



## Margaret Garner Draft

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# Margaret Garner

The tabs mark  
off the different  
scenes (through  
the end of opera).

Margaret  
Garner

Cast of Characters

Principal Roles

Margaret Garner\*,  
a slave in her mid-20s, Robert's wife

Mezzo-Soprano

Robert Garner\*,  
a slave in his early 30s, Margaret's husband

Lyrical Baritone

Cilla\*,  
a slave about 50 years old, Robert's mother

Dramatic Soprano

Edward Garner,  
the brother of Robert Garner,  
plantation, in his late 30s or early 40s

**MARGARET GARNER**

**An Opera in Three Acts**

Supporting Roles

George, the overseer of Maplewood plantation

Dramatic Tenor

Caroline Garner, the daughter of Edward Garner,  
engaged to George Hancock

Light Lyrical Soprano

George Hancock, engaged to Caroline Garner

Tenor

Mr. Mason,  
a plantation overseer (doubles the role of George)

Lyrical  
Character Tenor

4 Slave Children  
2 Tenors, 2 Baritone

**Music by Richard Danielpour**

**Libretto by Toni Morrison**

Overseer\*,  
a plantation overseer (doubles the role of George)

Baritone

Miss (doubles the role of Auntie)

Lyrical  
Character Tenor

Margaret's 2 Children,  
narratively help-voiced

Non-Singing Roles

Chorus of White Teenage girls\*\*\*

SATB, 40 voices  
(incl. 3 voices)

Chorus of Black Men\*\*

SATB, 40 voices  
(incl. 3 voices)

(as of 7/30/02)

## Cast of Characters

### Principal Roles

Margaret Garner*, a slave in her mid-20s, Robert's wife	Mezzo-Soprano
Robert Garner*, a slave in his early 30s, Margaret's husband	Lyric Baritone
Cilla*, a slave about 50 years old, Robert's mother	Dramatic Soprano
Edward Gaines, the handsome and charismatic Master of Maplewood Plantation, in his late 30s or early 40s	Lyric Baritone

### Secondary Roles

Casey, the Foreman of Maplewood Plantation	Dramatic Tenor
Caroline Gaines, the daughter of Edward Gaines, engaged to George Hancock	Light Lyric Soprano
George Hancock, engaged to Caroline Gaines	Tenor
Auctioneer, a Professional Salesman (doubles the role of Mayor)	Lyric or Character Tenor
4 Slave Catchers	2 Tenors, 2 Baritones
Simon*, the Ship's Waiter, a Freedman	Baritone
2 Ferrymen**	Baritones
Overseer**, responsible for the slaves on the steamship	Tenor
Mayor (doubles the role of Auctioneer)	Lyric or Character Tenor
Margaret's 2 Children, noticeably light-skinned	Non-Singing Roles
Chorus of White Townspeople***	SATB: 40 voices (min. 32 voices)
Chorus of Black Slaves*	SATB: 32 voices (min. 20 voices)

\* Although much latitude is possible in casting, *Margaret Garner* does require that these roles be sung by Black performers.

\*\* These roles can be sung by members of the White Chorus.

\*\*\* It is essential that the White Choristers outnumber the Black Choristers.

The scene begins in darkness. A large group of slaves gradually becomes visible, shackled and caged on a trading block. In a call-and-response song, the slaves, led by Margaret Garner, beg for deliverance from their suffering.

The scene shifts to a lively town square. In preparation for an auction, members of slave families are separated from each other, so that they can be sold individually. The local townsmen bid enthusiastically for these "picknies and mammies and brookers and bucks," even though they consider them nothing more than personal property or need of civilizing.

In the crowd of onlookers is a handsome, genteel man named Edward Gaines. He publicly interrupts the auction when an "old estate rich as honey" is brought to the block, asserting that the property, Maplewood Plantation, belonged to his deceased brother and therefore cannot be sold. As no one disputes the claim, Gaines acquires Maplewood. However, the self-assured Gaines, a native of the region but absent for twenty years, is dismayed to learn that none of the townfolks remember him, only his well-respected older brother. The younger Gaines informs them that he has returned back challenges; once happily married, he now is a widower with a child to care for, and he gradually proclaims that he will fill Maplewood with a multitude of provisions, and announces that he intends to retain all the plantation's "goods and property"—i.e., its slaves. These slaves, waiting to be auctioned therefore are reunited with their families.

While Gaines signs the ownership papers for Maplewood Plantation, the slaves celebrate their good fortune with dance and song. He notices, and is intrigued by, the vivacious and feisty young slave woman who leads the performance, Margaret Garner. After the crowd disperses, Gaines discovers, and takes, a red scarf that Margaret had tied around a tree. He now vividly recalls his childhood, even though he had been forced to leave town under reportedly disreputable circumstances. He vows that the townsmen, once his neighbors, will not forget him again.

Act 1, Scene 2 — Harvest time, about six months later

Singing a wry, somewhat defiant work song, the slaves head back to their quarters after a day toiling in the fields. Olla, the mother of Margaret's husband,

## Synopsis

### Act I, Scene 1 -- Kentucky, April 1856

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While Gaines signs the ownership papers for Maplewood Plantation, the slaves celebrate their good fortune with dance and song. He notices, and is intrigued by, the attractive and feisty young slave woman who leads the performance, Margaret Garner. After the crowd disperses, Gaines discovers, and takes, a red scarf that Margaret had tied around a tree. He nostalgically recalls his childhood, even though he had been forced to leave town under purportedly disreputable circumstances. He vows that the townfolks, once his neighbors, will not forget him again.

### Act I, Scene 2 -- Harvest time, about six months later

Singing a wry, somewhat defiant work song, the slaves head back to their quarters after a day toiling in the fields. Cilla, the mother of Margaret's husband,

Robert, joins the couple for supper; their spirits are light-hearted while they prepare the evening meal. After saying grace, however, Margaret insists upon seeing her baby immediately. Cilla, warm-hearted yet world-wise, cautions her against such an intense attachment to the child, but Margaret persists and sings a Lullaby to her baby while Robert and his mother eat dinner. Suddenly, Casey, the treacherous foreman at Maplewood Plantation, bursts into the cabin and delivers shocking news: Robert is being sent away that night to another plantation. Margaret is to remain at Maplewood, but now will work in the plantation's main house. When Casey tosses a fancy dress at Margaret, it is clear that Gaines expects sexual favors from her. Robert voices his anger, but Margaret reassures him of her faithfulness, and the two pledge their love. Later that evening, after Margaret has been delivered to Maplewood, Gaines delights at the thought of taking Margaret sexually.

**Act I, Scene 3 -- in Edward Gaines's parlor, in the early summer of 1857**

An engagement party is taking place to celebrate the betrothal of Caroline Gaines, Edward's daughter, to George Hancock. The guests include the local townspeople, whom Edward is very eager to impress as he seeks their approval. A discussion about the nature of love develops at the party; not surprisingly, Gaines expresses views markedly different from those of the young lovers. For Gaines, love seems to be a duplicitous force: "a thief respecting no household, stealing the loved ones away." It is not joyous and magical for him, or protecting and nurturing, as it is for Caroline and George. Love signals a loss of control for Gaines, and talk of it is liable to trigger the immense pain he feels, but cannot articulate, over his wife's death.

In an attempt to break the tension caused by this discussion, Gaines toasts the newly engaged couple. But Caroline inadvertently makes matters worse by asking Margaret, now the house servant, for her opinions on love. The guests are outraged that a person of "quality" would ask a slave for her opinion. To show their disapproval of Gaines, and the social manners he seemingly allows at Maplewood, the haughty guests leave the party abruptly. Distressed by their rudeness, Gaines lashes out at Caroline, who ruined what he had hoped would be a proud moment; now, he claims, his neighbors have "more reason to gossip and despise" him. He dismisses her attempts to mollify him.

After the party, when Gaines notices Margaret returning to clear the glasses, he lingers in a hiding place to observe her. While she continues to muse upon the

nature of love, he emerges from his hiding place and accosts her. Brandishing from his pocket the red scarf Margaret once had tied around the tree, he wraps it around her neck and drags her to his living quarters.

**Act II: Scene 1 - Winter, four years later (January 1861)**

Anticipating a visit from Robert, who has been secretly visiting her on Sunday nights, Margaret goes to Cilla's cabin. Upon arriving, however, she is puzzled to find Cilla packing a carpetbag. She becomes highly agitated when she notices that her children aren't there, and that Cilla is folding their clothing. As she has seen Casey lurking nearby, Margaret fears the worst - that he is coming for the children and plans to sell them. Cilla tries to reassure Margaret that all is well: Robert is attending to the final details for an escape attempt that night.

When he arrives at the cabin, Margaret, whose life has been sustained by her quest for freedom, is overcome when Robert tells her that they are scheduled to leave in just three hours. She anxiously inquires about his plans for their escape and new life. A man of great courage and strength, Robert also attempts to reassure Margaret before he leaves to get the children while his mother finishes packing. Suddenly, Margaret notices that Cilla is not packing any of her own things. In spite of Margaret's pleas to join them, Cilla proclaims that she is too old to begin a new life; her joy is simply to see her son's family safe, away from this region. Although sympathetic with Margaret and Robert's dreams for a free life, Cilla has made peace with her own, and sings of her reliance upon God.

Footsteps are heard approaching, and Cilla and Margaret are terrified when Casey storms into the cabin. At the same time, Robert inadvertently walks into the trap when he returns with the children. As Casey pulls out a pistol, Robert impulsively attacks him. A violent struggle ensues, but Robert hesitates and cannot shoot Casey. Yet when a heated exchange climaxes in Casey calling Margaret a "black slut," Robert shoots Casey to death. Cilla instantly understands that Robert's action has doomed the family, and she and Margaret beg him to run, regardless of any personal danger they might be in. While Cilla drags Casey's body away, Robert and Margaret sing of their love and make plans to meet later.

**Act II: Scene 2 - One week later, at twilight**

After successfully escaping their masters, Robert and Margaret have crossed the Ohio River and reached Cincinnati, a city in the Free State of Ohio. Now both outlaws, they live with their children in an underground shed to avoid recapture. Standing outside underneath a huge elm tree as a winter storm threatens, Robert and Margaret discuss speculation about the country's new president. Margaret shudders when she hears of Lincoln's belief that the "Union is Sacred" and that "A House Divided Cannot Stand," for she knows that means war is inevitable.

Ever hopeful, and sharing Margaret's dream for a better future, Robert asserts that freedom is nearly theirs - now they are living in a state whose name means "beautiful"! Here, their children will be able to grow up with dignity, and their own marriage will be respected as sacred. He will protect Margaret always, just as the elm tree always protects them. Margaret caresses Robert's face with a leaf from the tree, around which they dance a teasing "catch-me dance".

Only moments after Robert suggests that they return to the shed because of potential dangers facing them outside, Edward Gaines arrives on horseback, accompanied by slave catchers. He pounds on the shed door, proclaiming that no harm will be done; he has come just to claim his property. Intoxicated, Gaines breaks down the shed door. An exchange of gunfire leaves neither man hurt, but the slave catchers rush in and tie up Robert. As Robert is being dragged outside, Gaines grabs Margaret and laments that his bed is cold; he wants her to heat it up, just as she once did with hot coals. Breaking loose, Margaret recklessly plunges her hands into the glimmering hot coals in the shed's earthen floor; she throws piece after piece of coal at him with her bare hands. Gaines yells that she can pretend to be as crazy as she likes, he doesn't care even if she mangles herself in the process. Through the window, Margaret now sees Robert standing on a tall box underneath the elm tree; a noose has been placed around his neck. Robert's cries of love to her are cut off abruptly when the box is kicked away. In the sudden stillness, Margaret pulls from her hair the leaf Robert had placed there only moments before. She holds it in her scorched hands, weeping.

N.B. Synopsis for the Third Act of *Margaret Garner* to follow.

Act III:  
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W. B. S



MARGARET  
**MARGARET GARNER**

**Act I**

**Scene I: Kentucky, April 1856.**

The opera begins in darkness. A group of slaves gradually becomes visible on stage; they are shackled or locked in cages on a large trading block.

**SLAVES**

NO! NO MORE!  
NO! NOT MORE!  
PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!  
NOT IN OUR LIFETIME!

**MARGARET**

...ANKLES CIRCLED WITH A CHAIN...

**SLAVES**

NO! NO MORE!  
NO! NOT MORE!

**MARGARET**

...SKIN BROKEN BY A CANE...

**SLAVES**

NO! NO MORE!

**MARGARET**

...BLOODY PILLOWS UNDER MY HEAD...

**SLAVES**

OH NO! NO MORE!  
PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

**MARGARET**

...WISHING, PRAYING I WAS DEAD...

**SLAVES**

NO. NO. NO MORE!  
PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

**MARGARET**

BLOODY PILLOWS UNDER MY HEAD  
WISHING, PRAYING I WAS DEAD.

**SLAVES**

PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

**MARGARET**

MASTER'S BRAND IS BURNING ON ME  
ROPES CAN SWING FROM ANY OAK TREE

**SLAVES**

PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!  
PLEASE GOD, NO MORE!

The scene is transformed into one depicting a bustling townsquare, with a church visible in the distance. A group of TOWNSPEOPLE is gathering for a slave auction. They display a small-town mentality: familiar with everyone else's daily life and business, they love to gossip and at times are judgmental of others.

**AUCTIONER**

BY THE POWERS INVESTED  
AND BY CUSTOM INGESTED  
I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW  
THIS SALE TO BE NOW OPEN

### AUCTIONEER

BY THE POWERS INVESTED  
AND BY CUSTOM INGESTED  
I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW  
THE SALE OF ALL GOODS  
AND CATTLE AND WOODLAND  
SLAVES AND PLANTING FIELDS  
DARK WITH LOAM.

I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW  
AN OLD ESTATE RICH IN HISTORY  
IS NOW ON THE MARKET  
FOR A GENTLEMAN'S POCKET.  
A PRIZE IN THE WHOLE COUNTY ...

YOUR SHREWD EYES WILL LIGHT UP  
YOUR BIDS ARE INVITED  
DOLLAR FOR DOLLAR  
POUND FOR POUND  
THE BESTEST VALUE FOR MILES AROUND.

*(In preparation for their sale at auction, members of slave families are separated from one another. They are divided by gender and age, into groups of men, boys, women, and young girls.)*

### TOWNSPEOPLE

HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?  
FOR PICKNIES AND MAMMIES AND BREEDERS AND BUCKS?  
HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?  
HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?

O WHAT A PROBLEM TO DECIDE  
O WHAT A BURDEN ON OUR SHOULDERS:  
FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOTHING,  
ARE NOTHING, DO NOTHING, KNOW NOTHING  
EXCEPT FOR WE WHO CLOTHE THEM AND FEED THEM  
LET THEM SLEEP WHEN THEY ARE ILL..  
WE TEACH ALL THEY WILL EVER KNOW  
OF GOD AND WORK AND HOME.

### AUCTIONEER

BY THE POWERS INVESTED  
AND BY CUSTOM INGESTED  
I HEREBY DECLARE AND ALLOW  
THIS SALE TO BE NOW OPEN!

**TOWNSPEOPLE**

WHAT SAY? WHAT SAY?  
FOR MILKING AND PLOWING  
AND SPINNING AND CANNING AND SUCH.

HOW MUCH? HOW MUCH?  
FOR PICKNIES AND MAMMIES AND BREEDERS AND BUCKS?  
WHO KNOW NOTHING OF GOD AND HOME!

**AUCTIONEER**

*(bringing forth the first slave for sale)*

NOW THIS HERE IS CILLA.  
ABOUT FIFTY, SHE THINKS.  
A COOK, CHILD NURSE, LAUNDRY AND SEAMSTRESS.

THIS BID BEGINS AT TWO HUNDRED DOLLARS.  
DO I HEAR TWO FORTY, TWO FORTY, TWO FORTY?  
I NEED TWO FORTY.

**TOWNSPEOPLE** *(emphatically)*

TWO FORTY!

**AUCTIONEER**

TWO HUNDRED FORTY.  
DO I HEAR THREE HUNDRED, THREE HUNDRED, THREE HUNDRED?  
I NEED THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS.

**TOWNSPEOPLE** *(enthusiastically)*

THREE HUNDRED!

**AUCTIONEER**

THREE HUNDRED DOLLARS.  
I NEED FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED,  
FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS...

**TOWNSPEOPLE**

...FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED, FOUR HUNDRED DOLLARS!

**EDWARD**

*(impatient, forcefully)*

HOLD ON! HOLD ON!  
I'M TELLING YOU TO HOLD ON!

**TOWNSPEOPLE**

*(startled, a little nervous)*

WHO IS IT? WHAT IS IT?  
WHO IS IT? WHAT IS IT?

**AUCTIONEER**

*(polite, but annoyed)*

EXCUSE ME, SIR.  
LEGAL BUSINESS IS IN PROGRESS HERE.  
BY THE POWERS INVESTED,  
BY THE CUSTOM INGESTED...

**EDWARD**

*(courteously interrupting the auctioneer)*

...I BEG YOUR PARDON!

THIS FARM BELONGED TO MY BROTHER.  
IT CAN'T BE SOLD TO ANOTHER.

**AUCTIONEER**

IT IS TRUE.  
IF A FAMILY MEMBER CALLS THE CLAIM  
NO SALE CAN TAKE PLACE HERE OR NOW.

**EDWARD**

I AM GAINES. EDWARD GAINES. BROTHER OF THE DECEASED.

**EDWARD**

*(incredulously, almost pleading)*

DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME?

**TOWNSPEOPLE**

*(their curiosity aroused)*

EDWARD GAINES? WHO IS HE?  
DID OLD GAINES HAVE A BROTHER?  
EDWARD GAINES? WHO IS HE?

**EDWARD**

I WAS BORN AMONG YOU.  
AND NOW I'VE RETURNED.  
DOESN'T ANYONE REMEMBER ME?

**TOWNSPEOPLE**

NO. NO. NO. NO.  
WAS IT A LONG TIME AGO?

**EDWARD**

YOU THOUGHT I WAS LOST, DIDN'T YOU?  
IN A ROUGH LIFE OF THE GAME?  
YOU WERE WRONG.

WELL NO, YOU WEREN'T ... *(sotto voce)*  
WELL YES, YOU WERE!

I WAS JUST A BOY  
WHEN ANY OF YOU LAST SAW ME.  
BUT I'VE BEEN HAPPILY MARRIED  
WITH A DAUGHTER WE BOTH ADORED.  
NOW I'M A WIDOWER, A MAN WITH MEANS,  
A FATHER WITH A CHILD TO RAISE.

WHAT MY BROTHER OWNED  
I HAVE RIGHT OF FIRST OFFER TO BUY.  
WHICH I DO NOW, FRIENDS.  
WHICH I DO NOW.

**AUCTIONEER**

IT IS TRUE.  
IT IS THE LAW.

**TOWNSPEOPLE**

*(echoing the AUCTIONEER)*

IT IS TRUE. IT IS TRUE.  
IT IS TRUE. IT IS TRUE.

**AUCTIONEER**

WE MUST ENTERTAIN HIS RIGHT UNDER THE LAW.

(to EDWARD)

WHAT IS YOUR PLEASURE, MR. GAINES, SIR?  
WHAT PARTS INTEREST YOU?

**EDWARD**

I WANT IT ALL.  
I'LL HAVE IT ALL.  
EVERY STICK, EVERY BARREL,  
EVERY BOX OF CHINA TEA BELONGS TO ME.  
EVERY BODY, EVERY BROOM,  
EVERY MULE, EVERY LOOM.

(pointing at the slaves)

KEEP ALL THE GOODS AND PROPERTY TOGETHER.  
I'LL BUY IT ALL.

(GAINES negotiates his contract with the AUCTIONEER [Stage Left]. When the TOWNSPEOPLE begin to disperse, several prominent businessmen remain to witness the legal transaction.)

(The slave families, allowed to stay together thanks to GAINES's generosity, celebrate in dance and song. However, their movements suggest, abstractly, bars of detention.)

**CHORUS**

**BLACK CHORUS**

A LITTLE MORE TIME  
A LITTLE MORE TIME  
MORE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN WE LOVE...

(tenor soloist)

...TIME WITH OUR BROTHERS...

(all)

...WE FEEL THE MERCY OF OUR LORD GOD  
WITH THE GRACE OF A LITTLE MORE TIME.

**CILLA and MARGARET**

ANOTHER SEASON OF FRIENDSHIP  
TELLING STORIES, SHARING SECRETS BY THE FIRE.

**CHORUS**

WE FEEL THE MERCY OF OUR LORD GOD  
WITH THE GRACE OF A LITTLE MORE TIME.

**MARGARET**

MORE NIGHTS TO CURL LIKE A VINE  
IN OUR HUSBANDS' ARMS

**ROBERT**

MORE DAYS TO BASK IN THE LIGHT  
OF OUR LOVERS' EYES ...

**CILLA and MARGARET**

OUR FATHERS' GRAVES WE CAN STILL ATTEND

**ALL**

WITH SWEET WILLIAM AND COLUMBINE

**CHORUS**

A LITTLE MORE TIME  
A LITTLE MORE TIME  
MORE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN WE LOVE...

(mezzo-sopranos)  
...TIME WITH OUR MOTHERS...

(all)

WE FEEL THE MERCY OF OUR LORD GOD  
WITH THE GRACE OF A LITTLE MORE TIME.

**MARGARET**

I MADE A LITTLE PLAY DOLL FOR MY BABY  
WITH BUTTON EYES AND HAIR OF YARN;  
THE LIPS ARE MADE OF ROSE-COLORED THREAD.

*(Distracted, GAINES turns around and notices MARGARET. He is intrigued, and grateful for his good fortune to have just purchased her.)*

ONE DAY SHE WILL LOVE IT;  
I AM WAITING FOR HER TO LOVE IT.

(GAINES resumes his negotiations.)

WHEN SHE IS OLD ENOUGH TO HOLD IT  
I'M WAITING FOR THIS MYSTERY CALLED CHILD.

**ALL**

A LITTLE MORE TIME  
A LITTLE MORE TIME  
MORE TIME WITH THE CHILDREN WE LOVE...

(tenors)

...TIME WITH OUR BROTHERS...

(all)

...WE FEEL THE BREATH OF OUR LORD GOD  
WITH THE GIFT OF A LITTLE MORE TIME

(softer)

WE FEEL THE BREATH OF OUR LORD GOD  
WITH THE GIFT OF A LITTLE MORE TIME...

(ending quietly)

(To the accompaniment of soft instrumental music, the SLAVES slowly exit Stage Right.)

(After completing his transaction with GAINES, the AUCTIONEER departs Stage Left with the prominent businessmen.)

(Upon finishing her song, MARGARET unties her neck scarf and wraps it around a pole. She then exits Stage Right, the last of the SLAVES to leave.)

**EDWARD**

(watching the last of the townspeople leave)

LOOK AT THEM.  
THEY WERE MY NEIGHBORS ONCE.  
THEY LIE.  
THEY PRETEND THEY DON'T REMEMBER ME.

**CASEY**

IT WAS A LONG TIME AGO, SIR.  
YOU'VE BEEN AWAY FOR TWENTY YEARS...

**EDWARD**

*(turning back around)*

...TWENTY YEARS. *(as an aside)*

THEY PRETEND. THEY LIE.  
THEY SAY THEY DON'T REMEMBER ME.

*(MARGARET's scarf, tied to a pole, catches GAINES's attention; he starts walking toward it.)*

**CASEY**

SOMETHING IN THE PAST, SIR?  
SOMETHING BEST FORGOTTEN?

**EDWARD**

*(taking MARGARET's scarf from the pole)*

I WAS JUST A BOY.  
THE TROUBLE I CAUSED WAS INESCAPABLE.  
FOR A BOY ...  
A BOY WITH AN APPETITE.

**CASEY**

BUT EVERY BOY HAS AN APPETITE, SIR.

**EDWARD**

I LEFT UNDER A CLOUD OF SUSPICION.  
IT WAS NOTHING, NOTHING TO RAISE EYEBROWS.  
THE GIRL WAS SO YOUNG,  
AND FROM SUCH A FINE FAMILY;  
THINGS GOT A LITTLE OUT OF HAND.

SO NOW THEY PRETEND  
NEITHER I NOR IT EVER HAPPENED.  
WHAT A SHAME ...  
I REMEMBER!  
I REMEMBER EVERYTHING.

**ARIA**

[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE 1]

**EDWARD**

*(wistful, yet still optimistic)*

I REMEMBER EVERYTHING  
I REMEMBER EVERYTHING ...

I REMEMBER THE CURVE OF EVERY HILL  
THE SWANS IN THE POND  
I REMEMBER THEM STILL.

I REMEMBER EVERY TREE  
MAPLE, BIRCH, WILLOWS AND PINE

I CAN SEE THEM NOW  
SHADING THE DRIVE  
SHELT'RING ME FROM THE HEAT.  
MAPLE, BIRCH AND THE ODOR OF PINE

I REMEMBER EVERY TREE  
BUT NONE OF THEM REMEMBERS ME.

THE WELL, THE CREEK  
FISHING BY A LAKE.  
EVENINGS OF LAUGHTER  
WITH GIRLS WHO WANTED TO PLAY.

I REMEMBER EVERY TREE  
BUT NONE OF THEM REMEMBERS ME.

THEY WON'T FORGET ME AGAIN! *(sotto voce)*

*(EDWARD and CASEY leave.)*

**End of Scene One**

\*\*\*\*\*

## [ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE I]

Orchestral Interlude I is pure rhythm: intensely energetic, almost hard-edged staccato figures played by the orchestra's percussionists. These rhythmic motives lead organically into the opera's second scene, during which we see the slaves making music upon their plantation work implements and domestic goods, as well as singing animated work songs when coming home from a day's labor in the distant fields.

During the opera's Orchestral Interludes, atmospheric period photos of Southern plantations or historical sites (pre-Civil War, c. 1850) will be projected onto scrim(s) to enhance the sense of "time once removed." If any people are seen in these photos, their facial features must not be distinguishable; they are to be considered "props," not individuals or characters.



**Act I, Scene ii: Harvest time, about six months later.**

The slaves -- some of whom are children, barely 10 or 12 years old -- head back to their quarters after a day working in the fields.

**BLACK CHORUS**

CHORUS

**ROBERT**

TURN MY FACE TO THE DYING SUN

**CHORUS**

TURN MY FACE TO THE DYING SUN

**ROBERT**

CAN'T STRAIGHTEN MY BACK  
TIL THE WORK IS DONE

**CHORUS**

CAN'T STRAIGHTEN MY BACK  
TIL THE WORK IS DONE

**ROBERT**

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

**CHORUS**

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

**ROBERT**

GOING TO DANCE  
ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK SOMEDAY

**CHORUS**

GOING TO DANCE  
ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK SOMEDAY

**ALL (ROBERT and CHORUS)**

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER  
DON'T ABANDON ME  
WHILE MY SWEAT STILL SWEETS THE VELVET DIRT  
OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

**CHORUS**

(soprano soloist) BOSS IS HAPPY AT HIS PLATE  
(chorus) LONG AS HE GETS HIS FOWL  
(soprano soloist) IF I STAND AT HIS COOKING STOVE  
(chorus) HIS SUPPER WILL BE FOUL.

**ROBERT and SOPRANO SOLOIST**

BELIEVE IT! *(shouted as in gospel music)*

**ALL (ROBERT and CHORUS)**

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER  
DON'T ABANDON ME  
WHILE MY BLOOD FLOODS THE VELVET DIRT  
OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

...CRACK...  
...UH! BACK...

...CUT...  
...UH! CANE...

...PULL...  
...UH! MULE...

...CHOP...  
...UH! COTTON...

...SPLIT...  
...UH! WOOD...

*(a little louder)*

...CRACK...  
...UH! BACK...

...CUT...  
...UH! CANE...

...PULL...  
...UH! MULE...

...CHOP...  
...UH! COTTON...

...SPLIT...  
...UH! WOOD...

...CRACK! CUT!  
PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT!  
PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT!  
PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!

### WOMEN

(soprano soloist) BOSS IS HAPPY IN HIS BED  
(women's chorus) LONG AS HIS PILLOW'S DOWNEY  
(soprano soloist) IF I STOOD NEAR HIS SLEEPY HEAD  
(women's chorus) HIS FACE WOULD BE AS FLUFFY.

**ROBERT and SOPRANO SOLOIST**  
TELL IT TO ME! (*shouted as in gospel music*)

### ROBERT

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

### CHORUS

PLOWED THE FIELD, BALED THE HAY

### ROBERT

GOING TO DANCE  
ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK ONE DAY.

**CHORUS**

GOING TO DANCE  
ON THE LEAD MULE'S BACK SOMEDAY.

**ALL (ROBERT and CHORUS)**

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER  
DON'T ABANDON ME  
WHILE MY TEARS MUDDY THE RICH BROWN SOIL  
OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

OH MOTHER, OH FATHER  
DON'T ABANDON ME  
WHILE MY TEARS MUDDY THE VELVET SOIL  
OF DEAR OLD KENTUCKY.

...CRACK...  
...UH! BACK...

...CUT...  
...UH! CANE...

...PULL...  
...UH! MULE...

...CHOP...  
...UH! COTTON...

...SPLIT...  
...UH! WOOD...

*(a little louder)*

...CRACK...  
...UH! BACK...

...CUT...  
...UH! CANE...

...PULL...  
...UH! MULE...

...CHOP...  
...UH! COTTON...

...SPLIT...  
...UH! WOOD...

...CRACK! CUT!  
PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT!  
PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!...

...CRACK! CUT!  
PULL! CHOP! SPLIT!

*(When the dinner bell sounds, the workers wash up for supper. CILLA is waiting at MARGARET and ROBERT's cabin to welcome them home.)*

**CILLA**

YOU LEFT THE LIGHT BEHIND YOU.  
DID YOU HAVE A WORRISOME DAY?

*(CILLA, ROBERT, and MARGARET go inside the cabin, and begin preparing dinner.)*

**ROBERT**

EVERY NEW DAY IS LIKE YESTERDAY.  
WORK THE CROPS,  
FORGET ABOUT PAY.  
END EACH DAY  
LIKE THE ONE BEFORE.  
DON'T LEAVE THE FIELD  
TIL THE LIGHT'S TOO POOR.

**CILLA**

THIS GAINES IS NOT LIKE THAT LAST ONE.  
A MEAN STREAK RIDES HIS BROW.  
THE OTHER ONE HAD A HEART SOMETIMES.

**MARGARET**

NO SUCH THING AS A BOSS'S HEART.  
HE CAN'T WASTE THE SPACE.

**ROBERT**

IF HE COULD HARVEST CORN  
IN HIS CHEST

**ROBERT and MARGARET**  
*(in jest, as if repeating an old joke)*

HE WOULD LEASE OUT  
HIS OWN HEART'S PLACE!

*(ROBERT and MARGARET laugh heartily)*

**CILLA**

EASE YOURSELVES.  
EASE YOURSELVES.  
THE TABLE IS LAID.  
THE SUPPER IS PLAIN BUT WARM.

**MARGARET**

YOU'VE GOT MILK AND STRAWBERRIES TOO.

*(They all sit down to eat.)*

**"PRAYER"**

**CILLA**

DEAR LORD IN HEAVEN.

**MARGARET and ROBERT**

*(interjecting, as in a Responsorial)*

[Blessed Lord]

**CILLA**

MAKE US GRATEFUL FOR OUR FOOD.

**MARGARET and ROBERT**

[Sweet Jesus]

**CILLA**

KEEP US WELL AND IN YOUR SIGHT.

**MARGARET and ROBERT**  
[hmmm]

**CILLA**

PROTECT THOSE IN DANGER.

**MARGARET and ROBERT**  
[Take my hand]

**CILLA**

AND LET US BE GUIDED BY YOUR HEAVENLY LIGHT.

**MARGARET and ROBERT**  
[Precious Lord... hmmm]

**CILLA (alone)**

AMEN.

\*\*\*

**ROBERT**

(exuberantly)

YOU ARE A HUNDRED POUND BLESSING, MAMA.

**MARGARET**

HOW'S MY BABY?  
NOT CRYING FOR ME?  
HOW'S MY SWEETNESS?  
NOT MISSING ME?

**CILLA**

SLEEPING, MARGARET. SLEEPING.  
NOT A FROWN ON HER SUGAR BUTTER FACE.

**ROBERT (laughing)**

YOU EVER SEE A MOTHER LIKE THAT?  
THE CHILD SUPPOSED TO NEED THE MOTHER.  
NOW HERE THE MOTHER NEEDS THE CHILD MORE.

**MARGARET**

I NEED TO SMELL HER BREATH...

**CILLA**

...THE BABY NEEDS HER REST...

**MARGARET**

...I NEED TO SEE HER EYES, HER SMILE.

**CILLA** (*emphatically*)

IT'S DANGEROUS, DAUGHTER,  
TO LOVE TOO MUCH.  
THE LORD GIVETH  
AND THE LORD TAKETH AWAY.  
COME TO YOUR SUPPER BEFORE YOU WAKE HER.

**MARGARET**

SHE IS MY SUPPER,  
THE FOOD OF MY HEART.

**ROBERT**

AND WHAT AM I?  
THE LEAVINGS?

**MARGARET**

(*smiling, reaching out to ROBERT*)

OH NO. OH NO.  
YOU ARE THE PULSE.  
WITHOUT YOU I HAVE NO HEART.

**ROBERT**

AND WITHOUT YOU I HAVE NO PULSE TO GIVE.

(*They embrace.*)

**CILLA**  
(interrupting)

ENOUGH SAID.  
GO GET YOUR HEART  
BEFORE YOU BREAK MINE.

(As CILLA and ROBERT eat dinner, MARGARET sits at the table and tenderly sings to her baby.)

**"LULLABY"**

**MARGARET**

SAD THINGS, FAR AWAY  
SOFT THINGS, COME AND PLAY

LOVELY BABY ...

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW,  
SLEEP IN THE HAY  
BABY'S GOT A DREAMIN' ON THE WAY

BAD THINGS, FAR AWAY  
PRETTY THINGS, HERE TO STAY

SWEET BABY, SMILE AT ME  
LOVELY BABY, GO TO SLEEP

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW,  
SLEEP IN THE HAY  
BABY'S GONNA DREAM THE NIGHT AWAY

LOVELY BABY, PRETTY BABY  
BABY'S GONNA DREAM THE NIGHT AWAY

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW,  
SLEEP IN THE HAY  
BABY'S GONNA DREAM THE NIGHT AWAY

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW,  
SLEEP IN THE HAY  
BABY'S GONNA DREAM (softer)  
BABY'S GONNA DREAM ... (softer still)

(CASEY, who has been eavesdropping on MARGARET, suddenly barges in.)

**CASEY**

NOT TONIGHT.  
NOBODY DREAMS TONIGHT.

**ROBERT**

WHAT'S THAT? WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

**CASEY** (*snarling cynically*)

WHAT'S THAT I SAY?  
WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY?

**ROBERT**

EXCUSE ME, SIR.  
YES, SIR.  
WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY, SIR?

**CASEY**

BETTER. MUCH BETTER.  
WHAT I SAY IS  
NO HAPPY DARKY DREAMIN' TONIGHT.  
MR. GAINES HAS OTHER PLANS... OTHER PLANS.

**CILLA**

WHAT PLANS, MR. CASEY?

**CASEY**

I'M TALKIN' TO YOUR BOY, CILLA.  
NOT YOU.

**CASEY**

(*to ROBERT*)

YOU HAVE BEEN RENTED OUT, BOY.  
MR. GAINES WANTS YOU ON YOUR WAY TONIGHT  
SO YOU'LL BE READY FOR WORK AT SUNRISE.

**ROBERT**

WHERE, SIR?  
WHERE IS HE SENDING ME?

**CASEY**

NOT YOUR BUSINESS TO KNOW.  
ONLY YOUR BUSINESS TO GO.

*(pointing to the door)*  
THE WAGON IS ON THE ROAD.  
HOP TO IT, BOY!

**MARGARET**

I'LL GET READY.  
HOLD THE BABY, MAMA.

**CASEY**

HOLD ON, GIRL.  
YOU'LL GET READY ALL RIGHT.  
BUT YOU WON'T NEED THE WAGON.

*(quietly, with innuendo)*  
MR. GAINES WANTS YOU IN THE HOUSE, *HIS* HOUSE.  
AIN'T THAT NICE?  
NO MORE FIELD WORK.  
AIN'T THAT NICE?  
AIN'T THAT NICE?

YOU CAN PUT YOUR FEET UP  
IN HIS HOUSE ALL DAY,  
ALL NIGHT TOO.  
AIN'T THAT NICE?

*(CASEY pulls a stylish housedress out of his satchel. He waves the dress, like a red flag, in Robert's face, then tosses it at MARGARET.)*

AIN'T THAT NICE?

*(CASEY leaves.)*

*(ROBERT and MARGARET exchange troubled glances; CILLA rocks the baby.)*

**CASEY** (*offstage*)

SLEEP IN THE MEADOW

(*sung to the Lullaby's melody*)

DA-DA-DA... DA-DA-DUM

SLEEP IN THE HAY ...

(*he laughs derisively*)

**ROBERT**

(*erupting in rage*)

SKUNK! SNAKE!  
SON OF A WHORE!

**CILLA**

(*agitated*)

PLEASE! DON'T WAKE THE BABY.

**ROBERT**

YELLOWBELLY!  
[THAT] SON OF A DOG!!

**MARGARET**

COOL DOWN, ROBERT!  
HE WILL HEAR YOU.

**ROBERT**

(*angrily*)

I AM A MAN!  
AIN'T I?  
AIN'T I A MAN?

**MARGARET**

(*dreamily*)

YES!  
YOU ARE TO ME.  
AND TO US.

**ROBERT**

*(almost stuttering in frustration)*

...I KNOW... I KNOW... I KNOW...  
WHAT IS ON HIS MIND.  
BASTARD!

**MARGARET**

*(lovingly)*

IT WON'T HAPPEN. IT WON'T!  
BELIEVE ME!

**ROBERT**

HOW CAN YOU KNOW?  
HOW CAN YOU BE SURE?  
YOU CAN'T CONTROL A SNAKE IN HIS OWN NEST.

**MARGARET**

HIS DAUGHTER LIVES THERE TOO.  
HE WILL BEHAVE.

**CILLA**

BELIEVE HER, SON.  
IT CAN'T BE FOR TOO LONG.

**MARGARET**

WE WILL FIND A WAY.  
STAY STRONG.  
HE IS NOT THE MASTER OF ME.

**DUET**

**MARGARET**

HOLD ME...

**ROBERT**

...HOLD ON...

The scene changes to show EDWARD MARGARET in the library of Maplewood  
Plantation. Affecting the airs of an English aristocrat, he is elegantly dressed, drinks  
whisky, and smokes an expensive ...STAY SWEET...

**ROBERT**

YOU ASKED ...STAY STRONG... MR. GAINES.

**MARGARET**

...BE MY MOONRISE...

**ROBERT**

...BE MY DAWN...

NOTHING I COULDN'T HANDLE, SIR,  
A LITTLE CONNIVANCE AT FIRST.

**MARGARET and ROBERT**

YOU ARE MY SHOULDER

**ROBERT**

THAT'S YOU ARE MY SPINE THIS FOR,  
THE WAGON'S GONEY

**MARGARET and ROBERT**

YOU ARE MY COURAGE

**MARGARET**

AND YOU ARE THE SIGN

**MARGARET and ROBERT**

THAT LOVE IS THE ONLY MASTER  
THE HEART OBEYS  
LOVE IS THE ONLY MASTER  
THAT MY HEART OBEYS.

I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK IN HER EYES.

*(They kiss as evening falls.)*

\*\*\*\*

LOVELY! LOVELY!  
FEISTY WITH A LOOK IN HER EYES.

The scene changes to show EDWARD GAINES sitting in the library of Maplewood Plantation. Affecting the airs of an English aristocrat, he is elegantly dressed, drinks whisky, and smokes an expensive cigar.

(CASEY stops, looking back at GAINES)

**CASEY**

YOU ASKED ME TO REPORT, MR. GAINES.

**CASEY**

**EDWARD**

I DID. INDEED I DID.  
ANY PROBLEMS?

**CASEY**

NOTHING I COULDN'T HANDLE, SIR.  
A LITTLE COMMOTION AT FIRST,  
BUT THEY'RE QUIET NOW.

**EDWARD**

QUIET?  
THAT'S NOT WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR.  
THE WAGON'S GONE?

**CASEY**

AS PLANNED.

**EDWARD**

THE GIRL?

**CASEY**

IN THE KITCHEN, SIR.  
HOLDING HER HEAD UP HIGH.  
SHE IS FEISTY, SIR.  
I DON'T LIKE THE LOOK IN HER EYES.

**EDWARD**

LOVELY! LOVELY!  
FEISTY WITH A LOOK IN HER EYES.

*Phrases  
to be  
changed.  
All others in  
color.*

Richard: Is (CASEY turns to leave)

Although Orchestral Interludes break sufficiently the dramatic tension and suggest the

(CASEY stops, looking back at GAINES)

TELL HER I WANT HER TO COME TO ME TONIGHT.

**CASEY**

AT YOUR PLEASURE, SIR.

(CASEY leaves.)

**ARIA**

**EDWARD**

A LITTLE SOLACE  
FOR A HARD WORKING MAN  
A RUBY RED SCARF  
SOOTHES A CALLOUSED HAND  
SOME RESPITE FOR AN ACTIVE MIND  
IS DUE, IT'S TRUE.

THE LEOPARD'S SPOTS  
ARE NOT MARKS OF SOIL  
THEY ARE THE WISDOM OF NATURE'S DESIGN  
THE NATURAL LANGUAGE OF ITS KIND  
A CUE, **[IT'S TRUE].**

A LITTLE SOLACE  
FOR A HARDWORKING MAN  
ALL WORK AND NO PLAY  
IS A VERY DULL PLAN.

(Becoming increasingly inebriated, EDWARD anticipates his taking of MARGARET sexually. He draws from his pocket her red scarf, stroking it.)

**End of Scene Two**

**[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE TWO]**

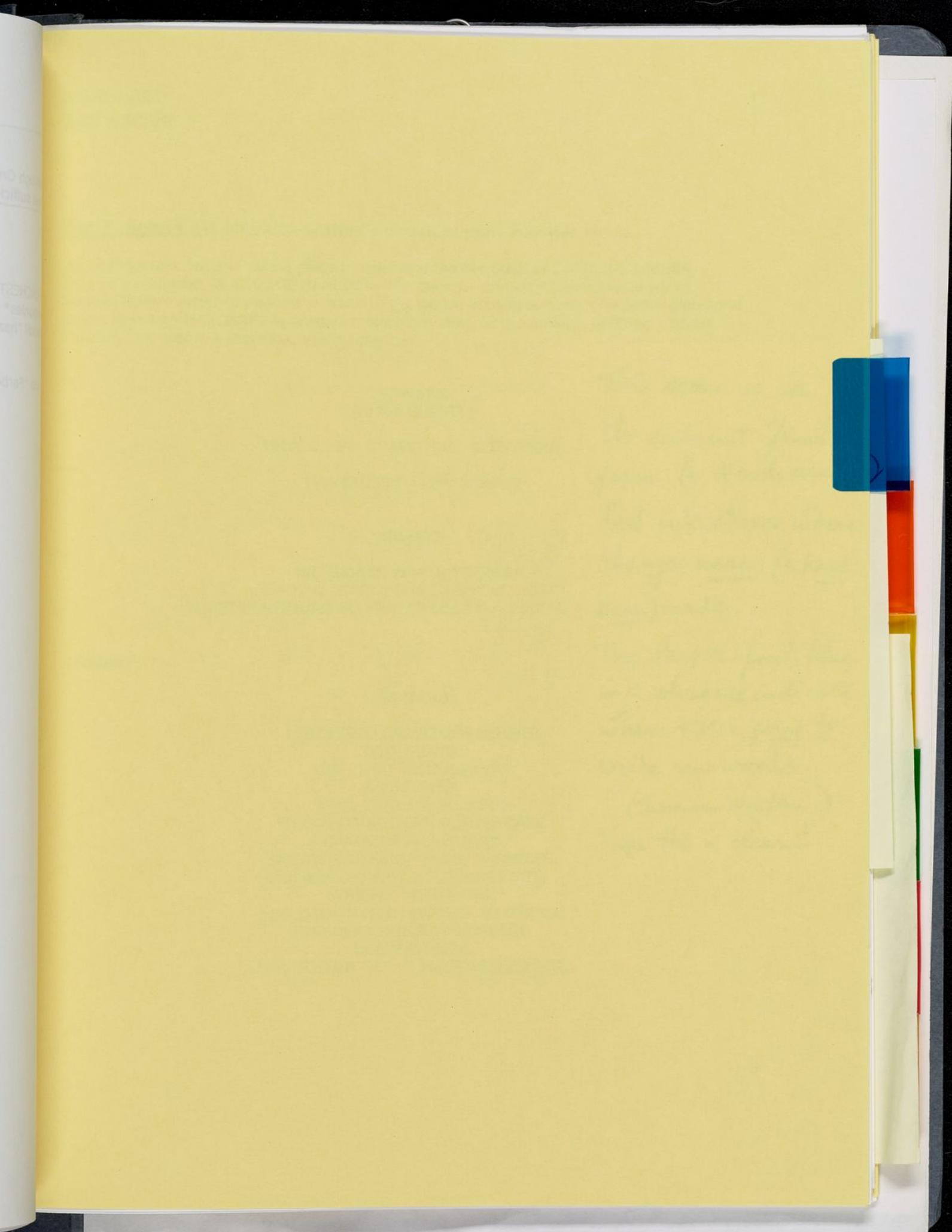
Phrase  
to be  
changed.  
All others in  
color.  
←

**Richard: Is this older description still relevant?**

Although Orchestral Interlude II is still "shortish," it is longer than the first, so as to break sufficiently the dramatic action and support the change in Gaines's character.

In ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE II, timbral strands and more tonally ambiguous harmonies\* provide a transitional flow into the next scene. Emerging from this musical "haze" is the feeling of a slow, stylized waltz.

\*as in "Farben" from Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces*.



**Act I, Scene iii: EDWARD GAINES's parlor, in early summer 1858.**

An engagement party is taking place to celebrate the betrothal of CAROLINE GAINES, Edward's daughter, to GEORGE HANCOCK. The guests – the local townspeople whom Edward is very eager to impress -- waltz to the gentle accompaniment of a parlor piano and violin. Although MARGARET is dressed more nicely now, in the uniform befitting a house servant, she acts in a more subjugated manner.

**EDWARD**  
(to the GUESTS)

PLEASE, MAY I HAVE YOUR ATTENTION?

(the GUESTS gather around)

**GUESTS**

MR. GAINES WANTS TO SPEAK.  
GATHER 'ROUND OUR GRACIOUS HOST.  
THERE IS NOTHING SO FINE AS SEEING A COUPLE

(Arioso)

**EDWARD**

I PROMISED CAROLINE'S MOTHER  
TWO THINGS.  
ONE, THAT I WOULD STAY  
A WIDOWER.  
TWO, THAT I WOULD SEE  
TO OUR DAUGHTER'S FUTURE CARE.  
CAROLINE HAS PROVEN  
THE RIGHTNESS OF THOSE PROMISES.  
SHE WILL INHERIT A SOUND ESTATE--  
WHICH, I MIGHT ADD,  
HAS GROWN FROM MODEST TO GRAND.  
AND HER CHOICE OF HUSBAND  
IS EVERYTHING  
HER MOTHER **WOULD** HAVE WISHED FOR.

This scene is in  
its current "final"  
form. (ie, it reads accurately)

Red ink shows where  
changes were (+ have  
been) made.

The larger font, blue  
ink phrases indicate  
where TM is going to  
write new words.

(There are very few.)  
Hope this is clear!

**GUESTS**

BEAUTIFUL WORDS.  
FROM OUR GENEROUS HOST!

**EDWARD**

A MAN OF STATURE AND LEARNING.

(GAINES nods at GEORGE with respect.)

**GUESTS**

AND HER CHOICE OF HUSBAND  
IS EVERYTHING HER MOTHER WISHED FOR.

**CAROLINE**

AND YOU, FATHER  
IS HE WHAT YOU HAVE WISH

**EDWARD**

EXACTLY SO. PRECISELY  
AM I RIGHT, GEORGE

**GEORGE**

I'M NOT SURE  
THAT I DESERVE HER  
BUT I WILL SPEND MY LIFE  
TRYING TO SERVE HER  
AND EARN THE DEVOTION  
SHE SQUANDERS ON ME.

**GUESTS**

THERE IS NOTHING SO WONDEROUS  
AS BEING IN LOVE.

(done)  
(They acknowledge  
and examine fine  
furnishings and  
fabric)

**GUESTS, EDWARD, CAROLINE and GEORGE**

THERE IS NOTHING SO WONDEROUS  
AS SEEING A MARRIAGE FOR LOVE.

**FEMALE GUESTS**

A MARRIAGE FOR LOVE.

**MALE GUESTS**

A MARRIAGE FOR LOVE.

**EDWARD**

CAROLINE, MY ADORABLE CAROLINE...  
GIVE YOUR FATHER  
A DAUGHTER'S EMBRACE.

(EDWARD, however, embraces CAROLINE too tightly.)

**CAROLINE**

(amused)

OH, FATHER. I CANNOT BREATHE.

**EDWARD**

(sarcastic, his feelings hurt)

FORGIVE ME.  
MY ARMS ARE LIKE MY LOVE.  
STRONG AND ALL EMBRACING.

**CAROLINE**

NEVER MIND, FATHER.  
I HAVE PROSPERED  
SO MUCH IN YOUR ARMS  
I CAN NOW EMBRACE ANOTHER.

(CAROLINE turns to GEORGE)

**GEORGE**

*(sensing that EDWARD feels somewhat rejected)*

THERE IS NO RIVAL HERE.  
LOVE DOES NOT CONQUER OR DISPOSE --  
IT DOUBLES AND TRIPLES WITH USE.

**EDWARD**

*(cynically, yet emotionally detached)*

I AGREE.  
LIKE MONEY IN THE BANK.

**GEORGE**

*(graciously)*

OH NO, SIR.  
LOVE IS AN OCEAN  
BREAKING INTO RIVERS;  
THOSE RIVERS  
BREAKING INTO STREAMS.

**EDWARD**

*(starting to bristle)*

WATCH OUT, DAUGHTER!  
HE WILL DROWN YOU.

**CAROLINE**

*(unwittingly increasing her father's insecurity)*

WILLINGLY, WILL I SWIM  
IN HIS SEA OF LOVE.  
AIR MEANS NOTHING TO ME  
WITHOUT HIM.

**EDWARD**

*(agitated, almost sarcastically)*

A MINUTE AGO  
YOU WERE GASPING FOR AIR.  
NOW YOU TRADE IT FOR WATER --  
YOUR CONFUSION DISTURBS ME, DAUGHTER.

**GEORGE**

*(trying to restore peace)*

SHE NEEDS BOTH, SIR.  
AS ALL LIFE DOES:  
AIR AND WATER.  
NO RIVALRY THERE.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE IS ALWAYS CONFUSING.  
IT CAN NEVER BE AS CLEAR  
AS THE EMOTION IT TRIES TO CONVEY.

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE ...

**EDWARD**

*(retorting)*

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS AN IMPOSTER!  
HIDING IN DRESSES OF VERSE...

**GEORGE**

*(emphatically)*

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS A MAGICIAN!  
TURNING ROSES INTO DOVES ON THE WING...

**EDWARD**

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE...

*(The heated exchange between the two men has quickly escalated into an argument. CAROLINE, embarrassed by their behavior in front of the guests, tries to defuse the tension.)*

**CAROLINE**

...A RAFT IN A STORMY SEA,  
OFFERING RESCUE.

**GUESTS**  
(enthusiastically joining in the discussion)

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS ~~VERY~~ OFTEN HARD TO EXPLAIN.  
IT MAY ~~BRING YOU TRUE JOY~~  
BUT ~~IT WILL CAUSE YOU GREAT PAIN!~~

offer much  
can end in such

**GEORGE**

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS A LIGHTHOUSE  
TO GUIDE US OVER HEAVY WAVES...

**EDWARD**

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS A THIEF RESPECTING NO HOUSEHOLD,  
STEALING THE LOVED ONES AWAY...

**GUESTS**

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS TOO COMPLEX TO BE KNOWN.  
~~IT~~ IS BOUGHT WITHOUT PRICE,  
~~AND IT~~ CAN NEVER BE OWNED.

What

**EDWARD**

...THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS AN IMPOSTER...

**GEORGE**

...IS A MAGICIAN...

**EDWARD**

...IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE! ...

**GEORGE**

...TURNING ROSES INTO DOVES ON THE WING!

*(With a nod of approval from her father, CAROLINE encourages the musicians to play a waltz. The GUESTS quickly return to the dance floor, reveling in the joyous, elegant music. Although GAINES appears uncomfortable at first about the argument that just transpired, he eventually regains his composure and once again plays the gracious host.)*

**EDWARD**

WELL THAT IS OUR ANSWER, THEN.  
CHAMPAGNE HEALS ALL WOUNDS  
AND PUTS ARGUMENT TO BED.  
CONGRATULATIONS, SON.  
BLESSINGS, DAUGHTER.

*(He drinks a toast to the couple as MARGARET serves the GUESTS.)*

**CAROLINE**

MARGARET. WAIT A MOMENT.  
COME TO ME.  
WHAT DO YOU THINK?

**MARGARET**

EXCUSE ME? MAM?

**CAROLINE**

WHAT DO YOU THINK  
ABOUT LOVE?  
WE WERE DISCUSSING  
THE WORDS TO DESCRIBE IT.

**EDWARD**  
*(warning)*

CHILD! DEAR CHILD!

**CAROLINE**

DO THEY HELP US TO LOVE?  
OR HURT US BEYOND REPAIR?  
I WANT TO KNOW WHAT SHE THINKS.

**EDWARD**  
(insistent)

CHILD, PLEASE!  
CHILD, NO MORE!

**GUESTS**

(alarmed)

OH DEAR. OH DEAR.  
WE THOUGHT HE WAS QUALITY.

[Oh dear, oh dear...]

THIS IS A MISTAKE  
QUALITY FOLK WOULD NEVER MAKE.

[Oh dear, oh dear...]

THIS IS A PROFOUND INSULT.  
THIS IS A MISTAKE  
QUALITY FOLK WOULD NEVER MAKE.

WHAT KIND OF HOUSE DOES HE RUN?  
*WE DON'T BEHAVE THIS WAY!*

**EDWARD**

CAROLINE,  
YOU ARE TOO WILLFUL.  
SHE CAN'T ANSWER YOU.  
*SHE WON'T ANSWER YOU.*

(Arioso)

**CAROLINE**

WHY NOT?  
SHE HAS LOVED ME,  
SERVED ME,  
TAUGHT ME.

~~[PUT ME TO BED,]~~ Helped me to dress  
WATCHED OVER MY SLEEP.  
WHO KNOWS BETTER THAN SHE  
HOW TO SAY WHAT LOVE IS?  
CAN WORDS DO IT JUSTICE, MARGARET?  
ENCOURAGE ITS SUCCESS?

[Oh dear, Oh dear...]

OR, AS MY FATHER SAYS,  
IS THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
AN IMPOSTER?  
A THIEF IN THE NIGHT?

**MARGARET**

BEGGING YOUR PARDON, MISS CAROLINE.  
MR. GAINES IS THE EXPERT HERE.

**EDWARD**

YOU SEE?  
SHE HAS NOTHING TO SAY ON THE MATTER.  
LOVE IS NOT IN HER VOCABULARY.

**CAROLINE**

MY FATHER? THE EXPERT?  
HIS LOVE IS ROUGH.  
YOURS IS TENDER.

**MARGARET**

*(thoughtfully)*

WORDS OF LOVE ARE MOTHS --  
EASY FOOD FOR FLAME.  
ACTIONS ALONE  
SAY WHAT LOVE MAY BE.

**EDWARD**

ENOUGH!  
WE HAVE ALL HAD ENOUGH  
OF THIS NONSENSE.

**GUESTS**

YES, ENOUGH.  
WHO IS INTERESTED  
IN A SLAVE WOMAN'S VIEWS?

THIS IS A MISTAKE  
QUALITY FOLK WOULD NEVER MAKE.

*[Oh dear, Oh dear...]*

**EDWARD**

I REFUSE TO HEAR A SLAVE COMMENT  
ON THINGS OUTSIDE HER SCOPE.  
OF COURSE SHE IS TENDER TO A CHILD,  
BUT WHAT CAN A SLAVE KNOW  
OF ADULT LOVE, GIVEN FREELY?  
OUR GUESTS ARE RIGHT.  
HER VIEWS ARE WORTHLESS.

(to MARGARET)  
YOU ARE EXCUSED.  
LEAVE US.

(MARGARET exits)

**CAROLINE**

FATHER, YOU SHAME ME.  
SHE IS AS COMPLETE A HUMAN AS YOU ARE.

**GEORGE**

IF SHE IS A MOTHER,  
MAYBE MORE SO.

*(The large clock in the ballroom strikes 10 o'clock. Surprised by the late hour, a few of the guests now realize that they have an alibi to leave the party.)*

**EDWARD** (to CAROLINE)

YOU DISAPPOINT ME.  
HOW COULD LOVE EXIST IN A SLAVE?  
PASSION, PERHAPS.  
BUT HOW ~~D~~ SHE KNOW THE DIFFERENCE?

how  
would

**CAROLINE**

THERE ARE MANY KINDS OF LOVE, FATHER.

**CAROLINE and GEORGE**  
*(looking into each other's eyes)*

AND MANY KINDS OF LOVERS.

**GUESTS**

THIS IS TOO SUBTLE FOR ME.  
AND ME...  
...AND ME...  
...AND YOU...AND ME...  
PERHAPS IT'S TIME TO SAY GOOD NIGHT.  
ARGUMENT CHILLS A PARTY.  
GOOD NIGHT...  
...GOOD NIGHT...  
...AND GOOD NIGHT!

*(The GUESTS leave, bowing stiffly. They disapprove of GAINES's behavior and act coolly towards him.)*

**EDWARD**  
*(chagrined by the GUESTS' early departure)*

FOOLS, IDIOTS.  
WHAT DO THEY KNOW ABOUT "QUALITY" FOLK?

*(with regret)*

THIS WAS TO BE A PROUD MOMENT.  
NOW YOU HAVE GIVEN MY NEIGHBORS  
MORE REASON TO GOSSIP AND DESPISE ME.

**CAROLINE**

I AM SORRY, FATHER,  
IF I UPSET YOU.

**GEORGE**

DON'T THINK US UNGRATEFUL  
FOR THIS CELEBRATION.



**MARGARET**  
(looking at the glass)

IS IT TRUE?  
ARE THERE MANY KINDS OF LOVE?  
SHOW ME EACH AND EVERY ONE.  
YOU CAN'T, CAN YOU?  
FOR THERE IS JUST ONE KIND.

**ARIA**

**MARGARET**

ONLY UNHARNESSED HEARTS  
CAN SURVIVE A LOCKED-DOWN LIFE

LIKE A RIVER RUSHING  
FROM THE GRIP OF ITS BANKS  
AS LIGHT ESCAPES THE COLDEST STAR  
QUALITY LOVE -- THE LOVE OF ALL LOVES, ~~my weapons of choice~~  
WILL BREAK AWAY.

WHEN SORROW CLOUDS THE MIND  
THE SPINE GROWS STRONG

NO PRETTY WORDS CAN SOOTHE OR CURE  
WHAT HEAVY HANDS CAN ~~BREAK~~ ~~crush?~~ ~~soil?~~

WHEN SORROW IS DEEP,  
THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS  
ITS **[QUALITY]** LOVE, <sup>^</sup> ~~weapon of choice~~  
THE LOVE OF ALL LOVES.

NO PRETTY WORDS CAN SOOTHE OR CURE  
WHAT HEAVY HANDS CAN ~~BREAK~~ ~~crush do~~

~~get~~ ✓ WHEN SORROW IS DEEP  
✓ THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS ~~its weapons of choice~~  
✓ ITS QUALITY LOVE.  
THE LOVE OF ALL LOVES.

~~stop~~ WHEN SORROW IS DEEP  
THE SECRET SOUL KEEPS  
ITS **[QUALITY]** LOVE. ~~weapon of choice~~  
THE LOVE OF ALL LOVES. ~~its Quality Love~~

(EDWARD emerges from his hiding place, and walks toward MARGARET. He gently takes the glass from her hand, and then pulls MARGARET's red scarf from his pocket. He dangles it before her menacingly.)

**EDWARD** (to MARGARET)

SUCH FINE SENTIMENTS.  
TOO FINE, I THINK  
FOR A SLAVE.  
**BUT I HAVE MY REMEDIES.**  
A MAN HAS MANY REMEDIES.

**MARGARET**

THEY CAN NOT TOUCH  
THE SECRET SOUL

**EDWARD**

YOUR SOUL  
IS NOT ON MY MIND.

*(He slowly ties the scarf around her neck. When MARGARET resists this seemingly tender gesture, EDWARD drags her to his quarters.)*

*(exit)*

**End of Act One**

\*\*\*\*\*

**No Break between Acts I and II**

**[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE III]**  
the longest of the interludes



**MARGARET GARNER**

**Act II: Scene I - Winter, four years later (January 1861)**

While walking to CILLA's cabin, MARGARET sees CASEY interrogating a black man in the distance. She is anticipating a visit from ROBERT, who has been secretly visiting her there on Sunday nights. When MARGARET arrives at the cabin, however, she finds CILLA packing a carpetbag.

**MARGARET**  
(agitated)

HAS HE COME?

**CILLA**

NOT YET.

**MARGARET**

IS HE HERE?  
HAS HE COME?

**CILLA**

NOT YET.  
BUT SOON.

**MARGARET**

(noticing CILLA's carpetbag)

WHAT ARE YOU DOING?  
WHERE ARE THE CHILDREN?

**CILLA**

ROBERT IS MY SON  
AND HIS WORD IS GOLD.  
CALM YOURSELF.  
YOUR DAUGHTER IS WITH KATE.  
SO IS THE LITTLE ONE.

**MARGARET**

WHY ARE YOU FOLDING THEIR CLOTHES?  
YOU ARE PACKING THEM AWAY!

WHAT AREN'T YOU TELLING ME?  
HAS CASEY BEEN HERE?  
*IS HE TAKING THEM AWAY?*

**CILLA**

YOU HAVE CHANGED SO, MARGARET.  
EACH TIME YOU VISIT  
I SEE LESS OF YOU  
*AND MORE OF A WET HEN.*

*DON'T CUT UP SO.*  
THE NEWS IS GOOD.

**MARGARET**

WHAT NEWS?  
PLEASE, CILLA.  
WHAT IS HAPPENING?

(Arioso)

**CILLA**

*(pulling MARGARET into a dark corner of the room)*

IT'S TIME, DARLING GIRL.  
AT LAST,  
THE TIME HAS COME.  
THE PLAN IS SET.  
THAT'S WHY YOUR HUSBAND IS LATE.  
HE IS MAKING SURE  
ALL IS IN PLACE.  
YOU'RE LEAVING TONIGHT!

**MARGARET**

SWEET JESUS!

**CILLA**

SWEETER THAN SYRUP  
AND RIGHT ON TIME.

*(MARGARET picks up some articles of her children's clothing and pretends to "dance" with them, as if they were a wealthy couple at a fancy ball. She and CILLA sing MARGARET's "Lullaby" in a lively, almost celebratory fashion.)*

**MARGARET**

SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE MEADOW  
SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE HAY  
MY BABIES GOT SOME DREAMING TO DO  
CAUSE FREEDOM'S ON THE WAY.

**MARGARET and CILLA** (*together*)

SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE MEADOW  
SLEEP MY BABIES IN THE HAY  
MY BABIES GOT SOME DREAMING TO DO  
CAUSE FREEDOM'S ON THE WAY.

(ROBERT arrives; he and MARGARET embrace)

**MARGARET**

(*feigning anger at ROBERT*)

YOU DIDN'T SAY A WORD LAST SUNDAY.

**ROBERT**

(*taking her seriously*)

I COULDN'T.  
I HAD TO BE SURE.

**MARGARET**

(*teasing, but slightly sarcastically*)

YOU OUGHT TO TELL ME  
WHAT YOU'RE DOING ... SOMETIMES!

**ROBERT**

YOU NEED TO KEEP IT *QUIET* IN HERE.

**MARGARET**

ALRIGHT.  
WHEN DO WE LEAVE?

**ROBERT**

THREE HOURS FROM NOW.

**MARGARET**

OH LORD.  
I AM GONNA CRY.

**ROBERT**

YOU? NOT YOU!  
MY SOLDIER GIRL'S GOING TO CRY?

*(ROBERT tries to embrace MARGARET, but she pulls away, embarrassed to show her tears.)*

IT'S ALL RIGHT.  
IT'S ALL RIGHT.

**ARIA**

**ROBERT**

GO CRY, GIRL  
YOU HAVE WON YOUR TEARS  
GO CRY, GIRL  
**[THROUGH YOUR TENDER YEARS]**  
THE STRING IS CUT  
THE TALE IS TOLD  
I KNOW.  
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW.

THE GATE IS OPEN  
THE WAY IS CLEAR  
THE WORK IS **[DONE]**  
**AND THE TIME HAS COME,]** I KNOW.  
DON'T THINK I DON'T KNOW.  
GO CRY, GIRL  
GIRL, GO CRY.

**MARGARET**

*(recovering her composure, but still anxious)*

WHERE WILL WE GO?

**ROBERT**  
*(reassuringly)* IT'S ALRIGHT.

**MARGARET**  
ARE THERE OTHERS?

**ROBERT**  
IT'S ALRIGHT.

**MARGARET**

DO WE HAVE MONEY?  
WHERE WILL WE HIDE?

**ROBERT**  
IT'S ALRIGHT.

**ROBERT**

**I AM IN CHARGE NOW.**  
EVERYTHING IS READY  
EXCEPT YOU.  
NOW HELP MAMA FINISH PACKING.  
I AM GOING FOR THE CHILDREN.

(ROBERT *leaves*)

**CILLA**

(*locking the bag*)

ALL DONE.  
I'M THROUGH.

**MARGARET**

WHERE ARE YOUR THINGS?  
I DON'T SEE YOUR THINGS, MAMA.

**CILLA**

DARLING GIRL,  
I AM TOO OLD TO TREAD NEW WATER.  
I AM BOUND TO STAY HERE.

**MARGARET**

MAMA!  
YOU HAVE TO COME WITH US.

**CILLA**

NO, I DON'T.  
YOU KNOW I WON'T.

SEEING YOU,  
MY SON AND MY GRANDCHILDREN  
GONE FROM THIS PLACE,  
AWAY FROM SATAN'S BREATH  
IS MY BLESSING.

DON'T MOURN ME.  
WHEN MY FAMILY IS SAFE,  
I WILL BE ONLY NEAR THE CROSS --  
NOT ON IT.

**ARIA**

**CILLA**

HE IS BY,  
FOREVER BY ME.  
IN HIS SHADOW  
I WILL LINGER ON A WHILE  
TIL HE CALLS ME.

HE IS BY,  
FOREVER BY ME.  
NO TRUMPETS OR STREETS OF GOLD  
HE WILL COME IN SILENCE  
AND GATHER ME IN HIS ARMS.

HE IS BY,  
FOREVER BY ME.  
NO TRUMPETS OR STREETS OF GOLD  
HE WILL COME IN SILENCE  
AND GATHER ME IN HIS ARMS.

**MARGARET**

*(sung in counterpoint with CILLA)*

PLEASE DON'T CONFINE US  
TO THE EDGE OF YOUR MIND IN SHADOW.  
WE DON'T WANT TRUMPETS  
OR STREETS OF GOLD  
AS WE LEAVE IN SILENCE,  
GIVE US YOUR ARMS.

**CILLA and MARGARET** *(together)*

AMEN.

**MARGARET**

IT WILL BREAK MY HEART  
KNOWING YOU ARE STILL HERE.  
WE CAN'T BE FREE  
WITHOUT YOU.  
ROBERT WILL INSIST.

**CILLA**

HUSH, CHILD.  
HEAR ME NOW:  
DON'T WASTE MUSCLE WHERE NONE IS WANTED.  
YOU WILL NEED EVERY BONE AND SINEW  
PLUS YOUR MIND  
TO GET AWAY FROM HERE.  
FOLLOW YOUR HUSBAND.  
SAVE YOUR CHILDREN, MOTHER!

REAR UP, NOW.  
HELP ROBERT WITH THE CHILDREN.

*(they hear footsteps approaching the cabin)*

HERE HE COMES.

MARGARET and CILLA recoil in fear when CASEY, not ROBERT, storms into the cabin.)

*CASEY glances around the cabin, then picks up one of their carpetbags and throws it across the room.)*

**CASEY**

*(trying to humiliate them)*

PLANNING A LITTLE TRIP?  
OR JUST CLEANIN' OUT THE STY?

**ROBERT**

*(calling from outside)*

THE CHILDREN ARE COMING!  
THE CHILDREN ARE ...

*(Upon entering the cabin, ROBERT quickly halts when he sees CASEY.)*

**CASEY**

WELL, I'LL BE. [WELL, I'LL BE.]  
LOOK WHAT CRAWLED OUT OF THE WOODS.  
PAPPY BEAR.  
COMIN' TO GET MAMMY BEAR  
AND ALL THE LITTLE CUBS?

*(ROBERT, MARGARET and CILLA are terrified.)*

**CASEY** (to CILLA)

I GUESS YOU MUST BE GOLDBLOCKS.  
SEEMS THE PORRIDGE IS ALL ET UP.  
LET ME SEE WHAT I CAN OFFER YOU.

*(pulling a pistol out of his coat)*

GUN POWDER MIGHT BE A LITTLE DRY,  
BUT GOLDBLOCKS GOT TO EAT,  
DON'T SHE?

*(Pointing the pistol at CILLA's mouth, CASEY motions to ROBERT and MARGARET with his free hand.)*

LET'S JUST LINE UP OVER THERE.

*(Impulsively, ROBERT attacks CASEY. A violent struggle ensues, during which ROBERT manages to wrest away CASEY'S pistol. He points the pistol at CASEY, yet hesitates to shoot him.)*

**CASEY**

YOU KILL ME,  
BOTH OF US IS DEAD.  
YOUR FAMILY TOO.

**ROBERT**

AND IF YOU LIVE, WILL THEY?

**MARGARET**

DON'T KILL HIM.  
HE'S ALREADY DEAD.

**CASEY** (to MARGARET)

**YOU** BLACK SLUT!  
DON'T YOU BEG FOR ME!

**ROBERT**

DOG WITHOUT TEETH!!  
REMEMBER HELL?  
GO HOME TO IT NOW!

*(He shoots CASEY dead.)*

Here's where RD stopped  
composing!



**CILLA**

LAP OF GOD, ROBERT.  
WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?

**ROBERT**

PROVED MY WORTH  
AS A MAN AND YOUR SON.

**CILLA**

*(clasping her hands)*

FORGIVE HIM, FATHER.  
THIS MAY BE THE END.

**MARGARET**

NO! WE CAN'T CHANGE WHAT IS DONE.  
QUICK! ROBERT,  
YOU HAVE TO RUN!

**ROBERT**

I CAN'T LEAVE YOU ALL HERE!

**MARGARET**

TELL ME WHERE TO MEET YOU.  
THEN GO!

**ROBERT** *(agitated)*

IN THE BOTTOM...  
BY THE MIMOSA.  
THE GRASS IS TALL THERE.  
WHEN THE MOON HITS  
THE TOP OF THE PINES,  
THE WAGON WILL BE THERE.

**CILLA**

HURRY, SON!  
MAKE TRACKS. NOW!  
WE'LL HANDLE GOD'S OUTCAST.

*(she drags CASEY's body away)*

**ROBERT**

MARGARET.  
OH, MY SWEET WOMAN!

**MARGARET**

THE BOTTOM...  
TALL GRASS...  
MIMOSA...

**ROBERT**

BE THERE.  
WHEN THE MOONLIGHT...

**MARGARET**

...TOUCHES PINE

**ROBERT**

LISTEN FOR THE WAGON WHEELS.  
WATCH FOR...

**MARGARET**

MOONLIGHT.  
THE MOONLIGHT.  
WE'LL MEET YOU  
IN THE MOONLIGHT. GO!

(ROBERT *exits*)

**End of Act Two, Scene One**

\*\*\*\*\*

**[ORCHESTRAL INTERLUDE IV]**



**Act II: Scene ii - One week later, at twilight.**

ROBERT and MARGARET have escaped from their masters; they have successfully crossed the Ohio River and reached Cincinnati, a city in the Free State of Ohio. A winter storm threatens. ROBERT is standing underneath a huge elm tree, near the entrance to an underground shed where he and MARGARET, now both outlaws, are hiding with their children in an attempt to avoid being recaptured and returned to their masters. Glimmering hot coals can be seen in a hole in the shed's earthen floor.

**MARGARET**

*(emerging from the shed)*

WHAT ELSE HAVE YOU HEARD?

**ROBERT**

THEY SAY THIS NEW PRESIDENT  
DOESN'T HISS LIKE A SNAKE;  
THAT HE TALKS LIKE A MAN.

**MARGARET**

WHAT HAS HE SAID?

**ROBERT**

THAT A HOUSE DIVIDED  
CANNOT STAND.  
AND THAT THE UNION IS SACRED.

**MARGARET**

THAT MEANS WAR...

*(music to provide a shift in mood/drama)*

**MARGARET**

SEATED IN SCHOOL ROOMS  
NOT BENDING OH ROBERT,  
THE CHILDREN ARE TROUBLED.  
THEY CRY IN THEIR SLEEP.

**ROBERT**

WILL I FEEL GARDENS  
I KNOW.  
BUT FREEDOM IS IN OUR TEETH.

**MARGARET**

OUR CHILDREN TUMBLING IN CLOVER AND ROSEMARY?  
TELL ME AGAIN.  
WHAT IS THE NAME OF THIS PLACE?

**ROBERT**

TRUST ME, MARGARET.  
IT WILL BE JUST SO.  
OHIO.  
IT MEANS 'BEAUTIFUL.'

**MARGARET**

WILL THEY SWIM IN CLEAR WATER  
UNTIL THEIR SKIN GLITTERS LIKE BRASS?  
IS IT?

**ROBERT**

LOOK, SEE THIS TREE?  
HOW ITS LOWER BRANCHES PROTECT YOU  
NO A BEAUTIFUL PLACE FOR A FUTURE.

**MARGARET**

IMAGINE  
THAT IS HOW I WILL ALWAYS BE.  
(MARGARET picks a leaf from the tree and presses ROBERT'S face with it.  
They dance a tango.)  
TELL ME.  
TELL ME WHAT THE FUTURE WILL BE LIKE.

**ROBERT**

IT WILL BE YOU AS MY WIFE  
NO OTHER MAN CAN TOUCH OR CLAIM.  
IT WILL BE  
THE CHILDREN SEATED NOT BENT.

ROBERT  
SEATED IN SCHOOL ROOMS  
NOT BENDING THROUGH ROWS OF CORN.  
IT WILL BE ME PAID FOR MY LABOR  
WITH COIN OF THE REALM.

COME INSIDE.  
**MARGARET**  
WILL I PLANT A GARDEN?  
MEND YOUR SHIRTS BY LAMPLIGHT?  
WILL I WATCH FROM A WINDOW  
OUR CHILDREN TUMBLING IN CLOVER AND ROSEMARY?

(Soon, loud hoof beats are heard approaching. ROBERT grabs his pistol, and MARGARET runs to protect her child, hiding in the corner behind a blanket. Accompanied by four SLAVE CATCHERS, EDWARD GAINES pounds on the shed door.)  
**ROBERT**  
TRUST ME, MARGARET.  
IT WILL BE JUST SO.

EDWARD  
**MARGARET**  
WILL THEY SWIM IN CLEAR WATER  
UNTIL THEIR SKIN GLITTERS LIKE BRASS?  
TELL ME.

IF BLOODSHED IS ON YOUR MIND,  
DON'T WORRY.  
**ROBERT**  
I JUST WANT TO LIVE.  
THEY WILL.  
EDWARD LOOK. SEE THIS TREE?  
HOW ITS LOWERING BRANCHES PROTECT YOU  
NO MATTER WHAT THE WEATHER BRINGS.  
IMAGINE.  
THAT IS HOW I WILL ALWAYS BE.

(MARGARET picks a leaf from the tree and caresses ROBERT'S face with it. They dance a teasing, catch-me dance around the tree.)

(Intoxicated, GAINES breaks down the shed door and fires his pistol in the air. ROBERT shoots at GAINES, missing. The SLAVE CATCHERS knock ROBERT to the ground and tie him up. Screaming, MARGARET emerges from behind the shed door.)  
**MARGARET**  
THAT IS HOW IT WILL ALWAYS BE.

**ROBERT**

THAT IS HOW I WILL ALWAYS BE.

*(places the leaf in her hair)*

COME INSIDE.  
IT'S DANGEROUS OUT HERE.  
SOMEONE MAY SEE US.

*(They return to the shed.)*

*(Soon, loud hoof beats are heard approaching. ROBERT grabs his pistol, and MARGARET runs to protect her children, sleeping in the corner behind a blanket. Accompanied by four SLAVE CATCHERS, EDWARD GAINES pounds on the shed door.)*

**EDWARD**

OPEN! OPEN UP!

*(no sound is heard from inside the shed)*

IF BLOODSHED IS ON YOUR MIND,  
DON'T WORRY.  
I JUST WANT WHAT IS MINE.

**EDWARD and SLAVE CATCHERS**

NO HARM. COME SOFTLY.  
NO HARM. OPEN UP.  
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO.  
WE CAN WAIT. WE WILL WAIT.  
AS LONG AS WE HAVE TO.  
THERE IS NOTHING YOU CAN DO.

*(Intoxicated, GAINES breaks down the shed door and fires his pistol in the air. ROBERT shoots at GAINES, but misses his target. The SLAVE CATCHERS knock ROBERT to the ground and tie him up. Screaming, MARGARET emerges from behind the childrens' blanket.)*

EDWARD

**MARGARET**

NO! NO MORE!

WHY CAN'T YOU LEAVE US BE?

**EDWARD**

LEAVE MURDERERS BE?

I OWN HIM!

I OWN YOUR CHILDREN!

*(in an angry tone, although in his drunken state he thinks he is being tender)*

I OWN YOU.

*(EDWARD roughly grabs MARGARET from behind, twirling her around)*

**MARGARET**

*(moaning as she sees ROBERT being dragged out)*

SOMEBODY HELP US! SOMEBODY!

**EDWARD**

MY BED IS COLD, GIRL.

IT WANTS HEATING.

REMEMBER THE BEDWARMER YOU RAN OVER MY SHEETS?

FIRST YOU FILLED IT WITH HOT COALS AS I RECALL...

**MARGARET**

*(breaking loose)*

HERE THEY ARE!

TAKE THEM! TAKE THEM!

*(MARGARET plunges her hand into the smoldering fire, and grabs a piece of coal to throw at GAINES. She continues to throw bits of coal at him, but he successfully dodges them. Grabbing MARGARET'S wrists, GAINES looks at her scorched hands, then forces her to her knees.)*

**EDWARD**

PRETEND TO BE CRAZY AS MUCH AS YOU LIKE.  
MANGLE YOURSELF, I DON'T CARE.

*(He throws her flat on the ground. The children cry loudly.)*

**EDWARD**

CASEY WAS NOT ENOUGH?  
YOU WILL KILL ME TOO?  
OH NO, MY LITTLE CROW.

*(A SLAVE CATCHER returns to the shed.)*

**SLAVE CATCHER**

HE'S BOUND AND READY, SIR.

**MARGARET**

DAMN YOUR MARBLE EYES,  
YOUR PUTRID, PUTRID HEART.  
DAMN YOUR SLITHERING SOUL!

**EDWARD**

*(to SLAVE CATCHER)*

TAKE THE YOUNG ONES TO THE WAGON.  
THEN LIGHT THE FIRE.  
THE NIGHT IS COLD  
AND PROMISES TO BE LONG.

*(In silhouette, ROBERT is seen standing outside on a tall box underneath the elm tree. A noose is hanging around his neck. )*

**ROBERT**

MARGARET! MARGARET!  
I LOVE YOU! I LOVE ...

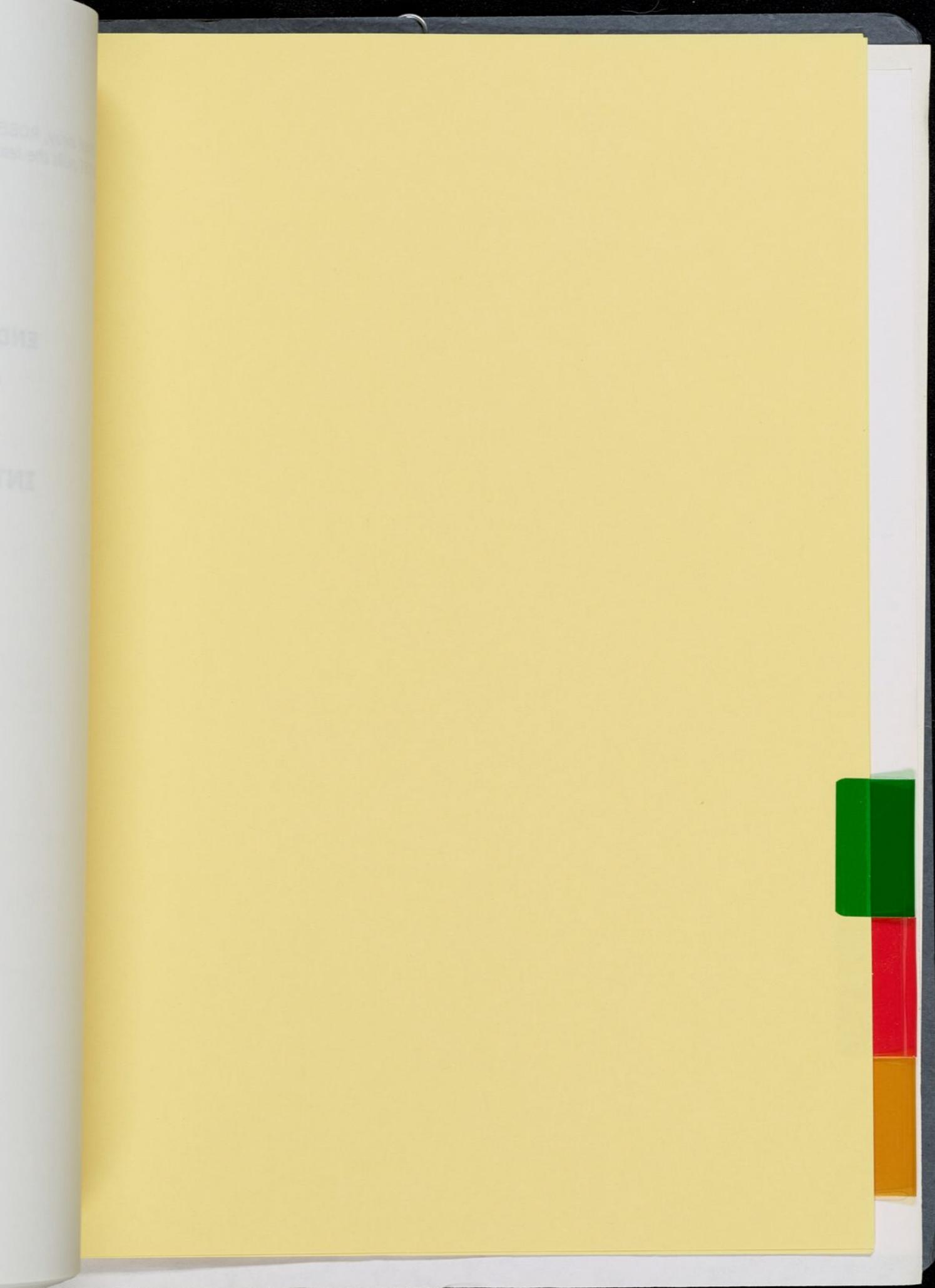
(As the box is kicked away, ROBERT's voice is cut off abruptly. In the sudden stillness, MARGARET pulls the leaf from her hair, and holds it in her scorched hands, weeping.)

**CURTAIN**

**END OF ACT TWO**

\*\*\*\*\*

**INTERMISSION**







MARGARET  
ACT 1; SCENE 3

7

**GUESTS**

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS A DANGEROUS ART.  
IT CAN OPEN YOUR EYES  
~~BUT~~ IT WILL TEAR OUT YOUR HEART!

OR

**EDWARD**

*(his temper flaring once again)*

THE LANGUAGE OF LOVE  
IS AN IMPOSTER...

**GEORGE**

...IS A MAGICIAN...

**EDWARD**

...IS AN INFANT'S HAND IN A FATHER'S GLOVE ...

**GEORGE**

...IT'S A LIGHTHOUSE TO GUIDE US ...

**EDWARD**

...IT'S A THIEF RESPECTING NO HOUSEHOLD,  
STEALING THE LOVED ONES AWAY.

**CAROLINE**

*(in a conciliatory tone)*

IT'S A CLIPPER SHIP  
WITH ROOM AFTER ROOM  
FOR DANCING ...  
AND CAKES AND TEA AND CHAMPAGNE!

*(MARGARET enters with a tray of glasses.)*

Princeton University

Dickinson Hall  
Princeton, New Jersey 08544  
609-258-1071 FAX 609-258-5095

2.14

Toni Morrison  
*Council of the Humanities*  
*Robert F. Goheen Professor*

ONLY UNHARNESSED HEARTS  
CAN SURVIVE A LOCKED-DOWN LIFE

LIKE A RIVER RUSHING  
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1914  
1885