

(NIGHT OVER WATER: Notes on the first draft outline)

1) Prologue

✓ 1. JW: Does Sidney Miller have to be ugly? How about piratical?

2. JW: Hide Augusta's true nature somewhat at this stage.

3. AZ: There must be a minor character who dramatizes the consequences of the failure of the bank, eg a footman who will lose his life savings; or, better, someone closer in status to Miller, who has put all his money into the bank because of his respect for Miller, and who now faces penury in retirement.

✓ 4. More physical action is needed and might be provided by Silvio.

2) Part I

✓ 1. Everyone in the Pilaster family identifies strongly with the bank. They are proud of it, it gives them their wealth and their position in the world, it is their work, their family, their triumph.

Hugh

✓ 2. AZ: Alter Hugh-Maisie-Edward

✓ 3. AZ: Cut out Hugh's family. KF: Give this information in other ways.

4. JW: Make it clear that Hugh and Solly form some kind of bond.

✓ 5. AZ/KF: Hugh is too bland. He can remain a nice guy but give him a terrible dilemma. (KF: How about guilt over loving Maisie after she has married his best friend Solly Greenbourne?) Or, (AZ) he could be given some extremely difficult task, something an ordinary person might shrink from, as Eddie is in Night over Water.

6. EF: Hugh tends to blame his father's weakness, rather than Augusta's meanness, for what is happening to him.

✓ 7. EF: Keep the ratting scene. But why does Hugh refuse opium?

8. EF: Make more of Rachel Bodwin.

× 9. Hugh sees Maisie steal a brooch. When caught, she is defiant: "I took it because it looks better on me than on any of these fat wives of rich men." Hugh rescues her from prosecution and this is the beginning of their relationship.

Maisie

× 10. Is Maisie's father an employee of the Pilasters? Or a tradesman they use?

✓ Maisie could come from a family of Welsh Jews (who were tinkers in the 19th century).

She could have a brother, a Chartist writing fiery pamphlets in a garret. At some point he could die, giving her a chance (at the funeral) to reflect on her roots.

✓ 11. Does Maisie get raped? Whose is the child?

✓ 12. EF: Maisie is getting fairly seriously sexually abused, and her marriage is an act of prostitution. It becomes difficult to respect her.

✓ 13. Maisie is Jewish and marries Solly Greenbourne rather than Sammlle.

× Ben Greenbourne is ready to hate her, but at their first meeting she charms his little cotton socks off and all is well.

Miller

✓ 14. KF: Is Miller engaging enough? AZ: Make Miller like Ross. Or: he is the equivalent of Philip in Pillars.

× 15. AZ/KF: Miller is in London at the start of the book, on his own business and Pilasters'. He pitches for the exclusive agency. Augusta opposes it. Miller flirts with Greenbournes. Joseph gives Miller the agency. Miller has earned Augusta's

hatred.

Augusta

16. JW: Augusta is in danger of being one-dimensional. Make her even more cunning, so that she can show a charming exterior when she wants to, hiding her nastiness and manipulative behaviour from Hugh and fromt the reader at first. her true character would then be revealed gradually as the story unfolded.

17. AZ: What are the roots of Augusta's obsessive behaviour? (KF: Do we really need to know?)

✓ 18. Marquez and Edward were at boarding-school together. Edward did something disgraceful--perhaps even killed someone. Marquez protected him from the consequences, perhaps by denying that he had witnessed the act when in fact he had. He and Augusta are brought together by this guilty secret.

Marquez

✓ 19. Marquez is a deeply sinister character.

He is physically attractive man in a Latin way: sleek black hair, aristocratic profile, beautifully dressed, bedroom eyes. Sex is one of his weapons. (AZ: Marquez is like Alfredo Machado.)

Although she would never admit it, Augusta is sexually attracted to him. She looks forward to seeing him, enjoys his Latin attentiveness, and when they are alone allows him to sit a little too close and touch her in a slightly over-familiar way. Perhaps she has dreams about him.

There is also a repressed sexual relationship between Edward and Marquez. They screw prostitutes in the same room, perhaps in the same bed; sometimes Edward likes to screw a girl after Marquez has finished with her.

Does one of Hugh's sisters marry Marquez? Marquez would mistreat her, and give Hugh a motive for hating Marquez.

✓ 20. Marquez' father comes to town. He looks a little

shabby. He explains to Marquez the grand scheme (which may well sound a little fantastic). The Marquez family has a long-term plan to take over the government of Granada. As the years go by, brothers and cousins of Marquez will be eased into position of power: chief of police in a provincial town, Colonel in the army, Minister of Ports and Rivers, and so on. Their methods will be bribery, coercion and murder. There is no altruistic political motive: they will run the country for their own benefit, just as the current bunch do.

Marquez role is to get a job in the Embassy in London, cultivate powerful people, and raise money on the financial market. (He immediately thinks of Pilasters and Greenbournes.) Father has arranged for him to get a job as chargé d'affairs and he must rise from there. Father buys Marquez a big flashy ring then gets back on the boat second class, leaving the son with a heavy guilt trip.

After the boat leaves, a rival emerges for the chargé job. Marquez organises a card game in which he cheats and the rival loses. The rival borrows from Edward (who is showing off to Solly). Losing borrowed money which he cannot repay, he goes home in disgrace, and Marquez gets the job.

3) Part II

✓ 1. KF: When Miller returns to London and is proposed as a partner, Augusta recalls her previous failure to defeat his ambition and realises that she cannot fight him on his own ground. She accepts his becoming a partner and determines to destroy him in other ways, i.e. socially.

✓ 2. AZ: Augusta needs a more overt plot against Miller/Dolly: she deliberately contrives to embarrass and humiliate them at a royal reception. They fall for it hook, line and sinker. Then Miller begins the long slow climb back to

social respectability with bitterness in his heart.

✓ 3. It is Maisie who coaches Dolly in etiquette (having been through the process herself). At the end of this section, August is at a huge ball, when in walk two beautiful women. All heads turn. To Augusta's chagrin, the beauties are--Maisie and Dolly.

4) Part III

× 1. EF: Nora is not yet real. JW: Does she need to be so ghastly? Not plausible that Hugh would have married her if she is.

2. Hugh sees a way to beat Solly out of a deal, but he does not do it, for Maisie's sake. Then Edward finds out about the missed opportunity and uses it to discredit Hugh.

5) Part IV

✓ 1. EG: There must come a moment when the adored son turns on the suffocating mother and defies her (she would say he betrays her). This happens after the death of Joseph, when Edward has fulfilled her ambitions by becoming both senior partner and Lord Carshalton. She now forbids him to do the Water Company deal, because even she can see it is disastrous, and he does it in spite of her.

× 2. After the death of Joseph, Augusta gets a proposal from the impoverished Comte de Quatrefeuilles. However, it is conditional on her being wealthy.

✓ 3. EF: Emily and her widower are two new characters brought in late.

6) Part V

× 1. BD: The murder of Edward by the dead girl's father is not intrinsic enough. His death must in some way be Augusta's fault.

√ 2. AZ/KF: Both Marquez and Augusta obstruct Miller/Hugh's plans to resuscitate the bank.

Miller needs a government that will settle the Water Company problem and pay interest on the Argentine bonds: Marquez does not want to do this.

Augusta does not want to sell her house and auction her possessions and move to the suburbs, especially now that she has the Comte de Quatrefeuilles. She pretends to be compliant while her house is put on the market and her jewels are appraised. Then at the last minute she tries to flee the country with all her portable wealth and the Duc. Hugh stops her.