

### Casting Notes:

Announcer: Someone warm and authoritative with a good radio voice. The hosts of old-time suspense and horror radio, say Ernest Chappell or Arch Oboler would be good models.

Receptionist: Female, middle-aged, professional.

Nurse: Also female, perhaps a bit younger and warmer in self-presentation than the Receptionist.

Briony: College girl, but mature for her age, which is 18 to 19 over the course of this story. Speaks in standard middle-American English, perhaps just a little on the high-strung side except when she's in a hypnotic trance, when her voice falls to a calm contralto.

Dr. Gneiss. Middle-aged woman and motherly in her tone, with a trace of a Germanic accent.

The Pharmacist: Can be any gender or ethnic background. Speech is fairly crisp and professional.

Grandmother Carrara: Cranky woman about 80, old-worldish and perhaps with an Italian or other non-native English accent.

Voice of Leopardi: The ideal performer for this role would be a male actor who is a native Italian speaker. Leopardi is one of the greatest of all Italian poets, so it would be good to do the one bit of him quoted in Italish justice.

Woman Classmate. Voice performance should suggest a young woman (perhaps about 19) who's cute and bubbly.

Miss Zerkalova. A woman not much older than Briony, she normally speaks in a Russian or at least Slavic accent, except when she's imitating Briony, in which case she sounds rather like Briony to someone who isn't listening carefully and doesn't know Briony well.

The Marquis. Middle-aged, immensely refined and well spoken, with a distinct but not thick and also perhaps hard-to-place European accent.

1 INT. RADIO STUDIO - DAY  
(Announcer)

OPENING THEME MUSIC

Radio studio with optimal acoustics. An ANNOUNCER introduces the drama.

(1) ANNOUNCER  
Ladies and Gentlemen and those who might be beyond such categories, welcome. Wherever and whenever you might be listening, Rational Public Radio is proud to bring you a new entry in the series Thaumatophile Dreams. In this program, "To Reach Her Highest Potential," an attractive woman college student seeks professional help for dealing with a routine problem, and ends up achieving something she would never otherwise have imagined. We join our story as that college student, Briony Carrera, sits in a waiting room for an appointment with psychiatrist Dr. Gneiss.

2 INT. RECEPTION AREA DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Receptionist, Nurse)

The waiting room of a psychiatric practice, where BRIONY CARRARA is waiting for her appointment. The acoustics of this office are soft and quiet due to carpet, plush seating, and so on. CLASSICAL MUSIC plays softly in the background. The quiet is broken only by the TRILLING of an office telephone, which is answered after one ring by the RECEPTIONIST.

(2) RECEPTIONIST  
(in background)  
Dr. Gneiss's office.  
(pause to hear other  
end of conversation)  
Yes, she's available this coming  
Wednesday. Can I get your  
information?

The Receptionist's conversation is interrupted by the sound of a DOOR QUIETLY OPENING (the door between the waiting room and the hallway leading to the rooms where DR. GNEISS practices).

(3) NURSE  
Ms. Carrara? Dr. Gneiss will see you  
now.

Pause as Briony gets up to walk across the reception area,  
the sound of DOOR QUIETLY CLOSING.

3 INT. HALLWAY AT DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Nurse, Dr. Gneiss)

At the sound of the door closing, the background CLASSICAL  
MUSIC ceases.

(4) BRIONY  
I have to say, this is some office.

(5) NURSE  
What do you mean, Ms. Carrara?

(6) BRIONY  
Every other doctor's office I've ever  
been in is so institutional and  
neutral. But this one has all these  
paintings on the walls, fancy  
furniture, sculptures in niches...

(7) NURSE  
Dr. Gneiss believes that being around  
beautiful things helps her patients,  
Ms. Carrara. Here we are.

Sound of the Nurse KNOCKING GENTLY on the door to Dr.  
Gneiss's consulting room.

(8) DR. GNEISS  
(from within)  
Come in!

Sound of DOOR OPENING.

(9) NURSE  
Dr. Gneiss, it's your two o'clock.

(10) DR. GNEISS  
Please show her in and close the  
door.

Sound of DOOR CLOSING.

4 INT. DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss)

- (11) DR. GNEISS  
I'm Dr. Gneiss. You must be Ms. Carrara.
- (12) BRIONY  
I am, but please call me Briony.
- (13) DR. GNEISS  
(with a smile in her voice)  
Briony. An herbal name. It suits a young lady like you. Won't you sit down on the couch there?
- (14) BRIONY  
Thank you, doctor.
- (15) DR. GNEISS  
So Briony, tell me a bit about yourself.
- (16) BRIONY  
I'm a first-year student at Gnosis College, about to start my second semester.
- (17) DR. GNEISS  
Um, hm. And what are studying?
- (18) BRIONY  
I'm thinking of focusing on either art history or philosophy. They both really fascinate me.
- (19) DR. GNEISS  
Well Gnosis will give you a very good education in either. My only advice to you would be not to rush in to one thing. Take your time to appreciate many different subjects. Are things going well at college?
- (20) BRIONY  
I made Dean's List last semester.
- (21) DR. GNEISS  
Oh, congratulations!
- Faint POP of a fountain pen being uncapped.
- (22) DR. GNEISS (cont'd)  
So Briony, what brings you to see me?

Note: whenever Briony speaks below there are faint SCRATCHING SOUNDS, these being Dr. Gneiss taking notes with a fountain pen.

- (23) BRIONY  
Dr. Gneiss, I think I have what are called "body-image issues."
- (24) DR. GNEISS  
Tell me more.
- (25) BRIONY  
I often feel like I look just hideous. I can't stand to look at myself in the mirror. And when people look at my, I keep thinking that they're internally mocking or pitying me.
- (26) DR. GNEISS  
And are they?
- (27) BRIONY  
No! Everyone at college is actually really kind to me. But I just can't shake these feelings.
- (28) DR. GNEISS  
And I bet you have friends who are always telling you there's nothing wrong with the way you look.
- (29) BRIONY  
Yes.
- (30) DR. GNEISS  
Indeed probably many of them even tell you that you're beautiful.
- (31) BRIONY  
Yes.
- (32) DR. GNEISS  
And does that help you with how feel?
- (33) BRIONY  
No. It only makes me wonder what is wrong with me.
- (34) DR. GNEISS  
And are your feelings interfering with you life in any way, I mean, aside from just feeling bad?

- (35) BRIONY  
It gets to the point where I don't feel like going out. I don't like going to parties. I feel awkward around most people. I wear the most shapeless clothes I can. I often try to sit in the back of classes so no one will see me. It's like I'm really missing out on college.
- (36) DR. GNEISS  
Yes, I understand.
- (37) BRIONY  
I remember when I had to take a swim test.
- (38) DR. GNEISS  
A swim test?
- (39) BRIONY  
At Gnosis during your first semester you have to take a swim test. You have to jump in the pool and swim a single lap. If you can't do that, you have to take a swimming class during your first semester.
- (40) DR. GNEISS  
I see.
- (41) BRIONY  
Weird requirement for a college degree, I know. They're aping the Ivy League who are all aping Harvard. Anyway, I remember that when I went to do mine I wore the heaviest, most covering, ugliest swimsuit I could find. I so much didn't want anyone to see me. And even then, the thought of coming out of the locker room made me sick to my stomach.
- (42) DR. GNEISS  
Do you have trouble swimming?
- (43) BRIONY  
No! I was an all-state swimmer when I was in high school.

Or at least I was early in high school, before I started getting a little...big up top, which wasn't good for me as an athlete and also might have been the start of my... issues. I so much didn't want anyone to see me! Only the horrible thought of having to be in that pool twice a week for a semester got me out of the locker room.

- (44) DR. GNEISS  
At least you did get out.
- (45) BRIONY  
And after I was done I went back to my room and huddled under the covers on my bed for an hour, crying.
- (46) DR. GNEISS  
Oh, dear. I'm so sorry to hear that. Tell me, have you had any issues with eating?
- (47) BRIONY  
Such as?
- (48) DR. GNEISS  
Such as not being able to eat, or binging and purging, anything like that?
- (49) BRIONY  
No, doctor. I even checked on my eating with the college nutritionist, and she said I was excellent.
- (50) DR. GNEISS  
Well, that's certainly good to hear. Do you take any drugs, legal or illegal?
- (51) BRIONY  
Uh...
- (52) DR. GNEISS  
Remember that everything said here is strictly confidential.
- (53) BRIONY  
No. Nothing, except for a tylenol from time to time for a headache.

- (54) DR. GNEISS  
And do you drink any alcohol?
- (55) BRIONY  
No, and as you know, I don't go to many parties.
- (56) DR. GNEISS  
Okay, that's all good. Have you tried any other forms of therapy before, for your problems with body-image or anything else.
- (57) BRIONY  
Well, yes. I tried cognitive-behavioral therapy but it didn't seem to help.
- (58) DR. GNEISS  
Interesting. Usually body-image issues like you describe when unaccompanied by eating disorders respond well to cognitive-behavioral therapy. Perhaps we need to try a different approach.
- (59) BRIONY  
I so hope you can help me, doctor.
- (60) DR. GNEISS  
I think I might be able to. But I need to do a little preparation first. What I'd like you to do is make an appointment for this time next week. In the meantime I'm going to write you a script for a little something...
- (61) BRIONY  
I don't know how much I like the idea of any drugs, doctor.

Sound of PEN SCRATCHING ON PAD followed by the TEARING of a single leaf off the pad.

- (62) DR. GNEISS  
This is very mild, really more of an herbal preparation than a drug. All it should do is help take the edge off your anxiety.



(63) BRIONY  
All right, doctor. This time next week.

Sound of DOOR BEING OPENED

(64) DR. GNEISS  
Oh, and Briony, one more thing.

(65) BRIONY  
Yes, doctor?

(66) DR. GNEISS  
When you come next week, be sure to wear the same sort of comfortable, loose clothing you're wearing today. It will be good for your therapy.

5 INT. PHARMACY - DAY  
(Pharmacist, Briony)

Some mild background noise appropriate to such an establishment. 1980s light rock plays in the background.

(67) PHARMACIST  
Next, please.

(68) BRIONY  
Hi. I have a prescription that I'd like filled.

Slight CRINKLE OF PAPER as Briony hands the script over.

(69) PHARMACIST  
Hm. "Lithozine." I've never heard of this before.

(70) BRIONY  
Are you sure you're reading it right?

(71) PHARMACIST  
Let me just look this up.

Sound of TYPING ON A COMPUTER KEYBOARD

(72) PHARMACIST (cont'd)  
Huh. What do you know? It does exist.

(73) BRIONY  
So you can fill my prescription?

(74) PHARMACIST  
Well, we don't have it in stock...

Sound of more TYPING.

(75) PHARMACIST (cont'd)  
...and not none of out other stores  
within thirty miles have it either.  
I could, however, put in an order  
with the manufacturer to overnight it  
here, and you could pick it up  
tomorrow afternoon. Would that work  
for you?

(76) BRIONY  
Yes. It would. Thank you so much.

6 INT. HALLWAY AT DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss)

Shift back to the quiet background of the offices. GENTLE  
KNOCKING on Dr. Gneiss's office door.

Sound of DOOR OPENING.

(77) DR. GNEISS  
Come in, Briony.

Sound of DOOR CLOSING.

7 INT. DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss)

(78) BRIONY  
Thank you, Dr. Gneiss.

(79) DR. GNEISS  
Here, let me take you coat and scarf.  
You're heavily dressed.

(80) BRIONY  
It's awful out there, Dr. Gneiss.  
Gray and cold and sleeting.

(81) DR. GNEISS  
Typical midwestern January. I'll  
hang those up for you. In the  
meantime, please sit down

Sound of CABINET OPENING and then a CABINET CLOSING and then  
a SQUEAK of a chair as Dr. Gneiss sits down.

- (82) DR. GNEISS (cont'd)  
So have you been taking the medicine  
I prescribed for you.
- (83) BRIONY  
Yes. Strange things. Little gelcaps  
that are sparkling golden inside. I  
think they might actually be helping  
with my anxiety a little.
- (84) DR. GNEISS  
Good, good.
- Sound of a FOLDER BEING OPENED by Dr. Gneiss.
- (85) DR. GNEISS (cont'd)  
So I've been thinking about your  
case, Briony, and I think that we  
might want to try a hypnotism  
session.
- (86) BRIONY  
Hypnotism? That sounds...sort of  
weird.
- (87) DR. GNEISS  
(chuckles slightly)  
Oh I know it seems strange in this  
day and age. But hypnotism is  
nothing like what you see in the  
movies. It's just an induced  
somnambulistic state. It isn't mind  
control. It can't make you do  
anything you don't want to do. What  
it can do is create a mental  
permission structure to do things you  
do want to do, but are blocked from  
doing.
- (88) BRIONY  
Well...
- (89) DR. GNEISS  
It's also very safe. Physicians and  
therapists have been using it for  
almost two centuries and no one has  
been hurt yet.
- Brief pause while Briony thinks it over.
- (90) BRIONY  
All right, I'll give it a try.

(91) DR. GNEISS  
Excellent! You just sit there, and  
I'll come over to you.

SQUEAK of chair wheels as Dr. Gneiss moves her chair over to Briony.

(92) DR. GNEISS (cont'd)  
Now, what I would like you to do is  
just relax itty-bitty muscles on your  
face and forehead around you eyes.  
Relax them as much as you can. As  
you do so you should find that your  
eyelids are becoming heavy, so heavy  
that you cannot imagine opening them.  
That's right. Now relax you body,  
deeply, deeply, good. I'm going to  
show you how relaxed you are. I'm  
going to gently lift your right hand  
by the thumb -- don't help me, just  
leave your arm relaxed and let me do  
all the work. And now lifting, and  
dropping it back...

There is a VERY SOFT THUD as Briony's arm falls back.

(93) DR. GNEISS (cont'd)  
...so how relaxed that is. And now I  
am going to raise my hand up past our  
eyes. Will you heavy heavy eyelids  
to open and follow it. Good. And  
now I am going to drop my hand past  
your eyes. As I do, let your eyelids  
drop closed as they relax. Feel the  
wave of relaxation traveling down yo  
body. Imagine yourself becoming twice  
as relaxed as it does. Now I'm going  
to raise my hand again and well  
repeat the cycle...and again...and  
again...and again.  
(pause)  
Now you should be in a fully  
somnambulistic state. Open your eyes  
and look to your left. You should  
see a little screened off area in the  
corner of my office. Do you see it?

Note: while in her trance Briony's voice is deeper and more relaxed than her "normal" tone of speaking. Briony's lines under this condition will be note with the parenthetical "in trance."

(94) BRIONY  
(in trance)  
Yes.

(95) DR. GNEISS  
Good. Now, I'd like you to walk over to that corner and pull the screen so that I cannot see you and you cannot see me. Can you do that?

(96) BRIONY  
(in trance)  
Yes.

SOFT FOOTSTEPS as Briony walks over and then a SLIGHT SCRAPING NOISE as she moves the screen.

(97) DR. GNEISS  
Good. Now, you should see what appears to be a full-length mirror on the wall. Do you see it?

(98) BRIONY  
(in trance)  
Yes.

(99) DR. GNEISS  
When you look into it, what do you see?

(100) BRIONY  
(in trance)  
I see a young woman.

(101) DR. GNEISS  
Very good, Briony. When you look at the young woman, I want you not to think that your looking at yourself. Instead, you are looking at the woman in the glass. Can you do that for me?

(102) BRIONY  
(in trance)  
Yes.

(103) DR. GNEISS  
Excellent. Now, I want you to imagine that you are willing the woman in the glass taking off her sweatshirt and letting it fall to the floor at her feet. Ready?

Slight RUSTLE OF CLOTHING as Briony takes off her sweatshirt and lets it fall hat her feat.

(104) BRIONY

(in trance)  
She is doing it.

(105) DR. GNEISS

Good, and now what do you see?

(106) BRIONY

(in trance)  
She is standing and facing me in her t-shirt.

(107) DR. GNEISS

Can you will her to take off of the t-shirt?

Another SLIGHT RUSTLE OF CLOTHING.

(108) BRIONY

(in trance)  
She is doing it. Now she is facing me in her bra.

(109) DR. GNEISS

Let's see if the woman in the glass will go just a little further. Can you will her to take off her bra?

(110) BRIONY

(in trance)  
I shall try.  
(brief pause)  
She is doing it.

SOFT PLOP as the bra hits the floor.

(111) DR. GNEISS

You must be able to see her bare breasts now. Tell me what they are like.

(112) BRIONY

(in trance)  
They are large and firm and well-formed. I think you might call them voluptuous.

(113) DR. GNEISS

Try willing her to lift them up and squeeze them together.

- (114) BRIONY  
(in trance)  
She must have very nice cleavage.
- (115) DR. GNEISS  
Now will her to drop them, all of a sudden.
- (116) BRIONY  
(in trance, faint giggle)  
They bounce and jiggle!
- (117) DR. GNEISS  
Okay, I think that is enough for one session. Will the woman in the glass to dress herself back up.

SLIGHTLY MORE PROLONGED RUSTLE OF CLOTHES as Briony dresses back up.

- (118) DR. GNEISS (cont'd)  
Now come back here and sit down facing me.  
(pause)  
Good. Now, when I snap my fingers I want you to come out of your somnambulistic state. You will not remember what happened, but I want you to keep, deep in your mind, your memory of how beautiful the woman in the glass was. Ready?

SOUND OF DR. GNEISS'S FINGERS SNAPPING

- (119) BRIONY  
Oh! I feel like I was just asleep?  
Did something happen?
- (120) DR. GNEISS  
Something good I think, Briony. This is only the first session and you will probably need many more. But I think you're on the road to a better place.

TRANSITIONAL MUSIC INDICATING PASSAGE OF SEVERAL WEEKS

8 INT. DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss)

Sound of DOOR CLOSING.

- (121) DR. GNEISS  
Well good afternoon. Briony. I see you've dressed up for this appointment!
- (122) BRIONY  
Well, I just...felt a like I'd try on this pencil skirt and blouse today, seeing as the forysthia are bloom and the snow is finally melting. I feel...comfortable in it
- (123) DR. GNEISS  
Well then, perhaps your therapy is working, yes?
- (124) BRIONY  
(giggles a little)  
Yes, perhaps.
- (125) DR. GNEISS  
So, are you still taking your medicine.
- (126) BRIONY  
I am. I can't say what it is doing for me, but somehow the ritual of taking it twice a day is comforting in itself.
- (127) DR. GNEISS  
Excellent. I shall make sure that you are refilled. In the meantime, before we begin this week's hypnosis session, is there anything you would like to talk about?
- (128) BRIONY  
Well, actually yes.
- (129) DR. GNEISS  
Please, make yourself comfortable on the couch and tell me.
- Note: when Briony speaks below, more PEN SCRATCHING sound effects.
- (130) BRIONY  
I couldn't sleep at all one night.
- (131) DR. GNEISS  
Can you tell me why?



- (132) BRIONY  
I think it happened because of something in my art-history survey class.
- (133) DR. GNEISS  
Did someone do something to upset you?
- (134) BRIONY  
No, but there was something about a work of art we studied.
- (135) DR. GNEISS  
Tell me more.
- (136) BRIONY  
Do you Gian Lorenzo Bernini's Apollo and Daphne?
- (137) DR. GNEISS  
Yes. It's very famous.
- (138) BRIONY  
It's so striking, as if Bernini could capture a moment in stone the way a camera captures a picture. And the work is so fine, right down to little leaves sculpted of marble in the branches extended from Daphne's fingertips as she transforms into a laurel tree.
- (139) DR. GNEISS  
And how did that deprive you of sleep?
- (140) BRIONY  
I felt so...exhilarated thinking about it. My heart was beating fast, for hours. And the thought of transformation made me feel incredibly turned-on.
- (141) DR. GNEISS  
Did you masturbate?
- (142) BRIONY  
What?

(143) DR. GNEISS  
Did you masturbate? Did you try to  
pleasure yourself in response to the  
fantasy of transformation?

(144) BRIONY  
You don't think that's sick or wrong?

The PEN-SCRATCHING of Dr. Gneiss's note-taking stops.

(145) DR. GNEISS  
Briony, as a professional therapist I  
hear a lot of sexual fantasies from  
my clients, many of which are far  
more peculiar than yours, some of  
which indeed might make you  
outraged...or sick to your stomach.  
But for them, that's what works.  
There is no harm in taking pleasure  
in your fantasies, doing so hurts no  
one. And I want you to take it from  
me: life is too short, and too filled  
with suffering, that we can afford to  
throw away pleasure when it happens  
to come our way. My advice to you is  
that if this happens again, you  
should pleasure yourself and then  
just relax and go to sleep. You  
won't be sorry about it at all.

Short pause as Briony takes this in.

(146) BRIONY  
Okay, I'll try that.

(147) DR. GNEISS  
Good. Now, are we ready for another  
session of hypnosis?

(148) BRIONY  
Yes. I'm ready.

TRANSITIONAL MUSIC INDICATING PASSAGE OF SEVERAL WEEKS

9 INT. HALLWAY AT DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Dr. Gneiss)

KNOCKING at the door Dr. Gneiss's office.

(149) DR. GNEISS  
(from within)  
Come in!

Sound of DOOR OPENING.

10 INT. DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss)

(150) DR. GNEISS  
Shorts and a halter top, Briony.  
That is a change.

(151) BRIONY  
It's very hot outside, Dr. Gneiss.

(152) DR. GNEISS  
It certainly is. Why not sit down on  
the couch and cool down?

(153) BRIONY  
I have something to show you. It's  
in my handbag.

SHUFFLING as Briony pulls something out of the handbag.

(154) DR. GNEISS  
Well, this is about the tiniest  
bikini I've ever seen -- a little  
thong for the bottom and two tiny  
triangle of fabric at the top. I  
suppose it would cover what social  
convention requires women to cover,  
albeit only barely. Why bring it to  
me?

(155) BRIONY  
I wore this recently, Dr. Gneiss.

(156) DR. GNEISS  
You wore it. In public?

(157) BRIONY  
At a recent family reunion. At Lake  
Montoosuc.

(158) DR. GNEISS  
(obviously fascinated  
by this development)  
Tell me more.

(159) BRIONY  
I put it on in the little changing  
hut they have for swimmers.

And then I shimmied and jiggled in it right down the beach in front of the assembled Carrara clan.

(160) DR. GNEISS  
Really! And how did that make you feel?

(161) BRIONY  
I could feel the eyes of everthing male from ages eight to eighty in sight on me. And a few of the women too, I suspect. And how did it make make me feel? I felt magnificent! I felt like I was glowing. I felt like was the goddess at the center of the world.

(162) DR. GNEISS  
Well, I suppose perhaps your body-image issues are a thing of the past.

(163) BRIONY  
And afterwards I got a furious lecture from my grandmother.

MUSIC STING TO INTRODUCE FLASHBACK

11 FLASHBACK -- GRANDMOTHER CARRARA  
(Grandmother Carrara)

(164) GRANDMOTHER CARRARA  
Do you think your beauty is something to exploit, you little slut! What decent man will have a girl you, who parades herself around like that! Mark my words, that beauty of your will fade far faster than you know. Your boobs will droop, your skin will wrinkle, and what jiggles will be fat in all sorts of place you don't want it to be!

## 12 BACK TO SCENE

(165) BRIONY  
 I don't care about any of that old-world crap about whether any man will "have me," but it was a real downer having to think about aging, especially in immediate aftermath of that glowing experience. It sure makes the Who's lyric "I hope I die before I get old" stand out with real force.

(166) DR. GNEISS  
 You don't think that line is just an expression of adolescent rebellion?

(167) BRIONY  
 Are you familiar with Giacomo Leopardi, Dr. Gneiss?

(168) DR. GNEISS  
 A central figure in European literature, of course.

(169) BRIONY  
 I learned about him only last semester. One of his aphorisms keeps running through my head.

ITALIANATE MUSIC INDICATING A TRANSITION TO AN IMAGINED SCENE

13 INTERPOLATED IMAGINE SCENE -- LEOPARDI SPEAKING  
 (Voice of Leopardi)

(170) VOICE OF LEOPARDI  
 La morte non è male: perché libera l'uomo da tutti i mali, e insieme coi beni gli toglie i desiderii. La vecchiezza è male sommo: perché priva l'uomo di tutti i piaceri, lasciandogliene gli appetiti; e porta seco tutti i dolori. Nondimeno gli uomini temono la morte, e desiderano la vecchiezza.

## 14 BACK TO SCENE

- (171) BRIONY  
"Death is not an evil, because she frees us from all evils, and together with blessings she takes away the desire for them. Old age is the highest evil, because it takes away all pleasures, leaving in place the desire for them, and bringing along with all sorts of suffering. All the same, people fear death and desire old age."
- (172) DR. GNEISS  
You really feel that way?
- (173) BRIONY  
Most of the time, yes. It's a real downer. I seem to have gotten rid of my body-image issues for a far worse obsession.
- (174) DR. GNEISS  
Briony, we all age. It is the way that nature has marked out for us.
- (175) BRIONY  
Nature? What do any of us owe to nature? Remember what John Stuart Mill wrote about it? "Killing, the most criminal act recognized by human laws, Nature does once to every being that lives; and, in a large proportion of cases, after protracted tortures such as only the greatest monsters whom we read of ever purposely inflicted on their living fellow creatures."
- (176) DR. GNEISS  
(dryly)  
I see you have been excelling in your studies of philosophy as well as literature.
- (177) BRIONY  
I know it sounds stupid and immature, but it feels outrageous that I should have to grow old.

(178) DR. GNEISS  
There is no answer to that, save that we are powerless against the forces of time. There is hope in therapy for overcoming the suffering we face as a result.

(179) BRIONY  
Is there no alternative?

Dr. Gneiss is silent for a few seconds before responding.

(180) DR. GNEISS  
Are you still taking the medication I prescribed for you when we first met?

(181) BRIONY  
Yes.

(182) DR. GNEISS  
Regularly? As instructed?

(183) BRIONY  
Yes.

(184) DR. GNEISS  
Then there is an alternative. It is Daphne's way.

(185) BRIONY  
I don't understand.

(186) DR. GNEISS  
The medication you have been taking contains as one of its components a mineralizing catalyst. The quantity is too small to be detected by conventional assay techniques, but as you have now been taking the medication for over a year a critical mass should be now have built up in every cell of your body. For that matter, it should be built up in your non-living tissues as well, such as you hair and nails. The catalyst can be activated by the right concentration of your own erotic energies. Like Daphne you could have your own transformation.

(187) BRIONY  
You had me take this medicine knowing that it would have this...effect?

(188) DR. GNEISS  
I sensed from the very beginning that you were longing for some sort of transformation. So I decided to make it possible for you to have a choice, something that takes long preparation. Most young women never get this choice, but you will. You can of course always decline the transformation. Walk out the door right now and never see me again. Throw the medication away and never take any more: it will wash out of your system entirely in time. But somehow, I suspect you won't do that.

(189) BRIONY  
I...I really have no idea what to say.

MORE DRAMATIC TRANSITIONAL MUSIC INDICATING PASSAGE TO ANOTHER SESSION

15 INT. DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss)

(190) BRIONY  
When you first suggested it, what you call my "transformation" seemed like the most obscene thing imaginable.

(191) DR. GNEISS  
But your view changed?

(192) BRIONY  
As I lie in bed at night I think about it and the prospect seems so exciting. To shrug off a life that's going to be mostly suffering -- as all human lives are, I have been convinced of that by Schopenhauer -- and become a source of joy for hundreds of generations.

(193) DR. GNEISS  
Do you take my advice on what to do when you feel like this?



(194) BRIONY  
This fantasy -- if that is what it is -- has turned me into a truly accomplished masturbater, if that is what you mean.

(195) DR. GNEISS  
And you are still taking your medicine?

(196) BRIONY  
Yes. Even on the day you first made your obscene suggestion.

There is a pause in the dialog.

(197) BRIONY (cont'd)  
I would want an assurance that I would not just be somehow disposed of after my transformation.

(198) DR. GNEISS  
I can make certain arrangements.

INSTRUMENTAL TRANSITION MUSIC -- IF POSSIBLE A PUBLIC DOMAIN INSTRUMENTAL VERSION OF ISOLDES LIEBESTOD.

16 INT. COLLEGE CAFE - NIGHT  
(Briony, Woman Classmate)

The background noise here is the HUM of activity as students talk, come and go, sound of espresso machines working.

(199) WOMAN CLASSMATE  
So, what did you think of the movie, Briony?

(200) BRIONY  
Well I rather liked it.

(201) WOMAN CLASSMATE  
Ew. I always found David Cronenberg's movies so icky.

(202) BRIONY  
I admire the way he is so forthright about his interest in radical transformation.

(203)                               WOMAN CLASSMATE  
 Want to come to the part at Silliman?  
 They do great drinks and I am can  
 promise there will be a bunch of guys  
 there who will be positively drooling  
 over you. And they'll have a lot of  
 steam to blow off now that the term  
 is ending...

(204)                               BRIONY  
 Can I catch up with you? I'm  
 expecting an important call.

(205)                               WOMAN CLASSMATE  
 At this hour?

CHIRPING of a mobile phone.

(206)                               WOMAN CLASSMATE (cont'd)  
 Oops, I guess I'm wrong. Catch you  
 later, incubator.

(207)                               BRIONY  
 Sure.

SCRATCH of chair as the Woman Classmate gets up to leave.

BEEP as Briony answers her mobile.

(208)                               BRIONY (cont'd)  
 Hello?

(209)                               DR. GNEISS  
                                   (on phone)  
 Briony? It's Dr. Gneiss. I've made  
 some arrangements on your behalf.

(210)                               BRIONY  
 I'm listening.

(211)                               DR. GNEISS  
                                   (on phone)  
 You know how Professor Petrov at  
 Gnosis College leads archaeological  
 expeditions in Varvaria, especially  
 the dig at the lost city of  
 Thaumopolis, where he finds works of  
 Hellensitic art?

(212)                               BRIONY  
 Sure. Slots for students are few and  
 in high demand.

It's considered quite an honor to be chosen to join one of the excavation teams.

(213)

DR. GNEISS

(on phone)

Well congratulations, Briony. Your application to join the expedition has been accepted.

(214)

BRIONY

But I never appl...oh, I see.

(215)

DR. GNEISS

(on phone)

Because of your exceptional record, you're being allowed to join the expedition already in progress. So here is what you need to do. You leave three weeks from today. You're supposed to book a flight to Varvarograd and make your way from the airport to the Hotel Dzerzhinsky. Make arrangements to leave. Book your flight, get your shots, pack your bags. They are supposed to meet you at the airport. On the day you are supposed to depart, bring everything with you that you would be taking on such an expedition -- luggage, money, passport, all of it to my office. Come dressed for travel. You're making one last visit to your therapist to make sure you're in tip-top mental health for the rigors of a six-month archaeological dig. I'll explain the rest of the arrangement to you then.

(216)

BRIONY

Okay.

(217)

DR. GNEISS

(on phone)

In the meantime, be a normal college student. Go to parties, take your exams and do as best you can on them, whatever you do.

(218)

BRIONY

I guess I can begin by going to a party and being drooled over.

- (219) DR. GNEISS  
(on phone)  
Sorry?
- (220) BRIONY  
Just a normal college student thing.
- (221) DR. GNEISS  
(on phone)  
I shall have to take your word for  
it. In the meantime, one last thing?
- (222) BRIONY  
Sure, Dr. Gneiss.
- (223) DR. GNEISS  
Keep taking your medicine. It will  
help.

TRANSITIONAL MUSIC SUITABLE FOR PASSAGE OF THREE WEEK'S  
TIME.

- 17 INT. DR. GNEISS'S OFFICE - DAY  
(Briony, Dr. Gneiss, Miss Zerkalova, The Marquis)

THUD-THUD sound of Briony putting two heavy bags on the  
floor.

- (224) BRIONY  
Oof! Those were heavy.
- (225) DR. GNEISS  
At least you will not have to carry  
them any further.
- (226) BRIONY  
And so now, the "arrangement?"
- (227) DR. GNEISS  
Of course. Miss Zerkalova, would you  
come in please.

There is the SOUND OF A DOOR OPENING AND CLOSING (Note:  
slightly different from the door that Briony normally uses.)

- (228) BRIONY  
(gasps)  
She looks so much like me!
- (229) MISS ZERKALOVA  
That is the idea, darling.

(230) DR. GNEISS  
Why don't you drop your robe and show  
Briony just how much you look like  
her.

Soft PLOP of a robe falling to the floor.

(231) BRIONY  
She...certainly does look like me.  
So what now?

(232) MISS ZERKALOVA  
Your clothes. Give them to me.

(233) BRIONY  
Seriously?

(234) DR. GNEISS  
Yes, all of the, Briony.

(235) BRIONY  
Uh, okay.

(236) DR. GNEISS  
Miss Zerkalova is an actress and a  
model. She has arrived in America on  
a false passport, but not to mind.  
She will be leaving on yours.  
Traveling as you, on your plane  
ticket, with your luggage, wearing  
your clothes. When she lands she will  
enter the country on your visa. And  
then she will make a terrible  
mistake. Although young women  
especially are warned not to take  
unlicensed taxis from the airport to  
their hotels, she will be seen being  
persuaded by a handsome young driver  
to take his. She will get in that  
taxi, it will drive off, and then she  
will disappear, which is not  
difficult, as she can just go back to  
her own identity. As for you, how  
sad! The local police will conduct  
inquiries and come up with nothing.  
There will be speculation that you  
were sold into white slavery or  
murdered by a local serial killer.

(237) BRIONY  
And we do all this because?

- (238) DR. GNEISS  
We have people helping us. It will not do for their interests -- or yours -- to have agents of the state following your real trail. As for your family, well, it will be better for them to face a stereotypical tragedy than an incomprehensible one.
- (239) BRIONY  
I regret the pain I shall cause them, but I just can't not do this.
- (240) MISS ZERKALOVA  
I think it is a very brave and noble thing you are doing. Your clothes seem to fit me very well, it seems.
- (241) BRIONY  
But do you think you can fool people into thinking you are me with your accent?
- (242) MISS ZERKALOVA  
Oh, that.  
(switches to a broad imitation of an American accent)  
I think I can mimic an American pretty well if I need to.  
(switching back to her native accent)  
Your passport, documents, money, pleas?
- (243) BRIONY  
Uh...
- (244) DR. GNEISS  
You will not need any of that where you are going, Briony. Any more than you need your clothes.
- (245) BRIONY  
They're all in this purse.
- (246) MISS ZERKALOVA  
Thank you. And, now, if you do not mind, I have a plane to catch.  
(groans a bit as she lifts a suitcase)  
Uh. Why did you have to pack so heavy?

Sound of DOOR OPENING and then DOOR CLOSING as Miss Zerkalova departs.

(247) DR. GNEISS  
So, now is the time.

(248) BRIONY  
What do I do?

(249) DR. GNEISS  
Do you see that turntable over there  
between the two piece of metal?

(250) BRIONY  
Yes.

(251) DR. GNEISS  
Go and stand on it. Strike your  
pose.

(252) BRIONY  
Okay.

Gentle PAD PAD PAD as Briony walks over to it in her bare feet.

(253) DR. GNEISS  
A lovely pose, Briony. The two  
pieces of metal to either side of you  
are orgone feedback amplifiers.

(254) BRIONY  
They are what?

(255) DR. GNEISS  
They are applications of a technology  
originally developed by Dr. Wilhelm  
Reich. They will reflect back on you  
erotic energies that you create in  
your mind, generating a positive  
feedback reaction.

(256) BRIONY  
And how does that happen?

(257) DR. GNEISS  
Think the thoughts that excite you  
about the possibility of your  
transformation. Vocalize them aloud  
if it helps you.

(258) BRIONY  
Okay...here goes.

(pause)  
 I am so beautiful...and I love the way people look at me, excited by how beautiful I am. I radiate excitement and arouse lust and it reflects back on me...

(pause)  
 ...oh I'm starting to spin...

(259) DR. GNEISS  
 Keep at it, Briony.

(260) BRIONY  
 I love the feel of eyes upon me, moving upon me. And now I know that how beautiful I am will never decay. I am going to become an extraordinary object of beauty. Eyes will move on me for centuries. Hands will move on me in trembling longing.  
 (shift in tone)  
 Oh...I'm feeling hot!

There is a low HUMMING THROBBING NOISE that begins to rise at this point and grows in intensity at this point.

(261) BRIONY (cont'd)  
 I am going to be beautiful forever. I am going to be what no other woman could be.  
 (moans)  
 Oh I can feel the energy beginning to surge and rise through me as I spin. I feel so hot. I feel amazing. I can feel it, the beginnings of energy crackling through me.  
 (gasps and moans)  
 Things, all through me, beginning to shine, melt, release their energies that will transform my body. I can feel it happening.  
 (pants, gasps and moan)  
 Can it really be happening. Can it be really be happening? Yes, I can feel it.  
 (almost howls with pleasure)  
 It's going to happen!

A CRACKLING sound marks the beginning of Briony's physical transformation.



(262)                   BRIONY (cont'd)  
 In my feet first. They're changing!  
 The transformation is moving up my  
 body. Oh God! Oh God! I'm really  
 changing. Up my shins...  
                   (moans)  
 ..up my thighs...Oh I can see it as  
 well as feel it...it's going to hit  
 my  
                   (something like a  
                   shriek of pleasure)  
 ...now my belly oh god oh god not  
 that much of me left now my breasts  
 are hardening perfect shape preserved  
 forever ever ever  
                   (vocalization like a  
                   gurgle)  
 ...ak...

Briony's ability to speak ceases as the transformation engulfs her lungs and then her throat. The CRACKLING NOISE and the HUMMING NOISE both continue until the last bit of Briony's transformation is complete. The process ends with POP and then both the crackling and humming abruptly cease.

Pause, then

(263)                   DR. GNEISS  
 You may come out now, Marquis.

Sound of DOOR OPENING.

(264)                   THE MARQUIS  
 She did it! She actually achieved  
 it! A perfect image of the woman  
 that was in pure white stone!

(265)                   DR. GNEISS  
 I take it you found the experience of  
 watching the transformation  
 satisfying.

(266)                   THE MARQUIS  
 I shall be seeing it in my dreams  
 until my dying day. May I touch her?

(267)                   DR. GNEISS  
 Of course. It is quite safe.

- (268) THE MARQUIS  
Amazing. I can feel through my fingertips the perfection of her curves, her lips, her breasts, her nipples, her buttocks, her lower lips. What a consolation this will be for my older age. Paintings one can no longer see when one's sight fails, as it always does in our family. But the sense of touch... that will not fail. She shall stand in a niche in my private study.
- (269) DR. GNEISS  
Until your life itself fails, of course, Marquis.
- (270) THE MARQUIS  
Yes. As all men's must. And when that day comes I shall have her moved to my garden, where she shall stand amidst the laurels and the spirea, and I shall be buried underneath her.
- (271) DR. GNEISS  
She will outlast the garden I think. She may well outlast the human species itself.
- (272) THE MARQUIS  
(suddenly more businesslike)  
I shall arrange for your compensation, Dr. Gneiss, through appropriate channels.
- (273) DR. GNEISS  
Most generous of you, Marquis. Please make sure to take your prize decently covered and down the back stair. I am sure neither of us wants to have this operation exposed due to a clumsy last-minute
- (274) THE MARQUIS  
Of course. Speaking of which, I take you intend to close your practice?
- (275) DR. GNEISS  
I think that would be prudent, yes. But I shall reopen in another place. Another college town, perhaps.

They make such good grounds for recruiting.

(276) THE MARQUIS  
Recruiting? That's a curious way to describe your activities, doctor.

(277) DR. GNEISS  
I achieve my aims through neither force nor fraud, Marquis. I merely guide others along the way they always wanted to go. I sense desire in others, and then I help them to reach their full potential.

18 INT. RADIO STUDIO - DAY  
(Announcer)

(278) ANNOUNCER  
And there you have it, Ladies and Gentlemen and those who are beyond such categories, our story for this evening.

END.