

NELL. And what's the glow?

LADY CASTLEMAINE. You're flushed. You feel chosen, don't you? Special. And you are – for a while. But it won't last. And when he tires of you, as he will, he'll spit you out and throw you back whence you came. Only you can't go back. Because everything you had, you've given up. For him. You will be lost. Sunk.

NELL. I have to unpack.

LADY CASTLEMAINE. Good day, Miss Gwynn. One more thing. Claim your title before your body's wracked in childbirth.

NELL. I don't want a title.

LADY CASTLEMAINE. I'm sorry?

NELL. You think that's why I'm here?

LADY CASTLEMAINE. Why else are you here?

NELL. I'm not like you. I don't want to be a lady. Or a duchess. I don't want any of that.

LADY CASTLEMAINE. Then why... *(Pause.)* Oh dear God. You love him. You're in love with the King. You poor, impotent child. Well. Then there's nothing in the world can help you now.

LADY CASTLEMAINE *leaves*. NELL *watches her go, shaken...*

*End of Act One.*