

LADY EUGENIA sides

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LORD ADALBERT

The venison is too rich. Take it away!

(Belching.)

This cook will kill me yet.

(MONTY nearly chokes on his food.)

START

So—what do you make of the castle, Novello?

MONTY

Oh, it's magnificent. Don't you think so, Phoebe?

PHOEBE

Oh, yes, marvelous!

LADY EUGENIA

It's falling apart and reeks of mildew.

(A beat.)

Not unlike my husband.

LORD ADALBERT

The men who have defended these walls! And brought honour to the name of D'Ysquith!

(LORD ADALBERT gestures to the medieval weaponry in the room.)

You see that broadsword over there? Roland, the second Earl, eviscerated his very own brother!

LADY EUGENIA

Really, Adalbert!

LORD ADALBERT

That crossbow? Belonged to my grandfather Charles. The details of the accident remain rather vague...

LADY EUGENIA

Let's leave it at that, shall we?

(LORD ADALBERT gets up from the table and takes a rifle off the wall.)

LORD ADALBERT

And I must show you the weapon I used to defend the Empire during the Boer War.

LADY EUGENIA

Really, Adalbert, *must* you?

(To her GUESTS:)

I beg you, I beg you not to encourage him!

LORD ADALBERT

It was the battle of Majuba Hill back in '81. The Boers stormed the mountain, we were completely surrounded.

(Reliving it:)

In the panic, Jurgen, my loyal young Transvaalian valet, suddenly revealed himself as a Boer. He was a turncoat, cornering me with my own weapon...

(HE handles it lovingly.)

Martini-Henry Mark II! Ever fired one?

(HE points it at EVERYONE around the table.)

LADY EUGENIA

Adalbert, sit down at once.

(HE does.)

LORD ADALBERT

Yes, I have looked death in the face. And death looked right back.

(MUSIC starts under.)

LADY EUGENIA

Here we go again...

END

#20 – *Looking Down the Barrel of a Gun*

LORD ADALBERT

WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN THE BARREL OF A GUN,
IT CONCENTRATES THE MIND COMPLETELY,
AND SUDDENLY YOU FIND
A LOVE FOR HUMANKIND
THAT MAKES YOU LOOK UPON THE WORLD MORE SWEETLY.

WHEN ALL AT ONCE IT SEEMS YOUR LIFE IS DONE,
YOU RECOGNIZE IT ALL GOES BY SO FLEETLY.
THERE'S SO MUCH LEFT TO DO,
EXCEPT, OF COURSE, FOR YOU,
WHEN YOU'RE LOOKING DOWN THE BARREL OF A GUN.

PHOEBE

Oh, this trifle is delicious!

(LORD ADALBERT looks as if HE might eat his dessert, but then pushes it toward SIBELLA).