“The catastrophic love affair characterized by sexual obsession has been a professional interest of mine for many years now. Such relationships vary widely in duration and intensity but tend to pass through the same stages. Recognition. Identification. Assignation. Structure. Complication. And so on. Stella Raphael's story is one of the saddest I know. A deeply frustrated woman, she suffered the predictable consequences of a long denial collapsing in the face of sudden overwhelming temptation. And she was a romantic. She translated her experience with Edgar into the stuff of melodrama; she made of it a tale of outcast lovers braving the world’s contempt for the sake of a great passion. Four lives were destroyed in the process, but whatever remorse she may have felt she clung to her illusion to the end. I tried to help but she deflected me from the truth until it was too late. She had to. She couldn’t afford to let me see it clearly, it would have been the ruin of the few flimsy psychic structures she had left.

Stella was married to a forensic psychiatrist called Max Raphael and they had a son, Charlie, aged ten when all this happened. She was the daughter of a diplomat who’d been disgraced in a scandal years before. Both her parents were dead now. She was barely out of her teens when he married Max. He was a reserved rather melancholy man, a competent administrator, but weak; and he lacked imagination. It was obvious when I met them that he wasn’t the type to satisfy a woman like Stella. They were living in London when he applied for the position of deputy superintendent. He came down for an interview impressed the board, and more importantly impressed the superintendent, Jack Straffen. Against my advice, Jack offered him the job, and a few weeks later the Raphael’s arrived at the hospital. It was the summer of 1959 and the Mental Health Act had just been passed into law.

This is a desolate sort of place, though god knows it’s had the best years of my life. It is maximum security, a walled city that rises from a high ridge to dominate the surrounding country: dense pine forest to the north and west, low lying marshland to the south. It is built on the standard Victorian linear model with wings radiating of the main blocks so all the wards have an unobstructed view across the terraces to the open country beyond the Wall. This is moral architecture, it embodies regularity, discipline and organization. All doors open outwards to make them impossible to barricade. All windows are barred. Only the terraces, descending by flights of stone steps to the perimeter wall at the foot of the hill, and planted with trees, grassy banks and flower gardens, soften and civilize the grim carceral architecture standing over them”

“Mr Cleg, let me see if I can sum up your career here. When you first came to Ganderhill you were a very sick boy; in fact you were displaying most of the classic symptoms of schizophrenia. You were hallucinating floridly in the visual, auditory and olfactory spheres; your affective reactions were bizarrely inappropriate; you suffered marked body delusions, you were regressed, you had ideas of persecution and thought injection.” He glanced at the file. “You were aggressive on the ward and frequently had to be isolated in a safe room, in restraints. You showed no awareness of your environment, nor any awareness of why you’d been brought to Ganderhill in the first place. My point is,” he said, closing the file “that all that has changed”.


“Changed”, I murmured.
“Changed”, he said. “You have for the past ten years assumed a steadily increasing measure of responsibility for your own life. The hospital milieu has imposed demands on you, Mr. Cleg, demands relating to grooming, punctuality, competence, sociability, and cooperation; these demands you have met. Your therapy has been implicit in your daily round of tasks and contacts: there’s no more we can do for you.”
“No more,” I said faintly.
“I need your bed, Mr. Cleg.”
“Ganderhill is overcrowded, and I find you are well enough to leave us. Is there any reason why I shouldn’t discharge you to community care?”
“Yes!” I suddenly cried without at all meaning to; shocked at my own temerity I fell silent.
“And that is?”
Silence.
“That is Mr. Cleg?”
Nothing

Bram Stoker's *Dracula* (1871)

We found him in a state of considerable excitement, but far more rational in his speech and manner than I had ever seen him. There was an unusual understanding of himself, which was unlike anything I had ever met with in a lunatic, and he took it for granted that his reasons would prevail with others entirely sane. We all five went into the room, but none of the others at first said anything. His request was that I would at once release him from the asylum and send him home. This he backed up with arguments regarding his complete recovery, and adduced his own existing sanity.

"I appeal to your friends," he said, "they will, perhaps, not mind sitting in judgement on my case. By the way, you have not introduced me."

I was so much astonished, that the oddness of introducing a madman in an asylum did not strike me at the moment, and besides, there was a certain dignity in the man’s manner, so much of the habit of equality, that I at once made the introduction, "Lord Godalming, Professor Van Helsing, Mr. Quincey Morris, of Texas, Mr. Jonathan Harker, Mr. Renfield."

He shook hands with each of them, saying in turn, "[...]. You, gentlemen, who by nationality, by heredity, or by the possession of natural gifts, are fitted to hold your respective places in the moving world, I take to witness that I am as sane as at least the majority of men who are in full possession of their liberties. And I am sure that you, Dr. Seward, humanitarian and medico-jurist as well as scientist, will deem it a moral duty to deal with me as one to be considered as under exceptional circumstances." He made this last appeal with a courtly air of conviction which was not without its own charm.

I think we were all staggered. For my own part, I was under the conviction, despite my knowledge of the man’s character and history, that his reason had been restored, and I felt under a strong impulse to tell him that I was satisfied as to his sanity, and would see about the necessary formalities for his release in the morning. I thought it better to wait, however, before making so grave a statement, for of old I knew the sudden changes to which this particular patient was liable. So I contented myself with making a general statement that he appeared to be improving very rapidly, that I would have a longer chat with him in the morning, and would then see what I could do in the direction of meeting his wishes.
They entered a handsome hall, with antlers and armour: from this a double staircase led up to a landing with folding doors in the centre of it; one of these doors was wide open like the iron gate outside. The servant showed Alfred up the left-hand staircase, through the open door, into a spacious drawing-room, handsomely though not gaily furnished and decorated, but a little darkened by Venetian blinds.

The old servant walked gravely on and on, till Alfred began to think he would butt the wall; but he put his hand out and opened a door that might very well escape a stranger's notice; for it was covered with looking-glass, and matched another narrow mirror in shape and size. This door led into a very long room, as plain and even sordid as the drawing-room was inviting: the unpapered walls were a cold drab, and wanted washing; there was a thick cobweb up in one corner, and from the ceiling hung the tail of another, which the housemaid's broom had scotched not killed: that side of the room they entered by was all books. The servant said, "Stay here a moment, sir, and I'll send her to you." With this he retired into the drawing-room, closing the door softly after him: once closed it became invisible; it fitted like wax, and left nothing to be seen but books; not even a knob. It shut to with that gentle but clean click which a spring bolt, however polished and oiled and gently closed, will emit. Altogether it was enough to give some people a turn. But Alfred's nerves were not to be affected by trifles; he put his hands in his pockets and walked up and down the room, quietly enough at first, but by-and-bye uneasily. "Confound her for wasting my time," thought he; "why doesn't she come? Then, as he had learned to pick up the fragments of time, and hated dawdling, he went to take a book from the shelves.

He found it was a piece of iron, admirably painted: it chilled his hand with its unexpected coldness: and all the books on and about the door were iron and chilly. "Well," thought he, "this is the first dummy ever took me in. What a fool the man must be! Why he could have bought books with ideas in them for the price of these impostors."

Still Peggy did not come. So he went to a door opposite, and at right angles to the farthest window, meaning to open it and inquire after her: lo and behold he found this was a knob without a door. There had been a door but it was blocked up. The only available door on that side had a keyhole, but no latch, nor handle.

Alfred was a prisoner.

This doctor had the peculiar marble skin which is ascribed to the first Napoleon. Dark and colourless, his strongly pronounced under jaw and thin lips, his delicate black eyebrows, and piercing, cold eyes, gave a character of severity and decision to his massive face, which inspired fear in all who were subjected to his authority.

Some little sensation of this kind modified Miss Vernon's agitated feelings, as he entered the room, and made his bow of ceremony, in obedience to her summons.

"Oh, Doctor Antomarchi!" she said, "I will try to speak with moderation. I have been duped. [..] I find that I have been wickedly deceived. I am a prisoner, and I can't escape. I don't know why I have been sent here. I am here, helpless, in the most awful place a mortal can be committed to — a madhouse. [..] May God help me!" Her lip trembled. "You, sir, can have
no wish to keep me here, if I am perfectly in my right mind; and, as God is my hope, I am not
mad, nor ever was supposed to be!" "What you say is reasonable," replies Antomarchi, not one muscle of whose stem face had
shown a sign of life during Maud's appeal, and whose dark eye had shown neither light nor
softening
[...] The inmates of that part of the house, in which apartments are assigned to you, are
generally quite competent to understand what I now say. It is my duty to treat you with what
skill I possess; it is yours to submit; and submit you shall. I have heard of your language, of
your violence, of your covert menace of forcing an escape, or committing self-destruction
[...] This, you understand, is not punishment; it is precaution, and a process, though painful,
strictly of a sanitary kind”