

I panicked. I ran up and pulled the dart out of her ear. She screamed. And Lucy's father ran out into the garden. My little victim ran up to him and hugged him around the waist, sobbing desperately.

"What the bloody hell's going on here?" he thundered.

"Elliot was playing a sort of William Tell¹ game daddy," said Lucy with a sweet smirk.

100 Her father walked up and smacked me once across the face. Then he stood aside as I blubberingly ran out through the kitchen and back to my house. I never dared tell my own parents what had happened and soon after that, Lucy's family moved away and I never saw her again.

It all came back to me with this very attractive woman in front of me.

"Daddy used to talk about you a lot over supper," she said. "I think he knew he shouldn't have hit you."

105 "Oh, I really can't remember," I replied.

We were standing flirtatiously close.

"I don't think you ever got that kiss, did you?" she said.

"No," I said. "Well, I wasn't entitled to it."

"This party is very boring," she said.

110 "Yes."

"Why don't you come up to my room and I'll give you a kiss now."

She turned on her heel and went back through the party and into the foyer. I followed.

We got into the lift, in which we were alone. We kissed.

115 Once at the sixth floor, we got out and headed for her room three doors along. Once inside, we kissed again, rolling on the big double-bed. I began clawing her clothes off and, panting, she plucked at my belt.

"Oh Elliot!" she gasped. "Call me by my name. Say my name."

At that moment I swept up her hair, to kiss her neck, and this revealed her ear, cut and disfigured by my dart. In the next instant, I complied with her request:

"Chloë..."

120 I left her room some time after that. She checked out early this morning before I was up.

Ah. The man on reception says my taxi's going to take a while yet and he wants to know if I'd like a complimentary drink from the bar.

I think I shall ask for a Corona lemonade.

(2017)

¹ *William Tell*: a mythical figure in Swiss history. He was required to hit with an arrow an apple placed on his son's head, which he did successfully.