

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

An American Romance

BASED UPON THE NOVEL BY EDITH WHARTON

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE SYNOPSIS

Set in 1870s New York society, THE AGE OF INNOCENCE tells the story of Newland Archer, a young attorney engaged to the loving but conventional May Welland. When he encounters her European cousin, the beautiful and mysterious Countess Olenska, his life is forever transformed. Torn between duty and desire, Newland confronts implacable social forces and his own contradictory nature in his quest for a true, authentic life.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE EXTENDED SYNOPSIS

N.B. Corresponding demo selections are listed by **TRACK NUMBER**.
Additional songs not included on the demo are listed by **TITLE**.

ACT ONE

Newland Archer and his son, Dallas, are in Paris during the early 1900s, awaiting a dinner with Countess Ellen Olenska. Memories of the past move in on him (1) as the scene shifts to an evening in 1870s New York. Newland, a young attorney comfortably ensconced in fashionable society, is attending the opera with his fiancée, May Welland (2). He is introduced to May's cousin, the Countess, who has fled her wealthy husband in Europe to return to New York (3). To discourage gossip, Newland decides to announce his engagement to May at the Beauforts' ball that evening (4). They visit May's grandmother, Mrs. Manson Mingott, to seek her approval (5, 6). Mrs. Mingott plans a dinner to introduce the unconventional Ellen to Society but no one accepts (7) until the influential Van der Luydens intercede (8). That evening, Ellen attempts to engage Newland in conversation but is deflected by their host. Seeking another means of communication, she performs a "continental" art song during which Newland privately ruminates on her mystique and allure (9). The following day, Newland visits her at her small house in a bohemian section of town (10).

May, intuiting Newland's growing attraction to Ellen, busies herself in domesticity and dreams of her married life to come (11). Newland again presses to advance the engagement but May is hesitant. On behalf of the Mingott-Welland families, Mr. Letterblair, Newland's employer, asks him to dissuade Ellen from seeking a divorce. Newland finds himself in his office ruminating on his past romantic indiscretions (12). Newland arrives at Ellen's and finds Julius Beaufort, a banker with an unscrupulous past, in her company (13). Newland convinces her to drop the suit. Afterwards, he begins to question his life and career (14). With May on vacation with her family in Florida, Newland follows Ellen to the Van der Luydens' home in upstate New York and discovers her with Julius Beaufort (15). Newland flees to Florida and implores May to move the wedding date up but to no avail (16). Returning to New York, he confesses his love to Ellen just as a telegram arrives from May saying that they will be married in a month (17).

ACT TWO

Following their honeymoon, May and Newland spend part of their summer in Newport with Mrs. Mingott (18). Ellen is visiting her grandmother as well. As she stands at the end of a pier contemplating the view, Newland watches her from a distance (19). Lying to May, Newland pursues Ellen to Boston and the two meet on the Common (**FLIRTING IN THE PARK**). Ellen promises to stay in America only if they do not hurt May with a clandestine affair as a band plays a tune that underscores their dilemma (20). Newland encounters a French emissary in the service of Count Olenski who begs him not to let Ellen return to Europe. When Beaufort's shady dealings cause an ensuing crash on Wall Street (**PANIC**), Mrs.

Mingott suffers a stroke and sends for Ellen to nurse her (21). Newland meets Ellen at the Metropolitan Museum, where she finally agrees to a one-time affair (22). Elated but guilty, Newland decides to confess all to May, but she interrupts him to say that Ellen will be returning to Europe and given financial assistance by Mrs. Mingott. At the farewell dinner hosted by the Archers, Newland realizes that everyone in his circle has conspired to keep him and Ellen apart. That night May announces that she is pregnant. We return again to the original opening scene in Paris where Newland encourages Dallas to see the Countess without him. Newland is left with his memories---and regret.

THE AGE OF INNOCENCE DRAMATIS PERSONAE

PRINCIPALS (6)

NEWLAND ARCHER a young successful lawyer, late 20s, High Baritone

MAY WELLAND Newland's fiancée and, later, wife, 22, Soprano

MRS. WELLAND May's mother, early 40s, Soprano

ELLEN OLENSKA May's cousin from Europe and a Countess by marriage. Speaks with a faint European accent, early 30s, Mezzo-soprano

JULIUS BEAUFORT A British banker and close friend to Ellen, mid-30s, Baritone

MRS. MANSON MINGOTT The matriarch of the Mingott clan and the grandmother of Ellen and May, early 60s, Mezzo-Soprano

ENSEMBLE (8) 4 Women, 4 Men, mid-20s to mid-50s/SATB
Portraying New York Society, performers, clergy, workers, servants and the following roles:

DALLAS ARCHER May and Newland's eldest child

LARRY LEFFERTS Authority on all matters of taste and form

REGINA BEAUFORT Julius' Southern wife

MRS. ARCHER Newland's mother

HENRY and LOUISA VAN DER LUYDEN Cousins of the Archers and the most powerful people in New York society

GRAND DUKE OF ST. AUSTREY Honored British guest of the Van Der Luydens

NASTASIA Ellen's Italian maid

MR. LETTERBLAIR The senior partner of Newland's law firm

NED WINSETT Newland's friend and a writer

CLERK Employee of Newland's law firm

MISS BLENKER The youngest daughter of the Blenker family

MR. RIVIERE Count Olenski's emissary

AUTHORS' NOTE

The period romance of Newland Archer and Ellen Olenska has been conceived as a memory play and chamber "meta-operetta." Correspondingly, THE AGE OF INNOCENCE would benefit from an impressionistic set design incorporating a theatrical framing device that reflects the artifice and spectacle of an era dominated by rigid social codes and role-playing, and highlights locales, such as Grace Church, that remain extant today; a staging concept modeled after the nineteenth-century "tableau vivant" to open and close scenes, alternating with a continuous blend of movement and dance depicting the whirl of High Society and its pleasure-seekers; a show curtain or projection of a family tree representing the complex relationships of the Archer-Welland-Mingott clans; an extensive lighting plot; a costume palette after the American Impressionists; and transparent instrumentations. In their totality these would not only evoke the vintage charms of Old New York but also possess the evanescent quality of a dream.

"'Yes," said Mr. Howells, 'what the American public wants is a tragedy with a happy ending.' What Mr. Howells said of the American theatre is true of the whole American attitude toward life. 'A tragedy with a happy ending' is exactly what the child wants before he goes to sleep...Things are not always and everywhere well with the world, and each man has to find it out as he grows up. It is the finding out that makes him grow, and until he has faced the fact and digested the lesson he is not grown up... The same thing is true for countries and peoples. The 'sheltered life,' whether of the individual or of the nation, must either have a violent and tragic awakening - or never wake up at all."

---French Ways and Their Meaning, Edith Wharton

"Could America deliver on its promises?"

---So We Read On: How The Great Gatsby Came to Be and Why It Endures, Maureen Corrigan

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

TRACK 1

(A small residential square near the Invalides in Paris. NEWLAND ARCHER, a gentleman in his late fifties, sits on a bench outside the building of COUNTESS OLENSKA'S apartments. A lamp glows from a window. It is evening in the early 1900s.)

NEWLAND

THIRTY YEARS...
THIRTY YEARS I'VE DREAMED...
THIRTY YEARS I'VE DREAMED OF YOU
AND YOUR LIFE IN PARIS,
SO FAR FROM THE WORLD THAT WE KNEW
WHEN WE WERE YOUNG.

THIRTY YEARS
I HAVE LONGED FOR THIS MOMENT,
MORE THAN HALF A LIFETIME,
AND YET I'M UNPREPARED TO SEE YOU ONCE AGAIN.
HAVE YOU KEPT A THOUGHT OF ME APART?
ONCE I LOVED THE SUMMER OF YOUR EYES,
THE LUSTER OF YOUR HAIR,
BUT HAVE I STILL A PLACE WITHIN YOUR HEART?

(Bells ring from a neighboring church. DALLAS, NEWLAND'S son, a young man in his twenties, steps out from the building.)

DALLAS

The concierge said it's on the top floor, the one with the lamp. I say, Dad, what was Madame Olenska like?

NEWLAND

Like? I don't know. She was...different.

DALLAS

Ah, there you have it! When the right one comes along, she's different from the rest. That's exactly why I'm marrying Constance.

NEWLAND

Dear boy, I should hope so! But I don't see---

DALLAS

Dad, own up. Wasn't the Countess once...your Constance?

(NEWLAND is silent.)

Before she died, Mother said---

NEWLAND

Your mother--?

DALLAS

Mother said we would always be safe with you because, when she asked you to, you gave up the thing you most wanted.

NEWLAND

(After a beat)

She never asked me.

DALLAS

But isn't this a chance to start over? It's not too late--even if you are fifty-seven!

NEWLAND

(Drily)

I wish I had your generation's lack of reserve.

DALLAS

Come, Dad. It's after six. We should go up.

(NEWLAND stands as the lights begin to dim.)

NEWLAND

We had known each other as children and met again at the opera in New York.

(The LADIES and GENTLEMEN of SOCIETY are discovered in frozen poses--like Olympian gods--in tiered club boxes flanking the proscenium.)

Your mother, May, is there, the future Mrs. Newland Archer.

(MAY WELLAND appears, carrying a bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley.)

It was the opening of the winter season...a yearly ritual...and fashionable Society was in its element once more!

(The action shifts to...)

SCENE 1

(The interior of the Academy of Music in New York City, thirty years before. NEWLAND, DALLAS and MAY exit. A cross section of stage and club boxes can be seen. A performance of THE JUDGMENT OF PARIS is in progress. PARIS, mortally wounded, lies on the ground. The LADIES and GENTLEMEN remain frozen from the previous scene.)

CASSANDRA

HERE ME, OH, FALLEN TROY!
SEE HOW THE FATES HAVE WOVE A FITTING DESTINY
FOR WRETCHED PARIS!
IT WAS HIS FATAL LOVE FOR BRAZEN HELEN
THAT BROUGHT THE SHIPS OF WAR FROM MIGHTY SPARTA
AND SEAL-ED OUR DOOM!

(The LADIES and GENTLEMEN suddenly come alive, moving freely between boxes, posing, gossiping and scrutinizing the audience through opera glasses.)

A GENTLEMAN

ALL NEW YORK IS GATHERED HERE TONIGHT

A LADY

THE MONEYED FAMILIES OF A NOBLE NAME

A GENTLEMAN

THE ROBBER BARON

A LADY

AND THE SOCIALITE

CASSANDRA

(the performer herself)

THE ARTIST OF ACHIEVEMENT AND ACCLAIM

(She bows.)

ALL

ALL NEW YORK TAKES A PART
IN THE SPECTACLE AND DRAMA

(Two LADIES alternately pose and inspect one another).

FIRST LADY

EACH BEAUTIFULLY DISPLAYED

SECOND LADY
AND CAREFULLY SURVEYED

ALL
ALL NEW YORK TAKES A PART
IN THE SPECTACLE AND DRAMA
THAT'S WORTHY OF THE PLOT OF ANY OPERA!

THERE'S A BUZZING LIKE A MIGHTY HIVE
THROUGHOUT THE ORCHESTRA AND MEZZANINE
WITH EVERYONE ATTENTIVE AND ALIVE
AND SAVORING EACH MOMENT OF THE SCENE!

(During the above, NEWLAND, now a young man, enters the GENTLEMEN'S box and overhears the following conversation.)

LARRY LEFFERTS
(Peering through opera glasses)
My God! I didn't think the Mingotts would have dared! Sitting next to May Welland is the cousin from abroad!

FIRST GENTLEMAN
The one who left her husband?

LARRY LEFFERTS
The very same! Poor Ellen Olenska, the black sheep of the stock.

SECOND GENTLEMAN
The Mingotts went to fetch her back. Said she was desperately unhappy.

LARRY LEFFERTS
It's one thing to receive her in the family circle but another thing entirely to parade her in public at the opera!

(NEWLAND, annoyed and embarrassed by the gossip surrounding his intended's family, takes his leave.)

ALL
EVERY TELLING LOOK AND KNOWING SMILE
PROVIDE DIVERSION FOR A GILDED AGE
AND WITH THE SHOW UNFOLDING IN THE AISLE,
WHAT LITTLE DO WE CARE WHAT'S ON THE STAGE!

(The LADIES and GENTLEMEN look on as NEWLAND enters the WELLAND club box. Present are MAY, MRS. WELLAND and ELLEN OLENSKA.)

NEWLAND

Good evening, May. Mrs. Welland. (*Drawing MAY aside*) Dearest, I must speak to you...

MRS. WELLAND

You know my niece, the Countess Olenska?

(*NEWLAND bows coolly.*)

PARIS

FAIR HELEN, THY BEAUTY I DESIRED...

ELLEN

We played together as children, didn't we? You were a horrid boy and kissed me once behind a door. But it was your cousin, George, who I was in love with. (*Looking about*) Ah, how this brings it all back to me. I see everybody here in knickers and pantalettes.

NEWLAND

(*Stiffly*)

Yes, you have been away a very long time.

ELLEN

TRACK 2

IT'S AGES SINCE I'VE LOOKED UPON THIS CITY
CENTURIES AND CENTURIES, IT SEEMS.
THE GIRL WHO LEFT ITS HARBOR
UNWORLDLY AND ROMANTIC
RETURNS A WOMAN TRAILING BROKEN DREAMS.
BUT HERE IN THIS LAND OF SECOND CHANCES,
HAPPINESS NOW LIES WITHIN MY SCOPE.
I'M BACK HOME IN AMERICA,
IN AMERICA, FULL OF HOPE.

IN EUROPE I'D GROWN COLD AND FATALISTIC
IN ORDER TO SURVIVE ITS CUNNING WAYS.
IN THE COMPANY OF BORES,
OF LIBERTINES AND WHORES,
THE MASK I WORE CONCEALED MY SOUL'S MALAISE.
BUT HERE I HAVE THROWN OFF MY DEFENSES,
NO LONGER A VICTIM OF THE PAST,
THANKFUL I'M IN AMERICA,
IN AMERICA, FREE AT LAST.

TO ME THIS DEAR OLD CITY IS LIKE HEAVEN,
A PLACE WHERE I CAN START MY LIFE ANEW.
I'LL REMAIN IN AMERICA,
IN AMERICA,

(*Placing her hand on Newland's arm*)

HERE WITH YOU.

MAY

Newland, it's time we left for the ball.

NEWLAND

(Pointedly, in a low voice)

I hope you've told Madame Olenska about our engagement. I want to announce it tonight at the Beauforts. Everyone must know *both* our families back up your cousin.

MAY

I understand, Newland. But I'll have to persuade Mamma. I give you leave to tell cousin Ellen yourself.

NEWLAND

(To ELLEN)

I expect we shall see you at the ball?

ELLEN

I'm afraid my outfit's not that smart. I left behind so many things in Europe...

(All present focus their attention on ELLEN as she and NEWLAND continue to regard each other.)

ALL

WE KNOW THE REASON WHY THE COUNTESS STAYS AWAY:
THE SHADOW ON HER REPUTATION.

ELLEN

Good night, May. Good night, Mr. Archer.

(The LADIES and GENTLEMEN descend from their boxes to the stage.)

ALL

EVERYONE EMERGES IN A RUSH
ANTICIPATION GRIPPING ONE AND ALL
ARRIVING ALL TOGETHER IN A CRUSH
TO JOIN THE PARTY AT THE BEAUFORT BALL!

SCENE 2

(The ballroom of the Beaufort home. LOVE VICTORIOUS, a large nude by Bouguereau, hangs center stage. The LADIES and GENTLEMEN cross the stage in a polka, circling around JULIUS and REGINA BEAUFORT.)

A GENTLEMAN
JULIUS AND REGINA...

A LADY
HOSPITABLE AND WITTY...

A GENTLEMAN
BUT COMMON, THOUGH...

A LADY
A PITY...

A LADY
IS IT TRUE THAT HE'S A JEW?

A GENTLEMAN
HE MADE HIMSELF A FORTUNE...

A GENTLEMAN
AND BOUGHT THEIR SOCIAL RANK...

A LADY
A NOUVEAU RICHE INVADER...

ALL
WITH OUR MONEY IN HIS BANK!

BEAUFORT
(Smoking a cigar)
The land of opportunity: isn't that what you Americans call it? A country with plenty of plunder for one willing to do battle.
(Superciliously) Of course I had some help from my investors *(Indicating the assembled)*--and their friends.

A LADY
VELVET ON THE STAIRCASE...

A GENTLEMAN
FOOTMEN AT THE DOOR...

A GENTLEMAN
SILVERWARE FROM PARIS...

A LADY
FLOWERS BY THE SCORE...

REGINA

(Fanning herself)

My gloxinias are a marvel, aren't they? I order them from Kew.

ALL

HE'S VULGAR AND PRETENTIOUS,
SHE'S A MANNERED FRIGHT!

BEAUFORT

What good is money if we are not to spend it--
and spend it *lavishly*?

ALL

THERE'S NOWHERE WE WOULD RATHER BE TONIGHT!

(The music rises and the scene shifts to another corner of the room. A cluster of young men and women surrounding MAY and MRS. WELLAND erupt in merriment and congratulations. NEWLAND approaches MAY.)

MAY

TRACK 3

(Excitedly)

You see? I did as you asked me to and announced our engagement. Mother gave her qualified approval.

NEWLAND

Yes, it couldn't wait. But I only wish it hadn't been at a ball!

MAY

I know, Newland. But after all, even here we're alone together, aren't we?

NEWLAND

OH, DEAREST--ALWAYS!
YOU ARE ALWAYS GOING TO UNDERSTAND.

A LOVE LIKE YOURS
SHALL ALWAYS BRING ME BLISS
THE WORST IS THAT I WISH FOR US TO KISS
AND WE CAN'T.
BUT TONIGHT MY LIFE BEGINS ANEW
AND THIS LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY IN YOUR BOUQUET

(Breaking off a sprig)

I SHALL KEEP FOR MYSELF TO MARK THIS DAY
FOR A LOVE LIKE YOURS SHALL BRING ME BLISS

(Swiftly glancing about the room)

COME---KISS---

(They do, fleetingly.)

OH, DEAREST---ALWAYS!

MAY
(*Breathlessly*)
Tomorrow we must visit Granny Mingott for her blessing.

NEWLAND
Of course.

MAY
Did you ever tell cousin Ellen?

NEWLAND
I...hadn't the chance.

MAY
(*Gently chiding*)
You must find one soon. Otherwise she might think I had forgotten her.

NEWLAND
At first opportunity, my angel.

(*MAY runs off. LARRY LEFFERTS enters.*)

LARRY LEFFERTS
Good evening, Newland.

NEWLAND
Larry.

LARRY LEFFERTS
It's quite the occasion, isn't it? Julius and Regina have outdone themselves. (*Inspecting the Bouguereau*) I haven't seen your new cousin, the Countess. Has she come?

NEWLAND
No. At the last minute she decided not to.

LARRY LEFFERTS
At least she had that decency.

NEWLAND
Madame Olenska has had an unhappy life. That doesn't make her an outcast.

LARRY LEFFERTS
I knew Count Olenski in Nice. A handsome sort but a brute. (*Conspiratorially*) Collects women like china. They say it was his secretary that helped her to get away.

NEWLAND
Well, what if he did? I hope there isn't a man among us who wouldn't have done the same thing.

LARRY LEFFERTS

He was still 'helping' her a year later when someone met them *living together* in Venice. I'm off for more punch. It's delicious.

(He exits. MAY reenters.)

MAY

Newland, come let us dance. You so rarely dance with me.

NEWLAND

If you wish. But you know I am hopelessly inept when it comes to the finer steps.

MAY

Nonsense. Come, dearest.

*(They join the dancers as a SOCIETY
LADY peels off from the line and
addresses the audience.)*

A LADY

TRACK 4

IN FAMILY MATTERS THAT CONCERN THE HEART,
OBSERVANCE OF TRADITION MUST BE DONE
BETROTHAL VISITS PLAY A CENTRAL PART
FOR MRS. MINGOTT'S FAVOR MUST BE WON.

SCENE 3

(The drawing room of the Mingott household. MAY and MRS. WELLAND huddle around an unseen figure while NEWLAND hangs back at a discreet distance.)

MRS. WELLAND

TRACK 5

The ring is made in the new way of course--a thick emerald set in invisible claws--a little bare to old-fashioned eyes, perhaps, but---

(MRS. MANSON MINGOTT is revealed, holding court in a bath chair and covered in layers of dress.)

MRS. MINGOTT

OLD-FASHIONED EYES?

I HOPE YOU DON'T MEAN MINE!

THOUGH IN MY TIME, WE WORE A CAMEO IN PEARLS
AND THOUGHT IT WAS SUFFICIENT!

(Addressing NEWLAND)

BUT IT'S THE HAND THAT SETS OFF THE RING, ISN'T IT?
MINE WERE MODELED IN ROME BY FERRIGIANI--

(Demonstrating)

YOU SHOULD HAVE MAY'S DONE.

NO DOUBT, YOU WILL!

IT'S THE HAND THAT SETS OFF THE RING

(BUT AN EMERALD MAKES A WOMAN FEEL AS BEAUTIFUL AS SPRING!)

NOW, TELL ME, GOODNESS,
WHEN'S THE DAY TO BE?

NEWLAND

As soon as possible, if only you'll back me up,
Mrs. Mingott.

MRS. WELLAND

But, Mama, we must give them time, time to know
each other better---

MRS. MINGOTT

FIDDLESTICKS! I SAY, FIDDLESTICKS!

KNOW EACH OTHER BETTER? FIDDLESTICKS!

EVERYBODY IN NEW YORK

HAS ALWAYS KNOWN EVERYBODY.

WHY DELAY?

LET THE YOUNG MAN GLADLY HAVE HIS WAY!

TOO SOON THE BUBBLE'S OFF THE WINE

LET THEM MARRY QUICKLY--NOW'S THE TIME!

MRS. WELLAND
TOO SOON THE BUBBLE'S OFF THE WINE
WHY LET THEM MARRY QUICKLY?
THEY MUST HAVE TIME!

MRS. MINGOTT,
NEWLAND & MAY
NOW'S THE TIME!
NOW'S THE TIME!
NOW'S THE TIME!

ALL
NOW'S THE (THEY MUST HAVE) TIME!

(ELLEN and JULIUS BEAUFORT enter.)

MRS. MINGOTT
Here's my lovely Ellen! And Mr. Beaufort! This
is a rare favor!

BEAUFORT
The Countess was good enough to let me walk
home with her from the bank.

MRS. MINGOTT
Did I tell you all that I have planned a formal
dinner, just for Ellen? A meet and greet in the
New York way.

BEAUFORT
A wonderful idea! We shall certainly accept
such a charming offer.

MRS. MINGOTT
Now, pull up a chair and sit down. I want to
hear all the latest gossip!

*(MRS. WELLAND and MAY are assisted
into their furs by a MANSERVANT as
NEWLAND moves toward ELLEN.)*

ELLEN
(With a faint questioning smile)
Is there something I missed? Must I speak with
Granny? Let me guess---

NEWLAND
Of course you know already about May and me.
She scolded me for not telling you at the
opera.

ELLEN
Of course I know. And I'm so glad for you both!

MAY

(Taking NEWLAND'S arm)

Come, Newland.

ELLEN

Please come and see me some day. *(Holding out her hand to NEWLAND who takes it.)* You all must come and see me. Goodbye!

(MRS. WELLAND, MAY and NEWLAND begin to walk as the lights dim on the previous scene. Three SOCIETY LADIES and two GENTLEMEN appear, watching from the shadows.)

MRS. WELLAND

It's a mistake for Ellen to be so conspicuous in public, and with a vulgar, married man like Beaufort, of all people!

NEWLAND

Why should she go into hiding as if *she* were the guilty party, not Olenski?

MRS. WELLAND

(Lowering her voice)

She means to get a divorce.

(The following is whispered in rapid succession.)

FIRST LADY

Divorce...

FIRST GENTLEMAN

Divorce...

SECOND LADY

Divorce...

SECOND GENTLEMAN
+ THIRD LADY

Divorce...

NEWLAND

I hope she will! Who else has the right to make her life over if she hasn't?

MRS. WELLAND

Well, apparently the Count shares your view; for he never lifted a finger to get his wife back!

(Blackout. A fanfare of music accompanies MRS. MINGOTT as she places a single dinner invitation on a shimmering silver tray carried by a MANSERVANT, who presents it to the quintet of LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.)

MRS. MINGOTT
MRS. MANSON MINGOTT
REQUESTS THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY
AT A DINNER PARTY TO BE HELD
ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY FIFTH.
PLEASE JOIN US AS WE HONOR
THE COUNTESS ELLEN OLENSKA
BY GRACIOUSLY RECEIVING HER
AND OFFERING YOUR RESPECTS.

TRACK 6

(Spurning the invitation, the LADIES AND GENTLEMEN pass it to one another in relay fashion. The last member promptly tears up the announcement, places it on the MANSERVANT'S tray and exits triumphantly).

WE REGRET...

FIRST LADY

WE REGRET...

FIRST GENTLEMAN

WE REGRET...

SECOND LADY

WE REGRET...

+ THIRD LADY
& SECOND GENTLEMAN

WE REGRET!

ALL

(The unhappy MANSERVANT returns to MRS. MINGOTT and informs her of the situation.)

THEY REGRET!

MANSERVANT

MRS. MINGOTT IS UPSET!

(MRS. MINGOTT squeals in shock and faints in the arms of the MANSERVANT.)

(Blackout. Immediately following, NEWLAND and his mother, MRS. ARCHER, appear.)

MRS. ARCHER

---And everyone "regretted that they were unable to attend" without so much as the courtesy of a "previous engagement!" The *insult* of having the families of my son and his fiancée *shunned*---!

NEWLAND

This is due to some intentional interference by Larry Lefferts, Mother, I'm certain of it. Whenever his wife suspects him of having an affair, Larry kicks up a fuss to prove how moral he is.

MRS. ARCHER

(Sighing)

It shows what Society has come to!

NEWLAND

We must appeal to the Van der Luydens, Mother. No one else has their social authority and they are family, after all.

MRS. ARCHER

Quite true! And when the Van der Luydens choose, they know how to give a lesson! Very well. Next Tuesday they are hosting a reception for the Grand Duke of St. Austrey.

(A fanfare of music is again heard.)

I shall ask Cousin Henry and Louisa to invite...

(MR. and MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN appear and place their summons on the shimmering silver tray carried by the same MANSERVANT, now attired in the livery of the VAN DER LUYDEN household. Once again, he presents the invitation to the quintet of LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.)

MR. & MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN

TRACK 7

MR. AND MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN
REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY
AT A DINNER PARTY TO BE HELD
ON THE EVENING OF FEBRUARY TWELFTH
THE GRAND DUKE OF ST. AUSTREY
AND COUNTESS ELLEN OLENSKA
WILL GRACE US WITH THEIR PRESENCE
AS OUR MOST DISTINGUISHED GUESTS.

(During the following, the LADIES and GENTLEMEN, accepting the invitation, pass it to one another in relay fashion, nodding in approval. The last member promptly consents and places the invitation on the tray.)

FIRST LADY
WE ACCEPT!

FIRST GENTLEMEN
WE ACCEPT!

SECOND LADY
WE MOST GRATEFULLY...

+ THIRD LADY
& SECOND GENTLEMAN
AND GRACIOUSLY...

ALL
ACCEPT!

(The MANSERVANT turns and walks triumphantly away as the scene shifts to...)

SCENE 4

(The drawing room of the Van der Luyden home. MAY is seen in conversation with MR. and MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN. A pianist plays in the corner. ELLEN enters with the GRAND DUKE OF ST. AUSTREY. She carries a plumed fan.)

DUKE

You remember I was winning in Monte Carlo and having such a grand streak: lucky at cards, lucky at the roulette wheel. The croupier insisted he had never witnessed such a gifted player. Ah, what a triumphant day that was!

ELLEN

(Stifling a yawn)

I do remember, dear Duke. Quite a remarkable event. *(Noticing NEWLAND seated in a corner.)* Now, if you will excuse me...

(She makes her way across the room.)

A GENTLEMAN

LADIES DO NOT SEEK OUT GENTLEMEN
CUSTOM DEMANDS THEY SHOULD WAIT.
THE MAN TAKES THE LEAD
LEST A LADY EXCEED
HER DEMURE AND AMENABLE STATE.

ELLEN

I want you to talk to me about May.

NEWLAND

You knew the Duke before?

ELLEN

Oh, yes, we used to see him every winter at Nice. He came to the house a great deal. I think he's the dullest man I ever met. *(NEWLAND regards her intently.)* May is a darling. I've never seen a girl in New York as handsome and intelligent. Are you very much in love?

NEWLAND

As much as a man can be.

ELLEN

Do you think there is a limit?

NEWLAND

To being in love? If there is, I haven't found it.

ELLEN

Ah, it's really and truly a romance?

NEWLAND

The most romantic of romances.

MR. VAN DER LUYDEN

(Interrupting)

My dear Countess, I understand you have a love of singing and the vocal arts. Perhaps you'd care to offer us a song---

ELLEN

Oh, but it would be my pleasure.

(ELLEN takes her leave and discusses her repertoire with the pianist.)

MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN

(Taking Newland aside)

It was good of you, Newland, to devote yourself unselfishly to poor Madame Olenska. I told Henry he must come to your rescue. I've never seen May looking lovelier. She's the handsomest girl in the room.

(ELLEN takes her place beside the piano. The accompanist begins to play and the room falls silent.)

ELLEN

TRACK 8

I WALK ALONG THE QUAYS OF PARIS
THE RIVER QUIET BY MY SIDE.
O, SEINE, BENEATH YOUR TRANQUIL WATERS,
WHAT ARE THE MYSTERIES YOU HIDE?
DO YOU ECHO WITH THE SOUND OF LOVERS' LAUGHTER
OR THE GENTLE REMINISCENCE OF A SIGH?
DO YOU DROWN THE STIFLED MURMUR OF A SORROW,
THE ANGUISH OF A CRY?

ARE YOU ALL REFLECTION,
PLACID AND SERENE?
OR CHURNING WITH EMOTION,
POWERFUL, UNSEEN?
DO YOU HARBOR SECRETS
IN THE DARK BELOW?
WILL I EVER KNOW?

I STAND UPON A BRIDGE IN PARIS
AGAINST A COLD AND EMPTY SKY.
BENEATH THE TREAD OF COUNTLESS STRANGERS
YOU DRIFT AWAY WITHOUT REPLY.

(The lights come up on NEWLAND.)

NEWLAND

LOOK AT HER,
JUST TAKE A LOOK AT HER!
HOW THE LADIES IN THEIR PEARLS
WITH THEIR CAMEOS AND RINGS
LOOK LIKE ANTIQUATED THINGS NEXT TO HER!
YET HER EYES:
MATURE AND WORLDLY-WISE.
IT FRIGHTENS ME TO THINK
WHAT WENT INTO THE MAKING OF THOSE EYES.

NEWLAND & ELLEN

ARE YOU ALL REFLECTION,
PLACID AND SERENE?
OR CHURNING WITH EMOTION,
POWERFUL, UNSEEN?
DO YOU HARBOR SECRETS
IN THE DARK BELOW?
WILL I EVER KNOW?

*(The lights are restored. During
the musical interlude, ELLEN drops
her fan. NEWLAND springs from his
seat to pick it up and returns it
to her.)*

ELLEN

(In an undertone)
Tomorrow, after five--I shall expect you.

NEWLAND

(Impulsively)
Yes.

*(NEWLAND takes his seat as ELLEN
concludes the number.)*

ELLEN

IN MY LONELY SOLITUDE
UPON THE MARBLE QUAY.

*(The lights fade as two SOCIETY
LADIES appear.)*

FIRST LADY

TRACK 9

LOCATION, LOCATION
TELLS A CITY-DWELLER'S CLASS

SECOND LADY

THE FASHIONABLE STREET,
THE ELEGANT RETREAT...

*(They watch as NASTASIA draws a red
damask curtain across the stage to
establish...)*

SCENE 5

(The low, firelit drawing room of ELLEN'S house, furnished with art, books and a spinet.)

NEWLAND
Madame Olenska, if you please. Newland Archer.

NASTASIA
La signora è fuori; ma verrà subito.

NEWLAND
Grazie.

(NASTASIA exits. The SOCIETY LADIES conclude their commentary as NEWLAND stands alone admiring the art on the walls and the book collection.)

FIRST LADY
THE WELL-CHOSEN ADDRESS
CARRIES WITH IT A CACHET

SECOND LADY
THE PROPER HOME IS ALWAYS DISTINGUE.

(They exit. The sound of a carriage. A moment later ELLEN enters.)

ELLEN
How do you like my funny house?

NEWLAND
You've arranged it delightfully.

ELLEN
Oh, it's a poor little place. My relations despise it.

NEWLAND
It's quite...colorful but lacking in the comforts you must be accustomed to.

ELLEN
The street is respectable—

NEWLAND
Though not very fashionable.

ELLEN
Why not make one's own fashion? But, perhaps, I'm too independent-minded. I should do what you all do for I want to feel safe.

NEWLAND

Last night New York laid itself at your feet.
The Van der Luydens do nothing by halves.

ELLEN

How kind the Van der Luydens are! Everyone
seems to have esteem for them.

NEWLAND

They are the most powerful of New York society.
Unfortunately, owing to her health, they're
seldom seen.

ELLEN

I suppose that is the reason for their power:
they make themselves scarce!

NEWLAND

(Laughs and stares at her)

You are truly quite remarkable.

ELLEN

Have I said something forward? If you knew how
I hate to be different! But you'll tell me all
I ought to know.

NEWLAND

Your family can advise you, show you the way.

ELLEN

Is New York such a labyrinth? I thought it so
straight up and down, like Fifth Avenue, with
big honest labels on everything!

NEWLAND

Everything may be labeled--but everybody is
not.

ELLEN

There are only two people who could explain
this world to me. They are you--and Mr.
Beaufort.

NEWLAND

(Wincing)

I understand, but don't let go of the older
women! They like and admire you and want to
help.

ELLEN

Oh, I know, I know! But only on condition that
they don't hear anything unpleasant. Does no
one want the truth here, Mr. Archer? For it's
lonely living among these kind people who only
ask one to pretend---

(ELLEN begins to sob.)

NEWLAND
(Clasping her hand)
Madame Olenska, don't.

OH, DON'T, ELLEN...

ELLEN
DOES NO ONE CRY HERE EITHER?
IS THERE NO NEED IN HEAVEN?

NEWLAND
(Releasing her)
I must go now.

ELLEN
How kind you are, dear friend...dear
friend....dear friend...

*(They freeze as MAY runs on,
carrying a large bouquet of lilies-
of-the-valley.)*

SCENE 6

(The Welland home.)

MAY

TRACK 10

OH, LILY-OF-THE VALLEY,
YOUR BLOOMS ARE SWEET AND PURE,
LIKE A CARILLON OF BELLS
BLENDING IN FRAGRANT HARMONY.

(Arranging the flowers in a vase)

EACH FLOWER IN POSITION
EACH BLOSSOM IN ITS PLACE
MEANT TO LEND AN AIR OF GENTLE GRACE.

TO MAKE A FINE ARRANGEMENT
IS HARDLY IDLE PLAY
IT TAKES A CERTAIN ARTISTRY
TO SHAPE A NICE BOUQUET.
A MEASURE OF DISCERNMENT
A STEADY, GENTLE EYE
AND TENDING JUST ENOUGH UNLESS IT DIE.

THE COMPOSITION OF SO DECORATIVE A THING
GREAT HAPPINESS CAN BRING.

OH, LILY-OF-THE-VALLEY,
YOU KEEP MY DEAREST IN MY SIGHT
REMINDING ME AT EV'RY MOMENT
OF LOVE'S SWEET GOODNESS AND DELIGHT.

AND ON THE DAY I MARRY,
MY WEDDING GOWN AND VEIL IN WHITE,
I'LL CARRY LILIES-OF-THE-VALLEY
AS BOTH OUR HEARTS FOR LIFE UNITE.

I MAY STILL BE A GIRL AT TWENTY-TWO,
INNOCENT OF WORLDLY THINGS, IT'S TRUE,
GREEN AND TENDER, AS A BUD UNFURLED.
BUT LIKE THE FLOWER I WILL BLOOM IN TIME,
NO MATTER HOW INCLEMENT BE THE CLIME,
AND TAKE MY PLACE AS A WOMAN IN THE WORLD.

WE'LL BUILD A SIMPLE HOME, MY LOVE,
WITH GIFTS THAT HEAVEN SHOWERS FROM ABOVE
AND, EVER AFTERWARDS, THE LILIES,
MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT, THE LILIES
WE'LL LIVE AMID THE LILIES IN THEIR WHITE
AND KNOW LOVE'S GOODNESS AND DELIGHT!
LOVE'S GOODNESS AND DELIGHT!

(NEWLAND enters.)

MAY

Oh, Newland, it's delicious waking every
morning to smell flowers in one's room. Thank
you for remembering.

NEWLAND

When I sent your lilies yesterday, I saw some rather gorgeous yellow roses and packed them off to Madame Olenska. Was that right?

MAY

How dear of you! Anything of that kind delights her, though she did not mention it. Perhaps she was entranced with the wonderful orchids Mr. Beaufort sent her.

NEWLAND

May, I want to talk to you about our plans. I know your mother insists on a long engagement but could we not be married sooner?

MAY

Is it so long? Isabel Chivers and Reggie were engaged for two years, Grace and Thorley for nearly a year and a half. Why aren't we very well off as we are?

NEWLAND

Can't we once strike out for ourselves, May? Can't we once be different?

MAY

To elope?

NEWLAND

If you would---

MAY

You do love me, Newland! I'm so happy you are near---

NEWLAND

Then why not be nearer? Why not be happier?

MAY

We can't behave like people in novels, Newland. It's vulgar, isn't it?

NEWLAND

Are you afraid of being vulgar, May?

MAY

Of course I should hate it. So would you.

(The subject is closed. May takes his arm and raises her ring.)

Did I tell you that I showed the ring to Ellen? She thought it the most beautiful setting she ever saw. I do love you, Newland.

NEWLAND

And I love you, too, May...

FOR NOW AND ALWAYS.

*(NEWLAND exits. MAY returns to her
flowers.)*

MAY

A MEASURE OF DISCERNMENT

A STEADY, GENTLE EYE

AND TENDING JUST ENOUGH UNLESS IT DIE...

SCENE 7

(The law offices of Letterblair, Lamson and Low. Old MR. LETTERBLAIR sits enthroned behind his mahogany desk as NEWLAND enters.)

NEWLAND

You wanted to see me, Mr. Letterblair?

MR. LETTERBLAIR

Good morning, Mr. Archer. The granddaughter of Mrs. Manson Mingott, the Countess Olenska, wishes to sue her husband for divorce. In view of your prospective alliance with the family, they should like for you to review these papers and for the Countess to consult you.

NEWLAND

But her family ought to deal with this!

MR. LETTERBLAIR

They've studied the matter and are against the divorce and I think rightly.

NEWLAND

But why, sir? The count is a blackguard. If there was ever a case---

MR. LETTERBLAIR

But what's the *point*? She's here, he's there, the Atlantic's between them. She'll never get a dollar more of her money back. Therefore, as the family say, why not leave well enough alone?

NEWLAND

I think that's for her to decide.

MR LETTERBLAIR

Mr. Archer, among those papers you'll find a letter to the Countess from her husband, charging her with certain...indiscretions. It might make some unpleasant talk if the Count defends the suit...

(The lights begin to dim on LETTERBLAIR as NEWLAND remembers the past.)

NEWLAND

TRACK 11

INDISCRETIONS...INDISCRETIONS...
A MAN MAY HAVE INDISCRETIONS
BUT THE WOMAN GETS THE BLAME.
HOW ABYSMAL THIS DISTINCTION:
THAT MEN BEHAVE WITHOUT CENSURE

BUT THE WOMEN BEAR THE SHAME.
YET IN MATTERS OF THE HEART,
SHOULD NOT MEN AND WOMEN
PLAY AN EQUAL PART?

(Shadowy figures appear and illustrate the events of NEWLAND's narrative through movement and dance.)

REMEMBER MRS. RUSHFORTH,
WHO CAME INTO MY LIFE.
A VAIN AND SILLY CREATURE,
A DISCONTENTED WIFE.
NOT A WOMAN TO BE LOVED
BUT TO BE PLEASURED,
A NEW ADVENTURE FOR A YOUNG MAN TO PURSUE
THUS, WE BEGAN OUR ROMANCE
IN SECRET RENDEZVOUS.

BUT SOON ENOUGH I GUESSED
SHE LOVED NO CHARMS THAT I POSSESSED
BUT MORE THE RISK AND PERIL OF THE SAD AFFAIR.
SHE'D HINT AT THE ROMANCE
TO FRIENDS WHO'D TRADE A KNOWING GLANCE
AND THEN PROCEED TO SPREAD THEIR GOSSIP EVERYWHERE.

ONE NIGHT AT A BALL,
I TOOK HER ASIDE
AND ENDED WHAT I COULD NO LONGER ABIDE.
CURSING HER COLDLY, I LEFT HER ALONE,
CRYING IN SOME CORNER ON HER OWN.
BRANDED AS A TEMPTRESS
SHE SUFFERED A DISGRACE
AND IN POLITE SOCIETY
SHE DARED NOT SHOW HER FACE.

(The shadows disappear.)

IN COMPLICATED EUROPE,
IS LOVE NOT MORE COMPLEX?
A RANGE OF SITUATIONS,
A WORLDLY VIEW OF SEX.

(Referring to the Count's letter)

MIGHT A LONELY AND DEFENSELESS
MARRIED COUNTESS,
FROM A NEED AND OPPORTUNITY TO STRAY,
PURSUE A COURSE OF ACTION
SO FOREIGN TO OUR WAY?

AND AS FOR MRS. RUSHFORTH,
WHO KNOWS WHERE SHE IS TODAY?

(The lights are restored as LETTERBLAIR interrupts NEWLAND'S reverie.)

MR. LETTERBLAIR

Divorce is always unpleasant, wouldn't you agree, Mr. Archer?

NEWLAND

Naturally.

MR. LETTERBLAIR

Then I can depend on you. See the Countess soon, use your influence. For to marry into a family with such a scandal hanging over it would be foolish!

SCENE 8

(ELLEN'S house. NASTASIA ushers NEWLAND into the drawing room, which is adorned with several vases of flowers. JULIUS BEAUFORT stands before the fireplace.)

BEAUFORT
(Smoking a cigar)
Ah, Newland, what brings you here at this hour?

NEWLAND
I should ask you the same thing, Julius.

BEAUFORT
Why, the Countess and I were having a conversation about how dull New York is. Would you not say we are dull in New York?

(NEWLAND notices the vase of yellow roses on the spinet and touches them gently.)

NEWLAND
I wager none would say that about you, Julius. (Becoming aware of the other flowers.) Aren't these orchids from the Beaufort hothouses?

BEAUFORT
A trifle of a gift. Alas, this humble little house begs for beauty. Still there's something charming and bohemian about it. Art, books, even a spinet. Does it play? (He sits at the keyboard and plays a chord.) I'm sure you know a few wicked tunes.

NEWLAND
I would not know of such things.

BEAUFORT
Come, come, sir, a man such as yourself? Here is one I have appropriated from my wife's own state of South Carolina. One of your minstrel songs, full of sin.

A YOUNG MAN WITH A BANJO
CAME RIDIN' INTO TOWN
AND SOON HE FOUND A SIMPLE GAL
WHO'D FOLLOW HIM AROUN'.
SHE WASN'T MUCH FOR PRETTY
NO, PRETTY YOU'D NOT SAY
BUT THE PINK WOULD RISE UP IN HER CHEEKS
WHEN HE WOULD START TO PLAY.

TRACK 12

HE WENT PICKIN' ON THE BANJO

STRUMMIN' ON THE BANJO
FINGERIN' THE BANJO NIGHT AND NOON
TEASIN' ON THE BANJO
SQUEEZIN' ON THE BANJO
STROKIN' IT UNTIL HE MADE THE PLAIN GAL SWOON

PLINKIN' ON THE BANJO
PLUNKIN' ON THE BANJO
LORDY, HOW HE MADE THAT BANJO RING!
RAPPIN' ON THE BANJO
TAPPIN' ON THE BANJO
TWANGIN' IT UNTIL HE MADE THE PLAIN GAL SING!

NOW THOUGH YOU'D THINK SHE'D TIRE
TO HEAR HIM PLUCK ALL DAY
SHE HARDLY EVER GOT ENOUGH
OF HAVIN' THAT BOY PLAY
THE YOUNG MAN TRIED TO HOLD OUT
AND KEEP HIS HANDS AWAY
BUT SOON ENOUGH HIS FINGERS
ON THE BANJO HE WOULD LAY.

HE WENT KNOCKIN' ON THE BANJO
POUNDIN' ON THE BANJO
HAMMERIN' THE BANJO LOW AND HIGH
HUGGIN' ON THE BANJO
TUGGIN' ON THE BANJO
THUMPIN' IT UNTIL HE MADE THE PLAIN GAL CRY!

RUBBIN' ON THE BANJO
SHOVIN' ON THE BANJO
LORDY, HOW HE MADE THAT BANJO RING!
PULLIN' ON THE BANJO
PUSHIN' ON THE BANJO
BANGIN' ON THE BANJO 'TIL HE POPPED A STRING!

(ELLEN enters wearing a long, fur-lined robe.)

ELLEN
Mr. Archer, you've been waiting.

NEWLAND
I was afraid you'd forgotten the hour.

ELLEN
I heard singing, Julius.

BEAUFORT
And you shall hear more if you join me at
Delmonico's some night---

ELLEN
Now, Mr. Beaufort, it's much too late and I
must talk business with Mr. Archer.

BEAUFORT

Newland, see if you can persuade the Countess to come and dine with me. Of course you are included. I've a private room with a Steinway--we'll sing the night away. *(To Ellen)* I await your answer. So, goodnight.

*(He kisses her hand and exits.
There is a brief, awkward silence.)*

NEWLAND

I see you received my roses.

ELLEN

Yes, they were so thoughtful.

NEWLAND

They cast a bit of the bohemian, I think.

ELLEN

Why? Is yellow so risqué?

NEWLAND

No, just so different and original.

ELLEN

How is darling May?

NEWLAND

She and her family are spending the winter in St. Augustine.

ELLEN

What do you do while May is away?

NEWLAND

I stick to my work. That's the reason I wanted to see you. Mr. Letterblair asked me to advise you in your suit against your husband.

ELLEN

Oh, you'd help me? That will make it so much easier!

NEWLAND

Yes, but first I ought to know a little more---

ELLEN

What more?

NEWLAND

I've read the Count's letter.

ELLEN

So you know how abominable he's been---

NEWLAND

But if your husband chose now to fight, he can say things publicly that might be disagreeable to you.

ELLEN

But what harm could they do me here?

NEWLAND

More harm than anywhere else! New York society is ruled by a few people with---well, rather old-fashioned ideas. If a woman of station has exposed herself to--to offensive insinuations...well...what could compensate for a lot of beastly talk?

NEWLAND

I'd be free. Is that nothing, Mr. Archer?

NEWLAND

Think of the newspapers and how vile they could be!

ELLEN

I don't understand this country. You have such freedoms here--but look what you've done with them!

NEWLAND

It's my business to help you see things as your family see them.

ELLEN

Very well, I will do as you advise and withdraw the suit. You are right, of course, and I am grateful to you.

NEWLAND

I only want to help you.

ELLEN

You do help, dear cousin. Goodnight.

(NEWLAND kisses her hand as the lights fade. A mustachioed, very French MAITRE D' appears.)

MAITRE D'

OUR FRENCH CUISINE IS PERFECTION
OUR VINTAGE WINES SELECT AND RARE
THE SERVICE ALERT YET UNOBTRUSIVE
THE SETTING SUBDUED WITH A CONTINENTAL AIR...

*(He remains onstage as NEWLAND
encounters NED WINSETT in the
street a few days later.)*

NED

Newland! Fancy meeting you like this! Escaping
from the law?

NEWLAND

(Warmly)

Something like that, Ned. I'm on my way to
Delmonico's for a drink. Care to join me?

NED

If they'll have me. Lead on, sir.

SCENE 9

(Delmonico's Restaurant. The MAITRE D' obsequiously greets NEWLAND, seats him and NED at a table and pours them champagne.)

MAITRE D'

THE BEST SOCIETY GATHER
WHERE THE CHAMPAGNE OVERFLOWS
AND FEAST ON THE PLEASURES OF THE TABLE
HERE AT DELMONICO'S!

(He bows with a flourish and exits.)

NED

---and what business I have working for a woman's weekly I don't know. All day long it's editing romances for love-sick housewives. Abominable claptrap, if you ask me. It pays the bills, I suppose, but I'm starting to fear for my soul. *(He drinks deeply.)*

NEWLAND

I sometimes feel that way about the law.

NED

I'm down and out but you're well off. Why not try a new direction? Politics, for example?

NEWLAND

Look at the career of the honest man in American politics. They don't want us!

(They laugh. ELLEN and BEAUFORT enter, tacitly acknowledge NEWLAND and retreat to a back room.)

NED

I say, who's that beauty with Beaufort? I believe she's from my neighborhood.

NEWLAND

That would be the Countess Olenska.

NED

A Countess! *(Whistles)* I wonder how a Countess happens to live in my slum?

NEWLAND

Because she doesn't care about where she lives, or about any of our little social sign-posts.

NED

Well, she cuts a fine figure. But I daresay, men like you and me will always be minor players in her drama.

(Music is heard from the back room.)

It's the Beauforts of the world that always attract her kind.

NEWLAND

And what kind is that?

(ELLEN is heard singing.)

ELLEN

DO YOU DROWN THE STIFLED MURMUR OF A SORROW,
THE ANGUISH OF A CRY?

NED

The most alluring kind there is. *(He polishes off his drink.)* Well, I must get back to work and finish editing my story. Perhaps I'll write my own some day and have it be a big seller, eh?

NEWLAND

Goodbye, Ned.

(NED exits.)

NEWLAND

TRACK 13

AM I JUST AN ACTOR IN A PLAY,
ASSIGNED A SCRIPTED PART THAT I PORTRAY?
GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS
IN A NEVER-CHANGING PLOT
AND DISCONTENTED WITH MY LOT...

(The lights come up on...)

SCENE 10

(NEWLAND's law office, the following day. He seats himself at his desk as a CLERK enters with some documents. N.B. The following montage encompasses several days.)

CLERK
Sign, sir.

NEWLAND
ANOTHER CONTRACT TO EMEND...

CLERK
Check, sir.

NEWLAND
ANOTHER DIVIDEND TO SEND...
WHAT THEN? WHAT THEN?

(The CLERK exits.)
ANOTHER STATEMENT TO THE BANK
ANOTHER EQUITY TO RANK
WHAT THEN? WHAT THEN?

DOING THE SAME THING DAY AFTER DAY
AT THE SAME HOUR
DOES IT MAKE ANY DIFFERENCE AT ALL?
THE TRIVIAL TASKS,
THE NUMBING ROUTINE,
A DUTY ADMINISTERED LIKE A MACHINE.

(The CLERK enters.)

CLERK
I could not find the roses. There were no yellow roses. The town appears bereft of them, sir.

NEWLAND
Keep trying, keep trying. I gave you the lady in question?

CLERK
Yes, the Countess Olenska.

(He exits.)

NEWLAND
ANOTHER FORTUNE TO INVEST
ANOTHER ACTION TO CONTEST
WHAT THEN? WHAT THEN?

ANOTHER LUNCHEON AT THE CLUB
ANOTHER LITIGANT TO SNUB
WHAT THEN? WHAT THEN?

(The CLERK enters.)

CLERK
I still cannot find roses. I searched in vain
for roses. I fear, sir, we must concede
defeat!

(He exits.)

NEWLAND
THE SENSE OF REGRET...
OF WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN...

(The CLERK enters.)

CLERK
Your note was sent by messenger, sir. There is
no reply from the Countess.

(He exits.)

NEWLAND
LIVING A LIFE SO EMPTY OF PURPOSE AND PLEASURE,
CAN A MAN EVER HOPE TO SURVIVE?
WHEN I IMAGINE WHAT LIES AHEAD IN THE FUTURE,
I'VE THE FEELING THAT I'M BEING BURIED ALIVE...

*(The CLERK runs in, carrying an
envelope.)*

CLERK
Sir, a letter from the Countess!

*(NEWLAND opens the letter and
begins to read it. ELLEN appears.)*

ELLEN
I ran away the day after I saw you. I wanted to
be quiet and think things over. The Van der
Luydens have taken me in at Skuytercliff. I
feel myself so safe here. Wish that you were
with us. Your friend, Ellen.

*(The lights fade on ELLEN. NEWLAND
begins to pace.)*

NEWLAND
Don't I have a standing invitation with the
Chiverses in the country? The open air is just
the thing they say!

I COULD GO SAILING OUT ON THE ICE OF THE HUDSON
TAKE A SLEIGH-RIDE THROUGH A VALLEY OF SNOW
NOW THAT I'M ALL ALONE BY MYSELF IN THE CITY,
WHY NOT TAKE A WEEKEND VACATION AND GO?

*(Snow begins falling as the scene
shifts to...)*

SCENE 11

(The village of Skuytercliff, a few miles away. ELLEN appears in a vivid red cloak.)

NEWLAND

TRACK 14

Ellen!

ELLEN

Ah, you've come! I knew you'd come!

NEWLAND

I came to see what you were running away from.

I TOOK THE TRAIN ALONG THE RIVER
IN THE SUNLIGHT IT WAS DAZZLING WHITE.

ELLEN

May asked you to take care of me.

NEWLAND

I didn't need any asking.

ELLEN

(Putting her hand on his shoulder)

Oh, my friend---

NEWLAND

YOU WERE UNHAPPY WHEN YOU WROTE ME
NOW YOU'RE LAUGHING AND YOUR SMILE IS BRIGHT.

ELLEN

I can't feel unhappy when you're here.

NEWLAND

I shan't be here long.

ELLEN

I know. But I live in the moment when I'm happy.

NEWLAND

Ellen, if I really am to help you, tell me what has happened.

ELLEN

Look, Newland!

SNOW FALLING ALL AROUND
SEE IT LIGHT UPON THE GROUND
HERE AND THERE THEN CARRIED HIGH.

TRY TO HOLD IT IN YOUR HAND
ON MY GLOVE IT MELTS SO QUICKLY!

OH, WHY MUST A THING OF BEAUTY DIE?

BUT I CAN TASTE IT ON MY LIPS
I CAN BREATHE IT COLD AND CLEAR
SOFT UPON MY CHEEK
I FEEL ITS LIGHT CARESS.

COVERING THE EARTH FOR MILES
FURTHER THAN THE EYE CAN SEE
NOT ANOTHER SOUL IN VIEW BUT
YOU AND ME.

SNOW, BLOW UPON THE WIND!
HIDE US IN A WONDERLAND COMPLETE!
LET WINTER SING BENEATH OUR FEET.

NEWLAND

It's like we're children again, and time has
stopped for us.

CLIMBING UP AN ICY HILL
TUMBLING DOWN WITH RECKLESS SPEED
LAUGHING WITH THE JOY OF INNOCENT DELIGHT.

SUDDENLY, WE'RE VERY CLOSE
HUDDLING IN A WARM EMBRACE
PRESSING TO EACH OTHER BREATHLESS,
FACE TO FACE----

*(During the above, ELLEN and
NEWLAND turn to one another and
seem about to embrace when JULIUS
BEAUFORT is suddenly heard from
offstage.)*

BEAUFORT

A YOUNG MAN WITH A BANJO
CAME RIDING INTO TOWN
AND SOON HE FOUND A SIMPLE GAL
TO FOLLOW HIM AROUND'....

NEWLAND

(Furious)

So that was it!

ELLEN

I didn't know he was here--I swear it, Newland!

*(She keeps her arm in his but he
pushes her away.)*

NEWLAND

Hello, Beaufort!--this way! Madame Olenska was
expecting you!

(NEWLAND storms away. Lights down
on the village. **TRANSITION TO
FLORIDA: ENSEMBLE SONG/CROSSOVER?**)

SCENE 12

(The garden of the Welland vacation home in St. Augustine.)

MAY
Newland, has anything happened?

NEWLAND
Yes, I found I had to see you.

(He puts his arms around her and kisses her. She draws back with surprise.)

What is it?

MAY
Nothing.

NEWLAND
How droll this place seems. Tell me what you do all day.

MAY
I swim and sail and ride and occasionally dance at the local inn. We wanted to play tennis on the sands but no one had any racquets and...

(As MAY recites her chronicle, NEWLAND becomes lost in thought. ELLEN appears, dressed in her red cloak.)

ELLEN
I CAN TASTE IT ON MY LIPS
I CAN BREATHE IT COLD AND CLEAR
SOFT UPON MY CHEEK,
I FEEL ITS LIGHT CARESS...

(Lights down on ELLEN as a distracted NEWLAND tries to focus on MAY.)

MAY
...And our house is a tumble-down thing with a paintless porch, an unpruned hedge of plumbago and pink geraniums and Mamma finds the servants quite unsuitable...

(ELLEN appears.)

ELLEN
COVERING THE EARTH FOR MILES
FURTHER THAN THE EYE CAN SEE
NOT ANOTHER SOUL IN VIEW BUT YOU AND----

(Overwhelmed, NEWLAND suddenly interrupts MAY as ELLEN disappears.)

NEWLAND

TRACK 15

Don't you understand how I want you for my wife? That now's our chance for adventure? Now's the time to start our lives?

MAY

Why, Newland, dearest...in time, we shall. Next year.

NEWLAND

Why should we dream away another year, my darling? Why not marry right after Easter?

MAY

Dearest, I don't think I understand. Is there-- is there someone else you've met?

NEWLAND

Someone else?

MAY

Sometimes, of late, I've felt a difference in you, Newland. You may talk to me truthfully should you have made some mistake---

NEWLAND

If I had made one as you suggest, should I be anxious we were wed?

MAY

Yes, you might want once and for all to settle the question.

NEWLAND

Well--

MAY

One hears and notices, my dear, one has feelings.

IN NEWPORT I RECALL
ONE NIGHT I SAW YOU AT A BALL
A WOMAN JOINED YOU SMILING
FOR THE FINAL DANCE

YOU STROLLED WITH HER OUTSIDE
AND LATER ON I HEARD SHE'D CRIED
AS IN A LOVER'S QUARREL
SET IN SOME ROMANCE

NEWLAND

Is that it? If you only knew the truth!

MAY

Then there is a truth I don't know?

NEWLAND

I mean, of the old story you speak.

MAY

But that's what I want to know, Newland. I couldn't have my happiness at someone else's expense.

WHEN TWO PEOPLE LOVE
THEY NEVER SHOULD HIDE
THE LONGING THEY FEEL,
THE HOPE DEEP INSIDE

AND SHOULD THAT MEAN SCANDAL,
THEN SCANDAL THERE'LL BE.
BUT, NEWLAND, DON'T DESERT HER
JUST FOR ME!

NEWLAND

There is no pledge there, May, no obligation. If there's no one and nothing between us, isn't that an argument for marrying quickly? If your parents refuse, you could persuade them. You know they have always let you have your way since you were a little girl.

MAY

Yes; and that's what makes it so hard to deny them the very last thing they'll ever ask of me--as a little girl.

(NEWLAND is crestfallen. MRS. WELLAND enters.)

MRS. WELLAND

(Waving a telegram)

I've just had the most extraordinary good news. Count Olenski wants Ellen back--and on her own terms. She would be a fool not to go. A title of countess and all the wealth that goes with it is a far cry from what she would have here.

NEWLAND

(To himself)

I would rather see her dead.

MRS. WELLAND

But come. Mr. Welland is in his hammock with instructions not to be disturbed, but with such bold news, I think he might be stirred.

SCENE 13

(The Mingott household.)

MRS. MINGOTT

Ellen has told me everything you have done for her, Mr. Archer. Your wise advice, your courageous firmness. Thank heaven it was not too late.

NEWLAND

Madame Olenska exaggerates. I simply gave her a legal opinion.

MRS. MINGOTT

Little did you know that at that moment she was being appealed to by the remorseful count himself. *(Chuckles)* Now, what of your affairs? How are the marriage plans coming?

NEWLAND

I'd gone down to St. Augustine to ask May if we could wed after Easter. But she wouldn't agree to it.

MRS. MINGOTT

Ah, these Mingotts! They're all alike! Not one of them wants to be different. The only one who takes after me is my little Ellen.

(ELLEN enters. She extends her hand to NEWLAND and stoops to her grandmother's kiss.)

Ah, here she is now! Mr. Archer has just returned from Florida where he's been to see his sweetheart.

ELLEN

Yes, I know. I sent a note to your mother to ask where you'd gone.

MRS. MINGOTT

In such hot haste to get married that he rushed down to implore the silly girl on his knees like a French lover!

ELLEN

Surely, Granny, between us, we can persuade the Wellands to do as he wishes.

NEWLAND

Good day, Mrs. Mingott.

(NEWLAND rises to leave. ELLEN walks him to the door.)

When can I see you?

ELLEN

Tomorrow evening, but early. I'm going out.

NEWLAND

Very well, tomorrow evening.

*(NASTASIA appears and draws the red
damask curtain across the stage.)*

SCENE 14

(ELLEN'S house. NEWLAND has just arrived.)

ELLEN

Nastasia, please set out my opera cloak for me.
The carriage will be here at seven.

NASTASIA

Si, Signora.

(She exits.)

ELLEN

Mr. Beaufort has invited me to the Struthers. I
must go where I'm invited or I should be too
lonely. But there's time for a cigarette.

*(NEWLAND hands ELLEN the cigarette
box and lights one for her.)*

NEWLAND

The Count has asked you to return to him.

ELLEN

After all, it was to be expected.

NEWLAND

It is believed you will go back.

ELLEN

Many cruel things have been believed of me
before.

NEWLAND

Oh, Ellen, forgive me. I'm a fool.

ELLEN

You have your own troubles. I know the Wellands
have been unreasonable about the marriage.

NEWLAND

May and I had a frank talk in Florida. She
thinks my impatience about the marriage is a
bad sign.

ELLEN

A bad sign?

NEWLAND

She thinks I aim to marry quickly to get away
from one I care for more, which is ridiculous.

ELLEN

Why ridiculous?

NEWLAND

Because I don't plan to marry anyone else.

ELLEN

This other woman...does she love you?

NEWLAND

Oh, there's no other woman; I mean, the person--

ELLEN

Then why such haste?

(The sound of approaching horses is heard.)

NEWLAND

There's your carriage...There *is* another woman, but not the one she thinks.

(He moves close to her.)

ELLEN

Don't make love to me! Too many people have done that!

NEWLAND

I have never made love to you and never shall, but you are the one I'd marry if it were possible for us---

ELLEN

Possible for us? You say that when it's you who've made it impossible!

NEWLAND

I've made it impossible?

ELLEN

You, you, you! It was you who made me give up on divorcing to spare the family heartache and scandal!

NEWLAND

But I thought the accusations the Count made in his letter---

ELLEN

All untrue! I had nothing to fear from that letter. All I feared was to bring notoriety down on the family, on you and May! I did it all for you!

NEWLAND

(Burying his face in his hands)

Oh, God....

ELLEN

Oh, Newland, I suppose this had to be but it
doesn't alter a thing...

NEWLAND

TRACK 16

CAN YOU NOT KNOW?
CAN YOU NOT SEE?
CAN YOU NOT UNDERSTAND YOU'VE ALTERED
ALL OF LIFE FOR ME?

A LIFE IN A GILDED FRAME,
CAREFULLY DISPLAYED,
FIXED IN THE FORMAL POSE
OF A MEANINGLESS CHARADE.
A WORLD OF INCESSANT LIES
BLINDING ME TILL YOU CAME
YOU OPENED MY EYES
AND SHATTERED THE FRAME
AND, ELLEN,
YOU'VE TAUGHT ME TO LIVE AGAIN!

ELLEN

But, Newland, you're engaged and I'm married---

NEWLAND

NO MORE LIES
NOT TO OURSELVES
OR THE PEOPLE WE HOLD DEAR.
NO MORE CONFUSION
OR SELF-DELUSION
OR KNOWING FEAR.

NO DISGUISE
HIDING THE DEPTH
OF THE FEELING THAT WE SHARE.
NO STOLEN GLANCES
OR WASTED CHANCES
BRINGING DESPAIR.

TOUCHING YOU MAKES EVERYTHING SO SIMPLE
HOLDING YOU MAKES EVERYTHING SO CLEAR.
THERE IS SOFTNESS, THERE IS BREATH
WHERE ONCE I FELT A CERTAIN DEATH
AND I'M ALIVE AGAIN WHENEVER YOU ARE NEAR!

THROUGH YOUR EYES
I'M LIKE A CHILD AND I SEE THE WORLD ANEW
A NEW DIMENSION
WITH NO PRETENSION
BUT LIVING TRUE.
ALL OUR FEARS
WILL VANISH LIKE A GHOST AT SUNRISE
NO MORE DECEPTION
NO MORE LIES.

ELLEN

It's too late to do anything, Newland.
Everything's been decided.

NEWLAND

But I'm still free and you're going to be!

ELLEN

You say that because it's the easiest thing to
say, not because it's true.

NEWLAND

I don't understand you!

ELLEN

YOU ALSO CHANGED MY LIFE
WHEN I RETURNED HERE
AND SHOWED ME KINDNESS WHEN I WAS ALONE.
WE WERE CLOSE RIGHT FROM THE START
AND YET YOU CHOSE TO STAY APART
FOR YOU CONSIDERED FEELINGS OTHER THAN YOUR OWN--
AND THAT'S A GOODNESS I HAVE NEVER KNOWN!

I can't let you undo what you've done. I can't
love you unless I give you up.

NEWLAND

If we don't do this now, it will only be worse
afterwards...

ELLEN

But what of the scandal? Having known scorn and
shame, I could not go through it again.

NEWLAND

This time, I'll be at your side, Ellen.

ELLEN

Is it possible? Do you think there's still a
chance?

*(Suddenly ELLEN rings for the maid.
NASTASIA enters.)*

NASTASIA

Signora?

ELLEN

Send the carriage away, Nastasia. I shall not
be going out this evening.

*(NASTASIA nods and exits. NEWLAND
and ELLEN embrace and kiss
passionately.)*

ELLEN
THROUGH YOUR EYES
I'M LIKE A CHILD AND I SEE THE WORLD ANEW

NEWLAND
A NEW DIMENSION
WITH NO PRETENSION
BUT LIVING TRUE.

BOTH
ALL OUR FEARS
WILL VANISH LIKE A GHOST AT SUNRISE
NO MORE DECEPTION
NO MORE---

(NASTASIA suddenly knocks and enters. NEWLAND and ELLEN remain entwined.)

ELLEN
What is it?

NASTASIA
Un telegramma per signora.

ELLEN
Grazie.

(NASTASIA exits.)
It's from May.

(She tears it open, reads it and hands it to NEWLAND. As he reads it, MAY appears in a light.)

MAY
Granny's telegram successful! Parents consent to wedding Tuesday after Easter. Am telegraphing Newland. Am too happy for words and love you dearly. Your grateful May.

(The telegram falls from NEWLAND'S hand.)

ELLEN
Newland?

NEWLAND
I'm going to be married in a month.

(The entire COMPANY appears in the club boxes.)

ALL
ALL NEW YORK TAKES A PART IN THE SPECTACLE AND DRAMA!

*(NEWLAND begins to laugh
uproariously as Ellen looks on,
numb. Blackout.)*

END ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

MRS. WELLAND TRACK 17
MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR WELLAND
REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY
AT THE MARRIAGE OF THEIR DAUGHTER, MAY...

*(MAY enters, resplendent in her
wedding gown.)*

...TO MR. NEWLAND ARCHER.

*(NEWLAND enters solemnly. Lights
rise on the interior of Grace
Church. The Mingott-Welland and
Archer-Van der Luyden clans, along
with the rest of New York society,
are in attendance at the wedding.
NEWLAND and MAY approach the
altar.)*

LADIES
EIGHT BRIDESMAIDS DRESSED IN PINK

GENTLEMEN
EIGHT USHERS DRESSED IN GRAY

LADIES
EIGHT LARGE BOUQUETS OF LILIES-OF-THE-VALLEY ON DISPLAY

GENTLEMEN
THE ORGAN MUSIC PROUD

LADIES
THE SCENT OF BLOSSOM SWEET

ALL
THE CONGREGATION---

*(NEWLAND is suddenly isolated by a
pin spot.)*

NEWLAND
HOW LIKE A FIRST NIGHT AT THE OPERA!
THE FAMILIES IN THEIR BOXES--I MEAN, PEWS!
ALL DRESSED UP IN THEIR FINERY,
THE SAME FAMILIAR FACES TO PERUSE.

RECTOR
Dearly Beloved, we are gathered together
here...

NEWLAND
BUT MEANWHILE,
REAL LIVES ARE HAPPENING SOMEWHERE,

PEOPLE ARE LIVING THEM SOMEWHERE
AND TO THEMSELVES BEING TRUE
MEANWHILE,
REAL LIFE IS HAPPENING SOMEWHERE
BUT NOT TO YOU,
NO, NOT TO YOU...

RECTOR
You may now kiss the bride. . .

NEWLAND
AM I DONE? ARE WE THROUGH?
IS THIS THE MENDELSSOHN PLAYING?

RECTOR
Give her your arm, young man.

*(Newland walks with MAY downstage
toward the audience.)*

NEWLAND
MEANWHILE,
REAL LIVES ARE HAPPENING SOMEWHERE,
PEOPLE ARE LEADING THEM SOMEWHERE
NOT JUST OBEYING DESIGN
MEANWHILE,
REAL LIVES HAVE HOPE IN THEM SOMEWHERE
BUT NOT IN MINE,
NO, NOT IN MINE,
NOT IN MINE...

(NEWLAND and MAY exit.)

TWO LADIES
A HONEYMOON IN RHEINBECK
WAS THE OFFERING OF HER AUNTS
NO BRIDAL SUITE IN BALTIMORE
OR OTHER UNSEEMLY HAUNTS,
THE VAN DER LUYDENS SAVED THEM
WHEN THE HOUSE HAD SPRUNG A LEAK
AND PUT THEM UP AT SKUYTERCLIFF
THE WEEK.

TWO GENTLEMEN
THEY TRAVELLED THEN TO EUROPE
FOR THE CONTINENTAL TOUR
SHE FOUND THE WHOLE TRIP BLISSFUL
THOUGH THE FRENCH SHE THOUGHT A BORE--
AND SOON THEY HAD RETURNED AGAIN
TO SUMMER ON THE SHORE--IN NEWPORT!

*(The scene shifts to the lawns of
Newport, R.I., where a garden
party, hosted by the Beauforts, is
taking place.)*

The assembled stand in tableau in various groupings with parasols, tennis rackets, etc. NEWLAND watches MAY compete in a meet of the Newport Archery Club. She stands with her bow and draws it back toward the target.

ALL
NO ONE HOLDS THE BOW AS SHE DOES!

(MAY mimes letting go of the arrow and the orchestra plays a single chord as she strikes the bull's eye.)

BEAUFORT
Yes, but that's the only target she'll ever hit!

(The crowd applauds May's athletic prowess. BEAUFORT awards MAY a diamond-tipped arrow brooch. The lights fade on the scene.)

NEWLAND
SHE REMAINS JUST A GIRL OF TWENTY-TWO,
INNOCENT OF WORLDLY THINGS, IT'S TRUE,
LIKE DIANA, STATUESQUE AND STRONG.
YET IN ALL OF THAT SERENITY AND GRACE,
OF AWARENESS THERE IS NOT A TRACE.
IN MY CHOOSING,
HAVE I DONE HER WRONG?

MAY
WE'LL BUILD A SIMPLE HOME, MY LOVE,
WITH GIFTS THAT HEAVEN SHOWERS FROM ABOVE

NEWLAND
AND, EVER AFTERWARDS, THE LILIES

MAY
MORNING, NOON, AND NIGHT, THE LILIES

BOTH
WE'LL LIVE AMIDST THE LILIES IN THEIR WHITE
AND KNOW LOVE'S GOODNESS AND DELIGHT!
LOVE'S GOODNESS AND DELIGHT!

(They embrace tenderly.)

NEWLAND
MEANWHILE, REAL LIFE IS HAPPENING SOMEWHERE.

(At number's end, NEWLAND and MAY enter....)

SCENE 2

(MRS. MINGOTT'S cottage in Newport.)

MRS. MINGOTT
Ah, here are my love birds!

MAY
Granny, see my prize, a diamond-tipped arrow...

MRS. MINGOTT
Ah, Julius Beaufort does things handsomely. I suppose he should with so much of our old money in his hands. You must leave such an heirloom to your eldest girl.

MAY
Granny!

MRS. MINGOTT
Aren't there going to be any daughters, only boys? Come, come, my girl, it's only natural! (Calling out) Ellen! Ellen, come see who's here!

MAY
Ellen is here?

MRS. MINGOTT
Ah, you didn't know? Ellen has been staying with the Blenkers in Portsmouth but I insisted she spend today with me. (Pounding her cane) Ellen! Ellen! Come here at once!
(No reply. A MANSERVANT enters.)
Where is Madame Olenska?

MANSERVANT
I saw her on the path, Madame. She was heading toward the shore.

MRS. MINGOTT
Mr. Archer, run down and fetch her like a good grandson. Your pretty wife will describe the party to me in the meantime...

NEWLAND
Yes.

(NEWLAND exits as if in a dream.)

SCENE 3

(ELLEN stands downstage at the edge of the pier facing the bay, i.e. the audience. She holds a pink parasol over her head. NEWLAND enters upstage and watches her. The setting sun casts a glow over the scene.)

ELLEN

TRACK 18

SAILBOATS GENTLY GLIDING
IN THEIR WAKE HOW THE FURROWED BAY
LEAVES A SHADOW OF WHERE THEY LAY
THE FURROWED BAY

NOW THE YACHTS WITH THEIR COLORS HIGH
RACE THE WIND 'NEATH THE SUMMER SKY
AND SKIM THE SEA

THEN COME THE BARGES
WITH THE WEIGHT OF CARGO
BURIED IN THEIR HOLDS
THEY TRAIL BEHIND A NOISY TUG
AND CROSS THE BAY

WITH THE RAYS OF THE SETTING SUN
SPARKING HUES OF THE BRIGHTEST FLAME
EACH CRAFT IS TEMPTED TO TURN AROUND
AND WATCH THE END OF GOLDEN DAY.

NEWLAND

TURN, ELLEN, TURN
I'M LONGING TO HOLD YOU
IN MY ARMS,
MY LOVELY ONE.
TURN, ELLEN, TURN
AS SUMMER SKIES BURN
(Sighting a boat on the horizon)
A BOAT WILL PASS THE LIGHTHOUSE SOON
UPON ITS COURSE ACROSS THE BAY
IF YOU DON'T TURN BEFORE IT DOES
I'LL TAKE MY LEAVE
I'LL WALK AWAY
OH, TURN, ELLEN, TURN
YOU ARE THE SAIL THAT GUIDES MY LIFE
AND I SHALL RIDE THE WAKE OF YOU.
IF ONLY YOU'LL SET ME FREE,
I BEG YOU, LOVE,
TURN TO ME!

ELLEN

SAILBOATS GENTLY GLIDING...

NEWLAND

THE BOAT SAILS BY...

*(Sadly, NEWLAND leaves and rejoins
MAY as the lights fade on the
pier.)*

MAY

I'm sorry you didn't find Ellen, I should have liked to have seen her again. But perhaps she wouldn't have cared, she seems so changed.

NEWLAND

Changed?

MAY

So indifferent to her friends. Giving up New York, setting up house in Washington, vacationing with the Blenkers in Portsmouth! I wonder if she wouldn't be happier back in Europe with her husband.

NEWLAND

I don't think I ever heard you say such a cruel thing before!

MAY

Cruel?

NEWLAND

I don't believe that even devils think people are happier in hell!

MAY

It's a pity she ever married abroad, then. Now, how will you spend your day tomorrow?

NEWLAND

Oh, I think for a change I'll just save it instead of spending it.

MAY

Dearest, you mustn't be cross. Mamma and I will be back from the Sillerton reception by six. Perhaps you can have a tennis match with the Chiverses or go sailing on the Beauforts' cutter. It's to be a perfect day.

NEWLAND

I thought I'd take the trotters and go for a drive. If it's to be a perfect day...

SCENE 4

(The exterior of the Blenkers' cottage in Portsmouth. NEWLAND enters and spies a pink parasol on the premises. Mistaking it for Ellen's, he gently kisses and caresses it. Suddenly, MISS BLENKER appears.)

MISS BLENKER
Oh, Mr. Archer!

NEWLAND
I beg your pardon.

MISS BLENKER
Gracious, where did you drop from?

NEWLAND
Newport. I--I had to come up the island on business.

MISS BLENKER
The house is empty. Mother's gone to a garden party at the Sillertons.

NEWLAND
But Madame Olenska--has she gone to the party, too?

MISS BLENKER
Oh, you found my parasol! I've been looking for it all morning.

(NEWLAND hands it to her.)
Madame Olenska was called away yesterday. A telegram came from Boston. I do love the way she does her hair, don't you?

NEWLAND
You don't happen to know why Madame Olenska went to Boston?

MISS BLENKER
She didn't say.

NEWLAND
It just so happens I shall be in Boston tomorrow. If I could manage to see her...

MISS BLENKER
Oh, of course! She's staying at the Parker House. It must be horrible there in this weather.

(She opens the parasol with a flourish.)

NEWLAND

Thank you, Miss Blenker.

SCENE 5

(The Boston Common. Several people picnic in the shade. A male vocalist performs in a gazebo. ELLEN is seated on a bench beneath her open parasol when MR. RIVIERE appears and engages her in conversation. NEWLAND enters and watches them from afar until the young man leaves.)

SOLO MAN

THERE IS A PARK WITHIN THE CITY
A CHARMING OASIS, LEAFY GREEN,
WHERE PRETTY YOUNG GIRLS IN SATIN AND CURLS
ON SUNDAY AFTERNOONS CAN BE SEEN.
I TAKE MY EXERCISE AMONG THEM
PROMENADING UP AND DOWN THE MALL
AND TO EACH DAINY MISS
I BLOW A LITTLE KISS
TILL ONE INVITES ME UNDERNEATH HER PARASOL.

OH, WHAT A LARK TO GO FLIRTING IN THE PARK
ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON!
NATURE LENDS HERSELF TO THE OCCASION
WHEN PRACTICING YOUR POWER OF PERSUASION.

I ADVANCE WITH A SMILE AND A GLANCE
TILL I MAKE THE POOR GIRL SWOON
NO, THERE'S NOTHING MORE DIVERTING
THAN TO BE OUT FLIRTING IN THE PARK
ON A SUNDAY AFTERNOON!

(The picnickers applaud as the vocalist bows. NEWLAND approaches ELLEN.)

ELLEN
(Looking up and seeing him)

Oh!

NEWLAND
I'm here on business in Boston. I just got here.

ELLEN
I'm here on business, too. *(Pauses.)* I've just refused to take back a sum of money that belonged to me.

NEWLAND
Someone has come here to meet you?

ELLEN

Yes.

NEWLAND

With an offer?

(ELLEN nods.)

And you refused because of the conditions?

ELLEN

I refused.

NEWLAND

What were the conditions?

ELLEN

Oh, nothing onerous: just to sit at the head of his table now and then.

NEWLAND

He wants you back at any price?

ELLEN

Well, a considerable price. At least the sum is considerable for me.

NEWLAND

Was the emissary the young man I just saw leaving you?

ELLEN

Yes.

(They fall silent.)

You haven't changed.

NEWLAND

I had, till I saw you again.

ELLEN

You mustn't say such things to me.

NEWLAND

My train doesn't leave till late this evening. Just give me the day to see you and be with you. It's been a hundred years since I last met you, it may be a hundred more till the next time.

ELLEN

Why didn't you come to the beach to fetch me that day at Granny's?

NEWLAND

I swore I wouldn't unless you turned around.

ELLEN

But I didn't turn around on purpose. I saw your carriage come into the drive. So I went down to the beach.

NEWLAND

To get away from me as far as you could?

ELLEN

To get away from you as far as I could.

NEWLAND

(Coldly)

In that case, why not simply go back to Europe?

ELLEN

(After a moment)

I believe it's because of you.

NEWLAND

And Beaufort? Do you say these things to Beaufort?

ELLEN

(Wearily)

Julius and I discuss only my financial affairs. I've placed the few pennies I have left in his trust.

NEWLAND

(Bitterly)

Well, I hope you haven't staked your all on the success of my marriage. That isn't going to be a sight to keep you here. *(Lashing out)* You gave me my first glimpse of real life and then asked me to go on with a sham one. It's beyond enduring!

ELLEN

Oh don't say that, when I've endured it, too! *(She chokes back a sob.)* Isn't it worthwhile to have missed things so that others might be spared misery? Or is everything I came home for just a dream?

(The musicians begin to play a waltz.)

NEWLAND

(Softening)

How can I keep you here?

ELLEN

Oh, I won't be going for a long time.

NEWLAND

But at some point---?

ELLEN

I promise you, not as long as you hold out. Not as long as we can be truthful with each other like this.

NEWLAND

What a life for you!

ELLEN

As long as it's a part of yours.

(As the song begins, a man and woman rise from the picnickers and begin to waltz. NEWLAND and ELLEN remain seated apart from each other on the bench.)

SOLO WOMAN

TRACK 19

LOVE, I STILL REMEMBER
DAYS BRIGHT IN THE SUN
BLITHE, FOOLISH AND TENDER
SEASONS OF YOUTH JUST BEGUN

NOW AUTUMN APPROACHES
SUMMER IS NO MORE TO BE
BUT, OH, LONG WILL IT GLOW,
EVER A PART OF ME,
EVER A PART OF ME.

SCENE 6

(The smoking car of a passenger train between Boston and New York. NEWLAND sits lost in thought.)

CONDUCTOR

New York! New York, next and last stop! New York station!

(A young man approaches NEWLAND.)

MR. RIVIERE

(Speaking with a French accent)

Mr. Archer? Allow me to introduce myself. Mr. Riviere.

NEWLAND

I believe I saw you in Boston, sir. You are Count Olenski's messenger.

MR. RIVIERE

My mission is over: as far as the Countess goes, it has failed and I return to Europe tomorrow.

NEWLAND

I see.

MR. RIVIERE

(Warily)

But I imagine you agree, sir, that in face of the new proposals I have brought, it would only make sense for Madame Olenska to return to her husband.

NEWLAND

Good God, no!

MR. RIVIERE

I am glad to hear it. In Boston I met with several members of the Countess' family and they desire her to return to the Count. But since then, I have formed my own opinion and know she is better off here.

NEWLAND

May I ask what led to this opinion?

MR. RIVIERE

Simply seeing the change in her.

NEWLAND

The change in her? Then you knew her from before?

MR. RIVIERE

Yes. You see, I used to be the Count's secretary and, out of necessity, took this mission in good faith. I knew Ellen was unhappy in her marriage but I thought it to her advantage to recover her situation.

NEWLAND

And what is this change you've observed?

MR. RIVIERE

SHE'S BECOME AN AMERICAN,
AN AMERICAN OF YOUR KIND.

BUT IF YOU'RE AN AMERICAN,
IT BECOMES IMPOSSIBLE
TO LIVE THE SORDID LIFE SHE KNEW TOO WELL.
AND SO I BEG YOU, SIR,
IF YOU DO CARE FOR HER,
DO NOT LET ELLEN GO BACK INTO THAT HELL!

NEWLAND

(Quietly astonished)

Thank you.

MR. RIVIERE

There's nothing to thank me for, Monsieur. But I should like to add one thing. From the moment I decided to speak to you, I consider myself discharged from the Count's employ, and I shall tell him so upon my return and give him my reasons.

(MR. RIVIERE bows and exits. During the following montage, NEWLAND is engulfed by the action taking place around him, which encompasses a number of days. BEAUFORT appears in a spotlight, holding a bottle of champagne and flute glass.)

BEAUFORT

(Tipsily)

A YOUNG MAN WITH A BANKROLL
CAME RIDIN' INTO TOWN
AND SOON HE DREW A SIMPLE CROWD
THAT FOLLOWED HIM AROUND.

THEY THREW THEIR MONEY AT HIM
WITH THEM HE HAD HIS WAY...

(A NEWSPAPER BOY suddenly appears.)

NEWSPAPER BOY

Read all about it! Wall Street reports
irregularities in Beaufort finances!

ALL
HAVE YOU HEARD THE RUMORS
AND TROUBLING ALLEGATIONS
THAT BEAUFORT'S LOST A FORTUNE
THROUGH UNLAWFUL SPECULATIONS?!
JUST WHO CAN SAY WHAT IT MIGHT ALL PORTEND?
AND NO ONE KNOWS FOR SURE HOW IT WILL END...

A LADY
I was at the Opera last evening and the talk
was of nothing but the Beaufort scandal. Have
you heard the latest?

SECOND LADY
Everyone has heard it! Julius' shoddy business
practices have come to light and the chickens
home to roost. The Beauforts are bankrupt! Who
will help them now? Will poor Regina's family
bail them out?

ALL
CERTITUDE IS SHATTERED
AND CONFIDENCE IS SHAKEN
A SENSE OF PANIC STARTS TO MOUNT
WITH JUDGMENT OVERTAKEN...

A GENTLEMAN
(Reading a newspaper)
"Had Mr. Beaufort's schemes stopped with his
own losses, New York would be in less of an
uproar. But with the disturbing reports of
fraud prompting a run on the bank by his
investors, his dastardly maneuvers promise to
be one of the most discreditable in the history
of Wall Street.'

LARRY LEFFERTS
Julius always struck me as a horse dealer
anyway. Let him spend his time with manure, not
our money!

MRS. MINGOTT
HONOR IS INTEGRAL TO OUR WAY
AND THOSE WHO VIOLATE ITS CODE MUST PAY

A LADY
I've seen bad things in my time but nothing as
bad as this! If the smash comes, there are
going to be repercussions. The Mingotts, for
one.

A GENTLEMAN
And the Countess! *Her* funds are in Beaufort's
hands.

LARRY LEFFERTS

More's the pity since she refused her husband's latest offer. What's she going to live on now?

ALL

THE FEARFUL REVELATIONS...
THE GRIM PROGNOSTICATIONS...

*(The Archer home. MAY enters.
NEWLAND joins her holding a lamp.)*

NEWLAND

May! This lamp is smoking again; I should think the servants might see that it's properly trimmed.

MAY

I'm so sorry. It shan't happen again.

NEWLAND

Look here, I may have to go to Washington for a few days. Next week, perhaps.

MAY

On business?

NEWLAND

On business, naturally. There's a patent case coming up before the Supreme Court---

MAY

Yes, I see. The change will do you good, dear. And you must be sure to go and see Ellen.

(Everyone converges to hear the latest report.)

NEWSPAPER BOY

Extra! Extra! Read about the Beaufort failure! Bank closes doors! Wall Street hits a new low!

(MRS. MINGOTT faints. During the following, JULIUS BEAUFORT, is seen surreptitiously taking his leave, suitcase in hand.)

ALL

ENDLESS REPERCUSSIONS
FROM BEAUFORT'S CRUEL ENDEAVOR
IF HE KNOWS WHAT'S GOOD FOR HIM,
HE'LL LEAVE NEW YORK FOREVER.

HE'S SOCIALLY EXTINGUISHED FOR HIS SHAME,
FOR BRINGING DOWN DISHONOR ON HIS NAME.
SO CLOSE THE BOOK ON BEAUFORT

AND THEN SEND THE DEVIL BACK---
FROM WHENCE HE CAME!

SCENE 7

(The Mingott home, a few days later. MRS. MINGOTT reclines on a chaise lounge attended by MAY and MRS. WELLAND.)

MAY
How is Granny?

MRS. WELLAND
She's resting now. Mr. Letterblair assured Mama her securities were not seriously jeopardized. But she is anxious to speak to Newland.

MAY
I've sent a letter to his office. He should arrive at any moment.

MRS. WELLAND
May, given the circumstances, are you sure it's wise---

MAY
(Softly but firmly)
If Granny wishes it, of course it must be done.

MRS. MINGOTT
What are you two whispering about? You always make such a fuss, Augusta! I have no intention of dying quite yet, not while things remain so unsettled.

NEWLAND
(Entering)
May, I came as quickly as I could...

MRS. MINGOTT
Ah, Mr. Archer, I've been expecting you!

(NEWLAND kisses her hand.)
Now, tell me plain, am I perfectly hideous?

NEWLAND
You're handsomer than ever.

(ELLEN unexpectedly enters. NEWLAND is dumbstruck.)

MRS. MINGOTT
But not as handsome as Ellen! I telegraphed her to come from Washington.

ELLEN
Have you eaten anything today, Granny? Perhaps some broth?

MRS. MINGOTT

Yes, do go on and busy yourself, my dear. All of you. Mr. Archer and I need to have a little tete-a-tete.

MAY

As you wish, Granny.

(MAY, ELLEN and MRS. WELLAND exit.)

MRS. MINGOTT

(Picking up needlepoint)

Oh, my Ellen. It's a pity she didn't marry you. Why in the world didn't you ever ask her?

NEWLAND

For one thing, she wasn't there to be asked.

MRS. MINGOTT

More's the pity. It would have spared me all this worry. But who ever thought of sparing their grandmother worry? Well, it's settled. She's staying with me whatever the rest of the family say! I've told Letterblair she's to be given her proper allowance.

NEWLAND

She couldn't have gone back--it was impossible!

MRS. MINGOTT

Ah, my dear, I always knew you were on her side and that's why I needed to speak with you in private. You see, we shall have a fight yet with the family. They think it her duty to go back to Olenski. But I'm a weak old woman. You've got to do the fighting for me.

NEWLAND

I?

MRS. MINGOTT

You. Why not?

NEWLAND

Oh, I don't know. I'm too insignificant.

MRS. MINGOTT

Well, you're Letterblair's partner, aren't you? You've got to get at the family through Letterblair.

(NEWLAND deliberates on her words.)

NEWLAND

You'll have my help.

MRS. MINGOTT
Then we're safe!

(NEWLAND rises to go.)

ELLEN
(Returning with broth)
Are you leaving, Mr. Archer?

NEWLAND
I'm afraid I must. But Granny and I have had a most productive talk and I am heartened her grip is becoming stronger by the minute.

MRS. MINGOTT **TRACK 20**
No, my children. When you get to be my age, it's no longer about the holding on but the letting go.

HOW SWIFTLY GOES THE SWEET IN TIME
TOO SOON THE TOLLING OF THE VESPER CHIME
THE OLD ONES KNOW
TO LET THINGS GO
WITH LITTLE WOE OR FEAR
FOR ALL TOO SOON THEY DISAPPEAR.

TOO SOON THE CHILD WITH HEAD OF CURLS
WHO REVELS IN HER PLAY
BECOMES THE LANGUID GRANNY TURNING GRAY

YET I REMEMBER SUITORS IN A LINE
COURTING ME WITH JEWELRY AND WINE
THE FEVERED DANCES AT A SUMMER BALL
THE SOUND OF LAUGHTER RINGING THROUGH THE HALL

A CARRIAGE RACING THROUGH A RAINY PARK
A SUDDEN KISS OF RAPTURE IN THE DARK
A MOMENT ROMANTIC AND SUBLIME
HOW SWIFTLY GOES THE SWEET IN TIME!

THE AGES COME, THE AGES GO
THEY PASS, AS DO ALL MEN,
FROM DARK TO LIGHT AND BACK TO DARK AGAIN
FROM DARK TO LIGHT AND BACK TO DARK AGAIN.

(MRS. MINGOTT dozes off. ELLEN and NEWLAND walk toward the door.)

ELLEN
You didn't expect me today?

NEWLAND
Oh, no. I'd made arrangements to go see you in Washington. I nearly crossed you on the train!

ELLEN

Oh...

NEWLAND

I must see you tomorrow. We must talk.

ELLEN

But I shall be at Granny's service every instant---

NEWLAND

Somewhere we can be alone.

ELLEN

In New York?

NEWLAND

There's the Art Museum in the Park. At half past two. Will you meet me there!

ELLEN

Yes. I must go back now.

(NEWLAND exits. ELLEN adjusts MRS. MINGOTT'S comforter, kisses her and exits. MRS. MINGOTT opens her eyes with a new awareness.)

MRS. MINGOTT

FROM DARK TO LIGHT AND BACK TO DARK AGAIN...

SCENE 8

(The Metropolitan Museum of Art. NEWLAND is waiting in the gallery exhibiting the "Cesnola antiquities." ELLEN appears.)

NEWLAND

I'm so glad you came. It's the only place I feel we are safe to speak.

ELLEN

Yes, Granny keeps me well-guarded. *(She pauses to look at a case with vases and bits of pottery).* It seems cruel that after a while nothing matters---all these things once so important, so necessary, are as forgotten as the people that made them! Merely labeled "Use unknown."

NEWLAND

Yes, but meanwhile--

ELLEN

Ah, meanwhile--

NEWLAND

Meanwhile everything matters that concerns you.

(The sound of voices in another part of the museum are heard.)

ELLEN

What is it you wanted to tell me?

NEWLAND

That I believe you came to New York because you were afraid.

ELLEN

Afraid?

NEWLAND

Of my coming to Washington.

ELLEN

Yes, I was. This is better, isn't it? We shall hurt others less.

NEWLAND

Better? To have you near yet out of reach? To meet you always on the sly? I want us to be closer.

ELLEN

TRACK 21

Should I live with you as your mistress, since
I cannot be your wife?

NEWLAND

I want--I want--somehow to get away with you
into a world where labels like that don't exist--
-where two people can simply love and nothing
else can matter---

ELLEN

OH, MY DEAR, WHERE IS THAT COUNTRY?
HAVE YOU EVER BEEN THERE?
MANY TRY TO FIND IT
BUT GET LOST ALONG THE WAY.

THEY SPEND THEIR DAYS IN DINGY ROOMS
THE CURTAINS DRAWN AGAINST THE LIGHT
ALWAYS STEALING FURTIVE KISSES
DEEP IN SHADOWS OF THE NIGHT
EVER IN RETREAT
FROM THE WHISPERED JUDGMENTS ON THE STREET.
OH, NEWLAND,
IT'S A MISERABLE COUNTRY!

NEWLAND

Then what is to become of us?

ELLEN

We're near each other only if we stay far from
each other, not by trying to be happy behind
the backs of people who trust us.

NEWLAND

I've gone beyond that!

ELLEN

NO, MY DEAR,
I KNOW THAT COUNTRY
AND YOU'VE NEVER BEEN THERE.
NO, YOU'VE NEVER JOURNEYED BEYOND
AS I HAVE
AND I KNOW WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE THERE.

Shall I come to you once and then go home?

NEWLAND

What do you mean by home?

ELLEN

Home to my husband.

NEWLAND

Do you expect me to say yes?

ELLEN
What else is there, Newland?

NEWLAND
Then come to me. Be with me.

ELLEN
I must go.

(She turns to go. NEWLAND follows her and grabs her wrist.)

NEWLAND
Come to me once.

(For a moment they regard each other almost as enemies.)
When? Tomorrow?

ELLEN
The day after tomorrow.

NEWLAND
Dearest---!

ELLEN
I shall be late! Goodbye! No, don't come any farther...

(As ELLEN begins to exit, the lights come down on the scene and she is left alone in a spot downstage.)

ELLEN
...YOU CANNOT JOURNEY BEYOND AS I MUST.

(ELLEN exits as the lights fade.)

SCENE 9

(Later that evening. The study of the Archer home with a writing desk in the corner. NEWLAND stands before the fireplace, anticipating his tryst with ELLEN.)

NEWLAND
TO TOUCH YOU WILL MAKE EVERYTHING SO SIMPLE
TO HOLD YOU WILL MAKE EVERYTHING SO CLEAR
IN EACH PASSIONATE EMBRACE
THE WORLD WILL FADE WITHOUT A TRACE
AND WE'LL DISCOVER NEW HORIZONS WHEN WE'RE NEAR...

MAY
(Suddenly appearing)
Newland, you've been daydreaming.

NEWLAND
I suppose I have.

MAY
I went to see Granny this afternoon, and just as I was going away, Ellen came in from a walk. So I stayed and all three of us had a talk, a really good talk. I'm afraid I haven't been fair to her lately. She is so unconventional...

NEWLAND
(Moving away from her)
May...there is something I want to say...

MAY
Yes, dear?

NEWLAND
Something important I've got to tell you...about myself...
(MAY sits silent and pale.)
Madame Olenska---

MAY
I know you've always understood her better than we did. You've always been kinder to her. But what does it matter, now that it's all over?

NEWLAND
All over? What do you mean?

MAY
Why, she's going back to Europe at the end of the week. Granny approves and understands and has arranged to make her independent of her husband. Ellen will live quite comfortably abroad.

NEWLAND

It's impossible!

MAY

Impossible?

NEWLAND

How do you know?

MAY

I told you I'd seen her at Granny's this afternoon. And then I had a note from her this evening. Do you want to see it?

(NEWLAND doesn't respond. She retrieves the note from the writing desk and hands it to him.)

I thought you knew.

(ELLEN appears as NEWLAND reads.)

ELLEN

May dear, I have at last made Granny understand that my visit to her could be no more than a visit; and she has been as kind and generous as ever. She agrees that if I return to Europe, I must live by myself. You must be very good to Granny when I'm gone, as good as you've always been to me. Ellen. If any of my friends wish to urge me to change my mind, please tell them it would be utterly useless.

(ELLEN disappears.)

MAY

So I'm hosting the farewell dinner for Ellen. *(Moving to the writing desk)* Here are the invitations already written. *(Flinging her arms around NEWLAND'S neck and pressing her cheek to his)* You haven't kissed me today.

(The lights come down on the scene as MAY addresses the audience.)

MR. AND MRS. NEWLAND ARCHER
REQUEST THE PLEASURE OF YOUR COMPANY
AT A FAREWELL DINNER TO BE HELD
ON THE EVENING OF JANUARY FIFTH.
PLEASE JOIN US AS WE HONOR
THE COUNTESS ELLEN OLENSKA---

(During the above, the ensemble, MRS. WELLAND and MRS. MINGOTT appear, singing fragments of songs heard previously. It is as if all of New York SOCIETY is assaulting NEWLAND in a surreal cacophany.)

*At its climax, NEWLAND erupts in
despair.)*

NEWLAND
ALL THESE HARMLESS-LOOKING PEOPLE
WHO RALLY ROUND MY WIFE:
WHAT ARE THEY BUT CONSPIRATORS
AND I A PRISONER IN MY LIFE?

*(There is a sudden burst of
laughter as lights come up on...)*

SCENE 10

(The dining room of the Archer home. Among the assembled are LARRY LEFFERTS, MRS. ARCHER, MRS. WELLAND, the VAN DER LUYDENS, and MR. LETTERBLAIR.)

MRS. WELLAND

No one can say Newland and May aren't giving Ellen a handsome send-off.

MRS. ARCHER

I understand May wants her cousin to tell people abroad we're not quite barbarians.

NEWLAND

Will you find your journey tiring?

ELLEN

Every trip is a hardship, I should say.

NEWLAND

I mean to do a lot of traveling myself before long. I shall see you soon in Paris!

ELLEN

Oh, if you and May could come!

MAY

Yes, we'd love to.

ELLEN

It would mean a great deal to me to see you both. I have learned so much here, not only about the differences between Americans and Europeans, but the similarities we all share. In turn, I'd like to offer you an American song, one which I shall never sing again.
(Rising) To my dear cousin and Mr. Archer: all my happiness in farewell.

(She sings without accompaniment.)

LOVE, I STILL REMEMBER
DAYS BRIGHT IN THE SUN
BLITHE, FOOLISH AND TENDER
SEASONS OF YOUTH JUST BEGUN
NOW AUTUMN APPROACHES
SUMMER IS NO MORE TO BE
BUT, OH, LONG WILL IT GLOW
EVER A PART OF ME,
EVER A PART OF ME

SCENE 11

(The Archer study. NEWLAND sits in the armchair, gazing into the fire. MAY enters.)

MAY
It did go off beautifully, didn't it?
(NEWLAND nods.)
May I come and talk it over?

NEWLAND
Of course.

MAY
I should like to sit with you a little.

(She takes her place before the fire.)

NEWLAND
Since you want to talk, there's something I must tell you. I tried to the other night---

MAY
Yes, dear. Something about yourself?

NEWLAND
I want to make a break.

MAY
A break? To give up the law?

NEWLAND
I should like to go away. Perhaps to India or Japan.

MAY
As far as that. But I'm afraid you can't, dear-- not unless you take me with you. That is, if the doctors will let me go--but I'm afraid they won't. For you see, Newland, I've been sure since this morning of something we've been longing for---

NEWLAND
Oh, my dear...

MAY
You didn't guess?

NEWLAND
Yes, I...no. That is, of course, I hoped---
(Turning from her)
Have you told anyone else?

MAY

Only Mamma and dear Granny, that is--and Ellen.
You know the day I had my long talk with her...

NEWLAND

Yes.

MAY

Did you mind my telling Ellen first, Newland?

NEWLAND

Mind? Why should I? But that was days ago. I
thought you had not known until today?

MAY

No, I wasn't sure then--but I told her I was.
And you see I was right!

**(SONG FOR MAY OR DALLAS AS PAST AND
PRESENT CONVERGE?)**

EPILOGUE

(The Parisian residential square of the Prologue. Bells ring from a neighboring church.)

DALLAS

Dad! Dad, it's getting late! She will be waiting!

NEWLAND

I know. But I should like you, please, to go up without me.

DALLAS

But, Dad, do you mean you won't come up at all? If you don't, she won't understand.

NEWLAND

Go on, my boy. Perhaps I shall follow you.

DALLAS

But what on earth shall I say?

NEWLAND

My dear boy, don't you always know what to say?

DALLAS

Very well. I shall say that you're old-fashioned, and prefer walking up the five flights because you don't like lifts.

NEWLAND

Tell her I'm old-fashioned. That's enough.

(DALLAS exits. The music of SUMMER'S END underscores the action as a couple waltz on in silhouette.)

NOW AUTUMN APPROACHES
SUMMER IS NO MORE TO BE...

(A MANSERVANT appears on the balcony and draws the curtains. Taking it as a sign, NEWLAND rises and walks slowly away as the lamp continues to glow in the window.)

END ACT TWO