

Waterloo
by
Charles Sturridge

Night One

Revised First Draft

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69 Riverview Gardens
London SW13 8QZ

EXT. BATTLEFIELD, WATERLOO - DAY

A hand thrust into space.

The ring finger has been crudely hacked off, blood trickles down the wrist. As we move down the arm, we find another body, not connected to the hand, then another, then more bodies piled on top of each other, some naked, some clothed, all stripped of anything of value.

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CREDITS

The camera moves across the corpses and more of the devastation is revealed. A battle that left over seventy thousand dead from a single day's fighting, this is the field of Waterloo.

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MAIN TITLE

We hear a girl screaming. Loud, high pitched and violent.

INT. GROUND FLOOR CORRIDOR, RUE DE LA BLANCHISSERIE - DAY

'Geegee' or Lady Sophia Georgiana Lennox (6) is being carried like a battering ram down a long white corridor by her brothers 'Freddie' Lord Frederick Seymour (14), and 'Sausage' Lord Sussex (13). They are followed by their parents, the Duke of Richmond: Charles Lennox (51), once a serial duellist, now a bluff cricketer and his wife Charlotte (47) formidable, dark and quick tempered. Three more daughters follow behind them: 'Georgie', Lady Georgiana, (20), Lady Sarah (21) and Lady Jane (17). The family is being escorted round the house by Monsieur Flanquin (40's), their Belgian property agent, a small carefully dressed man with an elaborate cravat. Last in the procession is 'Ma'amselle' (20's) their harassed Belgian nanny.

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CHARLOTTE LENNOX

For God's sake Freddie, put her down!

FREDDIE

(protesting)

She likes it!

CHARLOTTE LENNOX

Then, do something she doesn't like.

DUKE OF RICHMOND

(affably)

Leave her alone, Sausage old boy.

Revised First Draft 2.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX
Where's that bloody frog nanny?
(loudly)
Ma'amselle!

DUKE OF RICHMOND
She's not a frog darling. She's
Belgian.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX
How fascinating!
(loud)
MA'AMSELLE!

The harassed looking girl runs forward.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX
Geegee stop that awful racket.
(slowly to
Ma'amselle)
Take Lady Sophia away!

The girl nods awaiting further instructions.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX
AWAY! Take her upstairs and put
her to bed or something.

MA'AMSELLE
(confused)
For her rest?

CHARLOTTE LENNOX
No, for my rest you imbecile!

Ma'amselle rescues Lady Sophia from her brothers as M.
Flanquin, well used to the manners of the English,
arrives at a pair of large double doors.

FLANQUIN
(polite cough)
Your Grace... your Grace? I have
saved the best till last. There
is nothing like it in the whole of
Brussels. It is three times the
size of Lady Mountnorris's largest
drawing room.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX
How many does she have?

FLANQUIN
(quickly)
Three but all very meanly
proportioned, whereas this....

He opens the double doors with a flourish and stands back
to let the Duke and Duchess and their children through.

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Revised First Draft 3.

INT. BALLROOM, RUE DE LA BLANCHISSERIE - DAY

The 'ballroom', originally intended as a commercial showroom for gentlemen's carriages, is about thirty metres long and with a staircase leading to a galleried balcony at the far end. A trellis patterned wallpaper covers part of the otherwise plain white walls in an attempt to add style. There is no furniture.

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CHARLOTTE LENNOX

(looking round)

It doesn't look much like a ballroom to me!

FLANQUIN

Well, with a little imagination...

He gestures vaguely.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX

(withering)

Monsieur Flanquin, imagination is not something I am accustomed to using when it comes to my own accommodation.

SARAH

(cheerfully)

I like it.

GEORGIE

(excited)

We could fill it with candles and hang drapes on the walls and have parties every night!

JANE

I thought we came here to save money not spend it.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX

Don't be vulgar darling.

(to Flanquin)

Anyway, we're certainly not paying thirty guineas a month to live in a shop!

The girls start to 'dance' humming as they go. Jane takes the boys' arms and spins them around.

*

FLANQUIN

(protesting)

Madame La Duchesse, it is not a 'shop'!

Revised First Draft 4.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX

Lady Capel told me that the owner,
Mr. Van Sainte used to keep his
carriages in here to show his
clients. It's a shop!

FLANQUIN

That was before it was decorated!

CHARLOTTE LENNOX

This is humiliating!
(to her husband)
And all your fault! We should have
come to Brussels months ago and
rented a proper house near the
park like everyone else.

DUKE OF RICHMOND

My dear, there was a war on. It
wasn't safe.

CHARLOTTE LENNOX

Exactly, WAS a war on! It's over!
Has been for months and that
wretched Corsican dwarf is safely
locked up on some godforsaken
island in the middle of nowhere!

The Duke sighs, Elba seeming a perfectly pleasant idea at
this precise moment.

EXT. VILLA MULINI, ELBA - DAY

A large and beautiful terra cotta house overlooking the
sea. A group of about six officers in the uniform of the
'Old Guard' waiting outside, smoking. *

TITLE: ELBA

INT. DRAWING ROOM, VILLA I MULLINI, ELBA - DAY

Shafts of sunlight pierce the shadowy room. A young
valet, Marchand (24), is pouring tea for a sharp eyed old
woman, Napoleon's formidable mother, Madame Mere (91).
Standing against the harsh light of the window we
recognise the hunched frame of the once and future
Emperor of France, Napoleon Bonaparte (45). He has put on
weight since his exile but his eyes are fierce and
bright. *The conversation that follows is in Corsican*
except when remarks are addressed to Marchand. *

MADAME MERE

Today?

Revised First Draft 5.

NAPOLEON

I cannot wait. The British Consul may return at any moment. He goes to the mainland for sex but shows little appetite for it when he gets there.

MADAME MERE

There can be no going back.

NAPOLEON

Which is fortunate, mother, as I do not intend to come back.

MADAME MERE

What about money, it will be expensive.

NAPOLEON

(energized)

This house is expensive. The soldiers outside are expensive. Everything on this island costs money. Money that I don't have since there is no sign of the allowance I was guaranteed when I abdicated and now I understand there is talk of sending me to an island in the South Atlantic. If I don't go now, it will be too late and I will rot forever.

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MADAME MERE

(gently)

I was not trying to dissuade you.

NAPOLEON

(acknowledging)

Good.

MADAME MERE

(to the valet)

Marchand.

MARCHAND

Madame.

MADAME MERE

My box.

She indicates a polished wooden box which is on a side table. Marchand picks it up and carries it to her.

MADAME MERE

(indicating her son)

For him.

Marchand opens the box and Napoleon turns to look at it.
It is filled with jewellery.

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MADAME MERE

There is the Borgese necklace
which should be worth half a
million, a hundred thousand in
cash and some trinkets of mine.

NAPOLEON

(touched)

Thank you, but I don't need it.

MADAME MERE

(firmly)

Take it. You have enemies in
France. Tallyrand, Fouché, they
will not wait while you negotiate.
Besides if you fail, I want you to
be able to get out.

NAPOLEON

I will not fail. France is not a
place, it is an idea and the
idea...

(indicates his head)

...is in here.

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He kisses her and she hugs him close.

MADAME MERE

(as he goes)

Marchand.

MARCHAND

Madame?

MADAME MERE

Stay close to him.

MARCHAND

Madame.

MADAME MERE

And keep your eye on my money!

Marchand bows.

INT. CORRIDOR, PALACE, VIENNA - DAY

An ornate corridor in the Royal residence in Vienna.
Some ADC's and officials are waiting about, two bored
young men are sitting opposite each other on the floor,
backs against the wall, with a cup in between them. They
are playing 'Chuck Farthing' which consists of tossing
coins into the cup. The one that gets the most coins
into the cup, wins.

Revised First Draft 7.

The taller, a boy with tousled blonde hair, Lord James Hay (18) is winning, his opponent, the darker Will Lennox (16), another son of The Duke of Richmond, concentrates on his next throw.

WILL

When I was seven I beat every boy
in my year.

JAMES

(joking)
You're still seven, Will!

WILL

Bugger off!

He misses.

WILL

Dammit!

JAMES

I'm not sure this is exactly what
my father had in mind when he paid
twelve thousand guineas for my
commission!

He lobs one in.

JAMES

Chuck farthing champion of the
world!

Hay misses.

WILL

It's not our fault that the
fighting stopped the moment we
joined up.

JAMES

I should have become a bishop,
that's what my mother wanted.

*

WILL

Nice frocks... makes a terrible
mess of Christmas though. I've
got three uncles who are bishops.

JAMES

Not much point in being a soldier
if there's going to be peace for a
generation.

WILL

I don't mind peace, it's 'peace
talks' I can't stand...

Revised First Draft 8.

Will throws and gets his coin in.

WILL

Yes!

*

INT. DRAWING ROOM, ROYAL PALACE, VIENNA - DAY

The principle members of the formidable Council of Vienna are seated round an ornate table. These men are responsible for administering the balance of European power after the Revolutionary War of Napoleon: Prince Metternich of Austria (41) is in the chair, a diplomat at the height of his powers, Count Nesserode of Russia (34) dark haired and intelligent, Prince Von Hardenburg of Prussia (65), a grey haired civil servant and the representative of France: Charles Talleyrand (60) imposing and elaborately coiffured. Sitting with his back to us is a tall Englishman, whose commanding nose may just be visible: Arthur Wellesley, Duke of Wellington (45).

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METTERNICH

Monsieur Talleyrand, there can be no settlement which does not recognise the realities of war which, and excuse me if I stress this point, we, the 'allies' won!

*

TALLEYRAND

(sighs)

My dear Prince, France is no longer at war and therefore I reject absolutely the use of the belligerent term 'allies' and the business of this congress is not conquest, it is geography. We are here to draw lines! Our weapon must be the pencil not the sword!

*

*

Wellington leans forward, speaking quietly but with a natural authority.

WELLINGTON

Then Monsieur Talleyrand perhaps you would allow us to have a private conversation, not as 'allies' but as friends and colleagues. I am sure we will quickly reach agreement on the next stage.

*

Talleyrand, satisfied that he has won the argument, stands up to take his leave.

Revised First Draft 9.

EXT. SEA - DAY

HMS Inconstant, a twenty six gun brig, in full sail heading for France. On her deck we see Napoleon standing with men from his Imperial Guard.

EXT. DECK, HMS INCONSTANT - DAY

Napoleon catches sight of a ship bearing down flying French colours.

NAPOLEON

Messieurs.

The Imperial Guard duck down and lie on the deck. As the French ship sails by only one man is visible, Napoleon. A crewman shouts through a megaphone.

CREWMAN

Où allez-vous?

Napoleon gestures to the Captain to hand him a megaphone.

NAPOLEON

(taking it)

Genoa, de l'île d'Elbe.

CREWMAN

Bon vitesse.

NAPOLEON

Merci.

CREWMAN

Comment le vieux Empereur?

NAPOLEON

(smiling)

Pas si vieux, mais il est très bien. Merci!

Napoleon waves as the two ships separate.

EXT. PARC DE BRUXELLES - DAY

Through the trees of the wooded park in the centre of Brussels we can see a few fashionably dressed ladies walking. A military band is playing.

TITLE: BRUSSELS

We notice one couple in particular, Lady Mountnorris(62) dressed in black and her startlingly pretty blonde daughter, Lady Frances Wedderburn Webster(22), friend of Byron and one of London's more scandalous beauties.

FRANCES

Have you seen what they're wearing? French waists! Nothing from last year is going to do at all.

LADY MOUNTNORRIS

(firmly)

No new dresses, young lady! Particularly not in your condition.

FRANCES

(ignoring this)

Don't be ridiculous. Do you want me to look like a pauper?

LADY MOUNTNORRIS

Thanks to your husband that's exactly what you are!

FRANCES

He was your idea!

LADY MOUNTNORRIS

When he had a large inheritance! I had no idea how quickly the man could lose it. Fortunately the prices in Brussels are very reasonable.

FRANCES

(pleased)

So there should be no problem with a few new dresses! Come on let's go and listen to the band.

*

She runs forward leaving Lady Mountnorris shaking her head.

EXT. BEACH, GOLFE-JUIN, FRANCE - DUSK

The prow of a longboat filled with Imperial Guardsmen touches the beach. Two soldiers jump out and help Napoleon onto the shoreline as two more boats appear behind him. Napoleon kneels in the sand as his men gather round him. He makes the sign of the cross and bends forward to kiss the ground of France. Then he stands.

NAPOLEON

Remember, there is to be no bloodshed. Not under any circumstance.

(quietly)

Pour La France.

SOLDIERS

Pour La France

He heads at a determined pace, up the beach.

EXT. FIELD NR VIENNA - DAY

A lone rider covered in dust is standing by a hedgerow in the morning light. Across the field coming towards him is a pack of hounds followed by 'the hunt', a dozen mounted riders, some in uniform but most informally dressed. The hounds charge through the hedgerow and the hunters jump over it, apparently oblivious to the lone rider, until two of them, James Hay and Will Lennox peel off and ride back to the waiting man.

JAMES

(to Will)

There's a despatch here for the Duke, the messenger says it's urgent. He was told he was hunting with us.

WILL

(quickly)

Give it to me, I know where he is.

Will rides off followed by James.

INT. CORRIDOR, WELLINGTON'S QUARTERS, VIENNA - DAWN

A startlingly pretty masked woman emerges from a bedroom along the corridor, she is wearing a ball gown clearly from the night before. As she wanders down the corridor she meets Will and James hurrying towards her.

PRINCESS LIEVEN

(Russian accent)

Hello William.

WILL

(startled)

Princess.

She kisses him lightly on the cheek.

PRINCESS LIEVEN

Give him a moment. There's a good boy.

She wanders on and Will and James watch her go.

JAMES

Who the hell's she?

Revised First Draft 12.

WILL

The Russian Ambassador's wife.
She's a friend of my fathers.

*

They go up to the bedroom door. Will hesitates.

*

JAMES

Go on!

Will looks at the door, there is no alternative. He
knocks and goes in.

INT. WELLINGTON'S BEDROOM, VIENNA - NIGHT

As Will enters, Wellington is lying in bed reading some
diplomatic papers.

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*

WELLINGTON

(coolly)

Hello Will, what is it?

WILL

There's an urgent despatch from
our ambassador in Florence.
Something terrible has happened.

EXT. FIELD, NR ALDERSHOT, ENGLAND - DAY

Cool misty early morning light. Two artillery gun
carriages gallop down the field, polished brass
glistening. As they reach the end they swing round
together and head back up the field where they halt,
soldiers swiftly unharnessing the horses and priming the
guns, and ramming the wadding home, ready to fire. A
handsome, dark haired Yorkshireman, Captain Mercer (33)
watches the exercise with Sergeant Marston who is timing
the run with a watch.

MERCER

(shouting)

Steady now lads, keep it together.

The men stand to attention ready.

SGT MARSTON

One minute and thirty eight
seconds, sir.

Mercer nods.

SGT MARSTON

Don't worry, we'll have 'em down
to 90 seconds by the Summer
Review.

MERCER

Fire!

The cannons blast off.

MERCER

We may need to be ready a little
sooner than that if the rumours
are true.

*

Marston smiles.

MARSTON

I always said we should have
finished with him when we had the
chance.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD, NR GRENOBLE - DAY

A small band of thirty tired soldiers walk in line up the narrow road. Behind them is a carriage with no marking or decoration, and bringing up the rear some mounted cavalry. An officer comes riding down the road towards the column. He shouts to the men to halt and rides through them, dismounts and opens the carriage door.

*

INT. CARRIAGE, NR GRENOBLE - DAY

Napoleon is asleep, wrapped in his great coat. The officer leans forward to wake him, but his eyes open before he is touched.

OFFICER

Emperor.

Napoleon sits up, he is unshaven and looks tired.

OFFICER

A quarter of a mile ahead there is
a barricade across the road and
cavalry in the fields behind.

NAPOLEON

Who is the officer in charge?

OFFICER

De La Bedoyere. He would not meet
me.

NAPOLEON

(easy)

I know him. He is young. He
fought with us in Spain.

(beat)

Do you have anything to eat?

The officer looks uncertain.

NAPOLEON

Food?

He produces an apple from his pocket.

NAPOLEON

Thank you.

He climbs out of the carriage and sets off up the road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD, NR GRENOBLE - DAY

Napoleon makes his way up to the head of the column, eating the apple and calmly ordering the men to lower their arms.

EXT. BEND IN ROAD NR GRENOBLE - DAY

A line of Royalist troops block the road. In the fields beyond we see the waiting cavalry, among them, a nervous looking Col. De La Bedoyere (28). The sound of marching feet comes closer. *

DE LA BEDOYERE

Take aim.

The Royalist soldiers raise their rifles as around the corner comes a single man: Napoleon, walking alone, wearing his long grey coat. He throws the apple into a hedge and keeps walking. Thirty feet behind him, his troops appear, arms lowered. Napoleon raises his right hand and his men halt. Napoleon keeps walking. As he nears the line, De La Bedoyere gives another order and we hear the rifles being cocked. Napoleon comes to a halt a few feet in front of the guns. *

NAPOLEON

Well?

He looks at the soldiers standing in front of him.

NAPOLEON

(quietly)

I think you know who I am. I also know who you are, men of the Seventh, and I know your colonel, sitting up there, with his Legion D'Honneur and his Iron Crown. He was Captain De La Bedoyere when we last met... in Russia. So, we know each other, he and I, you and I. Now we must decide if we recognise each other.

(MORE)

NAPOLEON (CONT'D)

I recognise you, I know your worth, I have fought with you, eaten with you, got drunk with you. Now you must decide if you recognise me? As your Friend? As your commander?

(loud)

As your Emperor!

DE LA BEDOYERE

On my command!

Thirty rifles point at Napoleon.

DE LA BEDOYERE

Fire!

Nobody moves. Napoleon waits.

On Marchand, waiting with the carriage out of sight. Suddenly he hears a shot, then another. He runs forward to see Napoleon surrounded by Royalist soldiers firing their guns in the air with cries of 'Vive L'Emperor' Napoleon looks up to the young colonel and lightly salutes him. *

INT. BALLROOM, HOTEL DE VILLE, BRUSSELS - DAY

A large ornate room with tall windows down one side. The room is stripped bare for a dancing class which is being conducted by the large but unexpectedly agile Monsieur LePage with the assistance of a string quartet. In front of him are a dozen young women dancing a formal English reel. Among them, the Richmond girls: Sarah, Georgie and Jane. Frances Wedderburn Webster is partnering Sarah Lennox. *

MONSIEUR LEPAGE

Together now, let the movement flow. Pick up, pick up, Lady Jane that includes you. Now bear down every one... Two-three-four and five.

The dancers come to a finish, out of breath, the atmosphere is informal despite the attempts of M. LePage to keep order.

MONSIEUR LEPAGE

Lady Sarah? Come, come.

He waves his hands imperiously beckoning Sarah who is embarrassed to be singled out.

MONSIEUR LEPAGE

Bar seventeen please. Now Lady Sarah, show us the walk down.

(MORE)

Revised First Draft 16.

MONSIEUR LEPAGE (CONT'D)

Come please.

(taking her arm)

Step out... step out... step out... There, see. That is how it should be done. Now, shall we try something new?

FRANCES

(bored)

Yes, please.

MONSIEUR LEPAGE

Something that was very popular in the French court last year. *

FRANCES

I'm not sure I'm very keen on the French at the moment.

Laughter.

MONSIEUR LEPAGE

(clapping his hands)

Quiet please, ladies. *

FRANCES

Monsieur LePage do you know, by any chance, a 'waltz'?

The girls are suddenly all attention, the waltz, seen the season before at a few London parties, is considered a scandalous dance in the more conservative Bruxelles. *

MONSIEUR LEPAGE

(shocked)

A waltz? Certainly not. It is a most vulgar dance, not fit for a lady.

FRANCES

In London it's considered fit for a Prince.

(to the group)

Girls, do you want to judge for yourselves? *

The girls are slightly shocked by Frances's boldness but also interested.

FRANCES

(to the quartet)

Gentlemen can you oblige me?

They look at her blankly.

FRANCES

Tu connais 'An Sauteuse Waltz'? *