



THE SHELBYS

"Pilot"

Written by  
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COLD OPEN

EXT. ENGLISH COUNTRYSIDE, 1813 - DAY

Rain pours over the rolling hills of England as PIANO MUSIC plays. It's straight out of PRIDE & PREJUDICE.

A YOUNG MAN (forlorn, dripping wet), climbs over a hill. A YOUNG WOMAN (forlorn, dripping wet), climbs over another hill.

YOUNG MAN

Marianne!

YOUNG WOMAN

Edmund!

MUSIC SWELLS as they run to each other. They meet at a MUDDY ROAD, gushing with repressed love. Swoon!

EDMUND

Oh, Marianne! What a fool I've been!  
You'll find my mind is quite changed  
and my heart is quite... yours.

MARIANNE

Oh, Edmund! My heart has been fixed  
upon you from the start!

EDMUND

Oh, Marianne!

MARIANNE

Oh, Edmund!

The music SWELLS further. Their faces get close. Suddenly, we hear a loud, angry NEIGH!

Music STOPS. The couple turns to see a fancy and pissed-off looking HORSE glaring at them. Behind the horse is an enormous CARRIAGE. A snobbish, well-dressed lady, CAROLINE SHELBY (23, proud and intense) pokes her head out the window.

CAROLINE

You're blocking the road!

The melodrama is dropped.

EDMUND

Oops. Uh, sorry!

MARIANNE

Forgive us, for he was just...

Her eyes meet Edmund's. The MUSIC RE-SWELLS.

You! MARIANNE (CONT'D) You! EDMUND

CAROLINE (O.S.)  
HEY!

Caroline snaps her fingers at them. The MUSIC STOPS.

EDMUND  
If you could give us one moment-

CAROLINE  
No thanks!

MARIANNE  
But we just need to-

CAROLINE  
Relocate yourselves or I shall  
squash you with this carriage!

Too late, the MUSIC returns as the couple furiously makes out. Caroline groans and signals the DRIVER to drive forward. WHOOSH! SPLAT! The carriage sends the couple flying. Edmund pops his head up from a giant mud puddle.

EDMUND  
Bitch.

Marianne spits out a fountain of mud.

INT. CARRIAGE - (CONTINUOUS)

Caroline fixes her hair. She looks TO CAMERA.

CAROLINE  
What? They were in my way.

The carriage rolls up to a GIANT MANOR as we begin the INTRO SEQUENCE:

UPBEAT MUSIC. Sweeping shots of the estate. Characters introduce themselves a la "Keeping Up with the Kardashians."

TALKING HEAD: "CAROLINE SHELBY, 23"

CAROLINE (CONT'D)  
I'm Caroline Shelby and this is my home. I live here with my parents and two younger siblings. My father may own the place, but *I* run it.

We see Caroline yelling at a SERVANT carrying a TOPIARY shaped like her head. She instructs him to shift to the left, then right, then back again until he collapses under its weight.

TALKING HEAD: "PHILADELPHIA SHELBY, 16"

PHILADELPHIA (Bratty, whiny) boasts to camera.

PHILADELPHIA

I'm Philadelphia. The star of the family.

We see Philadelphia playing furiously at a piano. She's quite skilled. She looks up to see her family bored or asleep. With a pout, she pounds the keys with her fist.

TALKING HEAD: "ERNEST SHELBY, 20"

ERNEST (Awkward, gawky) talks to camera.

ERNEST

Ernest Shelby. I'm a romantic.

We see Ernest peeking over a bush, spying on a PRETTY GIRL. When she turns to look, he blushes and dives into the bush.

TALKING HEAD: "SIR AUGUSTUS SHELBY, 51"

SIR AUGUSTUS (Stately, permanent frown) talks to camera.

AUGUSTUS

Sir Augustus Shelby.

Long pause. Yep, that's it.

More shots of the estate. We see an enormous LAKE on the property. A pair of SWANS pull Caroline on a raft.

TALKING HEAD: "LADY ELAINE SHELBY, 42"

ELAINE SHELBY (Frail, not all there) nibbles a JAM TARTLET.

ELAINE

Elaine Shelby. Jam Tartlet.

She drops the tart, SHRIEKS, and bends out of frame to get it.

We travel down a hall of PORTRAITS OF SHELBY ANCESTORS. They glower down at the camera and whisper to each other. At the end of the hall, Caroline arranges her family in a group pose.

CAROLINE (V.O.)

I don't know what they'd do without me.

The family hits the final pose, Caroline front and center. The pose becomes a painted family PORTRAIT.

END COLD OPEN.

ACT ONE

EXT. SHELBY ESTATE - MORNING

Gratuitous landscape shot. Every big transition will have one, accompanied by a mini-tableau scene somewhere in the grand landscape. Here, we see a majestic ROOSTER crowing. Mid-crow, it's head is chopped off by a BUTCHER and the bird is flung into the kitchens. A dirty TODDLER waddles over to the Rooster's severed head and gums it like a teething ring.

INT. PORTRAIT HALL - MORNING

Servants bustle around, carrying enormous breakfast platters, arranging flowers. One brushes a long rug with a tiny delicate hairbrush and braids its tassels.

We see the WALL OF PORTRAITS wake up. Paintings of Shelbys past stretch and yawn. A servant on a high ladder polishes the frame of a portrait of an ANXIOUS MAN WITH A HUGE CHIN.

ANXIOUS MAN/PORTRAIT

You missed a spot. Missed it.  
There. No. Left corner. MY left.

The portrait to his left, a WOMAN IN A HIGH COLLAR joins.

HIGH COLLAR WOMAN/PORTRAIT

Are you deaf, boy?

ANXIOUS MAN/PORTRAIT

Let me handle this, Prudence.

HIGH COLLAR WOMAN/PORTRAIT

You have to be firm with the help!

The servant glances between the two, unsure what to do.

ANXIOUS MAN/PORTRAIT

I am always firm!

HIGH COLLAR MAN/PORTRAIT

Not according to your wife.

He turns to the portrait on his right, a POOFY-HAIRED WOMAN.

POOFY HAIRED WOMAN/PORTRAIT

Leave me out of this.

HIGH COLLAR WOMAN/PORTRAIT

(to Servant)

What are you gawking at? SCRUB!

Startled, the Servant falls from the ladder with a THUNK!

INT. BREAKFAST ROOM - DAY

We follow more servants into an enormous dining hall. Seated around the world's longest table are Caroline, Philadelphia, Ernest, and Augustus. At one end, Caroline and the Housekeeper, MRS. CHAWTON (40's) study a seating chart.

CAROLINE

I have spent a full six minutes on this! Why is it not done yet?

AUGUSTUS

What's that?

CAROLINE

(louder)

I've spent six minutes on this seating chart and it is not done!

AUGUSTUS

(didn't hear)

Quite right, quite right.

TALKING HEAD: CAROLINE SHELBY

CAROLINE

Tonight is my parents' anniversary ball. It is a major event. Naturally, I am taking care of everything.

BACK TO SCENE: Caroline pouts while Chawton takes care of everything. Caroline holds out her teacup.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

More tea, Chawton.

Chawton pours and does a tired look TO CAMERA.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

My world is nothing but difficulty!

AUGUSTUS

What's that?

CAROLINE

I said my world is- oh, dash it.

She snaps her fingers. Servants accordion-fold the table like origami paper to make it smaller and scoot the chairs in.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Look at me, working myself to the very bone to make this the perfect ball. But alas, I can seek no pity for my efforts.

AUGUSTUS

Do not worry, dear. No one is in danger of pitying you.

CAROLINE

(snappy)

And I suppose you've already selected your present for Mama?

Augustus grumbles, sinking further in his chair.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

You had one task, Papa!

AUGUSTUS

And it shall be done. Eventually. Besides, we shouldn't discuss it in front of your mother.

Indeed, Elaine has appeared beside Caroline, who JUMPS.

CAROLINE

How long have you been here?

ELAINE

(spacey)

42 years...

CAROLINE

Right.

Elaine drinks a GLASS OF WATER with a spoon.

TALKING HEAD: CAROLINE

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

My mother suffers from a nervous condition. But, thanks to the miracle of modern medicine, she's as normal as jellied fish pie!

BACK TO SCENE: Elaine blows on the water as if it is hot.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

(to Augustus)

Please do not forget the gift.

ERNEST

I shall help you find a gift, Papa! How we shall bond!

AUGUSTUS

I sincerely doubt it. Still, we mustn't discuss this in front of your mother.

ERNEST

Mother's not here.

Elaine has indeed disappeared. Philadelphia chimes in.

PHILADELPHIA

I already have the perfect gift,  
Papa! An original ballad with one  
verse for each year of your marriage.  
Shall I give you a sampling?

She starts to sing a high note, Augustus cuts her off.

AUGUSTUS

'Twould ruin the surprise. Must  
away, the privy calls.

He makes a quick exit. Philadelphia turns to Caroline.

PHILADELPHIA

Shall I give you a sampling?  
Without my music tutor, I've had no  
one to practice for.

CAROLINE

What happened to your music tutor?

CUTAWAY TO:

INT. PIANO ROOM - DAY (FLASHBACK)

A BEAUTIFUL YOUNG WOMAN plays a piano duet with Philadelphia.  
She's clearly better than her and garners applause and  
admiration from the Shelbys and several YOUNG MEN. With a  
jealous pout, Philadelphia pounds the piano with her fist.

BACK TO SCENE:

PHILADELPHIA

I dismissed her. Creative differences.

CAROLINE

Alas, that's *another* chore for me.  
(beat as she tries to  
focus)  
Lord, I cannot focus under these  
conditions. I require relocation!

CUT TO:

INT. EMBROIDERY ROOM - SAME

Caroline and Philadelphia embroider while Ernest reads.

CAROLINE

Let us finally make some progress!  
Mrs. Chawton, what is my next task?

Chawton scans a list for something easy enough for Caroline.

MRS. CHAWTON

You could count the dessert forks?

CAROLINE

Ooooo, all 87 of them?

MRS. CHAWTON

88, Miss. One for each guest.

CAROLINE

But there are 87 guests.

Caroline grabs the GUEST LIST from Chawton and scans the names.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Who in God's name is "E. Morten"? I  
invited no such person!

PHILADELPHIA

Morten as in Morten's hat shop?

CAROLINE

Who invited the hat-seller to my  
ball?!

ERNEST

Actually, it is the hat-seller's  
*daughter* and *I* invited her.

LONG BEAT as the sisters process this news.

CAROLINE

That is... nice.

Philadelphia quickly embroiders something and flips her  
embroidery hoop around so Caroline can see it. It reads:  
"WHAT THE HELL?" Caroline quickly embroiders: "RIGHT?!"

ERNEST

Her name is Emily and I met her  
three days ago. She works in her  
father's shop.

CAROLINE

Is that so?

Caroline embroiders a shocked face. Philadelphia embroiders  
an angry face.

PHILADELPHIA

Tell us more, dearest brother.

ERNEST

Well, she is kind, well-spoken,  
uncommonly accomplished, and she  
isn't unpleasant to look at either.

Philadelphia embroiders boobs. Caroline embroiders: "hahaha"

TALKING HEAD: CAROLINE

CAROLINE

The truth of it is, if my brother  
falls for a shop-girl, we are all  
rather f\*cked. It simply won't do.

BACK TO SCENE:

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Pardon brother, but I feel a sudden  
urge to go to town.

Chawton looks at her massive "To Do" list.

CAROLINE (CONT'D)

Not to worry, I shall take care of  
all of the shopping while I'm out.  
Come, Philadelphia.

Caroline walks into a web of party garlands. She rips them  
down and exits, taking down a SERVANT on a ladder. A portrait  
of a YOUNG BOY laughs at the servant in a super posh voice.

YOUNG BOY/PORTRAIT

Oh ho HO!

EXT. SHELBY ESTATE: COURTYARD - DAY (CONTINUOUS)

The sisters pass SERVANTS carrying crates of food for the  
party. A MAID dumps booze into a jacuzzi-size punch bowl,  
sneaking sips between pours. The sisters step into a CARRIAGE.

CAROLINE

Smith! Take us to Morten's Hat Shop.  
We're off to make a new friend.

Chawton shares an eye roll with SMITH, the carriage driver,  
who shares an eye roll with his HORSE. The carriage departs.