

THE FIXER

By

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Characters & Profiles

Charles Foster	<p>Billionaire American newspaper tycoon. In his 60s. Massively overweight. Belligerent. Used to getting his own way on everything. And he has the money to make anything happen.</p> <p>He loves the aesthetics of all things ancient and to live out his fantasies he has bought a medieval castle in Wales where he entertains the cream of Hollywood society.</p>
Virginia Foster	<p>Charles's long suffering and downtrodden wife. Also, in her 60s. She is very much left out of his double life at the castle.</p>
Jean Davies	<p>A beautiful and successful actress, she is in her 40s and is Charles's mistress. When they are in the castle, away from the prying eyes of the press and gossip columns, they live out a parallel life as a couple.</p>
Clark Cooper	<p>A Hollywood legend. Now in his 50s, He has had an acting career that has spanned decades. He usually plays lovable comic roles. He is the hottest property in Hollywood. He has grown used to being hero worshipped.</p>
Vivian Cooper	<p>Clark's fourth wife. She is a very glamorous model/actress, and she is only 19 years old. Very much in love with her husband but still just a child.</p>
Bertie Weisman	<p>A new name in Hollywood. Mid to late 20s. He has just had his first movie script accepted by a studio. He is a bit of an unknown and lacks the confidence to push himself.</p>
Dorothy Kohl	<p>A very ambitious and beautiful actress. Early 20s. She has given Bertie the impression that she is interested in him, but she just wants to 'use' his recent success to help her get noticed and climb the ladder.</p>
Ivor Davies	<p>He is 'the fixer'. A labourer and handyman who lives in a cottage in the village next to Charles's castle. He has a weathered complexion, with a lined face and deep gaze. He is</p>

Charles's 'man on the ground' who gets things organised and gets Charles and his guests whatever they need.

Everything about him is a contrast with the other characters. He is working class, humble. He has a gruff speaking voice which he uses sparingly. He has a strong Welsh accent, and he dresses in scruffy but practical outdoor clothing of the era. His trousers invariably held up by baling twine rather than a belt.

He is one of that generation of men whose world view has been shaped by having to fight in the First World War, coming home to live through the Spanish Flu epidemic, and then living through the Great Depression. He is a survivor and a grafter but seems to have little room for frivolity or fun in his life.

Agnus	Agnus is Ivor's wife. She has a piercing, screechy voice, and strong Welsh accent. She is a very homely woman with a strong sense of decency and morality. Her relationship with her husband Ivor is strained.
Alice	Charles's assistant
Chef	A cook who has been brought up from London to cater for the event.
Extras	A team of cleaners at the castle Kitchen staff A taxi driver Two uniformed footmen Dinner & party guests at the castle A guest who brings towels to Charles A swing jazz band/orchestra and singer Waiting staff at the dinner. Crowds and paparazzi at a Hollywood movie premier three chauffeurs

Scene One – Clark Cooper’s Pool in Beverly Hills

[Caption: The Home of Clark & Vivian Cooper]

We are looking at a shimmering blue swimming pool in a vast and beautifully landscaped garden. There are palm trees and white marble statues dotted around to create a hint of a classical, theatrical vibe. The sky is cloudless, and the sun is beaming down.

In the foreground there is a garden table and chairs with a tea set on it. There are a couple of parallel sun loungers set out on a lawned area to one side.

Reclining on one of the sun loungers, looking immaculate in swimming trunks and sunglasses is Clark Cooper. He is a Hollywood legend. He is reading a letter in the shade of a parasol.

Even though Clark is in his 50s, his wife, Vivian is only 19. She looks very grown up, but she is just a child. With childish mannerisms.

She skips towards Clark with a huge, enthusiastic, beaming smile. She is wearing a flowing black, silk sarong over a black swimsuit, a wide brimmed black sun hat and black sunglasses.

She sits on the edge of the sun lounge next to him, flings her arms around his neck, gives him a series of over enthusiastic, playful kisses. She sits back on her lounge, with her hands crossed on her lap, her legs kicking back and fore in the air. In a babyish voice (like ‘Queeny’ in Black Adder II) she asks

Vivian: What ‘cha doin’?

Clark: [Smiling] Just reading the mail honey.

Vivian: [Sill in a baby-like voice] Who’s it fwom? What’s it sayin’?

She laughs and leans forward to rub noses with him. Giggling.

Clark: [Laughing] Honey! You are the cutest. It from Charles Foster.

Vivian: OooH! Sounds important. Who’s he?

Clark: He an old friend of mine. He is really, really rich. He owns pretty much every newspaper in America.

Vivian: No way! That’s so cool. What’s he say?

Clark: He’s inviting us to a party...

Vivian: [Excited] A party?

Clark: Yes. In castle.

Vivian: [More Excited] A castle? Wow! What do you mean a castle?

Clark: I mean a castle. A proper castle. In England.

Vivian: England! No way! Does it have a moat?

Clark: I guess.

Vivian: Does it have a tower?

Clark: I guess. I don’t know. I’ve never been to this one.

Vivian: This one? Does he have lots of castles?

Clark: Well, his house in California is built to look like a castle.
Vivian: No way!
Clark: Yep. It sure does.
Vivian: Why?
Clark: He just likes castles. Not just castles. Just old stuff. Castles. Knights in armour with swords. Princesses...
Vivian: [Really excited] Princesses?? Does he have a princess in his castle?
Clark: [Laughing] Kinda'. He is married to a lady called Virginia who lives with him here in California. But whenever he goes to his castle in England, he finds a way of keeping her away and his lady friend always comes instead.
Vivian: [Acting coyly shocked] No way.
Clark: Yep. So, she's his princess in the castle. And you'll never guess who she is?
Vivian: Tell me. Who is she?
Clark: [Sitting back in his lounge] You know Jean Davies?
Vivian: [Sharp intake of breath] Jean Davies the actress?
Clark: Yep
Vivian: [Realising this is meaty gossip] Oh my. That is so bad!
[Leaping up and down with excitement] oh please can we go? Please please please please please? It will be so amazing. And I can be your Princess in the castle?
Clark: I don't think so sweetie. Its only two weeks before my premier. There'll be so much to do and...
Vivian: Oh pleeeeeeeeeeeaaasse! Baby, it'll make me so sad if we can't go. I want to see the castle.
Clark: [Pauses for a moment. Then smiles] Sure honey. If that's what'll make you happy. Then that's what we'll do.
Vivian: [Squeals with delight] Oh my! This is so fantastic!

She flings her arms around his neck. Then she excitedly turns and holds onto her hat in readiness to run. Before she can run back to the house, she turns back to face Clark.

Vivian: I've got to go shopping. To find an outfit. [She runs 2 paces. Stops and turns back to face Clark] What do princesses wear to parties?
Clark: Only the prettiest dresses they can find.

Vivian lets out another excited squeal, turns and runs back into the house.
Clark reaches under his sun lounge and pulls out a telephone. He studies his invitation, and referring to it, he dials a number and holds the receiver up to his ear.

Scene Two – The living room of Foster's Beverly Hills castle

[Caption: The Home of Charles & Virginia Foster]

Charles Foster is obsessed with ancient history. His home is filled with antiques with old masters hanging on the walls. Even the odd suit of armour.

The scene opens in his living room. He is sitting in a red leather, button back chair reading a newspaper. With a pile of other newspapers next to him. Strawn around his chair are newspapers he has already read. Discarded like the bones of devoured animals around a lion's lair.

Every now and then he sighs deeply, gets out a pen and circles something in the newspaper. Then start to write furious notes in the margin.

His wife Virginia is sitting on a sofa on the opposite side of the room hunched over a jigsaw puzzle on a coffee table in front of her. She appears to be bored out of her wits.

In the background we faintly here a phone ringing. After a few rings it stops. A butler enters the room. He stands next to Charles and clears his throat. Charles is so engrossed in what he is doing he does not notice him. After a brief pause the butler coughs and clears his throat again.

Virginia: Charles!
Charles: [Angrily] What! [Then checks himself] Sorry dear. I mean, I beg your pardon?
Virginia: Either Jarvis is choking on a fishbone, or he is trying to get your attention.
Charles: [Noticing the butler for the first time] Yes. What is it?
Butler: There is a phone call for you sir.
Charles: Who is it?
Butler: Mr Clark Cooper sir. Would you like me to tell him you are indisposed?
Charles: [Hurriedly putting his paper down and rising to his feet] No, no. That's alright. I'll take the call in the library.
Butler: Very good sir
Charles: [Clearly a bit agitated – he turns to his wife] I'm just going to take a call in the library.
Virginia: [Without looking up from her jigsaw puzzle, and in a bored, weary tone she replies sighing] So I hear.

Charles leaves the room hurriedly and heads towards his library.

Scene Three – The library of the Foster's California castle

The library has the look and feel of an ancient castle library. Floor to ceiling mahogany bookcases packed with leather bound books all uniform height. In the foreground is a vast mahogany desk with a leather back chair behind it and on the desk is one of those old-fashioned phones with the mouthpiece on top of a stem and the earpiece, on a cable, hanging from a receiver on the side.

Charles enters the library and sits at the desk. He picks up the phone.

Charles: Hello? Yes, put him through.... Hello? Clark is that you? [pause] How are you? Oh, that's wonderful. Me? Oh, you know. Making my way. Doing what I can. Did you get my invitation to our little get together? Excellent, excellent.... Oh! You'll come. That's wonderful. I'll let everyone know. They'll all be delighted. I

know Jean is really looking forward to meeting Vivian. As am I. You did so well there you old dog [manly laughing]. No not at all. The pleasure's all mine. I'll get Alice to send over all the travel arrangements and we'll see you there for the 20th. No, no. Like I said. The pleasure is mine. You take care now. Bye.

Charles hangs up his phone. He walks over to the door of the library. He opens it to double check there is still no one around. Then he closes it again. Goes back to his desk and picks up the phone. He dials.

Charles: Operator? I want to make a call. Long distance. To England.

Scene Four – Bertie Weisman's apartment

[Caption: The home of Bertie Weisman]

Bertie is a bit of a nobody compared to everyone else we have met. He is right at the beginning of his career having just had his first script accepted by a studio. He is young and optimistic but broke. And his apartment is small and modest and a bit of a mess. With movie promotion posters hanging on the walls, though a few are peeling off at the corners.

His doorbell rings. He rushes excitedly to the door. He opens it and on the other side of the door is Dorothy Kohl. She is a young and beautiful actress. Very ambitious and desperate to get her first break. She is leading Bertie on a bit to capitalise on his new connections and get her career off to a good start too. However, she finds it hard to maintain the pretence that she is interested in Bertie as she clearly finds him boring. He, however, is so smitten with her, he cannot see the signs. Or refuses to recognise them.

Bertie: [Excitedly] Dorothy! It's so good to see you.

He goes in for a kiss. She turns her head to offer a cheek just as he is about to kiss her lips.

Dorothy: OK. Simmer down. So, what's so important I had to come over right away/

Bertie: [Still excited] Oh Dorothy. You won't believe what's happened. Guess who's written to me, personally, to invite me to a party?

Dorothy: Are you kidding me? Why should I care about whose party you go to

She turns to leave

Bertie: No. No. Wait. Listen. It's somebody big. Just have a guess.

Dorothy: [wearily] I don't know Bertie. Just tell me who's invited you to their party.

Bertie: [staggered] Charles... Foster

Dorothy: [Smiling but not convinced] Charles Foster?

Bertie: Yep

Dorothy: The newspaper tycoon?

Bertie: Yep

Dorothy: One of the richest and most powerful men in the world?

Bertie: Yep

Dorothy: Has invited you to a party?

Bertie: Yep

Dorothy: I don't believe you.

Bertie: [Wanders over to a desk, rustles through some piles of paper, finds what he is looking for and shows Dorothy] Here. Look... You see. Look "desires your attendance for a weekend party" and look here "and guest". You, see?

Dorothy: Oh my God! Where did you get this?

Bertie: He sent it to the studio, and they sent it to me in the mail this morning. [He embraces her. She is trying unsuccessfully to push him away] Do you see what this means? This is it babe. This could be the beginning. Just think about who else is gonna be at a party like that. Producers; Studio bosses; Directors; movie stars...

Dorothy: [Starting to get excited] Wow! Bertie. This is amazing. We're gonna be smoozing with some of the biggest names in Hollywood. This is amazing.

She enthusiastically kisses him on the lips, then semi-recoils in repulsion after. She takes the invitation off him and studies it in a bit more detail.

Scene Five – Ivor’s cottage

We are outside a quaint, little, thatched cottage with whitewashed walls and black pitch covered window frames. It has a large allotment garden which is clearly well tended. The sky is covered with a bank of low hanging, grey clouds. The air is saturated with a heavy drizzle and the smoke of a garden fire which is smouldering on one side of the cottage garden.

At the end of the garden furthest away from the house there is a wooden chicken coop clad in painted weather boards. It has a fenced chicken run in front of it. Against one of the outside timber walls of the coop are two rows of wooden cages with chicken wire frontages. Most contain wild brown rabbits that have been caught locally.

Ivor is wearing a flat tweed cap and several layers of clothes to protect him from the weather. A hand rolled cigarette dangles from the corner of his mouth, with the tiniest, single whisp of smoke rising from it. He is pushing dandelion leaves and slices of root vegetables through the wire of one of the cages and calls melodically to the rabbit inside who greedily starts to tug at the offering:

Ivor: Choo choo choo choo choo come on. Choo choo choo choo choo Come on my lovely. Come on my beauty. There.

With his hands full of off cuts of veg, he moves to the next one and repeats his chant, pushing more greenery through the fencing. He moves to the third cage. He pushes some more greenery through, then as the rabbit starts to eat it, he carefully opens a side door to the cage, reaches in and pulls out the rabbit. He carries it round to the other side of the chicken coop. As he is walking with the rabbit, we can hear a phone start to ring from inside the cottage. Ivor ignores it and takes the rabbit to a well-worn and dark stained wooden block with axe cuts and slices all over it. He holds the rabbit down. It is struggling and desperately trying to escape. Ivor’s wife calls out from inside the cottage:

Agnus: Ivor! The phone’s ringing!

Ivor looks over at the cottage and grunts disapprovingly. He looks down at his quarry. Slashes forcefully at its throat with a sharp knife. He continues to hold the poor creature still while its body twitches its last. Meanwhile the telephone keeps ringing.

Agnus: [Screeching] Ivor!!

Ivor releases the now lifeless rabbit and pulls the cigarette from the corner of his mouth.

Ivor: [Shouting gruffly] Damn it all. I’m coming woman.

Ivor trudges towards the cottage. The phone is mounted on the wall. It is a black Bakelite box with a horn shaped mouthpiece beneath and an earpiece hanging on a brass hook. Ivor lifts the earpiece and the ringing stops. He holds the earpiece to his ear and speaks in a deep, gruff tone.

Ivor: Hello

We can hear Charles speaking on the other end of the phone.

Charles: Ivor? It's Charles Foster here.

There is a pause. Then Ivor answers

Ivor: I know.

There is another pause as Charles is not sure what to make of this response.

Charles: I've decided that the weekend of the 20th, I am going to be entertaining guests at the castle. I need you to make sure the place is ready for us. Round up the occasional staff and get them started on cleaning the place and lighting fires in the hearths. My butler Anthony who you know will be arriving on Thursday with a cook Alice has hired from London. Pick them up from the railway station, will you? And make sure they have whatever they need. I will get Alice to wire you as much money as you are likely to need but if you need more speak to her. I know you've got her number. But she will be arriving on Friday from London.

There is silence.

Charles: Ivor? Did you get all that?

Ivor: Aye.

Charles: OK then. Well, I'll leave everything with you until Anthony and Alice can take over.

Ivor hangs up.

Scene Six – Castle in Beverly Hills

Charles is not used to dealing with people like Ivor. He is startled by his hanging up so abruptly and starts tapping the receiver on his phone.

Charles: Hello? Ivor? Hello? Are you there.

He realises the call is at an end. He raises his eyebrows as he returns the earpiece to its receiver. Muttering under his breath.

Charles: God damn neanderthal.

Scene Seven – Bringing the castle back into life.

The whole castle has been locked up and its windows secured with wooden shutters for some time. All the furniture and ornaments are covered by shrouds and blankets. It feels very spooky. Inside it is very dark, but as each window has its shutters removed the pale springtime light begins to stream in. Picking out the particles of dust in the air.

A vast and bustling team of cleaners with aprons on and their hair in nets start dusting all the surfaces and scrubbing the floors in the vast rooms. Chandeliers are polished by ladies standing on chairs. Ornaments are taken down off shelves, dusted over and put back.

Cloth shrouds are lifted off the furniture. Upholstery is brushed down and cushions are plumped up and placed in the rightful positions on sofas, chairs, and beds. Mirrors and windows and glass display cabinets are washed down with soapy water and dried with clothes. A lot of the glass cabinets we see, house a large collection of antique weaponry. Pistols, flintlocks, muskets, daggers, swords, lances etc

Wooden furniture has a generous coating of bee's wax applied then polished to bring a vibrant shine.

We watch the whole place transforming from a deathly, dark, and shrouded place to a bright, and triumphantly gleaming show home.

Scene Eight – Castle kitchens

A very busy kitchen scene. Kitchen staff are busily trying to unload and put away endless boxes of ingredients. In the middle of the chaos is a chef who has been hired to cater for the party who is talking to Alice who is Charles's assistant. She is very officious and is holding a clip board and has a pen behind her ear.

Chef: So, we have most of what we need for the menu you've requested. Numbers I have is five courses for 70 guests to be served at 7:00pm. But, fresh fish, fresh meat, fresh dairy I must source locally. Can you organise that?

Alice: Not me. Ivor.

Chef: Who the hell is Ivor?

Alice: Very serious Welshman. Doesn't say much. He drove you from the railway station.

Chef: What's his role around here?

Alice: Anything you need. Staff, ingredients, equipment. Even repairs and odd jobs. He's your man. He's Mr Foster's man on the ground. He lives locally. He knows everyone and he can turn his hand to pretty much anything.

Chef: How do I contact him?

Alice: [Pointing at a telephone on the wall] Next to every phone in this house, there is a card with his telephone number on it.

Chef: Wow! Ok!

Alice: Yes. That is how useful he is to Mr Foster. He's not easy to get along with, but he'll never let you down.

Scene Nine- Bertie & Dorothy arriving

Show string of guests arriving one by one at the castle. Beautiful cars, elegant people. Confidently walking into the castle. There are footmen in uniform standing at the castle door. Every time a car arrives one sprints down to it to open the rear doors and gather up the luggage from inside the car and carry it into the castle.

The rows of cars in front of the castle gradually increasing in number. In front of the castle there is an array of beautiful 1930s luxury cars. A rather small and mundane looking taxi pulls up on the driveway. Bertie Weisman opens the back door and climbs out of the taxi. Looking up admiring at the magnificent castle. He turns, holding the door open for Dorothy but unable to take his eyes off the place.

Bertie: Wow! Just wow! Look at this place.

Dorothy climbs out of the car. Looks at the castle. With a smile, she triumphantly walks towards it. The taxi driver who has brought them takes their two suitcases out of the boot of the taxi. He places them next to Bertie. Then stands there waiting for payment.

A footman, suspicious of the inauspicious mode of transport walks up to Bertie and whispers in his ear. Bertie with a slight panic starts rummaging through various pockets in his jacket and coat. He eventually finds what he is looking for and pulls out the invitation. The footman intently scrutinises it, then takes it to the castle doorway where a book is open on a table with a list of guests. He checks the name on Bertie's invitation, then thumbs down the list and stops at his name on the list. He then walks back out to Bertie and gives him his invitation back, then gestures towards the castle.

Bertie looks around to find his suitcases. He spots the taxi driver waiting next to him. They stare at each other for a moment, then Bertie gets the hint that he is waiting for payment. He starts fishing around various pockets. Eventually finds some money and hands it to the taxi driver who takes it, gets back in his taxi, and drives off.

Bertie goes to pick up his suitcases and panics when he can't initially see them where they had been left. He swirls around. He sees that one of the footmen is holding them and is waiting to follow Bertie in.

They all walk towards the castle. As they walk through the door past the book containing the guest lists, we ponder a little longer on the entry. It does not say Bertie Weisman. On closer examination it says Bernie Weinman. But no one has noticed.

Scene 10- Dinner Guest watching.

At the castle there is a huge dinner table, like you'd find at a state banquet. Places are set at every seat with fine China and rows of silver cutlery and different types of wine glass. Every place has a full glass of champagne at it, and a waitress is hurriedly going from place-to-place refilling them as people drink them.

The banqueting room has a minstrel's gallery. In it a swing jazz orchestra and singer are playing the hits of the era.

Most of the guests have taken their seats at the huge dining table. All dressed formally. There are waiting staff busy everywhere. Bertie is sitting next to an empty chair. He looks up at Dorothy who is sitting opposite him. She is rather obviously, over flirting with the male guest next to her and is oblivious to everything else.

Charles and Jean are sitting at the head of the table, side by side on mini thrones. Like a medieval king and queen. They are engrossed in conversation with the people at their end of the table.

A woman takes the seat next to Bertie. He smiles and is about to introduce himself when she turns to the person sitting on the other side of her and greets them like a very dear old friend they haven't seen in ages. They immediately start talking excitedly to each other. Reminiscing. The person on the other side of Bertie is already engrossed in a very serious, intellectual conversation which is beyond Bertie.

Bertie takes in the details of the room around him. The splendour and scale of it all. He looks along the table on both sides. By enlarge, the men are mostly in their 50s and 60s and the women are mostly in their 20s or 30s.

Then Clark and Vivian arrive. Everyone turns to look at them and there is an excited round of applause and some whistles and cheering. Clark acts humble, beckoning them to stop as if he is embarrassed by the attention. The beaming smile gives away that he is not. He loves it. A servant guides them towards their seats. Vivian has a small tantrum.

Vivian: [Turning to Clark] Honey. I don't want so to sit here. Why can't we sit over there? [She points to the seats next to Jean Davies].

Clark: Now come now honey. These seats look OK.

Charles: [Jumping to his feet walks down towards them] Clark. Vivian. Please accept my apologise. Obviously, an oversight. Please come and sit with us.

Jean signals forcefully to the people she has been talking to. To give up their seats and move. They leap to their feet and indicate to Clark and Vivian to have their seats with enthusiastic smiles.

Clark: Oh please. No. There's really no need. These places are fine.

Vivian squealing starts to run towards the seats.

Clark: Well, if you insist. I don't want to break up the party.
Charles: Are you kidding me? Get up here. Come on.
Clark: Well, OK then [He follows Charles to the newly vacated seats].

Staff sweep away the wine glasses, plates and cutlery at the places and set new ones.

Then the food starts to arrive. Huge platters piled up with incredible looking delicacies. Very decadent. You get the impression that this is all done to wow and impress. The guests gasp and start to applaud as it is set out on the table. Then the serving staff step forward. There is one for each guest. They start to dish up. The atmosphere is buzzing.

Scene 11- After dinner

Dinner has now finished, and guests are milling around the various state rooms in the castle. Some are walking around, admiring the works of art on the walls. A gramophone is playing popular dancing music of the era, and some people are dancing to it.

There is a certain hedonistic charge to the guests and atmosphere. You get the indication that this party is some kind of fantasy world. Where wealthy men can play at being couples with their mistresses and where rules of decorum and inhibitions have no place.

Everyone has a drink in their hand or close at hand. One or two are beginning to act with carefree abandon. Some are heading upstairs, hand in hand, with carnal intent.

Charles has Clark and a small group of other guest around him. He has opened one of the glass display cabinets with old pistols and flintlocks in it. He picks up an old American revolver to show Clark.

Charles: Now this one was given to me by Kit Carson Cody. Do you know who he is?
Clark: [Studying the revolver carefully] No
Charles: Well, you might know his father better. Bill Cody. Better known as 'Buffalo Bill'
Clark: [Impressed] No way. And was this Buffalo Bill's 6 gun?
Charles: Yep. Sure was. He had this revolver with him when he was a scout at the Battle of the saline River. He reckons this old piece saved his life on more than 100 occasions.

Everyone seems very impressed. Clark hands it on for the others to hold it and take a closer look. Charles moves on to his next show piece.

Charles: And this one [he picks up another revolver and hands its Clark to take a closer look at] This was the service revolver of one George Armstrong Custer. The one he left at the barracks when he went off to fight in the Battle of Little Bighorn. And of course, we all know what happened to him there.

You can see that Clark is genuinely very impressed. He moves the pistol around in his hands to feel the weight of it. He takes aim with it and enacts firing it.

Clark: Wow. This is incredible. What else have you got in here? [He hands the pistol back to Charles and takes an interest in the rest of the display cabinet]
Charles: [Picking up another pistol] Now pick this one up.

Clark picks up the pistol he has indicated. He holds it as if he were going to fire it.

Charles: Do you notice anything different about it?

Clark lowers the pistol and studies the detail of it a bit closer. He transfers it from hand to hand like a cowboy to feel its weight.

Clark: [Clutching at straws] Its quite light

Charles looks around the gathered throng like a proud father. Clark acknowledges his reaction but is unsure what it means.

Clark: What? What did I say?

Charles: 'It's quite light' he says.

Clark: Well yeah. It is quite light.

Charles: You know your guns, Clark. I'll give you that. That revolver was specially made for General Stonewall Jackson after he lost his left arm in the Battle of Chancellorsville. And yes. You're right. It is light.

The throng standing around Charles and Clark all pat Clark on the back and make approving cheers and calls of 'well done' as if he has just achieved something remarkable.

Scene 12- Later at the party

It's now quite a bit later at the party. Numbers have depleted and those who are left are all clearly very drunk. Some are still making the effort to dance but it's all a bit messy by this point. Some couples are at various stages of affection with each other.

Bertie spots Clark in an unusual moment of solitude. He is worse for wear and is barely able to prop himself up. Bertie, with far too much enthusiasm for the occasion walks up to Clark and holds out his hand to greet him.

Bertie: Hi Mr Cooper. Bertie Weisman.

Clark does not offer his hand to be shaken. He just stares at Bertie, frowning. But he appears to be having difficulty focussing his eyes. He is also gently rocking back and fore as if he were on a rough sea crossing.

Clark: [Slurring] I don't think I know you.

Bertie: No sir. You don't. But I just wanted to say that I am a huge fan of your work.

Clark: [Trying to smile] Thank you. That's good to know.

Bertie: It's watching you that made me want to get into the movies in the first place.

Clark: [Stifling a burp] And are you in the movies?

Bertie: [Proudly] Yes sir. I've just had my first script taken on by MGM.

Clark: [Unimpressed] Really? That's great. I'll have to look into that.

A very drunk Vivian staggers over and falls into Clark's arms.

Vivian: Honey! I don't feel too good... Who are you talking to?

Bertie: [Holding out his hand] Hi there. Bertie Weisman.

Vivian: [Ignoring Bertie] Take me to bed baby. I need to sleep.

Clark: You go up honey I'll be there in a minute.

Vivian: [Beating his chest] No honey. I want you to take me. Take me to bed.

Clark tries to pick her up like they do in the movies but they both fall to the floor in a drunken heap, giggling. Bertie scrambles to help them both back up. A feat that proves far harder than seems physically possible. Both are weak from the combined effects of being unsteady on their feet and from laughing hysterically. It is like watching Bambi walking on ice for the first time. Eventually he gets them both up by lifting them one by one and propping them up against furniture.

They fall into each other's arms and stagger off in the direction of the stairs laughing. Stopping only for Vivian to take her shoes off. She leaves them in the middle of the floor.

Bertie realises that he has not seen Dorothy in some time. He scours the room but cannot see her anywhere. All he sees are the other guests in various stages of undress and drunken debauchery. He wanders off in search of her.

Charles wanders in wearing a smoking jacket and cravat. He is smoking a huge cigar and has an air of satisfaction about him. He sits in an armchair and pours himself a large glass of cognac from a decanter. He sits back in it and surveys the scene in front of him. His drunken guests cavorting and him looking on has overtones of the decadent days of the late Roman empire. Nero watching as Rome burns and all that.

After a few moments Jean floats in, wearing a long flowing silk dressing gown. She too has a distinct air of satisfaction about her. She is glowing with it. She walks up to Charles and bends down to kiss him. She is about to walk away and sit in the chair next to him when he reaches out and grabs her around the waist and pulls her onto his lap. She shrieks with laughter and succumbs. She strokes his chin and gives him another kiss. They both gaze lovingly into each other's eyes.

A couple holding hands walk past them to head towards the stairs. They wave as they pass. Charles and Jean reciprocate. As they leave the room, Clark suddenly bursts through the door and enters the room. He has a broom between his legs like a hobby horse. He has put a lady's brimmed hat on and is waving one of Charles's antique revolvers in the air. He is pretending to be a cowboy on a horse galloping around the room. Charles and Jean and the other guests all see him and all start laughing at the hilarity of it.

Clark: Yee – Haw!! Come on trigger! Let's go get us some mischief. Yee-haw

Clark starts play acting that his horse has started trying to buck him off like he's on a rodeo.

Clark: Woah there Trigger! Come on now there boy. Take it easy on this old timer.
Wooooaahhh!

His audience start laughing harder. The play acting continues. Then Clark badly over acts being thrown from the horse.

Clark: Wooooaaahhh!!

He falls to the ground and as he does so the revolver strikes the floor hard. What no one is aware of is the fact that it is loaded, and the impact makes it go off. Clark at first is startled. Then he starts laughing hard.

Clark: Did you see that? Wooo! It went off. Wow.

All the other guests we can see or hear in the room are all laughing. Clark looks up, still laughing. But as he straightens his gaze the laughter is stifled, and his face drops in horror. Standing in front of him. No more than a few yards away is Bertie. He has a pained expression on his face, and he is clutching his stomach. He pulls his hands away and looks down at them. They are covered in blood and his shirt is blood soaked around the area he has been clutching. He starts to omit pained groans. The sound of laughter abates, and the room falls silent. He slowly sinks to his knees still groaning. Panicked mutterings and gasps circulate, and a woman screams. Clark and Charles dash over to Bertie. The rest of the guests are too stunned to do or say anything. Clark sits on the floor behind Bertie and tries

to help him stem the flow of blood from the wound. Charles is standing over the two of them and takes control.

Charles: For crying out loud. Get me some towels. Clark. Put some pressure on it. Take it easy kid. You're gonna be OK. Someone get me Ivor. We've gotta get this kid to a hospital. [Bertie is spluttering and sobbing] Take it easy kid. Save your strength. We're gonna get you to a hospital. I've sent for my man. You'll be fine.

Charles becomes aware that the room is still full of shocked, drunken guests.

Charles: Can we clear the room please. Everyone return to your rooms. We'll take it from here. Thank you. If we need anything else, we'll let you know.

The guests begin to leave the room and head to their rooms. Shuffling in silence. All quite stunned. Bertie is in a bad way and a lot of pain. Clark is panic-stricken. He frantically tries to calm and sooth Bertie and apply pressure to his wound. But he is equally horrified by the thick blood which is now pooling around them and on his hands. A man runs in with a bundle of towels. Charles grabs one and makes it into field dressing and applies it to Bertie's wounds. Clark pulls his hands away, repulsed by all the blood.

Charles: No. Keep the pressure on here. [He turns to the man who brought the towels] Go outside and see where Ivor is will you. And when he gets here bring him straight here.

The man rushes out of the room. After the frantic past few minutes, a moment of silence descends over them. Just the sound of Bertie's heavy breathing, occasionally punctuated with a groan. They exchange glances with one another. After what seems like an eternity, Charles speaks to Bertie.

Charles: What's your name son?
Bertie: [Breathless] Bertie. Bertie Weisman.
Charles: [Quizzical] Bertie?
Bertie: [Nodding] Yes sir

Charles is looking confused. He is wracking his brains as he doesn't recognise the name or the face. There is a pause. Bertie continues.

Bertie: [Trying to raise a smile] I guess I was invited to the party by accident huh?
Charles: [Smiling] Sure as hell looks like it.

The three men force a laugh.

Charles: Well, you're here now. Smoke? [He offers Bertie a cigarette]
Bertie: Thanks, I don't. [He pauses] Actually what the hell. What's the worst that can happen?

The three men laugh again. This time it sounds a bit more natural.

Charles: That's the ticket. Here.

Charles puts a cigarette in the corner of Bertie's mouth. He reaches for a heavy silver lighter on the table behind him and lights it for him. Bertie takes a drag and coughs. Charles takes the cigarette from his mouth while he coughs. Bertie recoils in pain. Then gestures for the cigarette to be put back in his mouth. Charles does so. Bertie takes another drag on the cigarette. This time he doesn't cough. He seems to get some comfort from it.

The man who had brought the towels in earlier runs back into the room pointing. Ivor follows him. He goes over to where Bertie is lying in Clark's lap. He squats next to him and takes a proper first aid kit from his coat pocket. He gives Bertie an injection of morphine and starts to expertly apply a proper field dressing.

Ivor: I need to get this man to a hospital. Quickly

Charles indicates to the man who came in with Ivor to take over from Clark.

Charles: Clark. Let these guys take over for a minute. It's OK. They know what their doing. Both former soldiers. They can handle this.

He takes Clark out of the room.

Scene Thirteen- The kitchen debrief.

Clark is at the kitchen sink furiously scrubbing at his hands to try and get all the blood off. His clothes are also ruined with all the blood that has soaked into them. Clark is very shaken up and panicked. Charles is sitting at the kitchen table. He still has his glass of cognac and is still smoking his cigar. He is altogether calmer and more collected.

Charles: That'll do. [He takes one of Clark's hands and holds it in front of his face] You see. It's clean. No more blood. Come. Sit down. Have a scotch.

He pours Clark a drink. Clark swigs it. His hands are trembling, and he gulps his drink down in one go. Charles tops it back up again.

Charles: Quite a night huh?

Clark looking at the floor nods.

Charles: Look. It was an accident. Could have happened to anyone. And that kid. He's young. He's strong. He'll be fine. He'll pull through. You'll see. In a couple of days, he'll be out of hospital, and we'll all be laughing about this.

Clark: Do you think?

Charles: Hell yes. [There is a pregnant pause] We'll probably have to pay the kid off.

Clark looks up startled. He had not thought about consequences.

Clark: What do you mean?

Charles: Well, there's no one here who will want the kid talking about what happened here. And not just the accident. There's lots of guys here, including me, whose wives don't need to know we were ever here. You've got a movie premier in 2 weeks. That's what we want people to be talking about. Not what happened here tonight.

There is a pause while Clark tries to digest all this information. You can see the cogs starting to turn in his brain.

Clark: The kid's just starting out in the movie business. We could offer him his big break. [He pauses starting to see a way out] This could be the best thing that's ever happened to him. Hell, he could even work it into a plot line [He chuckles]

Charles: Well. May be not that. But yes. We could make this, so everybody comes out on top. And there's no other guest here who will want to talk about tonight when they get home so we've got nothing to worry about there.

Clark: But what if someone goes to the papers?

Charles: [Triumphantly] Hell, who owns all the papers? You've got nothing to worry about.

Clark smiles. Starting to feel a bit better. Charles slaps him on the back. They both laugh.

Charles: You need to get rid of those clothes before Vivian wakes in the morning. Put them in a bag outside your room. When he gets back from the hospital, I'll get Ivor to get rid of it. And I'll clean up the mess downstairs before the other guests wake up in the morning or the maids come in.

Clark stands up followed by Charles. They shake hands.

Clark: Thank you, Charles. You've made me feel a lot better.

Charles: Hey Clark. It's me. And tomorrow over breakfast all I want to hear about is your movie premier. You hear.

Clark leaves the room and heads off to bed. The smile on Charles's face drops. He takes a swig from his cognac and heads off out of the room.

Scene Fourteen- Back in the drawing room

Charles walks back into the drawing room. Bertie is now lying flat on his back. He is not moving. Ivor is kneeling next to him, holding his hand. Charles pauses at this site. Then gingerly walks over to them. Ivor looks up at him. He slowly shakes his head.

Ivor: Dead

Charles takes a swig at his cognac and shakes his head. There is a long silence. Charles is processing the situation. Ivor is waiting on his next instruction.

Charles: This is a serious situation. And this could carry some serious consequences if it isn't handled right. [He pauses to take a drag on his cigar and release a huge cloud of smoke]. This is down to you and me Ivor old friend. Because none of what has happened here tonight can ever leave this room. And its down to you and me to fix this. [another pause. Another puff on the cigar] To make this right.

Ivor says nothing. Charles goes on postulating in his mind

Charles: First things first. You need to get rid of... that. Do you understand me? I don't care how. I don't care where. But you need to make sure it's got rid of. So no one ever finds it. Am I clear on that.

Ivor nods

Charles: Let me give me a hand to get him out then.

Ivor pulls Bertie's hand so he is sitting up. They each get a shoulder under each of Bertie's arms. They lift him to his feet and drag his limp, lifeless body out of the house.

Scene Fifteen- The burial

Bertie's dead body lies in the foreground of shot, while in the background, Ivor digs a grave. He drags Bertie into it. Then starts to fill the hole again.

Meanwhile, back at the castle, Charles is sitting alone in his armchair. Glass of cognac in his hand. Cigar still smouldering in the ashtray. The sun is starting to rise and shine through the castle windows. A mop and bucket stand next to Charles's chair.

Scene Sixteen- The departure

The sun is now high in the sky. The car park in front of the castle is now much depleted. A very handsome car is in front of the castle doors and footmen are loading luggage into it. Charles is standing by the door of the castle. Vivian wearing dark glasses walks through the castle doors. She stops and gives Charles a kiss on the cheek. She walks to the car. Clark appears at the door. He is looking altogether more composed and relaxed than the night before. He stops to talk to Charles.

Clark: When I get back to California, I'll give you a call. You let me know how the kid is coming along and if there's anything I can do to make him more comfortable.

Charles: Sure

Clark: [Starts to walk towards the car. Stops and turns] And get him to send me one of his scripts. Tell him I'm looking forward to reading it.

Charles: Sure. I'll tell him. He'll be made up.

Clark: [Shaking Charles by the hand] Well, thank you Charles. For everything.

Charles: Don't mention it.

Clark walks down the steps of the castle and into the waiting car. His driver closes the door behind him, climbs into the driver's seat and drives away. Charles stands on the steps of the castle and waves them off. They wave back through the rear window of the car. They look into each other eyes. Clark kisses her hand. They hold hands. Both look out of alternate windows either side of the car at the scenery outside.

Dorothy appears at the door. Charles turns to her.

Charles: Can I help you my dear?

Dorothy: No, I'm just looking for my friend.

Charles: And who might that lucky man be?

Dorothy: [Coyly] His name is Bernie. Bernie Weisman. He was invited to the party.

Charles's face drops. He is overcome with a series of emotions. With surprise, then with horror. He is thinking. Scheming. Dorothy starts off smiling but begins to feel awkward as Charles's facial expression changes.

Scene Seventeen- Clark's Premier

We are outside a movie theatre in Hollywood. There is a red carpet and throngs of adoring fans on either side with press. The crowd is excited and noisy. A glamorous car pulls up and a couple of actors step out and walk up the carpet towards the theatre. The crowd are appreciative. Clapping and cheering. The press is calling to them, photographers' bulbs are flashing. They move up to the steps of the theatre, turn and wave. Lots of cheering and bulbs flashing.

As they enter the theatre another beautiful car arrives. The door opens and Clark climbs out. Vivian emerges from the other side.

The reaction of the crowd is 100 times more vocal and enthusiastic than for the previous actors. They surge and must be held back by the police. This is an altogether more frenzied reaction. A lot more noise. Clark and Vivian pose, smiling for photographs but the security people are very concerned at the excitement of the crowd and are trying desperately to usher them into the theatre. They succumb. The crowd are desperately trying to touch them as they pass. They pause on the steps to turn and pose. There is a barrage of flashing bulbs. Clark and Vivian are Waving to the crowd.

End on a freeze frame of the scene, turning from colour to black and white.

Scene Eighteen- At Charles's Californian castle

Scene opens with the freeze frame black and white photo from the Premier scene. Pan out to reveal that the photo is now dominating the front page of a newspaper and the newspaper. The headline reads "Another Triumph" and the bold leader text under the photo reads "Clark Cooper's latest film "The Sheriff" premiered to rave reviews". It is on top of a pile of newspapers in Charles's living room like the one he was working through in scene two. Charles walks in and sits at the same red leather chair as he did in scene two. He picks up the paper and reads the front page. He laughs to himself. He gets his pen and makes a short note in the margin. He then turns the page. His facial expression changes. What he has read does not come as a surprise to him, but you can clearly see that he is not comfortable with what he is reading. He sits back looking up, trying to process and question his actions.

Scene Nineteen- Poolside

We are back at the same pool as in scene one. As before, Clark is reclined on a sun lounger by his pool. He is reading the same newspaper front page that Charles was reading in the previous scene. He is looking happy with himself. Bordering on smug. He also turns the page. Does not initially react. Then clearly spots an item in the newspaper which has come as a frightening shock. He sits bolt upright in his lounge looking at the item in total disbelief. He drops the newspaper to the floor and runs into the house.

We zoom into the item on page two which has provoked such an intense reaction. There is a photo of Bernie and Dorothy beneath a headline which says, "Missing in Europe". The lead text below the photograph reads "Writer Bernie Weisman and his girl friend actress Dorothy Kohl have disappeared while on a romantic vacation in Europe." Zoom in tight onto the photo.

Scene Twenty- The Hutches

We are looking at the same newspaper item about Bernie and Dorothy. The newspaper gets pulled away. We see it being placed down on a flat surface. Then it is covered with straw. Ivor is using it as a liner under the bedding of a rabbit hutch. He is getting the hutch ready for a new tenant rabbit. It is the same hutch previously used by the rabbit he slaughtered in scene five.

He picks up a stick and a hessian sack. He slings the sack over his shoulder and walks off.

Scene Twenty-One- The graves

We go back to the spot where in scene X, where we saw Ivor burying Bertie. But as we approach, we can clearly see two areas where the soil has been freshly disrupted. Not one.

[END]