

# Plays for Young Audiences

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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## *Main Street*

By  
**Barbara Field**

From the novel by  
**Sinclair Lewis**

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Time: 1910-1919

Place: Gopher Prairie, MN

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WOMEN:

Carol Milford Kennicott

Vida Sherwin

Maud Dyer (also plays Béa Swenson's cousin Tina)

Juanita Haydock (also plays Mrs. Dawson)

Béa Swenson

Mrs. Bogart (also plays Frau Kempen, Mrs. Stowbody)

MEN:

Dr. Will Kennicott

Ramie Wutherspoon (also plays Chet Dashaway)

Sam Clark

Dave Dyer

Jack Elder (also plays Erik's father)

Harry Haydock

Nels Bjornstam

Erik Valborg (also plays Cyrus Bogart, Franz Kempen)

NOTE: Blodgett College graduates played by available actors, 3 F, 2 M

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### Principle character descriptions:

Carol Kennicott: self-possessed, self-directed, forthright. Not particularly soft or alluring, but pretty and very bright. At start of play she's 20.

Doctor Will Kennicott, 30-ish, is educated, but eager to blend in and be "one of the boys". A sweet, stubborn nature. Women find him attractive.

Juanita Haydock is what we'd now call a "trophy wife". A score of years younger than her husband, smartly turned out, extroverted, fun-loving.

Harry Haydock owns the Bon Ton department store. Benevolent and conservative.

Vida Sherwin: the school teacher. A contradictory personality: warm and sincere, but also somewhat sphinctered and judgmental.

Raymond Wutherspoon works for Haydock in haberdashery. He is better read than the others, a straight-laced spinster of a man. He sings.

Dave Dyer is the local druggist. Amiable.

Maud Dyer, his wife, is a bit depressed, sexually discontent.

Sam Clark owns the hardware store. Will's closest friend, a really nice guy, but a bit of a lecher.

Béa Swenson, a beautiful young fresh-off-the-boat girl from Sweden. Natural, kind, she becomes Carol's best friend.

Nels Bjornstam: a strong, attractive Swede. Very well-read, very left-wing, verbal. He's Sinclair Lewis's Ideal Man.

Erik Valborg. Poetic, handsome kid from the farm who works as a tailor. A romantic, with ambitions.

Mrs. Bogart, the town gossip, in her 50's. Well-meaning but bitter.

Jack Elder, the meanest (and richest) of the businessmen.

Cyrus Bogart, the widow's son. A bully.

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

CAROL STANDS IN SILHOUETTE ON TOP OF A HILL  
OVERLOOKING ST. PAUL. SHE IS TWENTY.

CAROL

My name is Carol Milford and I'm going to change the world! I will be a liberator. An innovator. I'll make the world beautiful. I'll teach. Or run a library. Or I'll get my hands on a squalid little town and make it beautiful. With public gardens and a town square, like New England. Or maybe France.

SHE STARTS DOWN THE HILL.

I plan to do something magnificent with my life! Change the world!  
Oh, damn!—I'm going to be late for graduation!

SHE DESCENDS TO JOIN A GROUP OF GRADUATES  
IN CAPS AND GOWNS. THEY ALL SING:

GRADUATES

*Hail to Thee, oh Blodgett College,  
And your ivied Halls,  
Cradle of our new-found knowledge,  
We leave these hallowed walls.  
Arts and science, Christian morals,  
Memories that shine  
Hail to thee, oh Blodgett College,  
Academic shrine.*

THEY TOSS THEIR HATS IN THE AIR, CHEER,  
BREAK FORMATION AND SCATTER AS THEY START  
TO GO. VERY FAST:

LUCY

I'll be getting married in July...the fifteenth. To Calvin Bates.

MABEL

Isn't he kind of old for you?

LUCY

Want to be a bridesmaid?

MABEL

Sure.

PETER

I'm leaving for Africa in September.

CAROL

You're going to be a missionary? (HE NODS) Where?

PETER

Rhodesia, I think it's called.

CAROL

What denomination?

PETER

Lutheran.

CAROL

Be careful, and write us all about it.

ANNE

I can't marry Joe till next year. Mother says I've got to learn culinary arts first.

LUCY

I'm going to have a girl for all that.

ANNE

A girl?

LUCY

A maid. What about you, Carol?

CAROL

I'm going to school in Chicago this fall, library school.

TOM

No, stay here and marry me, Carol. I love you madly.

CAROL

You're sweet, but no thank you. Marriage isn't in my future.

TOM

You're breakin' my heart.

LUCY (WHISPERS TO ANNE)

She's so ambitious. Chicago!

ANNE

What does she think *is* her future?

CAROL

I'm planning to change the world....

THE SCENE DISSOLVES.

TEA DANCE AT THE PALMER HOUSE, CHICAGO: 1910

A BAND PLAYS SOMETHING FROM "THE MERRY WIDOW".  
A WALTZ. CAROL IS DANCING WITH DR. WILL KENNICOTT.

WILL

It's a small world, isn't it?

CAROL

Is it?

WILL

I mean, both of us coming from Minnesota, Miss Milford.

CAROL

That's true. I'm from the eastern part of the state, though. St. Paul.

WILL

The capitol. I went to school at the University.

CAROL SMILES POLITELY.

So, what brings you to Chicago, Miss Milford?

CAROL

I'm finishing up a course in Library Science. But I have a job waiting for me back in St. Paul.

WILL

I am a strong believer in education for women, Miss—

CAROL

You may call me Carol. And I'm ashamed to say I've forgotten your name.

WILL

Doctor Will Kennicott. I'm in Chicago for a meeting.

CAROL

That's nice.

THEY DANCE FOR A BEAT.

WILL

I'm a doctor.

CAROL

That's a fine profession, Doctor.

WILL

Don't you think the Palmer House is a swell hotel....?

CAROL

Swell. It reminds me of the grand hotels of Europe. Not that I've ever been to Europe.

THEY DANCE.

Where do you practice, Doctor Kennicott?

WILL

Oh, I live in a little town way west of the Twin Cities. You've never heard of it.  
Gopher Prairie.

CAROL

Gopher Prairie? Quaint.

WILL

For a big city girl like you. But it's a nice town. When you move up to St. Paul, I'll invite you for a visit.

THEY DANCE ON FOR A MOMENT.  
HE PULLS HER CLOSER.

CAROL

Dr. Kennicott? What on earth is a gopher?

LIGHTS BLACK OUT. ON THEM.

A WOMAN WHOM WE HAVEN'T MET OPENS A  
NEWSPAPER AND READS:

VIDA

*Gopher Prairie Weekly Dauntless* ITEM:

The Dauntless has learned that our own beloved Doctor Will Kennicott was married last week. The bride is Miss Carol Milford of St. Paul. The happy couple met in Chicago, where Miss Milford was studying Library Science. They were married by the Reverend Marcus Elliot of the Redeemer Methodist Church in Saint Paul, and have been honeymooning in the mountains of Colorado for the past two weeks. We look forward to welcoming Mrs. Will Kennicott to Gopher Prairie.

VIDA GIVES A BODY-SHAKING SIGH, WIPES A TEAR.  
AS WE HEAR CARUSO SING THE FINAL NOTES OF HIS  
TRAGIC ARIA FROM *I PAGLIACCI*, THE 1904 RECORDING.  
LIGHTS FADE OUT ON THE STRICKEN VIDA, AS THE  
PIERCING SOB OF CARUSO'S VOICE CROSS-FADES  
TO THE SOUND OF A RAILROAD WHISTLE.

## **GOPHER PRAIRIE**

LIGHTS UP. A RAILWAY STATION SIGN, "GOPHER  
PRAIRIE. SOUND OF A TRAIN COMING TO A HALT.  
WILL AND CAROL ENTER WITH LUGGAGE. THEY LOOK  
AROUND. [WINTER CLOTHING?]

WILL

Don't worry, the train's fifteen minutes early. They'll come. Relax. You're going to love this town, honey! Welcome to Gopher Prairie! Welcome home!

CAROL

SHE LOOKS AROUND.

"Home"...the word terrifies me. It's awfully flat, here, Will.

WILL

Just wait, we've done a lot with lawns and gardens; and it's...homey.

CAROL

After Colorado, it seems...flat.

WILL

All the big elms and maples. And the best people on earth. I bet Luke Dawson has more money than most of the swells on Summit Avenue; and Miss Sherwin in the high school is a regular wonder—reads Latin like I do English; and Sam Clark, the hardware man, he's a corker—not a better man in the state to go hunting with; and if you want more culture, there's Reverend Warren, the Congregational preacher, and Professor Mott, the superintendent of schools; and Ramie Wutherspoon, he's not such an awful boob when you get to know him, and he sings swell; and plenty of others, all ready for you to come boss us around—

THE TRAIN WHISTLE SOUNDS, FARTHER AWAY.

CAROL

Boss you—?

AN AUTO HORN HONKS.

WILL

(SPOTS SOMEONE, WAVES) There's Sam. Sam Clark—and Harry Haydock—this *is* a welcoming committee!

SAM AND HARRY RUSH IN.

SAM

I brought my new motor to take you home!

WILL

Showin' off again? (TO CAROL) He's got a brand new Paige—it's as big as a boat. Sam, this is Carol. And Harry Haydock, he owns the Bon Ton—

SAM

Not so fast—or she won't get us straight—

WILL

'Course she will. My little bride's smart as a whip!

HARRY

Pretty *and* smart? How you gonna keep her in line, Will?

CAROL

Matter of fact, I haven't got anyone straight, Mr. Clark.

HARRY

I'm Haydock. Give her a chance, Doc, she's barely landed.

SAM

Take a deep breath, young lady. The air's pure, here, not like Chicago. I'm Sam Clark, dealer in hardware, sporting goods, cream separation, and almost any kind of junk you can think of. Call me Sam, and I'm gonna call you a fool, seein' you've married this poor bum of a medic.

WILL

Now hold on—

SAM

He can't take a joke! The missus and me, we're throwing a little party for you tonight. Meet the folks.

CAROL

That's so kind—*tonight*?

SAM

Seven-thirty.

HARRY

So why are we still standing here, gabbing? Climb in the motor. We'll take you home, Mrs. Kennicott.

THEY ESCORT WILL AND THE BEWILDERED CAROL OFF, LUGGAGE AND ALL. BUT NOT BEFORE SHE NOTICES A SWEET-FACED GIRL, BÉA SWENSON, FRESH OFF THE BOAT FROM MALMO. THE TWO WOMEN SMILE IN PASSING UNTIL BÉA'S SISTER TINA RUSHES IN.

TINA

Béa, Béa, Jag är här—

BÉA

Jag trodde inte att du skulle komma—

TINA

På Engelska. Du måste lära –you must learn English.

BÉA

English. I like... here. I get yob.

TINA

Ya, we get you job. Come now...

THEY PICK UP HER BUNDLE AND EXIT.  
THE TRAIN WHISTLE BLOWS AND THE TRAIN  
PULLS OUT AS THE LIGHTS DIM.

WILL AND CAROL STAND WITH THEIR LUGGAGE  
IN FRONT OF KENNICOTT'S HOUSE.  
SAM AND HARRY WATCH FROM A DISTANCE.

CAROL

Why are they watching us?

HARRY

(TO SAM) So, let's get going.

SAM

Hold your horses, Harry, we've gotta see him carry her over the threshold.

WILL

Those two jokers! They want to see me lift you up and haul you inside like a cave man.  
Ready?

BUT HE'S NOT QUITE READY.

Carol, I hope the house doesn't disappoint you. I was born upstairs.  
It's got all my folks' old furniture. Kind of shabby—

CAROL

I'll like it.

WILL

We'll build a new house, soon as I get the scratch.

CAROL

I'll love it.

WILL

Well...Ally-oop!

AS HE LIFTS HER, SAM AND HARRY CHEER  
IN THE DISTANCE.  
LIGHTS BLACK OUT.

**AT THE CLARKS'**

IN THE DARK WE HEAR THEM APPROACH THE CLARKS'.

CAROL

Do we have to go? Meeting all those people, all at once, I just can't, Will...it's too soon, and I'm scared.

WILL

You have to face it, sooner or later. Carol, honey, they're all gonna love you! The Clarks invited everyone specially.

CAROL

That's very nice, he's a kind man, but—

WILL

Look, we're here, calm down, honey....  
SOUND OF A DOORBELL.

LIGHTS UP ON A CIRCLE OF CHAIRS, THE WOMEN SIT  
SEPARATED FROM THE MEN, THEIR CHATTERING TURNS TO  
SILENCE, AS SAM PULLS CAROL FORWARD.

SAM

Welcome, little lady, the keys of the city are yours!

CAROL (WHISPERS TO SAM CLARK)

Mister Clark, they look like they'll swallow me in one mouthful!

SAM

Call me Sam—call me anything—just don't call me late to supper!

HE GUFFAWS, SHE SMILES, WEAKLY.

You just cuddle under Sam's wing, and if anyone scares you, I'll shoo 'em off!

HE LEADS HER INTO THE CIRCLE.

Ladies and worse halves...the Bride! Mrs. Carol Kennicott!

POLITE APPLAUSE.

HARRY HAYDOCK

We've already met. Welcome to Gopher Prairie, again, Mrs. K.

DAVE

Dave Dyer. How was the honeymoon?

CAROL

I loved Colorado—the mountains!

SAM

She's a big city girl. Grew up in St. Paul. Lived in Chicago.

DAVE

Chicago! (HE WHISTLES)

WILL

But don't worry. Boys, we'll turn her into hunter and fisherman! (TO CAROL)  
Come on, I'll introduce you to them, one at a time. Harry's dad owns the Bon Ton  
Department Store, but Harry runs it, now. And Dave Dyer, the druggist—he's a pretty  
good shot at duck hunting.

DAVE WAVES.

And this geezer's Jack Elder. He owns the Minniemashie Hotel, and the lumber mill  
factory, and quite a share of the Farmers' National Bank—

DAVE

He owns us all—

WILL

And this old fellow's Chet Dashaway. Furniture and undertaking.

CAROL

Builds the coffins, and then—clever. Does he do the actual embalming? With his own  
hands?

DASHAWAY

With my bare hands. I have a funeral license.

WILL

Come on, Carrie, you'd be proud to shake hands with a surgeon who puts his hands  
inside you while you're still alive.

CAROL

You're right, of course. (SHE SHAKES DASHAWAY'S HAND.)

WILL

Ramie Wutherspoon's hanging out in the kitchen, and Luke Dawson and—did you know that Percy Bresnahan comes from here?

CAROL

Who?

HARRY

Percy Bresnahan! Born and raised here.

SAM

You know—president of the Velvet Motor Company of Boston, Mass. Maker of the Velvet Twelve—biggest automobile factory in New England?

CAROL

Well, I—

DAVE

Sure you have. He's a millionaire several times over. But old Percy comes back here every summer for the black bass fishing; and he says he'd rather live here than Boston or New York or anywhere else...if he could.

WILL LEADS HER TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THE CIRCLE.

WILL

And now the ladies: meet Maud Dyer, Dave's better half.

MAUD

I hope you like small towns. I mean, coming from the Big City...

CAROL

I don't really know yet....

MAUD

Well, I guess you're going to find out. You haven't much choice, do you?

CAROL

I'm sure I'm going to love it.

WILL

And Juanita Haydock, Harry's wife.

JUANITA

Welcome, Carol. May I call you Carol?

CAROL

Oh, please, everyone—call me Carol—

JUANITA

Adore your hat. Chicago?

CAROL

No, Minneapolis. Dayton's.

MAUD

It's *different*, I guess.

JUANITA

Trés chic! You'll love our parties, Carol. We go sledding in the winter, and there's the lake in the summer and....

CAROL

It sounds like fun.

JUANITA

And we have a fine class of people in town. Friendly and open-hearted—

MAUD

Except for the farmers. Swedes. They don't want to pay school taxes, and they hardly spend a cent in town.

JUANITA

But mostly a fine class of people. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here?

CAROL

Yes, I heard that.

MAUD

And come meet our educator, Vida Sherwin.

VIDA

Welcome, Mrs. Kennicott—

CAROL

Carol. I'm so eager to talk with you, Mrs. Sherwin—

VIDA

Miss.

CAROL

I'd like to learn more about the schools.

VIDA

I suspect we'll have a lot to talk about, Mrs. Kennicott—

CAROL

Have you had a chance to explore any new educational theories—?

MAUD

Oh, those? Most of those would-be reformers are notoriety-seekers. They probably advocate knitting and ear-wiggling.

CAROL SMILES.

VIDA

Never mind her, Mrs. Kennicott, you and I will have a good discussion about schools and...well, everything.

CAROL

Once I've unpacked.

JUANITA HEADS TOWARD CAROL WITH A PLATE  
BRIMMING WITH ANGEL FOOD CAKE, HANDS IT TO HER.

JUANITA

Ethel Clark's started serving dessert. Her angel food cake's the best—

MAUD

So she thinks.

JUANITA

Do you play bridge, Carol? We have a bridge party once a month, with supper—

CAROL

No, I don't...

JUANITA

Really? You're from St. Paul?

CAROL

I was kind of a book worm.

JUANITA

We'll teach you. Bridge is half the fun of life! And we'll shop!

CAROL

Shop? That sounds nice.

MAUD

We have two groups you'll want to join. The Jolly Seventeen—

VIDA

That's just for amusement. The other one might appeal to you more, the Thanatopsis Society

CAROL

Thanatopsis...? Sounds like it's about death.

MAUD

(VAGUELY) It's just a name. Greek.

CAROL

I'm sure I'll love it.

SHE OBLIGES THEM BY TAKING A FORKFUL OF CAKE. THEY WATCH. SHE NODS. SWALLOWS. SHE HEARS SOME CONVERSATION FROM THE MEN, WHICH INTERESTS HER MORE, AND SHE LEAVES THE LADIES.

WILL

No, I guess I was honeymooning during that business. Then what happened?

DAVE

The next thing I hear, they're having a meeting.

WILL

Who?

DAVE

Those farmers.

WILL  
Where?

DAVE  
At the Lutheran Church. That damned Pastor Lundquist invites them into *his* church—

JACK ELDER  
I bet he had to sweep the hay out of the vestry after they left. Union filth!

CAROL  
Has there been much labor activity around here?

DAVE  
No, thank God. But it's coming. Trouble enough with the farm hands—

JACK  
They come over here and turn Socialist or Populist in a minute. 'Course, if they have a loan at my bank, I'm able to make 'em listen to reason.  
HE GRINS.  
Get it?

CAROL  
Well....

SAM  
Carol, I don't mind them being Democrats, but *Socialists*—

CAROL  
So I guess you don't approve of union labor?  
DEAD SILENCE FOR A MOMENT. THEY STARE.  
How do you feel about farm co-operatives?  
WILL SIGNALS TO CAROL TO SHUT UP.

JACK  
Come down off your cloud, Mrs. K. All this welfare work and insurance and old-age pension talk is poppycock! These half-baked thinkers and suffragettes and buttinskis, trying to tell a man how to run his own business—

DAVE  
College professors, too, attacking American industry to the last ditch. Yes, Sir!! They ought to hang those agitators, right, Doc?

WILL  
Well...sure.

CAROL  
Really, Will?

WILL  
Gee, Carrie, you know I'm not interested in that stuff.

HARRY  
Come on, boys, politics bore the ladies to death, right, Juanita?

JUANITA  
If you say so, dear.

HARRY  
Tell me, Carol, do you like our fair city? Best people on earth, here. Great hustlers, too.

CAROL  
Well, I—

HARRY  
Let me tell you, I've had plenty of chance to move to Minneapolis, but I like it here. Did you know that Percy Bresnahan came from here?

CAROL  
So I'm told.

SAM  
Come on, Dave; we need some entertainment, here! Tell us that story about the Norwegian catching the hen.

WILL  
Carrie, you'll love this!  
DAVE RISES, CLEARS HIS THROAT.

DAVE  
Well, Ole Olson had this farm and one fine day he comes across a hen...  
THE LIGHTS BLACK OUT.

IN DARKNESS, WILL AND CAROL WALK HOME.

WILL

Did you like them?

CAROL

They were terribly sweet to me. Mrs. Clark's angel food cake was splendid, if a little sweet.

WILL

There's a regular angel food competition among the ladies. (BEAT) Uh, Carrie, I ought to warn you—you ought to be more careful about shocking people. Talking about unions and education experiments—

CAROL

I was trying to join in, Will.

WILL

No, I didn't mean...look, you were the only up-and-coming person in the bunch.

CAROL

It's the twentieth century, and they're...I don't know... from another world.

WILL

Pretty conservative bunch, I guess, from your point of view.

I just meant...they were crazy about you! Know what Sam said? "That little lady of yours is the slickest thing that ever came to Gopher Prairie." And old Mrs. Dawson said, "Doc Kennicott, your little bride's gonna wake up this town!"

SHE KISSES HIM.

CAROL

Do you care if they think I'm flighty, Will?

WILL

I don't give a damn what they think.

CAROL

I'll try to be careful about my views. (BEAT) Does Dave Dyer always tell that story about the Norwegian catching the hen?

WILL

More times than I can count.

CAROL

And Ella Stowsbody?

WILL

She had professional training in dramatic art and oratory in Milwaukee—

CAROL

Impressive. I enjoyed her version of Mark Antony's funeral oration. She gave a particularly comic reading—

WILL

You hated every minute of this evening, didn't you?  
THEY KISS AGAIN, MORE ARDENTLY.

CAROL

Of course not. They were so sweet to me—what are you doing?!  
HE IS, IN FACT, REACHING INSIDE HER COAT,  
TO UNBUTTON HER BLOUSE.

WILL

What do you think I'm doing?

CAROL

In the middle of Main Street? What will Maud Dyer think?

WILL

They bored you.

CAROL

They frightened me...a little. No, I'm being silly. Let me get to know them.

WILL

I don't give a damn what anyone thinks of you, because I love you. Carol, you're my soul.

HE LIFTS HER UP AND CARRIES HER OFF. THE LIGHTS FADE OUT.

CAROL (READS ALOUD)

Gopher Prairie Weekly Dauntless: Item

The Sam Clarks held one of the most charming affairs of the season Tuesday, where many of our most prominent citizens gathered to greet the lovely new bride of our popular local physician, Dr. Will Kennicott. The charming Mrs. Kennicott, née Miss Carol Milford, is a lady of manifold graces and has for the past year been prominently employed with the Chicago Public Library, in which city Dr. Will had the good fortune meet her, We welcome her into our midst, witC prophesies for her many happy years in our city....

## CAROL TAKES A WALK ON MAIN STREET

CAROL

The view out my bedroom window is...hideous. I dreamed of hollyhocks and privet fences and all I see is The Seventh Day Adventist Church...painted the color of sour liver, with an ash-pile in back. (BEAT) Maybe I'm insane. I've got to go out and see the town: my first view of the empire I'm to conquer...

SHE STARTS TO TRAVEL.

OCCASIONAL PASSERS-BY WILL APPEAR IN THE DISTANCE

The Minniemashie Hotel, Jackson Elder, proprietor. Fly-speckled windows and a dingy dining room. Brass cuspidors in the lobby. Dyer's Drug Store...fake stones on the outside, a greasy marble soda fountain, heaps of pawed-over tooth brushes and teething rings, racks of garden seeds, patent medicines in yellow packages for Consumption or "women's diseases". My husband sends patients here for medicine.

And upstairs..."W. P. Kennicott, Phys. & Surgeon." I won't visit him...yet.

And here's the Rosebud Movie Palace, announcing a film, "Fatty in Love", starring Fatty Arbuckle.

Howland & Gould's Grocery...charming. Black bananas and—look—a cat is sleeping on top of the lettuce.

On the second floor, the lodges. Knights of Pythias, the Woodmen, the Masons...

Dahl and Oleson's Meat Market—reeks of blood. No *turnedos de boeuf* here, no *foie gras*. No sign of life on Main Street—

SHE TURNS, BUMPS INTO BÉA SWENSON. THEY ARE BOTH STARTLED.

Oh! I'm sorry—

BÉA

Pardon—

CAROL

You were on the train coming to town—

BÉA SHAKES HER HEAD.

Train. (SHE POINTS) Train...choo, choo...? (BÉA LAUGHS.)

BÉA

Oh, ja, ja. And you...Missus. doctor...?

CAROL

Kennicott. Yes, ja!

THEY ARE BOTH DELIGHTED WITH EACH OTHER.

BÉA  
Beatrix Swenson. Me. Béa.

CAROL  
Béa.

BÉA  
You have yob for me? I...want...yob.

CAROL  
Yob?

BÉA  
Ja, yob. Yob.

CAROL  
Ah...job. Yob! Yes, I give you yob. I want you!  
AND FOR A MOMENT, THEY ARE BOTH OVERCOME  
WITH JOY. THEY CLUTCH EACH OTHER, LAUGHING, JUMP  
UP AND DOWN LIKE CHILDREN,

CAROL AND BÉA  
Yob! Yob! Yob! Yob!  
THEN THEY PULL APART, SERIOUSLY.

BÉA  
Morgen? Yob?

CAROL  
Tomorrow? I live over there, around the corner.

BÉA  
Doctor house.

CAROL  
Ja.

BÉA  
I strong. I verk. *I morgen*. Tack, tack, så mycket.... Missus.  
SHE LEAVES.

CAROL  
Yob. She's as lonely as I am. Well...onward.

THE SMOKE HOUSE. A FEW YOUNG MEN LOITERING INSIDE. PLENTY OF RACY MAGAZINES ON THE RACKS. SAM CLARK APPEARS, WAVES AT HER.

CAROL

Sam. Jolly fellow. Ah, and now we've arrived at the Bon Ton. That's Harry Haydock's emporium. One window, men's suits, the other, fabrics, and...Harry, you are a saint among men, your windows are clean! First prize!

Sam Clark's Hardware...guns and butter churns and barrels of nails and shiny butcher's knives. Maybe I'll buy one and plunge it into...who?...what? My expectations?

Carol, you're losing it.

Billy's Lunch. (SNIFFS.) Sour milk.

The Ford Garage on one side of the street, the Buick Garage on the other...

And not a tree or shrub in sight. Bare ugliness.

Now, Carol, turn around and do full justice to the other side of the street.

SHE DOES SO.

The Feed Store.

Oh, look! Ye Arte Shoppe, proprietor Mrs. Mary Ellen Wilks; Christian Science Library open daily. Free.

A barbershop with poolroom. The barber's shaving a man with a big Adam's apple.

How does he manage not to cut him?

CYRUS BOGART APPROACHES HER.

Down that side street a red brick Catholic church, a post office, Nat Hicks's tailor shop, and—look! The Farmers' National Bank! Jack Elder's palace....not bad, Jack—you've got the handsomest building in town: an Ionic temple of marble.

CYRUS BOGART

Hey, sugar, got a match?

CAROL

No. I don't smoke.

HE MOVES IN ON HER.

CYRUS

You're kinda sweet. What's your name?

CAROL

Carol.

CYRUS

Come closer, sugar. Give me a kiss.

CAROL

Carol Kennicott.

HE TAKES A STEP BACK.

CYRUS

The Doc's wife? Oh, yeah, we're neighbors. Still...

A MAN IN A DOG-SKIN COAT COMES OUT FROM  
BEHIND A WALL. HE SMOKES A LARGE PIPE.

BJORNSTAM

Why don't you go take a walk, Cyrus Bogart?

CYRUS

That's what I was doing, you square-head.  
CYRUS BACKS OFF, LEAVES.

BJORNSTAM

How do, Mrs. Kennicott.

CAROL

That boy startled me! Wait, do I know you?

BJORNSTAM

They call me the Red Swede.

CAROL

Of, course, I've heard about you—you're the handy man—

BJORNSTAM

Name's Bjornstam. Nels Bjornstam. Kind of thought I'd like to meet you.

CAROL

(NERVOUS) I've been exploring the town.

BJORNSTAM

Fine mess, yes? No sewage, no street cleaning. And the Lutheran minister and the Catholic priest are the total authorities on the arts and sciences.

CAROL

Are you joking?

BJORNSTAM

No joke. They want us to walk the path of righteousness. But not to worry: because the dollar sign is chasing the crucifix clean off the map. I shock you?

CAROL

I think you're trying to. You've got interesting ideas.

BJORNSTAM

We lowly folks down in Swede Hollow aren't as dumb as you folks think. Thank God we don't have to attend the Jolly Seventeen, and be bored out of our union suits! (BEAT) Oh-oh.

CAROL

(SMILES.) It's cold again today. Who *are* you?

BJORNSTAM

I'm the town pariah, Mrs. Kennicott. Town atheist, and I guess I'm the town anarchist too. But in this town, anyone who doesn't love the Grand Old Republican Party and the Banks is an anarchist. Now I've really shocked you.

CAROL

I fancy you read a lot, Mr. Bjornstam.

BJORNSTAD

Nels. In a hit-or-miss way.

CAROL

Why do you call yourself a pariah?

BJORNSTAD

I'm poor. Yet I don't envy the rich like I'm supposed to. I make enough money for a stake of land, then I sit around by myself and have a smoke and read history; and I don't contribute to the purse of Mr. Elder or Harry Haydock...

CAROL

You are a curious man, Mr. Bjornstam. Nels.

BJORNSTAM

Also known as 'that damn lazy big-mouthed calamity howler that ain't satisfied with the way we run things here.'

THEY GRIN TOGETHER, SHAKE HANDS. TWO DISTANT  
LADY SHOPPERS STARE AT THEM, WHISPER.

BJORNSTAM

Far as I can make out, Mrs. Kennicott, you and I are the only folks in town with brains—not bookkeepers' brains or duck-hunting brains, but...imagination.

CAROL

Is that just a guess?

BJORNSTAM

I have eyes. I have ears.

HE SEES THE LADIES, WAVES TO THEM IRONICALLY.

What d'you think them two turkeys are saying about me?

CAROL

That we're breaking the rules.

BJORNSTAM

Their rules.

CAROL

I should be getting home. My nose is cold. But my husband wants you to saw up four cords of maple for us. Can you?

BJORNSTAM

So I will.

CAROL

You've put me in a hopeful mood, Mister....Nels.

HE GOES.

You have a refreshing lack of sanctimony.

CAROL

SHE STARTS TOWARD HOME. TO HERSELF:

People do live here and...and...this town can't be as ugly as—as I *know* it is! I can't go through with it. I cannot live in this bleak, barren town. But...I've got to...I must go on!

AS SHE CROSSES, KENNICOTT CATCHES UP WITH HER.

WILL

Carol—wait up. You been taking the grand tour? How do you like the town? Lots of trees, right?

CAROL

(BEAT) Ito quote Maud Dyer, "It's...*different*."

THE LIGHTS FADE TO BLACK.

## VIDA SHERWIN'S FIRST VISIT

CAROL AND BÉA ARE DRINKING COFFEE,  
AND STUDYING A HAND-WRITTEN LIST.

BÉA

And after I do bathroom, what?

CAROL

Oh, Béa, if you could wash the windows in the bedroom. Windows?

BÉA

Vindoes?

CAROL

Windows.

SHE SHOWS BÉA.

BÉA

Oh, ja, vindoes. I do good yob.

CAROL

Yob.

BÉA

Job.

THEY LAUGH AGAIN.

THE DOORBELL RINGS. THEY LOOK AT EACH  
OTHER, AND BÉA DECISIVELY TAKES AWAY THE  
COFFEE CUPS AND GOES TO THE DOOR.

VIDA

(FROM OUTSIDE) Is Mrs. Kennicott in?

SHE SWEEPS PAST BÉA.

CAROL

Miss Sherwin, I'm so glad you—

VIDA

I'm afraid you think I've been shabby in not visiting, but I wanted to give you a chance to get settled. I'm Vida Sherwin, and I teach French and English and a few other things—

CAROL

I studied to be a librarian.

VIDA

You needn't tell me, I know all about you. This is such a gossipy village!  
And you've got the widow Bogart right next door, you poor woman. She was watching  
me as I walked up to your front door.

CAROL

Dear God.

VIDA

She's got a rancid tongue, worse than anyone else in town. Keep your curtains drawn  
on that side of the house.

CAROL

I'll glue them shut!

THEY SMILE.

VIDA

This town is a rough diamond, and we're looking to you to help polish us up, Mrs.  
Kennicott—

CAROL

Please call me Carol. And may I—

VIDA

Vida, Vida—I'm so glad I came today. Dare I hope we can work together?

CAROL

(GAILY: ) Dare to dare! If I *could* help in any way.... Would it be an unpardonable sin if  
I whispered that Gopher Prairie is a tiny bit ugly?

VIDA

Of course it's ugly! Though I may be the only person in town to whom you could safely  
say that. But that will change. It's the town's spirit that gives me hope. It's a  
wholesome place, but it needs live creatures like you to awaken it.

CAROL

Perhaps we could have a good architect to come here and—

VIDA

Y-e-es. But it might be better to start by working with existing agencies. You'll be a  
godsend on the library board. Meanwhile, it would be lovely if we could get you to  
teach Sunday School—

CAROL

My religion's a little foggy.

VIDA

And there's our study group...the Thanatopsis Club.

CAROL

What do they *do*?

VIDA

Oh. Social work....they've made the city plant some trees. And they run the Rest Room.

CAROL

Rest room?

VIDA

It's that square one-story building on the corner of Main and Spruce. It's for the farmers' wives, when they come to town. It has benches inside, and a charcoal stove, and....you know, facilities. Plumbing.

CAROL

Because they're not invited to use the facilities in the hotel lobby? I see.

VIDA

Thanatopsis takes an interest in culture and refinement....it puts you in touch with the intellectual thought going on elsewhere in the world. Why, Percy Bresnahan once addressed the group. He comes from here, you know.

CAROL

So many possibilities....

VIDA

Next Thursday, Mrs. Luke Dawson will be leading a discussion about Shakespeare and Milton....you know, English poetry.

CAROL

Poetry?

VIDA

We're not so slow, Carol.

CAROL

Of course not. I'll join you, I promise.

VIDA

I'm being pushy.

CAROL

Heavens, no. But I need a little time to look around.

VIDA

(PASSIONATE:) Do you find me conservative, Carol? I am! So much to conserve, this treasure of unspoiled American ideals. Maybe not like it is down in Palm Beach. But we're free of social distinctions in Gopher Prairie. (MORE EMOTIONALLY) I have an overwhelming belief in the brains and hearts of our nation and our town. And I modestly think, sometimes, that I have a tiny effect on our citizens and I...

VIDA SUDDENLY RISES AND EMBRACES CAROL.

SHE IS VERY OVER-WROUGHT.

Oh, my dear, I know, I understand your situation, and I welcome you. Such a hasty wedding—

CAROL

It was! We both knew we didn't want to wait.

VIDA

Very wise, I understood. I understand. These first tender days of marriage—they're sacred to me! Home, and children that need you and depend on you to keep them alive, and turn to you with their wrinkly little smiles. And beloved Doctor Will, and the home and hearth—

SHE BURSTS INTO TEARS.

CAROL, QUITE BEWILDERED, TRIES TO COMFORT HER.

CAROL

(OUT) Perhaps we ought to start a drama club.

LIGHTS BLACK OUT.

WIDOW BOGART APPEARS IN HER WINDOW.

BOGART

Another thing, Mrs. Kennicott. Heaven knows I don't want to start trouble, but I can't help what I see on my back steps. I notice your hired girl carrying on with the grocery boy, and that handy man, too. I know she's a good girl, but she's green, and I hate to see her get into trouble. I know what evil thoughts these immigrants get inside their heads and nothing can cure them except coming right to God like I do at prayer meeting every Wednesday evening as...by the way, why haven't I seen you there?

SPOT GOES OUT.

## AT THE THANATOPSIS SOCIETY

A CIRCLE OF MEMBERS, INCLUDING MRS. LUKE DAWSON.  
RAMIE WUTHERSPOON, MAUD AND DAVE DYER, VIDA AND  
CAROL. THEY LISTEN ATTENTIVELY TO MRS. DAWSON.

MRS. LUKE DAWSON

William Shakespeare was born in 1564 and died 1616. He lived in London, England and in Stratford-upon-Avon, a lovely town with many curios and old houses well worth examining. Many people believe he was the greatest living poet. Perhaps his greatest play was *The Merchant of Venice*, which has a beautiful love story and a fine appreciation of women's brains, which even those of us who do not wish to commit ourselves on the matter of suffrage, ought to appreciate. And it shines a light on the evil of the money-lending Jewish race.

Shakespeare has written many roles in his plays where women dress up as men, for a while, and *The Merchant of Venice* is one of them.

SHE SITS. LAUGHTER. APPLAUSE.

MRS DAWSON

And now, Raymond Wutherspoon. Ramie?

HE RISES. APPLAUSE.

RAMIE

Robert Burns was a rather poor boy, who did not enjoy the advantages we enjoy today, except for the advantages of the fine old Scottish kirk, where he heard the Word of God preached more fearlessly than even in the finest brick churches in the big and so-called advanced cities of today. He was a good student, and educated himself, in striking contrast to the loose ways and so-called aristocratic society life of Lord Byron, on whom I will speak next week.

APPLAUSE.

MRS. DAWSON

Thank you, Ramie. And now, we come to the projects part of our meeting. Faith, hope and charity, the credo of Thanatopsis. The floor is open to suggestions.

CAROL RISES.

CAROL

My name is Carol Kennicott—

MRS. DAWSON

Welcome to the Thanatopsis Club.

APPLAUSE.

CAROL

I don't want to presume, but I've noticed...the poor in town—I'm not suggesting charity, but we need to encourage them with some help...so they can help themselves. Perhaps an employment bureau so they can find jobs, or a municipal fund for home building or—

MRS DAWSON

What's wrong with Charity? Charity is *good*. Wouldn't we all feel deprived of the pleasure of *giving* ---

MAUD DYER

Beside, they've been fooling you, dear. There isn't any real poverty in this town. Wait till you've been here a while, you'll see.

A SILENCE.

CAROL

Oh. I've overstepped. But I also wanted to invite you all to a party that Will and I will be giving two weeks from Saturday, at our house. Everyone's welcome....and prepare to be surprised.

APPLAUSE.

LIGHTS OUT.

---

*NOTE: Carol rips out a wall to make one long living room "on which she lavished yellow and deep blue; a Japanese obi with an intricacy of gold thread on stiff ultramarine tissue, which she hung as a panel against the maize wall; a couch with pillows of sapphire velvet; chairs which, in Gopher Prairie, seemed flippant..." This is just a note from S. Lewis's novel.*

---

BÉA AND CAROL, COFFEE CUPS IN HAND, HUDDLE OVER A LONG LIST.

CAROL

Bea, I'm afraid we'll have to eat leftovers for a week, but I'm planning to spend a fortune on this party.

BÉA

Why such a party?

CAROL

I'm trying to show these folks that a party isn't a committee meeting. I'm bringing in the food from Minneapolis—

BÉA

No!

CAROL

*Ja!* Chinese food. (THEY SMILE) And we're having a Chinese theme!  
A KNOCK AT THE DOOR. BJORNSTAD ENTERS.

BJORNSTAD

Hey, Missus K, am I interrupting?

CAROL

Not at all. Béa, have you met Nels Bjornstam?  
BÉA CLEARLY HASN'T, BUT WOULD LIKE TO.  
BJORNSTAM SMILES AT HER.

BJORNSTAM

Hej, på dej, flicka.

BÉA

Hello.

CAROL

Get Nels a cup of coffee, Béa. (BEA DOES SO). So...Nels?

BJORNSTAM

This package came on the train, so I took it upon myself to deliver it.  
HE PUTS A LARGE, PAPER-WRAPPED PARCEL  
ON THE TABLE.

Who is she? That girl.

CAROL

That's Béa. Béa Swenson. (BEA BRINGS COFFEE.) She works here.  
And she's my friend.

BJORNSTAM

Oh, there you go again, with your radical...fraternizing of the classes. Open it.  
CAROL DOES SO. IT IS A LARGE PIECE OF FABRIC,  
A SHIMMERING PIECE OF GOLDEN SILK TISSUE.  
BEA LETS OUT A LITTLE CRY OF DELIGHT.

CAROL

It's for my party. We're going to hang it right over there....a hanging.

THE LIGHTS FADE DOWN, CAROL EXITS, BJORNSTAM  
HOLDS THE FABRIC UP AGAINST BÉA'S FACE, THEN,  
IN DIM LIGHT HE PROCEEDS TO HANG IT.  
BÉA ENTERS, PUTS A WAX RECORD ON THE PHONOGRAPH:

“CHINATOWN, MY CHINATOWN.”

### THE CHINESE PARTY

WILL STANDS ALONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE DECORATED ROOM. HE IS SPIFFED UP IN A NEW SUIT. HE FINGERS THE GOLD HANGING, WHISTLES, THEN INSPECTS A BEAUTIFUL CERULEAN BLUE VASE. HE SITS ON THE NEW SOFA, JUMPS UP AGAIN, NERVOUSLY, AS HE TALKS TO HIMSELF.

WILL

Ye Gods! I reckon my little bride has gone through this month's allowance in one big splurge! She takes one trip to the big city and...spendy, spendy.

HE TOUCHES THE HANGING AGAIN.

This can't be pure gold? No, 'course not. But it's pretty grand. I hope she's pleased. She wanted to shake things up and...well, it's *different*.

HE GOES TO THE PHONOGRAPH, CRANKS IT UP AGAIN.

God knows what they'll think...

HE STARTS TO DANCE.

Who cares? So long as she's happy, then I'm happy.

BACK TO THE SOFA, HE SITS, CALLS UPSTAIRS:

I've got to admit it, honey, this di-van thing is an improvement on my mother's lumpy old sofa!

(A NOISE) Here comes somebody! Carol, hurry up, come down!

GUESTS ENTER VARIOUSLY. THE DYERS, VIDA, RAMIE, HARRY AND JUANITA HAYDOCK, SAM CLARK.

WILL

Come in, come in, don't let the heat out!

HAYDOCK

I smell something delicious. Spicy.

MAUD

Smells like stewed celery to me.

JUANITA

You have no imagination, Maud. No flare. Wait till you taste it, before you condemn it. Harry and I always eat Chink when we go to Chicago.

WILL

It's tasty, Maud, I promise. It's called chop suey, direct from China.

CAROL ENTERS IN A SILVER SHEATH. THE MEN STARE  
IN AWE. WILL HASN'T SEEN THE DRESS EITHER.

Wow! Carrie!

CAROL

Direct from Minneapolis! You have to eat it with chopsticks!

HARRY

The dress?

CAROL

The chop suey.

SAM

Little lady, you are a sight for sore eyes.

JUANITA

Carol, you never bought that at the Bon Ton!

CAROL

Listen, friends, I want this party to be noisy and undignified! This is the christening of our house and I want you to help me have a bad influence on it. So, for starters, let's have an old-fashioned square dance.

SHE CRANKS THE PHONOGRAPH, AND SOME RISE  
UNCERTAINLY TO DANCE.

DAVE DYER

(MUTTERS) Alaman left, alaman right, swing your partner and dance all night...

*THE REEL DETERIORATES, AND COUPLES HASTEN BACK TO  
THEIR SEATS.*

CAROL

Why aren't you all dancing?

WILL

Don't pester them, Carrie.

CAROL

(TO WILL) None of these people know how to play. (TO THE GUESTS)  
We're going to do something exciting, now.

DAVE (RISES)

Shall I tell the one about—

CAROL

Dave, I think we've heard your story about the Norwegian catching the hen quite enough.

A SILENCE.

Oh, I didn't mean—

VIDA

(ASIDE TO CAROL) Why not have Ramie sing a song—

CAROL

(ASIDE TO VIDA) He's so sentimental—(VIDA IS SHOCKED).  
I know, I'm being supercilious.

VIDA

Ramie longs for self-expression. His whole life is selling shoes at the Bon Ton, but he's an artist at heart, he longs for something finer.

CAROL

You're right, Vida. (TO RAMIE) Mr. Wutherspoon, would you honor us with a song?

RAMIE

(CLEARING HIS THROAT) Oh, they don't really want to hear me!

ENCOURAGEMENT FROM THE GUESTS.  
WILL TAKES OFF THE RECORD.

RAMIE SINGS "WHEN THE LITTLE SWALLOW LEAVES ITS  
TINY NEST." APPRECIATIVE APPLAUSE.

CAROL

(ASIDE TO WILL) Ornithology is alive and well in Gopher Prairie. (TO RAMIE) That was simply lovely, Ramie.

VIDA

He doesn't have the best voice, but he puts so much feeling into it.

CAROL

Oh, yes, so much *feeling*. (BEAT) Now. To work up our appetites, we're going to play an idiotic game I learned in Chicago. For a starter, you'll all have to take off your shoes. Go on.

INCRECULITY AND RAISED EYEBROWS.

CAROL

There are two teams, wolves and shepherds. Juanita and I will be shepherds, because we're not shy. The rest of you are wolves, and your shoes are the sheep! The wolves go out in the hall...wait, leave your shoes here. Now the shepherds scatter the sheep through the room, and we turn out the lights. Then the wolves crawl in from the hall and try to find their shoes in the dark, then try to get them away from the shepherds...who are permitted to do anything but bite. Come on, no one's excused, shoes off!

CAROL KICKS OFF HER SLIPPERS, VIDA FOLLOWS.

SAM

I'm not much accustomed to attending parties barefoot, but here goes!

THE OTHERS SMILE, FOLLOW.

CAROL

Dump them in the middle of the room and mix them up. Juanita, follow me.

THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

We've got to grab those shoes—sheep! Start!

JUANITA

In the dark!

FROM THE NOVEL:

“...SQUEALING, HALTING, THROWN OUT OF THE HABIT OF THEIR STOLIDNESS BY THE STRANGENESS OF ADVANCING THROUGH NOTHINGNESS, TOWARD AN ADVANCING FOE....

THEY QUIVERED WITH A RAPTURE OF FEAR. REALITY HAD VANISHED. A YELPING SQUABBLE AROSE, THEN JUANITA HAYDOCK'S HIGH TITTER, AND RAMIE'S ASTONISHED *OUCH! QUIT! YOU'RE SCALPING ME!*”

MAUD

Well, I declare! I was never was so upset in my life!

DAVE

I've got a lot of shoes, here—is that good?

THE LIGHTS SNAP ON.

IN THE MIDDLE OF THE FLOOR, WILL IS WRESTLING WITH HARRY HAYDOCK, AND THERE IS GENERAL CHAOS AMONG THE MEN. BUT THE WOMEN ARE

ALL SEDATELY SITTING IN THEIR CHAIRS, EXCEPT FOR  
JUANITA, WHO IS SITTING ON RAMIE.

HARRY

I got one shoe. Gee, I never knew I could fight like that.

THE LIGHTS GO BLACK. THE "PARTY" DEPARTS.

IN THE SEMI-DARK:

CAROL

Will, honey, was it fun? Did you have a good time?

WILL

It was *different*. (A CORRECTION:) Best party this town's ever seen!

CAROL

And I promise, it didn't cost that much!

WILL

You're right about waking these stodgy folks up. Now that you've showed them how, they'll never have those same old parties, with everyone sitting around like in a funeral parlor, again. It was swell...only, Carrie, your knees show in that dress when you cross your legs. (BEAT) Here, don't touch a thing! Pop up to bed, and I'll clear things away.

THE LIGHTS FADE OUT.

WILL (READS)

From the Gopher Prairie Weekly Dauntless: Item:

One of the most delightful social events of recent months was held Wednesday evening at the housewarming of Dr. and Mrs. Kennicott on Poplar Street. Their home, completely redecorated, is now nifty in its bold modern color scheme. A number of amusing diversions took place, Raymond Wutherspoon favored the guests with a song, and dainty refreshments were served in the novel Oriental style. One and all voted it a delightful adventure.

EXCITED:

Hey, hon—!

LIGHTS FADE OUT.

BÉA AND NELS CUDDLE AT THE KITCHEN TABLE,

DRINKING COFFEE. IT IS SNOWING OUT.

BJORNSTAM

“The snow, that bleak December day,  
Rose swiftly o’er the fields of hay...” John Greenleaf Whittier.

BÉA

I like that.

BJORNSTAM

I like you. You’re such a darn nice Swede girl. If I had a girl like you I wouldn’t be such a sore head. You keep a kitchen so clean it makes me feel like a slob. You got nice hair. Makes me want to sell my mules and my shares in that mining camp. Understand? I mean, do I have to spell it out?

BÉA

So?

BJORNSTAM

So. You’re so little, I could pick you up with one finger and read Karl Marx at the same time. I guess what I’m saying is—

BÉA

I understand what you saying. Ya. Yes. Yes.  
CAROL ENTERS.

BJORNSTAM

So how was your party?  
CAROL SHRUGS.

BÉA

It was gud.

CAROL

They didn’t like the food. The women were shocked. I kept trying to move them, but they were immovable. Nothing changes here. Last night we went to the Dyers’, and everyone sat around in the same dead circle as always. Nels, I’ve been here for months, and I haven’t accomplished a damned thing! And what’s worse, I have nothing to do!

BÉA

No, you done something, Carol.  
SHE GRINS, GLANCES AT BJORNSTAM, WHO SMILES BACK.

CAROL

Let me pretend I'm surprised. You two make me so happy! Let me help with the wedding.

BJORNSTAM

Who said anything about a wedding?

BÉA GIGGLES, SWATS HIM.

Joke! Yoke! Where you heading, Carol?

CAROL

I've got to gird up my loins because I'm attending a meeting of the Jolly Seventeen.

BÉA

What's jolly seventeen?

BJORNSTAM

It's a club you'll never be invited to, sweet.

CAROL

Lucky Béa. (TO HER:) It's a gathering of vixens with sharp teeth and nails.

BJORNSTAM

And what do you plan to do there, Mrs. K?

CAROL

Behave. I'll act as demure as a bride. And I'll eat angel cake. (SHE SHUDDERS)  
And rave about it. No, they're really lovely people.

BJORNSTAM

You betcha.

CAROL

Ignore my sulk! It can't be that bad. (BEAT) Yes it can...

LIGHTS CROSS-FADE TO THE JOLLY SEVENTEEN.

## AT THE JOLLY SEVENTEEN

A BRIDGE GAME IS BREAKING UP: MAUD, JUANITA,  
MRS. STOWBODY AND VIDA.  
CAROL WALKS INTO THE SCENE.

MAUD

That's why I bid one no trump, Vida; because I had an even distribution—

VIDA

I overcalled in clubs—

JUANITA

But I had six clubs in my hand, why did you bid them? Anyway, once she started leading hearts—

MRS STOWBODY

(TO MAUD) Did your girl put the coffee on?

MAUD

She's so slow, has to be told everything! (YELLS) Kristina, is the coffee ready? Next week we meet at your house, Juanita.

JUANITA

I'll make something special. Maybe some Floating Island.

MRS. STOWBODY

That sounds different. You're an adventurous cook, dear . (TO CAROL) I expect you'll be sending to Minneapolis for a new dress for next week's party, Missus K? At least that's what someone said.

CAROL

(SHARP) Maybe I will. I haven't decided, but I'll be sure to let you know.

VIDA

I liked the display in the Bon Ton window, Juanita.

MAUD

Gopher Prairie's not so much behind the times.

VIDA

That's not what I meant!

A BEAT.

CAROL

Of course, it's a very lovely place. Why, Will and I drove down to Wahkeenyan the other day. It was so good to get out in the fresh air. Don't you love those big red barns and silos? And that lonely Lutheran church with the tin spire, that stands on the hill? It's so bleak, but somehow *brave*. I believe the Scandinavians are the hardiest people—

MRS. STOWBODY

Jackson Elder says the Svenskas that work in the mill are a scandal! They're selfish and cranky and they keep demanding raises!

JUANITA

And the hired girls—pretty lame-brained!

MAUD

What's the world coming to, with all these Scandahoofian clodhoppers demanding every cent you can save!? Ignorant and impertinent, and wanting bath tubs and everything. They're lucky enough to get a bath in the tin wash tub at home.

A BEAT.

CAROL

Whose fault is that? Eating left-overs and having holes to sleep in? I don't want to boast, but I have no trouble with my Béa. (SILENCE.) How much do the maids usually get paid here?

JUANITA

Anywhere from three-fifty to five dollars a week. How much do you pay, Carol?

CAROL

W-why, I pay six a week. (A BEAT)

MAUD

Don't you think it's hard on the rest of us, when you pay so much---?

CAROL

I don't care! They work at least twelve hours a day; they have to wash slimy dishes and dirty clothes, and they do it for strangers—

MAUD

Strangers?!

CAROL

Just because she washes your underwear doesn't mean you *know* her.

VIDA

Tut, tut, tut! Ladies! What angry passions—and what an idiotic discussion! Stop it, all of you. Carol Kennicott, you're probably right, but you're much ahead of the times for Gopher Prairie. Juanita, stop looking so belligerent! This was supposed to be a card party!

THE LIGHTS SLOWLY FADE OUT AS  
CAROL WALKS OUT OF THE SCENE, TOWARD HOME.

CAROL

It was all my fault. I was touchy, and I rankled them. I'll never be one of them. Face it, they're destined to be my arbiters for the rest of my life. And Will? What does he really think? All my ideas about this town...he probably thinks I'm silly...maybe I'm a "neurotic" woman, that's a shiny new word. (BEAT) Maybe I neglect him. I need to pay more attention to Will....it was all my fault...

WILL IS AT HOME WHEN SHE ENTERS THE SCENE.  
SHE THROWS HER ARMS AROUND HIM.

WILL

Carrie... (HE KISSES HER) Big hug. (HE CAPTURES HER IN HIS ARMS)

CAROL

Will, talk to me. Tell me all about your cases. Your work. I want to know. Details!

WILL

Sure. You bet. It was the usual; my waiting room was full. But before I get into it, I'd better go down to the cellar and stoke the furnace. Hold on.

CAROL SLUMPS IN DISAPPOINTMENT AND WILL  
GOES AS THE LIGHTS FADE.

## VIDA SHERWIN'S SECOND VISIT

VIDA IS PEEKING INTO THE LIVING ROOM.

VIDA

(CALLS) Carol...Mrs. Kennicott? It's Vida Sherwin.

CAROL ENTERS.

CAROL

I didn't hear you knock.

VIDA

IN ONE BREATH:

May I come in and gossip a while? I guess I'm already in. Mrs. Bogart's peeking out the window at your house again. Such a nice day—I feel disgracefully good in this weather, don't you? Ramie Wutherspoon says if he had half my energy he'd be a great opera singer. I always think this climate is the best in the world. Probably I fool myself. But I know one thing: you're the pluckiest little idiot in town.

BEAT.

CAROL

Oh-oh. Why do I have the feeling you're about to flay me alive?

VIDA

Carol, you know I want you to play a big part in vitalizing Gopher Prairie and...

CAROL

I was too abrupt at the Jolly Seventeen?

VIDA

No, I'm glad you told them some wholesome truths about servants....though perhaps you were just a bit tactless. It's bigger than that. In a secluded town like this, every newcomer is on trial.

CAROL

What do they say about me?

VIDA

My dear!

CAROL

(SMILES) I can face it.

VIDA

(AVIDLY:) Let me take off my coat!

CAROL

I feel like I'm always in a cloud, looking out at others. I see them, but they don't notice me. Now you tell me they *talk* about me? They dare to discuss everything I say and do, pawing over me? I hate it!

VIDA

They'd paw over anyone new in town. Carol, I want you to help me make this town worthwhile, so you must try to be impersonal when I tell you—

CAROL

I'll be as impersonal as cold boiled potatoes! What do they say about me?

VIDA

(BEAT) The illiterate ones resent your references to anything farther than Minneapolis. They're suspicious. And they think you dress too well.

CAROL

They'd prefer me to wear gunny-sack?

VIDA

Don't act like a baby.

CAROL

I'll be good.

BÉA ENTERS, SERVES COFFEE, LEAVES AS:

VIDA

You'd better be, or I won't say any more. I'm not asking you to change, Carol, but you want me to tell you what they think, no matter how absurd their prejudices may be. So. Is it your ambition to beautify this town? You told me it's what you came to do.

CAROL

I...don't know—

VIDA

Tut, tut, I depend on you—you're a born reformer!

CAROL

Not any more.

VIDA

Of course you are—

CAROL

No, I've reformed. They think I'm affected?

VIDA

My lamb, they do. They think you're showing off when you say 'American' instead of 'Ammurrican'. They think you're frivolous. And Esther Villers thought you were patronizing her when—

CAROL

I was not!

VIDA

When you criticized the books she buys for the library—

CAROL

I merely suggested that the children could be reading something better than Elsie Dinsmore and the Hardy Boys—

VIDA

And some of the merchants think you're too flip when you talk to them and—

CAROL

I was trying to be friendly—

VIDA

The local housewives don't approve your being so chummy with your girl Béa. You act like she's your cousin, they say—wait, there's more. They don't like what they call your bizarre furniture. And I guess I've heard a dozen criticize you because you don't go to church—

CAROL

They've been saying all these things about me, while I— ?

VIDA

Knowledge is power, dear. You want to make change, you need power.

CAROL

It hurts. It shames me! It makes them seem beastly and treacherous. My God, what did they say about my Chinese housewarming party?!

VIDA

They liked it, dear. But a few thought you were showing off, pretending your husband is richer than he is.

CAROL

Vida, you want me to reform people like that? And all the while they want to reform me? Who said that? The rich or the poor?

VIDA

I'd say it was evenly divided.

CAROL

Swell! Tell them, with my compliments, that Will makes about four thousand a year, and that my party cost half as much as they think it did. Chinese things are cheap and—

VIDA

Don't shoot the messenger. They think you've started a competition by giving a party some of them can't afford. And four thousand is a pretty big income here.

CAROL

It wasn't about competition! I wanted to give them the gayest party I could! I meant it well. And they've been ridiculing me ever since...

SHE HUDDLES ON THE COUCH, WEEPING.

VIDA

I shouldn't have told you...I'd better go. I didn't mean to—

VIDA STROKES CAROL'S HEAD, THEN SLIPS AWAY.

LGHTS CHANGE.

WILL ENTERS, STUDIES HER.

WILL

What happened?

CAROL

Nothing.

WILL

Something, I think. Tell the old man.

HE JOINS HER ON THE SOFA.

What?

CAROL

Vida Sherwin just dropped by.

WILL

Sherwin the spinster.

CAROL

Will, dear, I wonder if the people around here don't criticize me sometimes?

WILL

Lord, I should say not! They all keep telling me you're the swellest girl they ever saw. Carol?

CAROL

The merchants think I'm too fussy about shopping. I'm afraid I annoy Mr. Dashaway and Harry—(BEAT) What?

WILL

Since you've brought it up...

CAROL

Oh God, here it comes.

WILL

Chet Dashaway 's probably cross because you bought our new furniture in the Cities instead of here. I didn't want to stop you at the time, but...After all, I make my money here, and they expect me to spend it here. But rats, what do we care? This is an independent town, not like these Eastern holes where you have to watch your step all the time, and live up to social customs.

HE NUZZLES HER.

And since you mention it, I do like to be independent, but I'd be glad if you went to Jenson or Ludelmeyer for groceries, rather than Mr. Howland.

CAROL

Howland's better; and cleaner.

WILL

I don't mean you should cut him out entirely, but it doesn't hurt to keep the trade in the family. See what I mean?

CAROL

No.

WILL

Howland goes to that other doctor in town, Gould. So I'm reluctant to pay out my money for groceries to Howland so he can pass it on to Doctor Terry Gould.

CAROL

I see.

WILL

But in the end, who gives a damn, honey?

CAROL

You do. And you got mad at me after we saw that movie at the Rosebud Movie Palace. Mack Sennett and “The Bathing Beauty Babes”.

WILL

It was kind of funny.

CAROL

It was crude. But of course the local vice society won't let us buy any of those nasty frank novels from Europe—“The Way of All Flesh”. “The Immoralist”. Not to mention Upton Sinclair's “Jungle”—

WILL

The American people don't like filth.

CAROL

So instead we get such delicate offerings as Mack Sennett girls and “Right on the Coco” at the Rosebud Movie Palace—

A SILENCE.

WILL

Got to hand it to you, Carrie. I thought after living with all these good decent folks you'd get over this high-hat art stuff, but you hang right in there. Just because a movie shows a few legs....

Look, it's been a long day, Carrie. It's time to turn in. I'll go lock up.

HE PATS HER ON THE HEAD, GOES.

SHE SITS, UNMOVING.

CAROL

I must go on. I must go on....

THE LIGHTS FADE.

BJORNSTAM, IN A SPOT:

BJORNSTAM

I'll tell you this, Mrs. K, when I'm rude to one of these slobs, it's maybe because I don't know any better (and god knows I'm no authority on fancy forks and what pants you wear with a Prince Albert coat). But maybe I'm rude because I'm the only man in Johnson County that remembers that bit in the Declaration of Independence about us having the right to "life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." I can sass these fools all I like, because I'm not dependant on them. The secret to living in Gopher Prairie is not to give a damn.

Don't give a damn, Mrs. K., don't give a damn!

**AT THE BON TON**

CAROL, COAT AND HAT ON, SHOPPING.  
RAMIE WUTHERSPOON APPROACHES, TO HELP HER.

Mrs. Kennicott—  
RAMIE

Carol, please.  
CAROL

May I help you?  
RAMIE

CAROL  
I just picked up some stockings. My old ones have holes.

RAMIE  
If I may be so bold: I put away a pair of patent leather slippers, for you.  
HE GETS THE SHOES.  
Sometimes, Mrs...Carol, I get a dainty little pair of shoes like these, and I set them aside for someone who'll appreciate them. As soon as I saw these, I thought they'd be just right for you.

CAROL  
You're a good salesman, Ramie. I'm flattered!

RAMIE  
Of course they may be a little too stylish for this town.

CAROL  
"This town."

RAMIE  
Gopher Prairie.

CAROL  
I hate it.

RAMIE  
The Paris of the frozen tundra?

CAROL  
Ramie Wutherspoon, you've just made a joke! I'd better sit down!

RAMIE  
I'll try not to do that again. . It's a decent little town, no worse than the rest of 'em, but a sense of humor is scant here. The people, they mean well...

CAROL  
But buried in that good will is venom. Maud Dyer calls something "different", and that "different" is poisonous.

RAMIE  
Right! And your pastor mistrusts my pastor. And my grocer hates yours. My laundry is whiter than yours. And the doctors—Will Kennicott excepted—Doc McGannum says Westlake is lazy, and Westlake insists Terry Gould is out of date.

CAOL  
I wonder what they say about Will?

RAMIE  
They believe that President McKinley is the agent of the Lord.  
They believe all socialists ought to be hanged.

CAROL  
They believe that people who make more than ten thousand dollars, or less than eight hundred are wicked.

RAMIE  
Europeans are even wickeder.  
IT BECOMES A GAME.

CAROL  
Virgins are not as virginal as they used to be. Or ought to be.

RAMIE

It doesn't hurt to drink a glass of beer on a warm day, but anyone who touches wine is going straight to Hell.

CAROL

Nobody needs drug store ice cream. Angel food cake is good enough!

CAROL

Why do you stay here? You could move to the cities.

RAMIE

When I first came, I swore I'd keep up my cultural interests: the singing, and reading good books. For a few years I'd run into Minneapolis to a play or a concert. I *thought* I was keeping up, but in truth I was succumbing to the Village Virus. I started reading cheap fiction magazines, and felt too overworked to go to the Cities, and suddenly I realized that I was as provincial and behind-the-times as everyone else here—including my boss, Harry Haydock.

CAROL

The Village Virus?

RAMIE

The local disease. It's a joke!

CAROL

Another one? Goodness. Come and have coffee with me, some time, Ramie?

RAMIE

I can't. Widow Bogart stares into your dining room window.

HE MOVES OFF.

CAROL

Funny man. I like him. (DREAMILY) Maybe I ought to start a salon....

LGHTS FADE OUT.

BOGART IN HER WINDOW:

BOGART

Won't you have a cup of coffee, Carol, dearie? I'm sure you won't mind, given how long I've known Dr. Will, and I was such a friend of his dear lovely mother when she lived here and—tell me, was that little hat you wore last night expensive—? Don't you just hate the way folks talk in this town? I don't know how they can act the way they do. Meanwhile, they say dreadful things about my own son, Cyrus. Have you met Cyrus? Innocent as a dove. I never pay any attention, but just the other day I heard that Harry Haydock has been carrying on with a girl that clerks in a shop down in

Minneapolis, and poor Juanita not knowing anything about it, though maybe it's the judgment of God because of the way she acted up before she met Harry....

LIGHTS FADE OUT ON BOGART.

### IN THE BEDROOM

WILL AND CAROL ARE GETTING READY TO GO TO BED.  
THEY HAVE A POST-BATTLE POLITENESS.

WILL

Did you lock the door when you came in?

CAROL

Uh-huh.

WILL

I wound the clock. I must say I'm ready to turn in, Carrie. It was a long day.

CAROL

Will? You know what I heard today? That there's a lot of competition between the doctors in town.

NO ANSWER.

What do you think of Dr. Westlake?

WILL

Honestly? He's behind the times, Carol. Any day now he'll start using leeches.

CAROL

Really?

WILL

No, he's okay, he's a wise old coot. But I bet I make about as much as Westlake and McGannum put together.

CAROL

McGannum seems scholarly.

WILL

That man goes into everything bull-headed, and tries to argue every patient into having whatever he diagnoses. About the best thing Mac can do is stick to baby-snatching. He's on a par with that bone-pounding chiropractor female, Mattie Gooch.

CAROL

But the doctors' wives seem nice enough.

WILL

Nice enough—but watch them, because you can bet they're both plugging away for their husbands all the time, trying to get the business. Mrs. McGannum *seems* square enough, but don't forget she's Westlake's daughter. Those two men think they're Willie and Charley Mayo rolled together.

CAROL

What about Terry Gould?

WILL

He's a tin-horn sport, but he does know something about medicine.

CAROL

Is he honest?

WILL

Don't start me laughing, I'm too sleepy. He can find the index in Gray's Anatomy; but he's as crooked as a dog's rear leg. Know what he said about me? He told Mrs. Glorbach I'm not up to date—

CAROL

No!

WILL

I'm telling you! Why all the questions?

CAROL SLIPS A ROBE OVER HER NIGHTGOWN.

CAROL

Someone told me that in small towns like this, even more than cities, the doctors hate each other because of money—

WILL

Who said that? I bet it was that Vida Sherwin. She'd be smarter if she kept her mouth shut so her brains wouldn't ooze out that way!

HIS ANGER IS SUDDENLY IGNITED.

CAROL

Will! That's horrible and vulgar! Vida is my best friend, and she *didn't* say it.

WILL

Makes no difference who said it. Problem is, *you* believe it!

HE GRABS A CIGAR FROM THE POCKET OF HIS  
VEST, LIGHTS IT. A BEAT.

CAROL

I didn't mean to wake you up. And please don't smoke. May I open the window?

WILL

It wastes the heat.

CAROL

I'm sorry.

WILL

Sorry's all right, but this falling for anyone's say-so about medical jealousy is part of your willingness to believe the worst you can about us hicks in Gopher Prairie. If you think the big city's such a hell of a finer place—

CAROL

Not true!

WILL

And you have no respect for me! You hand me some spiel about me being so "useful", but you never think of me as having ambitions—

CAROL

No, I think if you as being perfectly satisfied!  
HE BECOMES FURIOUS.

WILL

Well I'm not by a damned shot! I don't want to be a plug general practitioner all my life, like Westlake and die in harness because I couldn't save a cent of the money you spend!

CAROL

You dole money out to me like I'm a mistress, not a wife!

WILL

How dare you call me cheap!

THERE IS A THUNDEROUS KNOCK AT THE DOOR;  
AND A RINGING DOOR BELL. WILL GRABS HIS ROBE,  
STARTS DOWNSTAIRS.  
FROM OUTSIDE:

FRAU KEMPEN  
Doktor, doktor—

CAROL  
What's that?

WILL  
We won't find out without answering, will we?

FRAU KEMPEN  
Doktor—*bitte*—

WILL  
And I don't have a butler to go to see who it is!

CAROL  
I hate you!

HE WHIRLS ON HER, FIST RAISED. SHE SLAPS HIM,  
THEY GLARE.  
POUNDING AT THE DOOR AGAIN.  
WILL OPENS THE DOOR.  
FRANZ KEMPEN IS HELPED IN BY HIS  
MOTHER. HE HOLDS A BLOODY TOWEL TO HIS HAND,  
THEY'RE BOTH SPLATTERED WITH BLOOD.

WILL  
Franz Kempen! What did you do to yourself? Frau Kempen, let's get the boy in.  
(TO CAROL) Carol, I'm sorry—

FRAU KEMPEN  
*Es ist mein Franz. Sein finger ist—*

WILL  
Carrie, go grab *mein swartze*—my black bag.  
CAROL GOES.  
*So...schön.*

WILL  
Now, Franz, let's steer you over to the table. Easy, easy does it. *Stille*. Can you lie flat  
on your back? *Bitte...*  
FRAU KEMPEN AND WILL EASE HIM ONTO THE TABLE.  
Now, let's unwrap you, young man, and see what mischief you've done to yourself.  
BLOOD SPURTS FROM THE FINGER INTO WILL'S ROBE.  
Wow! That's quite a wound, kid.

HE WRAPS THE FINGER AGAIN.  
CAROL RETURNS WITH THE DOCTOR'S BAG.

FRANZ

*Mein*—my ax...cutting wood...

WILL

And it's hanging by a thread.

CAROL GULPS BACK NAUSEA.

Carol, I need a bowl of warm water, soap, and some rubbing alcohol. And bring your sewing kit.

SHE RUNS OUT AGAIN.

Now you just take a seat, Mother, so you won't be in my way. Franz, I'm going to take your sleeve and roll it up. You hang in there.

WILL STARTS TO DO SO, AS CAROL COMES AND GOES, DELIVERING THINGS.

And gauze! No, no gauze, bring me clean towels. How you doing, Franz? Think you can hold it there?

FRANZ

*Wass ist*—? Hold what? Ja...yes, I hold it.

AS HE STARTS TO WORK, WILL CARRIES ON A CONVERSATION, TO KEEP THEM FROM PANICKING.

WILL

*Schweig mal! So! Bald geht besser!*

It'll take a few weeks before you can go fishing again. That was a joke. Frau Kempen, do you have enough wood for a while? If not I can send that handyman, Bjornstam, over to chop some. Franz won't be able...*noch blos em wenig*...

You know, I was out north of town last week, hunting, and know what I saw? I saw a pure white squirrel! Did I tell you that, Carrie? White as snow. Water, Carrie, and towels. And the strangest thing, all the other squirrels were going after it, attacking it. They didn't know what to do with it, 'cause it wasn't like them.

WILL

You made a nice clean cut, Franz. Maybe you should become a surgeon. Carrie, now I need you to find a nice needle, dip it in alcohol, and thread it.

CAROL

(WEAKLY) What color thread?

WILL

Any color, for God's sake! (BEAT) Make it white.

CAROL

Like the squirrel?

WILL  
Are you okay, Carrie?

CAROL  
Yes.

WILL  
So I forgot to ask, Franz, are you right handed or left? *Rechts oder links?*

FRANZ  
Right.

WILL  
That's good. You'll be able to write, just fine, and your trigger finger will still work. I call that good luck. Carrie, I want you to come over here to the other side and hold his arm steady. Carol? Come on, move it!

CAROL MOVES SLOWLY TO FRANZ'S OTHER SIDE.

WILL  
Now I'm gonna grab that needle and do a bit of fancy embroidery. Hold steady on that arm, wouldn't want to have messy sutures. *Stille, stille....Franz.*  
Didn't know I could sew, did you, Carrie?  
Keep breathing, Franz, in and out, in and out, in and out, very good. Mother, you'll be proud of my handy work, I promise!  
In and out and in and out and in and out and.... I need the scissors. You can let go now, Carol.

WILL  
SHE GETS HIM A SCISSORS.  
That'll do. Bandage.  
CAROL HANDS HIM A BANDAGE. HE WRAPS THE FINGER.  
Over and over. Tape. Over there.  
HE TAPES IT. HE STUDIES IT.  
Carol, did you keep the chopsticks from your Chinese party?

CAROL  
I saved them. (BITTER) God knows why.

WILL  
Get me four of them.  
SHE GOES OUT, COMES BACK WITH FOUR CHOPSTICKS.  
We'll use them as splints. Kind of awkward, the way they stick out like that. But I figure that'll keep folks from bumping in to you, and it'll keep that finger still.  
Does it feel firm? No wiggles?

FRANZ

Viggles? Ah, viggles.

WILL

Well. I guess that'll keep you for a day or two.

HE STEPS BACK A PACE, TAKES A DEEP BREATH,  
NODS TO FRAU KEMPEN.

You did right to bring him here.

Come back on Thursday—

I mean, come to my office, and we'll have a look-see, and clean it up.

Okay, Mother, take him home. He'll live.

FRAU KEMPEN

*Vielen dank, vielen dank!* (BEAT) *Vie viel wird das kosten, Doktor?*

WILL

You saved me a drive out to your farm by coming here. Say...four dollars?

FRAU KEMPEN

(ALARMED) *Vier? Das kann Ich nicht bezahlen—*

WILL

Why, Lord love you, mother, I won't worry if I never get it. Pay me when your crop comes in, in the fall.

Now take that boy home and put him to bed.

THE KEMPENS LEAVE, FRANZ LEANING ON  
HIS MOTHER.

A BEAT.

CAROL RUSHES OVER TO THE GORGEOUS CERULEAN  
VASE, VOMITS INTO IT.

CAROL

(WIPING HER MOUTH) I'm sorry, I'm such a coward.

WILL

No, you did good. You made a dandy nurse.

CAROL

I didn't do anything. But Will, watching you— amazing. You're much more than competent, Will, you're a scientist! A hero. Calm and cool and...masterful.

And speaking German—! I can read Goethe, but you actually *spoke--!*

AND THEN SHE HURLS, AGAIN.

I'm ashamed.

WILL

Why?

CAROL

I'm weak.

WILL STARTS TO LAUGH.

WILL

No you're not. What you are is pregnant.

HE PICKS HER UP IN HIS ARMS, WHIRLS HER AROUND.  
SHE LOOKS OUT, WITH A STRANGE EXPRESSION, A  
MIXTURE OF JOY, HORROR, AND CONFUSION.  
LIGHTS BLACK OUT.

END ACT ONE.