

Villette
by
David Wagner

From the novel by
Charlotte Bronte

FADE IN:

INT. SHADOWY ROOM -- DAY

An intricate wooden sailing ship in a large glass bottle falls to the floor in slow motion.

The voice of LUCY SNOWE, a young British woman, asks --

LUCY (V.O.)
 Are there wicked things, not human, which
 envy human bliss? Are there evil
 influences haunting the air, and
 poisoning it for man?

The glass bottle strikes the floor and bursts in an EXPLOSIVE SHATTER, damaging the small sailing vessel beyond repair.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. ESTATE HOUSE IN ENGLAND -- DAY

The large house sits on a pleasant street. It is a bright day in the autumn of 1840.

INT. PARLOR OF ESTATE HOUSE -- DAY

A girl of 13, LUCY SNOWE, stares with wonder at an intricately-designed sailing ship constructed inside a large glass bottle.

LUCY (V.O.)
 When I was a girl, I went to visit the
 Brettons twice a year, and well I liked
 my time there. The house and its
 inhabitants specially suited me.

MRS. BRETTON, a statuesque woman of 45, appears to be explaining to Lucy how the small ship got inside the narrow-necked bottle.

Mrs. Bretton's son JOHN GRAHAM, a handsome 16-year-old with a frequent smile, studies at a desk nearby.

LUCY (V.O., CONT'D)
 I was a good deal taken notice of by my
 godmother, Mrs. Bretton, a widow with one
 son. That autumn, I believe my godmother
 could see events coming, whose very
 shadow I scarce guessed...

MRS. BRETTON
 A little girl is coming to stay for a
 while -- the daughter of a distant
 cousin. She has recently lost her mother.

LUCY
 Oh, how sad.

MRS. BRETTON
 The doctor insists that travelling will
 be a great help at this time to the
 little girl's father, so I offered to
 take charge of his daughter for a time.

LUCY
 I'll do whatever I can to help.

JOHN GRAHAM
We both shall, of course.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ENTRY HALL -- NIGHT

The DOORBELL announces company.

Lucy runs into the hall.

A SERVANT, with a blanketed bundle in his arms, enters from outside.

LUCY
Is that the child?

SERVANT
Yes, miss.

Lucy begins to open the blanket, but a small voice speaks from inside.

POLLY
Put me down, please.

Startled, Lucy takes a step back.

The servant lowers the small bundle to the floor.

Doffing the wrap with haste, little POLLY hands the blanket to the servant.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Please, put it away.

Polly turns and fixes her eyes on Mrs. Bretton, who has just entered.

MRS. BRETTON
Come here, little dear. Come and let me see if you are cold and damp.

Polly advances promptly.

Lucy gazes at her with curiosity. Polly appears tiny, but is a neat, completely formed little figure.

Mrs. Bretton rubs Polly's hands and arms. The little girl looks into Mrs. Bretton's cheerful eyes with a wistful gaze. The woman kisses the tiny face.

MRS. BRETTON (CONT'D)
What is my little one's name?

POLLY
Polly, Papa calls me.

MRS. BRETTON
Will Polly be content to live with me?

POLLY
Not always, but 'til Papa comes home. Papa is gone away.

MRS. BRETTON
He will return to Polly.

POLLY
Will he, ma'am? Do you know he will?

MRS. BRETTON
I know he will.

Polly's eyes fill.

Lucy reaches out to comfort the child, but her action startles Polly, who quickly pulls back. Lucy is grieved that she has caused the little girl more anguish.

LUCY
I -- I'm sorry, I was just --

MRS. BRETTON
(to Polly)
This is Lucy, dear. I'm sure the two of you will be great friends very soon.

POLLY
She's rather large, isn't she?

MRS. BRETTON
Lucy is a few years older than Polly.

POLLY
How old is she?

LUCY
I'm 13.

POLLY
Oh dear. I've never known a girl that old.

Lucy and Mrs. Bretton cannot hold back smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- NIGHT

Mrs. Bretton, Lucy, and Polly are seated around the fire.

John Graham enters and joins their circle.

JOHN GRAHAM
Good evening.

MRS. BRETTON
Hello, dear. Have you eaten?

JOHN GRAHAM
Yes, Mother, thank you. Hello, Lucy.

LUCY
Hello.

John Graham turns to the little figure before him.

JOHN GRAHAM
Mother, I see a young lady in the present society to whom I have not been introduced.

MRS. BRETTON

No, you were out with your friends when she arrived.

JOHN GRAHAM

Miss, might I have the honor to introduce myself? Your slave, John Graham Bretton.

He bows gravely.

Polly puts down her sewing, descends from her perch, and curtseys with unspeakable seriousness.

POLLY

How do you do?

JOHN GRAHAM

I am in fair health, only in some measure fatigued with the journey home. I hope, ma'am, I see you well?

POLLY

Tol-rer-ably well.

She regains her seat.

John Graham pulls his chair toward her stool.

JOHN GRAHAM

I hope, ma'am, the present residence, my mother's house, appears to you a convenient place of abode?

POLLY

Not par-tic-er-er-ly -- I want to go home.

JOHN GRAHAM

A natural and laudable desire, ma'am, but one which I shall do my best to oppose. I hope to get out of you a little of that precious commodity called "amusement," which Mama and Mistress Lucy fail to yield me.

POLLY

I shall have to go with Papa soon. I shall not stay long at your mother's.

JOHN GRAHAM

Yes, yes, you will stay with me, I am sure. I have a pony on which you shall ride, and no end of books with pictures to show you.

POLLY

Are you going to live here too?

JOHN GRAHAM

I thought I might. Does that please you?

POLLY

No.

JOHN GRAHAM

(amused, leaning in closer)
Why not?

POLLY
I think you queer.

JOHN GRAHAM
My face, ma'am?

POLLY
Your face and all about you. You have long red hair.

JOHN GRAHAM
Auburn hair, if you please -- Mama calls it auburn, or golden. But even with my "long red hair..."
(waving his mane with triumph)
...I cannot possibly be queerer than is your ladyship.

POLLY
You call me queer?

JOHN GRAHAM
Certainly.

POLLY
(insulted)
I think I shall go to bed.

MRS. BRETTON
Now, John Graham, I will not have that child teased.

JOHN GRAHAM
(undeterred)
A little thing like you ought to have been in bed many hours since, but you sat up in the expectation of meeting me.

POLLY
No, indeed.

JOHN GRAHAM
You certainly wished to enjoy the pleasure of my society. You knew I was coming home, and would wait to have a look at me.

POLLY
I sat up for sewing, and not for you.

JOHN GRAHAM
Very good, Miss. But I am going to be your favorite -- preferred before your papa soon, I dare say.

POLLY
(ignoring him)
Good night, Mrs. Bretton, good night, Miss Snowe.

Suddenly John Graham catches up Polly with one hand, and holds her aloft above his head.

The suddenness, the disrespect of the action are too much for Polly.

POLLY (CONT'D)
 (indignant)
 For shame, Mr. John Graham! Put me down!

He does.

POLLY (CONT'D)
 I wonder what you would think of me if I
 were to treat you in that way, lifting
 you with my hand...
 (raising that mighty member)
 ...as if I were a...a baby cat?

JOHN GRAHAM
 A kitten?

POLLY
 That's what I said!

She marches out.

John Graham has been put in his place.

Mrs. Bretton shakes her head disapprovingly.

Lucy looks on in amusement.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Polly sits listlessly in the window seat.

Lucy, watching her, suddenly witnesses a startling transfiguration.

Polly's fixed and heavy gaze swims, trembles, then glitters in
 fire.POLLY

It is!

In a moment she is gone from the room.

Lucy looks out the window.

EXT. STREET -- CONTINUOUS

Polly darts out to the street and gets caught up by a man, MR. HOME,
 and covered with his cloak. He advances with her toward the house.

INT. PARLOR -- CONTINUOUS

Mr. Home comes inside holding Polly. He is known to Mrs. Bretton, yet
 she is flustered, surprised.

MRS. BRETTON
 Mr. Home!

MR. HOME
 I could not help it, madam -- I found it
 impossible to leave the country without
 seeing with my own eyes how she settled.

MRS. BRETTON
 But you will unsettle her.

MR. HOME
I hope not. And how is papa's little Polly?

He sits down and places her gently on the ground before him.

POLLY
How is Polly's papa?

She leans on his knee and gazes up into his face.

There is emotion in Mr. Home's agitated face. He lays his hand on Polly's uplifted head.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Kiss Polly.

He kisses her.

She makes a wonderful little CONTENTED SOUND.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- NIGHT

Mrs. Bretton, Mr. Home, Lucy, and John Graham are playing cards.

Polly, sitting near her father, is trying to sew.

JOHN GRAHAM
Miss Home, may I have your attention?

POLLY
I can't attend to you. I have other things to think about.

JOHN GRAHAM
I implore you to state what things.

POLLY
Business.

John Graham tries to seduce her attention. He goes to his desk and displays its contents: seals, bright sticks of wax, pen knives, brightly colored engravings.

Polly's eyes, furtively raised from her sewing, cast a peep toward the desk.

An etching of a child playing with a spaniel flutters to the floor.

Polly is delighted by it.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Pretty little dog!

She approaches to examine the irresistible treasure more closely.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Nice picture!

JOHN GRAHAM
Well -- you may have it.

Polly hesitates. The wish to possess is strong, but to accept would be a compromise of dignity. No, she puts it down and turns away.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
You won't have it then, Polly?

POLLY
I would rather not, thank you.

JOHN GRAHAM
Shall I tell you what I will do with the picture if you refuse it?

Polly half turns to listen.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Cut it into strips for lighting the fire.

POLLY
No!

JOHN GRAHAM
But I shall.

POLLY
Please -- don't.

John Graham ignores the pleading tone. He takes a pair of scissors from his desk and makes a menacing flourish.

JOHN GRAHAM
Here goes! Right through Fido's head.

POLLY
No! NO! NO!

JOHN GRAHAM
Then come to me. Come quickly, or it is done.

Polly hesitates, lingers, but complies.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Now, will you have it?

POLLY
Please.

JOHN GRAHAM
But I shall want payment.

POLLY
How much?

JOHN GRAHAM
A kiss.

POLLY
Give the picture first into my hand.

She looks faithless.

John Graham gives her the picture.

Polly darts to her father and takes refuge on his knee.

John Graham rises in mimic wrath and follows.

Polly buries her face in her father's waistcoat.

Mr. Home smiles at John Graham's mischief.

POLLY (CONT'D)
Papa -- Papa -- send him away!

JOHN GRAHAM
I'll not be sent away.

With face still averted, Polly holds out her hand to keep him off.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Then, I shall kiss the hand.

But that moment, the small hand becomes a small fist, and gives John Graham payment with a punch in the eye.

He retreats, flings himself on the sofa, and MOANS as if pain.

Polly peeps at him.

John Graham's face is covered with his hands.

Polly gazes at her foe anxiously.

He GROANS.

Lucy looks on, amused at the drama.

POLLY
(whispering)
Papa, is he hurt?

MR. HOME
You had better ask him, Polly.

JOHN GRAHAM
Mother, I think you had better send for the doctor. Oh my eye! What if I were to go blind -- ?

Polly cannot bear the suggestion. She is beside him instantly.

POLLY
Let me see your eye -- I did not mean to hit it, I meant to hit your mouth, and I did not think I hit so very hard.

Silence answers her.

POLLY (CONT'D)
I am sorry -- I am sorry!

Then follows emotion, faltering, WEEPING.

MRS. BRETTON
Have done trying that child, John Graham!

MR. HOME
It is all nonsense, my pet.

John Graham once more snatches Polly up above his head.

POLLY
 (irate)
 You're the naughtiest, rudest, worst,
 UNTRUEST boy that ever was!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Mr. Home and Polly are in a window recess by themselves.

Mrs. Bretton is sewing, John Graham is writing at his desk, and Lucy is reading.

POLLY
 (whispering earnestly)
 Couldn't I pack my box and go with you,
 Papa?

Mr. Home shakes his head.

POLLY (CONT'D)
 Would I be a trouble to you?

MR. HOME
 Yes, dear.

POLLY
 Because I am little?

MR. HOME
 Because you are little and tender. It is only great, strong people who should travel. But don't look sad, my little girl, it breaks my heart. Papa will soon come back to his Polly. Polly would be sorry to give Papa pain, would she not?

POLLY
 Sorrier than sorry.

MR. HOME
 Then Polly must be cheerful -- not cry at parting, not fret afterward. She must look forward to meeting again, and try to be happy meanwhile. Can she do this?

POLLY
 She will try.

MR. HOME
 I see she will. Farewell, then. It is time to go.

POLLY
 Now? -- Just now?

MR. HOME
 Just now.

Polly holds up quivering lips.

Her father kisses her, and departs.

When the door closes, Polly drops to her knees.

POLLY

Papa!

She endures agony. Mrs. Bretton, John Graham, and Lucy are moved by her emotion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- NIGHT

Polly, worn and quiet, sits on the floor, staring at the fire.

John Graham comes in and takes her up gently, without a word.

This time, she does not resist him. She nestles in his arms.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Polly is drawing on a slate at Mrs. Bretton's feet.

The moment FOOTSTEPS sound at the door, Polly dashes to the head of the staircase.

INT. STAIRCASE -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy sits reading a large book on the steps.

Polly yells down to John Graham.

POLLY

You have not wiped your shoes properly on the mat! I shall tell your mama!

JOHN GRAHAM

Little busybody!

Lucy continues reading, ignoring the commotion.

Polly peeps down at John Graham between the rails of the banister.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)

I am fit to faint with fatigue.
(leaning against the wall in
seeming exhaustion)
The headmaster has quite knocked me down
with work. Come and help me carry up my
books.

POLLY

Ah! You're tricky!

JOHN GRAHAM

Not at all, Polly -- it is positive fact.
I'm weak as a kitten. Come down.

POLLY

Perhaps I may -- if you'll promise not to
snatch me up, and not to whirl me 'round.

JOHN GRAHAM

I? I couldn't do it if I wanted.

POLLY

Then put the books down on the first
step, and go three yards off.

This being done, Polly descends warily, not taking her eyes from the feeble John Graham.

When Polly is within reach, he snatches her up.

She pretends to be angry, but she cannot help GIGGLING.

POLLY (CONT'D)

John Graham Bretton! Put me down!

Lucy, frowning, looks at them over the top of her book.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALL -- DAY

Happy NOISE comes from the dining room.

Passing through the hall, Lucy finds Polly sitting alone on the stair, her eyes fixed on the dining room door, her little brow knit in anxious meditation.

LUCY

What's the matter, Polly?

POLLY

Nothing partic-lul-lar -- only I wish that door was clear glass, that I might see through it. The boys seem very cheerful, and I want to go to them -- I want to be with John Graham and his friends.

LUCY

What hinders you from going?

POLLY

I feel afraid -- but may I try, do you think? May I knock at the door, and ask to be let in?

LUCY

Why not?

Polly KNOCKS -- too faintly at first to be heard, but on a SECOND ATTEMPT, the door opens, and John Graham's head appears. He is in high spirits, but impatient.

JOHN GRAHAM

What do you want, you little monkey?

POLLY

To come to you.

JOHN GRAHAM

Do you indeed? As if I would be troubled with you! Away to Mama and Mistress Lucy, and tell them to put you to bed.

His flushed face vanishes, and the door shuts.

Polly is stunned.

POLLY

Why does he speak so? He never spoke so before. What have I done?

LUCY
Nothing, Polly, but he is busy with his
school friends.

POLLY
He likes them better than me. He turns me
away now they are here!

LUCY
There, there, Polly --

But Polly puts her fingers into her ears and lies down on the floor
with her face against the wall.

Lucy looks worried.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- NIGHT

Mrs. Bretton, Lucy, and Polly are in the parlor when John Graham
enters. He accosts Polly as usual.

JOHN GRAHAM
And what trouble has Miss Home been
causing --

Polly wrenches herself from his hand, her eyes flashing.

POLLY
Good night, Mrs. Bretton, good night Miss
Snowe!

She exits the room, leaving John Graham puzzled.

INT. LUCY AND POLLY'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

John Graham follows Polly into her bedroom.

JOHN GRAHAM
Why are you angry?

Polly does not speak.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
What have I done?

At this point, tears answer him. He pets and soothes Polly.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
There, there. What's this about?

She allows herself to be comforted, but does not answer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Mrs. Bretton is reading to Lucy from a letter.

MRS. BRETTON
"...I am now settled amongst my kinsfolk
on the Continent, and I wish my little
girl to join me immediately."

LUCY

She's gotten awfully attached to John Graham. I wonder how she will take this news?

Mrs. Bretton shakes her head in concern.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Lucy finds Polly on a couch, happily rocking a doll in its cradle, and looking at a picture book which lies open on her lap.

POLLY

Miss Snowe, this is a wonderful book. It was given me by John Graham. It tells about countries a long way from England, which no traveler can reach without sailing thousands of miles over the sea.

LUCY

Polly, would you like to travel?

POLLY

Not just yet, but perhaps in 20 years, I may travel with John Graham. We intend going to Switzerland and South America.

LUCY

But how would you like to travel now, if your papa was with you?

Polly abruptly stops rocking her doll.

POLLY

Where is the good of talking in that silly way? Why do you mention Papa? I was just beginning to be happy and not think about him so much, and there it will be to do all over again!

LUCY

Polly, we've received a letter from your papa, and you are to join him in France immediately. Are you not glad?

The book slides from Polly's lap to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Mrs. Bretton, John Graham, Lucy, and Polly are having tea.

JOHN GRAHAM

...and so I have to work twice as hard in the coming weeks just to make the finals.

MRS. BRETTON

You'll do fine.

There is a pause. Polly gives Lucy a small poke with her elbow.

LUCY
We heard from Mr. Home today. He's
settled in Paris and he wants Polly to
come to him right away.

JOHN GRAHAM
What?

MRS. BRETTON
Our Polly is leaving for her new home
tomorrow.

JOHN GRAHAM
Polly leaving? What a pity! Dear little
mousie, I shall be sorry to lose her --
she must come visit us again, Mama.

Hastily swallowing his tea, he takes his books off to a table and is soon buried in study.

Polly creeps to his side and lies down on the carpet at his feet, her face to the floor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUCY AND POLLY'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Lucy enters and finds Polly perched up in her small bed. Lucy closes the door and sets her candle on the dressing table.

LUCY
What's the matter?

Polly shakes her head.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Shall I call Mrs. Bretton?

Lucy examines her. Polly's cheeks are red, her eyes troubled and restless.

LUCY (CONT'D)
You're not feverish. Would you like to
bid John Graham good night? He is not
gone to bed yet.

Polly at once stretches out her little arms to be lifted.

INT. PARLOR -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy carries Polly into the room. John Graham is just coming out.

LUCY
She cannot sleep without seeing you once
more. She does not like the thought of
leaving you.

JOHN GRAHAM
I've spoilt her.

He takes her from Lucy and kisses Polly's little flushed face.

JOHN GRAHAM (CONT'D)
Polly, you care for me now as much as you
care for your papa.

POLLY
I do care for you, but you care nothing
for me.

JOHN GRAHAM
Oh, that is not true and you know it.

He kisses her again.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRETTON HOUSE -- DAY

Polly is leaving.

Mrs. Bretton, John Graham, and Lucy are seeing her off.

LUCY (V.O.)
Polly departed the next day, trembling
like a leaf. I departed a few weeks
later, little thinking I would never
return. Some bad investments caused Mrs.
Bretton to lose her home, and it would be
many years before our paths crossed
again...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. WHARF -- NIGHT

A coach drives up to the wharf and stops. The COACHMAN jumps off and starts unloading a trunk.

LUCY (V.O.)
By the time I was 20, I had lost both my
parents, and I was left in bad
circumstances. I heard of a possibility
abroad -- there are, I was told, many
Englishwomen well-placed with foreign
families, who take the baby out for
walks, and help the mother learn English
by chattering the day away.

The adult LUCY SNOWE climbs out of the cab. She is now 22, and possesses neither beauty nor fortune. A cold wind blows rain into Lucy's face.

LUCY (V.O., CONT'D)
I took what little money I'd saved and
booked passage to Brussels.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SHIP'S DECK -- DAY

At daybreak, other PASSENGERS board the ship, including GINEVRA FANSHAWE, an especially beautiful young lady. She glances in Lucy's direction, curling her pretty lip with distaste at Lucy's plain face and homely dress.

Ginevra paces the deck, looking with a sour air at the other passengers. Finally she approaches Lucy.

GINEVRA
Are you fond of sea voyages?

LUCY
I'm not sure -- I have never made one.

GINEVRA
Oh, how charming. I envy you the novelty.
I have made so many voyages, I forget the
first. I am quite blaséit.

Lucy cannot help smiling.

GINEVRA (CONT'D)
Why do you laugh at me?

LUCY
Because you are too young to be
blaséabout anything.

GINEVRA
(piqued)
I am 17.

LUCY
You hardly look 16.

GINEVRA
Thank you. Are you going to school?

LUCY
No.

GINEVRA
I am going to school. And yet I am quite
an ignoramus. I know nothing -- except I
play and dance beautifully -- and of
course I speak French, but I can't read
or write it very well. Papa says Monsieur
de Bassompierre -- my uncle, who pays all
my school bills -- has thrown away his
money.

LUCY
And where are you going to school?

GINEVRA
Oh, in Villette.

LUCY
Do you like Villette?

GINEVRA
Pretty well. The natives, you know, are
intensely stupid and vulgar, but there
are some nice English families.

LUCY
Is it a good school?

GINEVRA
Oh no! Horrid -- but I go out with
friends every Sunday and thus I make it
through. Now, tell me where you are
going.

LUCY
Where Fate may lead me. My business is to
earn a living where I can find it.

GINEVRA
To earn a living! Are you poor, then?

LUCY
As poor as Job.

GINEVRA
Bah, how unpleasant! I know what it is to be poor. They are poor enough at home. Papa is an officer on half-pay, but my uncle de Bassompierre, who lives in France, is the one who helps us. We girls are to marry rather elderly gentlemen with cash. This is better than "earning a living," is it not?

In spite of herself, Lucy is amused by Ginevra's frank words.

EXT. ON DECK -- NIGHT

The lights of the seaport town, glimmering around the harbor, meet Lucy like unnumbered threatening eyes.

An entire PARTY surrounds Ginevra, who speaks carelessly to Lucy as she bids goodbye.

GINEVRA
You should come to Madame Beck's -- she has some brats you might look after -- she wants an English housekeeper.

LUCY
Where does she live?

GINEVRA
The Rue Fossette! Goodbye!

She is hurried away by her friends, leaving Lucy alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET IN VILLETTE -- NIGHT

A thick fog has settled on the city.

Lucy sees a light burning over the door of a large house. A brass plate embellishes the great door: "Pensionnat de Demoiselles," and beneath, "Madame Beck."

Lucy gathers her courage and RINGS THE BELL.

A moment later, the door opens, and a HOUSEKEEPER in a cap stands before Lucy.

LUCY
Madame Beck?

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL -- NIGHT

Lucy is sitting in a bright salon with polished floors.

MADAME BECK, a motherly, dumpy little woman in a shawl and nightcap, stands before her.

MADAME BECK
You ayre Engliss?

LUCY
I am English.

Madame Beck holds up her hand and turns to the HOUSEKEEPER.

HOUSEKEEPER
(to Lucy)
I am partly educated in the Irish
convent, and speaks perfect English
language.

LUCY
Oh, please tell Madame Beck that I have
left my own country, intent on extending
my knowledge and earning my bread, and I
am ready to do any useful thing, provided
it is not wrong or degrading. I would be
a child's nurse, or a lady's maid, or do
housework.

The housekeeper gives Madame Beck a BRIEF TRANSLATION IN FRENCH.

MADAME BECK
(in French, with English
subtitles)
Englishwomen are audacious!

She stands looking at Lucy. A BELL RINGS.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)
Voila Monsieur!
(rising; to Lucy)
Leave and come back tomorrow.

With energy, yet collected and controlled, Lucy addresses Madame Beck.

LUCY
Be assured, Madame, that I will work
better than my wages, and if you hire me,
it is best I should stay here this night.

MADAME BECK
(after an addled pause)
References?

LUCY
None.

A MAN'S FOOTSTEPS are heard in the vestibule.

MADAME BECK
(demanding)
Monsieur Paul!

MONSIEUR PAUL enters. He is a powerfully built man of 38, with short-cropped black hair, dark eyes, and an intense gaze.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)
Mon cousin, your opinion. Read that face.

Madame Beck brushes against Monsieur Paul as she passes him. He steps back uncomfortably, and quickly averts his eyes, fixing his sight on Lucy. A resolute compression of the lips and gathering of the brow seem to say that he can see right through her.

NOTE: THE REST OF THE DIALOGUE IN THIS SCENE IS SPOKEN IN FRENCH AND SUBTITLED IN ENGLISH.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)
What do you see?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Several things.

MADAME BECK
Bad or good?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Of each kind, without doubt.

MADAME BECK
May one trust her word? She is an Englishwoman.

MONSIEUR PAUL
(gazing steadily at Lucy)
Do you need her services?

MADAME BECK
I could do with them.

MONSIEUR PAUL
(still scrutinizing Lucy)
Engage her. If good predominates in her nature, the action will bring its own reward. If evil -- well!

He marches off.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL -- DAY

Lucy comes downstairs for the first morning of her new position. What she finds is a thriving school, full of healthy, lively GIRLS, all well-dressed and most of them pretty.

Ginevra Fanshawe, the young beauty from the ship, catches a glimpse of Lucy and, unaffectedly nonchalant, gives a wave.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL -- DAY -- MONTAGE

Lucy is performing various duties -- dusting, making beds, helping in the kitchen, and reading to Madame Beck's THREE SMALL CHILDREN.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. UPSTAIRS APARTMENT AT THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Lucy is sewing as she listens to Madame Beck's children PRACTICING THEIR ENGLISH.

Madame Beck saunters into the room with an absorbed air, drops into a seat opposite Lucy, and speaks, almost in a tone of accusation.

MADAME BECK
This is your first time at teaching -- this attempt with my children?

LUCY
It is.

Madame Beck studies her, measuring her fitness for a purpose.

MADAME BECK
I find myself in a dilemma. The English master has failed to come again, the pupils are waiting in class, and there is no one to give a lesson. Would you, this one time, object to giving a short dictation exercise?

LUCY
Teach class, Madame?

MADAME BECK
Yes, the second division.

LUCY
Where there are 60 pupils?
(shrinking back)
I'm sorry, but I'm not capable of teaching a class of that sort.

She stoops busily over her sewing.

MADAME BECK
Come, leave that work.

She makes Lucy drop the sewing, takes her hand, and leads her out.

INT. HALL -- DAY

Downstairs, Madame Beck and Lucy reach the great double doors of the classroom.

Madame Beck pauses, drops Lucy's hand, and scrutinizes her.

Lucy is flushed and tremulous, near tears.

LUCY
I have studied French closely since my arrival, but I am far from trusting my powers of correct speech.

MADAME BECK
(sternly)
Do you really feel yourself too weak?

Lucy sees in Madame Beck's eyes something that makes her think twice before answering. It seems as if a challenge has been given.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)
Will you go backward or forward?

Lucy appears to feel all the dishonor of her timidity. She straightens her shoulders.

LUCY
Forward.

Madame Beck continues the hard look, sneering slightly as she speaks.

MADAME BECK
But can you face the class, or are you over-excited?

LUCY
I am no more excited than this stone.

She taps the stone floor with the toe of her shoe.

MADAME BECK
Bon! But let me tell you these are not quiet, decorous English girls. These girls are straightforward, abrupt, and rebellious.

LUCY
I know.

MADAME BECK
They always overthrow timid teachers.

LUCY
I know that too, Madame.

Lucy advances to the classroom doors.

MADAME BECK
(warning)
You will not expect aid from me. That would at once set you down as incompetent.

Lucy opens the doors, lets Madame Beck pass with courtesy, and follows.

INT. CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The room is large and accommodates 60 turbulent female PUPILS.

Lucy beholds eyes full of insolence, and brows hard and unblushing as marble.

MADAME BECK
Je presente Meess Snowe.

She sails from the room, leaving Lucy alone with the students.

Three belles in the first row, Mesdemoiselles BLANCHE, VIRGINIE, and ANGELIQUE, openly rebel with a series of WHISPERS that soon swell into MURMURS and short LAUGHS, which the other pupils catch up and echo more loudly. This growing revolt of 60 against one soon becomes oppressive.

Lucy walks up to Blanche, the prettiest and most vicious girl. Lucy takes Blanche's composition book from under Blanche's hand, mounts the platform where the teacher's desk stands, and begins reading Blanche's composition to the class.

LUCY
"I like puppies. Puppies are warm and soft. Puppies like to run. Puppies are pretty. I enjoy kittens also."

Then, in the face of the entire class, Lucy tears the written page in two. This action draws the attention of the class and STOPS THE NOISE.

One pupil alone, ISABELLE, a pale girl with mutinous eyes, perseveres with undiminished energy. She is standing, to conduct her clamor more freely.

Lucy notes that Isabelle is near a closet door that is slightly ajar.

Walking down the room, looking cool and careless as she can, Lucy turns to Isabelle.

In an instant, Isabelle is inside the narrow closet, the door is shut and locked, and the key is in Lucy's pocket.

INT. HALL OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Madame Beck, who has been peeping through the door, CHUCKLES QUIETLY.

INT. CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy's act proves popular to the pupils. The class is stilled, then a smile passes from desk to desk.

Lucy tranquilly returns to the platform and speaks as if nothing at all has happened.

LUCY
Continue working on your compositions as assigned.
(to Blanche)
And please try to do better than "I like puppies."

The students' pens immediately begin traveling peacefully over the pages of their composition books.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL STAIRCASE -- DAY

This sunny morning, Ginevra Fanshawe comes downstairs looking charming, well dressed, and well humored, her fair curls resting on her white shoulders.

Lucy is carrying some books upstairs.

LUCY
Passing Sunday with friends in town?

GINEVRA
One friend in particular. Lately it seems impossible to escape the vehemence of his attachment.

LUCY
Do you love him in return?

GINEVRA
He is handsome, and he loves me to distraction, so I am well amused. That is sufficient.

LUCY
Would your parents approve of the gentleman?

GINEVRA
It is very doubtful, as I do not believe he has much money.

LUCY
Do you encourage him?

GINEVRA
Furiously, sometimes.

LUCY
Without being certain you will be permitted to marry him?

GINEVRA
Oh, how dowdyish you are! I don't want to be married. I am too young.

LUCY
But if he loves you as much as you say, and yet it comes to nothing in the end, he will be made miserable.

GINEVRA
Of course it will break his heart. I should be shocked and disappointed if it didn't.

LUCY
Is this man a fool?

GINEVRA
He is, about me, but he is wise in other things. Some consider him extremely clever. All I know is, he does little more than sigh in my presence, and I can wind him 'round my little finger.

LUCY
Favor me with a personal description.

GINEVRA
Well, he's...he's got...I don't know, he is beautiful, but older -- at least 24.

LUCY
Well, his affections seem to be offered with great respect. I believe him much too good for you, Ginevra Fanshawe. Honestly, some days I could mistake you for nothing more than a vain coquette.

Ginevra LAUGHS, shakes her curls, and dances away as if Lucy has paid her a compliment.

INT. SMALL SALON -- NIGHT

Lucy sits reading by the fire.

Ginevra enters, illuminated by golden firelight. Dressed for a party, she looks beautiful, young, and fresh. She turns airily around so Lucy can survey her on all sides. Conscious of her charms, Ginevra is in her best spirits.

GINEVRA
Shall I do?

LUCY
Do? There are different ways of doing, and, by my word, I don't understand yours.

GINEVRA
But how do I look?

LUCY
You look well dressed.

Ginevra thinks the praise not high enough.

GINEVRA
Look at this brooch, the earrings, the bracelets -- no one in school has such a set -- not Madame Beck herself.

LUCY
I see them all. Did your uncle give you those jewels?

GINEVRA
Uncle de Bassompierre knows nothing about them.

Lucy turns away abruptly.

GINEVRA (CONT'D)
What is the matter now, old crusty?

LUCY
Take yourself away. I have no pleasure in looking at you or your adornments.

GINEVRA
What now, Mother Wisdom? I have not got into debt for them.

LUCY
Ginevra, people will tell you that you are very handsome in that ball attire, but in my eyes --

GINEVRA
(angry)
Other people have not your puritanical tastes. And, besides, I see no right you have to sermonize me.

LUCY
Certainly! I have little right, and you, perhaps, have still less to come flourishing and fluttering into my chamber. I have not the least respect for your jewels, Miss Fanshawe -- very pretty things, if you had bought them with money which was your own, and which you could well spare, but not at all pretty under present circumstances.

The doorbell RINGS.

GINEVRA
Jean is here. You need not be sulky with me. I assure you nothing remains unpaid.

LUCY
Ginevra, I believe you are doing very wrong -- seriously wrong. Perhaps, however, you feel certain that you will marry Monsieur Jean, and you love him entirely?

GINEVRA
But not at all! I am his queen, but he is not my king.

LUCY

Excuse me, I must believe this is mere nonsense and coquetry. You are above profiting by the good nature and purse of a man to whom you feel absolute indifference. You love Monsieur Jean far more than you think, or will admit.

GINEVRA

No. I danced with a young officer the other night whom I love a thousand times more than Jean. I often wonder why I feel so very cold to Jean, for everybody says he is handsome, and other ladies admire him, but, somehow...The man expects something more of me than I find it convenient to be. He thinks I am perfect -
- furnished with all sorts of sterling qualities and solid virtues, such as I never had, nor intend to have.

LUCY

Then you are deceiving Monsieur Jean. By accepting his presents you give him to understand he will one day receive an equivalent --

GINEVRA

But he won't -- he has his equivalent now, in the pleasure of seeing me wear them -- quite enough for him. Deep and passionate men are not to my taste. The officer, Colonel Alfred de Hamal, suits me far better. Go for the beautiful fops and the handsome rascals! To the devil with big passions and stern virtues!

She exits with drama.

Lucy shakes her head in disbelief.

INT. MADAME BECK'S DRAWING ROOM -- DAY

Madame Beck is sewing, while Lucy sits grading papers at a table.

Suddenly there is a loud TUMBLING SOUND.

Madame Beck and Lucy know immediately that something is wrong. They jump up and run to see what has happened.

INT. STAIRCASE -- CONTINUOUS

Madame Beck's middle daughter, FIFINE, 6 years old, has fallen down the steep flight of stairs.

MADAME BECK

Fifine!

She rushes to pick up the SCREAMING girl. One little plump arm hangs powerless.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

(quietly, to Lucy)

This child has broken her arm. Meess Snowe, take her, and I am going to fetch a physician.

Lucy takes the child.

Madame Beck, with admirable coolness and self-possession, hurries out to get a doctor.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. FIFINE'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Fifine is in bed. GOTON, the cook, ROSINE, the seamstress, and Lucy are keeping vigil in the small room.

Madame Beck returns with DR. JOHN, a handsome, young, English physician with auburn hair.

Lucy stares strangely at the doctor for a moment.

Fifine's CRIES double in intensity as the stranger approaches her.

FIFINE
Let alone! I will not you -- I will Dr.
Pillule!

DR. JOHN
And Dr. Pillule is my very good friend,
but he is busy at a place three leagues
off, and I am come in his stead. You may
call me Doctor John.

Fifine's CRIES HUSH at the young doctor's gentle touch.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
So now, when we get a little calmer, we
will soon have that unlucky little arm
bandaged and in right order.
(to Madame Beck)
Will you please bring the child a glass
of sugar water?

MADAME BECK
Of course.

She leaves, and Dr. John promptly goes to work. He turns to Goton, a robust, strong-armed woman.

DR. JOHN
I am going to need a little assistance
here, please.

But Goton and Rosine instantly flee the room.

Lucy looks as if she wants to escape as well, but, realizing there is no alternative, she extends her trembling hand to help.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
Thank you. Merci, Mademoiselle. One
composed person is worth a thousand who
are overly sensitive.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADAME BECK'S DRAWING ROOM -- DAY

Dr. John sits in the sunshine near a window. The light brings out a golden tone in his hair and beard.

Lucy, organizing her notes for class, takes notice of the doctor. A new idea, sudden and startling, rivets Lucy's attention to Dr. John.

The doctor notices the way Lucy is staring at him. He is ill at ease under her direct gaze, and speaks in a courteous, yet annoyed, tone, giving mild rebuke.

DR. JOHN

As I am not vain enough to fancy it is my merits which attract Mademoiselle's attention, it must then be some defect. Dare I ask -- what?

Lucy is startled, but not embarrassed. She does not answer, but simply gathers her notes and leaves the room.

This innocent action seems to cause Dr. John a pang of guilt at his accusation.

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL GARDEN -- DAY

Behind the school is a large, walled garden.

Isabelle and a few of the younger GIRLS sit under a tree in the twilight.

Lucy sits, holding a book, behind some foliage. She does not mean to eavesdrop, but she is within hearing distance of the girls, who are unaware of her presence.

The girls speak in English, with a French accent.

ISABELLE

...This very house was once a convent.

GIRL

A convent?

ISABELLE

Before the city spread to this quarter, something horrible happened here. This old tree marks the spot. Right here at the foot, you can see a glimpse of slab. Smooth and hard and black, see it? The legend goes, that this is the portal of a vault, imprisoning deep beneath the ground, the bones of a young nun whom the monks of the middle ages buried alive for some sin against her vow.

GIRL

Buried her alive? Right here?

ISABELLE

Her ghost, a black-robed, white-veiled nun, sometimes -- on certain nights of the year -- may be seen in parts of this school.

GIRL

Is this a true story?

ISABELLE

True as my word.

GIRL
 (frightened)
 It's getting late, I'm going inside.

ANOTHER GIRL
 And so am I!

The nervous girls run back inside the boarding house.

Lucy smiles in amusement. A moment later, she hears the CREAK of a hinged window casement.

Before she has time to look up, a tree overhead shakes as if struck by something, and a small box drops at Lucy's feet. She picks it up and opens the lid.

Inside, violets smother a folded slip of pink paper, on which is written, "For the grey dress."

Lucy is wearing a grey dress. She opens the note.

LUCY
 (reading to herself)
 "Angel of my dreams, how my heart
 palpitated with delight when I saw your
 grey dress through the trees. The garden
 is so often haunted by that monster --
 the English teacher, Miss Snowe -- that I
 was afraid you would not come tonight.
 Please accept these flowers, the sweetest
 that grow, yet less sweet than thee, mon
 cheri!"

Dr. John strides down the garden path, looking on one side, then the other.

Lucy rises to meet him.

LUCY (CONT'D)
 Dr. John! It is found.

He sees the box in Lucy's hand. He glares at her as if she is an enemy.

DR. JOHN
 Do not betray her.

LUCY
 (confused)
 I cannot betray what I do not know. Read
 the note, and you will see how little it
 reveals.

Lucy looks suspicious, but Dr. John's own look vindicates him. He grows angry and flushed as he reads.

DR. JOHN
 This is too much -- this is cruel,
 humiliating. What shall you do about it?
 Shall you tell Madame Beck what you have
 found and cause a stir -- a scandal?

LUCY

I think I ought to tell. I do not believe there would be either stir or scandal -- Madame Beck is much too prudent to make a noise about an affair of this sort connected with her establishment. But if you can assure me that none of the pupils are implicated in this business, I shall be happy to stand back from all interference.

DR. JOHN

(hesitating, glancing around)
Come with me, please. We cannot speak here.

INT. FIFINE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Lucy is looking out the window.

Dr. John is standing at the bedside, watching his little patient as her eyes close in sleep.

DR. JOHN

Pleasant dreams, Fifine.

Lucy's eyes are fixed on the tall houses bounding the garden.

EXT. HOUSES AROUND THE GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy sees one window cautiously open. From the window projects a hand waving a white handkerchief.

Immediately after, there flutters from the window a falling object, white and light -- an envelope.

INT. FIFINE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy whispers loudly.

LUCY

There!

DR. JOHN

What is it?

He moves toward the window.

LUCY

They have gone and done it again!
(pointing)
A handkerchief waved and something fell.

DR. JOHN

Go at once -- pick it up and bring it here. Nobody will take notice of you -- I would be noticed.

Lucy is stung by his words, but the logic stands.

EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT

Moments later, Lucy finds the envelope lodged in a shrub branch. Her hand seizes it.

INT. FIFINE'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Moments later, Lucy gives the envelope to Dr. John.

He instantly tears it into small pieces without reading the note inside.

DR. JOHN
It is not her fault, you must remember.

LUCY
Whose fault?

DR. JOHN
You don't know, then?

LUCY
Not in the least.

DR. JOHN
If I knew you better... You could act as guardian over a most innocent and excellent, but somewhat inexperienced, person.

LUCY
A chaperon?

DR. JOHN
Yes. What danger she is in!

INT. STAIRCASE -- CONTINUOUS

In the darkness, someone is stealing upstairs on tiptoe.

INT. FIFINE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Dr. John looks searchingly into Lucy's eyes.

DR. JOHN
I happen to be acquainted with the worthless character who has now twice invaded the sanctity of this place. I also know the object of his vulgar attempts. Innocent, unsuspecting as she is, I would guard her from evil if I could. However, I can do nothing -- I cannot come near her.

LUCY
Well, I am willing to help you. I will do what you wish, I will take care of her, only tell me who she is.

DR. JOHN
But you must already know. So spotless, so good, so unspeakably beautiful! Impossible that one school could contain two like her. I allude, of course, to Miss --

Suddenly the latch of the door, which opens into Fifine's room from Madame Beck's room, gives a CLICK, as if it has slightly moved.

INT. MADAME BECK'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Madame Beck has stolen upstairs on tiptoe and is in her room beside Fifine's, her ear glued to the door.

She swears silently to herself at accidentally revealing her presence.

INT. FIFINE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

While Dr. John stands aghast, Madame Beck instantly comes into the room from her chamber. She is alert, composed, in the most tranquil spirits, trying to convince the two that she is innocently entering and has not been eavesdropping.

MADAME BECK

Dr. John, how is my Fifine tonight?

DR. JOHN

She's...doing very well indeed. I was just telling mademoiselle that I'll be here Friday evening for the end-of-term festivities, and I'll look in on Fifine then.

MADAME BECK

Very good, merci.

When she turns away, the briefest glance passes between Dr. John and Lucy.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy sits reading in the empty room.

Just as the shaded quiet is beginning to lull her to sleep, a sharp RING OF THE DOORBELL snatches her back to consciousness and startles the book from her knee.

Lucy is stooping to pick up the book when the door of the classroom bursts open, and Monsieur Paul steps inside, ranting to himself.

MONSIEUR PAUL

This is it! This is what it has come to -- the Englishwoman! Too bad. Well, she will do it, or I will know why.

(composing himself)

Meess -- play you must.

(assertively)

My mind is made.

LUCY

What can I do for you, Monsieur Paul?

MONSIEUR PAUL

Play you must. I will not have you shrink, or frown, or make the prude. I read your face that night you came -- I see your means -- play you can -- play you must!

LUCY

Play?

MONSIEUR PAUL

In the play. You have said it.

Lucy GASPS, horror stricken.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Listen! The case shall be stated, and you shall then answer me yes, or no, and according to your answer shall I ever after estimate you.

LUCY

(cautiously)

I'm listening.

MONSIEUR PAUL

The whole matter is going to fail. Louise Vanderkelkov has fallen ill -- at least so her ridiculous mother asserts. She was cast in a role, as you know -- without that role the play is stopped. There are now but a few hours in which to learn it -- not a girl in this school will hear reason and accept the task. Englishwomen are either the best or the worst of their sex. God knows that I hate them as the pestilence, ordinarily, however, I apply to an Englishwoman to rescue me. What is her answer -- yes, or no?

A thousand objections seem to rush into Lucy's mind, but, looking up at Monsieur Paul and seeing in his vexed, fiery, searching eyes an appeal behind all the menace, Lucy surrenders.

LUCY

Yes.

For a moment, Monsieur Paul's rigid expression relaxes with a quiver of gratitude. Immediately bent up again, however, he continues.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Quickly to work! Here is the book, here is your role -- read! Memorize!

Lucy looks inside the open book.

LUCY

It is a man! I have to play a man?

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL HALL -- NIGHT

The hall is lit with large lamps. The wide doors of the classroom and the wide garden doors are open. Orange trees in tubs and tall flowers in pots decorate the doors on each side.

Groups of LADIES and GENTLEMEN in evening dress walk among the flowers.

Far off, there stands a stage, a dark-green curtain, a row of footlights.

INT. OUTSIDE A MAKESHIFT DRESSING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Monsieur Paul and STUDENT ACTORS, including Ginevra, are waiting.

Lucy reluctantly emerges from the dressing room. She is wearing trousers, a man's shirt, vest, cravat, a hat that covers her hair, and a large black mustache.

Monsieur Paul looks at Lucy and speaks not unkindly.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Well done! Courage, mon ami -- a little cold blood, a little aplomb, and all will go well -- Monsieur.

The student actors GIGGLE.

The moment for the performance arrives. A BELL TINKLES, and Monsieur Paul whispers into Lucy's ear.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Do not look at the crowd. Imagine yourself upstairs in the nursery, acting to Madame Beck's three little rats!

His irreverent comment instantly distracts Lucy from her nerves, and suddenly she and two more actors are ushered onto the stage.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BALLROOM -- NIGHT

After the play, the choleric Monsieur Paul has undergone a metamorphosis. Vivacious, kind, and social, he approaches Lucy, now in her regular dress, and shakes her hand with enthusiasm.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Merci, merci! I know not what possessed you! Your performance was better than the role was written, if this can be done.

LUCY
Thank you, Monsieur. At least it is over, and well over.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Now, I am determined that you should be my partner in the coming dance.

LUCY
I do not dance.

MONSIEUR PAUL
For once you must.

The MUSIC BEGINS, but Lucy slips aside, out of Monsieur Paul's reach. He frowns in disappointment.

Withdrawing to a quiet nook, Lucy watches the ball.

Ginevra is the belle, the fairest and brightest. She dances gracefully and smiles joyously, the child of pleasure.

Lucy sees Dr. John walking among the female pupils. He has a manly, responsible air that redeems his youth and half expiates his good looks.

Soon Madame Beck, LAUGHING, hurries up to Dr. John.

MADAME BECK

Come, wolf, come! You wear sheep's clothing, but you must quit the fold.

DR. JOHN

First let me have one dance with a pupil of my choice.

MADAME BECK

Have you the nerve to ask such a thing? It is madness -- it is impiety. Leave, leave as soon as possible!

She drives him before her, and soon has him enclosed within a cordon of other YOUNG MEN watching the young ladies.

Ginevra throws herself on the bench beside Lucy and throws her arms around Lucy's neck, a demonstration Lucy could live without.

GINEVRA

Lucy Snowe! Lucy Snowe!

LUCY

(drily)

What in the world is the matter?

GINEVRA

How do I look -- how do I look tonight?

LUCY

As usual, preposterously vain.

GINEVRA

Caustic creature! You never have a kind word for me. But in spite of you, and all other envious detractors, I know I am beautiful, I feel it, I see it -- this very night I have been breaking the hearts of two gentlemen. I do so like to watch them turn red and scowl and dart fiery glances at each other, and languishing glances at me.

LUCY

Pray, whose heart does your vanity lead you to think you have broken tonight?

Ginevra moves close to Lucy's ear.

GINEVRA

Alfred and Jean are both here.

LUCY

Oh! They are? I should like to see them.

GINEVRA

There's a dear creature! Your curiosity is roused at last. Follow me, I will point them out.

She proudly leads the way.

INT. CORRIDOR -- CONTINUOUS

Ginevra and Lucy approach the carré, commanding a view of the young gentlemen. Ginevra indicates to Lucy ALFRED DE HAMAL.

GINEVRA
 (whispering)
 Alfred.

His build is small, and he is pretty and smooth and trim as a doll -- a nicely dressed, nicely curled, nicely booted, and nicely gloved dandy.

LUCY
 What a dear little creature!
 (warmly, to Ginevra)
 I commend your taste.

GINEVRA
 Thank you.

LUCY
 His hands are scarce larger than your own. This might be convenient, as he could wear your gloves in a pinch. And I dote on his precious curls.

Ginevra, cruelly exultant, misses the sarcasm.

GINEVRA
 And if he were your lover?

LUCY
 Oh! Heavens, what bliss! But do not be inhuman, Miss Fanshawe. To put such thoughts into my head is like showing a starving man a banquet table.

GINEVRA
 You like him, then?

LUCY
 As I like sweets and jams and chocolate.

GINEVRA
 It was such good fun to glance first at him and then at the other and madden them both!

LUCY
 But the other -- where is he? Show me Jean.

GINEVRA
 I don't like.

LUCY
 Why not?

GINEVRA
 I am ashamed of him.

LUCY
 For what reason?

GINEVRA
 Because -- because --
 (in a whisper)
 -- he has such -- awful whiskers!

LUCY

The secret is out. Never mind, show him all the same, I promise not to faint.

Ginevra looks around. Just then, she hears Dr. John's voice behind her.

DR. JOHN

You are both standing in a draft. You must leave this corridor.

LUCY

There is no draft, Dr. John.

DR. JOHN

(looking at Ginevra with extreme kindness)
She is delicate, she must be cared for -- fetch her a shawl.

GINEVRA

(with hauteur)
Permit me to judge for myself. I want no shawl.

DR. JOHN

Your dress is thin, you have been dancing, you are heated.

GINEVRA

Always preaching, always coddling and admonishing! Please stop, Jean!

Lucy is startled at hearing Ginevra address the doctor as "Jean."

Darkened and hurt, Dr. John turns away and leaves.

Lucy grabs a shawl from a near rack. She folds the shawl well around Ginevra, and speaks to her in a fierce whisper.

LUCY

Is that "Jean"?

Ginevra doesn't answer.

Giving Ginevra a shake, and looking as if she could give her a hundred, Lucy repeats the question.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Is that Jean?

GINEVRA

(nodding)
It is! How coarse he is, compared with the Colonel-Count! And -- oh, Lord! -- those whiskers!

EXT. GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy leads Ginevra into the garden and looks at her with utter disbelief.

LUCY

The Colonel-Count! That doll -- that puppet! A mere lackey for Dr. John!

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

Is it possible Dr. John -- that fine, generous gentleman -- handsome as a vision -- offers you his honorable hand and gallant heart, and promises to protect your flimsy person through the storms and struggles of life -- and you hang back -- you scorn, you torture him? You are only pretending -- you are not in earnest. You love him, but you trifle with his heart to make him jealous, correct?

GINEVRA

Bah! How you run on! I don't understand half you have said.

Lucy sits Ginevra down on a bench.

LUCY

You will not go 'til you have told me which you mean in the end to accept -- the man or the monkey.

GINEVRA

The one you call the "man," is bourgeois, whiskered, and answers to the name of "John"? That is sufficient -- I don't want any. Now Colonel de Hamal is a gentleman of excellent connections, perfect manners, and a sweet appearance -- a man quite in my taste, not sensible and serious like the other, but one with whom I can talk on equal terms. The Colonel does not harass me with deep passions and deep thoughts. There now. Don't hold me so tight.

Lucy slackens her grasp, and Ginevra darts off.

Lucy rises and starts back toward the dance, but she meets Dr. John on the garden steps.

DR. JOHN

You know Miss Fanshawe? I have often wished to ask whether you knew her.

LUCY

Yes, I know her.

DR. JOHN

Intimately?

LUCY

Quite as intimately as I wish.

DR. JOHN

What have you done with her now?

LUCY

I have shaken her well, and would have shaken her better, but she escaped out of my hands and ran away.

DR. JOHN

Would you favor me by watching over her this one evening, and observing that she does nothing imprudent -- does not, for instance, run out into the night air immediately after dancing?

LUCY

I may, perhaps, look after her a little, since you wish it, but she likes her own way too well to submit readily to control.

DR. JOHN

She is so young, so thoroughly naive.

LUCY

To me she is an enigma.

DR. JOHN

Is she?
(much interested)
How?

LUCY

It would be difficult to say how -- difficult, at least, to tell you how.

DR. JOHN

And why me?

LUCY

I wonder she is not better pleased that you are so much her friend.

DR. JOHN

But she has not the slightest idea how much I am her friend. May I inquire did she ever speak of me to you?

LUCY

Under the name of "Jean" she has talked about you often, but it is only within the last few minutes I have discovered that "Jean" and "John" are the same man.

DR. JOHN

For more than a year I have been seeing her in society. We have several mutual acquaintances, thus I see her every Sunday. You said that she often spoke of me -- may I -- without inviting you to a breach of confidence -- inquire what was the tone of her remarks? I feel somewhat anxious to know, being a little tormented with uncertainty as to how I stand with her.

LUCY

Oh, she varies -- she shifts and changes like the wind.

DR. JOHN

Still, you can gather some general idea?

Lucy does not know what to say.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)

You are silent. I suppose you have no good news. No matter. If she feels for me absolute coldness and aversion, it is a sign I do not deserve her.

LUCY

Do you doubt yourself? Do you consider yourself the inferior of Colonel de Hamal?

DR. JOHN

I love Miss Fanshawe far more than de Hamal loves any human being other than himself, and would care for and guard her better than he. As for de Hamal, I fear she is under an illusion. The man's character is known to me, all his failings. He is not worthy of your beautiful young friend.

LUCY

My "beautiful young friend" ought to know that, and to know who is worthy of her. If her beauty or her brains will not serve her that far, she deserves the sharp lesson of experience.

DR. JOHN

Aren't you a little severe?

LUCY

I am excessively severe -- more severe than I choose to show you.

DR. JOHN

She is so lovely, one cannot but be loving towards her. You -- every woman older than her must feel for such a simple, innocent, girlish creature a sort of motherly fondness. Graceful angel! Does not your heart yearn towards her when she pours into your ear her pure, child-like confidences? How you are privileged!

He SIGHS.

LUCY

But excuse me, Dr. John, what about that Alfred de Hamal? What a god-like personage is he! What a nose on his face - - perfect! And then, such classic lips and chin -- and his bearing -- sublime.

DR. JOHN

De Hamal is an unutterable puppy, besides being very white-livered. An unprincipled, gambling, little jackanapes!

LUCY

But you must feel a sort of fatherly fondness for the sweet angel. Are you not a little severe, Dr. John?

She pauses. Dr. John smiles, but his eyes are melancholy.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Do not grieve. If there is in Ginevra one spark of worthiness of your affection, she will -- she must -- feel devotion in return. Be cheerful, be hopeful, Dr. John. Who should hope, if not you?

The doctor looks surprised by Lucy's words.

Monsieur Paul, standing in the window watching the two, fumes like a bottled storm.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. SCHOOL -- DAY -- MONTAGE

Everyone is leaving for summer vacation.

Madame Beck and her children are in a carriage. She coquettishly waves goodbye to Monsieur Paul.

MADAME BECK

Have a wonderful summer, Monsieur Paul!

He pretends not to hear her.

Other TEACHERS depart with FRIENDS, and pupils exit with their PARENTS and SIBLINGS.

The house is left empty, but for Lucy, who waves from the door.

Students, teachers, and parents fade away, leaving Lucy alone.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BREAKFAST ROOM -- DAY

Lucy, quite alone at the long table, slowly eats a small roll.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

At dusk, Lucy sits near a window, reading in the last light of day.

A small breeze starts a pencil rolling off a desk. The pencil CLATTERS LOUDLY to the floor.

Lucy jumps, then immediately recognizes the familiar sound. Angry with herself for being so jittery, she SLAMS her book shut, rises, and leaves the room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY -- NIGHT

SUBTITLE: TWO MONTHS LATER

Lucy paces and stares out the window. A fever of loneliness seems to forbid her rest. Her dark-circled eyes brim over with tears. She appears physically ill.

As lightning from an approaching storm temporarily dazzles the room, Lucy quickly begins to dress.

EXT. CITY -- NIGHT

Cloak-covered Lucy walks through wind and rain.

The BELLS of a church arrest Lucy in passing. She enters the old church.

INT. CATHOLIC CHURCH -- CONTINUOUS

It is a solemn old church, its pervading gloom purpled by lightning through stained glass. THUNDER ROLLS through the building.

Lucy kneels with a couple of WORSHIPPERS on the stone pavement.

A consoled PENITENT exits the confessional.

A pale LADY, kneeling near Lucy, speaks in a kind voice.

LADY
(in French, with English
subtitles)
You go now, I am not quite ready.

Mechanically obedient, Lucy rises and enters the confessional.

INT. CONFESSIONAL -- CONTINUOUS

PERE SILAS, the elderly priest within, inclines his ear to Lucy's lips. She hesitates.

LUCY
Father, je suis Protestante.

The priest turns to look at her. Noticing her accent, he speaks, not unkindly, in English.

PERE SILAS
Why, being a Protestant, have you come to me?

LUCY
I am perishing for a word of advice or comfort. I have been living for two months quite alone, I have been ill, I have a pressure on my mind which will hardly endure the weight any longer.

Pere Silas is startled.

THUNDER BOOMS through the old church.

PERE SILAS
Is it a sin, a crime?

LUCY
No, no, only I came as a stranger to this country to earn my living and I have tried hard and long to be good and kind and honest, but I have been rewarded only with this suffocating loneliness!

PERE SILAS
You take me unawares. I have not had such a case as yours before -- I am hardly furnished with counsel fitting the circumstances.

The relief of disclosing her long pent-up pain has done Lucy good. She is already solaced.

LUCY
Thank you all the same, Father, for
listening.

PERE SILAS
(kindly)
My daughter, I assure you your words have
struck me. You have come and poured your
heart out, a thing seldom done. I would
like to think your case over, and take it
with me to my oratory. Go, my daughter,
for the present, but return to me again
soon.

LUCY
(rising)
Merci.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Strong wind brings rain like spray as Lucy exits the somber church. She tries to reach the porch of a large building nearby, but she is too weak, and the wind and rain beat her back.

EXT. BUILDING -- CONTINUOUS

Suddenly the structure turns black and vanishes from Lucy's eyes. She seems to pitch headlong down a dark abyss.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Lucy's sense of sight slowly returns.

A familiar sailing ship inside a large, clear bottle comes into her focus.

Lucy re-enters consciousness with a MOAN and a long shiver. She looks spectral, her eyes larger and more hollow, her hair darker by contrast with her thin, ashen face. She is lying on a sofa.

Awareness revives in fear. Lucy sits up appalled. Not knowing where she is, she quickly glances from one spot in the room to another.

Her eyes fall on a familiar easy chair. Other furnishings dawn on her by degrees. At last Lucy takes in the complete parlor, with a wood fire on a shining hearth.

As Lucy gazes at objects, especially the ship in the bottle, she appears even more perplexed -- the room is filled with furniture and objects from the Bretton parlor in England, that Lucy visited as a child. Even the arrangement of the furniture is the same.

Lucy rubs her eyes. Her heart seems to ache at beholding these things again.

LUCY
Am I in England? Am I at Bretton?

Above the fireplace hangs a gilded frame enclosing a portrait. It is a watercolor of a young man, fresh, lifelike, animated. Lucy remembers it...

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. PARLOR AT BRETTON -- DAY

Over the mantelpiece hangs the portrait of 16-year-old John Graham Bretton.

Lucy remembers her younger self mounting a stool to unhook the portrait from the wall. Holding it in her hands, she stares into the portrait's happy eyes.

Suddenly, a small voice comes from behind her.

POLLY
What are you doing?

Lucy is startled, but not embarrassed, by little Polly. Lucy rehangs the portrait.

LUCY
I was just wondering.

POLLY
Wondering what?

Lucy steps down from the stool and lifts little Polly in her arms.

LUCY
Look at the picture. Do you like it,
Polly?

Polly gazes long, and darkness moves across her sensitive face.

POLLY
Put me down.

Lucy sets her down.

LUCY
You feel it, too. How can something that
charms so much, cause such pain at the
same time?

END FLASHBACK

INT. PARLOR -- DAY

Lucy stares at the portrait and audibly pronounces its name --

LUCY
John Graham.

A sudden voice speaks from behind Lucy.

MRS. BRETTON (O.S.)
Do you want John Graham, dear?

Lucy turns around.

How strange it is to behold the well-remembered face opposite her. The tall, well-attired lady is a little older, a little heavier, but she is the same -- Lucy's godmother, Mrs. Bretton.

MRS. BRETTON (CONT'D)
Do you wish to see John Graham?

The blood leaves Lucy's cheeks.

LUCY
Madame, where am I?

MRS. BRETTON
In a very safe place, well protected.
Make your mind quite easy 'til you get a
little better.

LUCY
I am so entirely bewildered, I do not
know whether I can trust my senses at
all, or whether they are misleading me --
but are you not come from England,
Madame?

MRS. BRETTON
I am. Have you been long in this country?
You seem to know my son.

LUCY
Do I, Madame? Perhaps I do. Your son --
the picture there?

MRS. BRETTON
That is his portrait as a youth. While
looking at it, you pronounced his name.

LUCY
John Graham Bretton?

MRS. BRETTON
Quite right, and you, I am told, are an
English teacher in a school here.

LUCY
How was I found, Madame, and by whom?

MRS. BRETTON
I shall tell you that by-and-by, but at
present you are too confused and weak for
conversation. Try to rest and I'll fix
you some tea.

She hurries off.

Lucy looks back at the portrait.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARLOR -- NIGHT

In amber firelight, an English tea service stands ready on the table.
Lucy rises from the sofa and passes behind it.

LUCY
The fire is hot.

She finds another seat in a darkened corner away from the fire.
Mrs. Bretton busies herself with the tea service.

MRS. BRETTON
Yes, we'll let it burn down a bit.

She finishes pouring the tea, then lifts her eyes and slightly
inclines her head as if she hears a sound.

Lucy hears the iron CLASH of a gate, FOOTSTEPS on gravel, and an OPENING DOOR.

Mrs. Bretton pulls a stuffed chair closer to the hearth.

The FOOTSTEPS GROW LOUDER and finally stride into the room.

Mrs. Bretton speaks curtly, but hides a glad smile.

MRS. BRETTON (CONT'D)
Is it you, John Graham?

Dr. John sits down in the stuffed chair before the fire.

DR. JOHN
Who else should it be, Mama?

MRS. BRETTON
You deserve cold tea, for being so late.

DR. JOHN
I shall not get my deserts, for the tea looks steaming.

MRS. BRETTON
Get yourself to the table, lazy boy. If you had one spark of consideration, you would leave that chair for the old lady.

DR. JOHN
So I should, only the dear old lady persists in leaving it for me. How is your patient, Mama?

MRS. BRETTON
(turning to Lucy)
Will she come forward and speak for herself?

At this invitation, Lucy leaves her corner and steps forward.

Dr. John courteously rises to greet her.

DR. JOHN
So you must be better then -- much better. I was alarmed last night, and if I had not been forced to hurry away to a dying patient, I certainly would not have left you, but my mother herself is something of a nurse. I saw your case was a fainting fit, not necessarily dangerous. What brought it on, I have yet to learn. Meantime, I trust you feel better?

LUCY
Much better, I thank you, Dr. John.

He makes a cozy arrangement of the cushions on the sofa, and motions Lucy to settle among them. He and his mother also draw to the fire and sit with their tea.

Mrs. Bretton's eyes are fastened steadily upon Lucy.

MRS. BRETTON
Well, I have seldom seen a stronger likeness!

(MORE)

MRS. BRETTON (CONT'D)

(pointing to Lucy)

Tell me, John Graham, of whom does this young lady remind you?

DR. JOHN

Mama, you put her out of countenance. I often tell you abruptness is your fault. Remember, too, that to you, she is a stranger, and does not know your ways.

MRS. BRETTON

Now, when she looks down -- now! When she turns sideways -- who is she like?

DR. JOHN

Indeed, Mama, since you propound the riddle, I think you ought to solve it!

MRS. BRETTON

And you have known her some time, you say -- ever since you first had a patient to attend at the school in the Rue Fossette - - yet you never mentioned to me that extraordinary resemblance!

DR. JOHN

What can you mean?

MRS. BRETTON

Stupid boy! Look at her!

Dr. John does look.

But this is not to be endured, and Lucy can see how it must end.

LUCY

Dr. John has had so much to do and think of, since he and I first met, that, while I found out some months ago that he is John Graham Bretton, it never seemed possible that he should recognize me...Lucy Snowe.

MRS. BRETTON

Lucy Snowe! I thought so! I knew it!

She at once steps across the hearth and kisses Lucy.

DR. JOHN

(dumbfounded)

Mama calls me a stupid boy, and I think I am so, for, upon my honor, often as I have seen you, I never once suspected this -- and yet I see it all now. Lucy Snowe! To be sure! I recollect her perfectly, and there she sits, not a doubt of it. But, you surely have not known me all this time, and never mentioned it?

LUCY

Do you remember my once looking at you, very fixedly?

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. DRAWING ROOM AT THE BOARDING SCHOOL -- DAY

Dr. John remembers sitting near a window in the sunshine.

Staring at him, Lucy seems struck by a sudden and startling new idea.

Dr. John is uncomfortable under her direct, intense gaze.

DR. JOHN (V.O.)
I think I do! I think I was even cross
with you.

LUCY (V.O.)
You considered me a little bold, perhaps?

DR. JOHN (V.O.)
Not at all. Only, reserved as you
generally were, I wondered what proved so
magnetic to your shy eyes.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- NIGHT

Lucy continues.

LUCY
You see how it was, now?

DR. JOHN
Perfectly.

MRS. BRETTON
What are you doing in this country? How
did you come here? When did you become a
teacher?

LUCY
I have as many questions for the two of
you!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- NIGHT

Later that evening, the three old friends are still catching up.

The CLOCK BEGINS STRIKING 11.

MRS. BRETTON
...so he took this small chateau, and I
brought with me as much furniture of the
house in England as I thought fit to keep
unsold --

LUCY
Hence my bewilderment at the phantoms of
chairs, looking glasses, teacups --

MRS. BRETTON
(laughing)
You poor dear!

As the CLOCK ENDS STRIKING, Dr. John stops his mother.

DR. JOHN
Miss Snowe must retire now. Tomorrow I will ask some questions about her loss of health. She is much changed since July, when last I saw her.

Lucy seems happy to stay off the subject tonight. She rises and kisses her godmother good night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- DAY

Lucy enters the room at dusk.

Dr. John stands by a window, reading a newspaper by fading light.

Mrs. Bretton sits in her chair, lost in a nap.

Dr. John sees Lucy and speaks low to avoid waking his mother.

DR. JOHN
Come over here, please.
(inviting her to sit near the window)
The first thing this morning, I went to the Rue Fossette and told the cook that you were safe and in good hands. What did Madame Beck mean by leaving you alone for months on end?

LUCY
She could not foresee that I would fall ill.

DR. JOHN
Your nervous system bore a good share of the suffering?

LUCY
I am not quite sure what my nervous system is, but I was dreadfully low-spirited.

DR. JOHN
Cheerful society would be of use -- you should be alone as little as possible. And you should take plenty of exercise.

LUCY
That sounds sensible.

DR. JOHN
Miss Snowe, is it permitted me to ask what your religion is? Are you a Catholic?

LUCY
(looking up in surprise)
A Catholic? No! Why suggest such an idea?

DR. JOHN
The manner in which you were consigned to me last night made me doubt.

LUCY
 Consigned to you? But, indeed, I still
 don't know how I fell into your hands.

DR. JOHN
 Under circumstances that puzzled me. I
 had been away all day on a critical case.
 Finally my patient's pain eased, and I
 set out homeward.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. ROAD -- NIGHT

Dr. John is riding his horse through the wind and rain. He approaches
 the Catholic church.

In the dark, Pere Silas is trying to lift something heavy.

DR. JOHN (V.O.)
 I saw a priest lifting something in his
 arms. I recognized him -- he was a man I
 have often met by sick beds of the poor.
 He is, I think, a good man, devoted to
 duty.

Pere Silas calls out to Dr. John.

PERE SILAS
 Arretez!

Dr. John climbs down from his horse.

PERE SILAS (CONT'D)
 This person is one of your countrywomen.
 Save her!

In a bright flash of lightning, Dr. John is startled to see the face
 of Lucy.

DR. JOHN (V.O.)
 What he supported was a woman -- you.

END FLASHBACK

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- DAY

Dr. John continues.

DR. JOHN
 You were perfectly unconscious. The
 priest gave a curious account, that you
 had been to him that evening at
 confession, that your exhausted and
 suffering appearance, coupled with some
 things you had said --

LUCY
 Things I said?

DR. JOHN
 (teasing)
 Horrendous crimes, no doubt, but he did
 not tell me what. Your confession,
 however, had not made an enemy of the
 good father.

(MORE)

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)

It seems he was so struck, and felt so sorry that you should be out on such a night alone, that he thought it a Christian duty to watch you when you left the church.

LUCY

I suppose you think me mad, but I could not help it -- my days and nights had grown intolerable, a cruel sense of desolation pained my mind -- I needed companionship, I needed counsel. I could find none of these at the Rue Fossette, so I sought them in church.

DR. JOHN

Confound Madame Beck! Has the woman no compassion, to condemn her best teacher to solitary confinement?

LUCY

It was not Madame Beck's fault, it is no living being's fault, and I won't hear anyone blamed.

DR. JOHN

Who is in the wrong, then, Lucy?

LUCY

Me, Dr. John -- only me.

DR. JOHN

You must take better care in the future. Change of air -- change of scene, those are my prescriptions.

Mrs. Bretton stirs in her chair.

LUCY

Your mother wakes, you ought to ring for tea.

He does. Mrs. Bretton sits up, astonished and indignant.

MRS. BRETTON

Goodness, the fire is so warm and cozy that one could almost fall asleep!

Her son comes spiritedly to the attack.

DR. JOHN

Hush-a-bye, Mama! Sleep again. You look the picture of innocence in your slumbers.

MRS. BRETTON

My slumbers, John Graham! What are you talking about? You know I never do sleep by day.

DR. JOHN

Funny -- most people don't snore when they are awake.

MRS. BRETTON

Oh, John Graham, don't be ridiculous! I do not snore.

(MORE)

MRS. BRETTON (CONT'D)
 (concerned)
 Do I, Lucy?

DR. JOHN
 Miss Snowe -- have you ever experienced anything like Mama's wit? She is a most sprightly woman for her age and size.

MRS. BRETTON
 Keep your compliments to yourself, sir!
 Was I snoring, Lucy?

INT. BRETTON DINING ROOM -- DAY

Dr. John looks agitated as he takes a seat at the table, which Lucy is using as a worktable for sewing. Dr. John picks up a reel of thread, which he nervously unwinds.

DR. JOHN
 Your friend is spending her vacation in travelling I hear?

LUCY
 Who do you mean?

She knows who he means.

DR. JOHN
 Ginevra -- Miss Fanshawe, is on a tour through the south of France?

LUCY
 She is.

DR. JOHN
 Do you and she correspond?

LUCY
 It will astonish you to hear that I never once thought of applying for that privilege.

DR. JOHN
 You have seen letters of her writing?

LUCY
 Yes, several to her uncle.

DR. JOHN
 They will not be deficient in wit and naiveté, there is so much sparkle in her soul?

LUCY
 She writes comprehensively enough when she writes to Monsieur de Bassompierre.

DR. JOHN
 And her handwriting? It must be pretty, light, ladylike, I should think?

LUCY
 It is.

DR. JOHN
 I truly believe that all she does is well done.

He waits, but Lucy is in no hurry to chime in at this remark.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
You, who know her, could you name a point in which she is deficient?

LUCY
She does several things very well.

DR. JOHN
When do you suppose she will return?

LUCY
Pardon me, Dr. John, I must explain. You honor me too much in ascribing to me a degree of intimacy with Miss Fanshawe that I have not the felicity to enjoy. I have never been the depositary of her plans and secrets. You will find her particular friends in another sphere than mine.

DR. JOHN
Excuse her, judge her indulgently, the glitter of fashion misleads her, but she will soon find out that these people are hollow, and she will return to you with greater attachment and trust. I know something of superficial, showy, selfish people. Depend on it, at heart Ginevra values you beyond a score of such.

Lucy manages, with difficulty, to keep a civil tongue.

LUCY
You are very kind.

DR. JOHN
Yet, while I comfort you, I cannot take the same consolation, I cannot hope she will do me justice. Alfred de Hamal is most worthless, yet I fear he pleases her. Wretched delusion!

Lucy's patience gives way.

LUCY
Dr. John, there is no delusion like your own. On all points but this one you are right-thinking and clear-sighted, but where Miss Fanshawe is concerned, you merit no respect, nor have you mine!

She quickly rises and leaves the room.

Dr. John is disturbed.

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- NIGHT

When Dr. John enters, Lucy sees at a glance that she has done harm.

Dr. John's demeanor is grave, yet there is no malice.

When Lucy hands him his tea with trembling care, he speaks as kindly as ever.

DR. JOHN
Thank you, Lucy.

She tries to catch his eye, but he sits, sad and quiet, reading the newspaper.

Moved by insupportable regret, Lucy murmurs his name.

LUCY
Dr. John...

He looks up from the paper. His eyes are neither cold nor malevolent.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Forgive my hasty words this afternoon --
do forgive them.

DR. JOHN
(smiles)
Perhaps I deserved them, Lucy. If you
don't respect me, I am sure it is because
I am not worthy of respect. I fear I am
an awkward fool -- I manage badly in some
ways.

LUCY
That is not true. But now, let me unsay
what I said in anger. In all things, I
deeply respect you. If you do not think
enough of yourself, and too much of
others, what is that but a virtue?

DR. JOHN
Can I think too much of Ginevra?

LUCY
I believe you can, you believe you can't.
Let us agree to differ. Let me be
pardoned, that is what I ask.

DR. JOHN
Do you think I hold ill will for one warm
word?

LUCY
I see you do not and cannot, but just
say, "Lucy, I forgive you!" Say that, to
ease me of the heartache.

DR. JOHN
Put away your heartache, as I will put
away mine. You wounded me a little, Lucy,
but now, when the pain is gone, I more
than forgive, I feel grateful, as to a
sincere well-wisher.

LUCY
I am your sincere well-wisher -- you may
be sure of that.

INT. ART GALLERY -- DAY

One picture of portentous size is set up with a cordon of protection
and a cushioned bench in front of it.

Lucy sits there alone.

The painting is of a dark-complexioned woman, over-fed, under-dressed, half-reclined on a couch, and considerably larger than life.

Suddenly a light tap visits Lucy's shoulder. Turning, she meets a frowning, almost shocked face, bent to hers.

MONSIEUR PAUL

What are you doing here?

LUCY

Monsieur Paul, you're back! Did you have a pleasant vacation?

MONSIEUR PAUL

Well enough. But you did not answer -- what are you doing here?

LUCY

I am...having fun.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You have fun! Doing what, please? But first, take my arm, and let's go on the other side.

Lucy does as she is bid. They start across the room.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Permit me to conduct you to your party.

LUCY

I have no party.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You are not alone?

LUCY

Yes, Monsieur.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Did you come here unaccompanied?

LUCY

No, Monsieur. Dr. John Bretton brought me here.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Dr. Bretton and Madame Bretton, his mother, of course?

LUCY

No, only Dr. John.

MONSIEUR PAUL

And he told you to look at that picture?

LUCY

By no means, I found it for myself. It's Cleopatra.

Monsieur Paul bristles. Lucy perceives this, and takes pleasure.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Astounding audacity! Unimaginable nerve, these Englishwomen!

LUCY
What is the matter, Monsieur?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Matter! How dare you, a young person, sit coolly down, with the self-possession of a garcon, and look at that picture?

LUCY
It is a very ugly picture, but I cannot see why I should not look at it.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Speak no more of it. But you ought not to be here alone.

LUCY
What does it matter whether I am alone or accompanied?

MONSIEUR PAUL
(pointing)
Sit down there -- there!

LUCY
But, Monsieur --

MONSIEUR PAUL
But, Mademoiselle, you sit down, and don't move -- hear you? Until I give you the permission.

LUCY
But what a sad corner! And what ugly pictures!

Lucy veers around and surveys the gallery.

A small group of SPECTATORS is now gathered around the Cleopatra.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Nearly half that crowd is ladies.

MONSIEUR PAUL
But they are married ladies, and it is quite proper for them to contemplate what no unmarried damsel ought to glance at.

Monsieur Paul looks at the picture for a long moment, quite at ease.

LUCY
I cannot agree in this doctrine, and do not see the sense of it.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Please be silent. I blame your mingled rashness and ignorance.
(looking back at Lucy)
Have you not been ill? I understood you had.

LUCY
Yes, but I am now quite well.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Where did you spend the vacation?

LUCY
Chiefly in the Rue Fossette, partly with
Madame Bretton.

MONSIEUR PAUL
I have heard that you were left alone in
the Rue Fossette, is that so?

LUCY
Not quite alone -- there seem to be some
rather large rats living within the
walls.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Remind me to set traps. And you fell
sick?

LUCY
(embarrassed)
I had a nervous fever, my mind was ill.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Indeed! You poor little thing. Your
courage will not sustain you in solitude,
it merely gives you the temerity to gaze
at scandalous pictures of Cleopatra.

LUCY
Monsieur too has been looking at
Cleopatra -- what does he think of her?

MONSIEUR PAUL
It is not worth noting. A superb woman --
the size of an empress, the shape of the
moon, but no one I would want for
company. As you would know if you'd had
more than a glance at her.

LUCY
But I have looked at her a great many
times while Monsieur has been talking --
I can see her quite well from this
corner.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Turn to the wall and study the pictures
of fruit!

LUCY
Excuse me, Monsieur Paul, they are too
hideous. But if you admire them, allow me
to vacate my seat and leave you to their
contemplation.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Mademoiselle, you Protestant English
women astonish me.

LUCY
Will Monsieur have the goodness to move
an inch to one side?

MONSIEUR PAUL
At what are you gazing now?

LUCY
I think I see a person I know.

Lucy sees the trim, natty figure of Alfred de Hamal.

He daintily holds a glass to one of his eyes and gazes upon the Cleopatra with admiration.

When Lucy looks back to Monsieur Paul, he is gone.

Lucy's eyes, pursuing Monsieur Paul, see Dr. John. He is looking for Lucy, but has not yet explored the corner where she sits. Lucy remains quiet, watching him.

Dr. John approaches Alfred de Hamal, pauses near him, then glances at the Cleopatra. Lucy sees that the painting is not to Dr. John's taste.

He steps aside and studies de Hamal more carefully than he studied the painting. Lucy sees that the man is not to Dr. John's taste.

INT. MRS. BRETTON'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Lucy is wearing a pink dress made with extreme simplicity, softened by a wrap of black lace.

MRS. BRETTON
There! Another success. Look in the glass.

With fear, Lucy looks in the mirror. She quickly turns away.

LUCY
Pink?

DR. JOHN (O.S.)
Mama! Lucy!

LUCY
(uneasily)
I do hope he will not think I have been decking myself out to draw attention.

MRS. BRETTON
You're hardly "decked out," my dear. For once you look like everyone else your age. Really, you're too young to wear black and gray all the time. Let's go downstairs.

INT. DOWNSTAIRS -- CONTINUOUS

Mrs. Bretton and Lucy walk down the stairs. Lucy self-consciously walks in Mrs. Bretton's shadow.

Dr. John stands waiting in the doorway.

DR. JOHN
Here, Lucy, some flowers.

He gives her a bouquet. He takes no further notice of her dress than is conveyed in a kind smile and satisfied nod, which seems to calm Lucy's fear of ridicule.

INT./EXT. CARRIAGE -- NIGHT -- MONTAGE

Lucy looks happy with her cheerful companions, the two Brettons, in the snug comfort of the carriage.

They roll down brightly lit streets; beside brilliant shops; next to the abundant flow of THEATERGOERS along the pavement; and before a great music hall blazing with light.

INT. MUSIC HALL -- NIGHT

Dr. John, Mrs. Bretton, and Lucy mount a wide staircase leading to great, gilded doors.

Dr. John rolls back the doors disclosing the music hall, which is grand, wide, and high.

Dr. John, Mrs. Bretton, and Lucy take their seats in a spot commanding a good view of the vast, dazzling, cheerful hall. Already it is filled with a splendid ASSEMBLAGE.

Seated by haughty-looking LADY SARA, Ginevra Fanshawe is cool, blonde, and beautiful as a white column. She seems full of satisfaction with herself, quite conscious that she is a mark for all eyes.

Soon she notices Dr. John, and she raises a glass to examine his mother.

Mrs. Bretton is turned in her seat, speaking to the WOMAN beside her.

Ginevra laughingly whispers something to Lady Sara.

Dr. John sees all this and struggles to keep his composure. He speaks quietly to Lucy.

DR. JOHN
I believe everyone in Villette is here tonight.

LUCY
Has Miss Fanshawe come with Lady Sara?

DR. JOHN
Evidently.

LUCY
Did she see you?

DR. JOHN
I think so. I have had the honor of witnessing a little spectacle -- Miss Fanshawe has been making fun of her friends.

LUCY
What friends?

DR. JOHN
Myself and my mother. As to me, it is all very natural. Nothing, I suppose, can be fairer game than the young bourgeois doctor. But my mother? I've never seen her ridiculed before.

LUCY
Think nothing of it, Dr. John -- it is not worthwhile. If Ginevra is in a giddy mood, she would make no scruple of laughing at the king and queen themselves. She is not motivated by malevolence, but sheer, heedless folly.

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

To a feather-brained schoolgirl, nothing is sacred.

DR. JOHN

But you forget -- I have not been accustomed to think of Miss Fanshawe as a feather-brained schoolgirl. Was she not my divinity -- the angel of my heart?

LUCY

Yes, there was your mistake.

DR. JOHN

One minute ago I was very much her slave. But for one luckless sneer, I would yet be the humblest of her servants. Through myself she could not in 10 years have done what, in a moment, she has done through my mother. Lucy, look well at Mama, and say, without fear, in what light she appears to you.

LUCY

As she always does -- an English, middle-class gentlewoman, well, though gravely dressed, independent of pretence, constitutionally composed and cheerful.

DR. JOHN

So she seems to me -- bless her! The merry may laugh with Mama, but only the weak will laugh at her. She shall not be ridiculed, with my consent at least, nor without my -- my scorn.

LUCY

I cannot tell why you are so very angry.

DR. JOHN

For this reason -- I just realized that Ginevra is more devil than angel.

LUCY

Nonsense! You exaggerate. She has no great harm in her.

DR. JOHN

Too much for me. Now dismiss the subject. Let me amuse myself by teasing Mama.

(to his mother)

Mama, wake up.

MRS. BRETTON

John Graham, I will certainly wake you up if you are not better conducted. How do you happen to be acquainted with young ladies of the court? I have observed two of them pay you no small attention during the last few minutes.

DR. JOHN

I wish you would not observe them.

MRS. BRETTON

Why not? Because one of them satirically levels her eyeglass at me?

(MORE)

MRS. BRETTON (CONT'D)

She is a pretty, silly girl -- but are you apprehensive that her titter will distress the old lady?

DR. JOHN

The sensible, admirable old lady! Mother, you are better to me than a dozen pretty, silly girls.

The lights dim and MUSIC BEGINS.

MRS. BRETTON

Don't be demonstrative, John Graham, or I shall faint and you shall have to carry me out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MUSIC HALL -- NIGHT

The intermission is a pleasant commotion, with people walking around, TALKING, and LAUGHING.

A little circle of GENTLEMEN has gathered around Ginevra and Lady Sara.

Nearest to Ginevra stands Alfred de Hamal. A secret look passes between Ginevra and de Hamal that speaks volumes.

Dr. John sees this and rises with sudden impatience.

DR. JOHN

This room is stifflingly hot. Lucy -- Mother -- will you come to the fresh air?

MRS. BRETTON

Go with him, Lucy, I would rather keep my seat.

Lucy rises and follows Dr. John.

EXT. MUSIC HALL -- NIGHT

Passing under a lamp, Dr. John encounters Lucy's eyes.

DR. JOHN

You look pensive, Lucy -- is it on my account?

LUCY

I was only fearing that you are grieved.

DR. JOHN

Not at all, so be of good cheer -- as I am. Whenever I die, Lucy, it will not be of heartache. I may be stung, I may seem to droop for a time, but no pain of sentiment has yet gone through my whole system.

(lifting his hat, making mock reverence)

Thank you, Miss Fanshawe! Yes, I thank her. She has made me feel that nine parts of my heart have always been sound as a bell, and the tenth part bleeds from a mere puncture that will heal in an instant.

LUCY

You are angry just now -- you will feel differently tomorrow.

DR. JOHN

Angry! You don't know me. On the contrary, I am cool as the night -- which, by the way, may be too cool for you. We will go back.

LUCY

Dr. John, this is a sudden change.

DR. JOHN

Not really -- or if it is, there are good reasons for it. Did you see that new bracelet on her arm? She has a flair for accepting gifts. Strange! For I know she is a girl of family.

LUCY

But you don't know her education, Dr. John. She has been tossed about all her life from one foreign school to another. She tells me that they are poor at home. She always speaks quite candidly on such points -- you never find her lying. Her parents have a large family. Necessity has caused reckless unscrupulousness as to how they sustain a good appearance. This is the state of things, the only state she has seen from childhood upwards.

DR. JOHN

I believe it -- and I thought to mold her to something better -- but, Lucy, I have felt a new thing tonight, in looking at her and de Hamal. I saw a look interchanged between them.

LUCY

How do you mean? You have been long aware of the flirtation they keep up.

DR. JOHN

Ay, flirtation! But what I refer to was not flirtation -- it was a look marking mutual and secret understanding -- it was neither girlish nor innocent. No woman who could give or receive such a glance, shall ever be sought in marriage by me -- I would rather wed a peasant and be sure that she was honest.

INT. MUSIC HALL -- NIGHT

CROWDS block the corridor along which Dr. John and Lucy pass.

Through the NOISE, Lucy thinks she hears a man call her name.

MONSIEUR PAUL (O.S.)

Meess Snowe!

Glancing around, Lucy sees the ubiquitous Monsieur Paul. He is looking at her gravely, a sardonic comment in his eyes.

Lucy is in no mood. She ignores him and turns her face to the sleeve of Dr. John.

DR. JOHN
Keep close to my side, Lucy, these crowds
respect no one.

As if against her will, Lucy glances back to see Monsieur Paul.

He is still looking, but he has understood her wish to shun him. His gaze is turned to a dark frown.

Lucy bows, with a view to conciliation, but she gets only the stiffest and sternest nod in return.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
(smiling)
Whom have you made angry, Lucy? Who is
that savage-looking friend of yours?

LUCY
One of the professors at Madame Beck's --
a very cross man.

DR. JOHN
He looks mighty cross just now -- what
have you done to him?

LUCY
I'm not sure. I'm never sure with
Monsieur Paul.
(quietly, to herself)
I wish I didn't have to go back to that
school at all.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- DAY

At dusk, a resolute Lucy, wearing her cloak, carrying her bag, stands near the door.

Mrs. Bretton and Dr. John are coaxing her.

MRS. BRETTON
Lucy must not leave us today -- she knows
we can try for a second respite from
Madame Beck.

LUCY
I would not ask for one if I might have
it for a word. I long to get the goodbyes
over, and to be settled in the Rue
Fossette again. I must go this day.

DR. JOHN
Stay just one night more, Lucy. It's
getting late.

Lucy looks as if she could cry, so irritated and eager is she to be gone, to have it over. She shakes her head.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL -- NIGHT

It is dark when Dr. John helps Lucy from the carriage at Madame Beck's door in the drizzle.

Dr. John RINGS THE BELL. The door is opened by Rosine.

LUCY
(to Dr. John)
Don't come in.

But Dr. John steps into the well-lit vestibule.

INT. VESTIBULE -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy looks down, not wishing Dr. John to see her tears.

DR. JOHN
Keep up your courage, Lucy. Think of my
mother and myself as true friends. We
will not forget you.

LUCY
Nor will I forget you, Dr. John.

Her bag is brought in by the DRIVER.

Dr. John and Lucy shake hands. He turns to go, but, unsatisfied, he turns back.

DR. JOHN
Lucy -- shall you feel very solitary
here?

LUCY
At first I shall.

DR. JOHN
Well, my mother will soon call to see
you, and, meantime -- I'll tell you what
I'll do -- I'll write. Just any nonsense
that comes into my head -- shall I?

Lucy shakes her head, smiling.

LUCY
Never think of it -- impose on yourself
no such task. You'll not have time.

DR. JOHN
Oh! I will make time. Goodbye!

He is gone. The heavy DOOR CRASHES SHUT.

The axe has fallen; the pang is experienced. Swallowing tears, Lucy picks up her bag and hurries upstairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REFECTORY -- DAY

Early morning, Lucy sits alone, near a large, black stove.

Monsieur Paul opens the door.

Lucy has not until this moment known that tears are on her cheeks, but she feels them now and wipes them away.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Mademoiselle, you are sad.

LUCY
I have the right to be.

MONSIEUR PAUL
You are sick of heart and mind.

LUCY
Monsieur, I shall be called to prayers
shortly -- my time for conversation is
very brief at this hour -- excuse --

MONSIEUR PAUL
I excuse everything. My mood is so meek,
nothing could ruffle it.
(sitting a few feet from Lucy)
You look like one who would snatch at a
draft of sweet poison.

LUCY
To whatever is sweet, be it poison or
chocolate, you cannot deny its delicious
quality. Better, perhaps, to die quickly
a pleasant death, than drag on long a
charmless life.

MONSIEUR PAUL
You grieve at being parted from friends --
is it not so?

LUCY
(with faltering voice)
Please let me alone.

Her head sinks on her arms and the table. She weeps bitterly, though
silently.

Monsieur Paul reaches out to place a comforting hand upon Lucy's
shoulder, then stops, sadly realizing that his gesture of kindness
will be rejected. He sits a moment longer, then rises and exits the
room.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. REFECTORY -- DAY

Lucy appears at breakfast serene as any other person.

Ginevra sits opposite Lucy, her eyes twinkling gleefully. She frankly
stretches a hand to be shaken across the table.

GINEVRA
I am glad you are come back, old woman!
You don't know how often I have wanted
you in this dismal hole.

LUCY
Oh, have you? Then, of course, if you
wanted me, you have some chore for me to
do -- stockings to mend, perhaps?

GINEVRA
Crabbed and crusty as ever! I expected as
much. It would not be you if you did not
snub me.

(MORE)

GINEVRA (CONT'D)

But I need to have a talk with you, chere amie. I know where you have been spending your vacation, and how you have been enjoying life like any other belle. I saw you at the concert the other night, dressed, actually, like anybody else. Who is your dressmaker?

LUCY

Tittle tattle -- how prettily it begins! My dressmaker -- fiddlesticks! Sheer off, Ginevra.

GINEVRA

A little reluctance on your part, eh, shy angel? And so, you know Jean?

LUCY

I know John Bretton.

GINEVRA

How is our well-beloved Docteur Jean? Do tell me about him. The poor man must be in a sad way. What did he say to my behavior the other night? Wasn't I cruel?

LUCY

Do you think he noticed you?

GINEVRA

It was a delightful evening. Oh, that divine Alfred de Hamal! And then to watch John sulking and dying in the distance, and the old lady! But I am afraid Lady Sara and I were a little rude in mocking her.

LUCY

Lady Sara never mocked her, and for what you did, don't make yourself in the least uneasy -- Mrs. Bretton will survive your sneer.

GINEVRA

She may -- old ladies are tough, but that poor son of hers! Do tell me what he said. I saw he was terribly cut up.

LUCY

He said you looked as if at heart you were already Mrs. Alfred de Hamal.

GINEVRA

(with delight)

Did he? He noticed that? How charming!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy is seated before the lively class and is taking out her work.

LUCY

Quiet, please. Let's get started.

Monsieur Paul enters the door with a BURST like a thunderclap. He halts suddenly at Lucy's desk, giving her a look of scowling distrust. He pulls his hand from his waistcoat and places a letter on her desk.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Voila! For you.

Lucy picks up the white envelope and sees the initials, "J.G.B." stamped in the red wax seal. Lucy's face reveals the happiness of a hope realized.

LUCY
Thank you, thank you, Monsieur!

Monsieur Paul gives her a vicious glance and marches out.

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL ATTIC -- NIGHT

Lucy places a candle on an old chest of drawers, and, trembling with sweet impatience, breaks the seal on her letter.

Suddenly she becomes aware of a strange SOUND in the vast attic.

Something is gliding out from the black recess.

Lucy's light is dim and the room is long, but she can make out a figure -- narrow, black, veiled -- a NUN.

Lucy CRIES OUT and runs for the door.

INT. MADAME BECK'S SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Madame Beck is entertaining a few FRIENDS, including one gentleman with his back to the door.

Lucy bursts in.

LUCY
There is something in the attic -- I saw something. Go and look at it!

Lucy's scare has made her deadly pale.

Those in the room rise in concern.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Go to the attic!

Lucy turns to the door, beckoning them to follow.

LUCY (CONT'D)
You must come this way, you must see what I have seen -- something strange!

Suddenly Lucy remembers something --

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

Lucy's letter is left on the chest of drawers with the candle.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MADAME BECK'S SITTING ROOM -- NIGHT

Lucy GASPS.

LUCY
My letter!

She flies out of the room. The others follow.

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

When Lucy reaches the attic, it is dark as a pit. Her candle is out.

Madame Beck has brought a lamp from the sitting room. Its rays pierce the blackness.

There stands Lucy's unlit candle on the chest, but her letter is not with it.

Lucy is looking for the letter now, and not for the nun.

LUCY
My letter!

She is almost beside herself, groping around on the floor.

MADAME BECK
What letter, dear?

The others are examining all corners of the attic.

MAN
The cloaks are disarranged.

WOMAN
Someone has been here.

LUCY
(still groping)
Oh! She has taken my letter!

DR. JOHN (O.S.)
What letter, Lucy?

Lucy recognizes the voice and looks up.

Dr. John was the man with his back to the door in the sitting room.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
Was it my letter?

LUCY
Yours -- the letter you wrote to me. I had come here to read it quietly. I had saved it all day -- never opened it 'til this evening. I cannot lose it.

DR. JOHN
Hush! Don't distress yourself so cruelly. What is it worth? Come out of this cold room, we are going to send for the police now to examine further. Come, we will go downstairs.

His hand takes Lucy's, leading her out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. SMALL SALON -- NIGHT

Lucy and Dr. John sit before the stove.

Lucy's eyes are vivid and restless, and she cannot steady her hands.

DR. JOHN
 (soothingly)
 Don't worry about the letter, Lucy, I'll
 send you 20 others better than the first.
 (smiling)
 Why do you care for this letter so very
 much?

Lucy quickly makes up an answer.

LUCY
 I...have so few letters to care for.

DR. JOHN
 I am sure you did not read it, or you
 would think nothing of it.

LUCY
 I wanted to read it.

She cannot help weeping again.

DR. JOHN
 Lucy, my poor little friend, here --

He takes the letter out of his waistcoat pocket and gives it to Lucy.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
 -- here is your letter. It is not worth
 such tears.

Pleasure at regaining the letter makes Lucy forget merited reproach.
 Her joy is great and cannot be concealed.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
 Are you satisfied now?

LUCY
 I am -- satisfied and happy! But where
 did you find it?

DR. JOHN
 On the attic floor, just before you would
 have found it.

LUCY
 But why did you keep it?

DR. JOHN
 It's not much of a letter. I was a little
 embarrassed, I suppose. Well --
 (moving closer and feeling her
 forehead)
 -- how do you feel physically? Are you
 growing calmer? Not much, for you still
 tremble like a leaf.

LUCY
 I am sufficiently calm.

DR. JOHN
You are able, then, to tell me what you saw? Your account was quite vague.

LUCY
I never will tell exactly what I saw, unless someone else sees it too, and then I will give corroborative testimony. Otherwise, I shall be discredited and accused of dreaming.

DR. JOHN
Tell me. I will hear it from a professional point of view. Come, Lucy, tell me.

LUCY
You would laugh...

DR. JOHN
If you don't tell me you shall have no more letters.

LUCY
You are laughing now.

She rises to go, speaking sadly.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Good night.

DR. JOHN
Have I offended you?

Lucy shakes her head.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
Permit me, then, to speak seriously before you go. You are in a highly nervous state. I feel sure from your look and manner that you saw, or thought you saw, something in that attic. I know you are not, nor ever were, subject to flights of the imagination. Be calm now. Just tell me what you saw.

LUCY
You will tell nobody?

DR. JOHN
Nobody -- most certainly. You may trust me as implicitly as you did Pere Silas.

LUCY
You will not laugh?

DR. JOHN
Perhaps I may, to do you good, but not in scorn. Lucy, I feel as a friend towards you, though your nature is slow to trust.

LUCY
I thought I saw -- no, I DID see -- a nun. You have heard the legend of this house. That is why no one will believe me.

Dr. John sits and thinks a moment.

DR. JOHN
Now, they will talk about thieves,
burglars, and so on -- let them do so --
mind you, say nothing, and report your
nun to nobody. She may appear to you
again -- don't be startled.

LUCY
(with horror)
You think then, she came out of my brain,
and may glide out again at an hour when I
am not looking for her?

DR. JOHN
I think it a case of illusion, resulting
from long-continued mental conflict.

LUCY
Oh, Dr. John -- I shudder at the thought
of being liable to such an illusion! It
seemed so real. Is there no cure -- no
preventive?

DR. JOHN
Happiness is the cure -- a cheerful mind
the preventive. Cultivate both.

LUCY
Cultivate happiness! What does such
advice mean? Happiness is not a potato,
to be planted in dirt and tilled. Do you
cultivate happiness?

DR. JOHN
I am a cheerful fellow by nature, and
then bad luck has never pursued me.
Adversity gave me and my mother one
passing brush, but we defied her, or
rather laughed at her, and she went by.

LUCY
How do you manage it?

DR. JOHN
I do not give way to melancholy.

LUCY
I have seen you subdued by that feeling.

DR. JOHN
About Ginevra Fanshawe, eh?

LUCY
Did she not sometimes make you miserable?

DR. JOHN
Pooh! Nonsense! You see I am better now.

LUCY
If I were to bring Miss Fanshawe into
your presence just now?

DR. JOHN
I vow, Lucy, she should not move me.

LUCY

Indeed! A smile of hers would have been a fortune to you not long ago.

DR. JOHN

Transformed, Lucy -- transformed! I was once a slave, but I am a free man now!

He stands up with disdain of his past bondage and pulls on his gloves.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)

Well, Lucy...will the nun come again tonight, do you think?

LUCY

I don't think she will.

DR. JOHN

Give her my compliments, if she does -- and tell her to have the goodness to wait a visit from me. Lucy, was she a pretty nun? Had she a pretty face? You have not told me that yet, and that is a really important point.

LUCY

She had a white cloth over her face. But her eyes...glittered.

DR. JOHN

(irreverently)
At least she had handsome eyes -- bright and soft?

LUCY

Cold and fixed.

DR. JOHN

No, no, we'll have none of her. She shall not haunt you, Lucy. Give her a shake of the hand if she comes again. Will she stand that, do you think?

He kindly and cordially shakes Lucy's hand.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

At dusk, Lucy is grading papers when she happens to notice a ribbon sticking out of her desk. She opens the desk and finds a wrapped gift.

She carefully tears open the paper and finds a book of poetry. She caresses the book and smiles.

Suddenly, Rosine bursts in.

ROSINE

Mademoiselle Lucy -- someone is here for you in the salon!

INT. SALON -- NIGHT

Lucy finds Dr. John waiting in evening dress.

DR. JOHN

My mother was going with me to the theatre, but an unexpected visit from a friend has prevented her. She immediately said, "Take Lucy in my place." Will you go?

LUCY

Just now?
(glancing despairingly at her dark wool)
I am not dressed.

DR. JOHN

You have half an hour. I would have given you notice, but I only decided to go since 5 o'clock, when I heard there was to be a genuinely great actress -- Olivia de Chevaux.

The mention of the actress's name thrills Lucy.

LUCY

Olivia de Chevaux? I will go -- I'll be ready in 10 minutes!

Away she flies.

INT. STAIRS -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy thoughtlessly rushes up to the attic, opens the door, and plunges in.

INT. ATTIC -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy enters.

The long room is not completely dark as it should be -- from one point, a solemn light shines. Then instantly, silently, the light vanishes and the attic becomes black.

Lucy has seen it. She snatches a dress that hangs on the wall near the door and runs out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. VESTIBULE -- NIGHT

Lucy has changed her dress. She joins Dr. John.

LUCY

Rosine ran back to fetch my shawl for me.

Lucy is nearly out of breath and is still trembling.

DR. JOHN

What is this, Lucy? Here is the old excitement. The nun again?

LUCY

Don't be absurd.

DR. JOHN

She has been, as sure as I live! Your eyes have a peculiar gleam not to be mistaken.

LUCY
She has not been.

DR. JOHN
The old symptoms are there.

LUCY
I had to go up to the attic and get my dress, and when I did...I thought I saw a light in there, that's all. But then it disappeared.

DR. JOHN
Could it have been an optical illusion -- your eyes adjusting to the dark?

Rosine brings the shawl.

LUCY
I don't think so. Thank you, Rosine.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THEATRE -- NIGHT

The entire theatre is hushed, all eyes centered on the stage.

Lucy is enthralled in the performance.

Then, oddly, there is a STIR behind the stage -- FOOTSTEPS RUN, VOICES SPEAK out of place.

Lucy whispers to Dr. John.

LUCY
Do you smell smoke?

Just then, a shooting flame from backstage answers her question.

MAN (O.S.)
Fire!

The word RINGS through the gallery, and ECHOES throughout the building. Faster than words come panic, rushing, crushing -- a blind, selfish chaos.

Dr. John, with his look of courage and calm, glances at his companion.

DR. JOHN
Lucy will sit still, I know.

She nods, as if she would not give him trouble at the price of her very life.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
This is a sorry scene -- I see women braver than some of the men. There's one over there --

As he speaks, a teenage girl, PAULINA, who has been quietly clinging to an older GENTLEMAN before her, is suddenly struck from her protector's arms by a big, forceful MAN, and hurled under the feet of the CROWD.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
-- good God!

He rushes forward. Dr. John and the gray-haired gentleman unite their strength to thrust back the crowd.

The girl's head and long hair fall back over Dr. John's shoulder. He speaks quickly to the gentleman.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)
Trust her with me -- I am a physician.

GENTLEMAN
Hold her, and I will force a passage --
we must get her to the air!

Dr. John summons Lucy with his eyes.

She penetrates the crowd, creeping under where she cannot get over or between, finally reaching Dr. John.

DR. JOHN
Fasten onto me, and don't let go!

Lucy obeys.

The older gentleman proves strong and adroit, opening the dense mass of humanity like a wedge.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOTEL CRECY -- NIGHT

The hotel is a vast, lofty pile of stone houses.

INT. HOTEL SUITE -- NIGHT

Lying in bed, Paulina is a small, delicate creature with a pale face. Her large, deep eyes settle on Dr. John.

PAULINA
Thank you, Doctor.

Lucy and the gray-haired gentleman look on anxiously.

Dr. John steps back and speaks quietly to the man.

DR. JOHN
Dislocated shoulder -- not dangerous.

The gentleman receives this assurance with a grateful smile.

GENTLEMAN
We are much obliged to you.

PAULINA
Papa, thank the lady too -- is she there?

Lucy opens the bed curtain with a smile and looks in.

GENTLEMAN
I thank the lady most sincerely. She has
been very good to my child.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL DORMITORY -- NIGHT

Lucy is alone, reading a letter by the light of a taper.

FOOTSTEPS run up the stairs, and Lucy hurries to hide the letter in a drawer.

In rushes Ginevra, dressed in bright silk, her shawl falling from her shoulders, her hair drooping carelessly. She is in a foul mood.

GINEVRA

It has been a stupid evening. They are stupid people.

LUCY

Who?

GINEVRA

My uncle de Bassompierre has come.

LUCY

Your uncle de Bassompierre! Are you not glad? I thought he was a favorite.

GINEVRA

You thought wrong. The man is odious. I hate him.

LUCY

Because he is a foreigner?

GINEVRA

He is not a foreigner. The man is English enough, and had an English name 'til three or four years ago, but his mother was a foreigner, "de Bassompierre," and some of her family died and left him estates, a title, and this name. He is quite a great man now.

LUCY

Why do you hate him?

GINEVRA

Fancy a great man, 50 years old, actually turning his back upon me after only a few minutes conversation, and then abruptly going out of the room. Such odd ways! Such a dismal evening. I'll go no more to his big hotel.

LUCY

Were you the only visitor?

GINEVRA

Yes, then there was my cousin, little spoiled, pampered thing that she is. Oh, dear! I am so tired.

(yawns, throwing herself on the bed)

It seems mademoiselle was nearly crushed to jelly in a hubbub at the theatre some weeks ago.

LUCY

Ah! Indeed -- and they live in a large hotel in the Rue Crecy?

GINEVRA

Just so. How do you know?

LUCY
I have been there.

GINEVRA
Oh, you have? Really, you go everywhere these days. I suppose Mother Bretton took you. She and baby John have the entrée of the de Bassompierre apartments. It seems Dr. John attended Paulina on the occasion of her accident. Accident? Bah! All affectation! Oh, how stupid they all were tonight!

LUCY
All? You said you were the only visitor.

GINEVRA
Did I? You see one forgets an old woman and her boy.

LUCY
Mrs. Bretton and Dr. John were there this evening?

GINEVRA
Ay! As large as life, and Paulina played hostess. What a conceited doll it is!

LUCY
Is Miss de Bassompierre quite well now?

GINEVRA
As well as you or I, no doubt, but she is an affected little thing, and gave herself invalid airs to attract medical notice. And to see the old dowager making her recline on a couch, and her son John prohibiting excitement, et cetera -- faugh! The scene was quite sickening.

LUCY
It would not have been so if the object of attention had been changed -- if you had taken Miss de Bassompierre's place.

GINEVRA
Indeed! I hate Mother Bretton and baby John!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

On a dark winter morning, Lucy trudges into the empty room. The first thing she sees on her desk is a white, flat object. A deep pulse of gratitude seems to send new life through her.

Looking on the letter with trembling hope, Lucy finds a pale, weak scrawl, a handwriting unknown.

Deeply disappointed, she carelessly rips open the envelope and reads to herself.

LUCY
"Dear Lucy, What you have been doing with yourself for the last month?"

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

I daresay you have been just as busy and as happy as John Graham and I."

(bitterly)

Just so.

(continuing the letter)

"I know Thursday is a half-holiday at the school, so be ready by 5 in the afternoon. I will send the carriage to bring you out to the chateau. Be sure to come. You may meet an old acquaintance."

(curious)

An "old acquaintance"?

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BRETTON CHATEAU -- DAY

At dusk, through a white tempest, Lucy is lifted by the driver from the carriage over the already snowed-up front steps of the house.

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy hurries in. If she were twice as cold, Mrs. Bretton's kind kiss and cordial clasp would still warm her.

MRS. BRETTON

You've become thinner since I last saw you!

LUCY

I'm fine.

MRS. BRETTON

We'll eat in a few minutes -- double portions for you. Go upstairs and remove your cloak.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The room has its own bright fire and lit candles.

Lucy enters and is startled to find that, dressing in front of the mirror, is a slight, white figure.

Turning toward Lucy, the large eyes soften in recognition.

PAULINA

Ah! You have come!

She smiles and gazes intently at Lucy.

LUCY

Miss de Bassompierre.

PAULINA

No, not Miss de Bassompierre to you!

(approaching)

You are changed, but still you are yourself. I remember you well -- your face, the color of your hair, your profile...It makes me almost cry to look so far back.

Bewildered, Lucy does not know what to say.

LUCY
I...think I never met you 'til that
night, some weeks ago, when you were
hurt...?

PAULINA
(smiling)
You have forgotten, then, that I have sat
on your knee, been lifted in your arms,
even shared your pillow? You no longer
remember the night when I came crying
like a naughty child, as I was, to your
bedside? Go back to Bretton. Remember Mr.
Home...

At last, Lucy sees it all.

LUCY
You are -- little Polly?

PAULINA
Now Paulina Home de Bassompierre.

LUCY
Little Polly!

Lucy moves forward and hugs Paulina with affection, then steps back.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Ah! You were so young -- you remember the
time at Bretton?

PAULINA
Better, perhaps, than you.

LUCY
You were a little creature of quick
feelings. You must, long ere this, have
outgrown the impressions stamped on your
mind all those years ago?

PAULINA
You think I have forgotten all that
emotion?

LUCY
The sharpness must be gone -- the
poignancy -- the deep imprint must be
softened away?

PAULINA
I have a good memory for those days.
(glancing around the room)
There are several things here that used
to be at Bretton. I remember that
pincushion, and that looking glass.

LUCY
Dr. John, of course, would be out of the
question. As I saw your meeting with him,
I know he appeared to you as a stranger.

PAULINA
That first night I was puzzled.

LUCY
How did the recognition come about?

PAULINA

He and my father exchanged cards. The names gave rise to questions and explanations. That was on the second day, but before then I was beginning to know something.

LUCY

How -- ?

PAULINA

When the doctor sat near and talked to me, when I had observed the look in his eyes, the expression about his mouth, the form of his chin, the carriage of his head -- how could I avoid thinking of John Graham Bretton? Dr. John is John Graham, just as I am little Polly, and you are Lucy Snowe!

LUCY

You and John Graham were once playmates.

PAULINA

You remember that?

LUCY

No doubt he remembers it also.

PAULINA

I have not asked him. Few things would surprise me so much as to find that he remembered. I suppose his disposition is still happy and careless?

LUCY

Is that how you remember him?

PAULINA

I scarcely remember him in any other light. Sometimes he was studious, sometimes merry, but it was the activity that interested him, and not the playmate.

LUCY

Yet to you he was partial.

PAULINA

Partial to me? Oh, no! He had other playmates -- his schoolfellows. I was of little consequence to him. But he was kind on Sundays. I remember walking with him hand in hand to church, and how good he was on Sunday evenings, so mild for such a proud, lively boy, so patient with all my blunders in reading the Bible.

MRS. BRETTON (O.S.)

Children, come down!

The girls smile at each other, and Lucy takes Paulina's hand. They start downstairs.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. BRETTON PARLOR -- NIGHT

Mrs. Bretton, Lucy, Paulina, and Mr. Home de Bassompierre are sitting near the fire.

Dr. John enters, pulling on his coat.

DR. JOHN
I have to check on a patient, but when I
get back, shall we have a game of chess,
Paulina?

Paulina blushes and answers almost inaudibly, glancing away to the fire.

PAULINA
Yes, that would be fine.

She is disconcerted. Her father notices.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BOARDING SCHOOL GARDEN -- NIGHT

The snow is gone, but it is still cold enough for Lucy to wear her winter cloak. She leans against the old tree at the center of the garden.

The night air is dim with mist, which changes the moonlight into luminous haze.

Suddenly Lucy sees a new shadow become distinct and marked. She squints to make out the contrast, and it takes shape.

Lucy stands three yards from the tall, black-robed nun.

LUCY
Who are you? Why do you come to me?

The figure stands mute. Lucy, if not brave, is desperate, and her desperation does the work of courage.

The shape advances one step.

Lucy stretches out her hand to touch it.

The figure recedes.

Lucy draws closer; the shape's backward movement becomes swift. Lucy follows, but the nun disappears behind a tall evergreen shrub. When Lucy passes that obstacle, she sees nothing.

LUCY (CONT'D)
If you have any message, come back and
deliver it!

She receives no answer.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy arrives and sits at her desk. Opening a drawer, she finds another wrapped and ribboned gift the size of a small book.

At that moment, Lucy hears FOOTSTEPS approaching. She quickly replaces the gift and closes her desk to find Monsieur Paul standing before her, looking solemn.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I have my eye on you -- I at least will do the duty of a friend, and not leave you entirely to your own devices. What has a person, devoted to the serious calling of education, to do with counts and countesses, hotels, and chateaux? On my faith, I believe you go out six nights of the seven.

LUCY

Monsieur exaggerates. I hardly ever go out. I go only when it becomes necessary.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Necessary! How is it necessary? I will recommend you to look at the Catholic nuns and study their lives. They ask for no nights out on the town.

LUCY

If Monsieur hasn't noticed, I am not a nun. Though I may as well be.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You are being reckless and worldly, athirst for the poms and vanities of life.

Lucy mutely begins correcting a pile of students' papers.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

I can see in you nothing Christian -- like many other Protestants, you revel in pride and self-will.

Lucy turns slightly from him.

A vague curse word GRUMBLES from between Monsieur Paul's clenched teeth.

LUCY

What was that again?

Monsieur Paul stomps out angrily.

INT. DE BASSOMPIERRE SUITE AT THE HOTEL CRECY -- NIGHT

Paulina and Lucy are reading by the fire.

PAULINA

"Ich habe gelebt und geliebet!" -- Lived and loved! Is that the summit of earthly happiness, the end of life -- to love? I don't think it is. It may be the extreme of mortal misery. If Schiller had said "to be loved," he might have come nearer the truth. Is not that another thing, Lucy, to be loved?

LUCY

I suppose it may be, but why consider the subject? What is romantic love to you?

Paulina blushes, half in irritation.

PAULINA

Now, Lucy, I won't take that from you. It may be well for Papa to look on me as a baby -- I rather prefer that he should -- but you know that I am verging on my 18th year.

LUCY

No matter if it were your 88th year, we will not talk about love.

PAULINA

Indeed, indeed! You may hold me in as much as you please, but I have talked about love, and heard about it too, and a great deal and lately, and disagreeably.

LUCY

Who talks to you disagreeably about love?

PAULINA

It is a person who makes me miserable sometimes, and I wish she would keep away. It is --

LUCY

Ginevra.

PAULINA

Every time she calls here she talks about her admirers. Love, indeed! You should hear all she has to say about love.

LUCY

Oh, I have heard it. Yet, surely Ginevra cannot influence you. You can look over both her head and her heart.

PAULINA

She does influence me very much. She has the art of disturbing my happiness and unsettling my opinions. She hurts me through the people dearest to me.

LUCY

What does she say, Paulina?

PAULINA

The people I have longest and most esteemed are degraded by her. She does not spare Mrs. Bretton -- she does not spare...John Graham.

LUCY

No, I dare say. And how does she mix up these with her..."love"?

PAULINA

Lucy, she is insolent, and I believe, false. You know John Graham, we both know him. He may be careless and proud, but when was he ever mean or slavish? Day after day she shows him to me kneeling at her feet, pursuing her like a shadow.

(MORE)

PAULINA (CONT'D)

She, repulsing him with insult, and he, imploring her with infatuation. Lucy, is it true? Is any of it true?

LUCY

It may be true that he once thought her handsome -- does she say he is still her suitor?

PAULINA

She says she might marry him any day -- he only waits her consent.

LUCY

It is these tales which have caused that reserve in your manner towards Dr. John?

PAULINA

They have certainly made me doubtful about his character. Ginevra's words do not have the sound of complete truth -- I believe she exaggerates -- perhaps invents -- but I want to know how much.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DE BASSOMPIERRE SUITE -- NIGHT

At a party hosted by the de Bassompierres, Ginevra is quietly PLAYING THE PIANO after dinner.

Dr. John enters the room.

Ginevra picks up the pace and begins PLAYING WITH SPIRIT.

Dr. John takes up his station beside her. He gazes near the hearth where Paulina is sitting, charming TWO FRENCHMEN.

As Dr. John pretends to listen to Ginevra's piano, his glance restlessly sweeps the room and lights on Lucy, sitting alone in a quiet nook. Dr. John smiles recognition and crosses the room to her.

DR. JOHN

How are you tonight, Lucy?

LUCY

Very well, thank you. And you?

DR. JOHN

Never better, thank you.

He sits beside Lucy and becomes silent. Ginevra and Paulina are now opposite him. He surveys both young ladies.

Lucy notices that the severe, dark Monsieur Paul has entered the room.

He sees Lucy and makes a movement to approach, but seeing Dr. John sitting beside her, he holds back, puckering his eyebrows and protruding his lip.

Lucy averts her eyes.

Dr. John is looking at Ginevra.

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)

Lucy, Miss Fanshawe is certainly a fine girl.

LUCY
Of course.

DR. JOHN
Is there...another in the room as lovely?

LUCY
(glancing around)
I think there is not another as handsome.

DR. JOHN
I agree with you, Lucy. You and I do often agree in opinion, in taste, I think, or at least in judgment.

LUCY
(doubtfully)
Do we?

DR. JOHN
(with a bantering air)
I believe if you had been a boy, Lucy, we would have been best friends. Our opinions would have melted into each other.

LUCY
On what points are we so closely in accordance?

DR. JOHN
Of course, you cannot but render homage to Miss Fanshawe -- but, what do you think of others in the room -- my mother, for instance, or, let us say, that pale little lady, Miss de Bassompierre?

LUCY
You know what I think of your mother.

DR. JOHN
And the other?

LUCY
I think she is, as you say, a little lady.

DR. JOHN
You don't remember her as a child?

LUCY
I wonder, sometimes, whether you do.

DR. JOHN
I had forgotten her, but certain words and looks that had slipped my memory are reviving more each day. Were you not a guest at Bretton years ago when Mr. Home brought little Polly to stay with us?

LUCY
I was there the night she came, and also the morning she went away.

DR. JOHN
Rather a peculiar child, was she not? I wonder how I treated her.

(MORE)

DR. JOHN (CONT'D)

Was there anything gracious or kindly about me -- great, reckless schoolboy as I was? But you don't remember me, of course.

LUCY

In manner, you were almost the same then as today.

DR. JOHN

But, Lucy, how is that? What am I today? What was I then?

LUCY

Gracious to whomever pleased you -- unkindly or cruel to no one.

DR. JOHN

There you are wrong. I think I was almost a brute to you.

LUCY

A brute! No, Dr. John, I would never have endured brutality.

DR. JOHN

This, however, I do remember: quiet Lucy Snowe tasted nothing of my grace.

LUCY

As little of your cruelty.

DR. JOHN

I could not have tormented a being inoffensive as a shadow.

Lucy smiles, hushing a groan.

LUCY

I want to thank you for the gifts you've been giving me.

DR. JOHN

Gifts of friendship and goodwill, you mean? I owe you thanks as well. I've never been one for giving tokens of affection, but I want you to know that I value your friendship greatly.

Lucy looks disheartened as she realizes that her secret gifts have not come from Dr. John.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy remembers receiving gifts of wrapped and ribboned books.

LUCY (V.O.)

You...don't care for giving gifts?

END FLASHBACK

INT. DE BASSOMPIERRE SUITE -- NIGHT

Dr. John answers Lucy's question.

DR. JOHN

It's not that I don't enjoy it, it's just that I seldom think of it. I have other things on my mind, I suppose. For example, I've been wondering -- on what terms were little Polly and I as children? Unless my recollections deceive me, we were not foes --

LUCY

You speak very vaguely. Do you think Paulina's memory not more definite?

DR. JOHN

Of course she remembers nothing of Bretton. Look at her large eyes, Lucy -- are they the same that used to read to me? She does not know that I helped teach her to read, in the Bible on Sunday nights. She has a calm, delicate look now. Once what a restless, anxious face she had! Would you believe it? That lady once loved me!

LUCY

I think she was somewhat fond of you.

DR. JOHN

You don't remember then? I had forgotten, but I remember now. She liked me the best of whatever there was at Bretton.

LUCY

You thought so.

DR. JOHN

I quite well recall it. I wish I could tell her all I recall, or rather, I wish someone, you for instance, would go and whisper it all in her ear, and I could have the delight -- here, as I sit -- of watching her face when she hears it. Could you manage that, do you think, Lucy, and make me ever grateful?

LUCY

Could I manage to make you ever grateful? No, I could not.

Her hands interlock.

Dr. John leans toward her coaxingly.

DR. JOHN

Do content me, Lucy.

Suddenly a sharp HISS pierces Lucy's ear on the other side.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You little cat, you coquette! There is a flame in your soul that you cannot control, and I must warn you of it!

Lucy turns to him in justified wrath.

LUCY

Yes, there is a flame in my soul, and you had better stay back or you will get burnt!

The professor indignantly leaves her side.

Dr. John has caught every word and puts his handkerchief to his face, laughing until he shakes.

DR. JOHN

Well done, Lucy, capital! "Little cat, little coquette!" Oh, I must tell my mother! Is it true, Lucy? I believe it is -- you redden to the color of Miss Fanshawe's gown! That man is frantic this moment because he sees me laughing. Oh! I must tease him.

With mischief, Dr. John bends toward Lucy and whispers in her ear until she starts LAUGHING.

Then, suddenly, Dr. John goes sober as he notices something.

The Frenchmen are leaving Paulina's side.

Dr. John rises, gathers his courage, and crosses the room.

Paulina looks up at him.

As Dr. John speaks to her, he half blushes, half glows.

Lucy gathers all this in one look, and speaks quietly to herself.

LUCY

Goodbye, John Graham. You are good, you are beautiful, but you are not mine.

She rises and bids good night to Mrs. Bretton and Mr. Home de Bassompierre.

As Lucy is leaving the room, a repentant Monsieur Paul steps up and speaks politely, even deferentially.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Do you have anyone to attend you to the Rue Fossette?

LUCY

(frostily)
I am provided with attendance.

She passes him.

INT. VESTIBULE -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy is collecting her shawl.

Monsieur Paul approaches.

MONSIEUR PAUL

The night is cold.

LUCY

(coolly)
It is.

Monsieur Paul looks at her shawl.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Your wrap is too light.

LUCY
It is as heavy as I wish.

She folds her shawl around her and fixes her eyes on a dreary painting darkening the wall.

Monsieur Paul comes closer and speaks gently.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Friends do not quarrel for a word. Tell me, was it I or the grand Englishman who made your cheeks so hot as they are now?

LUCY
I am not conscious of you, Monsieur, or of any other having excited such emotions as you indicate.

MONSIEUR PAUL
But what did I say? Tell me -- I was angry -- I have forgotten my words -- what were they?

LUCY
Such as it is best to forget.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Then it was my words which wounded you? Consider them unsaid. Permit my retraction, accord my pardon.

LUCY
I am not angry, Monsieur.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Then you are worse than angry -- you are grieved. Forgive me, Meess Lucy.

LUCY
Very well.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Let me hear you say it, "Mon ami, je vous pardonne."

His wistfulness, his earnestness make Lucy smile.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Bon! Voila, say it, my friend.

LUCY
Monsieur Paul, I pardon you.

MONSIEUR PAUL
I will have no "Monsieur" -- speak the other word, or I shall not believe you sincere.

LUCY
My friend.

Monsieur Paul's lips and eyes smile with contentment. He takes Lucy's arm and leads her out into the night.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Monsieur Paul's mood is visibly bad. He sits bent above his desk, grading papers.

Lucy quietly enters and approaches Monsieur Paul. Not tall enough to lift her head over his platform desk, she peeps around the side.

Her eyes are instantly transfixed by Monsieur Paul's wrathful glare over the top of his eyeglasses.

He slowly removes the glasses, lays them on his desk, and speaks in a growl.

MONSIEUR PAUL

May I help you with something?

LUCY

Monsieur, you are urgently summoned to the University to greet a visiting official. You must leave immediately.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I cannot go -- I will not leave my class before an examination.

Lucy stands waiting in silence, as if Monsieur Paul has not yet spoken.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

What more do you want?

LUCY

Only Monsieur's answer to deliver to the commissionaire.

Monsieur Paul waves an impatient negative.

Lucy picks up his hat from the windowsill.

Monsieur Paul is amazed at her presumption.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Ah! If Meess Lucy meddles with my hat -- she might just put it on her own head and go to the University in my stead.

With great respect, Lucy lays the hat on his desk.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

I'll write a note of apology -- that will do!

LUCY

It will not do.

She gently pushes the hat toward Monsieur Paul's hand.

The small push causes the hat to slide down the slope of the polished desk, carrying before it Monsieur Paul's eyeglasses, which fall, strike the floor, and SHATTER to slivers.

Lucy's hands tremble as she picks up the worthless spectacles. Frightened and sorry through all her nerves, she dares not look the professor in the face.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Mademoiselle Lucy, you are resolved to
have me quite blind and helpless!

Lucy lifts her eyes.

Monsieur Paul, instead of being irate, is smiling. He is not angry, not even grieved. His tone is gently teasing.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
A terrifying Englishwoman! I dare not but
obey one who has shown such dangerous
prowess!

Putting on his hat and taking his eyeglasses from Lucy's hand with a clasp of kind pardon, he makes his bow and walks off in good spirits.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. STUDY ROOM -- NIGHT

Lucy and several STUDENTS and TEACHERS sit studying or working at crafts on study tables.

The girls and teachers are TALKING FREELY IN FRENCH.

Lucy is making something from an elaborate pattern of yarn and knots.

Monsieur Paul is making notes in the margin of a book. After a moment, he rises and approaches Lucy.

MONSIEUR PAUL
At what are you working?

LUCY
I am making a watch guard.

MONSIEUR PAUL
For whom?

LUCY
For a gentleman -- one of my friends.

Monsieur Paul grows visibly upset and stoops down, hissing into Lucy's ear.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Of all the women I know, you are the
least possible to live with on friendly
terms. You have an unmanageable
character, and what possesses you, I do
not know!

LUCY
What possesses me -- ?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Stop! There I went again -- quick as
gunpowder! I am sorry -- I am very sorry.
You are not wholly without good
qualities.

(MORE)

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

If you were less coquette, less taken by people with broad shoulders and square chins -- you might yet prove useful. But as it is...

Lucy looks bewildered.

Monsieur Paul sits and speaks to Lucy in a low voice.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

While I am on these painful topics, I will dare your anger for the sake of your good, and refer to a change I have noticed in your dress. When you first came here, the gravity, the simplicity of your dress were in your best interests. What influence has impelled you lately to introduce flowers under the brim of your bonnet, to wear embroidered collars, and even to appear on one occasion in a scarlet gown --

Lucy interrupts, indignant and horror stricken.

LUCY

Scarlet, Monsieur Paul? It was pink, and pale pink, too -- and subdued by black lace!

MONSIEUR PAUL

Pink or scarlet, pea green or sky blue -- it is all the same -- these are all flaunting, giddy colors.

(sighing)

Your costume has of late assumed the worldly ways, which it wounds me to see.

LUCY

(looking down at her plain dress)

What "worldly ways" do you discover in my present dress?

MONSIEUR PAUL

It is all made with too much attention to effect -- have you not a bow of ribbon at your neck?

LUCY

If you condemn a bow of ribbon for a lady, Monsieur, would you disapprove of a thing like this for a gentleman?

She holds up the bright little watch guard.

Monsieur Paul's reply is a GROAN.

Lucy starts working on the watch guard more intensely than ever.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Will what I have said make you entirely detest me?

Lucy slows down for a moment and shakes her head.

Monsieur Paul rises.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

I do not entirely condemn the scarlet dress --

LUCY

Pink! Pink!

MONSIEUR PAUL

-- I cannot deny it looked rather well, only, whenever you wear it, do so in the same spirit as if its hue were dust gray.

LUCY

And the little flowers under my bonnet, Monsieur?

MONSIEUR PAUL

Keep them little then. Permit them not to bloom.

He turns and exits.

Lucy shakes her head in disbelief.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

The BELL RINGS and the room is filled with PUPILS, each bearing in her hand a spray of pretty spring blooms.

Lucy is the only person who is not holding flowers.

The eyes of Madame Beck rove over and around Lucy.

MADAME BECK

Mademoiselle Lucy, your hands, they are empty! You have no bouquet to offer Monsieur Paul for his birthday?

LUCY

I like to see flowers growing, but when they are gathered, they are rootless and perishable -- their likeness to human life makes me sad.

MADAME BECK

How wisely you have acted to keep your money, Mademoiselle. Silly I have gone and thrown away two francs on a bouquet of hot-house flowers!

She shows with pride her splendid arrangement.

Monsieur Paul enters in a mood as bright as a sunbeam. He has dressed for the occasion in a blue coat and silk vest. He places his hat and gloves on his desk.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Bon jour, mes amies.

MADAME BECK

We all wish Monsieur a good day, and present to him our congratulations on the anniversary of his birth.

Advancing to his desk with twists of affectation, she lays her costly bouquet before Monsieur Paul. He bows over it.

A long train of offerings follows, all the pupils leaving their tributes as they go by.

Seats resumed, all sit in silence, expecting a speech from Monsieur Paul.

He glances at the mountain of flowers on his desk.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Is this all?

MADAME BECK
(glancing around)
You all have presented your bouquets?

All nod. Madame Beck passes the nod on to Monsieur Paul.

He speaks again, in a deeper tone, staring at Lucy.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Is this all?

MADAME BECK
(rising, with an unhappy smile)
Monsieur Paul, I have the honor to tell you that, with a single exception, every person in class has offered her bouquet. For Mademoiselle Lucy, Monsieur will kindly make allowance -- as a foreigner she probably did not know our customs, or did not appreciate their significance.

Monsieur Paul gazes fixedly at Lucy.

Lucy does not appear in the least embarrassed or upset. She is holding a small box tightly in her hand. She carefully slips the box into a pocket of her dress.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HALL OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM -- DAY

The pupils are gone for the day.

Lucy approaches the classroom and finds the door ajar. She looks through the partially opened door and sees Monsieur Paul.

He is sitting in Lucy's chair, his hand holding open her desk.

INT. CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy softly steals forward and stands behind Monsieur Paul.

He has brought her a new book tied in a ribbon, and is placing it carefully into her desk.

Suddenly Monsieur Paul turns toward Lucy, but he is not startled nor embarrassed.

MONSIEUR PAUL
I thought you were gone into town with the others. It is as well you are not. I do not care being caught. I often visit your desk.

LUCY
I know it, Monsieur.

MONSIEUR PAUL
You find a new book now and then, but you do not read them.

LUCY
I read them.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Do you like them, any of them?

LUCY
Monsieur knows I have not so many recreations as to undervalue those he provides.

MONSIEUR PAUL
I mean well, and, if you see that I mean well, and derive some little amusement from my efforts, why can we not be friends?

LUCY
A fatalist would say -- because we cannot.

MONSIEUR PAUL
This morning, I awoke in a bright mood, and came into class happy -- and you spoiled my birthday.

LUCY
Unintentionally, Monsieur.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Unintentionally! No. Everybody wished me happiness but you. The children gave each her cluster of blooms with her congratulations. You -- nothing. Not a bud, leaf, whisper -- not a glance. Was this unintentional?

LUCY
I meant no harm.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Then you really did not know our custom? You were unaware that it was expected? Say so, and all is forgotten, and the pain soothed.

LUCY
I did know that it was expected, yet I bought no flowers.

MONSIEUR PAUL
You do right to be honest. Better than to have flattered and lied. Better to declare at once, "Paul Emanuel -- I hate you!" -- than to smile in affection and be false and cold at heart.

LUCY
I do not hate you, Paul Emanuel.

She takes from her pocket the little box she held earlier and places it into Monsieur Paul's hand.

LUCY (CONT'D)
It lay ready in my lap this morning, and if Monsieur had been rather more patient -
- perhaps I should say, too, if I had been calmer and wiser -- I should have given it to you then.

Monsieur Paul looks at the small box. Lucy sees that it pleases him. The box has the letters "PCDE" engraved into the lid.

LUCY (CONT'D)
Open it.

MONSIEUR PAUL
My initials! Who told you I was called Paul Carlos David?

He opens the box and takes out the watch guard, glossy with silk and gold threads. He admires it artlessly like a child.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
For me?

LUCY
Yes, for you.

MONSIEUR PAUL
This is the thing you were working at last night?

LUCY
The same.

He opens his jacket and arranges the guard across his chest.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Superb.

LUCY
Then we are friends again?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Even as we quarrel.

He smiles. Lucy smiles.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

The sun has set and the room is growing dim and gray.

Lucy awakens at her desk. She has fallen asleep grading papers.

On waking, Lucy finds a thick shawl wrapped around her shoulders. She rises, opens the glass door, and steps into the garden.

EXT. GARDEN -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy pauses before the giant tree in the garden, and leans her brow against its knotty trunk. Suddenly, she hears a voice quite near.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Good evening, Mademoiselle. I hope you slept well?

Lucy is startled, but discomposed for only a moment.

LUCY

Slept, Monsieur?

MONSIEUR PAUL

It seems you turn day into night, and choose a desk for a pillow.

LUCY

No matter where I fell asleep, I awoke covered.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Did the shawl keep you warm?

LUCY

Very warm. Thank you for covering me.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You looked pale in your slumbers -- are you homesick?

LUCY

To be homesick, one must have a home.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I scarcely know anyone, Meess Lucy, who needs a friend more absolutely than you. You need watching, and watching over, and I do my best to discharge both duties. I watch you and others pretty closely, pretty constantly, nearer and oftener than you think. Do you see that window with a light in it?

(pointing to a window in a building bordering the garden)

That is a room I have rented, namely for study, but in reality as a post of observation. There I sit and watch for hours. My curiosity is this garden -- its contents are human nature -- female human nature. I know you all by heart. Ah! I know you all well.

LUCY

(disturbed)

It is not right, Monsieur.

MONSIEUR PAUL

How is it not right? What discoveries I have made here, grand Dieu!

LUCY

Discoveries made by stealth seem to me dishonorable discoveries.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Puritan! I doubt it not. Yet see how my system works -- you know Madame Beck.

LUCY

Partially.

MONSIEUR PAUL

(laughs)

Whereas I know her thoroughly. There is the difference. She plays before me the amiable. She flatters, fawns on me. Now, I am accessible to a woman's flattery -- accessible against my reason. She has the art of dressing -- she has a certain cool, easy, social assurance. She intended to be my wife, and I don't know what would have happened, but for yonder little window. Yes, I have seen her rancors, her vanities -- I have witnessed what shields me against all her arts -- I am safe from Madame Beck. And when you came I saw you, marked your preference for this walk, noted your taste for seclusion, watched you well, long before you and I came to speaking terms.

He leans against the tree, looking at Lucy in a cool, amused way.

LUCY

Monsieur, if you were a wicked, designing man, how terrible would all this be! The knowledge it brings you is bought too dear -- this coming and going by stealth degrades your dignity.

MONSIEUR PAUL

(laughing)

My dignity! When did you ever see me trouble my head about my dignity? How often in your presence have I trampled upon my dignity in those mad transports you witness with such hauteur!

LUCY

Monsieur, I tell you, every glance you cast from that window is a wrong done to the best part of your own nature.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I have seen other things.

LUCY

(reluctantly)

What other things?

Monsieur Paul's tone is strange. The garden is growing dark.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I have seen, Meess Lucy, things to me unaccountable, that have made me watch all night for a solution, and I have not yet found it.

(looking at Lucy)

You're shivering. Are you afraid? Is it of my words?

LUCY

I am cold. The night grows late and the air is changed -- it is time to go in.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You shall go in soon. Answer me only this question, Mademoiselle -- do Protestants believe in the supernatural?

LUCY

(quietly)

There is a difference of belief on this point amongst Protestants as amongst other faiths. Why do you ask, Monsieur?

MONSIEUR PAUL

Why do you speak so faintly? Are you superstitious?

LUCY

I am...constitutionally nervous. I dislike the discussion of such subjects. I dislike it the more because --

MONSIEUR PAUL

You believe?

LUCY

No -- but I have experienced...impressions --

MONSIEUR PAUL

Since you came here?

LUCY

Yes -- not long ago.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Here? In this house?

LUCY

Yes.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Bon! I am glad of it. I knew it, somehow, before you told me. I was conscious of rapport between you and myself. We are alike -- do you see it, Mademoiselle? These "impressions," as you say, with caution -- I, too, have had my impressions.

LUCY

Monsieur, tell me them.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I desire to. You know the legend of this house?

LUCY

I know it, yes. They say that hundreds of years ago a nun was buried alive at the foot of this very tree.

MONSIEUR PAUL

And that a nun's ghost would come and go here.

LUCY

Monsieur, what if it comes and goes here still?

MONSIEUR PAUL

Something comes and goes here -- there is a shape frequenting this house by night, different to any forms that show themselves by day. I have seen something, more than once, and to me it was a strange sight -- a nun!

LUCY

Monsieur, I, too, have seen it!

MONSIEUR PAUL

I anticipated that. Whether this nun be flesh and blood, her business is as much with you as with me. Well, I mean to sort it out -- it has baffled me so far, but I mean to solve the --

He raises his head suddenly.

Lucy makes the same movement in the same instant.

Both look toward one point -- a tall tree shadowing the garden.

There is a strange and inexplicable movement, as if the arms of the tree sway of their own motion. With no breeze, the heavy tree is convulsed.

Then, something more solid than either night or shadow -- the nun -- blackens the path in front of Lucy and Monsieur Paul.

Suddenly the PRAYER BELL RINGS in the house.

Instantly the apparition, with an angry rush, sweeps away.

Monsieur Paul and Lucy look at each other with wide eyes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PAULINA'S ROOM AT THE HOTEL CRECY -- NIGHT

Lucy is visiting Paulina, who paces restlessly. She turns to Lucy and speaks in a diffident, half-appealing voice.

PAULINA

Lucy...is my cousin still at Madame Beck's?

LUCY

Ginevra is still there.

PAULINA

I...suppose she still talks about being married?

LUCY

Not to anyone you care for.

PAULINA

But of course she still thinks of John Graham? She cannot have changed her mind on that point, because it was so fixed two months ago.

LUCY

It does not matter. You know the terms on which they stand.

PAULINA

There is a little misunderstanding between them, certainly -- does she seem unhappy?

LUCY

Not she.

PAULINA

Papa received letters from John Graham once or twice about business, I think. He undertook the management of some affair for Papa. John Graham seems to respect Papa, and to have pleasure in obliging him.

LUCY

Yes?

PAULINA

(with a smile)

Papa still thinks me a little girl.

She sits on the stool at Lucy's feet.

LUCY

What have you to ask of Lucy? Be brave, and speak out.

Paulina takes Lucy's hand between hers, but there is no courage in Paulina's eyes.

PAULINA

You must think it rather strange that I should talk so much about John Graham, ask so many questions, but --

LUCY

Not at all strange -- perfectly natural -- you like him.

PAULINA

And if I do, I suppose you think me weak, like my cousin?

LUCY

If I thought you one whit like Mademoiselle Ginevra, I would not sit here waiting for your communications. Go on.

PAULINA

I mean to go on, I do... Do you care for me, Lucy?

LUCY

Yes, I do, Paulina.

PAULINA

And I love you. I was happy being with you even when I was a troublesome, disobedient child. Now I like to talk with you and trust you. So listen, Lucy...

(resting gently against Lucy's arm)

(MORE)

PAULINA (CONT'D)

Papa -- he forgets my age, he thinks I am a mere schoolgirl, he is not aware that other people see I am grown up as tall as I shall be... I am not actively good, yet God has caused me to grow in the sun, sheltered, fostered, taught by my dear father, and now -- now -- another comes. John Graham loves me.

Both pause on this climax.

LUCY

Does your father know?

PAULINA

(shaking her head)

How must I manage about Papa? Oh, it will be pain to wake Papa from his dream and tell him I am no more a little girl!

LUCY

Providence has protected and cultured you, not only for your own sake, but I believe for John Graham's. To develop fully the best of his nature, a companion like you was needed -- and here you are, ready. The two of you must be united. I knew it the first day I saw you together at the Bretton chateau.

Paulina looks happy.

EXT. CITY OF VILLETTE -- DAY

Twenty PUPILS and four TEACHERS pour happily over the morning street. All the young ladies are wearing fresh dresses and straw bonnets trimmed in flowers and ribbons.

Monsieur Paul wears a cool cotton shirt and straw hat.

Lucy is wearing a new pink summer dress. She shakes out a long black scarf and tries in vain to cover much of her dress with it.

MONSIEUR PAUL

(teasing)

Ahh! Another scarlet dress!

LUCY

Pink! It was cheaper and washes better than any other color.

MONSIEUR PAUL

And Mademoiselle Lucy is flirtatious as ten Parisians! An Englishwoman unparalleled. Look at her hat, and her blossoms and ribbons!

LUCY

They are just like my companions', certainly not one whit smarter -- perhaps plainer than most!

She begins to chafe, but gets a bantering smile from Monsieur Paul.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Courage! In truth I am not annoyed, I am happy that one made herself so beautiful for my small outing.

LUCY
But my dress is not beautiful, Monsieur --
it is only clean.

MONSIEUR PAUL
I like the clean.

Lucy glances briefly into his smiling eyes.

EXT. FARM -- DAY

Monsieur Paul leads Lucy to a tree where he can view the pupils romping over a wide pasture. He sits on a rustic bench and Lucy sits on the tree root. She takes a small book from a pocket, but does not begin to read.

Happiness fills Monsieur Paul's eyes and smoothes his forehead.

Lucy, too, looks happy.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Would you not rather run with your
companions than sit here?

LUCY
No, I feel content to be here.

MONSIEUR PAUL
If you were my sister, would you always
be content to stay with a brother such as
I?

LUCY
I believe I would.

MONSIEUR PAUL
(after a pause)
If I were to leave Villette and go far
away, would you be sorry?

Lucy's book slides from her lap to the ground, but she makes no reply.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Little sister, how long would you
remember me if we were separated?

LUCY
That, Monsieur, I can never tell, because
I do not know how long it will be before
I cease to remember everything of the
earth.

MONSIEUR PAUL
If I were to go overseas for two, three --
five years, would you welcome me on my
return?

LUCY
Monsieur...how could I live in the
interval?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Yet I have been for you very hard, very
demanding.

Lucy picks up the book and hides her face with it. She is crying.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

I will speak no more.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HOUSE IN THE CITY -- DAY

Pere Silas, Lucy's confessor from several months past, exits the once-grand house.

The early evening sky is settling into a mass of dark clouds. Large drops of rain are quickly darkening the stone pavement.

Lucy, carrying a basket of fruit, approaches the house from the street. When she RINGS THE BELL, the priest turns back to look at her.

The door opens, and there stands a very old WOMAN wearing a cantankerous expression and a cap with long flaps of lace.

LUCY

Madame Walravens, s'il vous plait.

The old woman does not reply, but tries to snatch the basket of fruit from Lucy's hand. Lucy pulls back.

LUCY (CONT'D)

No, Madame Beck said I must give it to Madame Walravens in person!

Pere Silas hobbles up. Lucy does not yet recognize him.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I was told to deliver this into Madame Walravens' own hands. For her birthday.

PERE SILAS

(commanding, to the old woman)
Let her enter!

INT. MADAME WALRAVENS' SALON -- DAY

Pere Silas escorts Lucy upstairs into a salon and leaves her there with a small bow.

The room is large and has stained-glass windows that look strangely menacing in the shadow of the coming storm.

Through the gloom, Lucy sees a painting of a nun on the wall.

Beside the portrait is an open arch leading to a winding stone stair. Down this stair descends the TAP, TAP of a walking stick.

Soon, there falls the shadow of MADAME WALRAVENS. Hunchbacked and dwarfish, she might be 5 feet tall, her skinny hand resting on an ivory staff.

She wears long, clear earrings, blazing with a luster that cannot be false, and on her skeleton hands are thick gold rings with sparkling blue, green, and red stones.

There appear to be a hundred years in Madame Walravens' features, and more in her malign, unfriendly eyes.

MADAME WALRAVENS

What do you want with me?

Lucy holds out the fruit basket.

LUCY
 Congratulations on your birthday, from
 Madame Beck.

MADAME WALRAVENS
 (demanding)
 Is that all?

LUCY
 It is all.

MADAME WALRAVENS
 Return to Madame Beck and tell her I can
 buy fruit when I want it!

There is a brilliant flash of lightning and a PEAL OF THUNDER.

Sullen Madame Walravens turns and walks out, tottering and trembling,
 TAPPING her ivory stick on the floor, and MUTTERING venomously.

Lucy leaves the fruit basket on a table, pulls on her cloak, and
 turns to exit the inhospitable salon.

Rain is BATTERING the roof as fierce lightning flashes very near.

Pere Silas glides back into the room.

PERE SILAS
 Indeed Mademoiselle shall not go out in
 this storm! It would displease our
 benefactor if he knew a stranger was so
 treated in this house. I beg you please
 stay.

LUCY
 Thank you.

The good father sits close to Lucy. He glances up when a fierce bolt
 and a HARSH RATTLE warn of danger. However it is not in fear, but in
 awe, that Pere Silas raises his eyes.

Lucy stares strangely at the old priest.

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. CONFSSIONAL -- NIGHT

In a flash of memory, Lucy recognizes Pere Silas, to whom she had
 spoken in the church before her illness the previous summer.

There she had seen him only in dim light and in profile.

END FLASHBACK

INT. MADAME WALRAVENS' SALON -- DAY

Embarrassed at the recognition, Lucy turns quickly from the priest.
 She looks to the wall, at the portrait of the young woman in a nun's
 dress.

The face, though not beautiful, is pleasing, pale, and shaded with
 dejection.

Pere Silas perceives the point of Lucy's attention.

PERE SILAS

She was much beloved. She died young. She is still remembered, still wept.

LUCY

By that aged lady, Madame Walravens?

The father shakes his head with half a smile.

PERE SILAS

No, no, a grandmother's affection may be great, but it is only the affianced lover, denied the bliss of union, who mourns what he has lost, as Justine Marie is still mourned.

LUCY

Who still mourns her?

PERE SILAS

A former pupil of mine, my benefactor, who loved Justine Marie. My pupil's father -- once a rich banker -- had failed, died, and left behind him only debts and destitution. The son was then forbidden to think of Justine Marie, especially Madame Walravens opposed the match. Mild Justine Marie gave him up and withdrew to a convent, and there died in her noviciate.

LUCY

Oh, how sad.

PERE SILAS

Some years after Justine Marie's death, ruin came on her house, too. Her father died of grief and shame for the loss. His mother and his wife were left penniless, and might have died of want, but their late daughter's once-despised, yet true-hearted suitor, hearing of the condition of these ladies, came to the rescue. He took on their insolent pride with the purest charity -- housing, caring for, befriending them, as no son could have done more tenderly.

LUCY

The man must be a saint!

PERE SILAS

The mother died blessing him; the strange, loveless grandmother lives here still, entirely supported by this self-sacrificing man. Madame Walravens was the bane of his life, blighting his hope, and he treats her with the respect a good son might offer a kind mother. He brought her to this house, and here too, he shelters me.

LUCY

You?

PERE SILAS

To our sustenance, he devotes three parts of his income, keeping only the fourth to provide himself with bread and modest accommodations. By this arrangement he has rendered it impossible for himself ever to marry. He has given himself to God and to his angel-bride Justine Marie as much as if he were a priest.

Lucy sits, musing on his words. The priest gently interrupts.

PERE SILAS (CONT'D)

Mademoiselle, I trust you have not far to go through these inundated streets?

LUCY

More than half a league.

PERE SILAS

You live -- ?

LUCY

In the Rue Fossette.

PERE SILAS

(with animation)

Not at the boarding school of Madame Beck?

LUCY

The same.

PERE SILAS

Then --

(clapping his hands)

-- you must know my noble pupil, Monsieur Paul Emanuel, Professor of Literature?

LUCY

Yes -- was it of Monsieur Paul you have been speaking? He is the benefactor of Madame Walravens?

PERE SILAS

Yes, and moreover -- he was and is the lover, true, constant, and eternal, of that angel in heaven -- Justine Marie.

LUCY

Monsieur Paul does not live here?

PERE SILAS

No, he only comes occasionally to make his confession to me, and to pay his respects to Madame. His own lodging consists of but one room -- and yet he will not suffer Madame Walravens to dispose of those splendid jewels which you have seen, and in which she takes pride as the ornaments of her youth.

LUCY

(looking back at the portrait)

How long is it since that lady died?

PERE SILAS

Twenty years. Paul was then very young,
for now he is not yet forty.

LUCY

Does he yet weep for her?

PERE SILAS

His heart will weep for her always -- the
essence of Paul Emanuel's nature is
constancy.

The sun breaks out pallid. There is no more storm.

Lucy rises.

LUCY

A longer delay will scarce leave daylight
for my return. Thank you for your
hospitality.

PERE SILAS

Peace be with you, daughter.

Lucy hurries out.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy is grading papers in the empty room. She glances out the glass
door and sees Monsieur Paul doing some gardening.

He notices Lucy also and approaches the door.

Lucy walks closer to him.

MONSIEUR PAUL

These flowers...they need much work.

LUCY

They look lovely.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I am sorry, about making you weep the
other day in the meadow, and I regret,
too, the fitfulness of my moods at all
times. But, I can hardly expect you to
understand, Meess Lucy -- you know
neither me nor my history.

LUCY

No, Monsieur, as you say, I know neither
your history, nor your sacrifices, nor
your sorrows, or trials, or affections.
No, I know nothing about you -- you are
altogether a stranger.

MONSIEUR PAUL

(arching his brows in surprise)
Pardon?

LUCY

You know, Monsieur, I only see you in
class -- stern, dogmatic, imperious.

(MORE)

LUCY (CONT'D)

A man like you, without ties, can have no dependants, no responsibilities, no worries. I don't so much as know where you live -- it is natural to take it for granted that you have no home, and need none.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I am judged. Your opinion of me is just what I thought it was. For you, I am neither a man nor a Christian. You see me void of affection, unattached by friend or family, unpiloted by principle or faith.

LUCY

You are a philosopher, Monsieur -- a cynic philosopher, despising the foibles of humanity -- independent of its comforts.

MONSIEUR PAUL

And you, Mademoiselle, are tidy and snug, and frightfully insensible of the world.

LUCY

But, in short, Monsieur, now I think of it, you must live somewhere. Do tell me where, and how many servants do you keep?

MONSIEUR PAUL

(with scorn)

I live in a hole! I inhabit a den, meess - a cavern, where you would not put your dainty nose. Once, with shame of speaking the whole truth, I talked about my "study" -- know now that this "study" is my whole abode! As for my servants, they number ten -- here they are!

He grimly spreads his 10 fingers.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

(savagely)

I black my own boots, I brush my own coat!

LUCY

No, Monsieur, it is plain -- you never do that.

He immediately brushes the sleeve of his coat with his hand.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I make my own bed. I seek my dinner in an uncostly restaurant, I pass days laborious and loveless, nights long and lonely; I am ferocious, and monkish, and nothing now living in this world loves me, except some old hearts worn like my own.

LUCY

Ah, Monsieur -- but I know!

MONSIEUR PAUL

What do you know? Many things, I verily believe, yet not me.

LUCY

I know that you have a pleasant old house in a pleasant old square of the Basse-Ville -- why don't you go and live there?

MONSIEUR PAUL

What?

LUCY

I liked it much, Monsieur, with the steps ascending to the door, the gray stone in front, the nodding trees behind. And the oratory -- you should make that room your study -- it is so quiet and solemn.

Monsieur Paul eyes her closely. He half-smiles, half-blushes.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Where did you pick up all that? Who told you?

LUCY

Nobody told me. I saw it. I saw a house and I saw people -- a priest, old, bent, and gray, and a lady, splendid but strange. She was decked with ornaments so brilliant, I never saw any with such sparkle, yet she seemed to have outlived the common years of humanity, and to have attained those which are only labor and sorrow. She has become morose -- almost malevolent -- yet somebody, it appears, cares for her in her infirmities -- somebody forgives her trespasses, hoping to have his trespasses forgiven. These people -- old, feeble -- sheltered under one kind wing.

Monsieur Paul covers the upper part of his face with his hand, but does not conceal his mouth, where Lucy sees an expression she likes.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I see you have entered into my secrets -- but how was it done?

LUCY

Madame Beck...sent me with a fruit basket for Madame Walravens. A storm detained me, and as I sat waiting for the rain to cease, Pere Silas whiled away the time with a story.

MONSIEUR PAUL

A story! What story?

LUCY

Oh, it seems Pere Silas once had a pupil--

Monsieur Paul's dark features are dyed red.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You need go no further.

LUCY

-- this pupil's vocation is almost that of a priest -- his life is consecrated by the ties of charity.

MONSIEUR PAUL
You have, then, the whole situation?

LUCY
I think so.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Now, Mademoiselle Lucy, look at me, and with that truth which you never knowingly violate, answer me one question. Raise your eyes -- rest them on mine -- fear not to trust me.

Lucy raises her eyes.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Knowing me thoroughly now -- all my history, all my responsibilities -- having long known my faults, can you and I still be friends?

LUCY
If Monsieur wants a friend in me, I shall be proud to have a friend in him.

MONSIEUR PAUL
But a close friend I mean -- intimate and real -- kindred in all but blood? Will Meess Lucy be the sister of a very poor, burdened man?

Lucy cannot answer him in words, yet she does answer him.

He takes her hand.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
When I talk of friendship, I mean true friendship.

Lucy is blessed by the kind, anxious look he gives her.

LUCY
Is Monsieur quite serious? Does he really think he needs me, and can take an interest in me...as a sister?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Surely, a lonely man like me, who has no sister, must be but too glad to find in some woman's heart a sister's pure affection.

The tone of his voice, his affectionate eyes, give Lucy pleasure she has never felt.

Monsieur Paul still is holding her hand.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Lucy, did you see a picture in the salon of the old house?

LUCY
I did -- a portrait of a nun?

MONSIEUR PAUL
Yes. You heard her history?

LUCY

Yes.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You remember what we saw that night in the garden?

LUCY

I shall never forget it.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You did not connect the two ideas -- that would be folly?

LUCY

I thought of the apparition when I saw the portrait.

MONSIEUR PAUL

You did not, nor will you fancy, that a saint in heaven perturbs herself with rivalries of earth?

LUCY

I know not what to think, but I believe there is a perfectly natural solution to this mystery.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Doubtless, doubtless. Besides, no kind woman -- much less a pure, happy spirit -- would trouble a friendship like ours.

Lucy gently shakes her head. The small movement seems to comfort Monsieur Paul.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PAULINA'S ROOM IN THE HOTEL CRECY -- DAY

Lucy is helping Paulina dress for an evening out.

PAULINA

Women are called beautiful, Lucy -- John Graham is not a woman therefore I suppose he is not beautiful, but what is he, then? Do other people see him with my eyes? Do you admire him?

LUCY

I'll tell you what I do, Paulina -- I never see him. I looked at him once or twice about a year ago, before he recognized me, and then I shut my eyes, and if he were to cross their sight a dozen times each day, I would hardly know what had passed by.

PAULINA

(under her breath)
Lucy, what do you mean?

LUCY

I mean that I value vision, and dread being struck stone blind.

PAULINA

Proud Lucy! John Graham says you are the most peculiar, capricious little woman he knows, yet you are excellent, we both think so.

LUCY

You both know not. Have the goodness to make me as little the subject of your thoughts as possible. I have my life apart from yours.

PAULINA

But ours, Lucy, is a beautiful life, or it will be, and you shall share it.

LUCY

I shall share no one's life in this world, as you understand sharing. I think I have one friend of my own, but I'm not sure, and 'til I am sure, I live solitary.

PAULINA

But solitude is sadness.

LUCY

Yes, it is sad. Life, however, has worse than that. Heartbreak is a thousand times more damaging than loneliness.

Paulina gives a small nod in fearful understanding.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. GARDEN AT THE BOARDING SCHOOL -- NIGHT

Early in the evening, Monsieur Paul joins Lucy as she walks. He takes her hand. She looks up into his face.

MONSIEUR PAUL

(softly)

My good little friend! Sweet comforter!

Monsieur Paul's eloquent look has more to say. His hand pulls Lucy forward.

Just then, Madame Beck and Pere Silas approach the twilight garden path.

Pere Silas is at first surprised, then immediately darkened with sternness.

After Madame Beck's initial surprise comes a look of embarrassment, then jealousy.

Through it all, Monsieur Paul retains Lucy's hand, clasping it close and tight.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Good evening.

He leads Lucy away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy and the pupils are assembled in class. Lucy glances impatiently at the clock on the wall. It is 9:10.

The door opens, and Madame Beck enters. She approaches Monsieur Paul's desk, stands before it, pulls her shawl around her, and begins speaking in low, firm tones.

MADAME BECK

This morning there will be no lesson of literature. It is probable the lessons will be suspended for a week. I shall require at least that space of time to find a substitute for Monsieur Paul. Your Professor, ladies, intends to take leave of you.

Lucy looks at Madame Beck with a start.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

A sudden and urgent summons of duty calls him to a great distance. He has decided to leave Europe for an indefinite time.

Lucy looks stunned.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

Ladies, instead of the usual lesson with Monsieur Paul, you will, this morning, study English with Mademoiselle Lucy.

Madame Beck bends her head courteously, pulls her shawl closer, and leaves the class.

A MURMUR goes around the room. Some of the pupils WEEP.

Lucy becomes conscious of growing disorder. She nervously twists a lace handkerchief in her hands. A sense of duty enables her to rise in her usual way and speak in her usual tone.

LUCY

All right, quiet please, everyone.

Young troublemaker Isabelle keeps crying when the others have stopped.

Lucy speaks impatiently to her.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Quiet, Isabelle. Your emotion is of no use at this moment.

(to everyone)

We will begin reading chapter 24 of the text.

But Isabelle cannot stop SOBBING.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Open your books, please. Violette, you start. Isabelle, come with me.

The chosen girl begins READING ALOUD as Lucy leads the crying girl out of the classroom and into the hall, closing the door behind them.

Isabelle WEEPS more bitterly in anticipation of her punishment, but Lucy merely presses the girl to her heart and kisses her cheek.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADAME BECK'S CHAMBER -- DAY

Lucy looks sick with worry as she reports to Madame Beck's room.

As Madame Beck speaks, she softly closes the two doors of her chamber and shuts the window, though it is a bright summer day.

MADAME BECK

Thank you for coming, I need you to read and translate an English letter I have received and to write for me the answer.

Lucy immediately seems to suspect something is wrong.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

My English is improving, I believe, but is not well enough yet for written communication. Here is the letter.

She hands Lucy a sheet, and Lucy begins reading aloud.

LUCY

"Dear Madame Beck, thank you for -- "

Just then Lucy hears QUICK FOOTSTEPS. She stops reading.

Madame Beck COUGHS, makes a bustle, and speaks loudly.

MADAME BECK

Proceed, please, Mademoiselle Lucy.

But Lucy's ears are straining. She can hear the sudden STIR of a large number of people, an entire class, rising at once.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

They are putting away work.

LUCY

Wait, Madame -- I will see what it is.

Lucy quickly puts down the letter and leaves the room.

Powerless to detain her, Madame Beck rises and follows, close as Lucy's shadow.

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

The girls are standing in a semicircle. Monsieur Paul is walking around, giving farewells, pressing each hand, touching each cheek with his lips.

Lucy enters the room. She is all too aware that Madame Beck is dogging her, following and watching closely.

After the last pupil, Monsieur Paul turns.

Madame Beck steps out suddenly in front of Lucy. Madame seems to magnify her proportions and gestures, eclipsing Lucy, hiding her, mastering Monsieur Paul's attention.

MADAME BECK

Mon cousin! C'est etre au revoir! How you
will be missed we simply cannot express.

She hurries him to the glass door opening on the garden.

Monsieur Paul glances around, but Lucy cannot catch his eye.

The room is all confusion, the semicircle broken into groups.

Lucy's small, dark figure is lost among 30 more conspicuous.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Sometime later, Lucy still stands in the same spot. The room is darker. Lucy is alone in her inexpressible grief over an unendurable loss.

Isabelle enters the room and holds out a letter to Lucy.

ISABELLE

Mademoiselle, I am to give you this.
Monsieur Paul said I was to seek you all
over the house, from the attic to the
cellar, and when I found you, to give you
this.

Lucy takes the note.

LUCY

Merci.

Isabelle leaves the room.

Lucy reads. Instantly, she takes courage and comfort from the note. She speaks to herself.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Tonight -- he has to come tonight -- his
ship sails tomorrow!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- NIGHT

The school is dark and quiet, bedtime is past.

Lucy remains in the gloomy classroom, tortured, pacing up and down in silent desolation. She looks at the clock on the wall. It is past 11.

Certain that the household is out of hearing, at last she WEEPS.

After a moment, the door opens quietly and lamplight invades the darkness. Madame Beck enters with a composed air, as if coming at an ordinary time.

MADAME BECK

It is past time for retirement.

Lucy does not answer, does not stop pacing.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

(softly)
Let me persuade you to calm, Meess -- let
me lead you to your chamber.

LUCY
No! You shall not lead me.

MADAME BECK
Goton is up still. She shall give you a
sedative.

LUCY
Madame, take your own sedative, and leave
me!

MADAME BECK
I must send for Goton --

She starts to take Lucy's arm.

LUCY
I forbid it! Leave me alone. Keep your
hand off me, and my life, and my
troubles. Oh, Madame! In your hand there
is poison. You envenom and you paralyze.

MADAME BECK
You must not marry Paul, Meess. He cannot
marry.

Lucy is stung by Madame Beck's threat.

Madame Beck, self-possessed though uneasy, quietly retreats.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy, her cheeks white, her eyelids swollen, goes through the motions
of teaching class.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DORMITORY -- NIGHT

Lucy suddenly awakens from fitful sleep. She rises and looks out the
window.

The faint SOUND OF A BAND PLAYING floats up from the distance.

A look of curiosity comes into Lucy's face.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Lucy, dressed and wearing a wide-brimmed hat and a shawl, walks
through the street, following the SOUND OF BAND MUSIC.

In a sleepy, dazed, and dreamlike state, Lucy drifts among other
PEOPLE walking toward the park.

EXT. PARK -- NIGHT

As Lucy approaches the park, light breaks, movement gathers, and Lucy
finds herself plunged into a living, happy CROWD.

Party dresses and grand carriages throng the bright street. Many in
the crowd wear masks.

In this land of illuminated paper lanterns and torches, Lucy takes
the precaution of binding down the broad brim of her hat with a
ribbon. In this motley crowd, no dress is noticeably strange.

The swaying tide leads Lucy farther from the music and somewhat away from the light.

Members of a small party stand on a knoll with a bench.

Among this circle is a portly lady holding a cherub by the hand. On closer inspection, Lucy sees that the little girl is Fifine and the lady is Madame Beck.

Several gentlemen stand around her, including Pere Silas. Sitting on the bench is ancient Madame Walravens.

Lucy stands close by this group, with her head bent under her hat.

Madame Walravens impatiently turns her head, looking into the crowd.

MADAME WALRAVENS

Where are they? Why do not they come?

Determined to have an answer, she speaks louder, her phrase sending a shock through Lucy.

MADAME WALRAVENS (CONT'D)

Where is Justine Marie?

No one but Lucy seems surprised, startled, or at a loss.

MADAME BECK

Justine Marie is coming -- she will be here presently.

PERE SILAS

Voila! Here is Justine Marie now!

Lucy leans forward. She sees the face of a happy, pretty, young woman, not the expected ghost of a nun. This living, breathing, buxom, blooming girl, JUSTINE MARIE, LAUGHS and CHATS with good humor. And she is not alone.

At this instant, a torch is carried past. Its blaze lights the face of Justine Marie's escort -- Monsieur Paul.

Lucy clasps her hands hard and draws a deep breath, holding in a cry. She is dumbfounded. She struggles to hear what is said.

Madame Beck, speaking to Monsieur Paul, is half good-humored, half malicious.

MADAME BECK

...you would not have to worry about it if you had taken the ship today as we advised.

MONSIEUR PAUL

It is but a temporary deferment. I will be sailing in two weeks' time.

MADAME WALRAVENS

But why did you postpone your voyage?

MONSIEUR PAUL

To settle a little piece of business which I have set my heart upon.

A meaning look passes between Monsieur Paul and Justine Marie, as if she is in his confidence.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

And Justine Marie will help me -- will she not?

He takes her hand and lifts it to his grateful lips.

Sharp talons of jealousy tear cruelly at Lucy. She turns and leaves the radiant park.

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Lucy pulls off her hat and shakes out her hair as she approaches the boarding school.

A carriage speeds her way, RATTLING LOUDLY on the cobbled road.

The street is narrow, and the carriage THUNDERS closer. As it rushes by, Lucy sees something white fluttering from the carriage window -- a hand waving a handkerchief to her.

Again, Lucy looks puzzled.

INT. DORMITORY -- NIGHT

Breathless, Lucy reaches her bed.

The next moment, she almost shrieks, but somehow holds in the sound.

In her bed, between the half-drawn bed-curtains, Lucy sees a dark shape.

She gathers courage and takes a step forward.

By the faint night lamp, Lucy sees, stretched on her bed, the phantom -- the nun.

In an instant, without exclamation, Lucy rushes on the bed. She strikes and tears at the dark shape.

And -- the shape falls down, all around her, in shreds and fragments.

The "nun" was nothing but a bolster dressed in a long, black stole, artfully embellished with a white veil. To the head is pinned a slip of paper.

In a whisper, Lucy reads the mocking words by moonlight:

LUCY

"The nun of the attic bequeaths to Lucy
Snowe her wardrobe. She will be seen in
this school no more."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MADAME BECK'S CHAMBER -- DAY

Madame Beck is pale and appalled. A discomposd Rosine is speaking to her.

ROSINE

We have ransacked the entire house. There
is not a trace. Ginevra Fanshawe has --

MADAME BECK

-- vanished. I see. Thank you, Rosine.

EXT. GARDEN -- DAY

Lucy walks out to the bench and sits. She finds an envelope stuck between two of the bench's wooden slats.

The envelope has Lucy's name written on the back.

Lucy frowns in curiosity and opens the envelope. She hears the letter in Ginevra's voice.

GINEVRA (V.O.)

"Dear Old Lady, I am off -- gone like a shot. Alfred de Hamal and I intended to be married this way from the start. You know, Alfred has seen so much of you the last few months that he hopes you won't miss him now that he has gone. He apologizes for any trouble he may have given you. He is afraid he rather inconvenienced you once when he came upon you in the attic, just as you were reading a letter..."

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. BOARDING SCHOOL ATTIC -- NIGHT

Lucy is starting to read her letter from Dr. John, when suddenly she is frightened by the "nun" -- Alfred, dressed in a nun's habit, hiding in the attic.

GINEVRA (V.O.)

"...but he could not resist giving you a start -- you appeared so wonderfully taken up with your correspondent."

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN -- DAY

Lucy can't help but smile as the secret of the nun is revealed to her. She reads further.

GINEVRA (V.O.)

"...But then, Alfred says you once frightened him..."

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

INT. ATTIC -- NIGHT

Alfred de Hamal is waiting by candlelight in the attic for Ginevra.

Lucy plunges into the attic for her dress on the night of the play.

GINEVRA (V.O.)

"...by rushing in for a dress or something, when he had struck a light while waiting for me."

Alfred quickly puts out his candle, but too late -- Lucy has seen its light. She hurriedly gathers her dress and rushes from the attic.

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN -- DAY

Lucy reads more of Ginevra's letter.

GINEVRA (V.O.)
 "Do you comprehend by this time that Alfred was the nun of the attic, and that he came there to see me? I will tell you how he managed it..."

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. GARDEN -- NIGHT

Alfred climbs the garden wall, then into a tree.

GINEVRA (V.O.)
 "Alfred can climb as well as he can dance. But one night..."

Lucy and Monsieur Paul are talking at the base of the old tree, when suddenly there is a commotion from above.

GINEVRA (V.O., CONT'D)
 "...he fell out of that big, ugly tree and nearly broke his neck! Running away, he was nearly caught by two people, Monsieur Paul and you."

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN -- DAY

Lucy nearly laughs remembering that night. She continues reading.

GINEVRA (V.O.)
 "But for the nun's costume, he would have been caught again and again, both by you and Monsieur Paul. He thinks you both capital ghost chasers, and very brave. But what on earth were you doing in the street the night I left?"

BEGIN FLASHBACK:

EXT. STREET -- NIGHT

Lucy is returning from the park when she meets the strange carriage. She sees something white fluttering from the window.

GINEVRA (V.O.)
 "Did you see me wave my handkerchief from the carriage?"

END FLASHBACK

EXT. GARDEN -- DAY

Lucy finishes reading the letter.

GINEVRA (V.O.)
 "Well, dear grandmother, congratulate me on my happiness. Until next time we meet, Countess Ginevra de Hamal. P.S. -- I am a countess now! Rather better than 'Mrs. John Bretton,' hmm?"

Lucy shakes her head, smiling in spite of herself.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

Lucy sits solitary, listless. She hears HAMMERING in the distance, then the HAMMERING STOPS, and FOOTSTEPS approach. The door opens.

Lucy's back is toward the door. She turns, looking to the doorway, and sees it filled with a familiar figure.

Monsieur Paul looks cheerful, kind, and benign. He comes in with eagerness and takes Lucy's hand.

When he looks into her face, his luminous smile goes dark. He finds Lucy greatly and unexpectedly changed, looking as if she is worn out or broken with illness.

Madame Beck's hurried voice from behind stops Monsieur Paul.

MADAME BECK

Monsieur Paul! Come into the salon, I have yet a great many things to say to you -- conversation for the whole day -- and so has Pere Silas. Come, Monsieur!

She presses so close, she almost thrusts herself between Lucy and Monsieur Paul.

MADAME BECK (CONT'D)

Come to your friends, Paul!

Her eyes graze Lucy with their hard ray. Madame Beck pushes against Monsieur Paul. He steps back slightly.

Lucy thinks he is about to leave. Pierced deeper than she can endure, she cries out.

LUCY

My heart will break!

MONSIEUR PAUL

(in a whisper)
Trust me!

These words lift a load, open an outlet. With trembling relief, Lucy SOBS.

MADAME BECK

Leave her to me -- I will give her a cordial and it will pass.

MONSIEUR PAUL

(harshly)
Leave us!

Madame Beck stays put. Monsieur Paul's facial muscles quiver as he speaks.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Leave us!

MADAME BECK

(with sternness)
But this will never do --

MONSIEUR PAUL
Go from here!

MADAME BECK
(threatening)
I will get Pere Silas --

MONSIEUR PAUL
Woman! Leave here this instant!

MADAME BECK
What you do is wrong, it is an act
impulsive, injudicious --

MONSIEUR PAUL
You know not what I have of judicious in
me, but you shall see. My cousin...
(less fiercely)
...be gentle, be pitying, be a woman.
Look at this poor face and relent. You
know I am your friend, and in spite of
your taunts, you know I may be trusted.

Madame Beck does not budge. Monsieur Paul's voice grows bitter and imperative.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Leave us!

But Madame Beck stands firm, gazing upon him dauntlessly.

Suddenly Monsieur Paul raises his arm as if to give Madame Beck his hand across her cheek.

The mere threat is enough. Madame Beck whirls around and runs from the room, gone and the door shut in a second.

The flash of passion is over. Monsieur Paul smiles at Lucy.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
Wipe your eyes.

Lucy calms.

Monsieur Paul sits beside her.

Lucy is no longer desolate or hopeless or sick of life.

Monsieur Paul takes her hand.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)
It made you very sad then to lose your
friend?

LUCY
It killed me to be forgotten, Monsieur.
All these weary days I have not heard
from you.

MONSIEUR PAUL
Must you have proof that I can be a firm
friend? Fine. Come with me.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STREET -- DAY

Monsieur Paul is leading Lucy to an unknown destination.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I have not for one hour forgotten you.

Lucy lifts her happy eyes.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

You are all pale, that face gives me pain.

Lucy quickly and self-consciously straightens her bonnet.

LUCY

Ah! I am not pleasant to look at. Do I displease your eyes much?

A great softness comes into Monsieur Paul's face.

MONSIEUR PAUL

No.

EXT. ANOTHER STREET -- DAY

Monsieur Paul continues leading Lucy.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I will be away three years in all. On my return, I will be free from all debt and have a clear course. What will you be doing in my absence? You talked once of trying to be independent and starting a little school of your own -- have you dropped the idea?

LUCY

Indeed, I have not -- I am doing my best to save what will enable me to put it in practice.

MONSIEUR PAUL

I do not like leaving you in the Rue Fossette -- I fear you will feel desolate -- you will be sad?

LUCY

This is certain, but I promise to do my best.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Still, there is another objection to your residence -- I wish to write to you sometimes. It would not be well to have uncertainty about the safe transport of letters, and in the Rue Fossette...

LUCY

But if you write, I must have your letters, and I will have them -- a dozen Madame Becks shall not keep them from me!

MONSIEUR PAUL

Quiet -- we will contrive a plan. Be calm.

They have reached a clean street where the houses are small, but pleasant.

Monsieur Paul stops before the white doorstep of a well-groomed dwelling.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Here we are.

He does not knock, but takes a key from his pocket, opens the door, and enters, ushering Lucy inside.

INT. HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The house is small, but friendly looking and freshly painted.

Opening a door, Monsieur Paul discloses a small, furnished parlor, its walls tinged like a blush.

LUCY

Pretty, pretty place!

Monsieur Paul smiles to see her so pleased.

Lucy continues in a whisper, half awed by the pervading peace of the house.

LUCY (CONT'D)

Will we sit here and wait?

MONSIEUR PAUL

We will first peep into one or two other nooks of this nutshell.

LUCY

Dare you take the freedom of going all over the house?

MONSIEUR PAUL

Yes, I dare.

He halts with a certain ceremony before a larger door. Producing a second key, he unlocks this door and opens it.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Voici!

INT. ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Lucy finds herself in a large room, scrupulously clean, containing two rows of benches and desks, a chalkboard, and a teacher's desk at the front. On the walls hang world maps. It is a miniature classroom - complete, pleasant.

LUCY

It is a school then? Who keeps it? I never heard of an establishment in this quarter.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Will you have the goodness to distribute a few prospectuses on behalf of a friend of mine?

He takes from his coat pocket some papers and gives them to Lucy. She reads aloud.

LUCY
 "Day school for girls, Numero 7, Faubourg
 Clotilde. Directrice, Mademoiselle --"
 (not believing what she sees)
 "-- Lucy Snowe"?

After a wordless confusion, she speaks.

LUCY (CONT'D)
 Is there another Lucy Snowe in Villette?
 Or -- tell me -- say something. How is
 it? I must know all!

Monsieur Paul extends his hand and Lucy drops the papers, oblivious
 of all else as she fastens onto his hand.

MONSIEUR PAUL
 Ah! You said I had forgotten you. Poor
 Monsieur Paul! These are the thanks he
 gets for trudging around from house
 painter to upholsterer, from cabinetmaker
 to charwoman. Lucy and Lucy's home, the
 sole thoughts in his head!

Lucy hardly knows what to do. Monsieur Paul's tender look shakes her.
 In the midst of all, she forces herself to look at the practical.

LUCY
 The trouble! And the cost! Had you the
 money, Monsieur Paul?

MONSIEUR PAUL
 Enough money. I have thought of this hour
 day and night lately. I would not go near
 you, because if I had, my secret would
 have come out. Now, you shall live here
 and have a school, you shall employ
 yourself while I am away, you shall think
 of me sometimes, you shall mind your
 health and happiness for my sake, and
 when I come back...

He leaves a blank.

LUCY
 I promise to do all you tell me. I
 promise to work hard and willingly. I
 will be your faithful steward. Monsieur,
 Monsieur, you are too good!

He raises his hand to stroke her hair. The hand gently touches her
 lips in passing. She presses the hand close and kisses it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. BALCONY -- DAY

A small table and chairs have been placed on the balcony outside the
 French window.

With shy joy, Lucy plays hostess, serving Monsieur Paul coffee.

LUCY
 I must distribute my prospectuses right
 away.

MONSIEUR PAUL

There is one pupil who will come daily to take lessons in English, and as she is rich, she will pay handsomely. I mean my goddaughter, Justine Marie.

That name freezes Lucy, striking her mute.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

What now?

LUCY

Nothing.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Nothing! Your face changes, your color fades. Nothing! You must be ill -- you have some suffering -- tell me what?

But Lucy does not answer. Monsieur Paul pulls his chair closer.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Justine Marie is a good girl, docile and amiable -- not quick, but you will like her.

LUCY

I think not. She must not come here.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Do you wish to puzzle me? Do you know her? But...there is something. You are pale as a statue. Rely on Paul -- tell him the grief.

His hand, quietly advanced, turns Lucy's face toward him.

MONSIEUR PAUL (CONT'D)

Do you know Justine Marie?

The name from his lips overcomes Lucy. Close to her as he now sits, Lucy's eyes and cheeks cannot hide the emotion.

LUCY

I want to tell you something -- I want to tell you all.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Speak, Lucy -- speak. Who prizes you, if I do not? Who is your friend, if not Paul Emanuel? Speak!

LUCY

That night in the park, the night of the fete, I slipped out and I saw you, and her, together, under trees...

Before she is done, Monsieur Paul holds both Lucy's hands. She is warm, jealous, and haughty.

LUCY (CONT'D)

I forbid Justine Marie my door and roof!

Monsieur Paul smiles, betraying delight.

MONSIEUR PAUL

Justine Marie helped me to set up this house. For you. She is my goddaughter, that is all.

(pulling Lucy to his heart)

Lucy, take my love. One day share my life. Be my dearest, first on earth.

He kisses her.

LUCY (V.O.)

He gave me his pledge, and then his farewell.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HARBOR -- DAY

Monsieur Paul's ship is leaving port.

Lucy waves goodbye.

LUCY (V.O.)

The next day, he sailed. Paul was away three years. They were the happiest three years of my life. Do you hear the paradox? Listen...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUCY'S SCHOOL -- DAY

Lucy is teaching a small group of PUPILS. She looks happy, young, pretty.

LUCY (V.O.)

I started my school. I worked -- I worked hard. I thought myself the keeper of Monsieur Paul's property, and I was determined to prosper. New pupils came, and kept coming.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUCY'S SCHOOL -- DAY

Now the room is filled to capacity with desks and busy STUDENTS.

LUCY (V.O.)

About the middle of the second year, I took the house adjoining mine. My day school became a boarding school. That also prospered. Few things unsettled me now; few things had enough importance to vex, intimidate, or depress me. Most things pleased me.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. LUCY'S BALCONY -- DAY

Lucy is reading a letter and smiling.

LUCY (V.O.)

Paul wrote letters to me as he gave and as he loved -- in full-handed, full-hearted plenitude.

(MORE)

LUCY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He wrote because he loved his Lucy and had much to say to her, because he was faithful and thoughtful, because he was tender and true.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUCY'S KITCHEN -- DAY

Lucy, dark with worry, looks out the window.

The wind is blowing, the skies hang full and foreboding.

LUCY (V.O.)

And then, three years had passed -- Paul's return was set. My school was flourishing, my house was ready.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. LUCY'S PARLOR -- NIGHT

The wind HOWLS and MOANS at every window.

Lucy restlessly wanders through the house. She grabs an apron, ties it on, and begins cleaning, as if to keep busy.

As she dusts around a familiar ship in a bottle that sits on her mantelpiece, Lucy's hand slips, and the bottle crashes to the floor, bursting in an EXPLOSIVE SHATTER.

Lucy becomes more upset than the event would seem to warrant. She breaks down, SOBBING as if she will never be comforted.

The little sailing ship lies smashed to pieces among broken glass.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OCEAN -- NIGHT

Lightning flashing from the tormented sky reveals the rough Atlantic, its dark water strewn with wreckage of a sailing ship.

LUCY (V.O.)

Here stop -- stop at once! There is enough said.

EXT. BESIDE A CALM POND -- ENGLAND -- DAY

On a bright summer day, at the edge of a clear-watered pond, 16-year-old John Graham Bretton carries a miniature sailboat.

LUCY (V.O.)

Trouble no kind heart -- leave sunny imaginations hope.

John Graham is closely followed by 13-year-old Lucy Snowe, who holds the hand of little Polly.

LUCY (V.O., CONT'D)

I believe that this life is not all, neither the beginning nor the end. I believe while I tremble -- I trust while I weep.

John Graham bends down and lowers the sailboat into the water.

LUCY (V.O., CONT'D)

My dear godmother Mrs. Bretton prospered
all the days of her long life...as did
her son, John Graham...and his wife,
Paulina. Farewell.

As the girls watch, John Graham's hand gently pushes the little
sailing vessel out into the pond, rippling the calm water.

FADE OUT

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