

A RESPECTABLE WOMAN

By

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adaption of 'A respectable Woman' by Kate Chopin

SCENE: 1

(RUNNING OF WATER AND CRASHING OF PLATES. MUFFLED VOICE OF MAN HEARD IN THE BACKGROUND. VOICE OF WOMAN HEARD AS ECHOEY, RESONATING SOUND. OVERWHELMING BUZZ GETTING LOUDER)

MRS. BARODA: Clean up this mess, on the table...Make sure the guest room is clean a tidy...wipe over the dinning table..

(THE SOUND OF THE MALE VOICE BECOMING CLEARER FROM WHAT SOUNDS LIKE A DISTANCE)

GASTON BARODA: Sweetheart...Sweetheart!

(THE BUZZ CEASES, WITH THE RUNNING WATER STILL AUDIBLE)

GASTON BARODA: Sweetheart, are you quite alright? You look lost?

MRS. BARODA: (TALKING DISTANT AT FIRST, AS IF STILL IN A TRACE.) I'm absolutely...

MRS. BARODA: (NOW TALKING NORMALLY) Fine! I'm absolutely fine dear, why wouldn't i be?!

GASTON BARODA: Ah, that's good then. Right..I am off to work now my sweet. Nothing else you need me for. Now don't forgot, my good friend Gouvernail is arriving tonight, i am so exited for you to meet him, he is quite the character!

MRS. BARODA: So you have told me dear! I also wait eagerly for his arrival. Everything will be ready and in place don't you worry.

GASTON BARODA: (ADMIRING VOICE) Oh i never do my love. You are perfect in everyway. Please never ever change.

(KISSING MRS. BARODA ON THE CHEEK)

(WALKING AWAY) I shall see you this evening, have a wonderful day. I love you!

MRS. BARODA: (SAID QUICKLY WITH AN INCREASED VOLUME IN HER VOICE) I love you too..

THE FRONT DOOR CLOSES. SILENCE,
DRIPPING OF WATER FROM THE TAP

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) And so I'm trapped. 8 hours...washing...cleaning...waiting. Everything is washed, everything is clean. So i guess it will just have to be waiting today.

TICKING OF CLOCK

SCENE: 2

(MRS. BARODA MAKING A BED AND
FLUFFING PILLOWS)

FLUFFING OF PILLOWS

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE, SPRIGHTLY) He'll love this room, south-facing, onto the orchard. Should feel very at home. I think Gouvernail will be very happy here..

DOORBELL INTERRUPTS

MRS. BARODA: (LETS OUT A SHORT SHRIEK, TALKING AND WALKING TO DOOR) Well whoever could that be! Gaston is not due for a good few hours yet. This has better be

(MRS. BAROD/CONT'D OVER)

MRS. BAROD (CONT'D):important.

DOORBELL INTERRUPTS AGAIN

MRS. BARODA: (SHOUTING THROUGH WOOD OF DOOR) Yes,
who is there please?

GOUVERNAIL: (CALMLY AND CLEARLY) My name is
Gouvernail and I am looking for the
residence of Gaston Baroda. Am I in
the right place?

MRS. BARODA: (FLUSTERED) Oh, oh, i'm ever so sorry.
I wasn't expecting you untill later
this evening.

DOOR OPENED

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) I opened the door to find
a man, not at all what i expected. He
was tall and slim. with a chiseled
jawline and dark swept over hair. A
very handsome man.

GOUVERNAIL: (CALMLY) It's quite alright. I presume
Gaston is not home at this time?

MRS. BARODA: No, I am afraid he is at work, but is
due back in a couple of hours.

GOUVERNAIL: Thank you...I shall return then.

FOOTSTEPS AWAY

MRS. BARODA: (SPEAKING HURRIEDLY AND PROJECTING HER VOICE) Oh, Mr Gouvernail, you are quite welcome to come in now and wait for Gaston.

GOUVERNAIL: (TALKING FROM A FARTHER DISTANCE) Thank you...but i shall return later.

MRS. BARODA: (LOWERED VOICE) Of course...see you.

FRONT DOOR CLOSED

CLOCK CHIMES 5 BELLS

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) 5 o'clock. 8 minutes.

TICKING OF CLOCK

MRS. BARODA: 5 minutes.

TICKING OF CLOCK LOUDER

MRS. BARODA: 1 minute.

TICKING CRESCENDO

MRS. BARODA: 10 seconds.

CLOCK TICKS 10 TIMES AND THE
SOUND OF THE FRONT DOOR OPENS

GASTON BARODA: (SHOUTING) Sweetheart! I'm home!

MRS. BARODA: (TO HERSELF) 0 Seconds

DOOR CLOSES

(TO GASTON, CHEERY) Hello darling, how was work today?

GASTON BARODA: Work was as good as work can be. But of course i couldn't wait to be home again with you.

(GASTON KISSES MRS. BARODA ON THE
CHEEK AND THEN WALKS AWAY TO HANG
HIS COAT AND HAT)

MRS. BARODA: (GIGGLES) I've missed you too.....Err earlier on..

FOOTSTEPS

GASTON BARODA: (FROM A DISTANCE) I wonder when
Gouvernail will arrive! I'm so excited
for you to meet!

MRS. BARODA: (CONCERNINGLY) Well yes dear, that's
what i was attempting to say..

GASTON BARODA: (FROM A DISTANE STILL) Pardon,
sweetheart?

FOOTSTEPS

MRS. BARODA: Gouvernail arrived but a couple of
hours ago but..

GASTON BARODA: (INTERUPED AGAIN BY GASTON) He's here!
Where is he?! The guest room?

FOOTSTEPS

MRS. BARODA: (WALKING OUT OF ROOM TO THE
STAIRS) Well no, you see he was here,
but said he would return later, one
you were home.

GASTON BARODA: (QUESTIONING) You didn't invite him
in, my love?

FOOTSTEPS

MRS. BARODA: Well of course i offered, but he declined...quite bluntly in fact.

GASTON BARODA: Oh..well if i know Gouvernail there was no malice intended! Hopefully it won't be long untill you can meet him properly.

SCENE: 3

(GASTON AND MRS. BARDOA ENJOY DINNER AND ARE HAVING EVENING DRINKS)

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) I was nervous to meet Gourvernail..more than before. His bluntness and rejection of hospitality confused me. As if it was a differnt man Gaston has so often described.

DOORBELL

GASTON BARODA: (EXCITED) That must be him!

(GASTON RUSHES TO THE DOOR)

FRONT DOOR OPENS

GASTON BARODA: Gouvernail!

GOUVERNAIL: Gaston, my friend. So nice to see you
again.

GASTON BARODA: It truly is! It has been far too
long. Do come in! How have you been?!

FRONT DOOR CLOSED

GOUVERNAIL: Very well, very well. and yourself
Gaston? Work treating you well?

FOOTSTEPS

GASTON BARODA: Oh yes, yes very well. Anyway we'll
get to that later...Gouvernail, i
believe you met briefly earlier, but
this is my darling wife - Alice.

GOUVERNAIL: A pleasure to met you, Alice. You have
what seems a beautiful home.

MRS. BARODA: Thankyou, Gourvernail. We very much
like it, don't we darling?

GASTON BARODA: Quite, dear. Now Gouvernail let me
take you to your room...give you a
quick tour of the house. This way..

FOOTSTEPS

(GASTON AND GOUVERNAIL WALK AWAY
CHATTING, WITH MOST OF THE
TALKING BEING DONE BY GASTON.
MRS. BARODA IS LEFT STANDING IN
THE HALL WAY.)

THE CLOCK TICKING CAN BE HEARD
SOFTLY

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) Gaston was clearly excited to see his old friend again. And i was happy for him....

TICKING OF CLOCK GETS UNBEARABLY
LOUD AND THEN CUTS OFF

SCENE: 4

(MRS. BARODA, GASTON AND
GOUVERNAIL ARE ALL SHARING A
DRINK TOGETHER. GASTON DOING A
MAJOITY OF THE TALKING)

GASTON BARODA: ..and that's when she said 'Don't be ridiculous, he's my brother!

GOUVERNAIL: (LAUGHING SLIGHTLY) I do remember that one, now you tell it again, Gaston.

GASTON BARODA: Oh sweetheart, do forgive us. I'm quite sure these stories will mean nothing to you at all.

MRS. BARODA: Oh, don't be ridiculous. You both have a lot of catching up to do!

GASTON BARODA: Oh but they were simpler times wern't they, Gouvernail?

GOUVERNAIL: Indeed, my friend. We were free living, certainly no women to hold us back.

GASTON BARODA: (LAUGHING) Oh how right you are!

MRS. BARODA: *cough, cough*

GASTON BARODA: It's all in jest my dear, all in jest!

(CONVERSATION FADES)

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) Gaston was excited, and like a child while talking to Gouvernail. Not to mention drunk. However Gouvernail, was not acting in

(MRS. BAROD/CONT'D OVER)

MRS. BAROD (CONT'D):the same way. He was so calm, suave and sophisticated. It was impossible to tell whether he had had a drink - and i had watched him consume several. He's not rude, but blunt in his delivery. I can't put my finger on him.

CLOCK CHIMES AND LOUD TICKING

MRS. BARODA: (ECHOEY) Clean up this mess, on the table...Make sure the guest room is clean a tidy...wipe over the dinning table..

SCENE: 5

(AT THE DINNER TABLE THE NEXT EVENING)

MUSIC: BEETHOVEN - PIANO CONCERTO NO.1 IN C MAJOR OP.15 - LARGO

MRS. BARODA: I hope everything is to everybody's liking.

GASTON BARODA: It looks wonderful, you have outdone yourself again.

MRS. BARODA: (GIGGLING SLIGHTLY) Enjoy.

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) I knew Gouvernail would say nothing. I knew Gaston was soon to dig up another story from the past also. and so i intervened..

MRS. BARODA: (TO THE TABLE) So Gouvernail, Gaston has managed to marry. Why is there no women in your life?

GOUVERNAIL: Well..as you know, Gaston here got married at a young age, found someone *quick*.

GASTON BARODA: The girl for me!

GOUVERNAIL: I on the other hand have decided to take my time, ensuring I make the right choice. For richer, for poorer, for better, for worst.

MRS. BARODA: (ANGRILY) I sincerly hope you're not questioning our marriage?

GASTON BARODA: Oh my love, of course he is not..

GOUVERNAIL: I'm not, no. I'm sorry if i offended the both of you, it was not to sound

(GOUVERNAIL/CONT'D OVER)

GOUVERNAIL (CONT'D): that way.

GASTON BARODA: Oh not at all Gouvernail, I know you would never mean such a thing!

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) He meant it. I find it difficult to believe that this man could have managed to befriend such a kind hearted and mild mannered gentleman such as Gaston. I'd never met a man so blunt with his words and who comes across so rude. Yet still have an intriguing, adhering quality that pleased with you to learn more.

SCENE: 6

(MRS. BARODA AND GASTON ARE IN BED RETIRING FOR THE NIGHT.)

FLUFFING OF PILLOWS

MRS. BARODA: (INQUIZITIVLY) Gaston, darling, has Gouvernail always been the same, as long as you've known him?

GASTON BARODA: (DREARILY) Why, yes..what do you mean dear? the same as what?

MRS. BARODA: Well, don't quote me wrong, he is a strapping, well organised man, who speaks when spoken to. But i cannot help but feeling a sourness towards me..

GASTON BARODA: (NOW TALKING NORMALLY) Nonsense! How could he ever think such a thing? Gouvernail is a kind man.

MRS. BARODA: (REGRETFULLY) Oh yes, he is polite in a sense and has manners. But his words are unforgiving and blunted, do you not feel?

GASTON BARODA: (THOUGHTFULLY) Well no, i've never noticed such a thing...Are you quite alright having him stay? Because if..

MRS. BARODA: (INTERUPTING GASTON) Of course, of course! Oh, look, what am i saying, he is a great friend of yours. I sure it is just me, ignore it.

GASTON BARODA: If you're sure?

MRS. BARODA: I am, darling. I shall see you in the morning for breakfast. Goodnight, my love.

KISS SOUND ON CHEEK

GASTON BARODA: Goodnight, sweetheart.

TICKING OF CLOCK

MRS. BARODA: (MONOLOGUE) There's something about Gouvernail, something that allows me to forgive his rudeness and want him to continue his visit. Not just for Gastons sake...

GOUVERNAIL: A pleasure to meet you Alice...

CLOCK CHIMES 5 BELLS