THE AGE OF INNOCENCE

Jay Cocks
&
Martin Scorsese

From the Novel by Edith Wharton
INT. THEATER NIGHT

New York in the early 1870s. It's unclear exactly where we are at first.

A bunch of DAISIES makes a sudden sunburst of BRIGHT YELLOW. A hand comes into frame, begins to sprinkle PETALS on the ground. CAMERA tilts down to follow petals and we see part of a woman's SHOE. It is strangely ornate, like something from an Arabian Nights fantasy.

As this is happening, we hear a burst of a dramatic music, and a voice singing an ARIA.

CAMERA pans up from the petals to the extravagantly painted face of a WOMAN SINGER performing an aria from Faust. As she continues to sing, we PAN to a small black BOY standing next to her wearing a tight purple velvet doublet.

PANNING continues through a series of DISSOLVES gradually revealing that we are on stage in a theater (the Academy of Music) in the latter part of the 19th Century. The stage setting—of which we see only small portions—is elaborately painted. The footlights are CANDLES. Just past them, we see the orchestra, and past the orchestra, a glimpse of a full theater, lit by LIMELIGHT.

Continue PANNING and DISSOLVING through a series of EXTREME CLOSE-UPS of DETAILS of period evening wear: high collars, flowing ties, beautiful beading on dresses, jewelry on necks and wrists, men's cufflinks against immaculate white cotton shirts, and shoes...women's heels, men's black patent leather pumps.

PANNING AND DISSOLVING continues through the theater AUDIENCE, past the slightly shabby red and gold painted BOXES, ending briefly on the plain red velvet WALL of a box.

NEWLAND ARCHER enters. What we see of him first is the perfect GARDENIA attached to the lapel of his jacket. CAMERA pans up to his face. He is in his mid-to-late 20s. Handsome, assured and guarded. He steps toward the front of the box, joining the company of several men, including LARRY LEFFERTS who is approximately Newland's age, and SILLERTON JACKSON, who is older by a couple of decades.

Newland's move toward the front of the box is covered in TIGHT SHOTS. We still do not have a full view of the theater, and will not for the rest of this scene.

Lefferts looks at stage through pearl opera glasses. We see his POVs: tight, of the stage, and the Singer performing. FLASH PAN off Singer through the audience, moving so fast it gives an almost kaleidoscopic IMPRESSION of rich fabric and glittering jewels.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Now we're back to Lefferts, who SWINGS opera glasses away from stage and toward another box.

He SEES: the figure of a woman entering a box across the way. Although the woman, silhouetted against candles, is still indistinct and mysterious to us, he recognizes her and reacts with controlled surprise.

LEFFERTS

Well.

He hands the glasses to Sillerton Jackson, who looks in the same direction. Newland watches Jackson, who takes the glasses away from his eyes after a moment and hands them back to Lefferts.

JACKSON

I'm surprised the Mingotts would dare.

The men in the box all stare, then turn away and look back at the stage: all but Newland. He is annoyed at the conversation around him. His glance stays on the neighboring box for a moment. Then he TURNS and leaves.

CUT TO

INT. THEATER NIGHT

A corridor, decorated with old prints hung from a red velvet wall and bright with candlelight.

Archer's POV quickly down the corridor. Doors are opening as Patrons leave boxes for the intermission.

Newland enters one of the open doors.

CUT TO

INT. THEATER NIGHT

The box which had so interested the men. We see first what Archer notices: a bouquet of lilies-of-the-valley.

TILT UP to the lovely young face of MAY WELLAND as she turns, smiling, to greet Archer. She is radiant. Archer smiles back at her, and at her MOTHER, seated beside her.

ARCHER

May. And Mrs. Welland. Good evening.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MRS. WELLAND
Good evening, Newland. You know my cousin, the Countess Olenska.

We see the back of the COUNTESS's head, her curly brown hair held in place around her temples by a narrow band of diamonds. She turns into close-up: this is clearly the figure who drew the attention of Lefferts and Jackson. She wears a distinctive blue velvet gown. Her face is unconventional, but it is magic.

Archer bows with the suggestion of reserve. Countess Olenska replies with a nod.

Newland sits beside May and speaks softly.

ARCHER
I hope you've told Madame Olenska.

MAY
(teasing)
What?

ARCHER
That we're engaged. I want everybody to know. Let me announce it this evening at the ball.

MAY
If you can persuade Mamma. But why should we change what is already settled?

He has no answer for this... no answer, anyway, that is appropriate for this time and place. May senses his frustration, and adds, smiling...

MAY
But you can tell my cousin yourself. She remembers you.

Countess Olenska turns.

ELLEN (COUNTESS OLENSKA)
I remember we played together.
I remember so many people here that way. Even dressed like this, I see them in play clothes.

She gestures out, and we PAN with her across the regal gathering: this is the first wide view we have had of the theater.

Archer moves to sit beside her.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:  (2)

ELLEN
You were awful. You kissed me once
behind a door. But it was your
cousin Robert I was in love with.

Archer is a little taken aback.

ARCHER
Yes, you have been away a very
long time.

Camera starts to move in as she raises a large fan of eagle
feathers.

ELLEN
Oh, centuries and centuries. So
long I'm sure I'm dead and buried,
and this dear old place is heaven.

FAST CUT TO

MAIN TITLES

As they end, the voice of a WOMAN NARRATOR fades up and we...

CUT TO

INT. THEATER NIGHT

In another box, the handsome MRS. JULIUS BEAUFORT (REGINA) draws
her opera cloak about her lovely shoulders. As she does this,
and leaves the box, we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It invariably happened, as
everything happened in those days,
in the same way. As usual, Mrs.
 Julius Beaufort appeared just
before the Jewel Song and, again
as usual, rose at the end of the
third act and disappeared. New
York then knew that, a half-hour
later, her annual opera ball would
begin.

CUT TO
6 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE THEATER (14TH STREET) NIGHT

A line of carriages drawn up in front of the Academy of Music. Mrs. Beaufort climbs in a carriage at the front of the line and drives away.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Carriages waited at the curb for the entire performance. It was widely known in New York, but never acknowledged, that Americans want to get away from amusement even more quickly than they want to get to it.

CUT TO

7 INT. BALLROOM/BEAUFORT HOUSE NIGHT

Dark and empty, as it is on every other night of the year. CAMERA pulls back from chandelier covered in a bag.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The Beauforts' house was one of the few in New York that possessed a ballroom. Such a room, shuttered in darkness three hundred and sixty-four days of the year, was felt to compensate for whatever was regrettable in the Beaufort past. Regina Beaufort came from an old South Carolina family, but her husband Julius, who passed for an Englishman, was known to have dissipated habits, a bitter tongue and mysterious antecedents. His marriage assured him a social position, but not necessarily respect.

Through a series of DISSOLVES, the room suddenly comes to life. Gilt chairs are set out. The chandelier blazes with candlelight. An orchestra plays. Dancers swoop by.

CAMERA tracks quickly along the carpet as people walk by, stopping at the front door. TILT UP from feet of an arriving guest: Newland Archer hands his opera cape to a servant and walks straight into large CLOSE-UP, which blacks out the camera.

Cut to Archer's POV as he enters the party and merges with the guests. The first man he sees is Larry Lefferts, deep in conversation with an attractive young woman.

ANGLE on Lefferts. Action slows (double-framing).

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
On the whole, Lawrence Lefferts was the foremost authority on "form" in New York. On the question of pumps versus patent-leather Oxfords, his authority had never been disputed.

Double-framing ends. Resume normal action as Archer's POV continues through the party. Holding court and amusing a small group of older women is Sillerton Jackson.

ANGLE on Jackson. Action slows again (double-framing).

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Old Mr. Sillerton Jackson was as great an authority on "family" as Lawrence Lefferts was on "form." In addition to a forest of family trees, he carried a register of the scandals and mysteries that had smouldered under the unruffled surface of society for the last fifty years.

Double-framing ends. Resume normal action with Archer's POV moving through party. JULIUS BEAUFORT, good-looking with a hint of flashiness, crosses in front of him, conversing with a guest.

GUEST
(in mid-discussion)
But I didn't see you there this evening. Madame Nilsson was in such splendid voice.

BEAUFORT
(snide)
I'm sure.

ANGLE on Beaufort. Action slows (double-framing)

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Julius Beaufort had speedily made a name for himself in the world of affairs. His secret, all were agreed, was the way he carried things off.

Double-framing ends. Resume normal action. CAMERA swings to another part of the room, concentrating now on May Welland surrounded by gleeful friends who are obviously reacting to her engagement announcement.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

CAMERA moves into close-up of May. She looks up, smiles, extends her hand.

Now we see her POV of Archer kissing her hand.

CUT TO

INT. BEAUFORT HOUSE NIGHT

Another room. Behind a tall screen of tree ferns and camellias, Archer presses May's gloved hand to his lips.

MAY
You see, I told all my friends. Just as you asked.

ARCHER
I know, darling. I just wish it didn't have to be here. So we could have been a little more alone.

MAY
But we are alone. Even here. We're always alone when we're together.

In CLOSE-UP, Archer absently breaks off a piece of lily-of-the-valley from her bouquet.

MAY
Did you tell Ellen Olenska, as I asked you?

ARCHER
No. I didn't have the chance.

MAY
She's my cousin, if others know before she does...It's just that she's been away for so long that she's a little sensitive.

ARCHER
I'll tell her now.

MAY
She didn't come. She was afraid her dress wasn't smart enough.

ARCHER
Oh well.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He smiles.

CUT TO

INT. BALLROOM/BEAUFORT HOUSE NIGHT

May smiling back. But now she is moving giddily around the ballroom floor, swept up in the rhythm of a waltz. The background behind her is a blur.

REVERSE shot of Archer, swirling along with her, returning her smile.

Now they both join the flow of the other dancers, all partners in a great social pageant.

CUT TO

INT. SITTING ROOM DAY

Waltz music echoes out. We start on a CLOSE-UP of an engagement ring: a large thick sapphire set in invisible claws. We hear the hearty, admiring voice of Mrs. Manson Mingott as we start to DISSOLVE.

MRS. MINGOTT

Very handsome. Very liberal. In my time a cameo set in pearls was thought to be sufficient. But it's the hand that sets off the ring, isn't it, my dear Mr. Archer?

DISSOLVE ends on medium-shot of Mrs. Mingott. She is hugely fat, as vast and august as a natural phenomenon, but her eyes are vibrant, and miss nothing.

May Welland, Mrs. Welland and Archer sit close by Mrs. Mingott, whose girth is supported by a careful arrangement of silk pillows very near a window from which she can confidently watch society come to call.

MRS. WELLAND

It's the new setting. Of course it shows the stone beautifully, but it looks a little bare to old-fashioned eyes.

MRS. MINGOTT

I hope you don't mean mine, my dear. I like all the novelties.

(more)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MRS. MINGOTT (Cont’d)
My own wedding ring was modeled
in Rome by the great Ferrigiani.
He should do May’s.

She reaches out for May’s hand.

MRS. MINGOTT
Her hand is large. It’s these
modern sports that spread the
joints. But the skin is white.
(staring straight at
Archer)
And when’s the wedding to be?

MRS. WELLAND
(a little flustered)
Oh...

ARCHER
(jumping in)
As soon as possible. If you’ll
back me up, Mrs. Mingott.

MRS. WELLAND
(recovering)
We must give them time to know
each other a little better, mamma.

MRS. MINGOTT
Know each other? Everybody in New
York has always known everybody.
Don’t wait ‘til the bubble’s off
the wine. Marry them before Lent.
I may catch pneumonia any winter
now, and I want to give the
wedding breakfast.

As everyone reacts to Mrs. Mingott’s statement with surprise
and (at least in Archer’s case) pleasure, SOUND fades down as
they continue to talk and we hear the voice of the...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Mrs. Manson Mingott was, of
course, the first to receive the
required betrothal visit. Much
of New York was already related
to her, and she knew the remainder
by marriage or by reputation.
(more)

(CONTINUED)
NARRATOR (Cont’d)
Though brownstone was the norm, she lived magisterially within a large house of controversial pale cream-colored stone, in an inaccessible wilderness near the Central Park.

As narration continues, CAMERA moves freely around the Mingott house, showing us rooms and giving an impression of secure wealth and unquestioned power.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The burden of her flesh had long since made it impossible for her to go up and down stairs. So with characteristic independence she had established herself on the ground floor of her house. From her sitting room, there was an unexpected vista of her bedroom. This was how women with lovers lived in the wicked old societies. But if Mrs. Mingott had wanted a lover, the intrepid woman would have had him too.

Near end of narration, Archer, May and Mrs. Welland have stood and started to say their farewells to Mrs. Mingott. CAMERA stops move at door of sitting room, which opens to admit Ellen Olenska and Julius Beaufort just as the other guests are leaving.

MRS. MINGOTT
Beaufort! This is a rare favor.

She holds out her hand to Beaufort as they others greet each other. Beaufort moves toward Mrs. Mingott.

BEAUFORT
I met Countess Ellen in Madison Square, and she was good enough to let me walk home with her.

MRS. MINGOTT
This house will be merrier now that she’s here. Push up that armchair. I want a good gossip.

Archer and the Welland women drift out into the hall under Ellen’s guidance. May and her mother put on their furs. Ellen looks at Archer with a faintly questioning smile.

(CONTINUED)
10  CONTINUED:  (3)

ARCHER
(laughing shyly)
Of course you already know. About
May and me. She scolded me for
not telling you at the opera.

ELLEN
Of course I know. And I’m so glad.
One doesn’t tell such news first
in a crowd.

May and Mrs. Welland are at the door. Ellen holds her hand out
to Archer.

ELLEN
Good-bye. Come and see me some
day.

Archer looks at her.

CUT TO

11  EXT.  MINGOTT HOUSE  DAY

As Archer follows May and her mother into their waiting
carriage.

MRS. WELLAND
It’s a mistake for Ellen to be
seen parading up Fifth Avenue with
Julius Beaufort at the crowded
hour. The very day after her
arrival...

The carriage pulls away from the curb.

CUT TO

12  INT.  DINING ROOM/ARCHER HOUSE  NIGHT

Newland Archer is having dinner with his mother ADELINE, sister
JANEY and Sillerton Jackson.

Start CLOSE on a piece of meat being probed gently with a knife
and fork as if it were a lab specimen. TILT UP to see Sillerton
Jackson looking at his filet with scepticism and resignation
as we hear...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Mrs. Archer and her daughter Janey were both shy women and shrank from society. But they liked to be well informed of its doings.

CAMERA pans to Janey and Mrs. Archer as Jackson speaks.

JACKSON
(in midst of holding forth)
Certain nuances escape Beaufort.

MRS. ARCHER
Oh, necessarily. Beaufort is a vulgar man.

ARCHER
Nevertheless, no business nuances escape him. Most of New York trusts him with its affairs.

MRS. ARCHER
My grandfather Newland always used to say to mother, "Don’t let that fellow Beaufort be introduced to the girls." But at least he’s had the advantage of associating with gentlemen.

As dinner conversation continues, SOUND fades down and we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
As far back as anyone could remember, New York had been divided into two great clans. Among the Mingotts you could dine on canvasback duck, terrapin and vintage wines. At the Archers, you could talk about Alpine scenery and The Marble Faun but receive tepid Veuve Clicquot without a year and warmed-up croquettes from Philadelphia.

JANEY
And Newland’s new cousin, the Countess Olenska…was she at the ball too?

(CONTINUED)
MRS. ARCHER
I appreciate the Mingotts wanting to support her, and have her at
the opera. But why my son's engagement should be mixed up with
that woman's comings and goings I don't see.

JACKSON
Well, in any case, she was not at the ball.

MRS. ARCHER
At least she had that decency.

A butler offers mushroom sauce to Jackson, who sniffs almost imperceptibly and motions the butler away. He sees Archer looking at him with bemused understanding.

JACKSON
(can't resist)
Ah, how your grandfather appreciated a good meal, Newland.

JANEY
I wonder if she wears a round hat or a bonnet in the afternoon. The dress she wore to the opera...

MRS. ARCHER
Yes, I'm sure it was in better taste not to go to the ball.

ARCHER
I don't think it was a question of taste, mother. May said the countess decided her dress wasn't smart enough.

MRS. ARCHER
Poor Ellen. We must always remember what an eccentric bringing-up Medora Manson gave her. What can you expect of a girl who was allowed to wear black satin at her coming-out ball?

JANEY
It's odd she should have kept such an ugly name as Ellen when she married the Count. I should have changed it to Elaine.

(CONTINUED)
ARCHER

Why?

JANEY
I don't know. It sounds more...Polish.

MRS. ARCHER
It certainly sounds more conspicuous. And that can hardly be what she wishes.

ARCHER
(argumentative)
Why not? Why shouldn't she be conspicuous if she chooses? She made an awful marriage, but should she hide her head as if it were her fault? Should she go slinking around as if she'd disgraced herself? She's had an unhappy life, but that doesn't make her an outcast.

JACKSON
I'm sure that's the line the Mingotts mean to take.

ARCHER
I don't have to wait for their cue, if that's what you mean, sir.

MRS. ARCHER
(trying to cool things out)
I'm told she's looking for a house. She means to live here.

JANEY
I hear she means to get a divorce.

ARCHER
I hope she will.

CUT TO

INT. STUDY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

CLOSE on a cigar being passed.

Jackson accepts the cigar from Archer and both men light up after dinner.

(CONTINUED)
13 CONTINUED:

JACKSON
There are the rumors, too.

ARCHER
I've heard them. About the secretary?

JACKSON
He helped her get away from the husband. They say the Count kept her practically a prisoner.

(shrugs)
Certainly, the Count had his own way of life.

ARCHER
You knew him?

JACKSON
I heard of him at Nice. Handsome, they say, but eyes with a lot of lashes. When he wasn't with women he was collecting china. Paying any price for both, I understand.

ARCHER
Then where's the blame? Any one of us, under the same circumstances, would have helped the Countess, just as the secretary did.

JACKSON
He was still helping her a year later, then, because somebody met them living together at Lausanne.

ARCHER.
(reddening slightly)
Living together? Well why not? Who has the right to make her life over if she hasn't? Why should we bury a woman alive if her husband prefers to live with whores? Women ought to be free...as free as we are.

Jackson draws on his cigar.

JACKSON
Well, apparently Count Olenski takes your view.

(more)

(continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

JACKSON (Cont'd)
I've never heard of him lifting
a finger to get his wife back.

CUT TO

MONTAGE

Of heavy vellum envelopes being passed from hand to hand and
delivered on silver plates; of invitations being drawn from the envelopes.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Three days later, the unthinkable
happened. Mr. and Mrs. Lovell
Mingott, one of the sturdiest
branches in old Mrs. Mingott's
family tree, sent out invitations.
Everyone was summoned to a "formal
dinner," meaning three extra
footmen, two dishes for each
course and a Roman punch in the
middle.

As these items are mentioned, we see them in the montage: the footmen; the fancy food; the brimming bowl of punch; kitchen staff busily preparing a feast.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The dinner, New York read on the
invitation, was "to meet the
Countess Olenska." And New York declined.

MONTAGE ends on image of the kitchen staff dissolving away,
leaving the kitchen empty.

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/ARCHER HOUSE  DAY

Mrs. Archer angrily detailing the slight to the family as Janey
and Archer attend her.

MRS. ARCHER
"Regret." "Unable to accept."
Without a single explanation or
excuse. Even some of our own. No
one even cares enough to conceal
their feeling about the Countess.
This is a disgrace. For our whole
family.

(CONTINUED)
15 CONTINUED:

Archer is seen now in CLOSE-UP as he watches his mother. Her voice fades down and we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
They all lived in a kind of hieroglyphic world.

As the narrator speaks, Archer imagines Ellen, seeing her quickly...

...looking through the cards of refusal. The words loom large: "Cannot." "Regret." "Must decline." Her face loses its usual composure. She turns her head...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The real thing was never said or done or even thought, but only represented by a set of arbitrary signs. These signs were not always subtle, and all the more significant for that. The refusals were more than a simple snubbing. They were an eradication.

On that last word, Archer's image of Ellen fades and we are back in the drawing room. Mrs. Archer has reached a decision and has risen from her seat.

MRS. ARCHER
Don't tell me all this modern newspaper rubbish about a New York aristocracy. This city has always been a commercial community, and there are not more than three families in it who can claim an aristocratic origin in the real sense of the word. So we will take up this matter with the van der Luydens.

She starts for the door.

MRS. ARCHER
You should come with me, Newland. Louisa van der Luyden is fond of you, and of course it's on account of dear May we're doing this.

ARCHER
Of course.
MRS. ARCHER
If we don't all stand together, there'll be no such thing as society left.

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/VAN DER LUYDEN HOUSE DAY

Start on a tight-shot of the patrician Henry van der Luyden and his wife Louisa. They have the same pale blue eyes, with the same look of frozen gentleness. They look calmly at Archer and his mother before them.

HENRY
And all this, you think, was begun by...

ARCHER
...Larry Lefferts, yes sir. I'm certain of it.

LOUISA
But why?

We are in a high-ceilinged white-walled room in the Madison Avenue house of the van der Luydens. A framed Gainsborough and a Huntington portrait of Louisa van der Luyden hang prominently.

ARCHER
Well. Excuse me, but...

LOUISA
Please, go on.

ARCHER
Larry's been going off with someone, the postmaster's wife in their village or someone, and it's getting around. Whenever poor Gertrude Lefferts begins to suspect something about her husband, Larry starts making some great fuss to show how moral he is. He's simply using Countess Olenska as a lightning rod.

LOUISA
Extraordinary.

HENRY
Not at all, my dear, I'm afraid.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MRS. ARCHER
We all know what you and Cousin Louisa represent. That's why Mrs. Mingott felt this slight on the Countess should not pass without consulting you.

HENRY
Well, it's the principle that I dislike. I mean to say, as long as a member of a well-known family is backed by that family, it should be considered final.

LOUISA
It seems so to me.

HENRY
So with Louisa's permission... We are giving a little dinner for her cousin the Duke of St. Austrey, who arrives next week on the Russia. I'm sure Louisa will be as glad as I am if Countess Olenska will let us include her among our guests.

CUT TO

INT. DINING ROOM/VAN DER LUYDEN HOUSE NIGHT

A formidable dinner party is in progress. Start with CAMERA moving along table as we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Dining at the van der Luydens was at best no light matter. Dining there with a Duke who was their cousin was almost a religious solemnity. The Trevenna George II plate was out. So was the van der Luyden Lowestoft, from the East India Company.

As these items are mentioned, the CAMERA glides by them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
When the van der Luydens chose, they knew how to give a lesson.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

PULL BACK to wide shot of the room. Archer, his mother, and the Duke, a rather carefree fellow with expansive whiskers, are among the guests. But the most prominent person in the room, and the youngest woman by far, is Ellen Olenska. She is radiant. Archer looks down the table at her as we...

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/VAN DER LUYDEN HOUSE NIGHT

Crowded with guests, all enjoying themselves.

Archer, seated on a sofa, continues to look at Ellen Olenska, who is in easy conversation with the Duke across the room. As he watches, she gets up and starts across the room.

Archer keeps watching: will she come toward him?

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was not the custom in New York drawing rooms for a lady to get up and walk away from one gentleman in order to seek the company of another.

As Archer watches her progress across the room, she does seem to be coming right toward him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But the Countess did not observe this rule.

She is next to Archer now, smiling as she sits beside him.

ELLEN
I want you to talk to me about May.

ARCHER
I can see you knew the Duke before.

ELLEN
From Nice. We used to see him every winter. He's very fond of gambling and used to come to our house a great deal. I think he's the dullest man I ever met.

Archer smiles, delighted at her outspokenness.

(CONTINUED)
ELLEN
But he seems to be admired here.
Can I tell you...
(mock conspiratorial)
...what most interests me about
New York? It's what's original
to New York. Not all this blind
obeying of tradition...somebody
else's tradition. It seems stupid
to have discovered America only
to make it a copy of another
country. Do you suppose
Christopher Columbus would have
taken all that trouble just to
go to the opera with Larry
Lefferts?

ARCHER
(laughs)
I think if he knew Lefferts was
here the Santa Maria would never
have left port.

ELLEN
And May. Does she share these
views?

ARCHER
If she does, she'd never say so.

ELLEN
Are you very much in love with
her?

ARCHER
As much as a man can be.

ELLEN
How much is that? Is there a
limit?

ARCHER
If there is, I haven't found it.

ELLEN
A romantic romance, then. And not
in the least arranged.

ARCHER
Have you forgotten? In our country
we don't allow marriages to be
arranged.

(CONTINUED)
ELLEN
Yes, I had forgotten. I'm sorry.
I don't always remember that
everything here is good that
was...that was bad where I came
from.

Her lips tremble. She looks down in her lap, at her fan of eagle
feathers, then over toward the door, where May, dressed in a
gown of silver and white, is entering with her mother. Several
men, including the Duke, come up to them. Introductions are
made.

ELLEN
You'll want to be with May.

ARCHER
(looking at the men
around May)
It looks like I have many rivals.

ELLEN
Then stay with me a little longer.

And she touches his knee lightly with her plumed fan.

ARCHER
Yes.

But they are interrupted by Henry van der Luyden and a guest.

HENRY
Countess, if I may. Mr. Urban
Dagonet.

Ellen smiles and Archer gets up to yield his place. Ellen holds
her hand out to him.

ELLEN
Tomorrow then. After five. I'll
expect you.

Archer manages to conceal his surprise.

ARCHER
Tomorrow.

And the Countess turns her attention to van der Luyden and the
guest. As Archer walks away from her, he sees Larry Lefferts
bringing his wife Gertrude over for an introduction.

Now Louisa van der Luyden falls into step beside Archer.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

LOUISA
It was good of you to devote
yourself to Madame Olenska so
unselfishly, dear Newland. I told
Henry he really must rescue you.

She looks around at the glittering gathering.

LOUISA
You know, I've never seen May
looking lovelier. The Duke thinks
her the handsomest woman in the
room.

He catches May's eye. She is indeed beautiful. They smile at
each other.

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/ELLEN'S HOUSE DUSK

Start on a large painting, more daring and more modern than any
art we have seen up to now.

Archer stares at it, a little uncertain, a little puzzled.

Another painting, by a different artist but much like the first
in its subject matter and the unsettling intensity of its mood.

Archer looks away from this second painting to some of the odd
bits of furnishing in the room: small slender tables of dark
wood, a stretch of red damask nailed on the discolored
wallpaper, a delicate little Greek bronze.

He hears a noise in the hall. A Sicilian maid walks by the door.
Archer looks at her. The maid speaks no English but understands
his unspoken question.

MAID
Verra, verra.

"Soon, soon." Archer understands, but this does little to lessen
his impatience.

He hears the sound of a horse moving down the street. He gets
up, moves to the window and parts the curtains.

Looking out, he sees: a compact English brougham, drawn by a
big roan, stopping at the curb. The carriage door opens and
Julius Beaufort climbs down. He turns, and helps the Countess
cut out.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

As Archer watches, Beaufort, hat in hand, says something to Ellen. She shakes her head. They shake hands and part. Beaufort climbs back into the carriage. Ellen comes up her front steps.

Archer turns away from the window. Ellen comes into the room, taking off her hat and long cloak as she moves toward him.

ELLEN
Do you like my funny little house? To me it's like heaven.

ARCHER
You've arranged it so well.

ELLEN
Yes. Some of the things I managed to bring with me. Little pieces of wreckage. At least it's less gloomy than the van der Luydensch, and not so difficult to be alone.

ARCHER
(smiles)
I'm sure it's often thought the van der Luydensch is gloomy, though I've never heard it said before. But do you really like to be alone?

ELLEN
As long as my friends keep me from being lonely.

She sits near the fire and motions him to sit in an armchair near where he is standing.

ELLEN
I see you've already chosen your corner.

As he sits, she folds her arms behind her head and stares at the fire.

ELLEN
This is the hour I like best, don't you?

ARCHER
I was afraid you'd forgotten the hour. I'm sure Beaufort can be very intriguing.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ELLEN
He took me to see some houses.
I'm told I must move, even though
this street seems perfectly
respectable.

ARCHER
Yes, but it's not fashionable.

ELLEN
Then I'll have to count on you
to let me know about such
important things.

The maid enters with a tray of tea, which she sets in front of Ellen.

ARCHER
The van der Luydens do nothing
by halves. All New York laid
itself out for you last night.

ELLEN
It was so kind. Such a nice party.

She busies herself with serving the tea. Archer wants to impress
on her the importance of the van der Luyden's gesture.

ARCHER
The van der Luydens are the most
powerful influence in New York
society. And they receive very
seldom, because of cousin Louisa's
health.

ELLEN
Perhaps that's the reason then.

ARCHER
The reason?

ELLEN
For their influence. They make
themselves so rare.

Her observation intrigues him. She watches him as she hands him
tea. The firelight makes her eyes gleam.

ELLEN
But of course you must tell me.

ARCHER
No, it's you telling me.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

She detaches a small gold cigarette case from one of her bracelets, holds it out to him. He takes a cigarette and she removes one for herself before closing the case.

ELLEN
Then we can both help each other. Just tell me what to do.

A flame darts from the logs in the fireplace. She bends over the fire. As Archer watches, she stretches her hand so close to the flame that it seems a faint halo of light shines around her fingernails. The firelight turns the dark hair escaping from her braids to russet and makes her pale skin even paler.

ARCHER
There are so many people already to tell you what to do.

ELLEN
They’re all a little angry with me, I think. For setting up for myself.

ARCHER
Your family can show you the way.

ELLEN
Is New York such a labyrinth? I thought it was so straight up and down, like Fifth Avenue, with all the cross-streets numbered and big honest labels on everything.

ARCHER
Everything is labeled. But everybody is not.

ELLEN
Then I must count on you for warnings, too.

ARCHER
Just don’t let go of your old friends’ hands so quickly. All the older women like and admire you. They want to help.

ELLEN
(sighs)
I know. But only if they don’t hear anything unpleasant.

(more)

(Continued)
ELLEN (Cont'd)
Does no one here want to know the truth, Mr. Archer? It's so lonely living among all these kind people who only ask you to pretend.

She puts her hands to her face and sobs. Her shoulders shake. Archer goes to her quickly, bending over her.

ARCHER
No, no, you musn't.

He takes her hands.

ARCHER
What is it they don't want to know?

She shakes her head.

ARCHER
Ellen.

This is the first time he's called her by her first-name, and it makes him a little self-conscious. He holds her hand and rubs it back and forth, like a child's.

After a moment she draws her hand away and starts to compose herself.

ELLEN
No one cries here, either? I suppose there's no need to.

CUT TO

20 EXT./INT. STREET AND FLORIST NIGHT

Walking home from Ellen's along Fifth Avenue, Archer passes a flower shop. He gets only a few steps beyond it, then turns and goes back.

Inside the shop, the florist greets him instantly.

FLORIST
Oh Mr. Archer, good evening. We didn't see you this morning, and weren't sure whether to send Miss Welland the usual...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARCHER
The lilies-of-the-valley, yes.
We'd better make it a standing order.

He notices a cluster of yellow roses almost fiery in their beauty.

ARCHER
And those roses. I'll give you another address.

He draws out a card and places it inside an envelope, on which he starts to write Ellen's name and address. But he stops. He removes his card and hands the clerk the empty envelope with only the name and address on it.

ARCHER
They'll go at once?

In extreme CLOSE-UP, Archer folds his calling card in two and places it safely in his pocket.

CUT TO

MONTAGE

A series of rapidly DISSOLVING images: of the maid's hands on the yellow roses as they are delivered; of Ellen's more delicate hands arranging the roses in a vase; of Ellen's face, looking at roses, turning toward CAMERA.

CUT TO

EXT. LAKE/CENTRAL PARK  DAY

CAMERA starts close on hands in a fur muff. PULL BACK to show Archer and May, ice skating in the Central Park. CAMERA moves with them as they circle the lake; the background is a blur behind them, just as it was when they waltzed.

MAY
It's wonderful to wake every morning with lilies-of-the-valley in my room. It's like seeing you.

ARCHER
They came late yesterday, I know. Somehow the time got away from me.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAY
Still, you always remember.

ARCHER
I sent some roses to your cousin
Ellen, too. Was that right?

MAY
Very right. She didn’t mention
it at lunch today, though. She
said she’d gotten wonderful
orchids from Mr. Beaufort and a
whole hamper of carnations from
Cousin Henry van der Luyden. She
was so very delighted. Don’t
people send flowers in Europe?

He seems mildly annoyed at this.

CUT TO

EXT. LAKE/CENTRAL PARK DAY

Later. At the side of the lake, Archer and May are preparing
to leave. As they talk, Archer reaches over to help her unlace
her skates.

MAY
Well, I know you do consider it
a long time.

ARCHER
Very long.

MAY
But the Chivers were engaged for
a year and a half. Larry Lefferts
and Gertrude were engaged for two.
I’m sure Mama expects something
traditional.

ARCHER
Ever since you were little your
parents let you have your way.
If you’d only tell your mother
what you wanted...

MAY
But that’s why it would be so
difficult. I couldn’t refuse her
the very last thing she’d ever
ask of me as a little girl.

(CONTINUED)
23 CONTINUED:

She takes his arm as they both stand and walk away.

MAY
But your wanting it makes me see
how you love me. I'm so happy.

ARCHER
Why not be happier?

MAY
(laughs lightly)
Did I tell you I showed Ellen my
ring? She thinks it's the most
beautiful setting she ever saw.
She said there was nothing like
it in the rue de la Paix.

She hugs his arm

MAY
I do love you, Newland.

CUT TO

24 INT. DINING ROOM/HOUSE NIGHT

The congenial, slightly florid face of Mr. Letterblair looks
straight into CAMERA.

LETTERBLAIR
She wants to sue her husband for
divorce. It's been suggested that
she means to marry again, although
she denies it.

Angle on Archer, most uncomfortable.

ARCHER
I beg your pardon, sir. But
because of my engagement, perhaps
one of the other members of our
firm could consider the matter.

LETTERBLAIR
But precisely because of your
prospective alliance...and
considering that several members
of the family have already asked
for you...I'd like you to consider
the case.

(CONTINUED)
24 CONTINUED:

ARCHER
It's a family matter. Perhaps it's best settled by the family.

LETTERBLAIR
Oh their position is clear. They are entirely, and rightly, against a divorce. But Countess Olenska still insists on a legal opinion.

CUT TO

25 INT. DINING ROOM/LETTERBLAIR HOUSE NIGHT

CAMERA follows a bowl of oyster soup as it is being served.

LETTERBLAIR (V.O.)
But really, what's the use of a divorce? She's here, he's there and the whole Atlantic's between them.

FAST DISSOLVE to next course being served: shad and cucumbers.

LETTERBLAIR (V.O.)
As things go, Olenski's acted generously. He's already returned some of her money without being asked.

Another FAST DISSOLVE, to next course: young broiled turkey with corn fritters.

LETTERBLAIR (V.O.)
She'll never get a dollar more than that. Although I understand she attaches no importance to the money.

Another FAST DISSOLVE to the final course: canvasback duck with currant jelly and a celery mayonnaise.

LETTERBLAIR (V.O.)
Considering all that, the wisest thing really is to do as the family says. Just let well enough alone.

Fast PAN up to Archer.

ARCHER
I think that's for her to decide.

(CONTINUED)
DISSOLVE again to port being poured. Move back to show that
dinner is over, a fire is lit and the men are having cigars.

LETTERBLAIR
Have you considered the
consequences if the Countess
decides for divorce?

ARCHER
Consequences for the Countess?

LETTERBLAIR
For everyone.

ARCHER
I don’t think the count’s
accusations amount to anything
more than vague charges.

LETTERBLAIR
It will make for some talk.

ARCHER
Well I have heard talk about the
Countess and her secretary. I
heard it even before I read the
legal papers.

LETTERBLAIR
It’s certain to be unpleasant.

ARCHER
Unpleasant!

Letterblair looks at him enquiringly and gives him a moment to
calm down.

LETTERBLAIR
Divorce is always unpleasant.
Don’t you agree?

ARCHER
Naturally.

LETTERBLAIR
Then I can count on you. The
family can count on you. You’ll
use your influence against the
divorce?

ARCHER
I can’t promise that. Not until
I see the Countess.

(CONTINUED)
LETTERBLAIR
I don’t understand you, Mr. Archer.

Archer reaches into his pocket and pulls out one of his cards. He starts to write a brief message on the back.

LETTERBLAIR
Do you want to marry into a family with a scandalous divorce suit hanging over it?

ARCHER
I don’t think that has anything to do with the case.

He finishes the note.

ARCHER
Can someone take this for me, please. To the Countess.

CAMERA in close on note, of which we see, in extreme CLOSE-UP, a few crucial words: "important"; "see"; "soonest."

CUT TO

INT. FOYER/ELLEN’S HOUSE NIGHT

The maid opens the front door to admit Archer. He enters and takes off his hat and coat, walking into tight CLOSE-UP. He spots something in the foyer.

We see, as he does: on a bench, in the hallway, a sable-lined overcoat and a folded opera hat. We move closer in a very fast series of DISSOLVES until we see: the dull silk lining of the hat, and the initials J.B. sewn in gold.

Archer reacts to this, and to voices behind him. He turns, and sees Ellen coming from the drawing room accompanied by Julius Beaufort.

BEAUFORT
Three days at Skyttercliff with the van der Luydens! You’d better take your fur and a hot water bottle.

ELLEN
Is the house that cold?

She holds her hand out to Archer in greeting as she speaks.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BEAUFORT
No, but Louisa is.

He nods carelessly at Archer.

BEAUFORT
Join me at Delmonicos Sunday instead. I'm having more congenial company.

The maid helps him on with his coat.

BEAUFORT
Artists and so on.

ELLEN
That's very tempting. I haven't met a single artist since I've been here.

ARCHER
I know a few painters I could bring to see you, if you like.

BEAUFORT
Painters? Are there any painters in New York?

ELLEN
(smiling)
Thank you. But I was really thinking of dramatic artists. My husband's house was always full of singers and musicians.

(to Beaufort)
Can I write tomorrow and let you know? It's too late to decide this evening.

BEAUFORT
Is this late?

ELLEN
Yes, because I still have to talk business with Mr. Archer.

BEAUFORT
Oh.

He starts to leave, but turns.

(continued)
26 CONTINUED: (2)

BEAUFORT
Of course, Newland, if you can
persuade the Countess to change
her mind about Sunday, you can
join us too.

He leaves and the maid close the door firmly behind him.

CUT TO

27 INT. DRAWING ROOM/ELLEN'S HOUSE NIGHT

Archer sits close, across from her, in an armchair.

ELLEN
You know painters, then?

ARCHER
Well, a little. I know where to
find them.

ELLEN
I once did too. My old life was
full of such things. But now I
want to try to be like everybody
else.

ARCHER
You'll never be like everybody
else.

ELLEN
Don't say that to me, please. I
just want to put all the old
things behind me.

ARCHER
I know. Mr. Letterblair told me.

ELLEN
Mr. Letterblair?

ARCHER
Yes. I've come because he asked
me to. I'm in the firm.

ELLEN
You mean it's you who'll manage
everything for me?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARCHER
I'm here to talk about it. I've read all the legal papers, and the letter from the Count.

ELLEN
It was vile.

He notices her hands, sees she's wearing three rings on her third and fourth fingers. But there is no wedding ring. He says, as he's noticing...

ARCHER (V.O.)
But if he chooses to fight the case, he can say things that might be unpleas...

His glance comes back up to her face.

ARCHER
...might be disagreeable to you. Say them publicly, so that they could be damaging even if...

ELLEN
If?

ARCHER
Even if they were unfounded.

ELLEN
What harm could accusations like that do me here?

ARCHER
Perhaps more harm than anywhere else. Our legislation favors divorce. But our social customs don't.

A small travel clock ticks on the table beside her.

ELLEN
Yes. So my family tells me. Our family. You'll be my cousin soon. And you agree with them?

ARCHER
If what your husband hints is true, or you have no way of disproving it...yes. What could you possibly gain that would make up for the scandal.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ELLEN
My freedom. Is that nothing?

ARCHER
But aren't you free already?

She looks at him.

ARCHER
It's my business to help you see these things just the way the people who are fondest of you see them, all your friends and relations. If I didn't show you honestly how they judge such questions, it wouldn't be fair of me, would it?

ELLEN
No. It wouldn't be fair.

She looks at the fire. A log breaks in two and sends up a shower of sparks. She looks at it.

ELLEN
Very well. I'll do as you wish.

He is a little surprised by her sudden agreement. He grabs her two hands in his.

ARCHER
I do... I do want to help you.

ELLEN
You do help me.

Archer bends to her and kisses her hands. She takes them away.

ELLEN
Goodnight, cousin.

CUT TO

28 INT. THEATER/NIGHT

We see the heavily made-up face of an actress, at the peak of a very theatrical moment, resting her arms on a mantle and bowing her face in her hands. We don't know at first that we are on stage.

CAMERA pulls out to show actor behind her. He too is very sad. This is obviously a scene of intense parting.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He moves to a door, then pauses, comes back. While the actress still has her face averted, he lifts the end of a velvet ribbon tied around her neck and kisses it.

Then he leaves and the curtain falls.

Now in CLOSE-UP: Newland Archer, watching the play. He is obviously very moved.

As lights come up he looks around the theater. The first person he sees is Ellen Olenska, in a box with some familiar faces: Larry Lefferts and his wife, Mr. and Mrs. Beaufort, Sillerton Jackson.

CAMERA moves in on Mrs. Beaufort noticing Archer and making a languid gesture of invitation.

He rises a little reluctantly from his seat and moves out of frame.

CUT TO

INT. BEAUFORT BOX/THEATER NIGHT

Everyone is chatting as Archer enters in the background.

LEFFERTS
It’s fascinating. Every season the same play, the same scene, the same effect on the audience.

Archer is making his greetings in the box. Lefferts turns to him.

LEFFERTS
Remarkable, isn’t it, Newland?

ARCHER
Certainly these actors are remarkable. They’re even better in the farewell than Kendal and Madge Robertson in London.

BEAUFORT
You see this play even when you travel? I’d travel to get away from it.

Archer seats himself just behind Ellen. She turns to him and, inclining her head towards the stage, says in a low voice...

(CONTINUED)
29 CONTINUED:

ELLEN
Do you think her lover will send
her a box of yellow roses tomorrow
morning?

ARCHER
(surprised)
I was...I was thinking about that,
too. The farewell scene...

ELLEN
Yes, I know. It touches me as
well.

ARCHER
Usually I leave after that scene.
To take the picture away with me.

She looks down at the mother-of-pearl opera glasses in her lap.

ELLEN
I had a letter from May. From St.
Augustine.

ARCHER
They always winter there. Her
mother's bronchitis.

ELLEN
And what do you do while May is
away?

ARCHER
(a little defensive)
I do my work.

The lights start to go down as the audience settles in for the
next act of the play. Ellen looks straight at him, whispering
now.

ELLEN
I do want you to know. What you
advised me was right. And I'm so
grateful.

The curtain is up as Ellen turns quickly from Archer toward the
stage, raising her opera glasses to her eyes.

As the new act begins on stage, Archer rises slowly and leaves
the box.

CUT TO
30 MONTAGE

Series of quickly DISSOLVING scenes as he hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The next day, Newland Archer searched the city in vain for yellow roses.

Director's note: camera will move always from left to right in this sequence, with images dissolving into one another, creating a circular effect.

Shot of Archer in florist shop DISSOLVES to shot of Archer, in his office at the law firm, writing a note to Ellen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
From his office he sent a note to Madame Olenska asking to call that afternoon and requesting a reply by messenger.

CAMERA tracks across note and the words "see you as soon as..."

NARRATOR (V.O.)
There was no reply that day. Or the next.

Scene DISSOLVES to street outside florist shop. Archer walks by. There are yellow roses in the window.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And when yellow roses were again available, Archer passed them by. It was only on the third day that he heard from her, by post, from the van der Luyden's country home.

FAST CUT TO

31 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD DAY

A lovely wintery scene. Ellen Olenska, bundled in warm fur, sits in a sleigh.

CAMERA moves in as she speaks straight to it.

ELLEN
"I ran away the day after I saw you at the play, and these kind friends have taken me in. I wanted to be quiet and think things over. I feel so safe here. I wish..."

FAST CUT TO
INSERT

These words, in longhand, as they are in the letter. They fill the screen as she says them: "...that you were with us."

ELLEN (V.O.)
(simultaneously)
"...that you were with us."

FAST CUT TO

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD DAY

Ellen, still to CAMERA.

ELLEN
"Yours sincerely..."

FAST CUT TO

INT. LAW OFFICE DAY

Archer, with Ellen’s letter in front of him, scribbling a note at the desk. CAMERA moves in on him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He had a still outstanding invitation from the Lefferts’ for a weekend on the Hudson and he hoped it was not too late to reply. Their house was not far from the van der Luydens.

CUT TO

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD DAY

A snowy landscape under bright sun. A single tree on a rise near a winding country road. In the distance, we can just make out a FIGURE IN A RED CLOAK.

Archer moves into frame in CLOSE-UP. Sees the figure far down the road. He goes out of frame and we DISSOLVE to...

...Ellen, in the red cloak, with her back to us. Archer enters frame, and she turns.

ARCHER
I came to see what you were running away from.

CUT TO
36 EXT. COUNTRY ROAD DAY
Archer and Ellen walking.

ELLEN
I knew you'd come.

ARCHER
That shows you wanted me to.

ELLEN
Cousin May wrote she asked you
to take care of me.

ARCHER
I didn't need to be asked.

ELLEN
Why? Does that mean I'm so
helpless and my need is so
obvious?

ARCHER
What sort of need?

They are walking past an old house with squat walls and small
square windows.

ELLEN
Henry left the old house open for
me. I wanted to see it.

ARCHER
That's the Patroon house.

ELLEN
Yes. It's been here two hundred
years.

Ellen has already started up the front stairs of the house.

CUT TO

37 INT. PATROON HOUSE DAY

A big bed of embers gleams in the kitchen chimney under an iron
pot hung from an old crane. Archer throws a log on the embers,
looks over to Ellen.

She sits in a rush-bottomed armchair just across the tile
hearth. Her cloak is loose over her shoulders. She smiles at
him.

(CONTINUED)
ARCHER
When you wrote me, you were unhappy.

ELLEN
Yes. But it's better with you here. I feel less unhappy.

Arch stands near a window, looking out, not quite able to look at her.

ARCHER
I can't be here long.

ELLEN
I know. So just let me be happy.

ARCHER
Ellen. If you really wanted me to come... if I'm really to help you... you must tell me what you're running from.

She does not answer. He keeps looking out the window.

Then he feels her, coming up behind him. Her light arms are around his neck, hugging him.

He turns... and sees her as she really is, still in the chair. He looks back out the window. And now he sees...

The figure of a man in a long coat with a heavy fur collar coming along the path to the house: Julius Beaufort.

ARCHER
Ah!

He laughs. Ellen moves quickly to his side.

Extreme CLOSE-UP: she slips her hand into his.

Then she looks out the window and sees Beaufort. She steps back, startled.

ARCHER
Is he what you were running from?
Or what you expected?

ELLEN
I didn't know he was here.

Arch pulls his hand from hers and walks to the front door, throwing it open.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

Bright sunlight rushes into the room, silhouetting Archer and Ellen, who is a few steps behind him.

ARCHER
Hello, Beaufort! This way! Madame Olenska was expecting you.

CUT TO

INT. STUDY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

Later. Archer is alone in his study, surrounded by books he’s unpacking from a carton.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
That night he did not take the customary comfort in his monthly shipment of books from London. The taste of the usual was like cinders in his mouth, and there were moments when he felt as if he were being buried alive under his future.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM/ELLEN’S HOUSE NIGHT

Ellen, at a writing table in the bedroom.

CAMERA moves in on her as she writes hastily.

ELLEN (V.O.)
"Newland. Come late tomorrow. I must explain to you."

CUT TO

INT. STUDY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

CAMERA moves in on Archer, reading Ellen’s note.

He holds it in his lap, on top of an open book.

As we hear her last words, he crumples the note. We glimpse the book he has been reading: Middlemarch.

CUT TO
EXT. GARDEN/ST. AUGUSTINE DAY

A small FIGURE IN A WHITE DRESS in the distance, surrounded by greenery.

Archer moves into the frame in CLOSE-UP. He sees the figure across the open lawn in front of him. He goes out of frame and we DISSOLVE TO...

...May, in the white dress. Archer enters the frame.

(This scene should match Archer's meeting Ellen previously.)

May looks at him, surprised.

MAY
Newland! Has anything happened?

ARCHER
Yes. I found I had to see you.

CUT TO

EXT. GARDEN/ST. AUGUSTINE DAY

CAMERA moves into tight CLOSE-UP as Archer and May sit on a garden bench. He takes her face in his hands gently and starts to kiss her.

His gentleness turns more insistent. She responds at first, but then draws back, a little startled.

ARCHER
What is it?

MAY
Nothing.

They are both a little embarrassed. She lets her hand slip out of his.

ARCHER
Tell me what you do all day.

MAY
(brightening)
Well, there are a few very pleasant people from Philadelphia and Baltimore who were picknicking at the inn. The Merry's are planning to lay out a lawn tennis court...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CAMERA moves in very close on Archer. May’s voice fades and MUSIC comes up as he stares ahead, not listening to her litan of daily routine.

MUSIC fades and, quietly, he interrupts her.

    ARCHER
    But I thought...I came here because I thought I could persuade you to break away from all that. To advance our engagement.

He reaches for her hand.

    ARCHER
    Don’t you understand how much I want to marry you? Why should we dream away another year?

    MAY
    I’m not sure I do understand. Is it because you’re not certain of still feeling the same way about me?

Archer is on his feet.

    ARCHER
    God, I...maybe...I don’t know.

    MAY
    Because there’s someone else?

He starts to protest. She hurries on.

    MAY
    If it’s untrue, then it won’t hurt to talk about it. And if it’s true...why shouldn’t we talk about it now? You might have made a mistake.

Archer stares at the path. There is a pattern of sunny leaves beneath his feet.

    ARCHER
    Mistakes are easy to make. But if I’d made the kind of mistake you suggest, would I be down here asking you to hurry our marriage?

(CONTINUED)
MAY
I don't know. You might. It would be one way to settle the question.

He sees: under the brim of her straw hat, her face trembling.

MAY
At Newport, two years ago, before we were...promised... everyone said there was...someone else for you. I even saw you sitting together with her once, I think. On a verandah, at a dance. When she came back into the house, her face was sad, and I felt sorry for her. Even after, when we were engaged, I could see how she looked.

He looks up quickly. There is a look of relief on his face which he manages to conceal at once.

ARCHER
Is that ...

MAY
Whatever it was, Newland, or whatever it may have been, I couldn't have my happiness made out of a wrong to somebody else. We couldn't build a life on a foundation like that. If promises were made...or pledges...if you said something to the...the person we've spoken of...if you feel in some way pledged to her...

Archer is beside her, holding her.

ARCHER
There are no pledges. No promises that matter. Except ours.

May looks as if a great weight had been taken from her.

ARCHER
That is all I've been trying to say. There is no one between us, May. There is nothing between us. That is precisely my argument for marrying quickly.

She puts her arms around him. He holds her close.

(CONTINUED)
NARRATOR (V.O.)
He could feel her dropping back
to inexpressive girlishness. Her
conscience had been eased of its
burden. It was wonderful, he
thought, how such depths of
feeling could co-exist with such
an absence of imagination.

He kisses her again. But more politely.

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/MRS. MINGOTT’S HOUSE  DAY

MRS. MINGOTT
And did you succeed?

ARCHER
No. But I’d still like to be
married in April. With your help.

MRS. MINGOTT
Well, you’re seeing the Mingott
way. When I built this house the
family reacted as if I was moving
to California. Now you’re
challenging everyone.

ARCHER
Is this really so difficult?

MRS. MINGOTT
The entire family is difficult.
There’s not one of my own children
that takes after me but my little
Ellen.

(smiling)
You’ve got a quick eye. Why in
the world didn’t you marry her?

Archer’s taken aback momentarily. Then...

ARCHER
(laughs)
For one thing, she wasn’t there
to be married.

MRS. MINGOTT
No, to be sure. And she’s still
not. The Count, you know. He’s
sent a letter.

(CONTINUED)
ARCHER

No, I didn't know.

MRS. MINGOTT

Mr. Letterblair says the Count wants Ellen back. On her own terms.

ARCHER

I don't believe it.

MRS. MINGOTT

The Count certainly does not defend himself. I will say that. And Ellen would be giving up a great deal to stay here. There's her old life. Think what that must have been like. Gardens at Nice with terraces of roses. Jewels, of course. Music and conversation. She says she's considered plain in Europe, but I know that her portrait has been painted nine times. All that, and the remorse of a guilty husband. Ellen says she cares for none of it, but still. These are things that must be weighed.

ARCHER

I would rather see her dead.

MRS. MINGOTT

(shrewdly)

Would you? Would you really? We should remember marriage is marriage. And Ellen is still a wife.

Behind Mrs. Mingott, doors open and Ellen enters, still wearing hat and cloak, her face vivid and happy. She stoops to kiss her grandmother and holds her hand out to Archer.

MRS. MINGOTT

Ellen, see who's here.

ELLEN

Yes, I know.

(to Archer)

I went to see your mother to ask where you'd gone. Since you never answered my note.

(CONTINUED)
MRS. MINGOTT
Because he was in such a rush to get married, I'm sure. Fresh off the train and straight here. He wants me to use all my influence, just to marry his sweetheart sooner.

ELLEN
Well surely, Granny, between us we can persuade the Wellands to do as he wishes.

MRS. MINGOTT
There, Newland, you see. Right to the quick of the problem. Like me.

(to Ellen)
I told him he should have married you.

ELLEN
And what did he say?

MRS. MINGOTT
Oh, my darling, I leave you to find that out.

Archer, who has done his best to abide this teasing, now rises to go. As he gets to his feet, his hand touches Ellen's.

CUT TO

INT. MINGOTT HOUSE/DOORWAY DAY
Ellen and Archer at the front door.

We see: extreme CLOSE-UP of their two faces close together, his mouth near her ear.

ARCHER
(quietly)
When can I see you?

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/ELLEN'S HOUSE NIGHT
CLOSE-UP of Ellen's face in the mirror on the mantle.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

ARCHER
I think your grandmother believes
you might go back to your husband.

He appears in the mirror as soon as he hear his voice. Ellen
shakes her head.

ARCHER
I think she believes you might
at least consider it.

ELLEN
A lot of things have been believed
of me. But if she thinks I would
consider it, that also means she
would consider it for me. As she
is weighing your idea of advancing
the marriage.

ARCHER
(under pressure)
May and I had a frank talk in
Florida. Probably our first. She
wants a long engagement to give
me time...

ELLEN
Time to give her up for another
woman?

ARCHER
If I want to.

ELLEN
That’s very noble.

ARCHER
Yes. But it’s ridiculous.

ELLEN
Why? Because there is no other
woman?

ARCHER
No. Because I don’t mean to marry
anyone else.

ELLEN
This other woman...does she love
you, too?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ARCHER
There is no other woman. I mean, the person May was thinking of...was never...

He sees her hands, holding her fan.

ARCHER
(slowly)
...she guessed the truth. There is another woman. But not the one she thinks.

He sits down beside her. He takes her hands, unclasping them, so her fan falls to the floor.

She gets up and moves away from him.

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

ARCHER
I've never made love to you. But you are the woman I would have married if it had been possible for either of us.

ELLEN
Possible? You can say that when you're the one who's made it impossible.

ARCHER
I've made it...

ELLEN
Isn't it you who made me give up divorcing? Didn't you talk to me, here in this room, about sacrifice and sparing scandal because my family was going to be your family? And I did what you asked me. For May's sake. And for yours.

She sinks down on the sofa. He stays near the mantle.

ARCHER
But there were things in your husband's letter....
ELLEN
I had nothing to fear from that letter. Absolutely nothing. You were just afraid of scandal for yourself, and for May.

He puts his face in his hands. After a moment, he goes to her. She is crying like a child.

ARCHER
Ellen. No. Nothing’s done that can’t be undone. I’m still free. You can be, too.

Now he’s holding her. Her face is so close to his....He kisses her.

And she kisses him back, passionately.

Then she breaks away.

They stare at each other. Then she shakes her head.

ARCHER
No! Everything is different. Do you see me marrying May now?

ELLEN
Would you ask her that question? Would you?

ARCHER
I have to ask her. It’s too late to do anything else.

ELLEN
You say that because it’s easy, not because it’s true.

ARCHER
This has changed everything.

ELLEN
No. The good things can’t change. All that you’ve done for me, Newland, that I never knew. Going to the van der Luydens because people refused to meet me. Announcing your engagement at the ball so there would be two families standing behind me instead of one...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (4)

She sees him looking at her questioningly.

ELLEN
Granny told me. I was stupid, I never thought. All that you did...there is no one as kind as you. You couldn't be happy if it meant being cruel. I'd never known that before. And that is what I love in you.

She speaks in a very low voice. Suddenly he kneels. The TIP of her SATIN SHOE shows under her dress. He kisses it.

She bends over him.

ELLEN
Newland. If we change what's happened, if we act any other way, I'll be making you act against what I love in you most. I couldn't stand it if that's what our love did to you. We might live with each other, but we would always live with that, and it would destroy us. Don't you see? I can't love you unless I give you up.

Archer springs to his feet.

ARCHER
And Beaufort, with his orchids? Can you love him?
(furious)
May is ready to give me up!

With a sweep of his arm he sends the orchids flying into the mirror, spilling flowers and water everywhere. Ellen is motionless.

ELLEN
(quietly)
Three days after you pleaded with her to advance your engagement she will give you up?

ARCHER
She refused! That gives me the right...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (5)

ELLEN
The right? The same kind of right as my husband claims in his letters?

ARCHER
No, of course not! But if we do this now...afterward, it will only be worse for everyone if we...

ELLEN
(almost screaming)
No, no, no!

They look at each other for a moment more. Then Ellen picks up a bell and rings for the maid.

CAMERA tilts up from spilled flowers on the floor to the face of the maid as she enters. She carries Ellen’s cloak and hat, and a telegram.

ELLEN
I won’t be going out tonight after all.

ARCHER
(sarcastic)
Please don’t sacrifice. I can see how lonely you are.

MAID
(in Italian)
This was delivered.

She hands the wire to Ellen, who opens the yellow envelope, looks quickly at the message, then hands it to Archer.

As he takes it, we...

CUT TO

EXT. GARDEN/ST. AUGUSTINE DAY

May, smiling joyously, comes toward the CAMERA. The light behind and around her is intense, blazing. She speaks directly to CAMERA.

MAY
"Granny’s telegram was successful. Papa and Mama agreed to marriage after Easter. Only a month!

(more)
CONTINUED:

MAY (Cont’d)
I will telegraph Newland. I’m too
happy for words and love you
dearly. Your grateful cousin
May."

She advances so close to the CAMERA she creates a burst of white
light as we...

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/ELLEN’S HOUSE NIGHT

Extreme CLOSE-UP of May’s telegram in Newland’s hand. He
crumpled it as if that single gesture would annihilate the news
it contains.

DISSOLVE to CLOSE-UP of his face, desolate.

CUT TO

INSERT

An oil painting. CAMERA starts very tight on the face of Newland
Archer, moves slowly across to May Archer, smiling with beatific
formality, then moves out: this is their wedding portrait.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
There had been wild rumors, right
up to the wedding day, that Mrs.
Mingott would actually attend the
ceremony. It was known that she
had sent a carpenter to measure
the front pew in case it might
be altered to accommodate her.
But this idea, like the great lady
herself, proved to be unwieldy,
and she settled for giving the
wedding breakfast.

CUT TO

INSERT

CAMERA moving down a lavishly array of wedding gifts: silver bowls
and exquisite china and heavy place settings.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The Countess Olenska sent her regrets—she was traveling with an aunt—but gave the bride and groom an exquisite piece of old lace. Two elderly aunts in Rhinebeck offered a honeymoon cottage, and, since it was thought "very English" to have a country-house on loan, their offer was accepted. When the house proved suddenly uninhabitable, however, Henry van der Luyden stepped in to offer an old cottage on his property nearby.

CUT TO

INSERT

CAMERA moves in on picture of the Patroon house, where Ellen and Archer had spoken.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
May accepted the offer as a surprise for her husband. She had never seen the house, but her cousin Ellen had mentioned it once. She had said it was the only house in America where she could imagine being perfectly happy.

From picture of the house. ...  

DISSOLVE TO

INSERT

...old postcards of London: 19th Century streets filled with carriages; regal figures in high hats and long dresses enjoying Sunday in Hyde Park; Bond Street crowded with shoppers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
They traveled to the expected places, which May had never seen. In London, Archer ordered his clothes, and they went to the National Gallery, and sometimes to the theater.

CUT TO
INT. CARRIAGE/STREET  NIGHT

May is close to Archer on the seat, holding his arm. She has a new attitude of easy intimacy with him.

ARCHER
Englishwomen dress just like everybody else in the evening, don’t they?

MAY
How can you even ask that, when they’re always at the theater in old ball-dresses and bare heads.

ARCHER
Well perhaps they save their new dresses for home.

MAY
Then I shouldn’t have worn this?

ARCHER
No. You look very fine.
(meaning it)
Quite beautiful.

She smiles...and surprises him with a kiss. He is delighted. She pulls away and hugs his arm.

CUT TO

INSERT

Old postcards of Paris: Rue Rivoli and the rue de la Paix, glittering like jewels strung across a city; the Place de la Concorde, busy with traffic and regal even at midday.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
In Paris, she ordered her clothes. There were trunks of dresses from Worth. They visited the Tuileries, and occasionally they dined out.

CUT TO

INT. DINING ROOM/ PARIS HOUSE  NIGHT

A small formal dinner. May holding her own nicely, charming everyone.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CAMERA moves in fast on Archer. He is in conversation with a fine-boned man whose face is distinguished by a carefully nurtured mustache.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Archer had gradually reverted to his old inherited ideas about marriage. It was less trouble to conform with tradition.

Archer glances away from his dinner companion to look across the table at the animated May.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
There was no use trying to emancipate a wife who hadn’t the dimmest notion that she was not free.

CUT TO

INT. CARRIAGE/STREET NIGHT

Archer and May riding home from the dinner.

ARCHER
I enjoyed him. I asked him to dinner.

MAY
Well, I didn’t have much chance to talk to him, but wasn’t he a little common?

ARCHER
Common? I thought he was clever.

MAY
I know I’m not the best judge of cleverness.

ARCHER
(quietly, resigned)
Then I won’t ask him to dine.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
With a chill he knew that, in future, many problems would be solved for him in this same way.

CUT TO
56 EXT. STREET/PARIS NIGHT

As their carriage moves away down a boulevard of flickering lamps.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The first six months of marriage were usually said to be the hardest, and after that, he thought, they would have pretty nearly finished polishing down all the rough edges. But May's pressure was already wearing down the very roughness he most wanted to keep.

CUT TO

57 EXT. STREET/PARIS NIGHT

DISSOLVE into the same street, later. It is still and empty, near dawn. The streetlamps flicker off in the light of the new day.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
As for the madness with Madame Olesska, Archer trained himself to remember it as the last of his discarded experiments. She remained in his memory simply as the most plaintive...

The last flame goes out...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
...and poignant of a line of ghosts.

On the word "ghosts," we...

CUT TO

58 EXT. BEAUFORT LAWN/NEWPORT DAY

...a close burst of blazing white.

White of summer dresses and crisp suits, the green of rolling lawns by the seaside under a bright afternoon sun.

Newport, Rhode Island, a year and a half later. The spacious lawn of the Beaufort summer "cottage."

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

CAMERA tracks parallel to a row of men and women standing against a tent, looking out at something we can't yet see. Their summer clothes are splendid.

CAMERA continues tracking until it comes to a break in the row: the raised flap of a tent. May walks INTO FRAME, wearing a white dress with a pale green ribbon around her tiny waist and a wreath of ivy on her hat. As she walks past the row of people, she comes toward CAMERA into big CLOSE-UP and we DISSOLVE to...

May, slowly raising a bow and arrow, taking careful aim, letting go. Her movements have a classic grace.

The crowd applauds appreciatively at her shot, and at her form. We see a banner announcing "Newport Archery Club/August meeting," and, in the distance, more spectators on the verandah of the Beaufort cottage.

Two of these spectators are Larry Lefferts and Julius Beaufort, who watch May admiringly. Beaufort has his customary orchid fixed to the lapel of his jacket.

LEFFERTS
She's very deft.

BEAUFORT
Yes. But that's the only kind of target she'll ever hit.

Now we see: Archer, a little in front of them. He REACTS angrily to Beaufort's remark, but says nothing.

Across the lawn, May makes her final bull's-eye. Archer starts across to join her.

May, flushed and calm, is receiving a winner's PIN from a club official.

She looks up as Archer approaches. They smile at each other.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
No one could ever be jealous of May's triumphs. She managed to give the feeling that she would have been just as serene without them.

May takes Archer's arm and they walk across the lawn together.

(CONTINUED)
58 CONTINUED: (2)

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But what if all her calm, her
niceness, were just a negation,
a curtain dropped in front of an
emptiness? Archer felt he had
never yet lifted that curtain.

CUT TO

59 EXT. NARAGANSETT AVENUE/NEWPORT DAY

May and Archer in an open carriage. May handles the reins of
the ponies expertly.

MAY
Has Gertrude Beaufort been here
at all this summer?

ARCHER
I don’t know. There’s a great deal
of gossip. I expect he’ll bring
Annie Ring here any day.

MAY
Not even Beaufort would dare that!

ARCHER
He’s reckless in everything.
There’s even talk about his
railway speculations turning bad.
But he just answers every rumor
with a fresh extravagance.

MAY
I heard he gave Gertrude pearls
worth half a million.

ARCHER
He had no choice.

CUT TO

60 INT. MINGOTT HOUSE/NEWPORT DAY

CAMERA close on the pin May won in the archery contest: an arrow
with a diamond tip, pinned to the front of her linen blouse.

A stout hand runs fingers along the contour of the arrow and
we hear the voice of...

(CONTINUED)
MRS. MINGOTT
Quite stunning. It's Julius Beaufort who donates the club's prizes, isn't it. This looks like him. A brooch would have done in my day, but there's no denying he does things handsomely.

We are in the sun-dappled drawing room of the Mingott Newport cottage. There is a tea service on a table in front of Mrs. Mingott, whom the summer heat is not treating kindly. She fans herself continually.

ARCHER
It's May who gives the pin its real distinction.

MRS. MINGOTT
Of course. And it will make quite an heirloom, my dear. You should leave it to your eldest daughter.

May blushes and Mrs. Mingott pinches her arm teasingly.

MRS. MINGOTT
What's the matter, aren't there going to be any daughters? Only boys? What, can't I say that either? Now your blushes are blushing.

Archer laughs. Mrs. Mingott smiles and calls out...

MRS. MINGOTT
Ellen! Ellen, are you upstairs?

CAMERA close now on Archer, startled at the name.

MRS. MINGOTT
She's over from Portsmouth, spending the day with me. It's such a nuisance. She just won't stay in Newport, insists on putting up with those...what's their name...Blenkers. But I gave up arguing with young people about fifty years ago...Ellen!

A maid appears.

MAID
I'm sorry, m'am, Miss Ellen's not in the house.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

MRS. MINGOTT
She's left?

MAID
I saw her going down the shore path.

Mrs. Mingott turns to Archer.

MRS. MINGOTT
Run down and fetch her, like a good grandson. May can tell me all the gossip about Julius Beaufort.

CAMERA close on Archer.

MRS. MINGOTT
Go ahead. I know she'll want to see you both.

CUT TO

EXT. SHORE PATH/NEWPORT. DAY

The path descends from the bank where the Mingott house is perched to a walk above the water. Weeping willows are planted on both sides of the walk. Through their branches the Lime Rock LIGHTHOUSE is visible.

Archer walks slowly down the path, as if moving toward a fate he thought was past him.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He had heard her name often enough during the year and a half since they had last met. He was even familiar with the main incidents of her life. But he heard all these accounts with detachment, as if listening to reminiscences of someone long dead.

The willow-lined walk curves toward the sea, where there is a small wooden pier ending in a pagoda-like summer house.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But the past had come again into
the present, as in those newly
discovered caverns in Tuscany,
where children had lit bunches
of straw and seen old images
staring from the wall.

BRIGHT sunset. The sun splinters in a thousand pieces. Archer
rounds the corner of the path, and sees the pier and house in
front of him. Then he sees: a WOMAN, back to the shore, leaning
against a rail. He stops, unable to go on. It's ELLEN.

She looks out to sea, at the bay furrowed with yachts and
sailboats and fishing craft.

He does not move. Ellen does not turn.

A sailboat glides through the channel between Lime Rock
lighthouse and the shore.

Still she has not turned.

Archer looks from Ellen to the sailboat, and back again.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He gave himself a single chance.
She must turn before the sailboat
crosses the Lime Rock light. Then
he would go to her.

He looks to the boat. It glides out on the receding tide between
the lighthouse and the shore.

He looks at Ellen: she seems to be drawn into the sunset.

Back to the boat: it passes the lighthouse. Water sparkles
between its stern and the last reef of the island.

Back to Ellen. She has not turned.

Archer walks away.

As he goes, we can still see Ellen's figure in the distance.
She does not turn.

CUT TO

EXT. MINGOTT HOUSE/NEWPORT DUSK

Archer and May leave the house and walk toward their waiting
carriage.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MAY
I'm sorry you didn't find her.
But I've heard she's so changed.

ARCHER
Changed?

MAY.
So indifferent to her old friends.
Summering in Portsmouth, moving to Washington. Sometimes I think we've always bored her. I wonder if she wouldn't be happier with her husband after all.

ARCHER
(laughs)
I don't think I've ever heard you be cruel before.

Archer helps her into the carriage.

MAY
Cruel?

ARCHER
Even angels don't think people are happier in hell.

MAY
(placidly)
Then she shouldn't have married abroad.

She starts to take the reins of the carriage. Archer lifts them from her.

ARCHER
Let me.

He snaps the reins and they start away from the house.

CUT TO

INT. ARCHER HOUSE/NEWPORT MORNING

The dining room: the family is having breakfast. Mrs. Archer and Janey are at the table, as is Mrs. Welland. May presides over the gathering with practiced ease.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MRS. WELLAND
The Blenkers. A party for the Blenkers?

JANEY
Who are they?

MAY
The Portsmouth people, I think.
The ones Countess Olenska is staying with.

Mrs. Archer puts down her fork and reads from an invitation.

MRS. ARCHER
"Professor and Mrs. Emerson Sillerton request the pleasure...Wednesday afternoon club...at 3 O'clock punctually.
To meet Mrs. and the Misses Blenker. Red Gables, Catherine Street."

She looks around the table.

MRS. ARCHER
You've all forgotten. Some of us will have to go.

JANEY
I don't see why, really. He's an archaeologist and he lives here even in winter. He's always taking his poor wife to tombs in the Yucatan instead of to Paris.
He's got a house full of long-haired men and short-haired women, and...

MRS. ARCHER
And he is Sillerton Jackson's cousin.

JANEY
(chastened)
Of course.

MAY
I'll go over. And, Janey, why don't you come with me. It will give you a chance to see Cousin Ellen.

(more)

(CONTINUED)
MAY (Cont'd)
(to Archer)
I'm sure Newland will find some way to spend the afternoon.

ARCHER
I think for once I'll just save it instead of spending it.

He takes the last bite of griddle cakes left on his plate.

ARCHER
Maybe drive to the farm to see about a new horse for the brougham.

CUT TO

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD/NEWPORT DAY

Archer at the reins of the carriage. The day is clear, the sky a brilliant ultramarine.

He leans a little way out of the carriage to check a name posted at the front of the lane, then turns the horses in.

We see the name on the post: Blenker.

CUT TO

EXT. DRIVE/BLENKER HOUSE/NEWPORT DAY

In the near distance, a long tumbledown house with peeling white paint.

Closer: a shed for horses. Archer stops and ties up his team.

Empty and quiet. The click of locusts in the still air. Archer looks toward the house, sees...

...to its left, a ghostly summer house of trellis-work that had once been white.

He walks toward the summer house.

As he gets closer, he sees a box garden, and something pink just beyond it.

DISSOLVE to tight shot: a pink parasol, inside the summer house.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

DISSOLVE to Archer’s face, staring at it, almost hypnotized. He walks toward the CAMERA. As he blocks it we...

...DISSOLVE again to the parasol. Close on it as Archer’s hand enters the frame to pick it up. CAMERA moves in on his face as he lifts the handle close to him. It is carved of rare wood. He smells its scent.

And lifts the handle closer...slowly...to his lips.

SOUND: of soft skirts behind him. We see: Archer’s eyes, in huge CLOSE-UP, closing in anticipation.

CAMERA pulls out as he waits for Ellen’s touch. But he hears only a voice behind him...

KATIE BLENKER

Hello?

His eyes open. He turns and sees...

...Katie Blenker, a large-framed adolescent girl.

KATIE BLENKER

I’m sorry, did you ring, I’ve been asleep in the hammock...

ARCHER

I didn’t mean to disturb you. Are you Miss Blenker? I’m Newland Archer.

KATIE

I’ve heard so much about you.

ARCHER

I came up the island to see about a new horse, and I thought I’d call. But the house seemed empty...

KATIE

It is empty. Don’t you know about the party the Sillertons are giving for us this afternoon? Everyone’s there but me, with my fever, and Countess Olenska...oh, you found my parasol!

She takes it from his hand.

(CONTINUED)
KATIE
It’s my best one. It’s from the Cameroons.

ARCHER
(trying to be casual)
The Countess was called away?

KATIE
A telegram came from Boston. She said she might be gone for two days. I do love the way she does her hair, don’t you? It reminds me of Sir Walter Scott.

CAMERA moves close on Archer. He is struggling with himself.

ARCHER
(interrupting her)
You don’t know...I’m sorry...I’ve got to be in Boston tomorrow. You wouldn’t know where she was staying?

CUT TO

EXT. BOSTON COMMON DAY
A sweltering summer day.

CAMERA close on an oil painting of the park scene. It nicely captures the trees and flowers under shimmering heat, the summer colors of suits and dresses...and the FIGURE of a woman, seated mid-perspective, on a bench.

DISSOLVE to an even tighter shot of the woman in the painting. A BRUSH works on her features.

DISSOLVE to Archer, watching the painter. He turns, squinting into the glare of the morning sun at the woman seated a little way in front of him on the bench.

FAST PAN over to her. It is Ellen.

CUT TO

EXT. BOSTON COMMON DAY
Ellen looks up. Archer is beside her.

(CONTINUED)
ELLEN
(startled)
Oh. (now smiling)
Oh.

Without rising, she makes room for him on the bench. He sits beside her and tries making casual conversation.

ARCHER
I'm here on business. Just got here, actually.

He stares at her. Being casual is too difficult.

ARCHER
You're doing your hair differently.

ELLEN
Only because the maid's not with me. She stayed back in Portsmouth. I'm only here for two days, it didn't seem worth...

ARCHER
You're traveling alone?

ELLEN
(sly)
Yes. Why, do you think it's a little dangerous?

ARCHER
(smiling)
Well, it's unconventional.

ELLEN
I suppose it is. I hadn't thought of it. I've just done something so much more unconventional. I've refused to take back money that belonged to me.

ARCHER
Someone came with an offer?

She nods.

ARCHER
What were the conditions? (CONTINUED)
ELLEN
(simply)
I refused.

ARCHER
(pressing)
Tell me the conditions.

ELLEN
Nothing unbearable, really. Just to sit at the head of his table now and then.

Archer choses his words carefully.

ARCHER
And he wants you back, at any price?

ELLEN
Well, it's a considerable price. At least it's considerable for me.

ARCHER
So you came to meet him.

She stares, then laughs suddenly.

ELLEN
My husband? Here? No, of course not. He sent someone.

ARCHER
(very careful now)
His secretary?

ELLEN
Yes. He's still here, in fact. He insisted on waiting. In case I changed my mind.

He is trying to absorb all this.

ELLEN
They told you at the hotel I was here?

He nods, but still says nothing. After a moment...

ELLEN
You haven't changed, Newland.
CONTINUED: (3)

Now he looks straight into her eyes.

ARCHER
(intense)
I thought I had.

ELLEN
Please don’t.

ARCHER
Just give me the day. I’ll say anything you like. Or nothing.
I won’t speak unless you tell me to. All I want is some time with you. All I want is to listen to you.

He is so intense Ellen has to look away from him. She takes out a small gold-faced watch on an enamel chain.

ARCHER
I want to get you away from that man. Was he coming to the hotel?

ELLEN
At eleven. Just in case...

ARCHER
Then we must leave now. It’s a hundred years since we’ve met. It may be another hundred before we meet again.

ELLEN
Where will we go?

ARCHER
Where?

He’s stumped: emotion has gotten in the way of foresight. He seems addled for a moment. She smiles at him.

ELLEN
Somewhere cool, at any rate.

ARCHER
We’ll take the steamboat down to Point Arley. There’s an inn.

ELLEN
I’ll have to leave a note at the hotel.

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (4)

He pulls a note-case from his pocket, fumbling a little.

ARCHER
Write it here. I have the paper... you see how everything's predestined?... and this... have you seen these... the new stylographic pen...

He hands her the case and pulls out a fountain pen.

ARCHER
Just steady the case on your knee, and I'll get the pen going in a second...

He bangs the hand holding the pen against the back of the bench.

ARCHER
It's like jerking down the mercury in a thermometer. Now try.

He hands her the pen and she starts to write a name on an envelope.

MATCH CUT TO

EXT. PARKER HOUSE HOTEL/BOSTON DAY

The envelope, sealed now, with a name we can't read.

ARCHER
Shall I take it in?

ELLEN
I'll only be a moment.

She disappears through the glazed doors of the hotel.

An Irish woman walks by, selling peaches. Archer declines.

The door of the hotel opens. He turns. A group of men comes onto the sidewalk and walks away. Archer watches them with mild interest.

He hears the doors again and looks over. A MAN, dressed in a distinctly European fashion and looking a little worried, appears on the sidewalk. He looks around, but does not seem to notice Archer.

Archer sees him, however. Something about his face is familiar, but Archer can't quite place it...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

...and the man is off, down the street.

SOUND of the hotel doors again. He turns, and Ellen is at his side.

CUT TO

INT./EXT. INN DAY

We see out the window: the billowing white sail of a small boat. CAMERA pulls back to reveal...

A private room for dining that opens onto a long wooden verandah. The Atlantic is visible through the open windows.

Archer and Ellen sit at a table covered with a checkered cloth held down from the ocean breezes by a bottle of pickles at one end and a blueberry pie under a clear dish at the other. SOUNDS of a party in the large dining room of the inn occasionally interrupt the stillness.

Ellen looks at the distant sailboat, then turns to Archer.

ELLEN
Why didn’t you come down to the beach to get me the day I was at Granny’s?

ARCHER
Because you didn’t turn around. You didn’t know I was there. I swore I wouldn’t unless you looked around.

ELLEN
But I didn’t look around on purpose.

ARCHER
You knew?

ELLEN
I recognized the carriage when you drove in. So I went to the beach.

ARCHER
To get as far away from me as you could.

ELLEN
As I could. Yes.

(CONTINUED)
ARCHE
Well you see, then. It’s no use. It’s better to face each other.

ELLEN
I thought you promised not to say things like that. I only want to be honest with you.

ARCHE
If we’re to be honest, there’s no other way I can speak to you. Isn’t that why you always admired Julius Beaufort? He was more honest than the rest of us, wasn’t he? So much more colorful, so much more... would you say, worldly? If that’s the world you admire so much, I wonder why you don’t go back.

ELLEN
I believe it’s because of you.

ARCHE
Me? I’m the man who married one woman because another one told him to.

ELLEN
(overlapping) Newland...

ARCHE
You gave me my first glimpse of a real life. Then you asked me to go on with the false one. No one can stand that.

ELLEN
Don’t say that. Not when I’m standing it.

He looks at her. Tears are running down her face.

ARCHE
Then you will have to go back.

ELLEN
No.

ARCHE
We can’t be like this.

(CONTINUED)
ELLEN
We can. We can be just like this.
Just as we are.

ARCHER
That's not a life for you.

ELLEN
It is. As long as it's part of
yours.

ARCHER
And the way I live...my life...how
can it be part of yours?

She looks away. He reaches for
her hands, holds them.

DISSOLVE quickly to Ellen and Archer, standing now, close. They
start out into the main dining room.

CAMERA follows them through the door, which opens onto a happy
party of schoolteachers enjoying a summer excursion.

CUT TO

70 EXT. STREET/NEW YORK DAY

Near Archer's law offices. The day is stifling, and the street
is crowded with discomforted business men, one of whom is
Archer.

He looks at the milling faces around him on the street, sees:
the face of the man that had seemed briefly familiar outside
the Parker House in Boston.

This time, the man sees Archer and walks straight toward him.

RIVIERE
(French accent)
It's Mr. Archer, I think?

ARCHER
Yes?

RIVIERE
My name is Riviere. We dined
together in Paris last year.

ARCHER
Oh yes. I'm sorry I didn't quite
recall....

(CONTINUED)
And we should remember, as Archer does now, the face of the MAN with the fine mustache we first encountered during the Paris montage.

People mill around them like rushing water as they stand talking.

RIVIERE
Quite alright. I had the advantage. I saw you yesterday in Boston.

Archer is taken aback by this.

CUT TO

INT. ARCHER'S OFFICE  DAY

The window is open, but heat has settled on the place like a curse. Occasional street NOISE, of pedestrians and carriage traffic, underscores the conversation. Riviere seems slightly uncomfortable, but handles himself impeccably.

RIVIERE
I wanted...if I might...to speak to you about the Countess Olenska.

ARCHER
On whose behalf?

RIVIERE
On behalf of...

ARCHER
You are Count Olenski's messenger?

RIVIERE
Not to you, Monsieur. I was his messenger to the Countess, yes. But that mission failed. I was his messenger to her family here. And I hope you can make that mission a failure as well.

ARCHER
Why in hell do you think I'd take a position against the family?

RIVIERE
Not against the family. But rather for the Countess.

(more)

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

RIVIERE (Cont’d)
Unless you agree with the family, of course, that she should accept the new proposals I brought from the Count and return to him.

ARCHER
I still do not understand why we’re speaking.

RIVIERE
So I can beg you, Monsieur...with all the force I’m capable of...not to let her go back.

Archer looks at him with astonishment. Riviere’s eyes fix momentarily on Archer, then look around the room.

ARCHER
And is that what you told the Countess?

RIVIERE
No. I accepted my mission from the Count in good faith. I believed it would be best for her to return. I told her all the Count had said, and she did me the kindness of listening carefully. But she’s changed, Monsieur.

ARCHER
You knew her before?

RIVIERE
I used to see her in her husband’s house. The Count would never have trusted my mission to a stranger.

ARCHER
This change...

RIVIERE
It may only have been my seeing her for the first time as she is. As an American. And if you’re an American of her kind...of your kind...

CAMERA starts to move in on Archer.  

(CONTINUED)
RIVIERE
...things that are accepted in
certain other societies, or at
least put up with for the sake
of...convenience...these things
become intolerable. She made her
marriage in good faith. It was
a faith that the Count could not
share, and could not understand.
So her faith was shattered. And
it was only coming back
here...coming home...that restored
it. Returning to Europe would mean
a life of some comfort. And
considerable sacrifice. And also,
I would think, no hope.

Archer looks at his presidential calendar hanging on the wall,
then down at the papers scattered on his mahogany desk. He hears
a SOUND--of a chair moving back, of Riviere getting to his
feet--and he looks up.

Riviere is standing in front of the desk. Archer extends his
hand.

ARCHER
Thank you.

CUT TO

INT. DINING ROOM/MRS. ARCHER'S HOUSE EVENING

A lavish affair attended by Janey and Mrs. Archer, Newland and
May, Mrs. Welland and Sillerton Jackson. CAMERA tracks along
a regal Thanksgiving dinner, ending on a well-carved turkey.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He had written to her once in
Washington. Just a few lines,
asking when they were to meet
again. And she wrote back: "Not
yet."

SOUND of dinner conversation comes up.

MRS. ARCHER
Well, Boston is more conservative
than New York. But I always think
it's a safe rule for a lady to
lay aside her French dresses for
one season.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

JANEY
I think it was Julius Beaufort
who started the new fashion by
making his wife clap her new
clothes on her back as soon as
they arrived. I must say, it takes
all Regina’s distinction not to
look like...

JACKSON
(helpfully)
Her rivals?

JANEY
...like that Annie Ring.

MRS. ARCHER
Careful, dear.

JANEY
Well, everybody knows.

JACKSON
Indeed. Beaufort always put his
business around. And now that his
business is gone there are bound
to be disclosures.

MAY
Gone? Is it that bad?

JACKSON
As bad as anything I’ve ever heard
of. Most everybody we know will
be hit, one way or another.

CUT TO

INT. LIBRARY/ARCHER HOUSE  NIGHT

Archer and Jackson stand at the Gothic fireplace of the library.
Archer helps Jackson light a cigar.

JACKSON
Very difficult for Regina, of
course. And it’s a pity...it’s
certainly a pity...that Countess
Olenska refused her husband’s
offer.

ARCHER
Why, for God’s sake.

(CONTINUED)
73 CONTINUED:

JACKSON
Well...to put it on the lowest
ground.... what's she going to
live on now? Most of her money's
invested with Beaufort, and the
allowance she's been getting from
the family is so cut back...

ARCHER
She has something, I'm sure.

JACKSON
Oh I would think a little. But
the family hoped she might see
that living here, on such a small
margin...

ARCHER
She won't go back.

Jackson looks at him attentively.

JACKSON
That's your opinion, eh? Well no
doubt you know. I suppose she
might still soften Catherine
Mingott, who could give her any
allowance she chooses. But the
rest of the family have no
particular interest in keeping
Madame Olenska here.

Archer sees: a cone of ash dropping from Jackson's cigar into
a brass tray at his elbow.

ARCHER
(pause)
Shall we go up and join my mother?

CUT TO

74 INT. ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

Archer and May climb the staircase to the second floor of their
house. The lamp May holds throws deep long shadows on the wall.

ARCHER
The lamp is smoking again. The
servants should see to it.

MAY
I'm sorry.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

He stops at the door of his study. She stops and bends over to lower the wick. The light shines on her shoulders and the curve of her face.

ARPER
I may have to go to Washington for a few days.

MAY
When?

ARPER
Tomorrow. I’m sorry, I should have said something before.

MAY
On business?

ARPER
On business, of course. There’s a patent case coming up before the Supreme Court. I just got the papers from Letterblair. It seems...

MAY
Well I’m sure it’s too complicated. I can’t even manage this lamp.

He helps her with the wick.

MAY
But the change will do you good.

The flame is stronger now.

MAY
And you must be sure to go and see Ellen.

He looks at her in the newly bright lamp light. Does she know? He thinks she might.

CUT TO

INT. ARPER HOUSE NIGHT

CAMERA close on a note being carried quickly on a silver tray through the hall.

WIDER to show: a MAID, carrying the note to Archer and May.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARCHER MAID
Excuse me, ma'm. But this came
while you were out.

May reaches for the note.

ARCHER
(indicating lamp)
Do something about this, will you,
Agnes?

He indicates the lamp, which still smokes slightly. The maid
nods, gives him her old lamp and takes the faulty one away.

May looks up from the note.

MAY
Granny's had a stroke.

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM/MINGOTT HOUSE MORNING

Aside from being propped up on more pillows than usual, and
breathing a little more heavily, Mrs. Mingott seems little the
worse for wear, although her speech is a trifle slurred. May
and Archer sit near her bedside.

MRS. MINGOTT
A stroke! I told them all it was
an excess of Thanksgiving, but
Dr. Bencomb acted most concerned
and insisted on notifying everyone
as if it were the reading of my
last testament. You're very dear
to come. But perhaps you only
wanted to see what I'd left you.

MAY
Granny, that's shocking!

MRS. MINGOTT
It was shock that did this to me.
It's all due to Regina Beaufort.
She came here last night, and she
asked me...

As she talks, we see what Archer imagines...

CUT TO
EXT. MINGOTT HOUSE NIGHT

The door opens and CAMERA moves in on the face of Regina Beaufort. She wears a thick veil, and looks, for a moment, like a figure from a Gothic novel.

MRS. MINGOTT (V.O.)
...she had the effrontery to ask me...to back Julius. Not to desert him, she said. To stand behind our common lineage in the Townsend family.

CUT TO

INT. DRAWING ROOM/MINGOTT HOUSE NIGHT

The regal Regina Beaufort, dressed in black as if for mourning, speaking animatedly to an intractable Mrs. Mingott.

MRS. MINGOTT (V.O.).
I said to her, "Honor’s always been honor, and honesty honesty, in Manson Mingott’s house, and will be ‘til I’m carried out feet first." And then...if you can believe it...she said to me, "But my name, Auntie. My name’s Regina Townsend."

CAMERA close on the tearful face of Regina Beaufort.

MRS. MINGOTT (V.O.)
And I said, "Your name was Beaufort when he covered you with jewels, and it’s got to stay Beaufort now that he’s covered you with shame."

CUT TO

INT. BEDROOM/MINGOTT HOUSE DAY

Mrs. Mingott finishes her story.

MRS. MINGOTT
So I gave out. Simply gave out. Now family will be arriving from all over expecting a funeral and they’ll have to be entertained. I don’t know how many notes Bencomb sent out.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARCHER
If there's any way we can help...

MRS.-MINGOTT
Well my Ellen is coming. I expressly asked for her. She arrives this afternoon on the train. If you could fetch her...

ARCHER
Of course. If May will send the brougham, I can take the ferry.

MAY
(the slightest pause)
There, you see, Granny. Everyone will be settled.

CUT TO

80 INT./EXT. CARRIAGE DAY
Archer and May riding downtown.

MAY
I didn't want to worry Granny. But how can you meet Ellen and bring her back here if you have to go to Washington yourself this afternoon.

ARCHER
I'm not going. The case is off. Postponed. I heard from Letterblair this morning.

MAY
Postponed? How odd. Mama had a note from him this morning as well. He was concerned about Granny but he had to be away. He was arguing a big patent case before the Supreme Court. You said it was a patent case, didn't you?

ARCHER
Well, that's it. The whole office can't go. Letterblair decided to go this morning.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

MAY
Then it’s not postponed?

The blood rises in Archer’s face.

ARCHER
No. But my going is.

May looks away from him.

CUT TO

EXT. TRAIN STATION  DAY

Close DISSOLVE onto a swarm of passengers disembarking from a steam train that we do not see.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He knew it was two hours by ferry and carriage from the Pennsylvania terminus in Jersey City back to Mrs. Mingott’s.

We see: Archer’s face, searching the crowd for Ellen.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Two hours. And maybe a little more.

DISSOLVE to passengers disembarking.

DISSOLVE to Ellen’s face, in the crowd.

CAMERA pulls back and Archer is at her side. He motions for the porter carrying her bags to follow them, then draws her arm through his.

ARCHER
You didn’t expect me today?

ELLEN
No.

ARCHER
It was Granny Mingott who sent me. She’s much better. I nearly went to Washington to see you. We would have missed each other.

They are at the carriage. Archer helps her in.

CUT TO
82 INT. CARRIAGE DAY

DISSOLVE quickly into Ellen seated in the carriage, Archer sitting close beside her.

ARCHER
Did you know... I hardly remembered you.

ELLEN
Hardly remembered?

ARCHER
I mean... I mean it's always the same. Each time I see you. You happen to me all over again.

ELLEN
I know that same feeling.

She puts her hand in his. The carriage starts to move.

Quick series of close DISSOLVES: he bends over. He unbuttons her tight brown glove. He kisses the palm of her hand. She turns her hand over and caresses his cheek.

CUT TO

83 INT. CARRIAGE DUSK

Later on in the journey to Mrs. Mingott's. Ellen and Archer sit very close in the cab.

ARCHER
Your husband's secretary came to see me. The day after we met in Boston.

She seems surprised.

ARCHER
You didn't know?

ELLEN
No. But he told me he had met you. In Paris, I think.

ARCHER
I wanted to ask you, after I saw him... was it Riviere who helped you get away after you left your husband?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ELLEN
Yes. I owe him a great debt.

ARCHER
(quietly)
I think you're the most honest
woman I ever met.

ELLEN
(slight smile)
No. But probably one of the least
fussy.

ARCHER
So much the better, then. For us.

ELLEN
Why?

ARCHER
So we can be together. Truly
together. Not just like this.

ELLEN
No.
(pause)
You shouldn't have come today.

Suddenly she turns to him and flings her arms around him,
pressing him close, kissing him passionately. He returns all
her feeling.

The light from a gas lamp on the street flashes in through the
window, startling Ellen. She draws away.

ARCHER
When my eyes are closed, I see
us together.

ELLEN
I see with my eyes open. Since
I can't be your wife, is it your
idea that I should live with you
as your mistress?

ARCHER
I want... somehow I want to get
away with you. Find a world where
words like that won't exist.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ELLEN
Oh my dear...where is that
country? Have you ever been
there? Is there anywhere for us
to be happy behind the backs of
people who trust us?

ARCHER
But it's too late. I'm beyond
caring about that.

ELLEN
No you're not! You've never been
beyond that. I have. I know what
it looks like. A lie in every
silence. It's no place for us.

He looks at her, dazed. Then he reaches for the small cab bell
that signals orders to the coachman.

The coach pulls up. Archer starts out.

ELLEN
Why are we stopping? This isn't
Granny's.

ARCHER
No. I'll get out here.

He steps down to the street.

ARCHER
You were right. I shouldn't have
come today.

He closes the door.

CUT TO

EXT. STREET DUSK

Archer signals and the coach pulls away.

A stinging wind is blowing. Archer touches his eyes. There are
tears.

He turns and walks away down the street.

CUT TO
INT. LIBRARY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

Archer is reading, May is embroidering a sofa cushion. Firelight casts a strong glow in the room.

Archer looks up from his book, sees: May's arms, as she works the needle. The sleeves of her dress have slipped back. Her sapphire betrothal ring shines on her left hand above her wedding band.

May sees him looking at her, smiles.

MAY
What are you reading?

ARCHER
Oh, a history. About Japan.

MAY
Why?

ARCHER
I don't know. Because it's a different country.

MAY
You used to read poetry. It was so nice when you read it to me.

He gets to his feet.

ARCHER
I need some air.

He goes to the window, opens it, leans out into the cold.

MAY
Newland! You'll catch your death.

ARCHER
Catch my death. Of course.

He turns, shuts the window, looks at May, who has gone back to her embroidery.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
But he thought, first, that he had been dead for months.

CAMERA moves closer on him, watching May.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Then then it occurred to him that she might die. People did. (more)

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (Cont’d)
Young people, healthy people, did.
She might die, and set him free.

May sees him looking at her.

MAY

Newland?

He walks to her and touches her head.

ARCHER

Poor May.

MAY

Poor? Why poor?

ARCHER

Because I’ll never be able to open
a window without worrying you.

MAY

I’ll never worry if you’re happy.

ARCHER

And I’ll never be happy unless
I can open the windows.

MAY

In this weather?

CUT TO

EXT. STREET/ELLEN’S HOUSE  NIGHT

Light snow. Ellen comes down the front steps of her house toward
a carriage that waits for her at the curb.

As she approaches the carriage door, Archer steps out of the
shadows.

ARCHER

I have to see you. I didn’t know
when you were leaving again.

ELLEN

I’m not leaving. Granny asked me
to stay and take care of her.

ARCHER

Then we have to talk now.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ELLEN
Not now. Granny lent me her carriage. I’m due at Regina Beaufort’s.

ARCHER
With all that’s happened, you’re still going to see her?

ELLEN
I know. Granny says Julius Beaufort is a scoundrel. But so is my husband, and the family still wants me to go back to him.

Two FIGURES, illuminated by the glowing street lamps but still a little indistinct in the blowing snow, are walking down the street toward Ellen and Archer.

ARCHER
But you won’t go back.

ELLEN
Not with Granny’s help. And yours.

The two figures draw nearer, then discretely cross to the other side of the street. As they pass under the streetlight we recognize one of the two men: Larry Lefferts.

Archer and Ellen see them and draw a little closer to the sheltering shadow of the carriage.

ARCHER
You won’t need my help if you have Granny’s.

ELLEN
I will still need your help. We will have to help each other.

ARCHER
I have to see you. Somewhere we can be alone.

ELLEN
(smiles)
In New York?

ARCHER
There’s the art museum in the park. Half past two tomorrow? I’ll be at the door.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: .(2)

She nods and takes his arm. He helps her quickly into the carriage.

We see: her gloved hand, gliding off his.

CUT TO

INT. ART MUSEUM DAY.

A obscure gallery in the brand new Metropolitan Museum.

CAMERA starts close on a case full of beautiful pre-Roman antiquities, moving along them. Some of the objects have descriptive cards attached; others simply bear the written legend "Use Unknown."

DISSOLVE to Archer and Ellen, sitting on a divan near a heating system in the center of the room. Through the far door is a diminishing perspective of other galleries.

Even though they are alone in the room, they both speak softly. Their whispers are sibilant in these marble walls.

ELLEN
I promised Granny to stay in her house because I thought I would be safer.

ARCHER
Safer from me?

She bends her head.

ARCHER
Safer from loving me?

EXTREME CLOSE-UP. What Archer sees: a tear, hanging in the mesh of her veil.

ELLEN
(crying quietly)
Safer from hurting others.

ARCHER
(urgently)
What others? We can't care about others any more.

ELLEN
(pause)
Shall I come to you once, and then go away?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARCHER
I won't think of you going away.

ELLEN
What else can I do? I can't stay here and lie to all the people who have been so good to me.

ARCHER
No. But can you leave and lie to yourself?

She looks at him. She can't answer. He hands her a sealed envelope.

ARCHER
Meet me tomorrow. There's an address. And a key.

She takes the envelope hurriedly as she stands up.

ELLEN
The day after.

He takes her wrist. They look at each other with such intensity that, for a moment, they seem like enemies. Then her face changes. The tension passes.

He stands with her.

ELLEN
No. Don't come any farther than this.

She hurries to the gallery door, turns and waves.

DISSOLVE from her, small in the distance, framed in the gallery door, to...

88 INT. LIBRARY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

...Archer's face, as he stares at the red grating of his fireplace.

A hand comes in and gently touches his shoulder. He turns, startled: it's May.

MAY
I'm sorry I'm late. You weren't worried, were you?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

ARCHE
Is it late?

She removes her velvet hat as she speaks, drawing the long hatpins from her glistening hair.

MAY
Past seven. I stayed at Granny's because Cousin Ellen came in.

Archer reacts to the mention of Ellen's name. May doesn't seem to notice.

MAY
We had a wonderful talk. She was so dear. Just like the old Ellen. And Granny's so charmed by her.

He listens to this, still beguiled by her apparent kindness.

MAY
You do see, though, why sometimes the family has been annoyed? Going to see Regina Beaufort in Granny's carriage...

Now he gets up, annoyed at the same old prattle.

ARCHE
Aren't we dining out?

He starts past her, and she moves forward, almost impulsively. She throws her arms around him and presses her cheek to his.

MAY
You haven't kissed me today.

She is trembling.

CUT TO

INT. THEATER NIGHT

CAMERA looks down on May from above. She is sitting serenely in a theater box. She wears a beautiful dress of blue-white satin and old lace.

CAMERA moves in slowly from her as we hear...

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was the custom, in old New York, for brides to appear in their wedding dress during the first year or two of marriage. But May, since returning from Europe, had not worn her bridal satin until this evening.

On those last words, we quickly see...

CAMERA close on a bright bunch of DAISIES; petals being sprinkled on the ground.

MUSIC up: it is the yearly performance of Faust. A woman starts to sing an aria.

In a reprise of the opening scene, we DISSOLVE to the face of Newland Archer. CAMERA pans as he looks across the row of boxes, sees: May, in her wedding dress.

Then he looks over to the Mingott box, where he first saw Ellen Olenska. It is empty.

CUT TO

INT. THEATER NIGHT

As in the opening scene: Archer's POV as he walks quickly down the theater corridor, past its red velvet walls.

CUT TO

INT. THEATER NIGHT

CAMERA on Archer, tight, as he enters box and leans over to May.

ARCHER
My head's bursting. Don't tell anyone, but please come home with me.

May looks at him, then whispers to her mother. Mrs. Welland whispers an excuse to her companion, Mrs. van der Luyden, as May rises and leaves with her husband.

As she goes, she puts her hand on his.

CUT TO
INT. LIBRARY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

Starting with CAMERA close on Archer’s hand as he opens a silver box and takes out a cigarette.

CAMERA pans with cigarette, as we hear...

MAY
Shouldn’t you rest?

Archer walks to the fireplace, May near him.

ARCHER
My head’s not as bad as that. And there’s something important I have to tell you right away.

May sits down in an armchair, looking at him expectantly.

ARCHER
May... There’s something I’ve got to tell you... about myself...

May sits still. Her face is tranquil, but very pale.

ARCHER
Madame Olenska...

MAY
(interrupting)
Oh, why should we talk about Ellen tonight?

ARCHER
Because I should have spoken before.

MAY
Is it really worthwhile, dear? I know I’ve been unfair to her at times. Perhaps we all have. You’ve understood her better than any of us, I suppose. But does it matter, now that it’s all over?

ARCHER
Over? How do you mean, over?

MAY
Why, since she’s going back to Europe so soon.

Archer’s hand grips the corner of the mantelpiece.

(continued)
CONTINUED:

MAY
Granny approves and understands. She's disappointed, of course, but she's arranged to make Ellen financially independent of the Count. I thought you would have heard today at your offices.

He stares at her, not really seeing her. She lowers her eyes.

Silence.

A lump of coal falls forward in the grate. May gets up to push it back and Archer turns to face her.

ARCHER
It's impossible.

MAY
Impossible? Certainly she could have stayed here, with Granny's extra money. But I guess she's given us up after all.

ARCHER
How do you know what you've just told me?

MAY
From Ellen. I told you I saw her at Granny's yesterday.

ARCHER
And she told you yesterday?

MAY
No. I got a note from her this afternoon. Do you want to see it?

May moves to the desk and opens a drawer.

MAY
I thought you knew.

She holds out a note. He moves to her and takes it.

CAMERA moves in on him very slowly as he reads, and we hear...

(CONTINUED)
ELLEN (V.O.)
"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 sees
now that if I return to Europe
I must live by myself. I am
hurrying back to Washington to
pack up, and I sail next week.
You must be very good to Granny
when I'm gone... as good as you've
always been to me."

CAMERA is very close on Archer now.

ELLEN (V.O.)
"If any of my friends wish to urge
me to change my mind, please tell
them it would be utterly useless."

CAMERA ends on huge CLOSE-UP of his wounded eyes.
Then Archer looks away from the note to May.

ARCHER
Why did she write this?

MAY
I suppose because we talked things
over yesterday...

ARCHER
What things?

MAY
I told her I was afraid I hadn't
been fair to her. Hadn't always
understood how hard it must have
been here.

Archer is struggling hard to keep himself together.

MAY
I knew you'd be the one friend
she could always count on. And
I wanted her to know that you and
I were the same. In all our
feelings.

(more slowly)
She understood why I wanted to
tell her this. I think she
understands everything.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

She takes one of his cold hands and presses it quickly to her cheek.

MAY
My head aches, too. Good night, dear.

She turns and walks toward the door. Her wedding dress makes a soft sound in the still room.

CUT TO

INT. DINING ROOM/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

CAMERA moves down the long dining room table, seeing: openwork silver baskets, containing Maillard bonbons, placed between candelabra; a lavish centerpiece of Jacqueminot roses and maidenhair; the finest china and silver; hand-written dinner menus edged in gold.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was, as Mrs. Archer said to Mrs. Welland, a great event for a young couple to give their first dinner, and it was not to be undertaken lightly. There was a hired chef, two borrowed footmen, roses from Henderson's, Roman punch and menus on gilt-edged cards. It was considered a particular triumph that the van der Luydens, at May's request, stayed in the city to be present at her farewell dinner for the Countess Olenska.

Big close-up of Archer. He goes through the motions of eating, but he has the face of a man in suspended animation.

CAMERA moves slowly out from him. First we see who's seated on Archer's left: Ellen, who wears several rows of amber beads around her neck.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Archer saw all the harmless-looking people at the table as a band of quiet conspirators, with himself, and Ellen, the center of their conspiracy.

(CONTINUED)
Gradually shot widens to include the room: there is a piano in a corner with a large basket of flowers.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He guessed himself to have been, for months, the center of countless silently observing eyes and patiently listening ears. He understood that, somehow, the separation between himself and the partner of his guilt had been achieved. And he knew that now the whole tribe had rallied around his wife.

CAMERA (crane) ends on overhead shot of room: several dozen guests—-including Mrs. Welland and Mrs. Archer, Janey and the van der Luydens and the Lefferts and the Jacksons—are enjoying the dinner and making easy conversation.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was a prisoner in the center of an armed camp.

Now we see: CLOSE-UP of Archer’s dazed and troubled face. Table chatter continues. We hear, over...

JANEY
Regina’s not well at all, but that doesn’t stop Beaufort from devoting as much time to Annie Ring...

As conversation drones on, CAMERA tilts down toward Archer’s coat pocket, and we DISSOLVE...

...through his coat...
...inside his pocket...
...to a sealed envelope, with his name and address on the outside...
...through the envelope...
...to a note, containing only an address...
...to a key, lying inside the folded note.

Now CUT back to CLOSE-UP of Archer. PULL OUT to TWO SHOT with Ellen sitting next to him. In an act of will, he turns to her.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

ARCHER
Was the trip from Washington very tiring?

ELLEN
The heat in the train was dreadful. But all travel has its hardships.

ARCHER
Whatever they may be, they're worth it. Just to get away.

She can't reply.

ARCHER
I mean to do a lot of traveling myself soon.

Ellen's face trembles. To rescue the moment, he leans toward a man sitting across from him.

ARCHER
Philip, what about you? Are you interested? Athens and Smyrna and maybe Constantinople? Then as far East as we can go.

PHILIP
Possibly, possibly.

MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN
But not Naples. Dr. Bencomb says there's a fever.

ARCHER
There's India, too.

PHILIP
You must have three weeks to do India properly.

CUT TO

INT. LIBRARY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

After dinner. The men are gathered in several groups, all smoking cigars. Archer still seems to be disengaged from everything happening around him, even though he manages to maintain appearances.

CAMERA starts close on group of several men near Archer

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

GUEST
Beaufort may not receive
invitations any more, but it’s
clear he still maintains a certain
position.

PHILIP
Horizontal, from all I’ve heard.

CAMERA moves out to include others in group: Larry Lefferts,
van der Luyden, Sillerton Jackson.

LEFFERTS
(indignant)
If things go on like this, we’ll
be seeing our children fighting
for invitations to swindlers’
houses and marrying Beaufort’s
bastards.

JACKSON
Has he got any?

Laughter from the group.

GUEST
Careful, there, gentlemen. Careful

Archer manages a small smile, but is still distracted. He starts
to walk straight toward the CAMERA.

CAMERA pans with him as he goes. Van der Luyden comes to his
side (from left side of frame) and gently takes his elbow. We
see, in TWO-SHOT: van der Luyden, in profile, as he speaks to
Archer. Archer’s back is turned.

VAN DER LUYDEN
Have you ever noticed? It’s the
people who have the worst cooks
who are always yelling about being
poisoned when they dine out.
Lefferts used to be a little more
adept, I thought. But then, grace
is not always required. As long
as one knows the steps.

As van der Luyden speaks, the dialogue FADES and CAMERA moves
in on Archer, back still turned to us, lost in his own thoughts.
We end on tight CLOSE-UP of the back of Archer’s head.

CUT TO
INT. HALLWAY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

CAMERA in tight CLOSE-UP of Archer’s face. PULL BACK to see: Archer, standing in the doorway of the drawing room. Over his shoulder, we see other men coming down from the library to join the ladies.

PAN from Archer slowly across room. We see MAY, sitting on a gilt sofa next to Countess Olenska. SHE looks over, sees Archer. Her eyes are shining as she gets up.

As soon as she’s on her feet, Mrs. van der Luyden beckons ELLEN to join her across the room. ELLEN goes slowly to her, and another woman joins them.

CAMERA pans with all this careful social choreography. ARCHER watches the ritual as if it were an elaborate rehearsal for a firing squad. We hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
The silent organization which held this whole small world together was determined to put itself on record. It had never for a moment questioned the propriety of Madame Olenska’s conduct. It had never questioned Archer’s fidelity. And it had never heard of, suspected, or even conceived possible, anything at all to the contrary.

CAMERA pans across the roomful of guests chatting with languid animation.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
From the seamless performance of this ritual, Archer knew that New York believed him to be Madame Olenska’s lover.

CAMERA now on May.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
And he understood, for the first time, that his wife shared the belief.

May looks at him and smiles.

CUT TO
INT. FRONT HALL/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

CAMERA (Archer’s POV) swoops down on Ellen’s bare shoulders in a great desperate rush.

Archer is helping her on with her cloak. Other GUESTS are leaving. A sharp wind comes through the open door, making the candlelight in the hallway flicker.

ARCHER
Shall I see you to your carriage?

She turns to him as Mrs. van der Luyden, swathed in sable, steps forward.

MRS. VAN DER LUYDEN
(casual)
We are driving dear Ellen home.

Ellen, grasping her fan of eagle feathers and holding her cloak closed, holds her other hand out to Archer.

ELLEN
Good-bye.

ARCHER
Good-bye. But I’ll see you soon in Paris.

ELLEN
Oh...if you and May could come...

Mr. van der Luyden comes forward to offer his arm. She takes it, and walks down the steps of the house.

Archer watches from the doorway. He sees:

Ellen, stepping into the carriage. For a moment, as she gets herself settled, he can see her face in the dim streetlight.

Then she sits back, and she is lost in shadow.

CUT TO

INT. UPPER HALLWAY/ARCHER HOUSE NIGHT

May, holding a lamp, climbs the stairs of the now silent house. Archer is a few steps behind her.

He stops, and goes toward the open door of the library.

May keeps going.

CUT TO
INT. LIBRARY/ARČHER HOUSE  NIGHT

Archer looks lost in the room. May, pale but still full of energy after the long night, now appears in the doorway.

MAY
It did go off beautifully, didn’t it.

ARCHER
Oh. Yes.

MAY
May I come in and talk it over?

ARCHER
Of course. But you must be very sleepy.

MAY
No. I’m not. I’d like to be with you a little.

ARCHER
Fine.

They sit near the fire.

ARCHER
Since you’re not tired and want to talk, there’s something I have to tell you. I tried the other night.

MAY
Oh yes, dear. Something about yourself?

ARCHER
About myself, yes. You say you’re not tired. But I am. I’m tired of everything. I want to make a break...

MAY
You mean give up the law?

ARCHER
Well, maybe. To get away, at any rate. Right away. On a long trip. Go somewhere that’s so far...

MAY
How far?

(continued)
98 CONTINUED:

ARCHER
I don't know. I thought of India.
Or Japan.

She stands up, still near him. He keeps looking at the fire.

MAY
As far as that? But I'm afraid
you can't, dear . . .
(uneasy voice)
...not unless you take me with
you. That is, if the doctors will
let me go...but I'm afraid they
won't.

He stares at her, his eyes nearly wild.

MAY
I've been sure of something since
this morning and I've been longing
to tell you...

She sinks down in front of him, puts her face against his knee.

ARCHER
Oh.

He strokes her hair with his cold hand.

MAY
You didn't guess?

ARCHER
No. Of course, I mean, I hoped, but...

He looks away from her.

ARCHER
(quietly)
Have you told anyone else?

MAY
Only Mama, and your mother.
(a beat)
And Ellen. You know I told you
we'd had a long talk one
afternoon...and how wonderful she
was to me.

ARCHER
Ah.

(continued)
MAY
Did you mind my telling her, Newland?

ARCHER
Mind? Why should I? But that was two weeks ago, wasn’t it? I thought you said you weren’t sure ’til today.

MAY
(face flushed)
No. I wasn’t sure then. But I told her I was. And you see...

She looks up at him, moving closer.

MAY
I was right.

She is very close to him now, expecting to be kissed. Her eyes are wet with victory.

CAMERA close on Newland. He’s speechless. He averts his eyes.

CAMERA follows his desperate gaze around the room. It starts to pan slowly. After several moments we hear...

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was the room in which most of the real things of his life had happened.

CAMERA continues to pan slowly around the room, from left to right.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Their eldest boy, Samuel, too delicate to be taken to church in midwinter, had been christened there.

DISSOLVE to another PAN, moving in the same direction: a baby being christened by an Episcopal bishop. May, Archer and the rest of the family standing by, proud and pleased.

DISSOLVE to PAN continuing slowly across room. We begin to notice gradual changes: in the furniture; in the furnishings; in the lighting.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was here that Samuel took his first steps. And it was here that Archer and his wife always discussed the future of all their children. Bill's interest in archeology, Mary's passion for sport and philanthropy. Samuel's inclinations toward "art" that led to a job with an architect, as well as some considerable redecoration.

CAMERA pans slowly past a Chippendale cabinet and some English mezzotints.

DISSOLVE to PAN in same direction, tighter than the one before: of Mary, a stalwart young girl, being embraced by a happy, older May.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
It was in this room that Mary had announced her engagement to the dullest and most reliable of Larry Lefferts' many sons. And it was in this room, too, that her father had kissed her through her wedding veil before they motored to Grace Church.

DISSOLVE to PAN in same direction, very tight: of Archer kissing his daughter through the veil.

DISSOLVE to continuing pan of the library.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
He was a dutiful, loving father, and a faithful husband. When May died of infectious pneumonia after nursing Bill safely through, he had honestly mourned her. The world of her youth had fallen into pieces and rebuilt itself without her ever noticing.

CAMERA has completed pan of room, and now moves slowly in on a silver-farmed picture of the young May, dressed in her Newport archery costume.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (4)

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Her incapacity to recognize change
made her children conceal their
views from her, just as Archer
concealed his. She died thinking
the world a good place, full of
loving and harmonious households
like her own.

CAMERA is close on the picture, which rests on Archer's Eastlake
writing-table. Near it: a shaded electric lamp.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Newland Archer, in his
fifty-seventh year, mourned his
past and honored it.

We hear, for the first time: a SOUND that is both startling and
familiar....the RINGING of a telephone.

CAMERA pans to phone, and to Archer's hand picking up the
receiver.

CAMERA follows the phone and reveals his face: at 57, he shows
the evidence of a full life behind him.

ARCHER
Yes? Hello?

OPERATOR (V.O.)
Chicago wants you.

SAMUEL (V.O.)
Dad?

ARCHER
Sam?

SAM (V.O.)
I'm just about finished out here,
but my client wants me to look
at some gardens before I start
designing.

ARCHER
Fine. Where?

SAM (V.O.)
Europe. I'll have to sail next
Wednesday, on the Mauretania.

ARCHER
And miss the wedding?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (5)

SAM (V.O.)
Annie will wait for me. I’ll be back on the first and our wedding’s not ’til the fifth.

CAMERA starts to pan around the room again. We hear the rest of this conversation while seeing the other side of the changed room.

ARCHER
(affectionate)
I’m surprised you remember the date.

SAM (V.O.)
Well, I was hoping you’d join me. I’ll need you to remind me of what’s important. What do you say? It will be our last father and son trip.

ARCHER
I appreciate the invitation, but...

SAM (V.O.)
Wonderful. Can you call the Cunard office first thing tomorrow?

CAMERA has come to rest on the window. Through the softly blowing curtains we see: a sunny street on a fine New York spring day.

And we...

DISSOLVE TO

INT. BRISTOL HOTEL ROOM/PARIS DAY

Another window. Now the city is Paris, the street outside the Faubourg St. Honore. The spring day is equally fine.

CAMERA pans around room, left-to-right. The luxurious furnishings make a distinct contrast to Archer’s darker, subtler library. End on Archer, sitting on a divan near the window, looking out.

A hand comes in and touches his shoulder. He turns: it’s Sam. He has his mother’s bearing. But he has Archer’s eyes.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SAM
I'm going out to Versailles. Will you join me?

ARCHER
I thought I'd go to the Louvre.

SAM
I'll meet you there later, then. Countess Olenska is expecting us at half-past five.

ARCHER
(stunned)
What?

SAM
Oh, didn't I tell you. Annie made me swear to do three things in Paris. Get her the score of the last Debussy songs. Go to the Grand Guignol. And see Madame Olenska. You know she was awfully good to Annie when Mr. Beaufort sent her over to the Sorbonne.

CAMERA moves close on Archer as his son talks, until only Archer is in the frame. We see, in his face, signs of memories flooding back.

SAM
Wasn't the Countess friendly with Mr. Beaufort's first wife or something? I think Mrs. Beaufort said that she was. In any case, I called the Countess this morning and introduced myself as her cousin and...

ARCHER
You told her I was here?

SAM
Of course. Why not? She sounds lovely. Was she?

ARCHER
Lovely? I don't know. She was different.

CUT TO
A series of paintings of the Italian Renaissance, DISSOLVING quickly from one to another.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
Whenever he thought of Ellen Olenska, it had been abstractly, serenely, like an imaginary loved one in a book or picture. She had become the complete vision of all that he had missed.

Last painting of the short series is a Titian of almost palpable sensuality.

Hold on this as we hear...

ARCHER (V.O.)
(whispering)
But I'm only fifty-seven.

And we...

DISSOLVE TO

INT. LOUVRE/PARIS DAY
Archer's face, melancholy and uncertain now, studying the Titian.

Dazzles of afternoon light flood the gallery. He turns and walks away.

CUT TO

EXT. TUILERIES/PARIS AFTERNOON
Sam and Archer, deep in conversation, walk through the great gardens on their way to Madame Olenska's.

SAM
Did Mr. Beaufort really have such a bad time of it, when he wanted to remarry. No one wanted to give him an inch.

ARCHER
Perhaps because he had already taken so much.

(CONTINUED)
SAM
As if anyone remembers any more.
Or cares.

ARCHER
Well, he and Annie Ring did have
a lovely daughter. You're very
lucky.

SAM
We're very lucky, you mean.

ARCHER
Yes, that's what I mean.

SAM
So considering how that all turned
out...and considering all the time
that's gone by...I don't see how
you can resist.

ARCHER
Well, I did have some resistance
at first to your marriage, I've
told you that...

SAM
No, I mean resist seeing the woman
you almost threw everything over
for. Only you didn't.

ARCHER
(cautious)
I didn't.

SAM
No. But mother said...

ARCHER
Your mother?

SAM
Yes. The day before she died. She
asked to see me alone, remember?
She said she knew we were safe
with you, and always would be.
Because once, when she asked you
to, you gave up the thing you
wanted most.

Archer walks on in silence for a few moments.

(CONTINUED)
102 CONTINUED: (2)

ARCHER
She never asked me.
Sam stops and turns to his father.

SAM
But I'll ask you. Come with me.

CUT TO

103 EXT. RUE DU BAC/PARIS DAY

A quiet quarter off a busy boulevard. Archer stands in a little square in front of a modern building with balconies running up its cream-colored front.

Sam crosses from the apartment to his father.

SAM
The porter says it's the fifth floor.

He casually slips his arm through his father's.

SAM
It must be the one with the awnings.

They both look toward an upper balcony, just above the horse-chestnut trees in the square. The day is fading into a soft sun-shot haze. The sun makes reflections on the window.

Sam turns to his father.

SAM
It's nearly six.

Archer sees an empty bench under a tree.

ARCHER
I think I'll sit a moment.

SAM
Do you mean you won't come?

Archer shrugs.

SAM
You really won't come at all?

ARCHER
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SAM
She won't understand.

ARCHER
Go on, son. Maybe I'll follow you.

He walks toward the bench, Sam following him.

SAM
But what will I tell her?

ARCHER
(as he sits)
Don't you always have something to say?

SAM
I'll tell her you're old-fashioned and you insist on walking up five flights instead of taking the elevator.

ARCHER
(pause)
Just say I'm old-fashioned. That's enough.

Sam gives his father a look of affectionate exasperation, then crosses the square and goes into the building.

Archer sits on the bench, watching him go.

Then he looks up at the windows on the fifth floor.

The setting SUN makes dazzling reflections on the glass.

A CURTAIN moves, briefly, then falls back into place.

The sun suddenly makes a bright FLARE on the pane that stings Archer's eye. He moves his head slightly and we...

CUT TO

EXT. SUMMER HOUSE/NEWPORT DUSK

Another sunset, thirty years ago.

A SAILBOAT starts to sail between the shore and a LIGHTHOUSE. 

ELLEN, in the summer house, watches it. Her back is to us.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

The SAILBOAT glides between the shore and the LIGHTHOUSE. The sun dances on the water.

ELLEN, in the last brilliant burst of the setting sun. She starts to move.

She TURNS AROUND.

And looks full at us, CAMERA close.

And SHE SMILES.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. RUE DU BAC/PARIS DAY

DISSOLVE onto balcony window. A servant starts to roll up the awning.

WIDE SHOT of Archer, still on the bench, watching the awning being secured. The servant finishes, goes back inside.

Archer remains on the bench, alone in the twilight.

FADE OUT