony?

COLIN
I shall run up and hasten her along.

ELOISE
Is he not attending?

BENEDICT
Colin, wait. I will do it.

COLIN
She likes me much better than you, Benedict.

BENEDICT
Did she say that?

COLIN
Everyone says that.

ELOISE
If our eldest brother is not bothering to attend, then why must I--

BENEDICT
--ELOISE. Quiet.

ELOISE
Oh, has that ever worked?

And she suddenly turns, yelling upstairs:

ELOISE (CONT'D)
DAPHNE! YOU MUST MAKE HASTE!!
She turns to her siblings, all staring at their brazen sister.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
Should you think she heard me?

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DAPHNE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

DAPHNE BRIDGERTON (18) stands in the middle of this elegant room. With her back to us, we can't quite see her face, just her ELABORATE ensemble -- DIAMONDS AND JEWELS shimmering in the light. She curtsies. She bows. She practices. When we spot VIOLET BRIDGERTON (late 40s, all warmth, wisdom and love) watching from the doorway.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Unlike Lady Featherington, the widowed Lady Bridgerton has only one daughter on the market this year. Her eldest darling, the season's forthcoming diamond, Miss Daphne Bridgerton...

And that's when Daphne finally turns toward us. As we revel in this girl's unmistakable beauty a beat -- all delicacy, grace and refinement -- Violet dabs at her eyes.

DAPHNE
Mama, do not--

VIOLET
--I have imagined this day for so very long. And now it is finally here. If only your father could see.

DAPHNE
He does see. I am sure of it. Now it is my day to make the both of you proud.

(then)
I am ready, mama.

And off her confident smile, we move...

EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE - DAY

As the front doors of both the Bridgertons and Featheringtons simultaneously SWING OPEN, our families begin to spill out of their homes. Their liveried FOOTMEN, MAIDS and OTHER STAFF joining the whole raucous scene as well...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Grosvenor Square. The sixth of April, 1813. A frenzied sight outside the Bridgerton and Featherington homes on this most momentous of occasions...
Colin and Gregory mount their HORSES. Francesca and Hyacinth board their GRAND CARRIAGE.
Eloise peers several residences down to see Penelope. The girls wave, friends. When Eloise spots the paper left on the doorstep. And as she picks it up, Violet and Daphne emerge with Daphne’s train-carrying maid, ROSE (20s). Daphne eagerly heads for the carriage as Violet peers over to meet the gaze of Lady Featherington. An over-it LORD FEATHERINGTON (60s) beside her. The mamas trade the tightest of smiles, as Violet sidles up to Benedict.

VIOLET
Any sign of him yet?
(off Benedict’s nope)
Should your brother wish to be obeyed as Lord Bridgerton, he must act as Lord Bridgerton. Where IS he, Benedict?

BENEDICT
(lying)
I do not know.

Find a ravenous ANTHONY BRIDGERTON (28), along with a lady friend -- SIENA ROSSO (20s) -- up against a tree. His breeches, down around his boots. Her skirts, bunched around her waist. When Anthony suddenly catches the eye of a beleaguered-looking VALET (40s) standing on the other side of the tree. The Valet holds up his hand. Anthony sighs, checking his POCKET-WATCH. Unhappy, he tosses the watch aside. And as his movements grow a tad bit faster, and our Valet lets out an exasperated sigh, we move...

Horses RUMBLE through these early 19th century streets...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
For today is the day London’s marriage-minded misses shall be presented to Her Majesty the Queen...

CARRIAGES wind their ways past grand, scenic architecture: CARLTON HOUSE. PICCADILLY. An UNDER-CONSTRUCTION BUCKINGHAM HOUSE (not yet Palace)...

As a beaming Daphne eyes the beautiful scenery that passes...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
A much anticipated day, when dreams shall finally be achieved. Hopes, fully realized...
Violet smiles, placing her hand over Daphne's, across from a giddy Hyacinth, a reserved Francesca and a Whistledown-reading Eloise.

14 INT. FEATHERINGTON CARRIAGE/EXT. MAYFAIR – DAY

As Prudence and Philippa vie for space in their seats and an indifferent Penelope plays with her HAIR RIBBON.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
And courses of lives, changed.
For the better. One hopes.

Lady F scoffs at Penelope, adjusts her ribbon. As Lord F stares at the ceiling, wishing he were anywhere but here.

15 EXT. ST. JAMES PALACE – DAY

PRACTICALLY ALL OF SOCIETY, in their glittering gowns and luxurious finery, passes beneath the majestic arches of this palace. Benedict, Colin and Gregory arrive on horse, trailed by the family's carriage. As FOOTMEN help the ladies down, Daphne excitedly takes it all in, as a breathless Anthony approaches.

DAPHNE
Brother! You are here.

ANTHONY
Of course I am here, sister. I would never miss such an important day for you and our family.

VIOLET
No, you would just be late for it.

And Anthony and Violet eye each other, as Benedict and Colin snicker. When Daphne seems to suddenly remember--

DAPHNE
My feathers. Mama--

VIOLET
--Calm yourself. They are right over there.

She nods at the nearby footman who carries Daphne's HEADDRESS OF FEATHERS. And as Daphne breathes a sigh of relief...

ANTHONY
Shall we?

We're off Daphne's exuberant nod, before:
INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/OUTSIDE PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

As DEBUTANTES don feathers and MOTHERS fuss with their ensembles -- we notice a few of them side-eyeing Daphne and Violet, who now stand in front of a pair of MASSIVE DOORS.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
One's triumph at the palace today invariably signifies one's success on the marriage mart tomorrow...

We move CLOSE on Daphne's face -- all nerves and excitement. And as Violet eyes her daughter, we hear a booming voice:

LORD-IN-WAITING (O.S.)
Miss Daphne Bridgerton. Presented by her mother. The Right Honourable, the Dowager Viscountess Bridgerton.

Daphne takes a breath, steeling herself, as the doors open and she peers inside:

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - CONTINUOUS

Pure decadence up in here. QUEEN CHARLOTTE sits at the far end of the room. SOCIETY MEMBERS, on both sides of an insanely long aisle, all staring back at Daphne now. Off our girl, taking a step forward, we start to CUT, OUT-OF-TIME:
INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

LORD-IN-WAITING
Miss Prudence Featherington.
(another card)
Miss Philippa Featherington.
(another card)
And... Miss Penelope Featherington. All presented by their mother. The Right Honourable, Lady Featherington.

Reveal the Featherington girls, on the arm of their mother. All eyeing the Queen, who's already irritated. BACK TO:

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

Daphne moves down the aisle -- slowly, carefully -- locking eyes with Her Majesty. The Bridgerton siblings watch from the sidelines, where Eloise covertly reads Whistledown...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Pray, it is the Queen who shall keep the fashionable world apprised of a lady's single most valuable and desirable asset: her reputation.

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

The Featheringtons move down the aisle. Looking quite uncomfortable. Because Prudence's dress is awfully tight, and Philippa is way too nervous, and Penelope's not even looking at the Queen right now. She's too busy taking in this amazing space. Lady Featherington elbows her. HARD.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
As such, any lady failing to secure the court's glowing endorsement shall endure the consequences...

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

Daphne finally reaches the end of the aisle. A mere inches from the Queen now. She curtsies. So deep she's practically kneeling. Like she practiced. Her Majesty tilts her head. Judging. Everyone leans forward. It's fucking TENSE.
INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

On Prudence, attempting her curtsy. It ain't happening. Lady F puts a hand on Prudence's shoulder. A flagrant attempt to help that curtsy. Queen Charlotte sees it, is about to say something, when she catches Penelope's mortified face. The Queen sighs, looks away with a flick of her wrist. Lady F just stands there: The fuck does that mean??

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
And not just from Her Majesty...

LADY FEATHERINGTON
I should just like to--

LORD-IN-WAITING
--You should just like to go, madam.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
...But from me.

Lady F nods stiffly. And that's when a pale-looking Prudence suddenly just... faints. FEATHERINGTON. DOWN. Off an aghast Queen and a humiliated Lady Featherington...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
For I have at my disposal a most powerful weapon that even the Queen lacks. My pen.

INT. ST. JAMES PALACE/PRESENTATION CHAMBER - DAY

The Queen's on her feet now. Staring down at Daphne, until:

QUEEN CHARLOTTE
Flawless, my dear.

And she kisses Daphne on the forehead. Anthony smiles from the sidelines, impressed, as GENTLEMEN whisper. Daphne stares up at the queen -- her mouth momentarily agape -- completely swept up in what's very clearly a HUGE moment. As Daphne and Violet back away--

DAPHNE
(quietly, to Violet)
Did that truly just happen?

VIOLET
Keep smiling, dearest. They are watching you. Now more than ever.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
A weapon this author will wield most keenly. No matter who you are. Or what your name might be...
Off Daphne, back to smiling that perfect smile, we have our—

BRIDGERTON TITLE SEQUENCE.
23 EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE - DAY

As a carriage -- Mme. Delacroix, Tailoress -- pulls up outside of this 18th century Palladian home, two Bridgerton Footmen greet the driver...

24 INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DAPHNE'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

Maid Rose, along with TWO OTHER MAIDS, help a glowing, vibrating Daphne out of her extensive court attire and into her afternoon dress. Corset unlaced. Makeup scrubbed. Fake hair unpinned. A precise operation. Hyacinth hovers as Eloise reads Whistledown next to Francesca in the background.

HYACINTH
You absolutely sparkled, sister!

DAPHNE
Come now, I merely simpered and minced in a pretty dress like everyone else.

FRANCESCA
Not exactly like everyone else.

ELOISE
I shall need to go and visit with Penelope. Her presentation was anything but... What was it the Queen called you again--

DAPHNE
--Flawless. Or some such thing. Trust I was astonished Her Majesty offered me, out of two hundred young ladies present, a most gracious remark.
And if that wasn't the humblebrag of the 19th century...

ELOISE
Yes, it was quite a distinction.
And now two hundred young ladies
have a common adversary. I wish
you luck, sister.

And we see Daphne shift at the thought. 'Cause she knows
Eloise has a point.

FRANCESCA

Eloise...

ELOISE
What, it is true. One flies too
close to the sun, and--

DAPHNE
--I thank you for your concern,
Eloise. But perhaps you might go
and visit with Penelope now?

HYACINTH
I thought the morning was perfect.
Now Daphne will have her choice
of handsome suitors.

FRANCESCA
What would you know of handsome
suitors?

DAPHNE
The morning did not only belong
to me, dear Hyacinth.

ELOISE
Two hundred tiny little daggers
pointed at her back--

DAPHNE
--My success on the marriage mart
influences all of your prospects.
Hyacinth may still have many years
to go, but... There are others
present who will need to make
matches in -- oh, what is it --
say, a year's time?

And Eloise looks up. Daphne's staring at her now.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
We will all need to find love.
One day. Indeed, a love as pure
as what dear mama and papa once
shared, if we are so fortunate.
(then)
I merely hope I am able to continue
such a grand tradition...
And Daphne’s clearly feeling the pressure here -- as Eloise eyes her. Suddenly, Violet excitedly sails in, trailed by A MAID who carries a collection of GORGEOUS GOWNS.

VIOLET
Your dresses have arrived!
And a thrilled Daphne makes an immediate beeline for them--

DAPHNE
Oh, this one is quite ravishing.

VIOLET
Mary Edgecombe wore a similar shade last season--

DAPHNE
--And secured three offers the very next day. One from an Earl.

ELOISE
Mary Edgecombe, now the Countess of Fulton, apparently spent the last year living in a cottage hundreds of miles away from her Earl. She is miserable.

And they look to Eloise. She holds up her reading.

ELOISE (CONT'D)
It says it all here.

VIOLET
Do not tell me that is yet another scandal sheet. Eloise.

ELOISE
This one is different. This one lists subjects by name. In full.

Now that is different. Hyacinth reaches for the paper--

HYACINTH
Let me see!

--But Francesca has already grabbed it.

FRANCESCA
Lady Whistledown...

DAPHNE
Lady Whistledown?

ELOISE
The author.

VIOLET
Do we know a Lady Whistledown?

FRANCESCA
Surely Lady Whistledown cannot be her true name...

And that's when Daphne snatches the paper from Francesca's hands. Violet watches her read a beat, before:
VIOLET

What does it say, dearest?
DAPHNE
(reading)
She loathes the fact we have been named alphabetically, oldest to youngest...

VIOLET
Your father and I found it orderly.

DAPHNE
Lady Whistledown finds banality.

ELOISE
The papers were distributed across town today without charge--

VIOLET
--Without charge? What kind of author...

She takes the paper from Daphne. Begins to read.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Well at least she has something right. She has named Daphne the season's Incomparable. She calls you a... diamond of the first water. How lovely.

HYACINTH
I do believe if anyone can live up to such lofty titles, it is my eldest sister.

Daphne offers a smile. A little nervous, that smile.

Eloise clocks it. She leans in, quiet:

ELOISE
Should any of those two hundred dagger-wielding ladies ever attempt something foolish... You do know where to find me, yes?

And they smile. When Violet suddenly gasps--

VIOLET
Oh! How dare this writer say such vile things about the Featheringtons. Even if they are true... Those poor young ladies.

25 INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Lady Featherington sits on her sofa, having tea with another equally enterprising society mama, LADY COWPER (30s). Copies of Whistledown beside them.
LADY FEATHERINGTON
I should not be surprised if this
*Whistledown* is revealed to be
Violet Bridgerton herself. These
pages certainly report on the
Viscountess's family with much
indulgence indeed.
LADY COWPER
The pages report nothing but the truth, Lady Featherington. Daphne has bloomed exquisite. The sooner she is taken from the market, the better for the other young ladies. Even ones prone to hysterics. In front of the Queen.

And as Lady Cowper shadily sips her tea, Lady F scoffs, waving her off. She turns toward the window, where Prudence fans herself as she and Philipa study a STACK OF MINIATURES of distinguished-looking gentlemen. Penelope is off to the side, reading.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Ladies! Hurry with your miniatures before our guest arrives. And Penelope put down that book at once. You shall confuse your thoughts.

Penelope glances over at her sisters, studying their tiny portraits. Penelope just sighs, goes back to her reading. As Lady F turns back to Lady Cowper...

LADY COWPER
So tell me about this cousin. Joining you for the entire season?

LADY FEATHERINGTON
She is a distant cousin of my husband. With no close female relative to sponsor her debut, Lord Featherington directed me to take her in. For charity.

LADY COWPER
You are known to be quite charitable.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Precisely what this new rumormonger should have published! Instead of erroneously specifying I shall have only three young ladies under my care this year. She knows nothing.

PENELOPE (O.S.)
Unless you shall like to have only three young ladies under your care.

They turn back to Penelope, who's clearly been listening.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
I shall gladly sit this season out.
LADY FEATHERINGTON
(to Lady Cowper)
Penelope is quite nervous. This
will be her very first season--

PENELOPE
--I am not nervous mama.

PRUDENCE
What she is, is two stone heavier
than she ought to be.

Ouch. But Penelope's used to it. We can tell as we watch
Prudence and Philipa laugh.

PHILIPA
The blemishes on her face are
quite difficult to conceal.
Perhaps some arsenic and lead
might help?

PENELOPE
Mama, should you allow me to delay
only a year, just as Lady
Bridgerton has done for Eloise, I
may remain dedicated to my studies,
perhaps--

LADY FEATHERINGTON
--The answer is no, Penelope.
Now return to those miniatures.
You too must recognize every
eligible nobleman by sight before
the Danbury ball.

And Penelope begrudgingly takes hold of a miniature. We
stay with Lady F and Lady Cowper.

LADY COWPER
You may wish to listen to her, my
lady. Shepherding four young
ladies through these endless rounds
of affairs at the same time... I
am quite thankful to only have my
darling Cressida to worry about.
Can you imagine the competition--

LADY FEATHERINGTON
--Oh how much competition can
this cousin provoke? She came of
age on a farm. She has a mere
four figure dowry. As for her
appearance, well... Let us hope
Miss Thompson is more presentable
than the legions of unkempt animals
she spent her entire life tending
to back home.

FOOTMAN
Lord Featherington's cousin has arrived, madam.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Remember to be kind, ladies. And charitable. The poor are our burden.

The footman steps aside, revealing MISS MARINA THOMPSON (17). And as all of the ladies stare, taken aback, at this wide-eyed girl, Penelope can't help herself when she says:

PENELOPE
She is beautiful.

Because, yes, Marina? Is stunning. As she curtsies...

MARINA
Good afternoon, Lady Featherington.

We're off a slack-jawed Lady F...

26 INT. OPERA HOUSE - DAY

As Anthony enters this empty theater, eyeing Siena -- up on stage, singing her little soprano heart out as she prepares for her nightly show. A few THEATRE WORKERS scattered about, busy doing their thing. When Siena finally sees Anthony. They regard each other a beat. Smile. Before we SMASH TO:

27 INT. OPERA HOUSE/SIENA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

As Anthony and Siena go at it. Vigorously. Crashing into Siena's dressing table, knocking various items to the floor.

SIENA
Someone will hear us, my lord--

But that seems to just make Anthony smile. Which makes Siena smile. Because this is way too good, and way too fun, before we finally move off of these spirited lovers...

28 INT. OPERA HOUSE/SIENA'S DRESSING ROOM - DAY

A spent, satisfied Anthony and Siena are now beside each other. Just breathing a beat, before Anthony habitually reaches out for his pocket-watch. Siena clocks his beleaguered sigh.

SIENA
One day I shall seize that watch and take it apart. Bit by bit.

He smiles.
ANTHONY
I shall have you know this belonged to my father.
(MORE)
ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Should it disappear, I'd miss it sadly.

SIENA
Then you'd know precisely how I feel. Every time you disappear.

And they start to kiss. When it seems to take all the effort in the world for Anthony to get up and start to dress.

SIENA (CONT'D)
Stay with me today.

And even though Anthony would clearly like nothing more...

ANTHONY
I am afraid I cannot. I must chaperone my sister at the Danbury ball this evening.

SIENA
Daphne, yes? What might they be like? These grand affairs she must attend.

ANTHONY
You would hate them. Every eligible lady of breeding dressed in some lavishly-trimmed frock. Bloodthirsty mamas at their sides. Wary fathers making arrangements for only the most advantageous of matches. Of course, without my father here, that responsibility falls upon me.

SIENA
A significant duty, no doubt.

ANTHONY
Someone must guard my poor sister from these bucks and pinks. Ensure her virtue remains free from any kind of... defilement.

SIENA
Daphne is fortunate. Every woman is not afforded such gallant protection.

ANTHONY
Every woman is not a lady.

And Siena has to look away, 'cause... damn.

SIENA
Of course not, my lord.
He eyes her. Sees she's bothered. Comes over to her.

ANTHONY
Siena. You have *me*. Protecting you, too. I shall *always* protect you.

And she looks back at him. Holds his gaze a beat, before:
SIENA
And I shall always be grateful.
(them)
Surely hours remain before
tonight's ball. Are you certain
you cannot stay? In the interest
of defilement?

She sits up a little, seductive. He stares at her,
conflicted, until... He takes her in his arms. And off
the two of them, getting back to their fun...

29 EXT. LONDON/EXT. DANBURY HOUSE - DAY

On the galloping hooves of a horse, thrashing through
town, before revealing its supremely confident, obscenely
handsome rider: SIMON BASSET (28). He slows, grimly
eyeing a magnificent Park Lane palace: Danbury House.
And then he removes A FLASK, taking it to the head before
he dismounts.

LADY DANBURY (O.S.)
Well if this is not a sight for
my sore eyes....

Simon turns, only to see the cane-wielding dowager we saw
in our opening sequence coming down the drive to meet

LADY DANBURY (CONT'D)
My condolences, Your Grace. For
your father.

SIMON
Very kind of you.

LADY DANBURY
Kind of me? You hated the man.

And he looks at her. Has to smile. Genuine. Because--

SIMON
It is so wonderful to see you,
Lady Danbury.

LADY DANBURY
Words I do not hear often enough.
(thumping her cane)
Come!

She turns, heading back towards the house -- where we see
SERVANTS entering and exiting, busily preparing for
tonight's ball. As they walk...

LADY DANBURY (CONT'D)
You must excuse the disorderliness.
I am to host a ball this evening,
as you know.
SIMON
Yes, I--

LADY DANBURY
--I have managed to keep the
details of your return quiet, but
when those vulgar mamas discover
there is an eligible Duke present
at tonight's fete, well, I shall
no longer be able to keep such a
secret.

SIMON
That is what I was hoping to
discuss. I have only returned to
London to deal with my late
father's affairs. I am afraid it
leaves me no time to... socialize.
And so, while I appreciate your
most gracious invitation, Lady
Danbury, I must ask you to accept
my regrets.

And somewhere over the course of all that, Lady D has
stopped walking. A sly smile now on her face, as she
stops a servant carrying a box and begins to examine the
CANDLES inside:

LADY DANBURY
I have been offended only three
times in my life. When I was a
young lady, and my governess said
I should never marry on account
of my brazen disposition. The
day of my wedding, when my mother
felt it wise to ridicule the hem
of my dress. She called it
unsightly.

SIMON
I am sure it was exquisite.

LADY DANBURY
The last, though greatest insult
of all was perpetrated by my own
husband. Who thought it perfectly
reasonable to get on and die before
I did. Thus adding the rather
cumbersome Dowager appellation to
my good name. Three insults,
Your Grace. Three.

She thumps her cane on the ground with great force.

LADY DANBURY (CONT'D)
I simply shall not be able to
endure a fourth.

(MORE)
LADY DANBURY (CONT'D)
 Especially from the young boy I
 used to walk about in leading
 strings. Your regrets are denied.

And even the Duke can't argue with this force of a lady...

SIMON
 I suppose a brief appearance shall--

LADY DANBURY
 --Excellent! Though leave that
 flask you carry at home. Most
 undignified.

(to the servant)
 I shall need more candles than
 this. A lady deserves to see her
 partner when she quadrilles, does
 she not?

The servant nods, flees. And as Lady D heads inside with
 a grin, we're off Simon, rather impressed...
INT. DANBURY HOUSE - NIGHT

SERVANTS walk purposefully with MORE CANDLES, now in full preparation mode for A GRAND PARTY. MASSIVE CHANDELIERS are set ablaze. FLORALS are taken from here to there. DANCE CARDS and their TINY PENCILS are placed symmetrically on a table. As SERVANTS apply CHALK to the dance floor...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
The season's opening ball at Danbury House is a most highly sought-after invitation indeed. For every darling debutante from Park Lane to Regent Street knows, if anyone can throw a crush of a party -- it's Lady Danbury.

Lady Danbury appears behind the servant. Her eyes squint, inspecting the floor. Off her approving nod...

EXT. DANBURY HOUSE - NIGHT

As fantastically-liveried FOOTMEN receive guests from their carriages, we spot the Bridgerton carriage arriving. Out steps Anthony, followed by Violet, and then Daphne -- in a stunning gown. And now we're:

INT. DANBURY HOUSE/BALLROOM - NIGHT

Corinthian columns and ornate swags and meticulous entablature surround glittering chandeliers above a room full of only the most in vogue members of society. MUSICIANS play. PEOPLE DANCE!

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Tonight, the answers to our most urgent of questions will finally be revealed...

Daphne enters with Violet and Anthony. She looks around, taking it all in, overcome--
DAPHNE
Mama... It is magical.

And GENTLEMEN immediately begin to stare at her, captivated. She smiles back at them.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Which bachelors might forsake their terribly rakish ways for the exquisite blisses of matrimony instead?

Anthony glares back. Ice. Cold.

ANTHONY
(quietly)
They are all staring, mother.

VIOLET
(beams, to Daphne)
Allow them to come to you, dearest.


LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Which ladies shall forever capture their hearts? Thereby securing their futures. And avoiding the grim, dismal condition known as a spinster.

We begin to pop around the room, intercutting VARIOUS YOUNG LADIES in mid-conversation with POTENTIAL SUITORS:

LIVELY YOUNG LADY
Oh, I do love to dance.

FASHIONABLE YOUNG LADY
Should you like my flower? We grow them in our very own garden.

HANDSOME YOUNG LADY
I must show you my watercolours some time. If you desire to see them.

Handsome Young Lady's MAMA suddenly interjects--

HYL'S MAMA
And she is quite proficient on the pianoforte, too...

Off the suitor, impressed, we ANGLE ON the Featherington sisters. Prudence and Philippa review their miniatures as Penelope stares at someone across the room...
LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
And shall one Lady Featherington finally resist bedecking her misses in the most unflattering of colors? Or will she have them appear as only the most undesirable pieces of overripe citrus fruit, once again...

And they DO look very much like some rather sour produce, don't they? Especially Penelope, in her yellow dress, watching Colin Bridgerton dance with some PRETTY YOUNG THING. Penelope's suddenly jolted from her reverie by CRESSIDA COWPER (17, beautiful, superior), who bumps into her from behind...

CRESSIDA
Penelope. I did not see you there.

Off Penelope, feeling invisible, we ANGLE ON Lady Featherington, gossiping with Lady Cowper and a JUDGY MAMA--

LADY COWPER
Is that not the young lady who was caught with her gentleman last year? In Lady Mottram's conservatory, unchaperoned?

She nods towards an unhappy-looking LADY, hanging on the arm of an equally unhappy-looking MISTER.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
She is lucky her gentleman agreed to a hasty marriage. After she went and ruined herself. Lightskirts.

And with a scoff, these mamas turn their attention elsewhere--

JUDGY MAMA
Oh, look who's already setting his cap at Miss Bridgerton...

ANGLE ON Daphne, still with Violet and Anthony, now being approached by LORD AMBROSE (30s, attractive buck). Daphne curtsies.

LORD AMBROSE
Lady Bridgerton. Miss Bridgerton.
(MORE)
LORD AMBROSE (CONT'D)
(stiffly, to Anthony)
Lord Bridgerton.

VIOLET
I believe you have already been
introduced to my daughter, Daphne,
Lord Ambrose.

LORD AMBROSE
Yes. We met at your brother's
levee.

DAPHNE
If I recall, my lord, you had
just won your first race at
Newmarket.

ANTHONY
His first and only, I believe.

And that was rather... sharp. Daphne breaks the tension--

DAPHNE
(smiles)
In that case, let us hope his
lordship has found himself a new
horse.

Ambrose laughs, charmed. A content Violet eyes Daphne,
pleased she's a natural. Anthony shifts uneasily.

ANTHONY
I have not had the pleasure of
seeing you at our club lately,
Ambrose.
(quickly)
Should it have anything to do
with the unpaid balance you left
on our betting books winter last?
You remember that, yes? I do.

And Ambrose holds Anthony's gaze. And then he nods. And
bows. And goes. Violet and Daphne eye a smiling
Anthony...

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
Lord Ambrose is a cheat. A man
of any honor ensures his debts
are fully paid.

DAPHNE
I did not realize...

ANTHONY
How could you have done? It is
the very reason why I am here,
sister. Let us take a turn about
the room.
And he takes hold of Daphne's arm, pointedly leading her away from Violet. Daphne takes a quick look back at her mother, left standing there, just as a passing GENTLEMAN nods at Daphne. Daphne smiles, nods back, when Anthony veers her in another direction.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
A Mister Duncan Lewis.

DAPHNE
He is rather pleasing.

ANTHONY
He is rather here to shuffle about hunting fortunes. Trust Mister Lewis knows of your sizable dowry. Leave him be.


DAPHNE
I presume you know of him, too?

ANTHONY (all the disdain)
Mister Worthington. Second son. We shall find better.

And as Anthony begins to discreetly point to the VARIOUS ATTRACTIVE MEN they pass...

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
He is of dubious parentage.
(yet another)
I shall not have you making a life with a poet, heaven forbid.
(still another)
Nor an eccentric. My word.

And throughout all of this, that glow of enthusiasm once visible behind Daphne's eyes has begun to extinguish. When--

BENEDICT (O.S.)
Anthony! Daph!

They turn, see Benedict and Colin approaching. Anthony sighs.

ANTHONY
If the only upstanding gentlemen present this evening are your brothers, then we are in a great deal of trouble indeed.
DAPHNE
You continue to say we, yet--

COLIN
(sidling up to Daphne)
--Did mother tell you yet? About my tour? I am to begin in Greece.

DAPHNE
Greece? How adventurous, Colin--

ANTHONY
--On guard.

Anthony nods toward an approaching Lady Danbury. As the boys immediately look for an exit--

LADY DANBURY
Too late. I already noted you.

ANTHONY/BENEDICT/COLIN
(all smiles)
Lady Danbury! /Good evening!
/Lovely to see you!

LADY DANBURY
Miss Bridgerton, you look rather lovely this evening.

She spots Daphne's empty dance card, tied around her wrist.

LADY DANBURY (CONT'D)
Is there a reason I have yet to see you on the dance floor?

ANTHONY
All in due time, Lady Danbury. We have only just arrived.

And Lady D eyes him. Sly. Knowing. She leans to Daphne:

LADY DANBURY
You poor thing.
Daphne stares back at her, thrown. Colin, meanwhile, spots someone on the dance floor. He leans to Benedict:

COLIN

Who is *that*?

Benedict follows his gaze... To none other than Miss Marina Thompson, dancing with A SUITOR.

BENEDICT

I am sure I have never seen her.

Off Colin, entranced by this beautiful girl, we ANGLE ON:

LADY FEATHERINGTON

Miss Marina Thompson. A distant cousin of my husband.

As Lady F and the mammas all stare at Marina now...

LADY FEATHERINGTON (CONT'D)

Rather dowdy, is she not?

JUDGY MAMA

One of the Bridgerton boys is joining the swarm...

We see Colin, sidling up to Marina and cutting in.

LADY COWPER

Most telling. I imagine your household will be a hive of callers in the morning, Lady Featherington.

JUDGY MAMA

Where one suitor goes, the rest will surely follow...

And Lady F's face has kept falling through this entire exchange, having spotted her own daughters, *alone*. As we MOVE to find Violet, who watches Daphne and Anthony, across the room, standing at the edge of the dance floor. A quiet beat, then Daphne sighs:

DAPHNE

Brother, I am quite parched.

ANTHONY

I shall fetch you a glass of lemonade--
DAPHNE
--No. You have already done so much for me tonight. I shall return in a mere moment.

Anthony eyes her. A reluctant nod. And as Daphne heads over to the lemonade table, we stay with her. Moving through the crowd. She reaches the lemonade table. Helps herself to a glass of lemonade. Until--

NIGEL (O.S.)
Small glasses.

Daphne looks over to see NIGEL BERBROOKE (40, all inelegance and awkwardness) standing there.

DAPHNE
Lord Berbrooke.

NIGEL
Tiny little things, are they not?

DAPHNE
The... glasses? I suppose?

NIGEL
Then the matter is settled.

DAPHNE
I am not entirely sure the matter in which we discuss, my lord...

Nigel smiles, inching closer to her. Breathes her in.

NIGEL
You have always amused me, Miss Bridgerton. Ever since I was a schoolboy and you were...

DAPHNE
All but five?

He nods, slurps his lemonade. And then he just... stares. Daphne shifts. Uncomfortable.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
My brother... He summons me, I...

And she turns, goes. Quickly. Glancing back to see Nigel, who has started to follow.
Miss Bridgerton? A moment please!

Daphne immediately spins back around, continues hurrying through the crowd, only to end up crashing straight into... Simon. And that powerfully-built chest of his--

Oh!

Forgive me.

She looks up at him. At this perfect specimen of English manhood. Momentarily thrown, before she steps back and sees Nigel, continuing to approach. And so, thinking fast--

(suddenly, to Simon)

Tell me your name.

Simon blinks.

Your name, sir.

And he just sighs.

Am I honestly to believe you do not already know my name?

She eyes him. Arrogant much? But Nigel's still approaching so... Daphne tosses her head back with a laugh. Using Simon as a diversion. And it seems to work, because Nigel is now stopping, turning, heading away. Daphne breathes, relieved.

If you desired an introduction, madam, I do believe accosting me is the least civilized of ways.

Accosting you?

(under his breath)

Truly, they will try anything.

He looks around. Half the ladies here are ogling this man. Daphne shifts. Flustered. Because...

Sir. That is not... This is not... What IS your name--
ANTHONY (O.S.)
--Basset?

Both Simon and Daphne turn to see Anthony coming over.

SIMON
Bridgerton!

ANTHONY
Come here, old friend!

And Daphne's eyes go wide as these two greet each other like old bro-y bros do.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
I heard news of your father.
(then, realizing)
Deuce take it, you are no longer Basset!

SIMON
I shall always be--

ANTHONY
--Hastings! The Duke of Hastings, now known forever more.

Simon offers an uneasy smile.

DAPHNE
The Duke of Hastings is it?

They turn to her. Anthony almost forgot she was there.

ANTHONY
Right. Hastings, this is my sister.

SIMON
(taken aback)
Your sister.

ANTHONY
Daphne, Hastings and I know each other from our days at Oxford.
(to Simon)
Days we shall not soon forget...

DAPHNE
(all smiles)
Yes. As I am well aware of the company you keep, brother, I am certain your days with His Grace were most... civilized, indeed.

And as Daphne pointedly nods at Simon, we ANGLE on a startled Lady Featherington, who's with Prudence and Philipa--
LADY FEATHERINGTON
The Duke. I would recognize...

And she grabs her daughters, taking them across the room...

PRUDENCE
Mama, where--

LADY FEATHERINGTON
--To meet the Duke.

PHILIPPA
(seeing Simon)
That man is not in our miniatures.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Make haste! Before he should see Miss Thompson!

ANGLE BACK ON Daphne, Anthony and Simon:

ANTHONY
Hastings, we shall need to get together properly. I expect to see you at our club then?

SIMON
Indeed. Evening, Bridgerton.

Miss.

Simon looks to Daphne, nods. She curtsies, abrupt, before heading away with Anthony. Simon watches her go. Daphne looks back, just in time to see Lady F and company arriving at Simon's side. OTHER MAMAS have started to surround him, too. As Violet pointedly sidles up next to Daphne:

VIOLET
I believe Lord Wetherby is looking for you to dance.

DAPHNE
Is he--

ANTHONY
--If only it were not time for us to retire.

VIOLET
Oh. Well Daphne is anything but weary -- I will stay with her.

DAPHNE
That would be lovely.

ANTHONY
Daphne. There is nary a gentleman here who would not take your hand. You must think about this.

(MORE)
ANTHONY (CONT'D)
The most perfect thing for you to
do now is not to dance. But to
leave them all wanting more. If
anyone knows how this works, it
is your eldest brother.

And Daphne looks around. Gentlemen nod back at her,
whispering. She looks at her mother.

DAPHNE
Perhaps he is right.
(a smile)
Let us go.

Anthony nods, taking his sister's arm. And as they leave,
we're off a beaming Daphne and a wary Violet...
34 EXT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE - DAWN

As golden, morning light bathes our family's beautiful home...

35 INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DAPHNE'S ROOM - MORNING

We're on Daphne, wide-awake in bed. She's staring up at the ceiling. Having barely slept she's so excited. Maid Rose appears at her bedside, surprised, because:

ROSE
Miss? You have already awakened.

Daphne bolts out of bed with all but a squeal--

DAPHNE
Have cook prepare as many biscuits as he can this morning. And perhaps we might move a few extra chairs into the drawing room, too. Oh I do wonder... Which gentlemen will be the very first to call. I have so much to ask of them all.

ROSE
Well let us get you dressed.

And off an equally-charged Daphne and Rose...

36 INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/MARINA'S ROOM - MORNING

We're CLOSE on a hand running across the sheets of a bed, before we reveal it's Marina, indulging in what can only be the finest woven white linen, in this lavish bedroom. We jump to the doorway, where Lady Featherington is with her housekeeper, MRS VARLEY (50s), eyeing Marina...

LADY FEATHERINGTON
The child cannot enjoy such luxury in her own home. Do they have proper beds where she comes from? Or only heaps of straw? Find her something muted to wear, Varley.

And the devoted Mrs Varley nods...

37 INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Daphne embroiders with her mother and sisters in this exquisitely-appointed room. No one's talking. Until the door suddenly opens. Daphne tosses her hoop to the side. Smoothes her dress and looks up, hopeful, but it's just--

DAPHNE
Anthony. I did not expect to see you here this morning.
It is terribly early for you, dearest.
ANTHONY
I could not sleep for some reason.
All the excitement, I presume.
(them, noticing)
Am I the first gentleman to arrive?
How wonderful.

And he goes to take a seat next to Daphne, who eyes him.

38
INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Lady F, Prudence, Philipa and Penelope eye A FOOTMAN:

FOOTMAN
Callers, ma'am. The Earl of Stafford and The Marquess of Finley.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
(beaming, to her girls)
My word. Well you should have my colorful fashions to thank...

FOOTMAN
For a Miss Marina Thompson.

And all eyes turn to Marina, who innocently just sits there, smiling. Off this, we're LAUNCHED INTO A SEQUENCE:

39
INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/INT. VARIOUS BALLROOMS - OUT OF TIME

QUICK POPS: Of corsets being affixed to Daphne's body. Of Daphne entering ballrooms, escorted by Violet and Anthony. Of suitors calling the next day. And of Anthony interrupting every single one.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Dearest reader. This author finds herself compelled to share the most curious of news...

Corset. Ballroom. Suitors. Anthony... Corset. Ballroom. Suitors. Anthony... And as we're moving through time, we can't help but notice that the number of suitors calling on Daphne IS STARTING TO DWINDLE...

40
EXT. MAYFAIR - DAY

As our favorite Delivery Boy leaves the latest Whistledown at doorsteps across town. Handing PAPERS to passersby, all increasingly eager to take hold of them...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
It seems the purported diamond of 1813 requires a closer inspection...
INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

As Daphne smiles and sits with a NERVOUS SUITOR.

DAPHNE
And do you have a large family, too, my lord?

And he's about to answer her, when--

NERVOUS SUITOR
Is there a problem, Lord Bridgerton?

--We reveal Anthony, hovering behind his sister.

ANTHONY
I should think so. You are in my seat.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
For this precious stone appears to possess a rather glaring imperfection.

And the suitor quickly rises. Off Daphne, glaring...

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

QUICK POPS of GENTLEMAN AFTER GENTLEMAN calling on Marina.
One comes with FLOWERS. Another with CANDY. Another with... Is that A PUPPY?!

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
And an even rarer jewel -- of only the most remarkable brilliance, fire and luster -- has been unearthed. Her name, unknown to most, yet soon known to all, is Miss Marina Thompson...

And as Marina all but glows, we notice Lord Featherington -- on the other side of the room -- quite visibly ogling his distant cousin. Lady F gives him the side-eye.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Should you not be out on your daily walk about the square, dear?

LORD FEATHERINGTON
(shrugs)
Appears as though it may rain.

Lady F glances outside, nothing but sunshine...
A stoic Daphne reads Whistledown as Maid Rose unties her corset from behind, revealing INDENTS on Daphne's skin where the boning has left impressions. A few blisters visible, too. Violet reads her own paper nearby.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
This author is left to wonder whether Her Majesty might reconsider the high praise she once afforded Miss Bridgerton...

Where Queen Charlotte lounges most fantastically with her LADIES-IN-WAITING. Whistledown in all of their hands, too.
LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
For we all must know what the
Queen despises more than anything:
*being wrong.*

And as the Queen herself seems to sit a bit straighter in
her seat, her own mouth dropping at what she reads...

48 INT. WHITE'S GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - DAY

All sophistication and the rattling of dice boxes in here
as we PAN across this bustling, smoky scene to find Nigel
Berbrooke, reading Whistledown at his own table...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
And the drawing room at Bridgerton
House currently appears to be
emptier than the muddled head of
her dearest King George.

Off Nigel's crude little smile...

49 INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

As Anthony shows an ANXIOUS SUITOR to the door and then
turns around, exasperated...

ANTHONY
Is a suitor in possession of a
proper gentleman's education simply
too much to ask?

And here's where we reveal Daphne, her sisters and Violet,
now sitting in an otherwise empty drawing room.

VIOLET
(pointed)
It is *astounding.*

DAPHNE
(also pointed)
It is *inconceivable.*

ANTHONY
Well, I must be off to my club
then. Sisters. Mother.

He exits. And we're off Daphne and Violet, both equally
appalled...

50 INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/GIRLS' DRESSING ROOM - DAY

An embittered Lady F reads Whistledown as a MAID applies
some kind of *foul-looking beauty cream* to Penelope's face,
that puppy in her arms. Prudence lounges nearby in her
own horrible face mask as ANOTHER MAID aggressively tweezes
Philipa's hairline.
Of course, it follows that Lady Featherington is to receive what she has always desired. The season's true Incomparable, living under her own roof. She must be overjoyed.
As Lady F suddenly spots ANOTHER MAID helping Marina dress--

LADY FEATHERINGTON
(scornful)
Is Miss Thompson so high in her instep she is unable to don her own slippers? I should think not.

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

Daphne paces, a little on edge, as Violet, Hyacinth, and Francesca sit. Eloise reads Whistledown. Awed.

ELOISE
Has anyone else read what Lady Whistledown has written of late?

HYACINTH
Should anyone pay any heed to what Lady Whistledown writes of late? I certainly do not.

DAPHNE
Mama... Perhaps we might attend the upcoming Salisbury ball by ourselves. And the Merriweather tea, too.

VIOLET
I believe Anthony has already replied on our behalf, dearest. Apparently he has managed our social calendar through June.

DAPHNE
The entire season?

ELOISE
Lady Whistledown has made her opinion about our dear sister's fortunes quite clear. Lady Whistledown says--

DAPHNE
-- Enough about Lady Whistledown!

And everyone looks to Daphne, who's beside herself now. She sits. Trying to keep calm. When Footman John enters.

FOOTMAN JOHN
A caller for Miss Bridgerton.
The Lord Berbrooke.

Nigel enters and Daphne's face just drops. Even Violet has to pause, before...
VIOLET
Lord Berbrooke. Come in. May I help you to some freshly prepared biscuits? Eloise, allow some room for his lordship, will you?

Daphne's hand instinctively goes to Eloise. The sisters exchange a look. Daphne silently pleads for her to stay where she is, but--

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Eloise, are you not due for a visit with Penelope this morning?

ELOISE
...I believe I should like to stay--
VIOLET
--I believe you should like to go.

Eloise looks at Daphne -- sorry, sis -- then goes. As Violet takes Francesca and Hyacinth to the other side of the room, Nigel takes his seat next to Daphne. Helps himself to a biscuit.

NIGEL
Forgive me for not calling sooner. I had presumed your affections were already engaged. But now I know... You and I were destined for each other.

And he licks his tiny lips on account of his biscuit. Daphne practically recoils, as Francesca and Hyacinth can't help but giggle across the room. Off a mortified Daphne...

52 INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

A HANSDOME YOUNG MAN is down on one knee in the middle of the room, gesturing dramatically towards Marina.

HANDSOME YOUNG MAN
...And so, by heaven, your love may burn. From the depths of my soul, 'tis thee, I shall earn...

THREE OTHER SUITORS are present, along with Colin Bridgerton, wincing at this young man's poem. Nearby, sits a resentful Prudence and a bored Philipa, along with an unimpressed Eloise and Penelope, who holds that puppy. We move past all of them to find an irritated Lady Featherington, as the awful poem concludes and everyone (hesitantly) claps.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
Wonderful, wonderful. Gentlemen, thank you for your calls. Do not forget to bid Prudence, Philipa, or even Penelope farewell as you go...

The gentlemen go, offering mere nods to the Featherington girls. As Colin bows to Marina, passing Penelope and Eloise on his way out...

COLIN
A most wretched sonnet indeed.

PENELOPE
Lord Byron he is not.
COLIN
(laughs)
I do not believe so. Good day,
Pen.
Penelope, shocked she made Colin actually laugh, eyes Colin HARD as he goes. As Eloise continues watching Marina...

ELOISE
She certainly is most interesting.
What is she like?

Off Eloise, eyeing the new girl...

53 EXT. KENSINGTON GARDENS - DAY

As Eloise and Penelope (along with that puppy) walk with Marina in a particularly beautiful portion of these gardens. TWO MAIDS trail them.

ELOISE
Tell us of your family's farm.
We have never visited Somerset.

MARINA
Oh, it is most beautiful. Despite the recent drought. I miss it dearly.

ELOISE
Even with all of the attention you receive here?

MARINA
Attention?

ELOISE
You have certainly gained the admiration of Lady Whistledown, much to my sister's discontent.

MARINA
I am only here at my father's insistence. It seems our land has seen better times. Papa believes an advantageous match will rectify the situation.

PENELOPE
Set your cap at someone yet?

And a tiny smile crosses Marina's face. We barely clock it.

PENELOPE (CONT'D)
Someone like... Mister Colin Bridgerton?

MARINA
Which one was he?
(MORE)
MARINA (CONT'D)
(off Pen's look)
I have met so many gentlemen over the past few weeks, I am unable to distinguish one from the next.

PENELOPE
A terrible predicament, to be sure.

MARINA
Am I the only one who finds all of these affairs a bit... tedious?

ELOISE
I am not out until next year. I cannot know what you mean.

MARINA
I mean we are at war. Men battle at sea and yet, all anyone here can think about is what to wear to the next dazzling party...

Eloise and Penelope exchange a glance. Because they feel the same way. But Marina thinks she's offended them.

MARINA (CONT'D)
I only mean--

PENELOPE
--I wish I were allowed to battle at sea. Can you imagine? Being a part of the Royal Navy. We should see the world!

ELOISE
With king and country our only concerns. Instead of this dreadful business of marriage.

They laugh at the thought. Marina smiles. She likes them.

MARINA
I do suppose living on a ship full of handsome, eager, young officers would certainly be interesting for a young lady.

Eloise and Penelope look to her. Confused.

PENELOPE
What can you mean?

MARINA
Well. There would be situations.
ELOISE
Situations?

MARINA
That would undoubtedly... arise.

But Eloise and Penelope aren't exactly making the connection--

ELOISE'S MAID
(interrupting)
Young ladies. What ever are we discussing?

The girls look at one another, until, covering--

MARINA
Why Lady Whistledown, of course. What else should there be to discuss?

ELOISE
Yes... I wonder what poor soul the author will turn her pen to next...

The maid nods, satisfied. And as the girls smile, sly...

EXT. HASTINGS HOUSE - DAY

A grand, sprawling architectural manse. If this is Simon's mere London home, what does his country estate look like??

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Ambitious mamas, rejoice! For the new Duke of Hastings continues to grace our fair city with his presence. And oh, what an impressive presence it is...

INT. HASTINGS HOUSE/HALLWAY - DAY

As Simon makes his way down this stately hall of PORTRAITS. He peers up at his ancestors. Stops to focus on ONE in particular: His father. The ninth Duke of Hastings.

SIMON
Jeffries?

Simon's dutiful butler, JEFFRIES (50s), appears.

SIMON (CONT'D)
See to it that this painting of my father is removed at once.

JEFFRIES
I shall place it in the vault with His Grace's other possessions.
SIMON
No. This one I should like destroyed.
(a sigh)
I am leaving.

And as Simon goes, Jeffries can't help but eye him, concerned...
INT. HIGH-CLASS BROTHEL - DAY

As we move down a rather garish hallway, we catch glimpses of FASHIONABLE IMPURES in these dark, shadowy rooms...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
It should be noted that the Duke has been overheard announcing to mamas everywhere that he has no plans of EVER marrying...

Find a NAKED Simon, getting down and dirty with THREE CYPRIAN WOMEN. Whatever they're doing, they're having fun...

INT. DANBURY HOUSE/GRAND HALL - DAY

Lady Danbury sits, examining the latest Whistledown...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
This author wonders which brazen matchmaker shall rise to such a challenge? For this competition is certainly well underway...

Off Lady Danbury, her wheels a-turnin', we CUT TO:

INT. WHITE'S GENTLEMAN'S CLUB - DAY

With AN IMBIBING SIMON AND ANTHONY, sitting at their table, laughing raucously. Drinks and cheroots in hand.

ANTHONY
Good God, Hastings. THREE?

SIMON
Should it have been four?

ANTHONY
If it were, I certainly would not expect to see you here, alive.

And they laugh a little more. As Simon takes in this scene, Men gamble. Others seem to be... weighing themselves?
SIMON
I do suppose, if it were not for an overzealous mother at every corner, this time of year in the city would not be so very dreadful.

ANTHONY
Those mothers simply want the same as you, I rather think.

SIMON
For every last one of them to choke on their daughters' hair ribbons?

ANTHONY
For you to claim a wife, Hastings. Are you truly not planning to take your place in society? When you have a Dukedom?

SIMON
I have a title. Which, as far as I am concerned, will end with me.

ANTHONY
Hastings--

SIMON
--Would you stop. Calling me that. It was my father's name. Never mine.

Anthony eyes him a beat. Nods, sipping his drink.

SIMON (CONT'D)
In any case, what of you?

ANTHONY
What of me?

SIMON
You are the firstborn Bridgerton of a firstborn Bridgerton nine times over. Where is your wife? (off his look) Is your plan to fuck her forever? Your mistress.

Anthony sighs, signals for someone to bring him another drink.

SIMON (CONT'D)
You shall need to sire an heir.

ANTHONY
I am in possession of something you are not... Brothers.
SIMON
You will pass the task on to one
of them?
(then)
She must be quite a mistress.

ANTHONY
You have no idea.

And Anthony's all up in his head for a beat.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)
You shall not outrun them. The
eager mothers of this town. The
harder you try to avoid them, the
harder they try to find you. I
would be willing to bet on it...

Off Simon's exasperated sigh, knowing his friend is
probably right...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
It has reached my ears that the
betting books at White's propose
the most fascinating of pairings
this season...

59 INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/DRAWING ROOM - DAY 59

Find Marina, on the sofa with Colin Bridgerton. As Lord
Featherington pretends to read his paper nearby, eyeing
the low cut of his distant cousin's dress...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
If one is to trust these accounts,
despite the fact they are all
written by men, then Mister Colin
Bridgerton shall be awarded the
year's grand prize when he sweeps
Miss Thompson from her pretty
little slippered feet...

Marina laughs at something Colin says. Penelope, teaching
her puppy tricks on the floor, all but rolls her eyes. A
bitter Lady Featherington stands with Mrs Varley.

VARLEY
(quiet, to Lady F)
You could always send the willow
back to her farm, madam.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
As if Lord Featherington would
ever allow that.

And off a disgusted Lady Featherington, turning away as
Penelope gets her puppy to play dead...
INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DRAWING ROOM - DAY

A pensive Daphne stands by the window, reading Whistledown. Violet sits nearby.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
In other news, a most peculiar suitor for Miss Daphne Bridgerton has emerged...

VIOLET
Daphne. Your caller...

And Daphne slowly turns. Sees Nigel, sitting on the sofa.

NIGEL
Will it be just the two of us? Yet again?

He pats the seat next to him.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Though this miss cannot possibly believe that the town idiot will be able to reverse her rather dire circumstances, can she?

Off Daphne, proceeding to crumble up that copy of Whistledown, we move...

EXT. HYDE PARK/ROTTEN ROW - DAY

The fashionable hour. As the QUALITY SET promenades. It's all see-and-be-seen when we find Daphne, riding
Sidesaddle, a few feet ahead of Anthony, on his own horse. Anthony eyes Daphne, speeding up. He catches up to her--

ANTHONY
We shall pay a fine if you want to gallop here.

DAPHNE
I know the rules I must follow.

And that was curt. She smiles at passersby. Keeping up appearances, naturally. Anthony senses something's wrong.

ANTHONY
Daphne...

DAPHNE
I presume news of Nigel Berbrooke's courtship has found its way back to you.

ANTHONY
I read as much in this scandal sheet taking Mayfair by storm.
(then)
Lord Berbrooke may be... persistent. But he is harmless. No one pays him any mind, sister. I certainly do not. Neither should you. There will be others...

And Daphne just stares straight ahead. Incredulous, because--

DAPHNE
Lady Whistledown has all but declared me ineligible. Worthy of the affection of a detestable simpleton and no one else. Tell me... What others will ever want such damaged goods now?

ANTHONY
You speak as if Lady Whistledown were to be held in higher regard than Her Majesty the Queen herself. You give far too much credit to some anonymous scribbler. These musings... They are not true.

DAPHNE
Only they are true, brother. And they are true because of you. You have managed to scare every worthy suitor away. Whistledown has merely reported it.
(then)
I had hoped to find a love match.
(MORE)
DAPHNE (CONT'D)
It is all I have ever wanted. I had hoped to marry, my very first season, so that our dear sisters would not have to devote themselves to such an overwhelming task.

ANTHONY
And you still can--

DAPHNE
--Not if you continue to ruin all of my chances.
ANTHONY
I am looking out for you. I am protecting you. It is my duty.

DAPHNE
And what of my duty? You are not the only one with responsibility to this family.

And she swallows her rage. A lady shall never cause a scene.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
You have no idea what it is to be a woman. What it might feel like to have one's entire life reduced to a single moment. This is all I have been raised for. This is all I am. I have no other value. If I am unable to find a husband... I shall be worthless. If I am unable to find someone to love me... I shall be useless. You have rendered me useless to society.

ANTHONY
Daphne... You are a Bridgerton.

And now Daphne has to smile. The irony.

DAPHNE
It would be easier if I were not.

ANTHONY
How can you say such a thing?

DAPHNE
The fact I am a Bridgerton is now the very reason why nobody wants me. All eyes have been on me my entire life. Everyone has been waiting for Daphne, the perfect Bridgerton bride, to make her debut. And what did I end up proving to them? Only that I am nothing more than an encumbrance. A young lady tethered to much trouble indeed. That makes me no perfect bride. That makes me no diamond. That merely makes me exactly what Lady Whistledown says I am: A counterfeit.

And we watch that land on Anthony, who turns contemplative. Off Daphne, perfectly perched on her perfect horse in her perfect dress, we begin to HEAR the sounds of an OPERA, now taking place...
INT. OPERA HOUSE - NIGHT

Blazing chandeliers float above the jam-packed, noisy audience as Siena performs Gluck's "Iphigénie en Tauride." Anthony stands amongst a group of conversing MEN in the gallery. Every now and then, he meets eyes with Siena, up on stage. And as one of those looks between the two of them lingers--

SOCIETY MAN
(to Anthony, re: Siena)
Do you know her, Bridgerton?

It catches Anthony off-guard. But he plays it off.

ANTHONY
The singer? What ever for...

But as he resumes his conversation with the men, we wonder if he's started to feel rather like a counterfeit himself. When we ANGLE ON Violet and Daphne, just arriving. And as they move through the crowd, Daphne suddenly spots Nigel, preening at her from afar--

DAPHNE
(to Violet)
Our box, mama...

Violet nods, just as--

LADY DANBURY (O.S.)
Lady Bridgerton! Join us.

Violet turns, sees Lady Danbury standing with none other than Queen Charlotte and her ladies-in-waiting. Violet smiles, approaches with Daphne in tow. As they do, the Queen whispers something to one of her ladies, before...

QUEEN CHARLOTTE
Lady Bridgerton.

VIOLET
Your Majesty. Good evening.
(a curtsy)
You must remember my daughter, Daphne.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE
Yes. She made quite an impression.
(quietly, to her ladies)
How ever fleeting it may have been.

With that, the Queen heads away. Violet stands there, shook.
DAPHNE
What did she say, mama? Did you hear her?

VIOLET
She simply flattered you, dearest.

And Daphne nods. As Lady Danbury eyes Violet sympathetically, clearly having heard the Queen...

LADY DANBURY
I would like to welcome you both to my box this evening. I insist.

And we TIMECUT:

63A INT. OPERA HOUSE/DANBURY BOX - NIGHT

Where Daphne and Violet sit with Lady Danbury. Daphne leans forward, clearly taken by the love story on stage. And as Violet can't help but eye Queen Charlotte, sitting in the royal box, Lady Danbury turns to her, quiet...

LADY DANBURY
(re: Queen Charlotte)
They are saying her husband will not live to the end of the month.

VIOLET
Surely another rumor provided by that vicious scandal mongering writer. Should her degradation know no bounds?

LADY DANBURY
Lady Whistledown writes of my family, too. Yet I suppose the duke can withstand such scrutiny since he is, after all, a man.

Violet nods.

VIOLET
His Grace was fortunate to have you there with him as a child. After what happened to his mother. Awful.

LADY DANBURY
He is not what Whistledown says.

VIOLET
Nor is Daphne.

LADY DANBURY
It would seem the two of them have that in common then. Matches have certainly been made with far less.
VIOLET
What are you suggesting?

LADY DANBURY
Lady Whistledown merely writes what she sees. Perhaps we need to help her see things a bit more clearly.
(then)
Unless of course you'd object to such a match for other more... contentious reasons.

And Violet turns to her as Lady D raises an eyebrow. Assessing. Checking. Is this gonna be a thing? Violet smiles.

VIOLET
Such matches have always had my full support, Lady Danbury. And I would say that even if our King and Queen were not leading by such wondrous example.

And now Lady D smiles.

LADY DANBURY
I knew there was a reason why I liked you so much, Lady Bridgerton.
(then)
The duke is quite fond of gooseberry pie.

VIOLET
The very dish my cook is renowned for.

They turn back to Daphne, who's still enthralled by the show, when -- on stage, Siena suddenly clutches her chest, belting out A STUNNING ARIA. Off these two plotting ladies...
EXT. GROSVENOR SQUARE/EXT. FEATHERINGTON HOME - DAWN

As WORKERS make their morning deliveries, we find a COALMAN -- overturning his bag of coal, depositing the contents down a COAL CHUTE in front of the Featherington Home. CUT TO:

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/MARINA'S ROOM - DAWN

We're on Marina, in her bed, running her hands on those sheets again. And she's smoothing the linen in long, sweeping motions when her movements become faster. Frenetic. Her face telling us that something is very, very wrong with those sheets. What the fuck is wrong with those sheets?? Something, because now Marina's furiously collecting them into one big ball in the center of her bed and tossing them to the floor. Spent. Breathless. Distraught. Off this...

INT. BRIDGERTON HOUSE/DINING ROOM - NIGHT

We POP AROUND this luxurious room, where bits of the Bridgerton family history are on display: THE FAMILY CREST. A PAINTING of Aubrey Hall (the family's grand ancestral estate). Another of the family playing PALL MALL. Before we find the Bridgertons enjoying a boisterous dinner with an entertained-looking Simon, seated next to Daphne, of course.

ANTHONY

For all we know, Whistledown may be some interloper living in Bloomsbury of all places.
BENEDICT
What should be so terrible about Bloomsbury? Is it because people there actually work for a living?

DAPHNE
She does seem to be someone with access.

COLIN
Who knows if Whistledown is even a she?

ANTHONY
Fair point.

ELOISE
Oh, because she is simply too good to be anyone but a man?

FRANCESCA
I think it rather obvious that the writer is Lady Danbury.

DAPHNE
Lady Danbury enjoys sharing her insults with society directly. She would never bother herself writing them all down.

And at that, Simon has to smile. Violet catches it.

HYACINTH
Could it be Lady Featherington?

ALL OF THE BRIDGERTONS
No.

And their collective answer makes them laugh. Hyacinth eyes them, confused.

ELOISE
You have yet to read what Whistledown writes of the Featheringtons, little sister.

And as this fun, lively conversation resumes, Violet turns to Simon...

VIOLET
You must forgive this rather unruly debate, Your Grace.

SIMON
Nonsense. I find it entertaining. All of you at one table, even the children.
VIOLET
I realize it may be unfashionable, but... We like each other. Most of the time.
(off his smile)
You should join us more often. Perhaps when we travel to our country seat. You would be most welcome.

And that seems to make Anthony sit a bit straighter in his chair. As if he just realized something. But then--

HYACINTH
--Gregory! You must stop tossing peas at me!

GREGORY
Those peas were already there! And you cannot tell me what to do. I am older!

HYACINTH
I am taller!

Children!

VIOLET

And as Violet quietly scolds them, everyone falls into conversation amongst themselves. ANGLE ON Francesca and Eloise, hushed:

FRANCESCA
He does have a presence about him...

ELOISE
If rakish Dukes were one's thing.

We ANGLE ON Colin, leaning across the table to Benedict:

COLIN
I'm to spar with Jackson himself.

BENEDICT
You?

COLIN
Is that envy I detect in your voice?

BENEDICT
Judgment, brother. I shall need to witness this...

And as these conversations continue, we finally ANGLE ON Daphne, quietly sitting next to Simon. She looks up, catching Simon's eye. Promptly returns to her meal.
You appear displeased.

Do I?

We find ourselves seated beside each other, Miss Bridgerton. I would like to think you happy about that.

Perhaps, Your Grace, it would be better if you refrained from thinking about me at all.

He nods. Amused. Violet eyes them from across the table.

It is simply... surprising.

Yes. How ever is it possible for a lady to offer anything but a smile whilst seated beside a Duke? Even one of your reputation.

You are aware of my reputation?

I am aware of your friendship with my eldest brother. And if that were not enough, I am also aware of the things a certain writer has recently written of you. Presumptuous, clearly. Arrogant, most definitely. You are a rake, through and through. Tell me I am wrong, Your Grace.

Who should refrain from thinking about whom again?

I assure you... I am anything but interested in you.

Good.

Quite.

And I anything but interested in you.
She looks at him. Again. As Violet shifts in her seat.

SIMON (CONT’D)
The eldest sister of my oldest
friend. Yet another recent subject
of a certain writer. Chaste.
Neat. Desperate.

DAPHNE
I shall have you know--

SIMON
--To marry, that is.
(off her look)
Tell me I am wrong.

And at that, a laugh seems to escape Eloise's lips. Until
Violet shoots her a look. As Anthony clears his throat--

ANTHONY
Hastings. I am so glad you decided
to join us this evening. It was
most spontaneous of you.

SIMON
Not at all. With Lady Danbury
accepting your dear mother's
gracious invitation on my behalf,
well, how ever could I have
declined?

Anthony turns to his mother, all innocence.

VIOLET
It is always a pleasure, Your
Grace.

And as Daphne and Simon's conversation resumes...

DAPHNE
You seem to consider the desire
to marry a fault. Why is that?

SIMON
I am afraid I cannot give you
that answer, Miss Bridgerton.
For if I offered you those rather
unsavory reasons, then I would be
forced to marry you. And neither
of us would want that now, would
we?

And he smiles. There's something about it. Wickedly
sexy, that smile. And for the first time, Daphne finds
herself oddly, annoyingly, drawn to it. Until...

DAPHNE
Certainly not.
It's a moment not lost on Violet or Anthony either. As Violet can't help but smile, clocking that look on her daughter's face, and Anthony stabs his beef course with his fork--

**ANTHONY**
Well. Tonight has been exceptional, but I am afraid it is getting late.

**VIOLET**
Anthony. We have not even had our dessert. Gooseberry pie, Your Grace.

**SIMON**
Ah. Lovely.

Off a none too pleased Anthony, onto his mother, we

TIMECUT:
Anthony works at the desk a beat, when Violet appears at the doorway. He doesn't bother looking up.

**ANTHONY**
You were a perfectly reasonable mother until your eldest daughter came of age.

**VIOLET**
Anthony...
ANTHONY
This matchmaking scheme you rather transparently concocted with Lady Danbury... It will not work.

VIOLET
I can think of worse matches for Daphne than a Duke. I believed the two of you to be friends.

ANTHONY
We are good friends. Which is how I know he has absolutely no intention of marrying.

VIOLET
You must understand that all men make that assertion.

She glances at the PORTRAIT OF EDMUND BRIDGERTON on the wall.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
Your father, even--

ANTHONY
--Do not bring father into this.
(then)
Even if he were in want of a wife, you would most certainly not have the Duke anywhere near Daphne.

VIOLET
I fully subscribe to the belief that reformed rakes make the very best of husbands--

ANTHONY
--He will NOT make her happy. Daphne deserves better. I know you think you are solving a problem, but you are not. That is all I shall say about the matter.

And he goes back to his work, resolute. And even though Violet knows it is her place to now go, she doesn't move:

VIOLET
The Duke will be joining us as our guests at Vauxhall tomorrow evening.

He looks up at her. Stunned.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
I admit, it was not easy to convince him to come, but--
ANTHONY
--You overstep--

VIOLET
--She is my eldest daughter--

ANTHONY
--Yet she is MY responsibility. As are you.

VIOLET
Responsibility?

ANTHONY
Do not make this any more difficult than it already is.

VIOLET
I wish to know something, Anthony. Tonight, when you leave this study you continue to keep at your family home, are you to return to your bachelor lodgings across the square or shall you pay visit to a certain soprano you tend to in an apartment you pay for on the other side of town? Relying on your younger brothers to one day do the job you cannot?

(off his look)
And you like to speak of responsibility, my dear son? Of duty? Pray tell... What should you know of it?

A long beat, as the two of them hold each other's gaze.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
I sit with her in that drawing room, and do you know what I see? A young woman who is terrified. Because she knows what kind of life, what kind of future awaits her should YOU continue to get in her way. She shall become a spinster. Should she not marry, she shall become invisible. Insignificant. My lively, beautiful girl... Presumed no better than the fetid street matter scraped from your boots every morning and night.

And Anthony scoffs at the thought.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
And yet she is not the only one who is terrified. Is she, Anthony?
He just keeps staring at her. Because he knows exactly what she's getting at.

VIOLET (CONT'D)
If your father were still here, Daphne would have already been matched. The man would have made an arrangement with an old friend. The man would have done what was now necessary. So you must ask yourself: Are you merely an older brother? Or are you the man of this house?

And with that, she begins to go. As Anthony sits there...

ANTHONY
I miss him. Father.

VIOLET
It has been ten years. You can no longer use that excuse.

She exits. Off a pensive Anthony, staring over at Edmund's portrait on the wall, wrestling with these burdens...
INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/SCULLERY - NIGHT

As Mrs Varley sets a pail full of laundry on the counter. She removes the contents -- linens, unmentionables and, finally, that big ball of Marina's sheets. When she suddenly pauses, noticing something. Off her startled face...

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/LADY FEATHERINGTON'S ROOM - NIGHT

Lady Featherington sits, applying her arsenic-laden nightly face cream. When she eyes herself in the mirror. Notices a nasty-looking RASH forming just underneath her hairline. She picks at it. A few hairs easily falling right out. When we see Mrs Varley appear in the doorway. CLUTCHING those sheets. We stay on her for a beat, silently debating. When she finally FORCES herself to go in...

VARLEY
Madam?

LADY FEATHERINGTON
(startled)
Yes, Varley?

Off Mrs Varley, closing the door behind her...

INT. FEATHERINGTON HOME/MARINA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Marina -- her hair, wrapped -- sits at a writing desk, furiously scribbling, when the door opens to reveal Lady Featherington, who now holds the sheets in her hand. Marina stops what she's doing, as Lady F comes over and drops the pile of sheets on the desk. A long beat, as Marina stares back at her, nervous.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
You haven't bled.
Bridgerton Ep 101 "Diamond of the First Water" Green Revisions 1.6.20 57.

Shit.

LADY FEATHERINGTON (CONT'D)
It has been over a month since your arrival. And you haven't bled.

And Lady F just glares her damn scary glare.

LADY FEATHERINGTON (CONT'D)
I suppose I should be happy. Up until now, I had no legitimate excuse to dispense with you. But when Lord Featherington hears of this. When your own papa hears of this...

MARINA
Please--

LADY FEATHERINGTON
--I suppose I should be happy. And if it were guaranteed that my own ladies should not be affected by your revolting recklessness, I would be.

(then)
Do you even know who the father is?

MARINA
Please... Do not tell anyone about any of this. I beg of you, ma'am--

LADY FEATHERINGTON
--I shall have nothing TO DO with this! My ladies shall have nothing to do with this! Not ONE of us will have ANY association with you whatsoever! Do you know what you have done?!

MARINA
(quietly)
What I know... Is that you shall never understand.

LADY FEATHERINGTON
What was that?

MARINA
You shall never UNDERSTAND. Someone like you. Living this ridiculously charmed... Do you think I wanted to come here? To be with people like you? So out of touch, so superior--
SLAP!! Lady Featherington is NOT to be trifled with right now. And as she stares daggers at this girl, we CUT OUTSIDE:

73 INT. Featherington Home/Outside Penelope's Room – Night

As Prudence, Philipa and Penelope all gather, ears to the door, LISTENING to shit. Go. Down. Horrified, when Mrs Varley appears at the end of the hall, shooing them away...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Be it shame or slander. Seduction or smear...

74 INT. Siena's London Flat – Day

We move through this well-appointed flat to find a post-coital Anthony and Siena. He's lost in thought, twirling his pocket-watch through his fingers.

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
There is one thing that continues to humble even the most highly-regarded members of our dear ton: A scandal.

He turns to her. She senses something is very, very wrong.

ANTHONY
I cannot see you anymore.

She stares at him.

SIENA
I do not understand.

ANTHONY
It is not for you to understand. I must do what is necessary.

And Siena just sits there a beat. Stunned.

SIENA
You said you would always protect me. You promised to care for me, my lord. And now... What shall I do now?

Anthony holds her gaze a beat, until:

ANTHONY
You shall leave.

Off a blindsided Siena...

75 EXT. Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens – Dusk

As Society Members arrive at this decadent pleasure playground.
LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Tonight, a privileged selection
of only the most fashionable guests
will descend upon the most scandal-prone grounds in all of London:
Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens...

SOME, through the main entrance, by carriage. OTHERS, like the Bridgertons, through the THAMES RIVER ENTRANCE, by boat. Daphne eyes the approaching spectacle, taking a breath, fortifying herself. And as we soar above the tree-lined promenades leading to illuminated waterfalls running past canals surrounded by lush, expansive grounds...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
Its shaded garden walls, such as those of the Dark Walk, have covered for the most notorious of trysts. This author wonders which persons of quality shall be discovered there tonight. Or better yet, how many?

We focus on a darkened canopy of trees, where CYPRIAN WOMEN await, and ONE SLY COUPLE disappears into the shadows -- clearly up to no good -- before we're:

76   EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS/BALL AREA - NIGHT 76

With MORE COUPLES, dancing beneath the stars at this visually stunning, spectacular event. We land on Penelope, wearing a surprisingly beautiful, NON-YELLOW GOWN. She's eyeing the dancers from the sidelines again, looking for someone...

COLIN (O.S.)
Pen!

She sees him approaching. Plays it cool.

PENELOPE
Colin. I did not know you would be here.

COLIN
Sorry to disappoint. Have you seen Miss Thompson?

PENELOPE
She is... ill. My mama stayed home with her. Papa had to chaperone.

They look over to see Lord F, guffawing with the other MEN.
PENELOPE (CONT'D)
I am quite enjoying the fact he is here. Mama would never allow me to wear a dress like this. Not yellow enough, I think.

They smile. Until Penelope spots Cressida, glass of punch in hand, approaching with her minions. *These bitches.*

CRESSIDA
Mister Bridgerton, I believe you owe me a dance this evening. And I have only one more space remaining on my card. *At present.*

PENELOPE
(under her breath)
How convenient.

Cressida goes to retrieve her card. But as she does, she accidentally spills her punch. All over Penelope's dress.

CRESSIDA
Penelope! I did not see you there! *Yet again.*

Penelope stares down at her ensemble. *Ruined.* And as she starts to back away, Colin eyes her. Turns back to Cressida:

COLIN
I am afraid I cannot offer you that dance, Miss Cowper. I am to escort Miss Featherington to the floor. *At present, I think.*

Penelope stops in her tracks, as an incredulous Cressida watches Colin take Penelope's hand, leading her to the floor. Penelope eyes Colin, a little unsure, until they start to dance. And then she breaks into a smile, and then a full-on laugh, before we move... To find Daphne and Violet, entering the fray. And they can't help but notice a few passersby quickly averting their eyes upon seeing them. Daphne steels herself, before spotting Simon, on the other side of the dance floor, surrounded by AMBITIOUS MAMAS AND DAUGHTERS -- all fighting for his attention. As we join them:

AMBITIOUS MAMA
(to Simon)
The resemblance is remarkable. You look just like him. *Your father.*
Simon stares daggers at this woman, about to respond, when--

MASTER OF CEREMONIES (O.S.)
Ladies and gentlemen, a most extraordinary event is about to take place! Right this way! Come! Come!

As everyone's ushered away from the dance floor, we stay on Simon, who turns and goes in the opposite direction of the crowd. Off Simon's dark expression, we move...

EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS/DARK WALK - NIGHT

Simon walks, by himself, down this shady corridor of trees. Sounds of revelers in the distance, as Simon passes a LORD AND LADY getting down and dirty in the dark. A little further and he passes two LORDS having some fun of their own. Finally, Simon finds what he's been hoping to find -- a group of CYPRIAN WOMEN. Simon pauses. Eyeing one woman in particular. And off this, we SMASH TO:

EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS/DARK WALK - NIGHT

As Simon and his lady friend GET TO IT in these shadows. His hands, everywhere. His mouth, hungry. Needy. Before we finally afford these two their privacy and move--

EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS/LANTERN AREA - NIGHT

On the wide-eyed faces of our crowd. Above, as many as fifteen-thousand colorful glass lanterns hang from festoons in trees. Our MASTER OF CEREMONIES stands with three PANDEAN MINSTRELS on a small stage up front.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES
It is with great privilege I present Vauxhall's newest spectacle of illumination! Feast your eyes above! And allow all that is radiant to overwhelm you!

He nods towards an AIDE, who lights a nearby FUSE. Which is when the most glorious, golden-colored light bathes our crowd, as every single one of those lanterns ILLUMINATES! The effect is BREATHTAKING. The crowd GASPS. An awed Daphne looks up, smiling, as MUSICIANS play. Anthony approaches.
DAPHNE
(seeing him)
Is it not the most bizarre...
Look, brother.

But he's not looking. And so now she's looking at him.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
What is it?

And she eyes him as he struggles with this. He takes a beat.

ANTHONY
Lord Berbrooke's barony is over two-hundred years old. His lineage is legitimate. He has had an excellent education. Possesses no debts. Never hurt an animal or a woman and he is even a decent shot. To speak strictly, there is nothing wrong with him.

DAPHNE
What should any of this--

ANTHONY
--You are to marry him.

DAPHNE
Nigel.

They hold each other's gaze. Tense. Before:

ANTHONY
I had to find you a husband, sister. Now be grateful it is done. It should be just as easy for you to fall in love with Lord Berbrooke as with anyone else--

DAPHNE
--I will not hear of this.

And Daphne STORMS away. Off a troubled Anthony, we CUT TO:

80   EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS - NIGHT

Where a furious Daphne paces, alone. Away from the party. We stay on her for a beat, hearing the SOUNDS of partygoers in the distance, until--

NIGEL (O.S.)
What ever are you doing?
Bridgerton Ep 101 "Diamond of the First Water" Pink Shooting 8.5.19 63.

Daphne turns, sees Nigel coming out of the shadows.

DAPHNE
Nigel. Not now.

NIGEL
Nigel? Are we to drop the honorifics so soon? I suppose, as your husband--

DAPHNE
--You will never be my husband. I will never marry you. My brother... He made a mistake.

Nigel eyes her. And as this man takes a rather predatory step forward, we CUT TO:

81 EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS - NIGHT

On a sly Simon, now making his way back to the ball. And he's in his head, his thoughts making him smile, until--

NIGEL (O.S.)
Do you think yourself better than me?

DAPHNE (O.S.)
It would be best for you to leave.

NIGEL (O.S.)
You should be thanking me. I am your last hope. No one WANTS you, Miss Bridgerton--

DAPHNE (O.S.)
--LET GO OF ME!

And now Simon breaks into a run, heading for the trees, ready to save his best friend's sister, until he comes round and spots DAPHNE CLOCKING NIGEL SQUARE IN THE JAW! Nigel goes down. Hard. Even Daphne's surprised by her own strength, as she looks up to lock eyes with Simon.

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
Your Grace. I had no intention...

SIMON
Of knocking the climp flat out? I must say I am impressed.

She eyes him.

DAPHNE
What are you doing out here?

SIMON
Avoiding certain... people.
DAPHNE
People?

SIMON
Mothers. They are people, I suppose.

DAPHNE
You were coming from the Dark Walk. It is merely a few steps away...

SIMON
What would you know of...

DAPHNE
(realizing)
The Dark Walk is merely a few steps away... And I am alone. With two men.

SIMON
I believe you are only with one man, the other is...

DAPHNE
I shall be compromised just the same. I must go.

NIGEL
Marry me... Miss Bridgerton...

And she looks back down at a half-conscious Nigel, who rolls himself over and falls back to sleep.

SIMON
Now as far as proposals go, that may be the least romantic of all.

Daphne sighs. Allows herself a tiny smile.

DAPHNE
I suppose if someone were to find me here, it would be one way out of marrying him.

SIMON
You cannot possibly be thinking of marrying him.
DAPHNE
If I am unable to secure another offer, there may be no alternative. Unlike you, I cannot simply declare I do not wish to marry. I do not have such a privilege.

SIMON
Yes, I was quite surprised to learn you no longer have a line of suitors around every last square in London.

She exhales, frustrated--

DAPHNE
I am in no need of your derision, sir.

SIMON
I do not mock you. I am being sincere.

And now she looks at him. Sees that he means it. A beat.

SIMON (CONT'D)
I know of what this Lady Whistledown has written. Trust I possess as much contempt for the author as you. She has all but issued a challenge to London's most ambitious mamas -- encouraging, provoking them to...

DAPHNE
Claim you as their prize? (then)
Do not worry, Your Grace. I believe such a win would be promptly forfeited, indeed.

And now he looks at her. There's that smile again. Daphne suddenly hears something off in the distance, refocuses--

DAPHNE (CONT'D)
I must... Go this way. You, through those trees--

SIMON
--Perhaps there is an answer. To our collective Lady Whistledown issue.
She slows. She's listening.

SIMON (CONT'D)
We could pretend to form an attachment.

DAPHNE
You and I?

SIMON
With you on my arm, the world will believe I have finally found my Duchess. Every presumptuous mother in town will leave me alone. And every suitor will be looking at you.

(off her look)
You must know men are always interested in a woman if they believe another, particularly a Duke, to be interested as well.

DAPHNE
You presume Lady Whistledown will--

SIMON
--I presume she will deem us precisely what we are: Me, unavailable. You... Desirable.

And she holds his gaze a beat. Until:

DAPHNE
It is an absurd plan.

SIMON
I find it quite brilliant. Provided you do not wish to marry me, and I do not wish to marry you -- what ever should you have to lose? Besides him, of course.

Daphne looks down at Nigel, fast asleep on the ground. Just as we HEAR the WHISTLE OF AN APPROACHING FIREWORK in the distance. Off Daphne, a decision in her hands...

82  EXT. VAUXHALL PLEASURE GARDENS/BALL AREA - NIGHT  82

FIREWORKS soar above, reflecting on the lake below. As COUPLES head to the dance floor, Anthony finds Violet.

ANTHONY
I decided to heed your advice. The opera singer. I am to see her no more.
And Violet eyes him, surprised, when there's a SUDDEN BUZZ about the room, as WHISPERS abound. All discerning eyes turning to... Simon and Daphne. Heading to the center of the dance floor. He takes her in his arms. Daphne looks around. Tense.

SIMON
Stare into my eyes.

And her eyes dart to his. A beat, as they start to move.

DAPHNE
You look quite... serious.

He smiles.

SIMON
Is this better?

She smiles. Relaxing a bit.

SIMON (CONT'D)
Here. Closer. If this is to work, we must appear madly in love.

She moves closer. He moves closer. They stare into each others eyes. They dance. Her breath catches. And now time stands still. As we LIVE in this dance. Because this dance? Is magic. But this dance is also just a charade... right?

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
For those not in attendance at the Vauxhall celebration, you missed the most remarkable coup of the season...

MEN elbow their pals. MAMAS goss furiously. Penelope watches from afar, moved. And Violet stands there, beaming. Before she looks over at Lady Danbury, who smiles right back at her. As these two exchange a subtle nod...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
It appears Miss Daphne Bridgerton has captured the interest of the newly returned Duke of Hastings. Perhaps she is the season's most precious gem -- incomparable and unbreakable -- after all.

We find a seething Anthony, glaring at his sister and Simon...
EXT. BUCKINGHAM HOUSE/FRONT ENTRANCE – DAY

As our serious-looking Queen, trailed by her ladies, stalks towards an apparent commotion on her front steps...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Of course, how Miss Bridgerton secured her newfound suitor is yet to be determined...

And now we see the GUARDS, apparently mid-argument with our Delivery Boy. Everyone stiffens upon seeing the Queen.

QUEEN CHARLOTTE
What is the meaning of this?

GUARD
He is asking for... money, ma'am.

DELIVERY BOY
Whistledown started to charge, Your Majesty. Five pence if you want the latest.

Queen Charlotte blinks. Incredulous. Tense. Until...

QUEEN CHARLOTTE
Well someone pay the boy! At once!

And as someone hands the boy his money, and the Queen snatches up her copy of the latest Whistledown...

INT. UNDISCLOSED LOCATION – NIGHT

CLOSE on A HAND, belonging to SOMEONE, SOMEWHERE, writing...

LADY WHISTLEDOWN (V.O.)
Yet if anyone shall reveal the circumstances of this match, dear reader, it is I. Yours truly. Lady Whistledown.

And as this hand signs the paper with flourish, we have our...

END OF EPISODE
Scene 66: Lively background conversations around the table as the Bridgertons eat dinner with Simon.

ELOISE
You have yet to read what Whistledown writes of the Featheringtons, little sister.

And as this fun, lively conversation resumes, Violet turns to Simon...

HYACINTH
Perhaps if I were allowed to read this paper, I would be much better at this game.

ANTHONY
I cannot help you there, sister.

GREGORY
Am I allowed to read this paper?

ANTHONY
No.

BENEDICT
I shall have all of you know that Bloomsbury is actually quite scenic.

ELOISE
Perhaps it is Lady Richmond.

COLIN
Should you not mean Lord Richmond?

ELOISE
Should you not be off somewhere planning your travels?

HYACINTH
--Gregory! You must stop tossing peas at me!

GREGORY
Those peas were already there! And you cannot tell me what to do. I am older!

HYACINTH
I am taller!

VIOLET
Children!
And as Violet quietly scolds them, everyone falls into conversation amongst themselves. ANGLE ON Francesca and Eloise, hushed:

FRANCESCA
He does have a presence about him...

ELOISE
If rakish Dukes were one's thing.

HYACINTH
What are you two talking about?

ELOISE
Nothing.

HYACINTH
No one ever tells me anything.

ELOISE
Perhaps you should just eat your peas.

FRANCESCA
I thought rakish Dukes were meant to be everyone's thing.

ELOISE
Certainly not mine.

FRANCESCA
You pass judgment much too easily, Eloise.

ELOISE
Only regarding subjects that are much too easy to judge. When do you leave for Bath again?

FRANCESCA
In two days. You are going to miss me.

ELOISE
Miss one less voice to have to speak over? I do not believe so, sister.

We ANGLE ON Colin, leaning across the table to Benedict:

COLIN
I'm to spar with Jackson himself.

BENEDICT
You?
COLIN
Is that envy I detect in your voice?

BENEDICT
Judgment, brother. I shall need to witness this...

COLIN
Come witness it, then. It is happening. Tuesday.

BENEDICT
I will clear my schedule.

COLIN
What better things do you have to do anyway, brother?

BENEDICT
I do things.

COLIN
Such as?

BENEDICT
Things that are none of your business.

COLIN
If you say so. You really try so very hard to be mysterious, do you realize that?

BENEDICT
(shrugs)
Not such a bad thing.

(then)
So tell me. About your upcoming bout with Jackson himself.

COLIN
It is a sparring session, only. Not a bout.

BENEDICT
At least that is what you hope.