

Scene 4

*Lord Lovelace and Ada in her parlor.*

*This is a third or fourth date. "Date" isn't the right word. All parents and finances and reputations have conspired to bring them together for this match.*

Start



ADA. I had a thought.

LOVELACE. What kind of thought?

ADA. Well. What if you call me "bird." As a nickname. That's rather lovely isn't it?

LOVELACE. What kind of bird?

ADA. No just "bird." "Birdie." "Hello, bird!" Something.

LOVELACE. *(Trying it out.)* Hello. Bird.

ADA. And what shall I call you? Lord Eagle? Master Hawk?

LOVELACE. Hawks eat birds.

ADA. Ah yes. That would make a poor metaphor for matrimony. One hopes.

LOVELACE. Oh. My sisters wish to offer you their dressmaker for the wedding. They will make all arrangements. Silks and things.

ADA. How kind of them. Though I do have a fine dressmaker here.

LOVELACE. Theirs is better.

And I've made arrangements for a honeymoon in Ockham. Then on to Somerset. Perhaps a stop at Ashley. I thought we'd retain a London residence—

ADA. Oh we must, we absolutely must keep a home in London. Mr. Babbage's salons and Mrs. Sommerville will have us for dinners and lectures.

LOVELACE. I thought we'd be in London for the birth.

ADA. Oh. Whose?

LOVELACE. Whomever you deliver first. I rather like the name Anne for a girl, George for a boy. Children are God's gift and a man's peace of mind.

ADA. And lectures, I suppose, are neither.

LOVELACE. I have no opinion on lectures.

ADA. A lecture might help you find one.

*A serious turn.*

LOVELACE. Miss Byron. Will you be a good wife to me? I'll thank you to be honest as I know well your...lineage.

ADA. Perhaps a balanced equation is best. I will be as good to you as you are to me.

LOVELACE. It seems I must be frank. We are both aware of your need for a husband of my standing, but I need...a good wife. I am not smitten by your fame nor your father, and I will not take kindly to a life of excessive...attention. I will do everything I can to make you happy but I will expect...domesticity, integrity, fidelity. I'd like to know your mind before we proceed.

ADA. My mind? Well that you cannot have. All else, however, as is a wife's duty, I will give to a loving husband. It seems then that it is *your* mind you need to reckon with before we proceed.

LOVELACE. Yes. Well. Very good then.

And I hope you know that—that I will be devoted to you. And care for you...deeply. And—

*Babbage enters, hurriedly.*

CHARLES. Miss Byron. Hello. I'm so sorry to rush in.

ADA. Charles I didn't expect you until the evening.

LOVELACE. Or at all. Good day.  End

CHARLES. So sorry, didn't see you there. Forgive the intrusion. I took an early train. I had to. You see I think...I think I have a thought.

ADA. Oh my. Shall we walk?

LOVELACE. Now?

CHARLES. That would be most helpful. If I do not interrupt.

LOVELACE. You rather do actually—

ADA. Oh we were just chatting. You don't mind do you darling? When Charles has a thought it's best to take a turn in the garden and extract it for him.

LOVELACE. I don't see why it's so urgent—