

**THE COURTSHIP OF WINIFRED EDWARDS**

**Sample Packet**

By Maggie Smith

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**SYNOPSIS:** Set in 1890s America, *The Courtship of Winifred Edwards* tells the story of two families in the process of becoming one. When Winifred leaves her handkerchief at a dinner party, Anthony Tailor becomes convinced she did so as a means of gaining his attention. He enlists his cousin, Georgia, to help him return the handkerchief and scout out Winifred's feelings for him. But it's never that simple, is it?

### **THE EDWARDSSES**

**WINIFRED** — 21; the family's oldest daughter; independent, full of energy,

**OTTILIE** — 19; the family's youngest daughter; a gossip who's interested in anything you have to say

**ELEANORA** — 40s; the family's mother; desperate for perfect daughters and a happy home

**GRANVILLE** — 40s; the family's father; kind, honest, and straightforward

### **THE TAILORS**

**GEORGIA** — 21; Clarence's niece, Anthony's cousin; quick-witted and sarcastic

**ANTHONY** — 23; Clarence's son, Georgia's cousin; a romantic, chasing love

**CLARENCE** — 40s; Georgia's uncle, Anthony's father; generous and intelligent

### **THE WOODSES**

**VICTOR** — 24; the family's only son; charismatic, always found lounging where he ought to not be

**CHARLOTTE** — 19; the family's only daughter; a busybody who's friends with everyone

### **SETTING**

New York, 1899

**ACT ONE**  
**SCENE FIVE**  
**IT'S LIKE THE LAST SUPPER, BUT VICTORIAN AND NO ONE DIES**

*[The Tailors' dining room. The families sit around a long table, the adults at one end and the younger generation on the other. The meal is near its end, no one really eating anymore. It's all conversation.]*

ELEANORA

And, I've been reading!

CLARENCE

Reading?

ELEANORA

All sorts of books! Granville has a whole room devoted to them.

GRANVILLE

It's a library.

ELEANORA

I picked one up— Dreadful book, all sorts of gore and flesh. So distasteful. Unacceptable for a woman to read, let alone write, this *Frankenstein*. I couldn't put it down.

*[The conversation fades out.]*

VICTOR

She couldn't put it down?

WINIFRED

She likes what's distasteful. She needs something to read that she can gasp about in front of other people so they can ask her what's wrong.

*[CHARLOTTE whispers in OTTILIE'S ear. OTTILIE gasps.]*

WINIFRED

A familial trait, clearly.

ANTHONY

What is it?

OTTILIE

What's what?

ANTHONY

The gasping. What did Charlotte tell you?

OTTILIE

Oh, you wouldn't be interested.

ANTHONY

Suit yourself.

OTTILIE

No, wait—

*[The adults' conversation fades in.]*

CLARENCE

I do hope I'm not intruding, but how is your family doing?

GRANVILLE

Well, given the circumstances. The girls are still in mourning. Right, Winifred?

WINIFRED

Hmm?

VICTOR

You're in mourning.

WINIFRED

Oh, heavily. Can't stop with the mourning, me.

ELEANORA

The poor girl can't keep her head on straight. I keep catching her forgetting to wear her mourning clothes, of course I never remind her to change, black just doesn't suit her.

WINIFRED

Not in the slightest. Mother, how was your day?

ELEANORA

I saw a cat in the street this morning...

*[The adults' conversation fades out.]*

ANTHONY

How'd you do that? I can never get my dad to take focus off of me.

WINIFRED

I just ask her questions. And then she'll trail for a while.

ANTHONY

And it's the same with Otilie?

WINIFRED

The exact same. Otilie?

OTTILIE

Yes?

WINIFRED

What are you thinking about?

OTTILIE

I saw a cat in the street this morning with Mom. And you'll never guess who it belonged to.

GEORGIA

Now why would you ask her an open-ended question?

WINIFRED

As an example for Anthony.

*[The adults' conversation fades in.]*

CLARENCE

My son's preparing to take over the shop, now that he's old enough. You're looking at what could soon be this city's finest watch repairman.

GRANVILLE

Forgive me if I'm wrong, but hasn't he been preparing to take over the shop for some time now?

CLARENCE

I'm not dead yet and he's not good at the job.

*[The conversation fades out.]*

CHARLOTTE

Bad at your job, Anthony?

ANTHONY

I'm not bad at it.

GEORGIA

He's horrible.

ANTHONY

No!

GEORGIA

One time my uncle gave him a watch to repair on his own and he lost the whole watch.

ANTHONY

People lose things all the time.

GEORGIA

Not things that belong to other people!

WINIFRED

Now, we can't blame Anthony for losing the man's watch.

ANTHONY

Thank you.

WINIFRED

We have to blame the man for entrusting it to him in the first place.

ANTHONY

Wait, no.

VICTOR

Do you even want to repair watches, Anthony?

ANTHONY

I don't mind it one way or the other.

GEORGIA

Learn to have an opinion.

ANTHONY

*[Genuine]* Do you really think I should?

GEORGIA

Oh my God.

GRANVILLE

I should say, before this all ends, that I really am grateful you gave us the opportunity for both of our families to see each other again. And the Woods'.

CLARENCE

You know how much the children enjoy seeing each other.

ELEANORA

I wouldn't call them children anymore. Your Anthony will be marrying soon, I'm sure. A handsome young man, you must be so proud.

CLARENCE

Soon, I should hope. When I met his mother...

*[The conversation fades.]*

VICTOR

Any fiancées we should know about, Anthony?

ANTHONY

I will kill you.

VICTOR

Do it quickly, I'd like to go home soon.

GEORGIA

Winnie, are you sure you can't stay later? Maybe you could stay the night in the guest bedroom?

WINIFRED

My mom won't allow me to stay the night anywhere but home anymore.

GEORGIA

She used to let you sleep here all the time when we were growing up.

WINIFRED

She just learned about scarlet fever and is afraid of me going places if she can't keep an eye on me.

GEORGIA

But scarlet fever was ages ago.

WINIFRED

Yeah. It was. She tends to learn things about ten years too late.

OTILIE

Winifred...

WINIFRED

What?

OTILIE

Don't be mad.

WINIFRED

Christ...

OTILIE

I spilled wine on your dress.

GEORGIA

Didn't I get you that dress, Winnie?

WINIFRED

Otilie Edwards, I'll wring your neck.



*[GRANVILLE, CLARENCE, and ELEANORA rise.]*

GRANVILLE

Thank you again for a lovely evening.

CLARENCE

I hope to see you all again soon.

ELEANORA

Oh, my coat. My coat. Girls, do either of you know where my coat is?

WINIFRED

Otilie does.

OTTILIE

I do not.

WINIFRED

She said she'll help you put it on.

OTTILIE

No, I didn't. I don't want to do that.

ELEANORA

Oh, wonderful! Otilie?

OTTILIE

Yes, Mother.

*[OTTILIE rises to help ELEANORA.]*

OTTILIE

I hope you choke to death on that fork.

ANTHONY

Please don't. I spent so long polishing it.

GEORGIA

It looks like you're going, then?

WINIFRED

It's not like I can keep them from leaving.

GEORGIA

We'll see you soon?

WINIFRED

I'll call for you on Tuesday. We have plants in the garden I want to show you.

GEORGIA

Tuesday? You won't call for me tomorrow?

WINIFRED

I'm sure I'll see you then, too.

GRANVILLE

Winifred, come along.

WINIFRED

Coming, Father!

*[GRANVILLE exits the room, leaving WINIFRED to follow. Before exiting the doorway, she waves goodbye. While she waves, she drops her handkerchief, which lands on the dining room table. WINIFRED exits. VICTOR rises.]*

VICTOR

That was uneventful. Wasn't it?

CHARLOTTE

Agonizingly so.

VICTOR

Come on. Mom and Dad will be waiting for us.

CHARLOTTE

No, they won't.

VICTOR

I know, but I thought it would be fun to keep up a facade. Let's go.

*[CHARLOTTE rises.]*

VICTOR

We'll be back tomorrow.

ANTHONY

We didn't invite you over.

CHARLOTTE

Eleven o'clock.

GEORGIA

See you then.

*[VICTOR and CHARLOTTE leave. GEORGIA stands and begins collecting plates and silverware.]*

GEORGIA

My favorite part of the dinner party.

ANTHONY

What?

GEORGIA

When everyone leaves. Can you pick up all of the napkins and bring them into the kitchen?

*[GEORGIA carries the dishes out of the room. ANTHONY stands, and picks up the napkins. As he moves to the exit, he sees the handkerchief left on the table. He picks it up, and stares. He can't contain a smile.]*

ANTHONY

Winifred Edwards is in love with me.

*[Transition into:]*

**[END OF EXCERPT**

**For the Full Script, Please Contact: [maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com](mailto:maggiesmithwrites@gmail.com)]**