

*The Corsican
Brothers*

EXTRACT. SCENE 2
(On the side
of a mountain road)

It is dark. The only light comes from the headlights of a car. Lydia is near to the car, gasping after having been sick. Lucien is standing a short distance away.

LUCIEN I drove too fast.
You are not used to the mountains.

LYDIA (shakily) It wasn't the driving.
Where is this ?

LUCIEN A few miles from my house. You can rest there.

LYDIA Are you the man who was supposed to meet me ?

LUCIEN Supposed to meet you ?

LYDIA (incredulous) I mean, are you the man from the agency ? The taxi-driver ? A driver was supposed to meet me. To drive me to the villa. It was supposed to take forty minutes. There's a maid there, making dinner. I should have been there by now. Tell me what's happening.

LUCIEN I had to take you away.

LYDIA Who are you ? Are you the police ?

LUCIEN I didn't want but I had to.

LYDIA Who are you ? Go to your house ? I'm not going to our house, I don't even know you.

LUCIEN I'm not the police.
I had to take you away, believe me. Believe me.
(English) My word of honour.



LYDIA How do you know I'm English ? How do you know ?

LUCIEN I saw on your label.

LYDIA What label ? I don't have a label.

LUCIEN On your case.

LYDIA (suddenly alarmed) My case.

LUCIEN In the car. Safe.

LYDIA Safe.

Pause

LUCIEN Take some deep breaths.

LYDIA You can't hurt me. Because I'm waiting to do lots of things, there are lots of things I haven't done yet.

LUCIEN I'm not going to hurt you. I don't mean you any harm.

LYDIA It isn't over. I haven't finished yet.

LUCIEN Take some deep breaths.

LYDIA I can scream.

LUCIEN Don't scream.

LYDIA I can scream very loudly, I've practised screaming for when this happens. I can scream so loud that I wake the dead.

LUCIEN You will keep your mouth shut. What gives you the right to come here, screeching out your lungsful of fear into our silence ?

LYDIA (shocked) I wasn't frightened before I stepped off the plane.

LUCIEN Yes you were. All you people are white with fear.

Pause

LYDIA How dare you ? How dare you shout at me, when... when... (she is trying not to cry)

LUCIEN Forgive me.

LYDIA Sit... I have to sit down. (she does so)

Pause

LUCIEN Forgive me.

LYDIA What ?

LUCIEN Forgive me.

I am not used to the words.

I am not used to being gentle.

I thought I should take you to my house. I don't know why.

I was wrong. I will look at the address on your case, I will drive you to your villa, I will see you safely inside and I will leave you.

LYDIA (*calmer*) You would just go ?

LUCIEN I would just go.

Then you must do what you have to do.

LYDIA What do you mean ?

LUCIEN Please take some deep breaths. We are high here and the air is fresh. Come.

She stands up and begins to breathe deeply

LYDIA I can smell sea.

I can smell wonderful things. Green things. Green and wet.

LUCIEN Come over here. (*She goes*)

That's the sea. That blackness.

My ancestors stood on this mountain and watched for danger, stealing in with the waves, The sea only brings bad things. And yet without it we would not be Corsica. You too live on an island.

LYDIA It doesn't seem like one.

Pause

LUCIEN Of what ?

LYDIA Like a blind person. I don't know where the ground is. And there are no clues; no soft voices, no movement. I have never known such silence.

Pause

LUCIEN I'll drive you to your villa.

(*He starts toward the car*)

LYDIA Is that your village ?

LUCIEN (*looking*) That's the graveyard. The best views here
are reserved for the dead.
The village is just further on.

(*He starts to go again*)

LYDIA I will come to your house.

LUCIEN (*hesitating*) I was only going to take you to my
house because I couldn't leave you where you were.

LYDIA That's all right. I can just recover myself. Do you
live alone ?

LUCIEN With my mother.
Forget what you saw.

LYDIA What ?

LUCIEN That is that I wanted to tell you : forget what you
saw. Do you understand ?

LYDIA I understand the words.

Pause

LUCIEN Come back with me.

(*He heads towards the car*)

LYDIA Wait.

She wipes her shoes on the grass

There was blood on my shoes.

He looks at her but says nothing.

Blackout

FRANCIS AÏQUI, Corsican playwright living in Ajaccio, has had his plays performed at the Edinburgh Festival and at the Bridge Lane Theatre, London, as well as at the Point Theatre and the Aghja, Ajaccio.

HELEN EDMUNDSON is one of the most interesting young playwrights in contemporary Britain. She also writes television films like *One Day* for the BBC and *Stella* for Channel Four.

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