

**PERSUASION**

*A New Play*

*by Tara Raczenski*

*adapted from the novel*

*by Jane Austen*

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## **CHARACTERS**

**ANNE ELLIOT**

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN**

**CPT. FREDERICK WENTWORTH**

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE**

*Doubling as follows:*

**MARY MUSGROVE/MARY OF THIRTEEN**

**CHARLES MUSGROVE**

**LADY RUSSELL/MRS. SOPHY CROFT**

**SIR WALTER ELLIOT/ADMIRAL CROFT**

**ELIZABETH ELLIOT/HENRIETTA MUSGROVE**

**LADY ELLIOT/MRS. MUSGROVE**

**WILLIAM ELLIOT/CPT. HARVILLE**

**MR. SHEPHERD/MR. COOK**

**MRS. CLAY/JEMIMA/MRS. HARVILLE**

**LOUISA MUSGROVE/SUZETTE/THE MEZZO**

**CPT. BENWICK/ROBERTS**

**SETTINGS:** A time and place reminiscent of a slowly fading way of life

The Country

The Town

The City

**PRODUCTION NOTES:** Doubling is to be preferred not only to embody the old way of things versus the new but also for intentional humor. If such casting proves impossible, care should be taken to adjust these flashes of amused self-awareness.

Likewise for scene changes, a slight value is placed on self-awareness over practical expediency, in that *how* they respond to their shifting world, including not only the placement and replacement of furnishings but changes in light and sound as well, serves to further illuminate their own natures and the nature of the world itself.

## ACT ONE

**SCENE ONE:** *A grand room, in a state of reluctant economy and transition evidenced by a complete lack of furnishings, apart from an ostentatious portrait frame, and several open trunks.*

*AT RISE: The portrait and the trunks are separate, in isolated pools of light. Posing within the portrait are SIR WALTER ELLIOT, LADY ELLIOT, ELIZABETH ELLIOT, MARY OF THIRTEEN and ANNE OF EIGHTEEN. ANNE ELLIOT enters with a stack of books meant for the trunk. This movement animates ANNE OF EIGHTEEN for they are the same person ten years removed. ANNE begins to put the books in but stops suddenly and takes out a music box. SHE opens it. It plays a poignant refrain. ANNE OF EIGHTEEN breaks formation, moving to the edge of the portrait but not out of it, bound as she is by its' borders.*

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** The Sorrowful History of Anne Elliot.

**ANNE.** *(with amused self-awareness)* Chapter one.

**SIR WALTER/ELIZABETH.** *(offended by the inattention)* --Ahem!

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN returns to her place in the portrait. ANNE turns outward. )*

**ANNE.** The Elliots of Kellynch Hall.

*(ROBERTS enters, turns outward)*

**ROBERTS.** Kellynch Hall!

*(Lights rise to reveal the rest of the hall, barren and cold.)*

Sir Walter Elliot.

*(SIR WALTER bows)*

Married to...Elizabeth Stevenson.

*(LADY ELLIOT curtseys)*

Of this lady was born, Elizabeth Elliot...

*(ELIZABETH curtseys)*

Anne Elliot...

*(ANNE and ANNE OF EIGHTEEN curtsey)*

And Mary Elliot

*(MARY OF THIRTEEN yawns, is prodded sharply by ELIZABETH, then curtseys.*

*ALL resume the tableaux)*

Lady Elliot, deceased.

*(LADY ELLIOT breaks tableaux, she gives the shawl to ANNE OF EIGHTEEN as ANNE pulls the same shawl out of the trunk. THEY don it simultaneously as LADY RUSSELL enters and LADY ELLIOT exits.)*

**ROBERTS.** Now, Lady Elliot had one friend--

**LADY RUSSELL.**-- One very intimate and loyal friend, a widow by the name of Lady Russell.

**ANNE.** This Lady and Sir Walter did *not* marry each other, whatever might have been anticipated--

**LADY RUSSELL.** --That a lady of...steady age and fortune should *decide* not to remarry needs no apology to the public, Anne. Continue Mister Roberts.

**ROBERTS.** In the absence of a son and heir there was only one distant cousin. William Walter Elliot

*(MR. WILLIAM ELLIOT enters, pausing to pose to advantage. He is charming, elegant, magnetic and well aware. ALL in the portrait, even ANNE a little watch him with interest).*

**MR. ELLIOT.** Ah! Just Mr. Elliot, if you please.

*(to the audience)*

Well! We're a handsome looking party, aren't we?

*(SIR WALTER steps forward to the edge of the portrait, but not out of it, bringing ELIZABETH and offering HER to MR. ELLIOT. SHE curtsies low, but MR. ELLIOT declines, moving decisively away. ELIZABETH and SIR WALTER resume their positions)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** Elizabeth had meant to marry Mr. Elliot of course, but he relinquished her hand and Sir Walter's good opinion to marry for more--

**MR. ELLIOT.** Ready money, as my wife used to say. God rest her.

**LADY RUSSELL.** Proving himself a great disappointment--

**ANNE.** --To some more than to others.

**ELIZABETH.** *(very coldly)* Ahem!

**LADY RUSSELL.** Thank you Mr. Elliot. For now.

*(MR. ELLIOT bows and exits. ALL resume tableaux except ELIZABETH, watching MR. ELLIOT go)*

**MARY OF THIRTEEN.** And what of me! What is my part?

**LADY RUSSELL.** You, Mary are to be educated.

**MARY OF THIRTEEN.** (*suddenly “ill”*) Oh! Lady Russell! I think I may be coming down with a cough--

*(LADY RUSSELL shepherds MARY OF THIRTEEN, out of the portrait and offstage, though we still hear MARY OF THIRTEEN, protesting...)*

--and-as-you-know-my-coughs-are-worse-than-anyone's!

*(FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE enters, moves directly to ANNE OF EIGHTEEN. ROBERTS looks to ANNE for permission)*

**ANNE.** Continue Mister Roberts.

**ROBERTS.** His name was Frederick Wentworth.

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN breaks tableaux and meets him at the border of the frame, but does not step out. HE gives her the music box, which SHE opens.)*

**ANNE.** Half the sum of attraction might have been enough, for he had nothing to do, and she had hardly anybody to love--

*(FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE and ANNE OF EIGHTEEN dance as LADY RUSSELL reenters, takes stock and confers with SIR WALTER and ELIZABETH)*

**SIR WALTER.** Yes, yes, but who is he? Where is he from?

**LADY RUSSELL.** Son of a clergyman. Lately in the Navy.

**SIR WALTER.** In other words, no one. From nowhere.

**ELIZABETH.** The question is, what does he want with Anne?

*(FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE kneels. ANNE OF EIGHTEEN accepts. THEY tableaux)*

**ANNE.** It would be difficult to say which was the happiest, she in receiving the proposal or he in having it accepted.

**ELIZABETH.** Father, how could she do it!

**SIR WALTER.** A very degrading alliance. I would naturally be unable to do anything for them.

*(THESE tableaux again as FREDERICK AT TWENTY-FIVE reanimates, leaning to kiss ANNE AT EIGHTEEN but is interrupted by ROBERTS.)*

**ROBERTS.** Ahem! Mister Wentworth. Sir Walter will see you now.

*(FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE exits with ROBERTS.)*

**ANNE.** And who can be in doubt of what followed?

**LADY RUSSELL.** *(to ANNE of EIGHTEEN)*....And to be snatched away at eighteen! You with all your claims to birth and beauty! He with nothing and nobody to recommend him! I grieve to think of it. And not only for your sake. If this young man is to hope for a rise in his profession, by no means assured him, would it not be better for him to do so unencumbered.

*(LADY draws ANNE of EIGHTEEN aside, still conversing in dumb show)*

**ANNE.** She was persuaded. For his sake. For his advantage. It was her chief consolation...

*(FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE re-enters. ANNE OF EIGHTEEN breaks from LADY RUSSELL and meets HIM)*

And every consolation was required...

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Unencumbered! And are these Lady Russell's words or your own...

*(SHE returns HIS ring)*

So. Then it would seem that love is *not* love which alters when it alteration finds or bends with the remover to remove.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Frederick--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** *(with great bitterness)* For love is an ever fixed mark that looks on tempests and is not shaken!

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Frederick, please.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Goodbye, Miss Elliot.

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN steps back into the portrait as FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE exits, ANNE experiencing it anew. LADY RUSSELL re-enters)*

**ANNE.** He left the country in consequence. A few months had seen the beginning and end of their acquaintance, but not Anne's suffering. Her attachment and regrets---. Her attachment And regrets had for a long time clouded every youthful enjoyment.

**LADY RUSSELL.** And an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect

**LADY RUSSELL/ANNE/ANNE OF EIGHTEEN**...And rosy lips and cheeks within his bending sickle's compass come.

*(MARY enters, now grown. ROBERTS follows with luggage)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** Welcome home, Mary.

*(ROBERTS exits with the luggage as MARY, now grown if not matured, resumes her place in the portrait)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** There came only one other proposal.

*(CHARLES MUSGROVE enters, observing ANNE OF EIGHTEEN keenly although MARY observes HIM with interest. ROBERTS reenters).*

**ROBERTS.** Mister Charles Musgrove. Sir Walter will see you now.

*(CHARLES follows ROBERTS out. SIR WALTER nods. CHARLES returns. HE kneels before ANNE OF EIGHTEEN, offers his hand).*

**LADY RUSSELL.** A very worthy young man--

**ANNE.** Anne refused.

**LADY RUSSELL.** Of good property! Very close by—

**ANNE.** Anne refused.

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN turns away. Hurt, CHARLES moves to leave. MARY arranges herself becomingly, then “coughs”. HE bows. SHE curtsseys. HE kneels. SHE accepts. HE helps MARY out of the portrait and THEY stand together.)*

**ROBERTS.** Mary Elliot. Married to Charles, son and heir of Charles Musgrove, Esquire of Uppercross in the county of Somerset.

*(THEY exit. LADY RUSSELL exits as MR. SHEPHERD and MRS. CLAY enter. )*

**ANNE.** Ten years--

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Ahem.

**ROBERTS.** Mr. Shepherd, a cautious and civil lawyer--

**MR. SHEPHERD.** --The personal agent to Sir Walter Elliot.

**ROBERTS.** And his daughter, Mrs. Clay--

**MRS. CLAY.** -- lately returned home after an extremely disappointing marriage--.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** --My dear, hadn't we better say “unprosperous?”

**MRS. CLAY.** Well, I say let them imagine what they will. They always do, you know. But they needn't worry about Mrs. Clay. No, for she was a clever, optimistic...young woman who surpassed even her father in the art of pleasing. Or at the very least, pleasing the Elliots.

*(THEY turn together to stand before the portrait. MRS. CLAY observes SIR WALTER very closely. LADY RUSSELL enters.)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** Mr. Shepherd! *(a disdainful beat)* Mrs. Clay. What brings you to Kellynch? Surely you know that Sir Walter and Elizabeth are in the city?

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Yes, all too well. No, it is urgent that I speak with you, Lady Russell.

**LADY RUSSELL.** Me! On what account?

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Oh! Accounts! Sir Walter and Elizabeth's to be precise and those of their many, *many* creditors. I fear, Lady Russell, we must--

*(leaning in courageously)*

--retrench.

*(SIR WALTER and ELIZABETH look horrified)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** Oh! Oh dear.

*(She decides)*

We must consult with Anne at once.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Miss Elliot? With all due respect, Lady Russell--

**LADY RUSSELL.** --Mr. Shepherd, if Sir Walter and Elizabeth had practiced but *half* Anne's economy...

**MR. SHEPHERD.** I see. Penelope, this could take some time.

**MRS. CLAY.** Oh, I can always find something to do for my own interest and enjoyment.

*(MR. SHEPHERD and LADY RUSSELL exit. MRS. CLAY returns her attention to the portrait, specifically SIR WALTER. After a moment, SHE exits the opposite Way. SIR WALTER watches her go.)*

**ROBERTS.** Will that be all Madame?

**ANNE.** Thank you Roberts, yes.

*(ANNE winds the music box and opens it. It plays, lights return to the two separate pools of light)*

**ANNE.** Ten years time had softened down much of Anne's feelings. But no one had ever come within the Kellynch circle to compare to Frederick Wentworth. As he stood--

**ANNE/ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** --In her memory.

*(Lights fade to black, music still playing which brings us into...)*



**SCENE TWO:** The Same.

*AT RISE: ANNE is in the same position, the music box open and playing, ELIZABETH enters, dressed to travel, followed by MRS. CLAY, dressed similarly, but certainly less expensively.*

**ELIZABETH.** Anne.

*(ANNE does not respond)*

Anne!

*(ANNE snaps the music box shut and puts it in the trunk)*

**ELIZABETH.** Of all days to be amusing yourself, Anne. Really.

*(The sound of thunder and rain.)*

**MRS. CLAY.** Oh! Oh dear, I've quite forgot my umbrella.

**ELIZABETH.** Never mind. You can take Anne's.

*(SUZETTE enters, carrying an umbrella, which she hands to MRS. CLAY)*

**MRS. CLAY.** Oh, I couldn't take it! Not when I am already taking her place in Bath!

**ELIZABETH.** Penelope. We have already been over this. Mary insists that she is too ill to do without Anne and I insist that I cannot do without you! Besides, Anne hates Bath.

**ANNE.** Elizabeth, may I please have a word alone with you. It is important.

*(SUZETTE exits. MRS. CLAY moves aside, with ANNE'S umbrella as SIR WALTER enters followed by ROBERTS with a traveling bag.)*

**ELIZABETH.** Well, out with it, Anne! Some of us are very busy.

**ANNE.** I think it unwise for Mrs. Clay to accompany you and Father.

**ELIZABETH.** I thought you said this was important.

**ANNE.** I am concerned for father's sake. He is single after all and Mrs. Clay is--

**ELIZABETH.** --Mrs. Clay never forgets who she is! Unlike some people. And as to my father, I really should not have thought that he be suspected of romance at his age. Besides, one would imagine you had never heard him mention her freckles.

*(LADY RUSSELL enters)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** To think I should live to see The Elliots removing from Kellynch Hall.

*(An anxious knock offstage. ELIZABETH and SIR WALTER pull out pocket mirrors To inspect themselves)*

**SIR WALTER.** Oh dear God! Not another creditor, I hope.

**ELIZABETH.** Creditors!

**SIR WALTER.** Vultures, more like.

**ELIZABETH.** --Come back to pick the last shreds of meat from our bones.

**SIR WALTER.** --What more can we economize?

*(HE puts the mirror away)*

Which reminds me Anne, you canceled all our charities?

**ANNE.** Yes, father.

*(Another, more insistent knock).*

**ROBERTS.** Shall I answer the door sir?

**SIR WALTER.** *(waves HIS assent and ROBERTS exits. Calling after.)* If it is a creditor, you may tell them we have already left!

**ANNE.** I suppose they must also have families and creditors of their own.

**ELIZABETH.** Don't be ridiculous Anne. How can we give them what we do not have?

*(SHE now puts her mirror away)*

**SIR WALTER.** Ah. Shepherd. Well, at least you're not a creditor.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** I come with good tidings Sir Walter! Excellent news! Relief from the pain of this most necessary extraction.

**SIR WALTER.** Extraction? What, are you now also our dentist? Very well then. Out with it. Ha!

**MRS. CLAY.** Oh! Sir Walter! A very clever play on words, wasn't it father?

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Well put indeed, sir! No, I am happy to report that I may have a tenant for you!

**SIR WALTER.** A tenant! Is this your "relief?"

**LADY RUSSELL.** But Sir Walter! We must have a tenant!

**SIR WALTER.** We must have the right tenant, Lady Russell!

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Oh, but this is a venerable man, sir, and his excellent wife! No children! Quiet, respectable people in want of just such a lodging in the country.

**SIR WALTER.** Very well. Who is it?

**MR. SHEPHERD.** A retired man. Sizeable fortune. Surprised you did not ask more for the place.

**SIR WALTER.** His name, Shepherd. If you please. Who is he? Where is he from?

**MR. SHEPHERD.** It is, well, Admiral Croft and his wife, Mrs. Croft.

*(ANNE looks up sharply. ANNE OF EIGHTEEN emerges with her music box)*

**SIR WALTER.** Admiral! A navy man?

**MR. SHEPHERD.** A Rear Admiral of the White. In the Trafalgar action! And has been in the East Indies since. Stationed there, I believe, several years.

**SIR WALTER.** Then I take it for granted that his face is about as tanned and leathery as the saddles on my horses, eh, Mrs. Clay?

**MRS. CLAY.** Oh! Nay, Sir Walter! Have a little mercy on the poor man. We are not all born to be handsome.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Admiral Croft is as hale and hearty a man as I have seen and his wife, Mrs. Croft is a very well-spoken and genteel lady and not unconnected to part of the country! That is, she is sister to a gentleman who did live amongst us once.

**SIR WALTER.** What gentleman? Where?

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN opens the music box. It plays)*

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Oh, bless me, what was his name!

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** His name is Frederick Wentworth

**MR. SHEPHERD.** I'll be forgetting my own name soon I suppose.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** *(more insistently now)* His name is Frederick Wentworth.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** How troublesome. And I can see his face so clearly--

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** His name is--

**ANNE.** *(suddenly)*--Frederick Wentworth.

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN shuts the music box as ALL look to ANNE.)*

**ANNE.** You are thinking of Frederick Wentworth. Captain Wentworth, now I believe.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Yes! Thank you Anne. What a memory you have! Captain Wentworth. Quite the hero and with twenty-five thousand in independent means! And it is his Elder sister, Mrs. Croft and her husband who wish only to come and tour the house and grounds to seal the deal.

**SIR WALTER.** Seal the deal! And whether I like it or not!

**ELIZABETH.** Oh, far from it, father! Lady Russell and Anne will be here to interview them.  
You may be sure they will honor your wishes above all.

**LADY RUSSELL.** With your permission then, Sir Walter?

**SIR WALTER.** Oh very well! So be it! I leave it in your hands.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Depend upon it! I will take care of everything! Well then, I must bid you  
All farewell. And to you of course Penelope. You will make yourself indispensable I  
hope?

**MRS. CLAY.** Oh, depend upon it.

*(MR. SHEPHERD exits. ROBERTS enters)*

**SIR WALTER.** Well, Anne. We quit Kellynch Hall.

**ROBERTS.** Quit Kellynch Hall!

*(ROBERTS begin the transition. LADY RUSSELL finds herself unequal  
to the task.)*

**SIR WALTER.** Give our best to Mary won't you?

**ANNE.** Of course.

*(SIR WALTER, ELIZABETH and MRS. CLAY exit, followed by LADY RUSSELL  
to see them out. ANNE retrieves the music box before that trunk is removed)*

**ANNE/ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Frederick....

**ANNE.** No, it must be Captain Wentworth now. And in any case, I may not see him at all...

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Not see him! His sister will be living here! He may even come with  
the Crofts to tour the grounds today! Good heavens--

**ANNE/ANNE OF EIGHTEEN** --Perhaps a long walk.

*(LADY RUSSELL enters)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** Anne? Are you leaving?

**ANNE.** *(concealing the music box)* Elizabeth has insisted that I visit all the neighbors before  
leaving for Uppercross Cottage

**ROBERTS.** Leaving for Uppercross Cottage.

*( As if reminded of her duty, ANNE puts away the music box and assists a  
with the transition, as if moving furniture were now second nature or indeed as  
though SHE herself were merely part of the surroundings)*

**LADY RUSSELL.** *(watching, bereft)* Yes. It will be expected, I suppose.

**ANNE.** Once more into the breach, dear friend?

**LADY RUSSELL** Yes. Well....perhaps a little tea first.

*(LADY RUSSELL exits. ANNE continues working as she converses)*

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Well in any case, if not today, The Crofts will certainly be introduced to the Musgroves and you will doubtless see him when he comes to Uppercross.

**ANNE of EIGHTEEN.** It is a hope at least. You must admit—

**ANNE.** It is a hope. And an agony.

**ROBERTS.** Miss Elliot?

**ANNE.** Thank you Roberts.

*(ROBERTS and ANNE exit opposite directions. ANNE of EIGHTEEN follows ANNE. Lights fade and we are now in....)*

**SCENE THREE:** *Uppercross Cottage, indicated by a window seat, including a window which opens out to the lawn with indications of a glorious autumn day.*

**AT RISE:** *MARY on stage, reclining on the chaise, moaning. A not-too-distant shot of a hunting rifle causes MARY to startle, a mood quickly exacerbated by CHILDREN'S VOICES*

**MARY.** Jemima! The window!....Jemima!!

*(And so SHE must rise, the martyr, to close the window herself. ANNE enters, over-exerted and worse for the wear as JEMIMA also enters)*

There you are! I've been calling and calling--

**JEMIMA.** *(rushing past her mistress to attend ANNE)* Miss Anne! You look like death's doormat! I told you they was wild things, those boys.

**ANNE.** On the contrary. They are very good boys, generally. Only I am not used to the exertion.

**JEMIMA.** They'll exert you right into the ground if you let em!

**MARY.** Thank you Jemima, that will be all!

*(JEMIMA exits, mumbling)*

You are very good with them though Anne. They never do a thing I tell them, though I am sure they would if Charles and his mother did not spoil them. She is forever giving them too many sweets and sending them home wild and cross. And Charles is...Charles.

**ANNE.** I haven't seen Charles today.

**MARY.** That's because he despises me.

**ANNE.** I am sure that isn't true Mary.

**MARY.** It is true! I really believe if Charles were to see me dying, he would not think there was anything the matter with me. I am sure Anne, if you would, you might persuade him that I really am very ill.

*(CHARLES enters)*

**CHARLES.** Hullo Anne! You're looking a bit pale!

**MARY.** Well?

**CHARLES.** Well, what?

**MARY.** Well, aren't you going to say a word to me? Your wife, remember?

**CHARLES.** Oh, I remember. Say Anne, I ran into Louisa and Henrietta and they asked if you won't walk with us up to The Manor.

**MARY.** Only Anne? Did your sisters not mention me as well?

**CHARLES.** No...because you told me to tell them that you were sick, Mary!

**ANNE.** Charles, why don't you and Mary go this evening and enjoy yourselves at the other house this evening. I'll look after the boys.

**MARY.** Are you serious! Dear me Anne, that is a very good thought!

**CHARLES.** It seems hard that you should be stuck here though, especially with Captain Wentworth expected.

*(ANNE OF EIGHTEEN enters)*

**MARY.** *(disdainfully)* A navy man. I thought he wasn't expected till next week.

**CHARLES.** We met on the shoot today by great good luck and he accepted my invitation to come to the manor this evening. Although, I do believe that may have more to do with my having two, unmarried younger sisters.

**MARY.** *(suddenly very interested)* Oh, is he very eligible?

**CHARLES.** Well, only if twenty-five thousand in prize money is eligible. Any pleasant young woman may have him for the asking. His words! I see no reason why Louisa shouldn't--

**MARY.** Louisa! No, it must be Henrietta! She's the eldest and much prettier.

**CHARLES.** What about Francis Hayter? He and Henrietta have a long understanding.

**MARY.** Don't be ridiculous Charles! That was nearly ten years ago! If he hasn't made her an offer yet, he never will. And besides a young woman has no right to disregard family honor just because she has an understanding. Isn't that so, Anne?

**CHARLES.** Well Wentworth could have his pick of either and I'd be very well pleased. Capital fellow. Excellent shot!

*(HE crosses to the window, calls out)*

Ho there! Wentworth! Mary will be joining us! You all may as well come in and wait!

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN/MARY.** He's here now!

**MARY.** Why didn't you say so before!

**CHARLES.** Here now, what's all the fuss?

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN/MARY.** Look at me!

*(MARY runs off stage. CHARLES follows, talking well into the wings.)*

**CHARLES.** What do you care what Captain Wentworth thinks of you? It's you and I that's married, remember?

**MARY.** *(offstage)* Oh, I remember! Jemima! Jemima!!!

*(JEMIMA has entered. )*

**JEMIMA.** Oh, Miss Anne! You've gone white as a whale's tooth! Here now, come and sit by the window. A bit of fresh air. And some strong hot tea too, I think.

*(JEMIMA exits whence she came.)*

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** What are you doing Anne! Any moment he'll walk through that door. Go! Make yourself presentable.

**ANNE.** No. You will have to see him sometime. It may as well be now. As you are.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** On second thought perhaps a long walk

*(LOUISA MUSGROVE and HENRIETTA MUSGROVE enter laughing with FREDERICK. HE sees ANNE, his demeanor instantly changing as LOUISA and HENRIETTA rush ANNE. FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE enters)*

Too late.

**LOUISA/HENRIETTA.** Oh! Miss Elliot! How good to see you!*(etc...)*

**HENRIETTA.** Miss Elliot, are you well? You do not look at all well.

**FREDERICK AT TWENTY-FIVE.** Wretched.

**ANNE.** I am quite well. Thank you Miss Musgrove.

**LOUISA.** No, no! You must call us Louisa and Henrietta. For we are as good as sisters are we not? Now come, and let us introduce you to our new acquaintance.

**FREDERICK.** *(bowing only slightly)* Miss Elliot.

**ANNE.** Captain Wentworth.

**LOUISA.** Oh, do you know each other?

**ANNE.** *(a beat)* We were acquainted.

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Briefly.

**LOUISA.** Of course! While you lived in Monkton.

**HENRIETTA.** Oh, then you will have heard of Lady Russell. I met her only once. A very great Lady. She terrifies me. Did you ever meet her Captain? She terrifies me...

*(CHARLES and MARY enter. MARY in a very silly hat. )*

**CHARLES.** Well then, here we are all! Captain Wentworth, my wife Mary.

**FREDERICK.** Very glad to have you joining our party Madame. Shall we proceed to Uppercross Manor?

**ROBERTS.** *(offstage)* Proceed to Uppercross Manor!

*(HENRIETTA moves towards the exit first. MARY coughs. HENRIETTA pulls back. FREDERICK offers HENRIETTA his arm. THIS group exits.)*

**ANNE.** *(ANNE sits)* It is over! The worst is over!

*(JEMIMA enters with the tea, which ANNE takes and drinks and hands the cup back)*

Thank you Jemima.

**JEMIMA.** Those boys! You rest awhile now. We can't do at thirty, you know, what we're used to do at eighteen.

*(SHE exits with some of the setting. The GROUP which has just left returns immediately to complete the transition, conversing and working in character and in dumb show. THEY are joined by MR. SHEPHERD and MRS. MUSGROVE, who really does try her best to be helpful. ANNE and ANNE OF EIGHTEEN assist, also in the same manner as before, although this time a bit distracted by FREDERICK)*

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Oh how well he looks ! So much the same and yet more so if that were possible. So open! So...agreeable.

**ANNE.** So silent. And once so much to each other.

*(SHE turns to ANNE OF EIGHTEEN a little accusingly before resuming her task)*

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** It was for his benefit! His advantage!

**ANNE.** Yes, yes. And Lady Russell was in the place of a trusted parent.



**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Then. But more importantly, how are his sentiments to be read now?

**ANNE.** *(with that same self-aware amusement)* His sentiments? His sentiments are perfectly clear Anne. You deserted and disappointed him and showed a feebleness of character which his own confident temper cannot forgive.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Well, I cannot argue there, but you know at least. And surely nothing he could say now could be worse than his cold civility.

*(MARY is now beside ANNE)*

**MARY.** Oh Anne! That Captain Wentworth is a capital fellow! And he is so very attentive to me although not very gallant by you! I heard him say just now to Henrietta that you were so altered by the years that he hardly recognized you.

*(MARY returns to the group which has found it's place , ANNE seeks refuge offstage at the piano, ANNE of EIGHTEEN follows and we are now fully two weeks later in...)*

**SCENE FOUR:** *Uppercross Manor represented by a couch flanked by two arm chairs, also a card table with four chairs.*

**AT RISE:** *As music from a pianoforte drifts in from offstage, and the scene change settles amiably into its' final picture: LOUISA and HENRIETTA sit on the couch looking at naval book. FREDERICK standing behind them. MARY sits in one armchair, CHARLES in the other. The "game" is on: Louisa or Henrietta?. MRS. CROFT enters on the arm of ADMIRAL followed by CPT. HARVILLE, enjoying the game as well.*

**MRS. CROFT.** Well Admiral?

**ADMIRAL.** Oh! Indubitably.

**MRS. CROFT.** Harville?

**HARVILLE.** I must admit he does seem to have one or other of those girls in mind.

**ADMIRAL.** He'd be better off taking the matter in hand.

**MRS. CROFT.** He's known them both only a fortnight Admiral. Give him a little time.

**ADMIRAL.** How much time does a man need? I knew the very day I saw you.

**MRS. CROFT.** Really? An entire day?

*(SHE crosses to MRS. MUSGROVE who upon entering has found her seat taken MARY. HARVILLE joins FREDERICK. MR. SHEPHERD and ADMIRAL move to the card table.)*

**MRS. CROFT.** Mrs. Musgrove, would you join us for a game of whist?

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Me! Oh, Mrs. Croft, I am a very bad hand at cards.

**MRS. CROFT.** I cannot believe it.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Oh, but it's true. You'd far better ask Anne. She is always so obliging

**MRS. CROFT.** Miss Elliot is already obliging us on the piano.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Bless me, that she is! My, my how her little fingers do fly. Well, I'll play a hand if you insist but you mustn't say you weren't warned.

*(THEY cross to the table and begin play as attention shifts to the group at the couch.)*

**HENRIETTA.** *(looking through the Navy Book)* Your first ship was "The Asp?"

**FREDERICK.** Aye, but you will not find her there. I was the last man who commanded her and she was hardly fit for service then.

**LOUISA.** Then it was the Laconia next?

**HARVILLE/FREDERICK.** Ah! The Laconia!

*(FREDERICK sits between HENRIETTA and LOUISA. THEY tableaux)*

**MRS. CROFT.** Mr. Shepherd, I hope you will tell Sir Walter from us that we are extremely pleased with the house and grounds. Only one adjustment, the removal of several mirrors in Sir Walter's dressing room--

**ADMIRAL.** --A fellow couldn't get away from himself in there--

**MRS. CROFT.** --But they may be easily moved back when the time comes.

**MR. SHEPHERD.** I would not look for that time to come very soon, Mrs. Croft. The Elliot's seem quite content to be in Bath.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Oh! I adore Bath! But Mr. Musgrove does not, so there's an end to it. At least perhaps until we may go there for wedding clothes

*(ALL at the card table look over to the couch which re-animates with FREDERICK and LOUISA laughing)*

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** But one thing I would object to is a long engagement.

**ADMIRAL.** Oh, I agree Mrs. Musgrove. Entirely. How many days was it for us, Sophy?

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** *(she cannot wrap her head around this)* Days?

**MRS. CROFT.** We had better not talk about it, my dear, or there shall be little chance of persuading anyone that we could possibly be happy together. It is your play, Mrs. Musgrove.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Is it? Oh dear! Bless me if I haven't gone and forgotten the lead.

**MRS. CROFT.** Hearts.

*(The song comes to a close. ALL applaud politely. ANNE enters, followed by ANNE of EIGHTEEN. FREDERICK rises, FREDERICK of TWENTY-FIVE enters)*

**FREDERICK.** This was your seat I believe.

**ANNE.** No, I—

*(But HE has already moved away. SHE sits)*

**HENRIETTA.** Captain Harville, did you meet Captain Wentworth on the Asp?

**HARVILLE.** Never! Wouldn't have set foot on a barge like the Asp if my life depended on it.

**FREDERICK.** Oh, my life did depend on it, I assure you. You see Miss Henrietta, the admiralty like to amuse themselves by sending sailors off in a vessel which may as well go to the bottom as not.

**ADMIRAL.** Stuff and nonsense! Never was a better than the Asp in her day. He was a lucky fellow to get her!

**FREDERICK.** Oh, I felt my luck, I assure you. It was a great object at that time to be at sea.

**HENRIETTA.** But if the Asp was such a broken down old thing, were you not disappointed to have her?

**FREDERICK.** Not in the least. She was a dear old girl to me. I knew from the moment I saw her that we should either go to the bottom together or that she would be the making of me. And so as luck would have it, I never had two days together of bad weather the entire time I was at sea in her. Then, mark this, not six hours after I turned her over at Plymouth, a gale came on which lasted four days and nights and did the poor girl in. Six hours more and I would have been little more than "gallant Captain Wentworth" in a small corner of the obituary. How's that for luck?

**LOUISA.** It sounds to me she'd rather be at the bottom of the sea than be commanded by any man apart from you.

**FREDERICK.** The thought had occurred to me I confess.

**HENRIETTA.** So then it was Plymouth where you took on the Laconia?

**HARVILLE.** And then the Western Islands. How fast we made money there.

**FREDERICK.** Not fast enough to suit you if I remember.

**HARVILLE.** Well, I had a wife. Money was everything. To know that once I had enough put by, I should, at long last be able to return to the woman I loved? Money was everything.

**FREDERICK.** And I shall never forget your happiness. An excellent woman, your wife. And very good to give you leave to come ashore for no other reason than to visit an old friend.

**HARVILLE.** She had other reason, I fear.

**FREDERICK.** Not Benwick?

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Who?

**HARVILLE.** Captain Benwick, madame. He was engaged to my sister but was persuaded by his family to wait until he had money. He went off to sea to obtain it, but Fanny died before he could return. He lives now with us.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Oh! Oh, I am sorry Captain Harville. You know, we have had our own loss as well. My poor Richard, you'll remember him from the Laconia?

**HARVILLE.** Yes. Ahem. We remember him well Mrs. Musgrove.

**ANNE.** Were Captain Benwick and your sister very much attached?

**HARVILLE.** I do not think I have ever seen so great or equal an affection.

**HENRIETTA.** I cannot bear to think of a young man's hopes so disappointed.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Unworthily. Cruelly.

**FREDERICK.** You have a sympathetic heart Miss Musgrove. It does you credit.

**LOUISA.** And Captain Benwick suffers still?

**HARVILLE.** He is bearing up rather hard. Either shut up in our house reading poetry or walking on the beach at Lyme without company or occupation.

**LOUISA.** Then we ought to go to him! No, we shall go to Lyme! How can we sit by when we have it within twenty easy miles to bring joy! Oh, what a happy conspiracy this will be! What say you Mama?

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** (*miles away*) Richard was a troubled boy to be sure but he had grown so steady under your care Captain Wentworth. Oh, if only he had not left the Laconia! My poor, poor boy!

(*SHE weeps. FREDERICK offers his handkerchief.*)

**LOUISA.** Do not despair of us, Captain Harville. Mama will come round, for once I have got a thing in my head I am determined to see it through.

**HARVILLE.** Thank you Miss Musgrove.

**MRS. CROFT.** It is your play, I believe, Mrs. Musgrove.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Oh! Already? I beg your pardon, what was the lead?

**MRS. CROFT.** Clubs.

*(MRS. MUSGROVE plays a card)*

--And you have won.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Oh! Bless me, have I truly?

**MRS. CROFT.** Somehow.

**ADMIRAL.** Well done, Mrs. Musgrove!

*(The group at cards join the others.)*

**MRS. CROFT.** You play very well Miss Elliot. Thank you for obliging us.

**ANNE.** Not at all! It gives me pleasure to play and Mrs. Musgrove keeps a very fine instrument.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Do I? I'm sure I wouldn't know...

*(continuing in dumb show, as ANNE OF EIGHTEEN speaks)*

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Say something to him.

**ANNE.** There's nothing I could say that he would wish to hear. Clearly.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** And yet gave up his chair to you. That is not nothing. It is proof of  
His warm and amiable heart.

**ANNE.** He is not unfeeling. He cannot forgive me but he cannot be unfeeling, but proof perhaps  
of the possibility of friendship.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Friendship! I believe I'd rather have his cold civility.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** *(finishing at last)*...But you are welcome to use it anytime you wish.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Say something!

**ANNE.** Thank you Mrs. Musgrove

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** To him!

**ANNE.** *(to FREDERICK)* Are you--

**MARY.** --Henrietta is quite an accomplished singer Captain.

**FREDERICK.** You will give us the pleasure then, I hope?

**HENRIETTA.** Oh, I beg you no. I am so shamefully out of practice.

**FREDERICK.** Another evening then. And what is your talent, Miss Louisa?

**LOUISA.** Oh, I have no talent at all. At least nothing out of the ordinary way.

**FREDERICK.** Come now. You young ladies are all so very accomplished these days.

**LOUISA.** Oh, but it's true! Ask anybody. I am happy though! I am determined to find pleasure in my circumstance, whatever it may be.

**MARY.** One could hardly call that an accomplishment Louisa.

**FREDERICK.** Oh, but I disagree. Respectfully. To always find contentment in the face of difficulty shall command my greatest admiration.

**MRS. CROFT.** Always content? I rather wonder at finding anyone who fits that description.

**FREDERICK.** It so happens I can name two in this very room besides Miss Louisa. Captain Harville for one. And you, for another Sophy.

**MRS. CROFT.** What's this? A compliment from the Great Captain Wentworth! Admiral, I charge you in the presence of this company to put that in my obituary.

**ADMIRAL.** What, am I to say nothing of all your continents?

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Continents?

**ADMIRAL.** Yes indeed! Sophy and I have crossed the Atlantic four times and once to the East Indies and back again.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Four?!

**MR. SHEPHERD.** Madame, you must be a very great traveler.

**ADMIRAL.** Never a better!

**ANNE.** What was it like?

**MRS. CROFT.** Wonderful. And nothing can surpass the accommodations of a Man O'War.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Four times you say.

**HENRIETTA.** You were never frightened?

**MRS. CROFT.** No. Not while we were together anyway.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** And back again? And never frightened....

**MRS. CROFT.** Well, excepting that one winter I spent in Deal while the Admiral was away in the North Seas. I must confess I suffered all sorts of imaginary complaints then.

**MRS. MUSGROVE.** Oh! I am of your opinion there! There is nothing so bad as separation! Mr. Musgrove is often away at these inquests and I am so glad when they are over and he is home.

**MRS. CROFT.** Even so, I do hate to hear people talk as if women were all fine ladies instead of rational creatures. We none of us expect to be in smooth water all our days. Let *me* not to marriage of true minds admit impediments.

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Precisely!

**FREDERICK.** Love is not love which alters  
when it alteration finds,  
Or bends with the remover to remove--

*(Where HE meant to wound, HE finds himself struck).*

**ANNE.** It is an ever fixed mark--

**FREDERICK.** --Yes. Thank you madame.  
That looks on tempests and is never shaken..

**FREDERICK/HARVILLE.** It is the star to every wan'dring bark  
Whose worth's unknown  
although his height be taken

**FREDERICK/HARVILLE/ADMIRAL.** Love's not Time's fool  
Though rosy lips and cheeks  
Within His bending sickle's compass come.  
Love alters not with His brief hours and weeks  
But bears it out even to the edge of doom.  
If this be error and upon me proved  
I never writ. Nor no man ever loved.

**FREDERICK.** And that is precisely the woman I would have by my side. Indeed above all,  
a strong unwavering mind.

**MRS. CROFT.** And the face attached to this strong, unwavering mind?

**FREDERICK.** Oh, as to that... a little beauty perhaps, a few smiles--

**HARVILLE.** --A few compliments to the Navy--

**MRS. CROFT.** Oh! And he would be a lost man indeed!

**ADMIRAL.** Hear! Hear!

**FREDERICK.** And there you have it ladies. Once married people start in on me, I say  
I am done with talking and must have dancing or nothing else! What say you?

*(MARY, LOUISA and HENRIETTA all heartily agree. Card table and all extraneous chairs are removed by LOUISA, HENRIETTA, CHARLES, and the ADMIRAL. ANNE moves offstage to the piano)*

**MRS. CROFT.** Miss Elliot may tire of playing, Frederick.

**FREDERICK.** Then she ought to say so. She is under no obligation to me.

*(“Roll The Old Chariot” begins. FREDERICK and MRS. CROFT exit after the others. CHARLES re-enters with the window unit to Uppercross Cottage)*

**MARY.** Charles! What are you doing?

**CHARLES.** What does it look like? Going back to the cottage.

**ROBERTS.** Back to the--

*(HE sees his redundancy and exits, a trifle annoyed)*

**MARY.** Oh Charles! You promised if there was dancing that you would dance! You promised me most distinctly!

**CHARLES.** No, I did not. I only nodded my head and said the word, “Happy”.

*(CHARLES exits followed by MARY cajoling as lights fade and we are now in...)*

**SCENE FIVE:** *Another afternoon at UPPERCROSS COTTAGE, only this time we see the outside of the cottage window.*

**AT RISE:** *Offstage CHILDREN sing the lyrics to “Roll The Old Chariot” ANNE is at the window, inside the cottage perhaps on the window-seat. Her hands bound to the framework of the window, she is “the captive” in a game of “Pirates”. ANNE of EIGHTEEN sits nearby as ANNE attempts to loosen her bonds.)*

**ANNE.** Little Charles! Walter!

*(silence)*

Little Charles!! Walter!!!

*(She rests.)*

**ANNE of EIGHTEEN.** Well?

**ANNE.** Louisa. Perhaps.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** He loves her.

**ANNE.** No. At least as far as I dare to judge from my own experience.

**ANNE of EIGHTEEN.** She is more in love with him, then.

**ANNE.** Yet there I think it is not love either. It is a fever. A fever of admiration.

**ANNE of EIGHTEEN.** But which might--

**ANNE.**--probably must--



**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** -end in love with someone

**ANNE.** Yes. Someone other than me. Anyone other than me.

*(SHE tries again to loosen herself, failing--)*

Little Charles! Walter! You are extremely troublesome! I am very angry with you!

*(FREDERICK enters unseen by ANNE. Before SHE is quite aware of what is HE has released HER. The sensation of physical contact makes HER and ANNE OF EIGHTEEN perfectly speechless. HE retains the rope which bound ANNE. HENRIETTA and LOUISA enter)*

**MARY.** *(offstage)* I will go! No Jemima! The other hat! The other one!

**ANNE.** Henrietta. Louisa. You are headed to Winthrop?

**HENRIETTA.** Oh, Anne! Do come with us, to Winthrop do! Not that I should wish to inconvenience you in the least, and it is a long walk however I should feel--and I daresay Mary most especially, so much less *anxious* if you were with her--, er-us.

**LOUISA.** Oh, I think we should all feel so, wouldn't you agree Captain? Will you go Anne? Please say yes!

**ANNE.** A long walk would be most welcome. Give me a moment...

*(ANNE exits.)*

**LOUISA.** I don't know what we shall do when Anne leaves us. She really is too good. So very much unlike---

**CHARLES.** *(off)* Mary, are you certain you want to go?

**MARY.** *(off)* And that is another thing. Everyone is always supposing I do not like a long walk and yet everyone would be offended if I refused.

**HENRIETTA.** Mary is good natured enough in many respects, but we do so wish Charles had married Anne instead. I suppose you know that he asked her. She refused him though...

*(FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE emerges)*

**FREDERICK.** When was this?

**HENRIETTA.** Oh, I do not know exactly. Louisa and I were in school at the time. We thought her great friend Lady Russell persuaded her against it.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Oh, a very great friend indeed!

**FREDERICK.** Why would she do it? Why would she interfere?

**HENRIETTA.** We never knew. She *is* a very great lady.

**LOUISA.** Perhaps she thought Charles not quite bookish enough.

*(JEMIMA enters with a basket of laundry and removes the pirate flag from the window. FREDERICK begins absent-mindedly tying knots with the rope which recently bound ANNE. FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE emerges, the lights change)*

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** What are you doing?

**FREDERICK.** Nothing.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** You are thinking of Miss Elliot.

**FREDERICK.** No! The past is past.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Precisely! And now the present! Or more to the point, your future!

*(HENRIETTA and LOUISA turn front and become as living statues to which FREDERICK of TWENTY-FIVE refers)*

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Henrietta or Louisa. Henrietta? Or Louisa? Either one would do the job. Both sweet and unaffected. Both very engaging. Lively. Witty. Educated. Pleasant.....Agreeable.

**FREDERICK.** Ah! I see.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Well, it plays a part. You must admit it plays a part.

**FREDERICK.** A small part, perhaps--

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** --Not that small.

**FREDERICK.** Even so, being in...agreement is not quite the same thing as admiration. Or love.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Well, admittedly but admiration may--

**FREDERICK.** --Probably must--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** --end in love.

**FREDERICK.** With someone.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Anyone but Miss Elliot.

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Naturally.

**FREDERICK.** Even so--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Good God man! What has happened to you? Where is your resolve? You, who have made a career--

**FREDERICK.** --A handsome career--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE** --an *extraordinary* career out of instantaneous life and death decisions--

**FREDERICK.** --but that was war--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** --And this is marriage! What could be easier! Look here Frederick, you have two very lovely young ladies standing here before you, ready and I dare say very willing and all you need do is pick one! What do you say?

*(FREDERICK is silent)*

I knew it! I knew it! You *are* thinking of her!

**FREDERICK.** I tell you I am not.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** *(indicating the rope)* Then why are you tying a lover's knot?

**FREDERICK.** *(putting the rope hastily away)* And why must that have anything to do with Anne?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Oh, it's Anne now is it?

**FREDERICK.** Well, surely it is not unnatural to admire an attractive woman.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Attractive! Did you not say to Henrietta that she looked perfectly wretched?

**FREDERICK.** Never!

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Well, you thought it.

**FREDERICK.** *You* thought it!

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** What is the difference?

**FREDERICK.** Ten years.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Precisely!

**FREDERICK.** Come, come. I dare say I've changed as well.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** For the better!

**FREDERICK.** Yes, well. I can't argue there.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** So then! Would you really go crawling back merely because you can? Have you forgotten--

**FREDERICK.**--Yes, yes, she disappointed me--

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** *(the “Mantra”)* --and showed a weakness of character which your own confident temper cannot forgive.

**FREDERICK.** I know. I never said I intended to marry her again.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** But you do intend on marrying someone. Keep in mind-

**FREDERICK.** --I know.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** --That you’re not getting any younger--

**FREDERICK.** *(an accusatory beat)* I know.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Well then! Spread a little canvas, man! Pick one or other of these two girls and bring her home!

*(FREDERICK turns his attention to LOUISA and HENRIETTA. HIS memory fires rapidly)*

**LOUISA.** When I have made up my mind, I have made it. We shall go to Lyme!

**ROBERTS.** *(offstage)* Go to Lyme.

*(MRS. CROFT and THE ADMIRAL enter to remove the Uppercross window sharing the work and the burden equally, congenially)*

**LOUISA.** If I loved a man as she loves the Admiral, I should always be with him.

**HENRIETTA.** --I cannot bear to see a young man so disappointed.

**LOUISA.** --I am determined to be content--

**HENRIETTA.** --But I should not like to oppose Lady Russell in anything-- She terrifies me.---

**FREDERICK of TWENTY-FIVE.** It is the worst evil of an indecisive character. Anybody may persuade her--

**LOUISA.** --Would I be frightened from doing a thing I had determined to be right by the airs and interference of such a person? No! I have no idea of being so easily persuaded.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Above all, a strong unwavering mind.

*(ANNE enters to assist The CROFTS in the transition. THEY welcome HER warmly. SHE is changed. In dress but perhaps more significantly by the change of scenery. An entire sea now in her view. A first taste of real freedom and good company)*

**FREDERICK.** Precisely.

*(HE exits. Waves and Seagulls. We are now in...)*

**SCENE SIX:** *Lyme, a seaside town, indicated by a raised structure, wide enough to be walked upon with steps leading down to ground level, hereafter referred to as "The Cobb".*

*AT RISE: CHARLES and MARY enter.*

**MARY.** How much longer are we expected to wait for him? I am freezing!

**CHARLES.** Oh, Mary.

*(LOUISA pulls HENRIETTA up onto the top of The Cobb.*

**LOUISA.** Anne! Will you not join us?

*(ANNE does so gladly.)*

Is it not beautiful?

**HENRIETTA.** Oh! Oh, Louisa! Oh! Oh! You nearly went over!

**LOUISA.** Oh, nothing can happen to me! I am as safe as a bird. My wings shall sustain me.

*(SHE extends her arms, her shawl now wing-like, SHE 'soars' offstage as MR. ELLIOT enters, immediately noticing ANNE, now alone atop The Cobb)*

**MARY.** *(of MR. ELLIOT)* Charles! There's that gentleman again! From before!

*(MR. ELLIOT moves to exit, as ANNE descends. FREDERICK enters with CAPTAIN BENWICK, pale and tragic)*

**MR. ELLIOT.** *(to ANNE)* A moment, Miss. These steps can be very treacherous. If you will allow me the liberty.

*(SHE takes MR. ELLIOT'S hand and HE helps HER down the steps. Such marked attention cannot go unnoticed)*

**ANNE.** Thank you, sir.

**MR. ELLIOT.** My pleasure. Good day.

*(HE ascends the steps but stops to look back with undisguised interest.)*

**ADMIRAL.** Ah! Captain Benwick!

**MRS. CROFT.** How good to see you again, James!

**BENWICK.** Always a great pleasure Admiral. Mrs. Croft.

*(a beat)*

I trust you are both well?

**ADMIRAL.** Quite well.

**BENWICK.** As it should be. Yes, just as it should be.

*(ALL look to FREDERICK for introductions, but HE is still observing MR. ELLIOT'S attentions to ANNE. ANNE looks back at MR. ELLIOT again. HE tips HIS hat and exits.)*

**MRS. CROFT.** Frederick?

**FREDERICK.** Ah! Yes. James Benwick, allow me to introduce our friends from Uppercross. Charles and his wife Mary Musgrove. Their sister, Henrietta Musgrove. And Mary's sister, Miss Elliot of Kellynch.

**BENWICK.** A pleasure indeed! Welcome to Lyme!

*(LOUISA enters atop The Cobb. SHE stops and for once holds perfectly still, perfectly enraptured by the scene. SHE holds out her arms again, wing-like. BENWICK is struck, not necessarily by HER but by the perfect poetry of the moment.)*

**LOUISA.** Can you just imagine flying out among the waves. What a thing it would be...

**BENWICK.** Then let winged fancy wander  
Though the thought still spread beyond her.  
Open wide the mind's cage door.  
She'll dart forth and cloud-ward soar.

**LOUISA.** Captain! You've returned and in good company.

**FREDERICK.** The best! Miss Musgrove, won't you come and meet my very good friend.  
Captain James Benwick.

**LOUISA.** But you must catch me Captain Wentworth! For the wind has transformed me as you can see.

*(HE holds out his hands to encourage LOUISA to jump)*

**HENRIETTA.** Oh, do be careful!

*(SHE jumps. HE catches her. Such marked attention cannot go unnoticed.)*

**ADMIRAL.** But where are Captain and Mrs. Harville?

*(MRS. CROFT, the actress, nudges The ADMIRAL)*

**BENWICK.** *(the actor, covering)* Er, Harville was not equal to an excursion today I fear.

**MRS. CROFT.** *(assisting)* But he will surely recover in time to join us at the Inn this evening?

**BENWICK.** Oh have little doubt of that. There never was such a nurse as Mrs. Harville. She glories in it. And speaking of glories...

*(HE gestures towards the wild expanse of waters)*

“By the deep sea and music in it’s roar--

**ANNE.** --I love not man the less, but nature more.”

**BENWICK.** You know Byron Miss Elliot! Have you read *The Bride of Abydos*?

*(THEY begin walking offstage. LOUISA and FREDERICK watch)*

**ANNE.** I have.

**BENWICK.** And *The Giaour*?

**ANNE.** Is that how it is pronounced? I could never be quite certain.

*(She attempts it)*

Giaour?

**BENWICK.** No, Giaour. As in--

Tis he! Well met in any hour

Lost Leila’s love, accursed Giaour!

*(THEY are off, and then followed by THE CROFTS, and LOUISA on the arm of FREDERICK.)*

**MARY.** Well, I would rather return to the Inn--

**ROBERTS.** *(offstage)* Return to The Inn at Lyme!

*(MARY begins the transition obstinately, assisted by MR. COOK who has just entered with the window unit )*

**MARY.** Who’ll come with me? Henrietta? Louisa? Charles?

**CHARLES.** Be reasonable Mary! None of us came twenty miles to sit looking out a window.

*(ALL exit and MARY is forced to abandon the transition and follows them off, but MR. COOK completes the change in crisp naval fashion and in good time we are in.....)*

**SCENE SEVEN:** *Some hours later at The Inn at Lyme, a public room, two chairs and a small table near a salt-stained, multi-paned window unit, from which swings an unlit lantern.*

**AT RISE:** *MR. ELLIOT enters from within the Inn, carrying a newspaper and sitting down in one of the chairs only moments after it is placed by MR. COOK.*

**MR. COOK.** Mister Elliot, sir. Your carriage is ready.

**MR. ELLIOT.** Fine. Oh, I say--

**MR. COOK.** The name is Cook, sir.

**MR. ELLIOT.** Cook. I wonder do you happen to know the name of the lady occupying the suites opposite mine?

**MR COOK.** Do you mean Miss Elliot?

**MR. ELLIOT.** Elliot you say! And do you know where she is from?

**MR COOK.** Kellynch, I believe. Near Monkton.

**MR. ELLIOT.** Really! Are you certain? It is very important. You are quite sure it was Kellynch?

**MR. COOK.** I can show you the register if you like.

**MR. ELLIOT.** Oh, good God, no.

*(MARY enters and MR. ELLIOT hides behind his paper once more. MARY moves in for a closer look.)*

**MR. COOK.** May I help you, ma'am?

**MARY.** Oh! Yes.--Tea, if you please.

*(HE bows and exits. MARY continues to observe MR. ELLIOT as LOUISA and HENRIETTA enter*

**LOUISA.** Oh Louisa ! I am absolutely smitten with the Lyme! Everyone so amiable! Even poor Captain Benwick, who has every reason to be otherwise.

**HENRIETTA.** While he spoke with Anne perhaps. He hardly said two words to me.

**MARY.** Oh! Louisa! Henrietta! Join me for tea!

**LOUISA.** Oh. Well, it's only that we rather hoped to rest and to change before dinner.

**HENRIETTA.** But Miss Elliot and The Crofts are just outside. They'll sit with you. Surely.



*(LOUISA and HENRIETTA exit. MR. ELLIOT rises still reading. ANNE and MRS. CROFT, & THE ADMIRAL enter, laughing. MR ELLIOT. ensures a mild collision with ANNE. )*

**MR. ELLIOT.** Oh! Oh, I do beg your pardon.

**ANNE.** I am as much to blame sir, but there is no harm done.

**MR. ELLIOT.** I am relieved to hear it. Good day then.

*(HE tips his hat and exits. ALL watch him go with interest. MR COOK enters. MARY pounces.)*

**MARY.** Pardon me, but do you know the name of that gentleman who has just left?

**MR COOK.** That's Mr. Elliot, mum.

*(to THE CROFTS)*

Tea ma'am?

**MRS. CROFT.** Thank you Mister Cook.

**MARY.** --But did he happen to mention whether he is connected with The Elliots of Kellynch?

**MR. COOK.** No, but I did hear his manservant say he was in line to be a Baronet. Several times.

*(HE exits.)*

**MARY.** Bless me! But it must be our cousin! And in the very same inn as us! I must write to Lady Russell at once.

*(MARY exits, ANNE of EIGHTEEN emerges)*

**ADMIRAL.** This Mister Elliot is a relation?

**ANNE.** Distantly. He is to inherit Kellynch eventually, but he and father have not been on good terms for many years.

**MRS. CROFT.** Well, he was certainly very agreeable and attentive to you. Whomever he is. Talking of agreeable and attentive gentlemen, the Admiral and I are very anxious for your opinion concerning our poor Captain Benwick.

**ANNE.** Captain Benwick did love Miss Harville deeply from what I can gather and I think, with time and a perhaps a little less poetry--

**MRS. CROFT.** Oh indeed! A good dose of prose might be in order.

**ANNE.** He was not opposed to the idea.

**MRS. CROFT.** And any hope of future happiness? Admitting time of course.

**ANNE.** I--

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** And Anne Elliot? What of her hope of happiness?

**MRS. CROFT.** Yes?

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** –I cannot think his hope need be lost forever.

**MRS. CROFT.** Oh, certainly not! He is far too agreeable to be lost forever.

**ADMIRAL.** Although bit too “pianissimo” perhaps.

**MRS. CROFT.** Meaning only Frederick’s manners and interests are more to our taste, although that is very likely only our own partiality for him.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** Well, I cannot argue there!

**ANNE.** (*an amused beat*) Very likely, I am sure.

(*MR. COOK enters*)

**MRS. CROFT.** Ah! Is that the tea ready Mister Cook?

**MR. COOK.** At your service ma’am.

**MRS. CROFT.** You’ll join us I hope?

**ANNE.** I’d be delighted Mrs. Croft.

**MRS. CROFT.** Excellent. Only do call me Sophy...

(*SHE takes ANNE’s arm confidentially and THEY move off together*)

Now, you and Benwick were a long time walking together. Did you find much to talk about?

(*Lights transition to...*)

**SCENE EIGHT:** The same. Late that evening.

*AT RISE: MR. COOK enters to light the lamps as offstage ALL WHO CAN sing “So We’ll Go No More A-Roving”. MR. COOK, whether HE can or no joins in. ALL enter at the song’s conclusion, quiet in their collective sense that their time together is fast drawing to an end. Even MARY.*

**BENWICK.** Well my friends, it was a happy conspiracy, coming here expressly to bear me up. For which I think I owe a debt of gratitude to Mrs. Harville?

**MRS. HARVILLE.** Oh no! The scheme was Miss Musgrove’s entirely. The credit must belong to her alone, though I am glad enough someone had the good sense to think of it.

**LOUISA.** I cannot admit to good sense but of determination I may easily be convicted.

**MRS. HARVILLE.** A strong, unwavering mind needs no apology here Miss Musgrove  
(*with a pointed look to FREDERICK*)

Is that not so, Captain Wentworth?

**FREDERICK.** Hm? Oh, yes. Of course.

**BENWICK.** My heartfelt thanks Miss Louisa. To you and to this good company. For coming such a distance. For the warmth of your affection and conversation.

(*to ANNE*)

For the recommendations in prose. It was a herculean effort, considering my wintery disposition.

**LOUISA.** But what is winter but the hope for the spring?

**BENWICK.** Truly.

They say that Hope is happiness--  
But genuine Love must prize the past  
And mem'ry wakes the thoughts that bless  
They rose the first--they set the last  
  
And all that mem'ry loves the most  
Was once our only hope to be:  
And all that hope adored and lost  
Hath melted into memory.

(*a beat which seems to conclude, but does not.* )

Alas! It is delusion all--  
The future cheats us from afar  
Nor can we be what we recall  
Nor dare we think on what we are.

**CHARLES.** Now see here Benwick! I know little of all that but the fact remains that Uppercross is but twenty easy miles from Lyme. You must come now to us. It's only fair after all!

**LOUISA.** What a very great thought, Charles!

**CHARLES.** And we have some capital shooting if you're a sporting man. And if you are not....well...there's.... Now, I suppose you might—

**MRS. CROFT.** (*of Louisa and Henrietta*) I think he means to say that Uppercross may also boast of some very pretty views

**ADMIRAL.** And you are welcome at Kellynch, for as long as we are there of course.

**BENWICK.** Thank you. Such good company. I am sure that Fanny would have considered you as I do--as amongst the very best of our acquaintance.

*(A ship's bell sounds in the distance, marking the first watch: eight bells in a quick One-two, one-two, one-two, one-two pattern)*

The chance of an hour may command us to part...

**LOUISA.** Farewell?! But no! No, we still have the morning before we must part. Why, we might breakfast on the Cobb together. One last hurrah! What say you, Captain Wentworth?

**FREDERICK.** Oh! No, I have no objection, but I ought not speak for all.

*(No one really wishes it but no one dares oppose it)*

Then, I suppose I ought to see about the arrangements.

*(BENWICK exits with FREDERICK as to THE MUSGROVES bid goodnight to THE CROFTS. THE HARVILLE's approach ANNE, who is standing apart)*

**MRS. HARVILLE.** Miss Elliot. You have done a good deed in making poor Benwick talk so much. I wish he could have such company oftener.

**HARVILLE.** It is bad for him, I know, to be shut up as he is, but what more can we do for him?

**ANNE.** Nothing more I am sure. But he may be yet called a new mourner, I think.

**HARVILLE.** True enough. It was only last June we lost Fanny.

**ANNE.** And the news not known to Captain Benwick for some time after, I understand?

**HARVILLE.** Not till the first week in August, no.

**ANNE.** Was it you who told him?

**HARVILLE.** No indeed! I'd rather have been run up the yard-arm. No, none but Frederick would do it.

**MRS. HARVILLE.** Traveled day and night to Benwick at Portsmouth and never left the poor Benwick's side for a week.

**HARVILLE.** Saved his life. That's what he did Miss Elliot. Pure and simple.

**MRS. HARVILLE** You may think Miss Elliot how dear Frederick was to us after that!

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** How dear he *is*.

*(FREDERICK returns, joins MRS. CROFT and ADMIRAL. THEY approach and so the subject must be changed)*

**ANNE.** Will I see you both tomorrow for our picnic on the Cobb? Weather permitting.

**MRS. HARVILLE.** I think Captain Harville will have had quite enough walking by the time we reach home tonight. In any weather.

**ANNE.** Then I fear I must say my farewells to you now.

**HARVILLE.** Rather adieu than farewell! For as we now know it is but twenty easy miles to Uppercross.

**ANNE.** But many more to Bath, which is where I shall be. Regrettably.

**MRS. HARVILLE.** That is very regrettable indeed.

**MRS. CROFT.** Is the day set then for you to rejoin your family?

**ANNE.** As soon as I return.

**MRS. CROFT.** Oh. Well. I am very sorry to hear it.

**ANNE.** As am I. This good company--this circle of new friends--

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** --Which might have been yours.

*(In grave danger of emoting beyond her ability to control, ANNE says no more.)*

**MRS. CROFT.** Oh my dear girl, qherever you are, you may be certain your friends go with you.

**ANNE OF EIGHTEEN.** And this might have been your sister.

*(This thought breaks the last of ANNE'S reserve and SHE is eager to go at the very moment when FREDERICK realizes he is most eager for HER to stay)*

**ANNE.** That is a hope then, and cause for real happiness. Despite what Byron might say of the matter. Good night. And adieu.

*(SHE exits followed by ANNE OF EIGHTEEN and the full weight of the loss Lands as MR. COOK enters to douse the lantern)*

**ADMIRAL.** Ah! Mr. Cook! Just the man.

*(To ALL present)*

A nightcap?

**HARVILLE.** One perhaps. Medicinally.

**FREDERICK.** Aye.

*(of HIS throat)*

I do feel a tickle.

*(ALL chortle appreciatively. ADMIRAL signals COOK for a full round)*

**ADMIRAL.** Rain's coming eh Harville? perhaps that will put a damper on the picnic plans?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Noah's flood could could not deter it.

**MRS. CROFT.** A confident young lady, Miss Louisa.

**ADMIRAL.** Rather like a very pretty buoy!

**MRS. CROFT.** Admiral.

**FREDERICK.** She does seem--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Demanding, insistent, exhausting--

**FREDERICK.** --resolved.

**MRS. HARVILLE.** An fine quality in a wife.

**FREDERICK/ FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Wife!

**FREDERICK.** We are—Louisa and I are not engaged.

**ADMIRAL.** Aren't you? Well, spread a little canvas my boy. The sooner the better I say. Tie the knot well and it'll weather the storm. Of course, you had better be certain you love the girl.

**MRS. CROFT.** Frederick. You *do* love Louisa--

*MR. COOK returns with the drinks and hands them round.*

**ADMIRAL.** Ah! Mr. Cook! Just in time. Well, Frederick? I believe it falls to you.

**FREDERICK.** (*raising HIS glass*) The King.

**ALL.** (*likewise but somberly, for George is mad, and his heir is monstrous*) The King.

*(THEY drink)*

**FREDERICK.** (*raising HIS glass again, with newfound sincerity*) May our sweethearts become our wives and our wives remain our sweethearts.

**MRS. HARVILLE/MRS. CROFT.** Hear, hear.

*(THEY drink)*

**ADMIRAL.** (*looking at his empty glass*) Out! Out! Brief candle.

*(A beat)*

**MR. COOK.** Another, sir?

**ADMIRAL.** No. No thank you Cook. We're for the hammocks I think. And bear up Frederick. I have a feeling it may rain very hard after all.

**MRS. CROFT.** Good night Captain. Mrs. Harville. Frederick.

*(Farewells given, THE ADMIRAL exits with MRS. CROFT and HARVILLE with MRS. HARVILLE.)*

**MR. COOK.** Anything else for you Captain?

**FREDERICK.** One more if you please.

*(MR. COOK exits. FREDERICK broods. FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE fidgets.)*

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Anne looked lovely. Out there on the Cobb today.  
Didn't you think?

**FREDERICK.** I wasn't the only one who thought it.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Mr. Elliot. Well, it is perfectly natural to admire an attractive woman.

**FREDERICK.** An attractive woman who deserted and disappointed you?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Well...perhaps she has changed.

**FREDERICK.** Perhaps you have.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Anne Wentworth. Mrs. Anne Wentworth. Captain and Mrs. Wentworth. Lord and Lady Wentworth! Oh now that's got rather a nice ring to it.

**FREDERICK.** Please!

*( drops his head into his hands)*

Dear God! What am I to do about Louisa!

*(turns suddenly on FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE)*

What! Nothing to say?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** You were praying. It seemed rude to interrupt.

**FREDERICK.** Perhaps I ought to pray more often if it will silence you.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** If you want silence--

**FREDERICK.** --I know--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** --then marry Anne. It's her you love.

**FREDERICK.** I know!

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Well, you certainly haven't been acting like it!

**FREDERICK.** *You* haven't been acting like it!

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** What is the difference?

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Ten years!

*(a beat)*

Precisely!

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** So what are you waiting for?

**FREDERICK.** Not two weeks ago it was “Louisa or Henrietta. Louisa or Henrietta.” And now I hardly know how it has happened but every person whose good opinion I desire to retain expects me to marry Louisa! Good heavens, I suppose even Anne must.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** It was a harmless flirtation.

**FREDERICK.** Was it? I rather think it has done a great deal of harm.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** But what of love? What of your own happiness?

**FREDERICK.** Come Frederick, is that really all you can think of?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Absolutely! And why the devil not?

*(MR. COOK enters with the drink.)*

**FREDERICK.** Do you know, I am beginning to think you are the Devil!

**MR. COOK.** *(stiffly)* The name is Cook, sir.

**FREDERICK.** What? Oh! Yes...yes, of course. I beg your pardon. I have kept you very late.

**MR COOK.** I beg your pardon sir, but it is not late. It is quite early. Tomorrow as a matter of fact.

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Tomorrow!

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** That’s it! Frederick you must go to visit Edward in Shropshire tomorrow! Distance yourself honorably from Louisa and The Musgroves. Write to Edward! Tonight!

**FREDERICK.** *(to Mr. Cook)* Would you have pen and paper?

*(MR. COOK exits.)*

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** But what about Anne?

**FREDERICK.** She goes to Bath, yes? I will spend a month in Shropshire and at the end of it, I will go and seek her out in Bath. I must hang all my hopes on Bath.

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** One month?

**FREDERICK.** Can I do any less?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** Easily!

**FREDERICK.** Honorably?

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** But an entire month!

**FREDERICK.** I have waited this long--

**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** --But will she? Keep in mind--

**FREDERICK/FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE.** *(a la Seinfeld’s “Newman!”)* Elliot!



**FREDERICK OF TWENTY-FIVE** . --already on his way to Bath--

**FREDERICK**. --And unless it rains very hard, another day must be wasted on the Cobb!

**ROBERTS**. (*offstage*) The Cobb at Lyme!

(*A grudging and sleepy CHARLES, MARY, and HENRIETTA enter to remove the INN. MR. COOK enters with pen and paper.*)

**MR. COOK**. Here you are sir. The items you requested.

(*A heavy rain breaks.*)

**FREDERICK**. Thank you God!

**MR. COOK**. The name, sir, is Cook!

(*MR. COOK exits with the table and chairs FREDERICK was about to utilize. Unfazed, FREDERICK stands and composes outward as the transition to The COBB continues with help now from BENWICK and ANNE*)

**FREDERICK**. Dear Edward. Haven taken the charms of Shropshire on credit far too long, I hope to trespass almost immediately upon your wife's hospitality and your goodwill. My plans for now are to stay a month, upon which time I will remove to Bath with hopes far different..far more tenuous nature.

(*This now meant for ANNE*)

Desirous of being soon with you at last. I remain yours. Frederick.

(*Lights transition and we are now in...*)

**SCENE NINE: The Cobb at Lyme.**

*AT RISE: Waves and Seagulls. LOUISA enters and joins those assembled as they now walk slowly towards the Cobb. FREDERICK falls in step beside ANNE. LOUISA breaks from the Group and runs up onto the Cobb.*

**FREDERICK**. Miss Elliot--

**HENRIETTA**. Oh Lisa! Please come down from there! The steps must be very wet still!

**MARY**. (*truly, this time*) Can we please go back now, Charles? I am not feeling very well at all.

**HENRIETTA**. Lisa! Please don't be foolish. It's starting to rain again.

**LOUISA**. Captain Wentworth!

(*SHE prepares to jump. FREDERICK starts toward her.*)

**FREDERICK.** Louisa! --

*(On his "Louisa! " Mary screams but it and all action is cut short as lights shift. ALL are frozen in their various reaction to seeing Louisa fall. LOUISA, or perhaps HER SOUL remains atop the wall, now serenely observing the scene below.)*

**LOUISA.** Then let winged fancy wander

Though the thought still spread beyond her--

*(Slowly, the tableaux reanimates beginning with MARY'S scream rising in volume and intensity. ALL reactions are followed through as though Louisa were Unconscious on the ground. HENRIETTA starts to faint into the arms of BENWICK and ANNE. LOUISA remains on the wall)*

**MARY.** She is dead! She is dead!

**FREDERICK.** Oh God! Oh God! Help me! Is there no one to help me! Anne-

**ANNE.** A surgeon! Captain Benwick! Go quickly! I can support Henrietta.

*(BENWICK exits as ANNE revives HENRIETTA.)*

**FREDERICK.** Anne! What is to be done next?

**ANNE.** She must be carried to the Inn. Can you manage it Captain? Charles.... Charles! Look to your wife!

**LOUISA.** Open wide the mind's cage door

She'll dart forth and cloudward soar....

*(ANNE helps HENRIETTA . As FREDERICK passes the wall where LOUISA still stands, SHE falls gently into HIS arms and is carried offstage. ALL follow. Waves and Seagulls and lights fading to darkness.)*

*INTERMISSION.*

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