

INT. DRAWING ROOM - DAY

[Violet is dressed in black.]

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Of course I've heard. Why else would I be here?

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Robert didn't want you to read about it in a newspaper and be upset.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

He flatters me. I'm tougher than I look.

[Cora sighs.]

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

I'm very sorry about poor Patrick, of course. He was a nice boy.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

We were all so fond of him.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

But I never cared for James. He was too like his mother and a nastier woman never drew breath.

[Cora puts on a smile.]

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Will you stay for some luncheon?

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Thank you.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

I'll let Carson know.

[Cora heads for the door.]

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

I've already told him. Shall we sit down?

[They sit.]

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Do you know the new heir?

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Only that there is one.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

He's Robert's third cousin, once removed. I have never, well, to my knowledge, set eyes on him.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Of course, if your late husband hadn't forced me to sign that absurd act of legal theft--

[Violet puts up a hand.]

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

My dear, I didn't come here to fight. Lord Grantham wanted to protect the estate. It never occurred to him that you wouldn't have a son.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Well, I didn't.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

No...you did not. But when Patrick had married Mary, and you grandson been hailed as master, honour would have been satisfied. Unfortunately, now...

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Now a complete unknown has the right to pocket my money, along with the rest of the swag.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

The problem is, saving your dowry would break up the estate. It would be the ruin of everything Robert's given his life to.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

And he knows this?

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Well, if he doesn't, he will.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Then there's no answer.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Yes, there is, and it's a simple one. The entail must be smashed in its entirety, and Mary recognized as heiress of all.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

There's nothing we can do about the title.

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

No. She can't have the title. But she can have your money. And the estate. I didn't run Downton for thirty years to see it go lock, stock, and barrel to a stranger from God knows where.

CORA, COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

Are we to be friends, then?

VIOLET, DOWAGER COUNTESS OF GRANTHAM

We are allies, my dear, which can be a good deal more effective.