

THE MAKING OF MR. CARTWRIGHT

Written by  
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Based on the novel  
The Making of Mr. Cartwright

Written by  
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EXT. OPEN AIR MARKET - DAY

Victorian England. Cobblestone streets. Bustling crowds.

MR. THOMAS CARTWRIGHT, 30s, handsome and shy, smiles as he passes the various vendors, each one offering something new.

He sees the FLORIST and steps up onto the sidewalk. He hears a familiar voice, stops, and looks around. He finally sees a pair of attractive women walking down the street.

The ladies each wear a fancy dress and a bonnet. The lady on the left has auburn ringlets. He gasps. It's her, LADY CLARA.

Lady Clara looks up and notices Thomas staring at her.

Thomas drops. He immediately drops to a squatting position behind the large ferns being showcased in front of the shop. He ducks his head. He is too nervous to poke his head out...

LADY CLARA (O.S.)  
Mr. Cartwright?

He hears her, but stays perfectly still.

LADY CLARA (CONT'D)  
Mr. Cartwright, is that you?

Thomas pops up.

THOMAS  
Ah...Lady Clara.

Lady Clara, auburn beauty, and her slightly less pretty brunette friend, Lady Elizabeth, jerk back, startled by his enthusiastic reveal. Lady Elizabeth rolls her eyes and looks away, fanning herself.

THOMAS (CONT'D)  
Good afternoon. I hope you're well.

Lady Clara flashes a dazzling smile.

LADY CLARA  
I am well, thank you, Thomas. What were you doing...down there?

Thomas chuckles as he steps out from behind the ferns.

THOMAS  
Oh, well, um, I was...gathering inspiration...For a new...story I am considering.

Still smiling, but with eyebrow raised.

LADY CLARA  
How is that going?

Thomas shakes his head, unable to speak.

THOMAS  
Yes....yes.

Lady Clara waits for more. Lady Elizabeth lets out a sigh.

LADY ELIZABETH  
Ugh...Let's go.

Lady Clara bows her head at Thomas.

LADY CLARA  
I will leave you to your work.

Thomas bows his head in defeat. A booming voice pops up.

CONNER  
My dear Lady Clara.

CONNER MORGAN, total stud, steps up. Thomas recoils. Clara turns to see who's addressing her. Thomas already knows.

CONNER (CONT'D)  
I hope our friend Thomas was not  
wasting too much of your time.

Conner Morgan is tall with gorgeous blonde hair and mustache, riding pants and a fantastic purple coat. An elegant rapier hangs from his belt. Thomas is not impressed.

THOMAS  
Hello Conner.

CONNER  
Digging through weeds today? I see  
you've moved up slightly in your  
profession.

Lady Clara steps forward.

LADY CLARA  
He's gathering inspiration for his  
next novel.

Thomas perks up, surprised by her intervention.

CONNER

I have no doubt. Truly, Thomas,  
your previous efforts would serve  
the kingdom better as kindling.

Conner turns to Clara.

LADY CLARA

I am pleased to have run into you,  
Lady Clara. I was wondering if you  
would accompany me to the theater  
tonight. It would be a delight to  
sit by your side.

LADY CLARA (CONT'D)

Lord Morgan, I am flattered by the  
request, yet I must decline. I have  
a previous commitment.

Conner chuckles.

CONNER

What plans do you have, may I ask?

LADY CLARA

They are my own, thank you.

He rolls his eyes, then looks over Lady Clara's shoulder at  
her attractive friend. He nudges Lady Clara to the side.

CONNER

Perhaps your beautiful friend would  
be willing to accompany me. My name  
is Conner Morgan. I don't believe  
we've...

ELIZABETH

It's Lady Elizabeth and I'd love to  
join you.

Lady Elizabeth reaches past Lady Clara and places her hand in  
the crook of Conner's arm. Conner cast one more disdainful  
glance and they both walk away.

THOMAS

I hope she was not a part of the  
plans you mentioned.

Lady Clara turns to him.

LADY CLARA

I beg your pardon.

THOMAS

I was only saying. Your companion  
...she left.

She breaks out into a smile.

LADY CLARA

Yes. She did leave. Though I do not  
blame her. Lord Morgan can be quite  
charming when he so chooses.

Thomas laughs. She does not. He stops and looks at his feet.

LADY CLARA (CONT'D)

We were on our way to my carriage.  
Would you care to escort me?

Thomas looks up. Clara raises her hand. He holds out his arm.

THOMAS

It would be an honor.

They head down the walkway. The silence is awkward. He starts  
to speak and stops. She finally speaks up.

LADY CLARA

You do not hold Lord Morgan in high  
regard?

THOMAS

I've known Conner a very long time.

LADY CLARA

I was rather surprised you did not  
respond to his insults.

THOMAS

In my defense, he carries a sword.

LADY CLARA

Surely it is mere decoration. He is  
no soldier, just nobility.

THOMAS

I've seen him use it when we were  
younger. Quite effectively.

LADY CLARA

Still, I doubt he would have run  
through the middle of the market.

THOMAS

I see no reason to meet insult with foolish bravado. What good could possibly come from making a scene?

LADY CLARA

No reaction at all practically invites him to continue.

THOMAS

My inaction is neither cowardice nor submission. Were I to react in the way you suggest, I would be behaving in just the way he would want. I would be descending to his mindset, agreeing to what he determines to be right and wrong.

LADY CLARA

I mean no insult. It's just that the characters in your books are warriors, knights who constantly fight for honor, who never back down from a challenge. I had not expected...well...that.

THOMAS

Writers often craft tales of what they are not, of what they shall never become.

She reaches over and touches his arm lightly.

LADY CLARA

You may have more in common with your characters than I thought. More so than even you realize.

Lady Clara's carriage pulls up. She steps into the open door.

LADY CLARA (CONT'D)

Goodbye, Mr. Cartwright. Thank you.

THOMAS

The honor was mine.

Lady Clara's driver closes the carriage door and circles around to climb up to his seat. With a crack of the reins, the horses start.

Thomas stands still, watching the carriage roll along down the road.