

Hysteria

(Period Comedy) (2011)

95 minutes

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MAGGIE GYLLENHAAL HUGH DANCY RUPERT EVERETT



HYSTERIA



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Major Characters

Dr. Dalrymple Jonathan Pryce

One of London's leading doctors for hysterical women. His burgeoning practice specialises in the treatment of "hysteria", a popular diagnosis for women of that time. Dr. Dalrymple treats hysteria by massaging the genital area, decently covered under a curtain, to elicit "paroxysmal convulsions"

Charlotte Dalrymple.....Maggie Gyllenhaal

Dr. Dalrymple's oldest daughter. She runs a settlement house in a poor section of London. Charlotte believes women deserve to lead lives of pleasure and significance.

Emily Dalrymple..... Felicity Jones

Dr. Dalrymple's favourite daughter. She's the pinnacle of demure mildness and the antithesis of the spirited, uncontrollable Charlotte.

Mortimer GranvilleHugh Dancy

A young physician who has difficulty with his occupation due to constant arguments over modern medicine. He gets a job assisting Dr. Dalrymple

Edmund St. John-Smythe.....Rupert Everett

Mortimer's aristocratic best friend whose plans to build an electric feather duster are taken in a most unexpected direction.

Fanny.....Ashley Jensen

A settlement house resident. She helps Charlotte see that, whereas affluent women are getting massages for mysterious maladies, working women are in dire need of real medical care

'Molly the Lolly' Sheridan Smith

A former prostitute now working as a house maid for the Dalrymple's. Mortimer uses her as a "guinea pig" on which to test first, fledgling vibrator

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Hysteria is a 2011 British period romantic comedy film directed by Tanya Wexler. It stars Hugh Dancy and Maggie Gyllenhaal, with Felicity Jones, Jonathan Pryce, and Rupert Everett appearing in key supporting roles. The film, set in the Victorian era, shows how the medical management of hysteria led to the invention of the vibrator. The film's title refers to the once-common medical diagnosis of female hysteria. . ©Wikipedia

Plot

In 1880 pioneering doctor Mortimer Granville, sacked from various hospitals for challenging his superiors' out-moded methods, gets a job with Dr Dalrymple, who relieves female patients' frustrations - or hysteria - with pelvic massages which allow orgasm. The handsome young doctor attracts a large female clientele and gets engaged to Dalrymple's studious younger daughter Emily but after the constant massaging brings on a carpal injury he is sacked. Fortunately an enterprising inventor friend has come up with a power operated feather duster which will soon be transformed into a vibrator and make Mortimer a fortune. Along the way he also realises that his heart really lies with Emily's older sister Charlotte, an outspoken suffragette who runs a home for disadvantaged women in London's East End. ©on @ minifie-1 IMDb

The following dialogue was transcribed using the screenplay and/or viewings of the film Hysteria

Dialogue
Doctor's Surgery, London. 1880s

[first lines]

Mrs Bellamy: I truly don't even know why I'm here, doctor. Well of course it's difficult running a large household by one self. And raising four children is exacting, but they're wonderful, wonderful children. And my husband, he's a good man. A very hard worker. And, hum. [*clears throat*] Well, there is just one thing. Sometimes at night, when he comes to me, I imagine myself splitting his fat, bald head with a great large axe.

Mrs Parsons: It's just a feeling that comes over me many, many times a day. A feeling of, hum, expectation, ah, hungering.

Mrs. Castellari: How do you bear it, this English weather? I cannot sing from the sadness. I open my mouth...you see? [*no sound*] Nothing.

Mrs Parsons: Well, and with my dear Alistair gone these two years now, I... I should have thought that I'm far too old for these kinds of feelings, but well, there they are.

Westminster Hospital

Mortimer: Nurse! I asked you to clean this wound and put on fresh bandages.

Nurse: Umm, Dr. Richardson told me not to waste supplies.

Mortimer: Is he mad? No, we must keep the wound clean to prevent sepsis.

Patient: What 'sis'?

Mortimer: [*confidently*] Sepsis. Infection. It's caused by germs entering the wound. Germs. They're tiny creatures that invade the body, causing pain, fever, infections.

Patient: I don't think I have those.

Mortimer: You can't see them. They're invisible. [*to the nurse*] Please, just fetch me a beaker of carbolic acid solution and fresh bandage.

Nurse: Yes, doctor.

Mortimer: [*unwrapping the blood and dirt infested bandage*] Honestly, if that oaf Richardson had his way we'd perform surgery in the sewer using rusty saws, and it would be Beekman's pills for everybody, no matter the ailment [*Richardson approaches the bed*]

Dr. Richardson: Granville. I'm aware I specifically told the nurse not to change these bandages.

Mortimer: Soiled bandages are a heaven for germs.

Dr. Richardson: Germ theory is poppycock, Granville. Now stop speaking of it. You're frightening the patients.

Mortimer: Poppycock? But Lister has proved it. All the latest journals...

Dr. Richardson: Tripe, Granville. [*to the nurse*] Now, we won't be needing those. Thanks very much. [*to Mortimer*] A study there of calm reassurance and regular bleeding. These are the keys to modern medicine.

Mortimer: Will you remain calm, when the leg putrefies and become gangrenous? When you amputate? When the rot spreads to her blood and kills her?

Dr. Richardson: I've had quite enough of your impertinence. Put back that bandage and bleed a pint.

Mortimer: Look, look at her, man. You'd get more blood out of a turnip.

Dr. Richardson: Do as you're told. And give her Beekman's pills for insurance.

Mortimer: Beekman's pills are rubbish. They will do nothing but bring on stomach cramps. I won't stand here and watch you murder your patients just because you can't be bothered to read the latest science.

Dr. Richardson: [*gives a hearty laugh*] At long last we agree, Granville.

Edmund St. John-Smythe. Grosvenor Square

Mortimer: Good day Mrs. Copeland. Is Edmund in?

Mrs. Copeland: I wouldn't know, sir. Guests at all hours, mad parties, deliveries day and night. If I didn't love his parents so, I'd never stay. I'd pack my bags. And all this electrical equipment, it's a fire hazard, that's what it is.

Mortimer: I'll try his study.

Edmund: Oh, no. You haven't been sacked again, have you?

Mortimer: I'll tell you, Edmund, the healing arts in England are positively lethal. It's no coincident that the morgues are placed adjacent to the hospitals. It's the 1880s. We're meant to be in the midst of a medical revolution. Is it asking too much to use just a bit of what science has provided. Rather than go about indiscriminately killing people?

Edmund: Oh, well, if you put it like that.

Mortimer: What's all the fuss outside?

Edmund: My new generator.

Mortimer: You purchased a generator just last year.

Edmund: Obsolete. This one is half the size and delivers double the power.

Mortimer: I never thought I'd say this, but, I've lost hope. Since I was a boy, all I wanted was to practice medicine, and to help people that actually needed it. But I'm beginning to fear that the world is set against me.

Edmund: Well, what you gonna do?

Mortimer: Private practice, I suppose. I shall harness myself to some greedy pill pusher, shut my mouth, and pray that it nets me a steady income.

Dr. Dalrymple's Medical Practise

Mortimer: Good Morning. Mortimer Granville to see Dr. Dalrymple. I have an appointment.

Receptionist: He's with someone now.

Mortimer: I see. Very well. I shall wait, then. [*he's forced to stand in the busy waiting area*] Ladies.

Charlotte: [*shouting at her father*] You're a charlatan! With no more idea of a woman's wants or needs than of, of the moon's atmosphere.

Dr Dalrymple: Charlotte, I simply want you to behave...

Charlotte: You may be unaware, but there is a social revolution afoot. Women, will no longer be denied our rightful place. Try, as you might to keep us in a kitchen and in a drawing room. We will not rest until we are welcomed in the universities, in the professions, and in the voting booth. [*to Mortimer*] What are you staring at? [*he's speechless*] Yes, I can see the wheels turning. Pity I can't stay for the pronouncement.

Dr Dalrymple: Charlotte! [*she storms out*]

Mortimer: That woman was...

Dr Dalrymple: Hysterical.

Mortimer: Yes, quite.

Dr Dalrymple: It's a very difficult case, that one.

Interview

Dr Dalrymple: Tell me doctor, what do you know of hysteria?

Mortimer: Ah... Nothing.

Dr Dalrymple: Nothing? But it's a plague of our time. I would venture to say that half the women in London are affected. It stems from an overactive uterus. In its most severe forms, it demands drastic measures, institutionalisation, surgery even. But in it's milder manifestations– nymphomania, frigidity, melancholia, anxiety– it's eminently treatable. Look, I'll come straight to the point, doctor. I'm keen for help. Well, you saw my waiting room. Not enough hands to do the work, so to speak.

Mortimer: Sir, I would be enormously grateful for any position that allowed me to offer relieve to my patients with little chance of killing them.

Dr Dalrymple: I've treated thousands of cases, and I've not lost a single patient. But I won't lie to you, Granville. [*he stands up*] It's tedious, tiring work. Are you fit?

Mortimer: I have never shirked from hard work in the pursuit of helping the most needy among us.

Dr Dalrymple: Jolly good. Shall we say, umm, 3 pounds a week?

Dr Dalrymple: We're going to do great things together, Granville. [*they shake hands*] Good God, man, what a grip. So, breakfast at 8, dinner at 6. Your room is up...ah... Emily, I want you to meet my new assistant. Dr. Mortimer Granville. My daughter Emily Dalrymple.

Mortimer: Your servant, ma'am.

Emily: So pleased to meet you, Dr. Granville.

Dr Dalrymple: Emily is the angel of the house. Since my dear wife, Melodia, passed away, Emily has run things in proper order. Oh, and she's also quite a scientist in her own right.

Emily: Don't boast, Father.

Mortimer: Let me guess. Geology? [*both chuckle*] Botany? Lepidopterology?

Dr Dalrymple: Phrenology. [*Mortimer gives a dismissive chuckle*] I can assure you phrenology is an accurate science, doctor.

Emily: Yes. The size and the relation of the bumps on one's head are a veritable road map to the personality, if one is properly trained to read them.

Mortimer: I didn't mean to imply...

Dr Dalrymple: I think a demonstration is in order for our young sceptic. It'll be most convivial.

Emily: [*with her hands on Mortimer's head*] Why, Dr. Granville, you had the most perfectly formed nimbus I've ever felt.

Dr Dalrymple: [*firmly*] Nimbus?

Emily: [*confidently*] He is a man of great wisdom.

Dr Dalrymple: [*pleased*] I knew it. I knew it

Emily: And your mastoid is...is very well pronounced. Doctor, you're quite sympathetic, aren't you?

Mortimer: Umm...well...

Dr Dalrymple: What else...what else?

Emily: [*shrieks*] Oh... Oh, I'm so sorry.

Mortimer: What?

Emily: It's just, well your thrombus is so rigid, so jutting and prominent, it startled me.

Dr Dalrymple: Rigid thrombus? Sorry. Rigid thrombus?

Emily: It augurs fame.

Mortimer: No, no, no... While I have the utmost respect for your method, Miss Dalrymple, I must complain that you misread me. I'm but a simple doctor. I have no ambition for notoriety.

Emily: And I can assure you, your thrombus is the key to your future. Whether you seek it or not, Dr. Granville. You're destined for fame.

Edmund St. John-Smythe. Grosvenor Square

Edmund: Do you realise, I've just been speaking to a barrister on the other side of London?

Mortimer: What about ?

Edmund: Nothing. I don't even know his job.

Mortimer: I don't see the value if you have nothing to speak about.

Edmund: Here I am in Grosvenor Square, and he's miles away, yet we're able to speak to each other instantaneously.

Mortimer: Do you think it'll catch on?

Edmund: I have no idea. But imagine if everyone had one.

Mortimer: Right. Well, I've just been offered a position by London's leading specialist in women's medicine.

Edmund: Oh, God, how ghastly for you. When do you start?

Mortimer: Tomorrow. Quite looking forward to it, actually.

Edmund: Who is she?

Mortimer: What? Well, she's his daughter. Emily Dalrymple. I've only met her briefly, but...

Edmund: But what?

Mortimer: Oh, Edmund, she is magnificent. The epitome of English virtue and womanliness. I haven't a hope.

Edmund: Huh. A handsome young doctor. What more could a woman ask?

Mortimer: Better income. Social equal.

Edmund: Overrated. A few laughs, a stiff prick, that's all a girl wants.

Mortimer: And you know this because?

Edmund: Oh, I've read it in a magazine.

Mortimer: Oh, I see.

Edmund: A toast then. To the end of Mortimer Granville, once a brilliant student, most recently a visionary doctor to the poor and now handmade to anxious middle-aged women.

Mortimer: Edmund St. John Smythe. Bachelor, benefactor, miserable student, sometime drunkard, full time sexual deviant, and supreme waster of time and money, especially if it has anything to do with the science of electricity.

Edmund: To the telephone.

Mortimer: To the Queen.

Edmund: To calling the Queen on the telephone.

Dalrymple's Medical Practise – Mrs Parsons – 9:00am

Dr Dalrymple: Morning, Mrs. Parsons.

Mrs. Parsons: [*her legs trussed up in stirrups*] Oh, good morning, Doctor.

Dr Dalrymple: This is Dr. Granville. He'll be assisting me this morning.

Mortimer: Very pleased to meet you, Mrs. Parsons.

Mrs. Parsons: Doctor.

Dr Dalrymple: [*to Mortimer*] Notice the general pallor. [*to Mrs Parsons*] And how are we this morning, Ms. Parsons? Still feeling anxious?

Mrs. Parsons: Yes, quite anxious, doctor. I've been having those distracting thoughts we discussed all week.

Dr Dalrymple: Yes. [*to Mortimer as he washes his hands*] Throughout history, the medical establishment has offered hysterical women a veritable smorgasbord of treatments. Warm baths, ice baths, water jets, mesmerisation, horseback riding even. But I favour a more direct approach. [*oil*] Now, I like to begin with a drop of musk oil. Followed by oil of lilies, a good dollop. [*rubs his hands*] Now, are you ready, Mrs. Parsons?

Mrs. Parsons: Yes. Yes, doctor, quite ready.

[*Dr Dalrymple reaches through the red curtain that's covering Mrs. Parsons*]

Mrs. Parsons: Ooh...

Dr Dalrymple: [*to Mortimer*] Now, you begin with the index finger. Applying gentle pressure. Then slowly, slowly in a circular motion. Still pressing gently. It's a bit like patting your head and rubbing your tummy at the same time. But you'll soon get the hang of it. [*9:15 am*] Vulva massage was popularised by Pieter van Foreest in the 16th century, who prescribed it most especially for widows and women of religious orders. No offence, Mrs. Parsons.

Mrs. Parsons: None taken, Doctor.

Dr Dalrymple: But today, in a clinical environment, with a trained professional, this is the most direct, most effective treatment we can offer. Good steady pressure, that's the key. Oh [*Mortimer dries sweat from Dalrymple's forehead*] Thank you, doctor. Thank you. Of course, reapply oil as needed. [*Mrs Parsons gives out an involuntary kick*] [*9:35 am*]

Dr Dalrymple: Notice the effect, Doctor?

Mortimer: Shortness of breath, blushing of the skin, and a fluttering of the eyelids, twitching.

Mrs. Parsons: Come on, Crimson!

Dr Dalrymple: Vocalisation. All perfectly normal. Merely and involuntary physiological reaction to the treatment.....*continued*

Mrs. Parsons: *[getting louder]* Oh, Oh, come on! Come on, boy! Up and over!

Dr Dalrymple: Steady on, Mrs. Parsons. Steady on. Good steady pressure. That's the key, Mortimer *[9:45 am]*

Mrs. Parsons: *[shouting]* Tally-ho! Tally-ho!

Dr Dalrymple:*[his jacket removed]* Steady as she goes, Mrs. Parsons. Steady as she goes. You see, by fierce external stimulation, we're able to elicit the pain pleasure reaction, there by inducing the hysterical paroxysm, and coaxing the uterus back to its normal position.

Mortimer: Amazing.

Dr Dalrymple: *[trying to be heard over Mrs Parsons groans]* The female organ is, as you know, incapable of experiencing any pleasurable sensation what so ever without actual penetration of the male organ.

[Mrs Parsons kicks out violently]

Dr Dalrymple: Arghhh... *[getting to his feet]* As you can see, Granville, a very satisfactory paroxysm. *[to Mrs Parsons]* Well, I think we can judge this treatment a great success, What do you say, Mrs. Parsons?

Mrs. Parsons: *[almost breathless]* Startling, Dr. Dalrymple.

Mortimer: A powerful demonstration.

Dr Dalrymple: *[to Mrs Parsons]* And those nagging thoughts?

Mrs. Parsons: *[thinks for a moment]* Gone, Doctor.

Dr Dalrymple: Wonderful, wonderful. So, same time next week.

Mrs. Parsons: Umm... Same time tomorrow, I should say.

Dr Dalrymple: Moderation in all things, Mrs. Parsons. Moderation in all things.

Dinner at Dalrymple's

Mortimer: My father was the Anglican minister of Mortlake. Unfortunately, he and mother perished in the last cholera outbreak when I was a boy. After coming to London to volunteer, they contracted the disease themselves.

Emily: Oh, how dreadful.

Dr Dalrymple: No doubt that's where you gained your interest in medicine. Lord St. John -Smythe knew of my fate and without thought of the cost brought me into his own home and provided for my welfare and education.

Dr Dalrymple: Just what you'd expect from a man of his standing.

Emily: There is no greater charity than the gift of education.

Mortimer: You read the book of Samuel Smiles?

Emily: Is there anyone more sensible, more supremely British?

Mortimer: Quite. Music, philosophy, phrenology. You're a woman of many talents, Miss Dalrymple.

Dinner at Dalrymple's—Charlotte Arrives Home

Charlotte: [*cheerfully*] Hello, Father. I'm so sorry I'm late. Emily, hello. Lovely earrings.

Emily: [*formally*] Good evening, Charlotte.

Charlotte: Molly, hello. Staying out of trouble, I hope?

Molly: Most days, miss. Wine?

Charlotte: Yes, please.

Dr Dalrymple: [*to Mortimer*] You remember my daughter, Charlotte Dalrymple.

Mortimer: Daughter?

Dr Dalrymple: [*to Charlotte*] My new assistant, Dr. Mortimer Granville.

Charlotte: Oh, hello. Lovely to meet you properly. [*he's holding a knife*] Careful not to prick yourself, Doctor.

Mortimer: What...oh!

Dr Dalrymple: You are aware that the dinner begin at six.

Charlotte: I'm so sorry. Lizzie Burke had her eighth baby today. A little girl. She was turned the wrong way around, it took forever to get her out. It was unbelievable.

Emily: Must we speak of such things at table?

Charlotte: Emily. [*formally*] Dr. Granville. How is your fish?

Mortimer: Very fresh and very flaky, thank you.

Charlotte: And Emily, are the parsnips to your liking?

Dr Dalrymple: Oh...that's enough, Charlotte.

Charlotte: Only trying to keep the conversation sufficiently benign. Dr. Granville, what say you? Childbirth, nasty, uncomfortable topic best avoided at supper, or a miracle of life suited for any setting?

Mortimer: I believe that serious medical matters are best left to those who're trained in them.

Charlotte: The doctor in my neighbourhood can only study his scalpel with a quart of gin. What say you, then?

Emily: Charlotte is the mistress at the East End Settlement House, it's a haven for the less fortunate.

Dr Dalrymple: Yes, unfortunately, the experience has left her without a sense of punctuality or decorum.

Charlotte: Oh, that's probably true. I suppose I should've said to Lizzie, "Hold tight darling, won't be a minute. Just got to pop home. Mustn't be late for supper"

Dr Dalrymple: I don't know why you bother coming here at all if your sole intention is to be disruptive.

Charlotte: It isn't my sole intention. We're out of coal again and I need ten pounds.

Dr Dalrymple: No, no, no, no. I already told you yesterday, I am not giving you any further support in that regard.

Charlotte: I know you did, but I didn't think you mean it.

Dr Dalrymple: Well if that what it takes to bring you to your senses, so be it. I've indulged you too long. I've allowed you to roam the streets of London late at night, streets that I would be frightened to go into in broad daylight. I've taken into my own home the employ ...*[gesturing towards Molly]*.. inexperience maid at your request. But no more.

Charlotte: Then, father, please give me my dowry.

Dr Dalrymple: Ha! What, so you can waste it on prostitutes and factory workers? I don't think so. No, no. Not until you marry.

Charlotte: I would rather offer myself to a band of ravenous Cossacks.

Mortimer: *[trying to change direction]* The parsnips are delicious, are they not?

Emily: I do find they work wonderfully with the fish.

Charlotte:*[shouting]* It's not the Middle Ages. She will be able to marry whoever she pleases.

Dr Dalrymple:*[bangs the table]* No! It's not proper. Now you will give up this settlement house and step up to your responsibility. And until you do so, I will not give you another penny.

Charlotte: And I won't come here anymore. Not the charity or the company. And you may threaten me with privation, with bankruptcy, with a life that knows only hunger and squalor. But I shall never veer from what I know to be my own true path.

Bedtime-Mortimer and Emily. A distance of two meters separates them

Emily: Good night, Doctor.

Mortimer: How is it, Miss Dalrymple, that you are so much the ideal, and your sister is so... so volatile?

Emily: Well, I'm hardly ideal, doctor. And Charlotte, she just feels everything so strongly. If you truly knew her, you would see she's terribly clever and wonderfully charitable

Mortimer: If she's earned such love and admiration from one so kind and gentle as yourself, I should never speak poorly of her.

Emily: Good night, Doctor.

Mortimer: Good night, Miss Dalrymple.

Mortimer's First Day

Mortimer: Mrs. Bellamy, is it? I'm Dr. Granville, Dr. Dalrymple's new associate. Good morning.

Mrs Bellamy: Very pleased to meet you, doctor.

Mortimer: You've been here before?

Mrs Bellamy: Yes.

Mortimer: So you are aware of the procedure?

Mrs Bellamy: Indeed.

Dr Dalrymple: *[popping in]* Going well?

Mortimer: Yes, quite. Thank you.

Dr Dalrymple: As I said before, I'm leaving you in very good hands, Mrs. Bellamy.

Mrs Bellamy: *[a little shriek of laughter]* Oh, thank you, doctor. *[Dalrymple leaves]*

Mortimer: Shall we begin? *[he opens the bottle and spills some oil]* Sorry about that.

Mrs Bellamy: You alright, doctor?

Mortimer: Yes, quite. Thank you. Here we go, then. *[Mrs Bellamy settles back]* Please let me know if anything is uncomfortable.

Mrs Bellamy: No, that's very nice, doctor. Thank you. Very nice, indeed. *[groans and closes her eyes]*

A Short Time Later. The Clientele are Very Satisfied – Dinner

Dr Dalrymple: *[concerned]* Something wrong with your hand?

Mortimer: Just a twinge.

Dr Dalrymple: You seem to have settled in nicely, Granville. Now, you may have noticed that I'm not getting any younger. And with only two daughters, I have no one to carry on the practice. I was wondering whether you might like to consider becoming a partner.

Emily: Father, that's a wonderful idea.

Mortimer: I'm speechless. *[Mortimer]*

Dr Dalrymple: And, who knows, if things go well, this practice may end up yours. Since my dear wife, Melodia, passed away, God rest her soul, Emily has diligently and professionally managed the household. I've no doubt that one day she would make a fine Doctor's wife, with that experience.

Charlotte

Mortimer: Miss Dalrymple, what a surprise? I'm afraid that your father isn't here.

Charlotte: Good.

Mortimer: Well in that case I must tell you that we work only to appointment.

Charlotte: Fannie has broken her ankle. I was hoping to persuade you to treat it?

Fannie: [*tipsy*] I'll have fish and chips.

Charlotte: That's the rum talking. It's all I had to ease the pain.

Mortimer: Normally, I don't recommend extreme drunkenness, but it's probably a very good choice. Let have a look at it.

Charlotte: I should tell you, we've no money.

Mortimer: Let's take her inside.

Fannie: I'm not wearing any knickers.

Mortimer: Well, I'm sure it's an honest mistake.

Fannie: You want to look? [*they place Fannie on the bed*]

Mortimer: Now, Fannie, I want you to count to three for me. Can you do that?

Fannie: Yes, I think so. One, two..Owww!! You said three.! Bloody hell! [*passes out*]

Mortimer: Forgive me. I wanted her thoughts elsewhere. I need some plaster, for her ankle.

Charlotte: I didn't know my father had any proper medical supplies in here anymore.

Mortimer: Crimean War surplus, I imagine. [*he plasters Fannie's leg*]

Charlotte: Is your hand alright?

Mortimer: A bit stiff actually. Why are you so opposed to your father?

Charlotte: My father. You know, he's never been to the settlement house. I simply wish he helped people like Fannie who really need it instead of the trivial work he does here.

Mortimer: It's hardly trivial. Hysteria is a disabling condition suffered by half the women in this city.

Charlotte: Keeps you busy, I see.

Mortimer: It does wonders for disagreeable personalities.

Charlotte: You find me disagreeable?

Mortimer: I've only ever seen you shout at people and slam doors.

Charlotte: At least I've got the courage of my convictions.

Mortimer: And few friends, I would imagine?

Dalrymple's-Evening

Dr Dalrymple: Granville. A word? [*they move to the drawing room*] I must insist that you give Charlotte no further assistance of any sort. It merely prolongs her relationship with those people and that place.

Mortimer: The woman had a broken ankle.

Dr Dalrymple: Well, I admire your dedication, doctor. But we can't have day labourers traipsing through the office. This is a very exclusive, and I might add, lucrative practice. Appearances matter.

Mortimer: I have taken a solemn oath, sir.

Dr Dalrymple: I thought we had an understanding, you and I, about your future here.

Coal Delivery, The Settlement House

Jack: That's last of it, Miss.

Charlotte: Oh, Jack. Thank you.

Jack: Well, then. [*calculating how much she owes*] It's two hundred weight today, plus what's on account, that's three and carry the one, which makes seven and six, I think.

Charlotte: Yes, that looks right. May I pay you Friday next?

Jack: I'm sorry, miss. But the governor is very clear. "Cash only," he said, and "get the balance."

Charlotte: [*thinking*] Would you tell your employer, that my father, Dr. Dalrymple, has absolutely promised a very large donation to the settlement house this coming Friday, and I will bring him the money myself.

Jack: I'll make it stick, miss. Nobody appreciates more than me what you've done here. My boy, Frank, says you're the strawberries and the cream.

Charlotte: [*giggling*] Shush! Friday, then.

Pall Mall, Private Members Club

Edmund: [*leaving the building*] Mortimer, must you wear that ghastly hand brace?

Mortimer: I must find some way to attend to these women properly.

Edmund: I believe the French have had quite a bit of luck using their tongues.

Mortimer: [*coming down the steps*] Please be serious. We're speaking of my patients. They need me. Perhaps for the first time I feel truly useful.

Edmund: Aren't you a rainy day? Oh, don't worry, something will come along, [*he grabs Mortimer's hand*]

Mortimer: Oww!! I wish I could share your optimism. [*walks to the street and gets hit*]

Charlotte: [*lying on the ground with Mortimer on top*] Oh, Dr. Granville.

Mortimer: Are you all right? [*helping her up*]

Charlotte: Yes, I think so. Thank you. [*his hand touches her breast*] Have you quite finished, doctor?

Mortimer: Edmund, this is Emily's sister, Charlotte. Charlotte Dalrymple, Edmund St. John Smythe.

Charlotte: Oh, Edmund Smythe from the papers.

Edmund: Overblown, I assure you. I attended that party as a favour to a dear friend, and I can swear that I never met that horse before in my life.

Charlotte: Sounds as if you had a jolly good time.

Mortimer: What brings you to the West-End, Miss Dalrymple?

Charlotte: Begging for money, unsuccessfully till now.

Mortimer: Miss Dalrymple runs a settlement house in the East End.

Edmund: How fascinating.

Charlotte: I must be going. Oh, it seems as if your hand is no better. It must be difficult pleasuring half the women in the city.

Mortimer: [*defensively*] Madam, pleasure has nothing to do with it. I can assure you

Charlotte: Well, I suppose that depends on whether you're over the table or on it. Goodbye.

The Settlement House

Charlotte: Dr. Granville. Trawling for patients? Afraid you'll find no cases of hysteria here. Women are all too busy trying to find enough to eat.

Mortimer: Ah, Miss Dalrymple, always speaking out of turn. No, I came to enquire about Miss Fannie's broken ankle.

Charlotte: A house call?

Mortimer: Surely there's no harm following up with the patient?

Charlotte: None at all.

Mortimer: [*to Fannie*] No pain?

Fannie: No. Nothing.

Charlotte: [*grateful*] I was going to take her to see you on Friday.

Mortimer: There's no bother. I was in the neighbourhood. [*she studies him*] I was...I was near the neighbourhood. [*to Fannie*] How's that feel?

Fannie: Fine, thank you, doctor.

Charlotte: Would you like a cup of tea, doctor?

Mortimer: No, thank you.

Charlotte: Dr. Granville. It's the least we can offer.

Mortimer: Yes, all right, a cup of tea would be lovely.

The Settlement House, Classroom

Charlotte: Milk, doctor?

Mortimer: Please.

Charlotte: We use this room mostly as a nursery but we do fit in the odd bit of teaching now and then.

Mortimer: Promoting some aggressive political agenda, no doubt?

Charlotte: Sums and letters mostly. Occasionally we sneak in something slightly progressive. Oh, you might like this. Actually, look, for example, this is where the children wash their hands. We use soap and boiled water. We do our best to keep the settlement sanitary, but you can't imagine the filth and the germs.

Mortimer: You know about germs?

Charlotte: I do read, doctor.

Mortimer: I spend years trying to convince the medical establishment that the hand washing prevents disease, unsuccessfully. And then, here you are teaching it to the children.

Charlotte: And with great success. I know. With the parents is another story. But, eventually the children will teach them themselves.

Mortimer: Bravo.

Charlotte: For the women, we're trying to provide services that will offer the most direct result. Good hot meal, safe place for their children, and communal laundry. I think if we can ease their work load a bit, we can get on to the important work of changing their minds.

Mortimer: You, madam, are a socialist.

Charlotte: A socialist? And what if I am? Are there not eight oarsman in a crew? Socialism at its heart is nothing more than a group pulling together. If women pull together, if they weren't so frightened, there's no telling what we could accomplish.

Mortimer: And this revolution that you're planning, will you achieve it all from here?

Charlotte: Drop a stone in a pond and it will make ripples.....The building adjacent, and the one behind are both for sale for two thousand pounds. Put them together and we're not just a classroom and a kitchen, we're a centre for the neighbourhood, with a garden, a proper school, maybe even a medical clinic.

Mortimer: Two thousand pounds is aiming quite high, don't you think?

Charlotte: No, I don't think so. I know by the time I'm gone, women will have the vote, they'll have equal education and rights over their own bodies. And I'd like to play some small part in making that happen.

Mortimer: Absolutely. And then, you should teach them how to fly.

Charlotte: I would. You just wait and see, doctor. I'd like to see your face.

Mortimer: Your passion, your devotion to this work, it's admirable.

Charlotte: Honestly, I get much more out of it than they do. They only get food and laundry, and I'm giving a useful life. And I set my own hours. You know, I could really use the help of an able doctor on a more regular basis. Broken ankles are the least of it. All the children suffer from malnutrition, rickets, scurvy, even cholera and typhus. All preventable, as you know, with the knowledge and resources.

Mortimer: I'm afraid my patients keep me very busy.

Charlotte: I only mean, I only mean a weekend a month.

Mortimer: I don't believe I would have the time.

Charlotte: Or even a few hours on a Sunday. Anything would help.

Mortimer: I'm sorry, I'm sorry, Miss Dalrymple. I'm afraid I can't help.

Charlotte: You can't, or you won't?

Mortimer: It's a bit more complex than that.

Edmund St. John-Smythe. Grosvenor Square

[*Edmund is working on an electrical duster*]

Mortimer: I'm finished, Edmund. Completely bugged. I had the perfect life within reach and I lost it. All due to hand cramps. [*phone rings*]

Edmund: God! Someone's telephoned. [*on the phone*] Ahoy! Who? Oh, I didn't know you had a telephone. [*Mortimer picks up the feather duster*]

Edmund: [*on the phone*] I'm very, very flattered. Yeah. Oh, yes, indeed. Where's yours? Really? What a good place for it. Mine is in my studio. No, I'm inventing a new cleaning tool. Yeah, very good. Yes. Yeah, do that. Got to rush, actually. Goodbye. [*he switches off the electric generator*]

Mortimer: Don't stop.

Edmund: I think you're enjoying yourself too much.

Mortimer: It makes your hand feel all, all warm and tingling. I feel it right down to the bone.

Edmund: Oh, really?

Mortimer: Turn it back on. [*he switches it on*] That's bloody marvellous. Well, that's what I call good steady pressure. Does it go any higher?

"The Feather Duster" is Transformed

Edmund: But you said yourself that you could feel the vibration deep inside your hand

Mortimer: I know what I said. But this is crude and rough and inexact and nothing at all like the motion and pressure that I use. Well, it didn't seem to hurt much at the time.

Mortimer: I grant you.

If this works, it could put you back in good standing with Dr. Dalrymple and Emily.

Mortimer: Edmund, let me be perfectly clear about this. We are not going to take a dangerous, explosive, and untried electrical device, and press it against a lady's most gentle areas.

[*later after a little bit of work on the duster*]

Edmund: That's it, then.

Mortimer: I believe I shall regret this to the very end of my days.

Edmund: Now, who should we try it on?

Molly The Lolly

Molly: Ordinarily, for five pounds, I wouldn't ask questions. But that's with a man. This is a different kettle of fish.

Mortimer: I don't believe it will involve any pain. But if it does, we will stop immediately.

Edmund: Think of it this way, Molly. For one brief moment, you can be a pioneer of technology. A voyager for the British Empire, and quite possibly the vanguard of modern medical science.

Mortimer: And we pay up front.

Molly: Why not? [*she hoists up her dress*] Do your worst.

[5 mins later]

Mortimer: [*with a paper and pen*] How do you feel, Molly?

Molly: [*breathless*] Bloody marvellous, what do you think?

Mortimer: Would you say you had a paroxysm?

Molly: I'd say three, if I'm counting right. It got a little bit muddly in the middle.

Mortimer: [*Edmund shows him the stopwatch*] That's astonishing.

Molly: What do you call that little thing?

Mortimer: Well, I was calling it the feather duster.

Molly: Better think of something quick, so a girl knows what to ask for.

Dalrymple's-Evening

Dr Dalrymple: Horsefeathers

Mortimer: I give you my word as a gentleman, sir. Three paroxysms in five minutes.

Dr Dalrymple: And no harm came to the girl?

Edmund: She was completely satisfied with the result.

Dr Dalrymple: Yes, well, we can hardly take the word of a trollop.

Mortimer: That's why we must try it here. Medical science demands a thorough investigation. What better place to start than with these women whom we know suffer so from hysteria?

Dr Dalrymple: Yes, well, in my opinion, change is rarely beneficial.

Mortimer: I believe we're on the verge of something revolutionary, sir.

Edmund: If we achieve half as much of your patients, all credit goes to you. Not just money. [*leaning forward for effect*] Fame.

Dr Dalrymple: [*his ego stroked*] Three paroxysms in five minutes, you say? Very well. One test case.

A Name for "The Feather Duster"

Edmund: The Rubby-Nubby.

Mortimer: The Vibratorium.

Edmund: Jigly-wigly

Mortimer: The Paroxysmator.

Edmund: Oh, The Sorcerer's Apprentice.

Mortimer: The Excitetator

Edmund: Mr. Wobbly.

Mortimer: Oh ,please

Edmund: What about, The Squealer?

The Engagement of Dr. Mortimer Granville to Emily Dalrymple

Charlotte: Dr. Granville, I can assure you that women enjoy physical pleasure just as much as men, even if it can be hard to come by.

Mortimer: Physical pleasure has nothing to do with it. It is strictly a medical treatment that stimulates the nervous system.

Charlotte: Indeed it does, doesn't it. Bargain at a guinea. But my point is, according to your diagnosis, hysteria seems to cover everything, from insomnia to toothache.

Mortimer: It's not my...

Charlotte: It's nothing more than a catch-all for dissatisfied women. Women forced to spend their lives on domestic chores and their prudish and selfish husbands who are unwilling or unable to make love to them properly or often enough.

Mortimer: You seem to have strong opinions on husbands for a woman who doesn't have one.

Charlotte: Look, if you don't believe me, ask your patients.

Mortimer: Faintly ironic, don't you think? To use my engagement party as an opportunity to deliver your ill opinions of marriage?

Charlotte: Yes, and I apologise for that, but you must admit you men really did get the best side to the bargain.

Mortimer: Bargain?

Charlotte: For us it's mindless housework and doting on some halfwit

Mortimer: You can make some halfwit very happy.

Charlotte: It's simply not enough for me or for most women. Would it be enough for you?

Mortimer: I'm not most women. Wouldn't you be lonely?

Charlotte: I would take a partner. An equal. But, not for me a life of darning socks, doing chores until my mental faculties become Sunday pudding.

Charlotte: Mrs, Huddleston, do you know Dr. Granville?

Mrs. Huddleston: Not personally.

Mortimer: Very nice to meet you.

Mrs. Huddleston: Charmed.

Charlotte:[*to Mrs Huddleston*] Looks as though you're going to be getting these earrings after all.

Mrs. Huddleston:[*suddenly leaving*] You'll have to excuse us.

Charlotte: I'm sorry.

Mortimer: That was a little odd.

Charlotte: These earrings are security against the loan for the settlement house which is due tomorrow.

Mortimer: Ah

Charlotte: So this is my last night with them.

Mortimer: They were your mother's.

Fannie: [*her face covered in blood*] Charlotte!

Charlotte: What? Tell mw what happened.

Fannie: They came for the money, I told them that I didn't have it...

Charlotte: Mr. Huddleston, what's the meaning of this? You gave us until Monday.

Mr. Huddleston: I no longer hold the note, Charlotte. Your father does.

Charlotte: Father?

Dr Dalrymple: Now, Charlotte, calm down. I'm simply doing what's best for you.

Charlotte: What are you doing?

Dr Dalrymple: I purchased the note from Mr. Huddleston, and I'm closing down the settlement house. You no longer have any debt...

Charlotte: These are the actions of a villain.

Dr Dalrymple: Charlotte.

Charlotte: Of a villain

Dr Dalrymple: Charlotte! This is your sister's engagement party.

Charlotte: Party? She's bruised and bleeding. You want me to consider a party?

Doctor's Daughter To Stand Trial

Dr Dalrymple: I would never have imagine it will come to this.

Emily: Well, we have to help her.

Dr Dalrymple: I've done nothing but, Emily. I've tried indulging her, I've tried a firm hand. I'm at my wits end.

Emily: Mortimer. Please, she's my sister.

Mortimer: What would you have me do?

Emily: You must testify on her behalf.

Mortimer: And say what?

Dr Dalrymple: The truth. That she's hysterical.

Mortimer: Sir, they will send her to a sanatorium.

Dr Dalrymple: That's the only thing that will keep her out of prison.

Court

Judge: Order! Order! This court will come to order.

Barrister: The facts are these, Your Honour. A fortnight ago, the defendant, Charlotte Dalrymple, in full view of witnesses, assaulted a police constable carrying out his duty. If this were a first offence, then a short prison sentence might suffice, but this isn't the first offence, is it, Miss Dalrymple? You were arrested last April on public nuisance and resisting arrest.

Charlotte: Your honour, I was handing out suffragette leaflets in Trafalgar Square when two officers arrested me.

Barrister: The officers sworn statements read: "Miss Dalrymple was asked to leave the square, where upon she started to shout and jump about. When finally we did try to place her in handcuffs, she resisted most violently".

Charlotte: No. That is not true.

Judge: You will speak only when questioned, Miss Dalrymple.

Charlotte: Well, how am I to defend myself against his accusation if you won't let me speak?

Judge: Is there more?

Barrister: I'm afraid there is, Your Honour. October 1879, solicitation.

Charlotte: No, that was not me. My friend, Molly, she is a prostitute. She was a prostitute. She has since found gainful employment, as a maid, in my father's house.

Judge: Anything else, Mr. Squyers?

Barrister: No, Your honour.

Charlotte: No? Nothing else? What of the crimes of charity and compassion?

Barrister: Very admirable I'm sure. Seems that this help included prostitution, resisting arrest, and assaulting police officers. One could only imagine the cost to England should we extend university education to all her women.

Charlotte: Oh, yes, it's very easy, isn't it, to make fun of women's lives? I would like to see you walk for one mile in our shoes. I imagine that your mirth would turn first to sympathy and then to despair.

Barrister: Careful, Miss Dalrymple. Your symptoms are showing.

Charlotte: Until England fully recognises the worth and contributions of women, will she be anything other than a second class country, despite all her wealth?

Judge: That's enough, Miss Dalrymple.

Barrister: Your Honour, Charlotte Dalrymple clearly suffers from erratic, aggressive and violent emotions, that are best described as incurable hysteria. To buttress my opinion, I would like to call an expert witness, Your Honour.

Judge: Proceed, Mr. Squyers.

Barrister: I would like to call Dr. Mortimer Granville, if it pleases the court.

Barrister: Now, I'm sure we are all well aware of your celebrity, doctor. But if you wouldn't mind just telling us a little of your professional experience.

Mortimer: I'm a medical doctor whose practice consists of treating women diagnosed with hysteria.

Barrister: And in this capacity, how many women have you treated?

Mortimer: Hundreds, certainly.

Barrister: And all with good results, I trust?

Mortimer: We've had few complaints of late.

Barrister: Is it true, Dr. Granville, that incurable cases of hysteria demand institutionalisation and surgical hysterectomy?

Judge: Please answer the question, Dr. Granville.

Mortimer: Well, yes. Traditionally, yes. But only in the most severe, most persistence cases...

Barrister: Thank you, doctor. We have already address the persistence of Miss Dalrymple problem. In your professional opinion, doctor, as an expert in the field of hysteria, how would you describe Miss Dalrymple's behaviour?

Mortimer: Without a doubt, Charlotte Dalrymple is erratic, and volatile, and at times physically aggressive. She is also the most vexing woman I've ever met.

Barrister: Thank you, doctor. Your Honour, based on this evidence, I find that I must recommend, that Charlotte Dalrymple be remanded to the Chelmsford Institute for the criminally insane. With a further recommendation for immediate surgical hysterectomy.

Regent's Park

Emily: Mortimer

Mortimer: Thought I might find you here. I've been thinking a lot about my future. And...well, actually I was wondering if you might give me a reading.

Emily: I'm sorry. I've giving up phrenology.

Mortimer: Oh, Emily, I'm... I'm so sorry.

Emily: Don't be. Charlotte's trial was a revelation for me as well. I realised, I haven't been living my life at all. I've been living my father's idea what my life should be Phrenology, Chopin. Even you, Mortimer.

Mortimer: You seem happy.

Emily: I am. After all, life will always be to large extent to what we ourselves make it.

Edmund St. John-Smythe. Grosvenor Square

Edmund: Any prospects?

Mortimer: My name is mud.

Edmund: Open this.

Mortimer: I told you before I don't want your money.

Edmund: It's not my money, it's yours. It's your share of the royalties of my manufacturers. The portable electric massager.

Mortimer: The portable electric massager?

Edmund: Yes, I told you I was working on something rather exciting . You see, I made a very small motor. It seems to go really well, so I shared it to few firms, and they simply adored it. And apparently, they're selling it directly to women for home use. I really have to admit, I never thought it would go so high but, it is rather ingenious device even if I say so myself. Don't you understand, Mortimer? You have your fortune now. You can have anything you want.

Regent's Park

[last lines]

Dr Dalrymple: Well, all's well that ends well. Fresh air and perambulation. The key to mental equity and long life.

Mrs Parsons: If you say so, Doctor.

Dr Dalrymple: Oh, look. Ducks.

Closing Credits

Medical diagnosis of hysteria officially ended in 1952

The portable home-use massager was sold as a woman's health aid in magazines and mail-order catalogues

Now battery operated, the electric vibrator remains the single most popular sex toy in the world.

to putrefy exacting impertinence poppycock adjacent gangrenous
a morgue an oaf trivial to fetch a bandage tripe(2) an ailment

1. _____ is nonsense
2. _____ is to decay and smell very bad
3. _____ is decaying because the blood supply to it has been stopped because of an illness or injury
4. _____ is needing or demanding a lot of effort and care about details
5. _____ is a strip of cloth used for tying around a part of the body that has been hurt in order to protect or support it
6. _____ is go for and then bring back (*someone or something*) for someone
7. _____ is a stupid, unpleasant or awkward person, especially a man
8. _____ is an illness that is not very serious
9. _____ is something that somebody says or writes that you think is nonsense or not of good quality
10. _____ is rude behaviour or comments that show no respect for somebody who is older or more important
11. _____ is a building in which dead bodies are kept before they are buried or cremated
12. _____ is next to or near something (*of an area, a building, a room, etc.*)
13. _____ is not important or serious; not worth considering

convivial *a harness* *to misread* *to boast* *epitome* *a charlatan*
ghastly *relieve* *afoot* *a plague* *rigid* *tedious*

1. _____ is a set of strips of leather, etc. for fastening something to a person's body or to keep them from moving off or falling

2. _____ is being planned; happening

3. _____ is a person who claims to have knowledge or skills that they do not really have

4. _____ is lasting or taking too long and not interesting

5. _____ is to remove or reduce an unpleasant feeling or pain

6. _____ is any infectious disease that kills a lot of people

7. _____ is to talk with too much pride about something that you have or can do

8. _____ is cheerful and friendly in atmosphere or character

9. _____ is stiff and difficult to move or bend

10. _____ is to understand somebody / something wrongly

11. _____ is very bad; unpleasant (*of an experience or a situation*)

12. _____ is a perfect example of something

to coax a twinge to inherit to traipse to prolong to suffice
a haven to trawl to indulge to prick pallor to veer a dollop

1. _____ is to receive money, property, etc. from somebody when they die
2. _____ is to make something last longer
3. _____ is to walk somewhere slowly when you are tired and unwilling
4. _____ is to search through a large amount of information or a large number of people, places, etc. looking for a particular thing or person
5. _____ is to be enough for somebody / something
6. _____ is to change in the way it develops (*of a conversation or way of behaving or thinking*)
7. _____ is to persuade somebody to do something by talking to them in a kind and gentle way
8. _____ is to be too generous in allowing somebody to have or do whatever they like
9. _____ is to make a very small hole in something with a sharp point
10. _____ is an amount of something
11. _____ is a sudden short feeling of pain
12. _____ is pale colouring of the face, especially because of illness or fear
13. _____ is a place that is safe and peaceful where people or animals are protected

Match the following idioms/phrases with their meaning on page 32

1. bring someone to their senses *.if that's what it takes to bring to your senses, so be it*
2. come straight to the point.....*I'll come straight to the point, doctor*
3. to pull together.....*It's nothing more than a group of people pulling together*
4. in the midst of*We're meant to be in the midst of a medical revolution*
5. board and lodging.....*Three pounds a week?– Plus board and lodging*
6. Tally-ho!
7. a firm hand.....*I tried indulging her, I've tried a firm hand*
8. to pass away.....*Since the day that my wife, Melodia, passed away*
9. be at your wits' end..... *I've tried a firm hand. I'm at my wits end*
10. to soil*Soiled bandages are a heaven for germs*
11. steady as she goes.....*Steady as she goes, Mrs. Parsons*
12. asking too much *Is it asking too much to use what science has provided*
13. in good hands*I'm leaving you in very good hands, Mrs. Bellamy*
14. lead to believe*Your disability is clearly far more serious than you let me to believe*
15. stem from.....*It stems from an overactive uterus*
16. standing*Just what you'd expect from a man of his standing*
17. a different kettle of fish.....*This is a completely different kettle of fish*
18. get the hang of it*You seem to getting the hang of vulva massage*
19. break the mould..... *I think they must've broken the mould*
20. catch on*Do you think they'll catch on?*
21. to shrink from.....*he never shrank from hard work*
22. have/lack the courage of your convictions
23. pay up front.....*And we pay up front*
24. augurs*Rigid thrombus? It augurs fame*

- a. to make something dirty
- b. while something is happening or being done; while you are doing something
- c. to expect or demand something
- d. to be the result of something
- e. the main or most important idea in something that is said or done
- f. to be unwilling to do something that is difficult or unpleasant
- g. the meals and room that are provided when someone pays to stay somewhere, for example when working or studying away from home
- h. to die. People say _____ to avoid saying 'die'
- i. to become popular or fashionable
- j. a sign that something will be successful or not successful in the future
- k. to learn how to do or to use something; to understand something
- l. used in hunting for telling the dogs that a fox has been seen
- m. describing someone or something that is progressing in a stable manner.
- n. the position or reputation of somebody / something within a group of people or in an organisation
- o. make someone become reasonable
- p. protected by or in the care of someone trustworthy
- q. to be / not be brave enough to do what you feel to be right
- r. to act, work, etc. together with other people in an organised way and without fighting
- s. a completely different situation or person from the one previously mentioned
- t. to be influenced to a certain belief because of something heard, seen, or read
- u. as payment in advance
- v. strong control or discipline
- w. to be so worried by a problem that you do not know what to do next
- x. to change what people expect from a situation, especially by acting in a dramatic and original way

HYSTERIA–Background

The spark of HYSTERIA began with a little-known quirk of history: in the 1880's, one Joseph Mortimer Granville, a highly-regarded English physician, designed and patented the battery-operated vibrator. Granville promoted his machine, known as "Granville's Hammer," for the relief of muscular aches and pains, but it was soon commandeered into service for what was, at the time, seen by many physicians as the only reliable treatment for the widespread, and notoriously mystifying, women's disorder known as "hysteria." This treatment was "medicinal massage" of the female organs "to the point of paroxysm," which, in the Victorian view, was a perfectly clinical release of the nervous system, certainly not to be confused with sexual pleasure.

When producer Tracey Becker (films include Marc Forster's Academy Award®-winning FINDING NEVERLAND) first heard the story of Granville from writer Howard Gensler, she was initially amused, but then she was inspired. The notion of an upright and proper Victorian doctor inventing what would become the world's most popular sex toy sounded like a terrific jumping off-point for a modern movie.

"But it couldn't be another dusty biopic," Becker laughs. "It had to be a sparkling romantic comedy and a story that's about much more than the invention of the vibrator, that's about the spirit of change."

Becker brought the idea to director Tanya Wexler, and the two of them, in turn, brought it to the writing team of Stephen Dyer and Jonah Lisa Dyer, who had collaborated with Wexler on earlier films. The Dyers immersed themselves in research, discovering a time period on the very cusp between dust-worn traditions and the shock of the new a time when doctors were moving away from a belief in vapours and leeches to an understanding of germ theory and psychology; when a candle and gas-lit world was turning into an electrified spectacle of mechanical devices; and when women began fighting for the right to make their own choices.

In the midst of all this, they learned about the strange chapter in 19th Century medicine when nearly a quarter of London's female population was diagnosed with "hysteria," a term applied to a vast array of women's disorders, including such apparent feminine mysteries as unhappiness, restlessness, disobedience, impertinence, either too little or too much interest in sex, and even the desire for voting rights. (While the diagnosis was finally dropped in the 1950s, even today we still say "don't get hysterical!" as a warning to women on the verge.)

Hysterical symptoms of one sort or another had a long and outrageous treatment history since the time of ancient Greek physicians. Such creative therapies as "pelvic massage," "digital manipulation," horseback riding and hydro-baths for the nether regions were applied. But in Victorian times, with doctors believing they had an epidemic of female madness on their hands, the practice of stimulating paroxysms became widespread in England, couched in the staunch philosophy that such treatments were in no way erotic in nature – on the contrary, they were purely neurological therapy. The physical reaction that resulted could not possibly be related to what should only happen between husband and wife, but rather, a medical release allowing toxicity and strain to drain from the nervous system.

Indeed, the search for new ways to stimulate women led to early progenitors of the vibrator, and when Mortimer Granville invented his "Hammer" he was well aware that it might be used to treat women for hysteria. As the Dyers started writing, they looked into the real Granville's rather conventional story and decided to fictionalise his life and relationships, imagining romantic entanglements with his boss's two opposite daughters, a disastrous form of carpal tunnel syndrome, and his biggest inner conflict: whether to settle for conformity and success, or dare to follow his convictions and his heart.

"Mortimer's journey is really about a man who believes in modern science, who wants to change medicine," explains Stephen, "But then he loses all that when he starts treating women for hysteria, until he meets the amazing Charlotte Dalrymple, Maggie Gyllenhaal's character. She forces him to confront what he can and can't live within his own actions."

For Mortimer, the risks and the rewards of flying in the face of Victorian conventions are brought home in his choice between the two Dalrymple sisters, whose diametrically opposed takes on the Victorian feminine mystique bring life and verve to the story.

"Emily is of course the Victorian Ideal in the flesh – dutiful, well-behaved and exquisitely turned out," notes Stephen. "Charlotte, on the other hand, is a pure firebrand fighting for women's rights and using her father's money to lift women out of poverty. It's a stark choice for Mortimer."

Charlotte soon becomes the prickly thorn in Mortimer's side – with deliciously flirtatious results. "I loved creating Charlotte, because she's such a modern

character," says Jonah Lisa. "She truly believes in things and reminds Mortimer that he used to believe in things, too. She gets under his skin, and all their bickering and banter just fuels the flame. It's an exasperating, funny relationship, but it's also a true love story, because in the end, Mortimer finds he is actually willing to sacrifice his safe, perfect life for Charlotte."

"Tanya, Tracey, Jonah Lisa and I always envisioned a movie that would look like HOWARD'S END in its attention to details but play more like FOUR WEDDINGS AND A FUNERAL in tone," explains Stephen. "And that's exactly what Tanya went on to achieve." © Sony Pictures

Weblinks

https://youtu.be/J9K_xzfeaZU. Hysteria Cast Interviews - Rupert Everett, Felicity Jones, Maggie Gyllenhaal, Hugh Dancy -behind the scenes. 5 mins

<https://youtu.be/8oPkOggzDus>. Maggie Gyllenhaal 7 mins 2011

<https://youtu.be/7nTPmiSL10A>. Hugh Dancy of 'Hysteria' at the Toronto Film Festival 2011. 3mins

<https://youtu.be/68AYKe9Xkys>. Interview with director Tanya Wexler 4 mins. (handheld camera)

<https://youtu.be/6JqNI-Wfe2w>. Tanya Wexler 30 minute interview