

The University of North Carolina
at Greensboro

JACKSON LIBRARY



.....
CQ

.....
no. 695

.....
*Gift of
Newton C. Neely*

COLLEGE COLLECTION

NEELY, NEWTON C. Analysis and Interpretation of The Innocents and The Turn of the Screw. (1970) Directed by Kathryn England. pp. 161

The purpose of this thesis is to study the script, produce the play, and evaluate the production of William Archibald's The Innocents. The play is based on The Turn of the Screw by Henry James.

The first part includes the following: (1) a discussion of four theories concerning the story and the play, (2) an investigation of the production styles, (3) character description and analysis, and (4) a discussion of the setting.

The second part is the director's prompt book for the production, performed on April 24, 25, and 26, 1970, in Taylor Theatre at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Types of notations included are: (1) movement, composition and picturization, (2) rhythm and tempo notes, (3) stage business, and (4) sound and light notes. Production photographs are included.

The third part is the director's critical evaluation of the production. Discussed in this chapter are: (1) goals and achievements of interpretation, style, and mood, (2) actor-director relationships during the rehearsal period, and (3) audience reaction to the production.

A program and a statement from Beatrice Straight, who played Miss Giddens in the original Broadway production, comprise the appendices.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF
THE INNOCENTS AND THE TURN OF THE SCREW

by
Newton C. Neely

A Thesis Submitted to
the Faculty of the Graduate School at
The University of North Carolina at Greensboro
in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Fine Arts

Greensboro
May, 1970

Approved by

Kathryn England
Thesis Adviser

APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis has been approved by the following committee of the Faculty of the Graduate School at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Thesis
Adviser

Kathryn England

Oral Examination
Committee Members

David R. Batcheller
Thomas L. Telford
Hermon W. Dillman
W. W. M. M. M.

April 28, 1970
Date of Examination

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to Gene Crotty, who was Director of the University Players at the University of South Carolina. The following passages were written by him just before his death in 1960.

. . . Speed, slickness, technical production of excellent quality--but no thinking by the actors. It's unfortunate that the high tempo of our daily lives is carried beyond the procenium, for the art of the theatre requires sensitivity, not blatancy; revelation, not assembly-line quantity; and the vitality of the soul, not that of the football field. Ideals? Yes. Those which no artist dare abandon. The interpretation of the times is a false aim for the artist. His is the work of interpreting human kind, not 1959. Though science may prove that no soul exists, materialism cannot deny spirit and aspiration in man. Eternally, these are the materials of the artist.

Directing requires much effort and drains me emotionally. I am no longer able to build sets . . . and endure the long hours in addition to teaching . . . recently more participants have worshipped at the altar of Janus than that of Dionysus.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Grateful acknowledgement is made to the faculty of the Theatre Division of the Department of Drama and Speech--especially to Miss Kathryn England for her help and encouragement as thesis adviser; to Dr. Herman Middleton, Dr. David Batcheller, Dr. Thomas Tedford, and Dr. Warren Ashby for serving on the committee, and to the cast and crews for their part in the production.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I:	ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF <u>THE INNOCENTS</u> AND <u>THE TURN OF THE SCREW</u>	
	The Theories	2
	The Ghosts are Real Theory	4
	The Insanity and Sex Repression Theory	6
	The Villainy of Mrs. Grose Theory	9
	The Allegory, Morality Play Theory	11
	The Play	14
	The Style	14
	The Characters	15
	The Setting	17
PART II:	PROMPT BOOK	
	Act One	23
	Act Two	86
PART III:	CRITICAL ANALYSIS	
	Interpretation, Style, and Mood	138
	Actor-Director Relationships	145
	Audience Reaction	147
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	151
	APPENDICES	
	Production Program	153
	Statement from Beatrice Straight	154

LIST OF FIGURES

FIGURE	PAGE
1	22
2	30
3	45
4	76
5	94
6	116
7	135

PART I

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF
"THE IMMEDIATE AND THE DEEP OF THE PLAY"

The play, *The Immigrants*, by Willson Archibald, is an adaptation of a short novel, *The Luck of the Irish*, by Henry Jones. Controversy over the meaning of the story arose the moment it was off the press. Some critics said it was purely and simply a plot about money, some contended that Miss O'Brien, the governess, was the central and actually the

PART I

central figure. Others contended that Mrs. Brown, the miser, was the cause of all the trouble, and one, Robert Bellamy, saw the story as an allegory, a morality play. The first section of this work will examine the different theories about the story, point out why the play should be played, analyze the characters in the play as opposed to those in the novel, and consider the physical aspects of production.

The Theatre

Whoever has been struck by the ambiguity of Henry Jones in *The Luck of the Irish*, but upon reading his preface to the 1908 edition of the story it is discovered that he has purposely been ambiguous. He has done so in order to make the reader think the work

only took the reader's general view of evil, meant to show . . . and his own experience, his own indignation, his own sympathy (with the children) and horror (of their fate) which still apply his quite sufficiently with all

PART I

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF"THE INNOCENTS" AND "THE TURN OF THE SCREW"

The play, The Innocents, by William Archibald, is an adaptation of a short novel, The Turn of the Screw, by Henry James. Controversy over the meaning of the story arose the moment it was off the press. Some critics said it was purely and simply a ghost story; some contended that Miss Giddens, the governess, was sexually repressed and mentally disturbed; others theorized that Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper, was the cause of all the trouble; and one, Robert Heilman, saw the story as an allegory, a morality play. The first section of this work will discuss the different theories about the story, point out why the play should be played realistically, analyze the characters in the play as opposed to those in the novella, and consider the physical aspects of production.

The Theories

Volumes have been written on the ambiguity of Henry James in The Turn of the Screw, but upon reading his preface to the 1908 edition of the story it is discovered that he has purposely been ambiguous. He believed in making the reader share the work.

Only make the reader's general vision of evil intense enough . . . and his own experience, his own imagination, his own sympathy (with the children) and horror (of their false friends) will supply him quite sufficiently with all

the particulars. Make him think the evil, make him think it for himself, and you are released from weak specifications.¹

According to an entry in his notebook dated Saturday, January 12, 1895, James got the idea for the story from the Archbishop of Canterbury.² However, there are other references in other works to other sources for the story, so The Turn of the Screw is probably a composition of several ideas and "germs" from various sources. One thing, though, is certain. James intended from the beginning to have fun with the story.

He would write it of course primarily for himself and for the reader for whom he must always write--the reader not content to have the author do all the work--but he would make this particular work the supreme test, of attention and inattention alike. He would have his own private fun in its writing, his own guarded intention, his own famous centre of interest. But he would put about this centre, not only traps set and baited for the least lapse of attention, but lures--delights and terrors mingled--calculated to distract or break off short any amount of alert intentness. Let some singularly astute reader avoid one and yet another of these, others would lie hidden or beckon invitingly ten steps ahead. It would be, as he said ten years later, "an amulette to catch those not easily caught." . . . It would be amusing to see how far he might work on the cunning and the casual alike; it would be the very essence of irony if their reactions to the story were identical. As a little matter of critical history they were. And Henry James narrowly escaped writing a best seller.³

Very likely Henry James, wherever he is right now, is chuckling to himself about all the critics and interpreters of his amulette. James has written another Hamlet as far as interpretations and theories are

¹Henry James, "An Exercise of the Imagination," in THE TURN OF THE SCREW: An Authoritative Text, Backgrounds and Sources, Essays in Criticism, ed. by Robert Kimbrough (New York: W. W. Norton and Co., Inc., 1966), p. 123.

²Ibid., p. 106.

³Edna Kenton, "Henry James to the Ruminant Reader: The Turn of the Screw," in A Casebook on Henry James's THE TURN OF THE SCREW, ed. by Gerald Willen (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, 1960), p. 108.

concerned. People have read and written things into these two works that neither author intended, and will continue to do so for years and years to come. Hamlet is four hundred years old and is still being debated. That The Turn of the Screw will evoke the same curiosity is suggested by some of the theories.

The Ghosts are Real Theory

James himself makes references to the fact that the ghosts are real. In letters he refers to it as a tale of the supernatural, a "small and gruesome spectral story" related to him by Archbishop Benson, "My bogey-tale . . ."4

The most convincing argument within the story itself that the ghosts really exist is the fact that Miss Giddens gives a perfect description of the valet, Quint, after having seen him through the window. At this time she does not know who he is, or that he is dead. But when she describes him to Mrs. Grose, the housekeeper immediately identifies the apparition as the dead Peter Quint. Obviously if the ghost had been a figment of the governess's imagination she would not have been able to give such an accurate picture of a dead man she had never met.

"He has no hat." Then seeing in her face that she already, in this, with a deeper dismay, found a touch of picture, I quickly added stroke to stroke. "He has red hair, very red, close curling, and a pale face, long in shape, with straight, good features and little, rather queer whiskers that are as red as his hair. His eyebrows are, somehow, darker; they look particularly arched and as if they might move a good deal. His eyes are sharp, strange--awfully; but I only know clearly that they are rather small and very fixed. His

⁴Oliver Evans, "James's Air of Evil: The Turn of the Screw," in Willen, Casebook on Henry James, p. 202.

mouth's wide, and lips are thin, and except for his little whiskers he's quite clean shaven. He gives me a sort of sense of looking at an actor."⁵

From the very beginning James spares no pains in informing the reader that there are supernatural forces at work within the house. The housekeeper is already aware of them, and the governess becomes aware long before she has any reason to invent them.

Many of the critics who believe the governess to be mentally disturbed contend that there is no proof any of the other people in the house ever see the revenants. Oliver Evans points out in his essay that ghosts can pick and choose to whom they appear.⁶

James himself has this to say:

Good ghosts, speaking by book, make poor subjects, and it was clear that from the first my hovering prowling blighting presences, my pair of abnormal agents, would have to depart altogether from the rules. They would be agents in fact; there would be laid on them the dire duty of causing the situation to reek with the air of Evil.⁷

Unless the children, Miles and Flora, are possessed by an evil spirit, which necessitates the reality of the ghosts, there is simply no conflict, no drama, no story. Oliver Evans, in his essay already cited, points out that James was thoroughly conscious of this. That he was conscious of it is proved by the artistry with which he focuses on the details which increase the conflict and intensify the drama of the situation.

⁵Henry James, The Turn of the Screw (New York: The New American Library, 1962), p. 320.

⁶Evans, "James's Air of Evil," p. 206.

⁷Henry James, from the preface of "The Aspern Papers," in Willen, Casebook on Henry James, p. 99.

This analysis, of course, is concerned mainly with the play, The Innocents, rather than with the story. In his introduction to the text of the play which appeared in the January, 1951, issue of Theatre Arts, Archibald stated that he had chosen to accept the fact that the ghosts are real. He felt that for dramatic effect they had to be. This director believes that Archibald was attempting to create a tragic hero more closely related to the Greek. If the tale is turned into a psychological study and the governess is believed to be insane, she is not nearly so dramatic or sympathetic a character as if the spirits are real and she is struggling with a force much greater than herself. In other words, she sees the situation, accepts the responsibility that has been placed upon her, and tries to solve the problem.

To reinforce that fact that the children are aware of the spirits in the house Archibald includes a scene in his dramatization that does not appear in the story. The figure of the former governess, Miss Jessel, appears on the stairway. Flora, the little girl, is center stage. She sees the ghost, rises, turns to it, and holds out her hand. Miss Giddens enters the room and observes the scene, but Flora vehemently denies having seen anything, and accuses Miss Giddens first of trying to scare her, and then of teasing her.

The Insanity and Sex Repression Theory

Henry James was the son of a religious philosopher, and the brother of William James, the psychologist and philosopher. He had a sister who suffered from some sort of mental illness, and he was writing at a time when Freud's theories were beginning to be popular. There is also evi-

dence that he studied clinical cases which could have served as background material for The Turn of the Screw.⁸

The most famous and widely read essay that expounds the sex repression theory is that of Edmund Wilson. In the second paragraph of his work Wilson states: "The theory is, then, that the governess who is made to tell the story is a neurotic case of sex repression, and that the ghosts are not real ghosts but hallucinations of the governess."⁹

The first piece of evidence to substantiate Wilson's theory is the fact that the story makes clear that the young woman has become infatuated with her employer, the uncle of the children. So, according to Wilson, she creates the whole problem of the ghosts and the possession of the children only to get attention from the uncle, who had stated that he did not want to be bothered. Because she knows that he does not want to be concerned with any problems involving the children, she realizes that the situation will have to be extremely serious, or even dangerous, to warrant her contacting him, thus giving her a chance to see him once again.

One of Wilson's strongest arguments is that there is never any reason to suppose that anyone but the governess, Miss Giddens, sees the ghosts.¹⁰ This part of his theory is refuted by those who believe the "real ghosts theory" by asserting that ghosts can choose to whom they

⁸Francis X. Roellinger, "Psychical Research and The Turn of the Screw," in Kimbrough, The Turn of the Screw, p. 132.

⁹Edmund Wilson, "The Ambiguity of Henry James," in Willen, Casebook on Henry James, p. 115.

¹⁰Ibid., p. 117.

appear, as has already been mentioned.

Oscar Cargill, another interpreter of the story, believes the author was purposely ambiguous to hide the fact that the story of Miss Giddens grew out of the mental illness of his sister.

The tenderest of men, Henry James could hardly have used the illness of his sister Alice as the basis of a story while she lived, or later, without deliberately disguising it-- particularly since that illness, though not concealed, was only guardedly revealed as mental. But a decade before he employed The Turn of the Screw as a story title, perhaps when he first used the phrase in The Reverberator, he saw its aptness as applied to some climactic episode in the career of a hysteric. Delicacy, propriety, affection instantly inhibited the development of so rich a "germ," but it remained planted in James's ingenious and subtle mind until he could bring it forth so altered that his closest intimates would not suspect its source and connections. The product was one of the greatest horror stories of all time.¹¹

C. P. Oberndorf, a psychoanalyst, praised the insight of Henry James, calling him ". . . a novelist who wrote like a psychologist, and at times like a psychoanalyst."¹²

If the story is read in a Freudian light there are a number of things to corroborate the view that the governess is sexually repressed and mentally disturbed. She is the daughter of a country parson (whose own sanity is doubted). She has led an extremely sheltered, Victorian childhood in a large family of several brothers and sisters. The first time she sees Quint he is standing on the tower of the house; the first appearance of Miss Jessel is by a lake, while Flora is trying to force a stick into a hole in a piece of wood to construct a boat. As has

¹¹Oscar Cargill, "Henry James as Freudian Pioneer," in Willen, Casebook on Henry James, p. 223.

¹²W. David Sievers, Freud on Broadway (New York: Hermitage House, 1955), p. 426.

already been stated, she is sexually attracted to the uncle, and by stretching the imagination we can also convince ourselves that she is sexually attracted to Miles, even though he is ten years younger. In the prologue to the novella a character named Douglas begins to tell the story of The Turn of the Screw, which was supposedly written by his sister's governess. Douglas also makes mention of the fact that he was ten years younger than his sister's governess, which leads one to suspect that he may have been involved with her. There is a hint also that Miss Giddens suspected a homosexual relationship between Miles and Quint and between Flora and Miss Jessel. This, in itself, is enough to be a traumatic experience for a young woman who has led an extremely sheltered life. There are several indications of madness and sex repression if the story is read with that in mind.

The Villainy of Mrs. Grose Theory

Eric Solomon singles out the housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, as the evil agent in the story. In his theory Solomon points out that James was very careful about the names he gave his people, and that the name he chose for this character indicates that she could have been the cause of all the trouble. Accepting Solomon's theory, though, presents a dilemma in the matter of interpretation. It can be taken seriously, or, maybe because of the parallel he draws as to what Sherlock Holmes would have done if he had been investigating this case, it can be read as if it had been written with tongue-in-cheek.

Solomon points out that the least obvious suspect is Mrs. Grose.

Her motive is greed, her crime murder--more than one murder.¹³

Mrs. Grose is extremely jealous of anyone's relationship with Flora. She contends that Miss Jessel went away to die, but maybe the housekeeper poisoned her slowly, and sent her away to die. It is obvious that Mrs. Grose did not like Peter Quint. He was ". . . too free. Too free with everyone." Possibly he had been too free with her at an earlier time, and she was envious of Miss Jessel's relationship with him. Quint's death was considered an accident when he was found at the bottom of a hill, down which, it was thought, he had fallen. But is it not possible that Mrs. Grose murdered him either out of jealousy or because she thought he had too much control over Miles?

After the death of Miss Jessel, and until the arrival of Miss Giddens, Mrs. Grose was in complete control at Bly, the estate owned by the children's uncle. Miss Giddens posed a threat to her authority and security, and just might steal the affection of the children. In the face of these possibilities the only thing to do was to get rid of her.

So Mrs. Grose sets out to make Miss Giddens believe herself insane. To begin with she hints at supernatural doings at Bly. When Miss Giddens describes the ghost, naturally Mrs. Grose identifies it as Quint. If he had been described in any other way her identification would have been the same. She knows of Miss Giddens upbringing, and begins to suggest all sorts of dirty and vile things that have passed between the former servants and the children. Surely that would unbalance any closely sheltered, Victorian girl. Miss Giddens continues

¹³Eric Solomon, "The Return of the Screw," in Kimbrough, The Turn of the Screw, p. 238.

to see the ghosts, but Mrs. Grose flatly refuses to admit that she does. The climax comes when Mrs. Grose succeeds in turning Flora against Miss Giddens. She convinces Flora that Miss Giddens is the evil one and Flora wants never to see the governess again. What an effect this would have on a governess who is the epitome of responsibility and conscientiousness!

How many fall prey to Mrs. Grose's grossness? Peter Quint, Miss Jessel, Miles, Flora, and Miss Giddens that we know about. That is enough to make her the villain.

The Allegory, Morality Play Theory

As mentioned earlier, James used great care in choosing names for his characters. A look at some of them will show how the story could be considered an allegory or morality story.

Flora. The flower. Nothing is more innocent and beautiful than a flower. She has "the deep, sweet serenity," "angelic beauty," "blessed innocence," and "extraordinary childish grace." James, to present the spiritual decline of the children, finds terms which exactly balance those that connote their spiritual capabilities.¹⁴

The name Miles could possibly be derived from Miles Gloriosus, the soldier, the archetypal male. In the beginning Miles is described as having the "great glow of freshness," "positive fragrance of purity," a "sweet innocence," he was "extraordinarily happy," and he "fairly glittered."¹⁵

¹⁴Robert Heilman, "The Turn of the Screw as Poem," in Kimbrough, The Turn of the Screw, p. 222.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 218.

When James speaks of Mile's "beautiful, fevered face" and says that he "lives in a setting of beauty and misery," he puts into words what the reader has come to feel--that his real subject is the dual nature of man, who is a little lower than the angels, and who yet can become a slave in the realm of evil. The children's beauty, we have come to feel, is a symbol of the spiritual perfection of which man is capable. Thus the battle between the governess and the demons becomes the old struggle of the morality play in new dress.¹⁶

Mrs. Grose's name could have allegorical significance also. She is the commonplace mortal, well intentioned, but perceiving only the obvious. According to Webster she could be dense, thick, flagrant, very wrong, obscene, vulgar, rude, over-fed, or too fat.

A jess is a strap used to hook around a falcon's leg, with a ring on one end for attaching a leash. Miss Jessel's name indicates the tie or hold she had on Flora. Possibly this means that Flora will never be more than a short distance from her. Even after death Miss Jessel has complete control over the little girl.

Quint is an interesting name. There are two words that could easily be its basis. The first one is quince. Webster describes a quince as an apple-like fruit with a hard shell, which suggests the forbidden fruit that brought about the downfall of man.

The second word is quintessence, which means the perfect manifestation or embodiment of a quality or thing. So could not the name Quint connote the perfect manifestation or embodiment of evil?

Miss Giddens's name could be derived from giddy, which means having a whirling, dazed sensation; dizzy; lightheaded; possessed by a god. She certainly experiences all of these things at one time or another in the story as well as in the play.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 217-218.

In the beginning Miss Giddens sees nothing but beauty in the garden at Bly (the Garden of Eden?); later it becomes dark and sinister. The day she arrives is bright and sunny, but as the story progresses everything assumes a different atmosphere. The children change from the epitome of goodness and beauty to just the opposite. Miss Giddens's second encounter with Quint prevents her from going to church. Already the revenants have begun to separate her from her past.

Is it possible then that James has written an allegory? Is the whole purpose of the story to show the struggle between good and evil? It is another theory, at least.

These four theories concerning the meaning of The Turn of the Screw, and ultimately of The Innocents, have great value in an over-all approach to the play. Even though it will never be known for certain what James intended his story to be, the director chooses to accept Archibald's interpretation, which states that the ghosts are real. The playwright intended the play to be a ghost story pure and simple. But to try to convey a deeper meaning the director plans to include some elements of each of the other theories in his production of The Innocents. The audience will sense Miss Giddens's uncertainty about what she sees, for instance. During Mrs. Grose's speech about finding Quint's body they will feel that maybe she had something to do with his death. The spectator will realize the paradox of the co-existence of good and evil in everything.

The Play

The Style

Since the director has chosen to treat The Innocents as a "realistic" ghost story, Miss Giddens, to be credible, must be a stable person. She must not be the only one who sees the ghosts. If she is to be the heroine, the role cannot be played as though she were mentally deranged. If the play were done as a psychological study of an insane person, it would be much more difficult for the audience to sympathize with the governess.

This decision, though, creates another problem: how to play ghosts realistically. The audience has to be convinced that Miss Giddens sees them. They cannot, then, be played as "typical" spirits. They must not be filmy, wispy, "spooks." They must appear as they did in life. They must present a real threat. The ghosts should be three dimensional, believable apparitions. In fact, the audience should not even realize that Quint is a ghost until the middle of the first act. If he is thought to be alive, possibly a prowler, the impact ought to be even greater when Mrs. Grose states that he is, in fact, dead.

The director realizes that this is a dangerous situation in which to place himself and the production. There is a fine line between something that is frightening and something that is funny. Every precaution will be taken to make sure that the spirits maintain an air of evil and that they do not become comical.

A key scene in the play is the one in which Flora holds out her hand to Miss Jessel. If there is doubt in anyone's mind that the spirits do exist, it will be expelled at this point. This brief, small scene

indicates that Miss Giddens does see what she claims she sees, and it also shows the dual characters of Flora.

The acting style, then, must be realistic, but the production style will be theatrical. The director proposes using projections for the garden, and set pieces, rather than full, realistic walls, to represent the inside of the house. The set will be discussed more fully later, but the director feels that by contrasting the production and acting styles the inner conflict of the play will be heightened. What happens to Miss Giddens is real and actual, but to her it must all seem unreal, as if she were floundering in a nightmare world. It is hard for her to believe what is happening. Expressionism and symbolism creep in from time to time, but, in the director's opinion, these styles strengthen rather than weaken the realistic style.

The Characters

Much of what would normally come under this heading has been discussed earlier in the section devoted to the theories that have developed concerning the meanings and motivations in the story and the play. Mental, physical, and emotional characteristics have been pointed out, but there are a few additional items that should be noted.

Archibald has made some changes in the characters in adapting the story to the stage. These changes, even though they are minor, make the play tighter and more dramatically effective.

The children are slightly older in the play than James had made them in the story. Instead of being eight Flora is ten; instead of being ten Miles is twelve. This change is understandable, since two years can make quite a difference in how effectively the parts could be cast and

played. However, this director found an eight year old girl and an eleven year old boy, both of whom were physically right and read well; so he took the liberty of changing the ages to fit the people available.

The character of the children remains basically the same even with the age changes. They are outwardly the epitome of beauty, manners, intelligence, good-will, and co-operativeness. However, they are infected with the evil of Miss Jessel and Peter Quint, and know and participate in things that most adults in Victorian 1880 might not have known or taken part in. They are very calculating and malicious: excellent, but difficult roles, for children to play. The dual nature of these characters is a challenge for even accomplished actors to portray, and this problem is compounded when using children as actors, since they do not have the experience, either theatrical or actual, to fall back on in creating the roles. This director feels that it may not be necessary for the children to fully understand the character's motivations, but this will mean more careful explanation, and even coaching, on his part.

The uncle in the story is a young, handsome man of the world. Thus it would follow that Miss Giddens could fall in love with him at first sight. But in the play he is an old man who is a semi-invalid, interested only in his work. This change in character lends credence to the real ghost theory. Since he is a much older man, Miss Giddens would not become infatuated with him immediately; therefore there would be no need for her to create a situation which would call for his coming to Bly. The uncle never appears in the play, but he is a very important character, nevertheless. His attitude toward the children has created the situation in which Miss Giddens finds them.

Miss Giddens is young and inexperienced. She has led a quiet, sheltered life among the members of a rather large family. Her father was a country minister, and the family existed on a meagre income. This is the first time she has been on her own. She had never even seen herself in a full length mirror until she arrived at Bly.

There are times when Miss Giddens almost breaks, and there are times when she doubts herself, even her sanity. However, this makes her an even more believable, profound character. In the end, when she realizes what she has done, we can truly sympathize with her. If she is played in this manner she will fall into the mold of the classical tragic hero.

The housekeeper, Mrs. Grose, is uneducated, dull, unobservative, but at the same time she is trusting, dependable, and willing to do her share to try to save the children from the horror that threatens them. She admires Miss Giddens, of course, but loves the children deeply, and will put nothing over their care and safety. When Flora finally turns on Miss Giddens, Mrs. Grose immediately comes to the defense of the child. She finds it hard to believe that Miles has done anything to cause his dismissal from school, even to the point of suspecting the school masters of being jealous of his innocence, intelligence, and beauty.

The ghosts have already been discussed at some length. They have no lines, so their characterization is visual. They must pose a threat to the children to whom both women are so devoted.

The Setting

The Innocents is set in a large, old, English country house called Bly. The set should suggest vast space. The house is immense,

and even though only one room is shown, it has to reveal what the rest of the house is like. Jo Nielziner designed the set for the Broadway production, and the following is what he has to say about how he approached his design.

In discussing the production style for William Archibald's dramatization of Henry James's The Turn of the Screw, I said to Peter Glenville, the director, that I wanted to approach the design a bit unconventionally. I suggested that I design the lighting completely before designing the setting. Except for the furniture which the actors used, the position of the staircase that led to the upper part of the house, and the position of the great windows, the scenery for this play of atmosphere was almost secondary. I carefully plotted the areas where Glenville wanted each scene played and then I settled on the lighting equipment to a degree that I normally do not do until after the setting has been completely worked out. For a production so dependent on mood and suggestions of ghostly figures either seen or felt in the background, and with an imaginative director who planned well ahead, this reversal of the designer's procedure proved very effective.

This is the kind of play that cries out for magic in the lighting. During most of the scenes it is desirable to have actors playing in moody, shadowy atmosphere. Except for brief moments the actors had to be covered by some brighter source of light. To cover every one of their acting positions would have necessitated far too many individually controlled lights. My solution was to use two follow spots, handled in such a subtle manner and with outlines so soft that most people in the audience were unaware of the technique.¹⁷

The color of the set in the beginning is warm and friendly, but with the change in lighting as the play progresses, there is also a change in the mood, feeling, and color of the set. The house must become very cold and sinister. There is little furniture in the room, and with the cooling of the lights, and the change that takes place in the garden, a bleak atmosphere is created.

The set should suggest great height. The walls should seem to

¹⁷Jo Nielziner, Designing for the Theatre (New York: Atheneum, 1965), p. 156.

fade out into space. Hopefully this will give the effect of a pit or trap into which the characters have been placed, and from which there is no escape until the full game has been played. They are inextricably caught in a web of evil.

The set, therefore, unlike the acting style, will be theatrical. By the use of set pieces rather than full walls the house and garden will be united by the evil that pervades both. As mentioned earlier, the proposed plan for the garden is to use projections. The director found a rather unkempt formal garden and photographed it in the summer and again in the winter. He plans to use projections made from these photographs, taken under different seasonal conditions, to bring about the change in character of the garden as the play progresses. By cross-fading the summer and winter garden projections during Quint's appearances the trees will assume a more skeletal, hovering attitude.

This director first read The Innocents when it appeared in Theatre Arts in 1951. Since that time, it has been a favorite, and he has always hoped that he would have an opportunity to do the play. After several readings of The Turn of the Screw, and after many readings of The Innocents, it still produces the same terrifying impact on him, and if the play is done well it can have that effect on an audience.

Of course, the play means more than just making someone have goose bumps. There are many messages in the play, depending on how one chooses to interpret it, but to this director the most important is the statement it makes about the dual nature of man, i.e., the good and evil that lives in all people. It shows that once evil has its grasp on someone it is

difficult to extract him from its hold.

In concluding this part it might be interesting to look at an article by Clifton Fadiman that appeared in the program of the original Broadway production: The Meaning of The Innocents.

The Playgoer, meeting Henry James's eerie thriller for the first time, may not find it as clear as he might wish. One should not worry too much about this. . . .

Actually, the "meaning" of the original novel from which Mr. Archibald has drawn his remarkable adaptation is even less sharply defined than is the "meaning" of the play. Without losing a single tremor of the horror of the original, Mr. Archibald has, with extraordinary tact, simplified the original Jamesian movement and motives. There is no doubt, for example, that the ghosts in the play are "real," . . . It is also clear that these ghosts inhabit the souls of the two innocents, as evil may inhabit the soul of any one of us. Sometimes, in extreme instances, the ghosts may be driven out, only at the cost of the life of the poor victim, as in this case where the life of the evil ghost and that of the little sufferer have become so intertwined that, like Siamese twins, they may not be separated without the intervention of death.

This, as it seems to me, is what Mr. Archibald is implying in the agonizing close of his play. But it is not the "meaning" of The Innocents. A work of art, as this is, has many meanings, and they vary with the time and the audience. One may be moved by a work of art, as audiences are by this one, without being able to reduce its significance to a set formula. Indeed, that one cannot do so (provided that one is also moved) is often a sign that a work of art has pretensions beyond the transient.

So, if we are a little puzzled by The Innocents, let us not blame either ourselves or the play. Let us ask ourselves only whether we are filled with a vague, troubling sense of evil that exists in the world, in us, and even in the very heart of innocence. If we do have this sense, the play has given us much of what it has to give.¹⁸

¹⁸Clifton Fadiman, "The Meaning of The Innocents," in The Playbill of the original Broadway production, 1950.

FIGURE 2

PART II



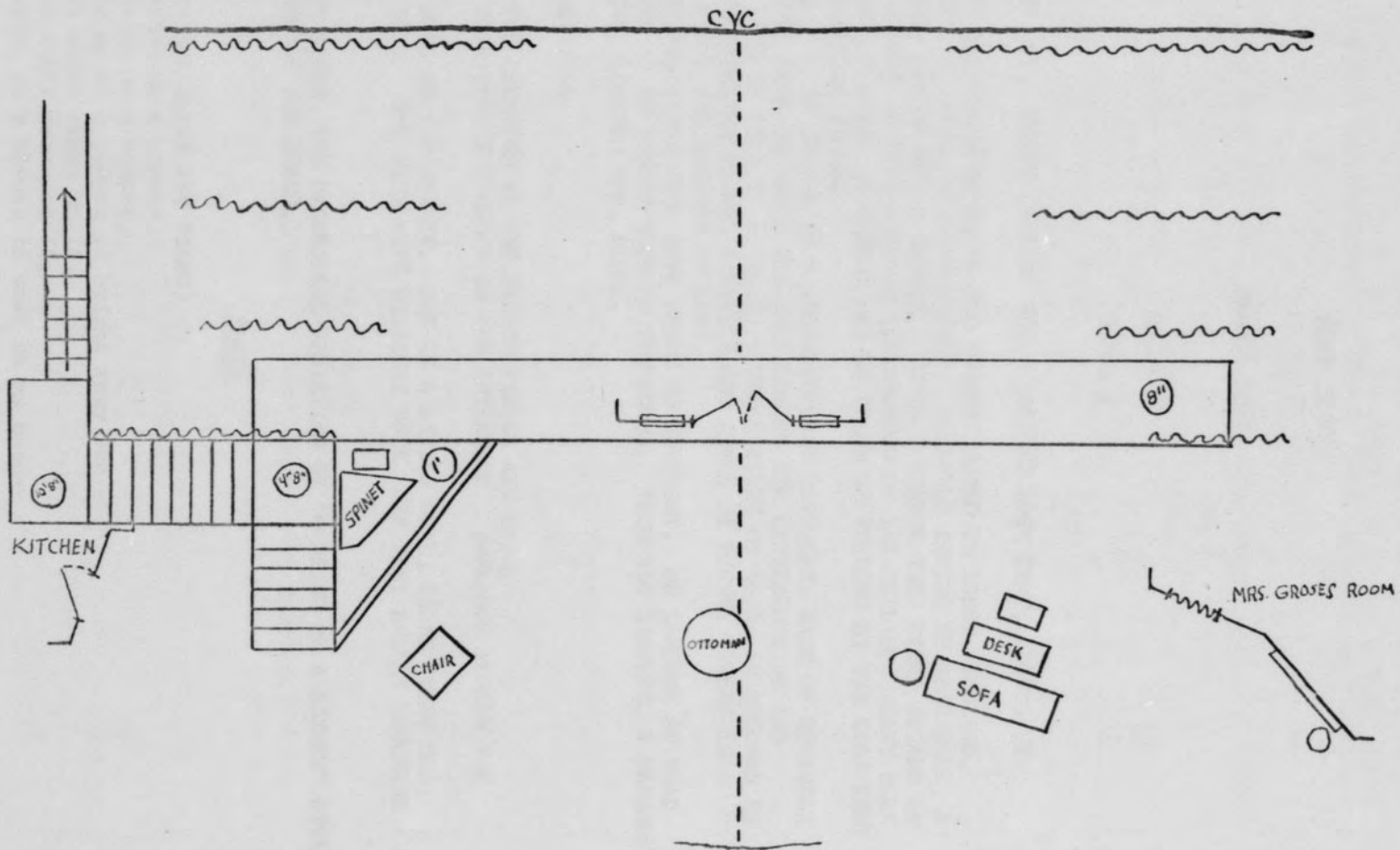


FIGURE 1

PART II

PROMPT BOOK

ACT ONE

Scene 1

HOUSE LIGHT OUT. MUSIC (VOLUME 45). "BRIGHT ROSY RED"; LIGHTS UP.

SCENE: THE DRAWING-ROOM OF AN OLD COUNTRY HOUSE IN ESSEX, ENGLAND.

THE ROOM IS LARGE, HIGH-CEILINGED. DIRECTLY CENTER OF REAR WALL, A FRENCH WINDOW OPENS ONTO A GARDEN. IT IS A WINDOW THAT RISES UP AND UP UNTIL ITS SUMMIT IS HALF-LOST IN THE SHADOWS OF THE CEILING; HEAVY DARK CURTAINS HANG FRAMING IT--THESE CAN BE DRAWN BY PULLING AT THE CORD THAT HANGS TO RIGHT OF WINDOW.

TO THE LEFT OF CENTER IS A PLUSH-COVERED LOVESEAT; BACK OF LOVESEAT IS A GRACEFUL DESK ON WHICH ARE ACCESSORIES FOR LETTERWRITING AND CANDLES. BACK OF DESK IS A CHAIR; A TABLE RIGHT OF SOFA; AN OTTOMAN AT CENTER; AN ARMCHAIR RIGHT; A SPINET AND STOOL UP RIGHT. THERE IS A DOOR DOWN RIGHT AND ANOTHER UP LEFT.

A STAIRCASE RISES FROM DOWN RIGHT TO UP RIGHT. ON LANDING AT HEAD OF STAIRCASE IS AN UNSEEN DOOR TO TWO ROOMS. FROM THE LANDING, A PASSAGE IS SUGGESTED, LEADING OFF, RIGHT.

TIME: ABOUT 1860.

AT RISE: THE CURTAINS AT THE FRENCH WINDOW ARE OPEN.

IT IS FOUR-THIRTY O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON. SUNLIGHT FLOODS THE ROOM.

FLORA SITS AT THE SPINET. SHE IS A LITTLE GIRL, EIGHT YEARS OLD, WITH LONG HAIR. SHE SITS WITH STRAIGHT BACK, HER FEET BARELY TOUCHING THE FLOOR.

(AS CURTAIN RISES, THE ORCHESTRAL VARIATION OF "O BRING ME A BONNET" GIVES WAY TO SOUND OF THE PIANO.)

FLORA

(SINGING AS SHE PLAYS THE PIANO)

O bring me a bonnet,
 O bring me a bonnet,
 O bring me a bonnet of bright rosy red--
 With white roses on it,
 With white roses on it,
 O bring me a bonnet to wear on my head--

(THE MELODY SEEMS TO BE REPEATED FAR AWAY. FLORA TURNS QUICKLY AS MRS. GROSE ENTERS FROM DOOR DOWN RIGHT. MRS. GROSE IS IN HER SIXTIES AND WEARS THE STARCHED APRON AND FRILLY CAP OF A HOUSEKEEPER OF THE PERIOD.)

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSING TO CHAIR R DUSTING IT) Have you been sitting quietly, Miss Flora?

FLORA

(CROSSING DOWN TO L OF MRS. GROSE) I haven't been doing anything else for hours. Where have you been, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

(AN EXCITEMENT APPARENT IN HER EVERY MOVEMENT TURNS TO FLORA). You've rumbled your dress-- Now, Miss Flora--

FLORA

(SMILING, TEASING AS MRS. GROSE PULLS AT HER SASH) O no! That's a tuck that was always there--

MRS. GROSE

It wasn't this morning. Now, do sit down and don't muss yourself.

FLORA

There'd be less chance of that if I remain standing, don't you think? When will she get here, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

At any moment--the carriage'll bring her soon-- Did you put those leaves in her room?

FLORA

They are pretty, aren't they?

MRS. GROSE

(CROSS TO OTTOMAN, BRUSH IT OFF) Leaves! With a whole garden of flowers!

FLORA

(FOLLOWING MRS. GROSE ABOUT THE ROOM) Is my uncle coming with her?

MRS. GROSE

(PAYING LITTLE ATTENTION TO HER) Your uncle?

FLORA

I expect he's too busy-- (PAUSE) Is she very pretty?

MRS. GROSE

(PREOCCUPIED) I'm sure she is.

FLORA

She might be ugly. Do I need another governess?

MRS. GROSE

Why, yes. You'll like her--won't you? (STOP DUSTING, LOOK AT FLORA)

FLORA

O, yes-- Will Miles like her?

MRS. GROSE

Master Miles? Of course.

FLORA

He'll be home from school soon--

MRS. GROSE

For the holidays. Not before.

FLORA

He might be. Mighn't he, Mrs. Grose? Before that?

MRS. GROSE

There'd be no reason. (TURNS--HER FACE PUCKERING UP) O, Miss Flora, lamb! You miss him, don't you?

FLORA

I'm not lonely--though I'd like to see Miles. I'd like it if he were always here.

MRS. GROSE

Of course you would, precious. But Miss Giddens will think of things to do--and won't she be amazed at how clever you are--!

FLORA

Am I? (AS MRS. GROSE NODS) Then--do I need another governess? And--are all governess' alike?

MRS. GROSE

(CROSS TO TABLE BY SOFA, DUST) They're different as one person is from another.

FLORA

(THOUGHTFULLY) It'd be an interesting thing if she'd let me get all dirty then put me to bed without a bath--

MRS. GROSE

(HARDLY LISTENING AS SHE DUSTS) Ha!

FLORA

(SIT L SIDE OF OTTOMAN) Perhaps I won't have to study my books--perhaps we'll spend the time with conversations or, if we feel like it on a particular day, we might just sit and stare at each other--lots of people do--

MRS. GROSE

Only when they have nothing to say. There's no chance of that with you around.

FLORA

When I don't talk you think I'm ill--

MRS. GROSE

Ha! Is that why you have so much to say? (FONDLY) I don't believe it!

FLORA

(RISE) Things pop into my head. There doesn't seem much sense in leaving them there--

MRS. GROSE

(CROSS TO DESK, DUST, PAYING LITTLE ATTENTION TO HER) Don't you get all hot and mussy, now, Miss Flora.

FLORA

How could I? I'm standing still--and, do you know? (LOOKS SLOWLY UP AT THE CEILING) I feel quite small when I'm not moving--

MRS. GROSE

You'll grow soon enough.

FLORA

O, it's not that. (CROSS ULC) Mrs. Grose? Why do people run past tall trees?

MRS. GROSE

I haven't got time for riddles, Miss Flora.

FLORA

It isn't a riddle. (WANDERING OVER TO THE WINDOW, BACK TO AUDIENCE)
I feel terribly small-- I feel as though I could crawl under the carpet
and be completely flat--

MRS. GROSE

If you go on feeling you'll make yourself ill.

FLORA

(SINGING) "O, Bring Me A Bonnett." (LOOKING OUT TO GARDEN) O, it's
lovely watching a person come at you from a long way off!

MRS. GROSE

You'll be sick. (CROSS TO FIREPLACE, DUST)

FLORA

(STILL LOOKING OUT) Of course she may not like it here. Then she'll
pack her things and leave--

MRS. GROSE

(PEERING UNDER STOOL BY FIREPLACE) Do you put leaves under here just to
tease me, Miss Flora? If you must bring leaves into the house, couldn't
you put them in a box?

FLORA

(NOT TURNING) They'd stifle. She's coming up the drive--and she isn't
in a carriage at all--(TURNS FROM THE WINDOW--WIDE-EYED) She's walking--

MRS. GROSE

(ALL NERVOUS EXCITEMENT, NOW, CRUMBLING THE LEAVES IN HER HAND) Is it
Miss Giddens, Miss Flora? Or are you teasing? And why would she be
walking? The carriage went to fetch her--

FLORA

She has just a little bag in her hand--(CROSS DOWN C ON PLACE WITH DESK) wouldn't she have a trunk if she's going to stay?

MRS. GROSE

O, dear! She couldn't carry her trunk--(CROSS UP TO DOOR, LOOK OUT, CROSS DOWN TO DESK) Everything was so neat-- What will she think?

FLORA

There, there. Everything is neat. I'll close the piano--then everything will be tidy. (CROSSES TO SPINET, CLOSSES THE SPINET WITH ALL THE SERIOUSNESS OF A WELL BEHAVED CHILD) Now. Shall I go to the window and go to meet her?

MRS. GROSE

No, no. It's not in your place as a little lady. Sit quietly, Miss Flora--(CROSSES UP TO WINDOW, WAITS ON THE THRESHOLD. FLORA SITS ON LOVE-SEAT. TO THE PERSON WHO COMES WALKING UP THE DRIVE) Miss Giddens?

(FLORA TURNS HER HEAD TO FRENCH WINDOW)

MISS GIDDENS

(FROM GARDEN. HER VOICE IS YOUTHFUL AND BREATHLESS. ENTERING FROM L SPEAKS AS SHE APPROACHES DOOR) It's beautiful! It's all so beautiful! The gardens, I mean-- I had to walk from the gate-- I had to see it all! The carriage took my trunk around to the back-- I hope you don't mind? (See Figure 2)

MRS. GROSE

(STEPPING BACKWARDS INTO THE ROOM) Dear, no-- I thought the carriage had missed you-- (TURNING) Miss Flora--here is Miss Giddens--

(MISS GIDDENS STEPS INTO THE ROOM. SHE IS YOUNG, PRETTY, DRESSED FOR TRAVELLING. SHE CARRIES A SMALL BAG.)

FIGURE 2



MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES DOWN TO L OF OTTOMAN AS FLORA CURTSIES TO HER) How do you do, Flora? (MRS. G ROSE, CROSSES DOWN TO POINT BELOW AND R OF OTTOMAN) And you--you are Mrs. Grose--the housekeeper, of course?

MRS. GROSE

(CURTSEYING) Yes, Miss--and you must forgive me. I meant to have tea ready for you--but, now--I'll have it here if you don't mind waiting a moment-- (SHE GOES, IN CONFUSION, TO DOOR RIGHT, THEN TURNS, FLUSHED AND BEAMING) I'm glad you've come-- (EXITS)

MISS GIDDENS

(TO MRS. GROSE) Thank you. Well, Flora--?

(MISS GIDDENS AND FLORA STAND, SILENTLY FOR A MOMENT, SMILING AT EACH OTHER.)

FLORA

Would you like to take off your hat?

MISS GIDDENS

(TAKING OFF HAT) Thank you--

FLORA

(TAKING HAT FROM HER) I shall put it here--on the desk. Won't you sit down? (CROSSES L OF SOFA TO DESK, PUTS IT ON DESK.)

MISS GIDDENS

Thank you. Come sit by me-- (FLORA GOES TO SIT ON LOVE-SEAT.) We must get to know each other, you know--

FLORA

O, I'm sure we will. You're staying, aren't you? You told Mrs. Grose your trunk was here--

MISS GIDDENS

(LAUGHING) Why, of course I'm staying! I wouldn't be much of a governess if I didn't--now would I? So, I shall-- (WOOLING HER) --if you'd like me to?

FLORA

O, yes-- (PAUSES) I hope you'll like your room--

MISS GIDDENS

I'm sure it's lovely--

FLORA

If you don't--you may choose another--There are thirty-five--most of them closed--and think of it! One hundred and forty windows! (RISES, CROSSES BETWEEN SOFA AND OTTOMAN) Shall we go into the garden and count them?

MISS GIDDENS

(CHARMED BY THE POLITENESS) I would like to--but poor Mrs. Grose would be alone with her tea--and I did say I'd like some.

FLORA

You didn't. She said she'd get it.

MISS GIDDENS

(TAKEN ABACK--LAUGHING) O-- It wouldn't be polite, now would it? To go walking in the garden?

FLORA

I often do. (CROSSES INTO MISS GIDDENS) There are several ways you can walk, you know, if you don't walk on the drive--

MISS GIDDENS

(NONPLUSSED--BUT TRYING) Several ways? You mean hopping and skipping?

FLORA

(IN AMAZEMENT) Do you hop and skip?

MISS GIDDENS

I do--on occasion--

FLORA

I've never had a governess who did that--

MISS GIDDENS

Well, we're each a little different.

FLORA

(1 STEP BACK. FLORA'S SMILE DISAPPEARS) "Different"?

MISS GIDDENS

(MISS GIDDENS, PUZZLED, LAUGHS AFTER A PAUSE THAT, BECAUSE OF ITS SUDDENNESS, SEEMS MUCH LONGER THAN IT ACTUALLY IS) Just as you are different from--from, well say: Mrs. Grose-- (FLORA DOES NOT MOVE, NOR DOES SHE SEEM TO BE LISTENING. MISS GIDDENS MAKES ANOTHER TRY) You're eight years old, aren't you, dear?

FLORA

Yes--

MISS GIDDENS

And Miles? He's eleven, isn't he?

FLORA

Yes--

MISS GIDDENS

And as good as you are, I'm sure!

FLORA

(IN A VERY SMALL VOICE) I expect we're both a little naughty sometimes--

MISS GIDDENS

(DRAWING FLORA TO HER, KISSING HER ON HER CHEEK) Of course you are!
And I shall love you for it!

MRS. GROSE

(ENTERING FROM RIGHT, CARRYING A TRAY OF TEA THINGS) You're famished for a cup, I'm sure--after your long journey--so I'll set it down and leave you and the little lady to talk-- (SETS TRAY ON DESK--TURNS TO RIGHT, CROSSES TO R OF OTTOMAN)

MISS GIDDENS

Mrs. Grose? Won't you sit with me a while? There're things I'd like to ask you--

MRS. GROSE

(STOPS, TURNS) Things, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

Yes--I don't know the habits of the house--it would make it easier if you told me--

MRS. GROSE

Why, yes, if you'd like, Miss. (REMAINS STANDING)

MISS GIDDENS

(RISING) Will you have some tea, Flora?

FLORA

(SITS ON OTTOMAN) No, thank you.

MISS GIDDENS

(GOING TO DESK AROUND L END OF SOFA) Do sit down, Mrs. Grose.

MRS. GROSE

(SITTING ON CHAIR AT R) Thank you, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(MISS GIDDENS POURS TEA INTO CUPS-- AS SHE DOES THIS SHE STARTS TO LAUGH SOFTLY, LOOKING AT MRS. GROSE, THEN FLORA, WHO SITS QUIETLY) And I was so afraid!

FLORA

(WONDERINGLY) Afraid?

MISS GIDDENS

Timid, Flora--couldn't make up my mind for days-- Should I accept this post--should I? Shouldn't I? None of my brothers or sisters could help me! I wouldn't ask advice! (LAUGHS)

FLORA

(LAUGHING) I never take advice!

MRS. GROSE

(SERIOUSLY) Now, Miss Flora--

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES BEHIND OTTOMAN AS SHE TAKES A CUP OF TEA TO MRS. GROSE, WHO RISES EMBARRASSEDLY) But why should one take advice, Mrs. Grose? Or give it? (AS MRS. GROSE REMAINS STANDING--CUP IN HAND--SLIGHTLY ILL-AT-EASE) Do sit down, Mrs. Grose-- (AS SHE RETURNS TO LOVE-SEAT, SITS WITH CUP OF TEA) Of course, advice is forced upon you, in as large a family as mine was--

FLORA

(FASCINATED) How large?

MISS GIDDENS

Very large. In a very small house. Secrets were difficult.

FLORA

But "possible"?

MISS GIDDENS

Not for long.

FLORA

That must have been annoying.

MISS GIDDENS

Well-- (LAUGHING) Of course we shared our secrets when we were your age--but grown-ups never knew--

FLORA

(LAUGHING WITH HER) They never do--do they?

MRS. GROSE

Now, Miss Flora--

MISS GIDDENS

(TO MRS. GROSE, SMILING) Oh, they found out after awhile! My family believed in open doors and after-dinner conferences--

MRS. GROSE

And a very sensible thing, too, Miss--

FLORA

Is it? (RISES)

MRS. GROSE

(VEXEDLY) Miss Flora--

MISS GIDDENS

(REALIZING THAT PERHAPS SHE HAS BEEN A LITTLE TOO FREE WITH FLORA) Yes, Flora. A very sensible thing-- (SMILING) Now, wouldn't you like to walk in the garden while I speak to Mrs. Grose? (SHE GOES WITH FLORA TO WINDOW. PUTS TEA CUP DOWN ON END TABLE)

FLORA

(THE PERFECT "OBEDIENT" CHILD) Why, yes, if you'd like me to, Miss Giddens.

MISS GIDDENS

And I'll come out when I've had a cup of tea-- (FLORA CURTSIES TO HER, GOES THROUGH FRENCH WINDOW AND OUT INTO GARDEN, OUT UC, THEN L) Poor little thing. She looks so lonely out there--

MRS. GROSE

Lonely, Miss? Most independent. Just as soon wander off by herself-- though as easy with company as any--

MISS GIDDENS

(LOOKING OUT) She is lonely, though. (CROSSING DOWN BETWEEN OTTOMAN AND CHAIR R) Perhaps it's because I grew up in a large family-- Well, at least she has a beautiful garden to walk in-- (SOFTLY, TURNS UP TO LOOK AT GARDEN) It is a beautiful garden--so quiet, so peaceful-- The thickness of the trees seem to form a wall between one path and another. As I walked under them I had a feeling of solitude--and yet, I also felt that I was not completely alone-- (TURNING TO MRS. GROSE) When you walked in the garden--your first day here--what did you think, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

(SOFTLY) I was young, Miss-- I thought it was all very beautiful--

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSING BELOW SOFA TO FIREPLACE, LOOKING ABOUT ROOM, TAKING IN EACH DETAIL OF IT) How awful if it were an ugly one! (SHE LAUGHS SOFTLY) How awful if this room were cold and ugly! I was almost afraid it might be! (RETURNS TO LOVE-SEAT. SITS DOWN; TAKES HER CUP.)

MRS. GROSE

(PUZZLED) Might be, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

(SERIOUSLY) No. I didn't think that. I suppose I knew it would be beautiful--because his house on Harley Street was-- (PAUSE) Mrs. Grose--perhaps it isn't any of my business--but he, their uncle, when I spoke to him--when he engaged me--he was so brief with me. He said he didn't want to be bothered by letters from me about the children-- He said that, you know--he made it seem the important part of his terms. He said--under no condition was I to bother him. Doesn't he love them?

MRS. GROSE

(UNCOMFORTABLY) I'm sure he does--in his fashion, Miss, if you'll excuse me-- (RISES, STARTS OUT R)

MISS GIDDENS

I don't understand how he could choose to ignore them. But I know so little-- Only that their parents died soon after Miss Flora's birth and that he is their sole guardian--

MRS. GROSE

Yes, Miss-- (CROSSES IN TO MISS G) But you must understand, Miss-- He's not a young man and he's never enjoyed good health-- He was always a studious man--wrapped up in his work-- He's never had any family responsibilities before-- (GENTLY) But he does keep this house on-- especially for them. He is doing all that can be expected--

MISS GIDDENS

Yes, after all, Miles and Flora aren't his children-- And, he certainly was absorbed in his work-- He could scarcely spare the time to interview me and spent most of it talking about his collection of Chinese paintings-- I must admit they're rather beautiful--but I couldn't help being angry when

he spoke to me about not bothering him about the children. (GENTLY) You see, I have been in the midst of my family, first as a child, then as a guardian of my younger brothers and sisters-- (RISING, MOVING ABOUT THE ROOM, CROSSES AROUND L END OF SOFA TO L DOOR, CROSSES TO SPINET, CROSSES DOWN TO R OF R CHAIR, TAKING IN THE DETAILS OF IT) It isn't enough to give a child a house and garden as beautiful as these-- (WRYLY) I'm afraid I showed him how angry I was. I'm afraid that is why he engaged me--because I "stood up" to him. I was caught. I showed how much I loved children--and that I would do anything to make them happy. That was all he wanted, apparently-- Someone to take the responsibility off his shoulders. Well, here I am. (GENTLY) And I'm embarrassing you--I don't mean to. (LAUGHS) And what an easy task it will be! An affectionate task! And all within a large roomy house surrounded by a lovely garden! (DETERMINEDLY) And--(CROSSES IN 2 STEPS TOWARD WINDOW) when he pays us a visit--

MRS. GROSE

I don't expect he will, Miss. He's been here only once or twice that I can bring to mind. Though there were times in the months just passed when--

MISS GIDDENS

(TAKEN ABACK) When what, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

When he should have been the one to shoulder the--

MISS GIDDENS

The what, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

Bygones is bygones. (CROSSES BELOW OTTOMAN)

MISS GIDDENS

Not if I'm to do my work satisfactorily-- (CROSSES TO MRS. G)

MRS. GROSE

Pardon me, Miss. It isn't to do with you--you'd best forget I spoke--so--so out of place.

MISS GIDDENS

(STUBBORNLY) Mrs. Grose. What was she like?

MRS. GROSE

(UNCOMFORTABLY) Who, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

The lady who was here before.

MRS. GROSE

(THINKS, THEN CROSSES U AND IN CIRCLE TOWARD L) The last governess? She was also young and pretty, Miss, even as you--

MISS GIDDENS

(SMILING WITH EMBARRASSMENT) He doesn't mind them being young and pretty!

MRS. GROSE

(TURNING TO HER--VEHEMENTLY) Oh, no--it was the way he liked everyone!
(FLUSHING) I mean--why should the Master mind?

MISS GIDDENS

But of whom did you speak first?

MRS. GROSE

(BLANKLY) Why, of him.

MISS GIDDENS

Of the Master? (WARN DIMOUT)

MRS. GROSE

Of who else?

(THEY SEARCH EACH OTHER'S FACES.)

MISS GIDDENS

(CASUALLY) Mrs. Grose--was she--my predecessor--careful, particular--in her work?

MRS. GROSE

(AGAINST HER WILL) About some things--yes--

MISS GIDDENS

But not about all?

MRS. GROSE

Well, Miss, she's passed on. I won't tell tales.

MISS GIDDENS

(QUICKLY. CROSSES DOWN R 2 STEPS, THEN TURNS IN TO MRS. G) I understand your feeling--but-- Did she die here?

MRS. GROSE

No--she went away.

(FLORA APPEARS AT WINDOW, AT BACK OF GARDEN FROM R, CROSSES DOWN TO DOORS)

MISS GIDDENS

Went away? To die? She was taken ill you mean--and went home?

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES FARTHER DL) She was not taken ill so far as appeared in this house. She--she left it to go home, she said, for a short holiday. At

the very moment I was expecting her back I heard from the Master that she was dead.

MISS GIDDENS

But of what?

(THE TWO WOMEN STARE AT EACH OTHER. THROUGH SCENE, LIGHTS DIM. ONLY FROM THE FRENCH WINDOW COMES A LAST RAY OF SUNLIGHT.)

FLORA

(IN A SMALL, CLEAR VOICE) Miss Giddens--aren't you coming for a walk?

(LIGHTS DIM OUT. MUSIC. SLOW DIM)

Scene II

(MUSIC)

SCENE: THREE HOURS LATER.

THIS SCENE BEGINS IN SEMI-DARKNESS. MISS GIDDEN'S VOICE OVERLAPS TRANSITION MUSIC.

LIGHTS COME UP SLOWLY. A PALE MOONLIGHT COMES THROUGH THE FRENCH WINDOW.

MISS GIDDENS SITS ON THE LOVE-SEAT. FLORA C, MISS GIDDENS L END OF SOFA. FLORA SITS BESIDE HER, SLEEPILY; SHE IS WEARING A LONG WHITE NIGHTGOWN.

FLORA LEANS AGAINST MISS GIDDENS' SHOULDER.

MISS GIDDENS

(SOFTLY, READING FROM BOOK) "In the winter time, when deep snow lay on the ground, a poor boy was forced to go out on a sledge to fetch wood. When he had gathered it together, and packed it, he wished, as he was frozen with cold, not to go home at once but to light a fire and warm himself a little--"

FLORA

How would he light it?

MISS GIDDENS

Well--I suppose he had a flint on which to strike--

FLORA

Oh--

MISS GIDDENS

(READING) "So--he scraped away the snow, and as he was thus cleaning the ground, he found--a tiny, golden key! Hereupon he thought that where the key was, the lock must be also--so he dug in the ground and found--an iron chest! 'If the key does but fit it!' thought he; 'no doubt there are precious things in that little box!' He searched, but no keyhole was there. At last--he discovered one! But so small that it was hardly visible. He tried it, and the key fitted it exactly. Then he turned it once round--and now we must wait until he has quite unlocked it and opened the lid--and then we shall learn what wonderful things were lying in that box."

FLORA

Was he a little boy like Miles?

MISS GIDDENS

He might even have been Miles.

FLORA

Oh-- What was in the box?

MISS GIDDENS

Why, we shall have to wait until it's opened.

FLORA

When will it be?

MISS GIDDENS

It doesn't say--but it's fun guessing. What do you think is in the box?

FLORA

I think I'd rather wait until it's opened--

MISS GIDDENS

And if it isn't?

FLORA

Then I'll just imagine things.

MISS GIDDENS

(MORE TO HERSELF THAN TO FLORA) Yes-- (CLOSES BOOK. SHIVERING AS THOUGH A SUDDEN DRAUGHT HAS ENTERED THE ROOM) It's cold-- Aren't you cold, dear?

FLORA

No. (SNUGGLING CLOSER TO MISS GIDDENS) I'm half-asleep, I think. Shall I stay in your room tonight?

MISS GIDDENS

(LOOKING ABOUT THE ROOM. ABSENTMINDEDLY) If you'd like to--
(VIBRATION)

FLORA

Mrs. Grose wanted to give you a larger room--but I said: She'll only be there when she's asleep and big rooms have a way of growing bigger at night. Mrs. Grose says they don't, but that's because she doesn't like the dark and won't open her eyes.

(A MAN APPEARS, ENTERS FROM UR, CROSSES DOWN TO WINDOW. AS QUINT APPROACHES THE WINDOW, THIS TIME AND THROUGHOUT THE SHOW, THE LUSH GREEN GARDEN PROJECTION CROSS-FADES TO THE STARK GARDEN PROJECTION. FLORA YAWNS, THEN SHE GIGGLES.) (See Figure 3)

FLORA

I wish there was some way to sleep in several rooms at once-- Mrs. Grose was quite startled by the thought--



FIGURE 3

MISS GIDDENS

(LAUGHING--A LITTLE NERVOUSLY) I don't wonder!

(UC, OFF R, THE MAN STEPS AWAY.)

(VIBRATION)

FLORA

(LAUGHING) She gets so upset about things like that! Do you know what she did about the rooms in the attic? (MISS GIDDENS RISES FROM THE LOVE-SEAT, CROSSES TO L END OF SOFA, A PUZZLED FROWN ON HER FACE. SHE LOOKS TOWARD WINDOW.) Why--what's the matter, Miss Giddens, dear?

MISS GIDDENS

(SMILING QUICKLY) Nothing. What about the attic rooms? (CROSSES BACK IN FRONT OF SOFA)

FLORA

They are empty, but you can see everything that once was in them!

MISS GIDDENS

(LOOKING TOWARD WINDOW AGAIN) Can you--?

FLORA

Yes. The chairs--everything--has left a mark. It looks as though the pictures are still hanging and, if you look closely, you can see the carpet, though it's been rolled up and put away! (SHE WATCHES MISS GIDDENS AND WAITS FOR A MOMENT; THEN: MISS GIDDENS CROSSES BACK L OF SOFA UP ABOVE DESK) Mrs. Grose doesn't like the idea. She has locked up all those rooms and several more-- (SHE YAWNS, WATCHING MISS GIDDENS, WHO IS LOOKING ABOUT THE ROOM AS THOUGH SHE SENSES SOMETHING AMISS) But I--O, I wish my room was like that!

MISS GIDDENS

(LOOKING AT HER--SMILING--TRYING TO APPEAR UNCONCERNED, CROSSES C TO OTTOMAN LOOKING AT WINDOW) It'd--it'd be uncomfortable. Nothing to sit on--and how would you go to bed?

FLORA

I wouldn't. I'd much rather not, anyway.

MISS GIDDENS

I'm afraid you'll have to--now.

FLORA

Must I? Then, first, tell me a story out of your head.

MISS GIDDENS

(ONCE MORE PREOCCUPIED) Out of my head?

(WARN MUSIC AND DIMOUT)

FLORA

With me in it. And Mrs. Grose and Miles--and you.

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES TO SOFA, TAKES FLORA'S HAND, STARTS R) Come along, then. (THEY START TOWARDS THE STAIRS.) Once upon a time--once upon a time there was a ship called Bly--

FLORA

(SLEEPILY) That's the name of this house-- I know--

MISS GIDDENS

It was also--it was also the name of a very old ship-- (AS THEY GO UP-STAIRS) This ship had long corridors and empty rooms and an old square tower--just like this house. It had a crew. Their names were-- Do you know what their names were?

FLORA

(SLEEPILY) What were they?

MISS GIDDENS

(AS THEY REACH THE LANDING) Why, their names were Flora and Mrs. Grose and Miss Giddens--and, yes, still another--and his name was Miles.
(THEY ENTER ROOM OFF LANDING.)

(IMMEDIATELY, AS MISS GIDDENS SAYS "MILES," A THIN VIBRATION COMES FROM FAR AWAY--MORE OF TREMBLING OF ALL INANIMATE THINGS THAN OF SOUND ITSELF --AND WITH THIS VIBRATION, FROM UCR THE MAN AGAIN APPEARS AT THE WINDOW, FILLING THE WINDOW, BLOCKING OUT THE MOONLIGHT, ENTERS THE ROOM AS--)

SLOW DIMOUT

(MUSICAL TRANSITION TO SCENE III.)

Scene III

(MUSIC FADE. LIGHTS UP.)

SCENE: THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

IT IS A CLEAR, BEAUTIFUL DAY. THE FRENCH DOOR IS WIDE OPEN. THE GARDEN IS APPARENT BY ITS REFLECTED LIGHT, GREEN AND COOL, THAT FILLS THE ROOM.

MRS. GROSE AT SPINET IS POLISHING THE FURNITURE. AFTER A MOMENT, SHE REACHES INTO ONE OF THE POCKETS OF HER APRON, PULLS OUT TWO LETTERS, PLACES THEM ON DESK, LOOKS OUT INTO THE GARDEN, THEN CONTINUES WITH HER POLISHING AT DESK.

FLORA COMES THROUGH DOOR ON LANDING AND, UNNOTICED BY MRS. GROSE, COMES DOWN, HALF-WAY, TO SIT ON A STAIR. HER CHIN IN HER HANDS, SHE WATCHES MRS. GROSE QUIETLY.

(MUSIC OUT)

FLORA

(SOFTLY) Where is Miss Giddens?

MRS. GROSE

Ah! Miss Flora! You startled me! (CROSSES TO R OF OTTOMAN) Aren't you supposed to be in the schoolroom, now? Miss Giddens won't like it--and on her second day here, too--

FLORA

(UNDISTURBED) I finished my writing. Where is she?

MRS. GROSE

Picking some flowers--though I'm sure she'd stop if she knew you weren't doing what she told you to do. (CROSSES TO STAIRS) You get back now, there's a lamb.

FLORA

(PATIENTLY) But I've finished my writing--then I copied out a rhyme I knew by heart:

In sleep she seemed to walk forlorn,
Till cold winds woke the gray-eyed morn
about the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "The day is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary,
I would that I were dead."

MRS. GROSE

(APPALLED) What was she thinking of to have you learn that!

FLORA

She gave me O's to copy--but they were so easy--

MRS. GROSE

(BENEATH HER BREATH) Then it's clear from whom you learned that, Missy!
(CROSSES TO CHAIR R, DUSTS) And there's no telling what else!

FLORA

Are you dusting the ship, Mrs. Grose, dear?

MRS. GROSE

(GRIMLY) I'm dusting a chair--a ship, indeed!

FLORA

Miss Giddens says Bly is a ship--

MRS. GROSE

Then you'll get sea-sick, no doubt!

FLORA

O, no. But Miss Giddens was.

MRS. GROSE

(STOPS, TURNS TO FLORA) Ah, Miss Flora--

FLORA

(RISES) Well, I thought she was, for she came upstairs and I wasn't asleep, though I kept my eyes shut--and I heard her say: "Flora? Flora, dear?" And she could hardly get her voice out, so I expect she was sick, for she was very restless all night. I heard her.

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES TO END TABLE, LAUGHING IN SPITE OF HERSELF) Miss Flora!

FLORA

(LAUGHING WITH HER AS SHE COMES DOWN STAIRS, RUNNING, GOES TO FRENCH DOOR) So I should find her--for she may have fallen down-- (GOES OUT INTO GARDEN.)

MRS. GROSE

(LAUGHING WITH AMAZEMENT) Fallen down, indeed! (CROSSES TO FIREPLACE) "Are you dusting a ship!" (A MOMENT PASSES, THEN, AS MISS GIDDENS' APPROACH IS HERALDED BY HER SHADOW AT THE WINDOW.) What a lovely day, Miss!

MISS GIDDENS

(ENTERING FROM GARDEN, STOPS IN FRONT OF DOOR, PENSIVE) Yes, it is.

MRS. GROSE

Didn't you get the flowers, Miss? The vases are filled for them--

MISS GIDDENS

No--I forgot them-- (CROSSES TO STAIRCASE. STOPS. TURNING BACK TO MRS. GROSE) Mrs. Grose--?

MRS. GROSE

Yes, Miss? (CROSSES BELOW SOFA)

MISS GIDDENS

Mrs. Grose-- (CROSSES IN BELOW CHAIR R) you know where the path ends in a clump of elms, beyond the lawn, close to the woods?

MRS. GROSE

Yes, Miss--

(MUSIC)

MISS GIDDENS

(LOST IN WHAT SHE DESCRIBES) I was standing there--I was about to pick the flowers--but suddenly I felt that I was being stared at. I turned, expecting to find that it was you or Miss Flora who had come to call me-- Instead, I saw a man, a stranger--who stared at me, Mrs. Grose--who stood there, casually, as though he belonged here--

MRS. GROSE

You're sure, Miss, (CROSSES TO L OF OTTOMAN) it wasn't the gardener or his boy?

MISS GIDDENS

No one I knew. (TRYING TO LAUGH) I stood there waiting for him to approach me. I was sure of a reason for his being there and so I waited--and he--he waited with me--not coming closer--standing there, fifty yards away, though it seemed that he was as near to me as you are-- (SHE SHAKES HER HEAD AS THOUGH TO RID HERSELF OF THE THOUGHT)

And then, even though there was that distance between us, I could feel his eyes on me--bold, insolent-- He stared at me as though I were being indecent-- I felt as though I was looking into someone's room-- He stared at me, Mrs. Grose, as though I were the intruder! (SHE LAUGHS WEAKLY.)

MRS. GROSE

And he is gone, Miss--?

MISS GIDDENS

O, yes! He went away--as casually as he had come--though, for all I know he might be still in the garden, somewhere, or in the woods-- And (CROSSING SLOWLY UP BEHIND DESK) the ridiculous thing, Mrs. Grose, is that only now am I angry! Not when I was there, mind you, when I might have questioned him--but now, when I am here--quite safe from him--I feel angry--and--a trifle ill-- (SHE SHAKES HER HEAD AGAIN AND MOVES TOWARDS THE DESK.)

(MUSIC OUT)

MRS. GROSE

(FACING UP, BACK TO AUDIENCE, STARING AT HER) But, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(DISTURBED--NOT WANTING TO GO ON WITH IT) Don't be concerned for me--I didn't sleep well. Let us forget it. --I see there are letters for me.

MRS. GROSE

(STARTS R ABOVE OTTOMAN) Wouldn't you like some tea, Miss--?

MISS GIDDENS

(WHO HAS QUICKLY, NERVOUSLY OPENED THE FIRST OF TWO LETTERS) It's from my youngest sister--and here-- (MRS. G STOPS, CROSSES IN TO L OF OTTOMAN TO GET PICTURE. TURNING TO MRS. GROSE, A PICTURE IN HER HAND) --here --she has sent a picture that I forgot to bring with me--of my family. I've never been without it--and yet I forgot it--and so she sent it-- (GIVES MRS. GROSE THE PICTURE, STARTS OPENING THE SECOND LETTER.)

MRS. GROSE

(LOOKING AT THE PICTURE) How you must miss them--! Is this your first time away from them, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

(FROWNING AT LETTER IN HER HAND) Yes. How like their uncle. He's forwarded this letter without even opening it. It's from Master Miles' school. Their uncle has written on the back--"whatever it is, deal with it. Don't bother me with it. Not a word."

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES IN 2 STEPS) O, that's his way, Miss. He never did like being bothered. What a pretty picture this is. A big family is what I like. Let them muss the furniture up a bit, I say. A scratch won't hurt here and there if there's happiness in a house--

MISS GIDDENS

(ALL HER UNCERTAINTY RETURNING) What am I to do? How am I to deal with this?

MRS. GROSE

With what, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

Master Miles. He's been dismissed from school.

MRS. GROSE

(AFTER A LONG PAUSE) Dismissed--

MISS GIDDENS

Sent home.

MRS. GROSE

(BLANKNESS) But aren't they all--?

MISS GIDDENS

Only for the holidays. (CROSSES TO L END OF SOFA) Miles can't go back--
at all.

MRS. GROSE

What has he done--? (AS MISS GIDDENS HESITATES) Is he really bad?
(CROSSES BELOW SOFA) Do the gentlemen say so?

MISS GIDDENS

They go into no details--they simply express their regret. They say it
is impossible to keep him--

MRS. GROSE

Why?

MISS GIDDENS

That he is an injury to the others.

MRS. GROSE

It's too dreadful to say such cruel things! See him first, Miss, then
believe it if you can! You might as well think ill of Miss Flora,
bless her!

MISS GIDDENS

O, I know that, Mrs. Grose-- (CROSSES TO STOOL BY FIREPLACE) but what am
I to do? Am I to question him when I meet him at the coach this afternoon?

MRS. GROSE

This afternoon--?

MISS GIDDENS

Yes-- Shall I put it to him?--boldly?

MRS. GROSE

See him first, (CROSSES IN 2 STEPS TO MISS G) Miss, before you think badly of him-- It's cruel--too cruel--to write things like that about him!

MISS GIDDENS

You've never known him to be bad?

MRS. GROSE

Never known him-- Oh I don't pretend that!

MISS GIDDENS

You like them with the spirit to be naughty? So do I. But not to the degree to contaminate.

MRS. GROSE

To--?

MISS GIDDENS

To corrupt.

MRS. GROSE

(LAUGHING ODDLY--WITH A BOLD HUMOR) "Corrupt?" Are you afraid he'll corrupt you?

MISS GIDDENS

(LONG PAUSE; STARES AT MRS. G) What a comfort you are-- (CROSSES UP TO FRENCH DOORS) If I'd had a good night's sleep I'd be able to think this out and not be silly about it-- But I didn't sleep--

MRS. GROSE

Miss Flora said that.

MISS GIDDENS

Did she? I hardly thought--

(WARN LIGHTS)

MRS. GROSE

(TURNS UP TO MISS G) And that you bent over her and spoke her name.

MISS GIDDENS

Yes--because-- (CHECKS HERSELF, CROSSES TO SPINET) I wondered if she were thirsty--

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES TO L OF OTTOMAN; GENTLY) Why didn't you call me--if you were taken ill?

MISS GIDDENS

Ill? Why, no. It was my first night here--that was all. After my home, small, crowded, this house with so many rooms empty--all shut up--so quiet and-- (THERE IS A DEADLY STILLNESS BEFORE SHE SPEAKS AGAIN; CROSSES DOWN TO CHAIR R AS IF IN TRANCE) And--I seemed to hear someone walking beneath my window-- I mustn't think about it-- It's odd, though-- I can't get it out of my mind-- He stared at me so boldly-- I could feel an intense silence into which all the sounds of the garden dropped--leaving me, as he walked away, with nothing to stare at but emptiness-- Then--the smell of flowers--overpowering-- (SHE SWAYS AS THOUGH ABOUT TO FALL; STARTS TO STAIRS) I--I must go to Flora, now-- (STARTS TO CLIMB STAIRS.)

MRS. GROSE

(WITH A SUDDEN REALIZATION) She's not up there-- Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(TURNING TO HER) Where--then? (AS MRS. GROSE, FRIGHTENED, LOOKS TOWARDS WINDOW) In the garden--?! (SHE RUNS ACROSS THE ROOM, TO THE WINDOW, MRS. GROSE FOLLOWS HER, QUICKLY.) Flora! (EXITS OUT WINDOW) Flora!

MRS. GROSE

Miss Flora! Miss Flora! Miss Flora!

(FLORA ENTERS DOOR LEFT AND GOES TO WINDOW.)

MISS GIDDENS

(OFF) Flora! Flora!

(LIGHTS DIMOUT. MUSIC)

Scene IV

(MUSIC. LIGHTS UP.)

SCENE: TWILIGHT (SAME DAY).

THE WINDOW IS OPEN. THE CANDLES ARE NOT LIGHTED, FOR THE DAY HAS NOT QUITE PASSED, THOUGH THE GOLDEN AFTERGLOW THAT FILLS THE ROOM WILL SOON FADE.

THIS MOMENT OF TWILIGHT IS SILENT BUT ANTICIPATES THE BREAK THAT SOON COMES FROM THE GARDEN.

FLORA'S VOICE

(FROM THE GARDEN) We're here, Mrs. Grose! Mrs. Grose! (ENTERING, RUNNING ACROSS TO DOOR, LEFT) Miles! Miles is back!

MRS. GROSE

(OFF LEFT) Here I am, lamb!

FLORA

(TURNING AGAIN TO WINDOW) Hurry! He's grown--he's so tall! You won't recognize him! (RUNNING TO WINDOW) The darling boy! O, hurry! Please hurry, Mrs. Grose!

MRS. GROSE'S VOICE

(OFF LEFT) I am--I'm doing the best I can--bless you!

FLORA

(RUNNING OUT TO GARDEN) Miles! Where are you, Miles? Don't hide from me, now! Where are you! (HER VOICE DIES AWAY IN THE DISTANCE. RUNS UC, OFF R)

MRS. GROSE

(OFF LEFT) O, dear! I'll be out directly! (MUSIC OUT. AS MRS. GROSE ENTERS FROM LEFT, MISS GIDDENS APPEARS AT THE WINDOW. FROM LEFT, ON PLATFORM MRS. GROSE STOPS AS SHE SEES MISS GIDDENS) Well, Miss? Master Miles?--where is he?

MISS GIDDENS

(FLATLY) Somewhere in the garden. He ran off amongst the trees. (CROSSING SLOWLY DOWN BETWEEN OTTOMAN AND CHAIR)

MRS. GROSE

(SENSING THE TENSION IN MISS GIDDENS) It is all right, (CROSSES BETWEEN SOFA AND OTTOMAN) isn't it, Miss? I mean--what did he say to you?

MISS GIDDENS

(COMING INTO ROOM) About the reason for his being sent home? Nothing. Nothing seems to bother him.

MRS. GROSE

You see? I told you there would be no trouble about it-- (STARTS TOWARDS WINDOW) ~~BACK TO AUDIENCE.~~

MISS GIDDENS

I don't see. (AS MRS. GROSE STOPS, BACK TO AUDIENCE) We sat across from each other in the carriage and he was all smiles and not in the least concerned, if that's what you mean. Other than that--

MRS. GROSE

But you do like him?

MISS GIDDENS

O, he's charming. I expected, at least, that he'd be uneasy--that he'd say something about his school--

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES DOWN JUST R ABOVE OTTOMAN, PLEADING) But he's just come home, Miss. It'll come out. He'll tell you. I know he will--

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES DR 2 STEPS) O, no. I'll have to get it out of him.

MRS. GROSE

And it'll be nothing at all!

MISS GIDDENS

Then why hasn't he said something?

(AT THIS MOMENT, MILES APPEARS AT WINDOW. HE IS ELEVEN YEARS OLD; A HANDSOME CHILD WHOSE FACE REFLECTS A REMARKABLE INNOCENCE, WHOSE BEARING IS GENTLEMANLY AND PROUD. HE LOOKS AT MISS GIDDENS THEN, WITH A GREAT SMILE OF WELCOME, GOES TO MRS. GROSE.)

MRS. GROSE

(EMBRACING HIM) Master Miles--dear Master Miles--

FLORA

(RUNNING IN FROM GARDEN. GETS ON OTTOMAN ON KNEES. SITS ON OTTOMAN) O, there you are! I looked all over the garden for you! (FONDLY) Why do you tease me so!

MILES

(LOOKING AT MRS. GROSE AS SHE RELEASES HIM) You look as though you like to cry. Aren't you glad to see me?

MRS. GROSE

I'm that happy--I--

FLORA

She means she's so happy she could weep! (OFF OTTOMAN, HUG MILES) But I was sick when I heard you were coming! My stomach turned over.

MISS GIDDENS

(SHARPLY) Is supper ready, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

(STARTLED) Why--yes, Miss.

MISS GIDDENS

(COLDLY) You must be hungry, Miles.

MILES

(R ON OTTOMAN) Yes, thank you, Miss Giddens.

(STAGE AREA DIM.)

FLORA

Just think, Mrs. Grose-- (RUNNING UP TO OTTOMAN, AROUND TO L OF IT AND SITTING) Miles ate four little cakes on the coach! And a wheel came off!

MRS. GROSE

(SOFTLY) Did it, now?

MILES

(LOOKING ABOUT THE ROOM. COMPLETELY AT EASE) No. It almost did. A man fixed it and then we went along beautifully.

MRS. GROSE

Four cakes--and I made a pudding for you--

MILES

I actually ate only two. A little girl ate the others and her mother became quite angry. So I fibbed.

MISS GIDDENS

(SHARPLY) Why, Miles? (CROSSES IN 2 STEPS)

MILES

O, because the lady wouldn't scold me. (RISES) So, of course, I said I'd eaten four. So you see, Mrs. Grose, I shall be able to enjoy your pudding. (CROSSES TO MRS. G, EMBRACES)

(THE LIGHT FROM THE SKY DIES AWAY WITH MILES' LAST WORDS. THE ROOM IS IN DARKNESS.)

FLORA

Hello! (ON KNEES ON OTTOMAN)

MILES

Hello! (CROSSES TO OTTOMAN)

MISS GIDDENS

(TAKES OFF HER HAT) Flora, wouldn't you like to go with Mrs. Grose-- (CROSSING UP TO DESK TO PUT HAT DOWN) and have her give you a taper--then you could light the candles.

FLORA

May I?

MISS GIDDENS

And Mrs. Grose, would you see to supper?

FLORA

(STILL PLAINTIVELY, CROSSING TO MISS GIDDENS) And may I have supper with you and Miles?

MISS GIDDENS

I don't see why not.

FLORA

(FOLLOWING MRS. GROSE, WHO GOES SILENTLY TO DOOR R) And may Mrs. Grose have supper with us?

MRS. GROSE

Dear me, that wouldn't--

MISS GIDDENS

That would be nice.

FLORA

(TAKING MRS. GROSE BY THE HAND) She shall. Won't you?

MRS. GROSE

(HARDLY AUDIBLE--AS THEY EXIT R) If you'd like it, Miss Flora-- (EXITS)

MISS GIDDENS

(MISS GIDDENS, NOW THAT SHE IS ALONE WITH MILES, SEEMS FILLED WITH IN-DECISION. SHE TURNS TO DESK, PLACES HER HAT UPON IT, THEN TURNS TO HIM. TOO CASUALLY) Well, Miles? Don't you want to tell me something?

MILES

(RETURNS HER LOOK WITH A CHARMING SMILE) Something?

FLORA

(ENTERING R WITH A LIGHTED TAPER IN HER HAND) Do I look like an evening star? (SHE DOESN'T SEEM TO NOTICE THE SILENCE BETWEEN MILES AND MISS GIDDENS. FLORA CROSSES TO LIGHT CANDLE ON SPINET) We'll all have stomachaches, I'm sure. I saw the pudding and it's beautiful.

MILES

(GOING OVER TO HER, CROSSES UP TO FLORA) I shan't.

FLORA

(BEAMING AT HIM) No. You never do. I don't see how you manage not to-- what with third helpings and all. (A CLOSE INTIMATE COMPANIONSHIP EXISTS BETWEEN THEM. AS THOUGH THEY DELIBERATELY IGNORE HER, MISS GIDDENS IS LEFT ON HER OWN; SHE IS AWARE OF THIS--SHE INVOLUNTARILY MOVES OUT OF THEIR WAY AS THEY APPROACH THE DESK.) Thank you. If I have even a second helping I almost die.

(DESK AREA DIM UP.)

MILES

(SMILING AT HER) Silly. You dislike second helpings?

FLORA

O, no. I love them.

MISS GIDDENS

Miles.

FLORA

(AS THOUGH MISS GIDDENS WEREN'T IN THE ROOM) I shall die of them one day, of course. But I do think it'll be worth it-- (LIGHTING CANDLE-- THEN BLOWING OUT FLAME OF TAPER) Especially if it's pudding. Not the soggy kind, you know-- (PLACES TAPER ON DESK, TAKES MILES BY THE HAND. TOGETHER THEY GO TO STAIRCASE.) The chewy kind--with raisins in it--

MISS GIDDENS

(FIRMLY) Miles.

MILES

(TURNING ON FIRST STEP--ALL SMILES) I should wash my hands for supper, shouldn't I?

(MILES AND FLORA RUN, SILENTLY UP THE STAIRS AND THROUGH DOOR ON LANDING. MISS GIDDENS LOOKS UP AT LANDING AS A BURST OF LAUGHTER COMES FROM THE ROOM BEHIND THE DOOR. SHE ANGRILY CROSSES TO DESK, SITS DOWN, OPENS DESK-DRAWERS, TAKES THE LETTER OUT, RAPIDLY READS THROUGH IT. WITH SUDDEN DECISION, SHE BEGINS TO WRITE. A FEW MOMENTS PASS. SHE RISES, GOES TO FRENCH WINDOW, CLOSES IT BUT DOES NOT DRAW THE CURTAINS; SHE RETURNS TO DESK, CONTINUES WRITING. MILES COMES THROUGH DOOR ON LANDING AND DOWN THE STAIRCASE.)

MILES

(ON LANDING) Am I disturbing you, Miss Giddens?

MISS GIDDENS

(PRETENDING DISINTERESTEDNESS) Not at all.

MILES

Flora's hiding.-- (CROSSING DOWN TO BOTTOM STEP) When she's hidden, I'm to find her.

MISS GIDDENS

(WRITING) Well, don't be too noisy.

MILES

(MILES GOES TO FRENCH WINDOW. LOOKS OUT INTO GARDEN OVER WHICH COMPLETE DARKNESS HAS FALLEN. AFTER A MOMENT) It must be nice out in the garden, now--

MISS GIDDENS

(NOT LOOKING UP) Too dark to be pleasant.

MILES

I'm not afraid of the dark. (TURNS TO MISS GIDDENS) Are you?

MISS GIDDENS

(TAKEN ABACK--LOOKING AT HIM) Sometimes--

MILES

Why?

MISS GIDDENS

There's nothing to be afraid of, really--

MILES

I know that. Why are you afraid?

MISS GIDDENS

I suppose-- I suppose I'm timid.

MILES

(SERIOUSLY. CROSSING DOWN TO DESK) You shouldn't be. Everything's the same at night as it is by day. You're in a room and it's dark--so you light a lamp and--there's nothing but chairs and tables! Just as there always were!

(MISS GIDDENS IS FINDING IT DIFFICULT TO RETAIN HER ANGER AGAINST HIM.)

MISS GIDDENS

(LOOKING UP AT HIM) If everything were as simple as that--

MILES

But it is! Though grownups don't see it--usually. On the coach, the little girl's mother was nervous about the wheel--not while it was about to fall off--but after it was fixed. She said she was going to faint! All because the wheel might have come off--which it didn't! You see? It's all in what you think might happen. Most of the time it doesn't.

MISS GIDDENS

(TOUCHES HIM ON THE ARM) Miles--

FLORA'S VOICE

Miles!

MISS GIDDENS

Sometime--we must talk about-- (SHE SMILES AT HIM--THEN SHE SHAKES HER HEAD) Not now, though.

FLORA'S VOICE

I'm hid, Miles!

MILES

You don't suppose I might stretch my legs a bit out there, do you?

MISS GIDDENS

And disappoint Flora who's hidden and waiting?

MILES

No--I couldn't do that, could I? (HE GOES ACROSS TO STAIRS.)

FLORA

Miles!

MILES

I'm coming. (AS HE STARTS TO CLIMB STAIRS, SMILING AT MISS GIDDENS) I'm glad you're here, Miss Giddens. I'm sure we'll get along splendidly together--I'll catch you! (GOES OFF, INTO ROOM ON LANDING.)

(MISS GIDDENS PICKS UP THE LETTER SHE HAS STARTED, LOOKS AT IT, BEGINS TO TEAR IT UP.)

MRS. GROSE

(ENTERING FROM R. SHE IS CARRYING SOME BOOKS, CROSSES R OF OTTOMAN)
Here are Master Miles' books, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(RISING QUICKLY FROM THE DESK, TAKES BOOKS TO DESK) I've been stupid,
Mrs. Grose--how could I have been so stupid? You were right--I should
have given him a chance-- Well, I shall!

MRS. GROSE

You've spoken to him, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

Not about his school--not yet. (CROSSES DOWN TO L OF OTTOMAN) How
could I have made up my mind so quickly about him--I who have brothers?
When I think of the rage I felt toward him fifteen minutes ago! O, a
fine governess I make, Mrs. Grose!

MRS. GROSE

What will you say, then?

MISS GIDDENS

In answer to the letter? Nothing until I've spoken to Master Miles.

MRS. GROSE

And to his uncle?

MISS GIDDENS

O, I shan't bother him--I'll handle it myself. (CROSSES L BELOW SOFA)
Master Miles will help me-- He's an intelligent boy-- I've been so
unfair to him! Meeting him at the coach with what amounted to a stony
silence-- Well-- (LAUGHS) He'll have his chance to tell his side of
the story-- Then, we'll see--

MRS. GROSE

(ENTERING FROM R. SHE IS CARRYING SOME BOOKS. CROSSES R OF OTTOMAN)
Here are Master Miles' books, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(RISING QUICKLY FROM THE DESK, TAKES BOOKS TO DESK) I've been stupid,
Mrs. Grose--how could I have been so stupid? You were right--I should
have given him a chance-- Well, I shall!

MRS. GROSE

You've spoken to him, Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

Not about his school--not yet. (CROSSES DOWN TO L OF OTTOMAN) How
could I have made up my mind so quickly about him--I who have brothers?
When I think of the rage I felt toward him fifteen minutes ago! O, a
fine governess I make, Mrs. Grose!

MRS. GROSE

What will you say, then?

MISS GIDDENS

In answer to the letter? Nothing until I've spoken to Master Miles.

MRS. GROSE

And to his uncle?

MISS GIDDENS

O, I shan't bother him--I'll handle it myself. (CROSSES L BELOW SOFA)
Master Miles will help me-- He's an intelligent boy-- I've been so
unfair to him! Meeting him at the coach with what amounted to a stony
silence-- Well-- (LAUGHS) He'll have his chance to tell his side of
the story-- Then, we'll see--

MRS. GROSE

(CLOSE TO TEARS--BUT SMILING) Miss-- Would you mind, Miss--? (CROSSES TO MISS GIDDENS)

(THEY EMBRACE, THEN MRS. GROSE EXITS LEFT.)

FLORA'S VOICE

(FROM ROOM OFF LANDING--SHRIEKING WITH LAUGHTER) O, Miles! How did you find me?

MISS GIDDENS

(SMILING. GOING TO STAIRCASE) Flora--

FLORA

(COMING ONTO LANDING) Yes, Miss Giddens?

MISS GIDDENS

Don't get so excited, dear.

FLORA

How can I help it? Miles is so clever at finding me out. Now he's hiding-- (SHE LISTENS--THEN IN A WHISPER) I hear him rustling--which means he's pretending he's getting under the bed. But he won't. He'll be somewhere else--and I'll never find him-- It's quite frightening!

MISS GIDDENS

(LAUGHING, FAST TEMPO, HAVING FUN) To know someone's there, in the room with you, and yet you can't see them? But that's the fun of it!

FLORA

You hear them breathing right behind you--but you don't dare turn around to look--!

MISS GIDDENS

And when you do they're not there at all!

FLORA

You find them when you least expect to!

MISS GIDDENS

They jump out at you!

FLORA

A terrible thing! But such fun! (AS MISS GIDDENS, LAUGHING, GOES TO DRAW CURTAINS AT WINDOW_ Poor Miss Giddens-- Do you feel better now?

MISS GIDDENS

(TAKEN ABACK--NOT DRAWING THE CURTAINS) Better--?

FLORA

You know--about everything?

MILES' VOICE

(CALLING) Flora!

FLORA

(RUNNING OFF, INTO ROOM OFF LANDING) O, I'll never find you! (MISS GIDDENS STARES AFTER HER, FROWNING.) I've found you! I've found you!

(MISS GIDDENS CROSSES ROOM AS THOUGH TO GO UPSTAIRS. BUT AS SHE REACHES STAIRS SHE COMES TO A SUDDEN STOP. SHE DOES NOT TURN, BUT SHE IS FULLY AWARE OF THE MAN WHO HAS APPEARED, FRAMED IN THE WINDOW, STARING IN FROM THE GARDEN. HIS FACE IS CLOSE TO THE GLASS OF THE WINDOW. SLOWLY, MISS GIDDENS TURNS TO FACE HIM ACROSS THE ROOM. SHE DOES NOT CRY OUT, NOR DOES SHE MOVE UNTIL THE MAN STEPS BACKWARDS INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE GARDEN. FOR A MOMENT AFTER HE HAS GONE, MISS GIDDENS REMAINS STILL, THEN SHE RUNS TO WINDOW, UP C INTO DARKNESS, OPENS IT AND GOES OUT INTO THE GARDEN AFTER HIM. THERE IS AN ABSOLUTE SILENCE FOR A LONG MOMENT. MRS. GROSE ENTERS ROOM FROM DOOR LEFT. SHE COMES TO AN ABRUPT STOP, HER HAND

COVERS HER MOUTH TO STIFLE A SCREAM--FOR MISS GIDDENS HAS RE-APPEARED IN THE WINDOW, FRAMED THERE, BLANK TERROR APPARENT IN HER FACE.)

MRS. GROSE

What--what in the name of goodness is the matter? (BELOW L END OF SOFA)

MISS GIDDENS

He was here--again. (JUST INSIDE DOOR)

MRS. GROSE

Who, Miss--? (WARN LIGHTS)

MISS GIDDENS

He stared in at the window--just as he did in the garden this afternoon-- He stared--only, this time, he looked right past me as though he were looking for someone else--

(SHRILL, EXCITABLE LAUGHTER COMES FROM MILES AND FLORA AS THEY PLAY IN THEIR ROOM BEYOND THE LANDING. MISS GIDDENS LOOKS UP AT THE LANDING.)

MRS. GROSE

Do you fear for them? (CROSSES IN 1 STEP)

MISS GIDDENS

Don't you? (CROSSES DOWN 1 STEP)

MRS. GROSE

(AFTER A LONG MOMENT) But--what is he like?

MISS GIDDENS

No one I've seen around here-- (SITS ON OTTOMAN) He has red hair--very red, close and curling. A long pale face. His eyebrows are dark--dark and arched. His eyes seemed sharp--strange--awfully. I only know clearly that they are small and--very fixed. (MRS. GROSE STARES AT HER WITH A HORROR THAT GROWS AS SHE CONTINUES.) His mouth is wide, his lips thin.

He's tall--erect--well dressed, but certainly not--a gentleman--

MRS. GROSE

(GASPING) A gentleman? Not he!

MISS GIDDENS

You know him?

MRS. GROSE

(ALMOST A WHISPER) Quint.

MISS GIDDENS

Quint? (RISE)

MRS. GROSE

Peter Quint. His own man, his valet, (FACING STRAIGHT FRONT) when the Master was here. When the Master left-- Quint was alone--

MISS GIDDENS

Alone?

MRS. GROSE

Alone with us-- In charge.

MISS GIDDENS

And then--?

MRS. GROSE

He went.

MISS GIDDENS

Went where?

MRS. GROSE

(PAUSES. LOOKS AT MISS GIDDENS) God knows where. He died.

(LIGHTS DIM FAST. MUSIC)

Scene IV

(LIGHTS UP)

SCENE: THE FOLLOWING MORNING.

IT IS A BLEAK AND RAINY MORNING. A COLD, GREY LIGHT COMES FROM THE GARDEN IN WHICH, NO DOUBT, EVERY TWIG ON EVERY TREE IS DRIPPING.

MILES AND FLORA ARE SEATED AT DESK. THEY ARE HARD AT WORK AT SOME TASK SET THEM BY MISS GIDDENS.

MISS GIDDENS IS SEATED ON OTTOMAN. SHE IS WORKING ON SOME EMBROIDERY WHICH IS STRETCHED BEFORE HER ON A FRAME. ON THE OTTOMAN, BESIDE HER, LIES A SMALL BOX OF PENCILS, SCHOOLBOOKS, AND A LARGE PIN-CUSHION. EVERY NOW AND THEN SHE LOOKS UP TO STARE AT ONE CORNER OR ANOTHER OF THE ROOM. EVERY STAB OF HER NEEDLE SHOWS THE TENSION UNDER WHICH SHE NOW LIVES.

THE ONLY SOUND IS THE HIGH, THIN SCRATCHING OF SLATE-PENCILS ON SLATES AS MILES AND FLORA DO THEIR TASK--A NERVE-RACKING SOUND--A SOUND THAT IS HEARD BEFORE THE LIGHTS COME UP AND THAT CONTINUES WITH NAIL-BITING INSISTENCY.

MISS GIDDENS PRESSES HER HAND ONTO HER FOREHEAD.

FLORA

(LOOKING AT MISS GIDDENS, L END OF DESK) Why are you doing this--?
(SHE REPEATS MISS GIDDENS' GESTURE) You looked as though you were pushing something away--

MISS GIDDENS

Flora. Sit down.

FLORA

(LOOKING OUT INTO GARDEN) O, look! There's a bird with an enormous worm! Mayn't we go out?

MISS GIDDENS

(SHARPLY) Certainly not. It's raining.

FLORA

O, no, it isn't. It's dripping from every twig and leaf and branch--
but--

MISS GIDDENS

Will you sit down?

FLORA

Why, of course-- (RETURNS TO DESK IMMEDIATELY AND ABSORBS HERSELF IN
HER TASK. --AFTER A MOMENT:) O, Miles! Your chalk does have a terrible
squeak!

MILES

I can;t help it, you know--

FLORA

Can't you? I thought you were doing it on purpose. --I wish I could--
(SHE TRIES. HER SLATE-PENCIL SNAPS IN TWO) O, dear--

MISS GIDDENS

Now, what's the matter?

FLORA

It's my pencil--

MISS GIDDENS

You shouldn't bear down on it so. (REACHING INTO BOX BESIDE HER) Here's
another.

FLORA

(GOING TO HER, AROUND L END OF SOFA) Does the squeak of Miles' pencil send shivers through you? It does through me--

MISS GIDDENS

(SHORTLY) No. (REPENTING) I know it's a horrible day--but could you try and do your task?--quietly, dear?

FLORA

Does your head hurt, Miss Giddens? (TO MILES) O, Miles--poor Miss Giddens.

MISS GIDDENS

(TRYING TO LAUGH--FAILING MISERABLY) Flora--Flora, dear--my head doesn't hurt--

FLORA

(SITTING ON OTTOMAN) Doesn't it? (TAKING MISS GIDDENS' HAND) You're warm-- Miles? I do believe Miss Giddens has a fever!

MILES

Has she? (RISING, CROSSING DOWN TO OTTOMAN) May I get you a cup of tea, Miss Giddens? Or a plaster?

MISS GIDDENS

(LAUGHING--THOUGH NEARER TEARS) A plaster? Whatever for? I'm not ill-- you dear things! It's the rain--and not being able to go out into the garden--and tiring my eyes with--with this--

FLORA

Then, why do you bother about it if you don't like it?

MISS GIDDENS

It's my task for the day--like your spelling and geography--though nothing seems to be getting finished while we go on about nothing--

MILES

It's the rain that does it. I know--because I'm all turned about when I wake up and find the sun isn't out--

FLORA

I know! I know! I get a funny feeling that something's going to happen! I wait all day--but nothing ever does-- It's so disappointing--what with having to stay in--

MISS GIDDENS

Well, you're not going out.

FLORA

Not even with a hat?

MISS GIDDENS

Not even with a hat.

MILES

(CROSSES AROUND OTTOMAN TO R OF MISS GIDDENS) Don't keep on at Miss Giddens like that, Flora. We must do what she wishes, you know--

MISS GIDDENS

(ALMOST BREAKING DOWN. HER HAND GOING TO HER EYES--THEN QUICKLY AWAY)
I-- (See Figure 4.)

FLORA

Of course we must. (PUTTING HER ARM AROUND MISS GIDDENS' SHOULDER) I'm being naughty, aren't I?

MISS GIDDENS

No-- It is I who am behaving wickedly-- What a grumpy old governess you have!

FIGURE 4



FLORA

You're not grumpy at all! Is she, Miles?

MILES

Of course she isn't. Though I wouldn't wonder if she were--

FLORA

Nor would I--with everything so horrible.

MISS GIDDENS

(HARDLY ABLE TO BREATHE) Horrible--?

FLORA

Why, yes--you know. The rain--Miles' squeaky pencil--and my naughtiness--why! I wasn't even trying to be good!

MISS GIDDENS

But you are good! You both are!

FLORA

Well, I might try a little harder, don't you think? (DISENGAGES HERSELF, GENTLY, FROM MISS GIDDENS' ARMS. GOES TO DESK, AROUND L END OF SOFA.)

MISS GIDDENS

(RISING QUICKLY) Why--no! Why should you? If it's gloomy outside--that's no reason why we should be gloomy here! Let's play!

FLORA

(DELIGHTEDLY) Play?

MISS GIDDENS

Yes! Why not? We've worked--haven't we? Well, then-- (TO FLORA) You can choose the game!

FLORA

Hide-and-peek! (CROSSES DOWN BELOW SOFA)

MISS GIDDENS

No!

(SO SHARP IS MISS GIDDENS' VOICE THAT FLORA'S HAND GOES TO HER OWN MOUTH AS THOUGH SHE HAS SCREAMED.)

FLORA

(IN TEARS--LOOKING DOWN AT FLOOR--WHISPERING) I'm--sorry-- I thought you said I could choose the game--

MISS GIDDENS

(GOING SWIFTLY TO HER. SITS ON SOFA, TAKING HER IN HER ARMS) I did--I did say that--and you may. But let's not hide from each other-- Mrs. Grose has dusted and tidied all morning and it wouldn't be kind of us to--to untidy the room all over again--would it? And what's the fun of hide-and-peek if you can't pull the beds apart and hide in cupboards?

FLORA

(WITHOUT SPIRIT) Then--you choose a game.

MILES

I shall. (CROSSES IN BETWEEN OTTOMAN AND SOFA.)

MISS GIDDENS

You see, dear? Miles has an idea!

MILES

Dressing-up.

MISS GIDDENS

(RISES) That's a wonderful game! I can remember "dressing-up" with my brothers and sisters on rainy days--why didn't I think of it! It's ever so much more fun than--well, than anything else I can think of! We used to pretend-- O, a hundred things! Here--use my handkerchief, dear-- (GIVES FLORA A HANDKERCHIEF) Kings and queens--beggars and thieves!

FLORA

May we?

MISS GIDDENS

Of course you may.

MILES

Come along, then, Flora-- (TAKES HER HAND.)

(THEY CROSS TO STAIRCASE.)

MISS GIDDENS

Why--where are you going--?

MILES

(AT FOOT OF STAIRCASE AS FLORA CONTINUES UP) To dress up-- Didn't you say we may?

MISS GIDDENS

(STARTING TO FOLLOW THEM, CROSSES C ABOVE OTTOMAN) I'll--I'll go with you.

MILES

But then you'd know what we were--there'd be no surprise--

(HE TURNS AND GOES UP THE STAIRCASE WITH FLORA. TOGETHER, THEY GO INTO ROOM, CLOSING THE DOOR BEHIND THEM. MISS GIDDENS REMAINS AT CENTER, UNABLE TO MOVE. SHE KEEPS HER EYES ON LANDING. NOT THE SLIGHTEST SOUND IS HEARD; IT IS AS THOUGH THE TREES IN THE GARDEN HAVE STOPPED DRIPPING, AS THOUGH THE EARTH ITSELF HAS STOPPED TURNING.)

MRS. GROSE

(MRS. GROSE ENTERS FROM DOOR RIGHT, BELOW AND JUST RIGHT OF STEPS. STARING AT MISS GIDDENS, THEN UP AT LANDING. SOFTLY) Miss?

MISS GIDDENS

(NOT TURNING. ALMOST INAUDIBLY) I let them go--Mrs. Grose, I let them go--

MRS. GROSE

(STILL AT DOOR, RIGHT) Where, Miss--?

MISS GIDDENS

Up there-- (ALL THE BLEAKNESS OF THE GARDEN SEEMS TO COME INDOORS, MISS GIDDENS COVERS HER FACE WITH HER HANDS. HER VOICE COMES WEARILY) I let them go-- All morning I kept them with me. Now--I've let them go--

MRS. GROSE

Couldn't you stop them--?

MISS GIDDENS

(HER HANDS DROPPING FROM HER FACE) How? (CROSSES SLOWLY TO CHAIR R AND LEANS ON IT) What reason could I give them? I see a man at the window-- I ask you who it is--you tell me who it was--that he is dead-- (VIOLENTLY) Last night it was as though a nightmare possessed me! It was a nightmare, I told myself--it would pass, it must pass! All the things I would have asked you had I been able--I couldn't come to you even when the children were in bed--I couldn't allow myself to think further--it was a nightmare! I told myself it would pass! But it is no longer dark--it is daylight. And I know it--A man, something that was a man, looked in at me from its grave! (HER VOICE NEVER RISES ABOVE A HARSH WHISPER) Should I call them now? What shall I say to them?

MRS. GROSE

Miss--I--

MISS GIDDENS

(WITHOUT INTERRUPTION, SITS CHAIR R) I can't go up after them! I made Flora cry because I wouldn't let her play hide-and-peek! Because I thought of them hiding--and of how I would go through the rooms and find each one empty! I would call to them--they wouldn't answer-- They would be up there alone-- What would come at them--first from one room and then--from another--? (TERROR) Why has he come back! Do you think? (HER WORDS DIE AWAY. SHE STARES THROUGH THE DIMNESS AT MRS. GROSE. LITTLE BUT THEIR FACES CAN BE SEEN--SO FEEBLE IS THE LIGHT FROM THE GARDEN--SO STRANGE AT MORNING--SO MUCH MORE, THIS DIMNESS, THAN THAT LOSS OF LIGHT THAT COMES FROM A CLOUD PASSING OVER THE SUN. MISS GIDDENS MOVES, SLOWLY, ACROSS TO MRS. GROSE UNTIL SHE IS BUT A STEP FROM HER) Mrs. Grose-- How did he die--?

MRS. GROSE

Quint? Quint died early one morning--on the road from the village. (DURING SPEECH CROSSES DRC SLOWLY) They said at the inquest that he had slipped on the icy slope. He had been drinking. There was a wound on his head--from falling, they said. But I saw him. It was I who found him. The wound was terrible. He had died in pain!--such pain. Miss!-- It was there in his face. His eyes were still opened-- It wasn't an accident. I knew it couldn't be--for there were things in his life that would have accounted for violence done him--

MISS GIDDENS

What things? (2 STEPS TOWARD MRS. GROSE)

MRS. GROSE

(NUMBLY--AS THOUGH BEATEN) Disorders-- Secret disorders--vices I don't guess at--

MISS GIDDENS

(AS THOUGH A GREAT WEIGHT PRESSES ON HER) They have never mentioned the time they were with him--his name--

MRS. GROSE

Don't try them--don't try them, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

Were they together--often--? Quint and Miles?

MRS. GROSE

(TREMENDOUS DISGUST BURSTING FROM HER) It wasn't him! (CROSSES UP TO SOFA, BACK TO MISS GIDDENS AS IF ASHAMED TO FACE HER WHILE SHE TALKS) It was Quint's own fancy! To spoil him! Quint was much too free!

MISS GIDDENS

(AS THOUGH STRUCK IN THE FACE) Too free with him? (CROSSES C) With that child?

MRS. GROSE

Too free with everyone!

MISS GIDDENS

Mrs. Grose!

MRS. GROSE

(TURNS QUICKLY) I knew it! But the Master didn't!

MISS GIDDENS

And you never told him?

MRS. GROSE

He hated complaints!

MISS GIDDENS

I would have told!

MRS. GROSE

I was wrong-- I was wrong--but I was afraid--

MISS GIDDENS

Afraid? Afraid of what?

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES SLOWLY TO STOOL BY FIREPLACE) Of Quint. No one could go against him. He fancied himself master. He used his position here to do what he wanted. O, he was handsome enough!--but evil--such power he had over people!-- He was a devil--!

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES BELOW SOFA) You were afraid of him! Not of his effect on the children? They were in your charge!

MRS. GROSE

No! They were not in mine! The Master hated complaints! If people were all right to him--he wouldn't be bothered with more! So Quint gave all the orders, even about them.

MISS GIDDENS

And you could bear it!

MRS. GROSE

(TO FIREPLACE, BACK TO MISS GIDDENS) No! I couldn't--and I can't now!

MISS GIDDENS

(THE THOUGHT STRIKING HER WITH TREMENDOUS POWER) Why has he come back?
--Not--not--

(STAIR AREA DIM UP.)

(CROSSES IN 3 STEPS. SHE TURNS, LOOKS UP AT LANDING AS THE DOOR OPENS SLOWLY. THROUGH DOORWAY STEPS FLORA. SHE HAS DRESSED HERSELF IN WHAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN A CURTAIN ONCE--HEAVILY BROCADED CLOTH THAT GLEAMS ABOUT HER SHOULDERS, IS CAUGHT AT HER WAIST BY A RIBBON TO FALL BEHIND HER IN A LONG TRAIN. SHE WEARS A PIN-CUSHION ON HER HEAD. SHE STEPS DAINTILY, TO THE TOP STAIR. AS SHE REACHES HALF-WAY DOWN THE STAIRCASE, MILES APPEARS ON LANDING. HE HAS WOUND A SHEET ABOUT HIS HEAD TO FORM A TURBAN. HE BENDS DOWN, GATHERS FLORA'S TRAIN TO HIM AND SO, MOVING SLOWLY AS THOUGH PART OF AN OUTLANDISHLY COSTUMED MASQUE, THEY CONTINUE DOWN THE STAIRCASE. NOT A SOUND COMES FROM MISS GIDDENS.)

(LIGHT ON SPINET AREA DIM UP.)

FLORA

(AT FOOT OF STAIRCASE) I have borrowed your pin cushion, if you don't mind-- (THUNDER. FLORA STOPS, LISTENS, SMILES) Miss Giddens, dear? Would you sit there? (SHE MAKES AN AIRY GESTURE TOWARD THE LOVE-SEAT. MISS GIDDENS OBEYS SILENTLY. SHE SITS, STIFFLY, HARDLY VISIBLE IN THE LIGHT FROM THE CANDELABRA ON THE SPINET.) Now, I shall sing a song and Miles shall play for me. (MILES SEATS HIMSELF AT THE SPINET, STRIKES A CHORD. FLORA, VERY GRANDLY, CLASPS HER HANDS TOGETHER AND SINGS:)

Once there was a merry king,
Who had a face of blue--
He lived in a room
At the top of the stair
With his handsome daughters two-oo,
With his handsome daughters two.

The older girl was tall and broad,
The tallest girl was she.
She combed her hair
Each early morn
With the top of a chestnut tree-ee,
With the top of a chestnut tree.

The younger girl was small and thin,
The smallest girl was she--
She washed her face
In a walnut shell
And galloped away on a flea-ee,
And galloped away on a flea.

Now. Miles shall sing for you and I shall play. (THUNDER)

(MILES RISES, BOWS TO FLORA. HE TAKES CANDELABRA AND HOLDS IT BEFORE HIM. THUNDER. FLORA STRIKES A CHORD.)

(WARN LIGHTS)

MILES

(CANDELABRA IN HIS HAND. HE BEGINS TO MOVE UPSTAGE. MISS GIDDENS AND MRS. GROSE WATCH HIM WITHOUT MOVING. A STRANGE, LOW VIBRATION BEGINS; A DISCORD OF SOUND AS THOUGH SOMETHING IS TRYING TO ENTER THE ROOM-- SOFT BUT PERSISTENT.)

What shall I say
 When my Lord comes a-calling?
 What shall I say
 When He knocks on my door?
 What shall I say
 When His feet enter softly,
 Leaving the marks
 Of His grave on my floor?

(HE REACHES WINDOW)

Enter! My Lord! Come from your prison!
 Come from your grave!
 For the moon is arisen!

(THUNDER)

(AS HE SINGS THE LAST LINE, HE THROWS THE WINDOW OPEN. STEPPING BEYOND THE THRESHOLD, HE REMAINS THERE, FRAMED IN THE WINDOW; THE VIBRATION RISES WITH THE WIND. HE REMAINS MOTIONLESS THERE.)

MISS GIDDENS

(RISING FROM LOVE-SEAT, STARING AT HIM) Mrs. Grose--! He knows! He knows!

(THE VIBRATION STOPS ABRUPTLY.)

FLORA

(TURNING FROM SPINET. A PUZZLED FROWN MIXED WITH A STRANGE HALF-SMILE ON HER FACE. SOFTLY) Knows what, Miss Giddens?

(THUNDER)

SLOW DIM OUT

ACT TWO

Scene I

(THAT NIGHT)

(AS MUSICAL INTRODUCTION FADES, FLORA IS HEARD SINGING AS LIGHTS COME UP. MRS. GROSE LIGHTS CANDLE)

FLORA'S VOICE

(FROM ROOM BEYOND LANDING, SINGING)

O bring me a bonnet,
 O bring me a bonnet,
 O bring me a bonnet of bright rosy red--
 With white roses on it,
 With white roses on it,
 O bring me a bonnet to wear on my head--

(MRS. GROSE CLOSSES CURTAINS, CROSSES, STANDS BY SPINET, LOOKING UP AT LANDING, LISTENING TO FLORA'S SONG.)

FLORA'S VOICE

(FLORA LAUGHS AS SHE STOPS SINGING) Isn't that a lovely song, Miss Giddens?

MISS GIDDENS' VOICE

It is-- Now go to sleep--and don't pull the covers off. (MISS GIDDENS APPEARS ON LANDING.)

FLORA'S VOICE

There's something dripping outside my window-- Do come and see what it is.

MISS GIDDENS

(COMING DOWN STAIRS) It's just the rain.

FLORA'S VOICE

Is it still raining? I don't suppose we'll be able to go to church-- shall we?

MISS GIDDENS

I'm sure it'll have stopped by morning--

FLORA'S VOICE

There's a beetle crawling on my neck!

MISS GIDDENS

Goodnight, Flora. (AT FOOT OF STEPS)

FLORA

(AT TOP OF STAIRS) Is the box with the golden key opened yet?

MISS GIDDENS

(STARTING DOWN STAIRCASE) I'm afraid not.

FLORA

I know what's in it.

MISS GIDDENS

(CONTINUING DOWN STAIRCASE) You can tell me in the morning. Go to sleep.

FLORA

I am asleep. I'm having a lovely dream. I'm on a ship called Bly. We're going through a terrible storm. The waves are washing over the decks and--

MISS GIDDENS

(AT FOOT OF STAIRCASE) Flora! Go--to--bed this instant--

(FLORA GOES UP STAIRS AND OFF.)

MRS. GROSE

(SOFTLY) Well, Miss--? (CROSSES DOWN ON PLANE WITH MISS GIDDENS AS MISS GIDDENS LOOKS AT HER) Forgive me, Miss--but I thought, perhaps--whatever I may have said before--perhaps their uncle should be told--now-- (SHE FALTERS.)

MISS GIDDENS

(FROM WHERE SHE STANDS) What should he be told, Mrs. Grose?

MRS. GROSE

I don't know for certain--but you would know what to say, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

How--how would I say it?

MRS. GROSE

You could write him--

MISS GIDDENS

And what would you say?--in a letter?

MRS. GROSE

But it isn't my place, Miss--to write--

MISS GIDDENS

(INTENSELY, BUT IN A WHISPER) Then put yourself in my place--understand what stops me. What would their uncle think if he should receive a tale of-- After all--you haven't seen anything-- What if I have been imagining things? Is there anything I could write that would make sense to him?

MRS. GROSE

(STEPS IN 2 STEPS TO MISS GIDDENS) Write, Miss. Ask him to come--

MISS GIDDENS

And have him laugh at me? (DESPERATELY, TURNS DR) I've taken it on--
whatever it is--

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSING TO MISS GIDDENS) There's only one thing that matters--the
children mustn't be frightened--if you won't write--then, take them away!

MISS GIDDENS

(TURNS TO MRS. GROSE, A SMALL PANIC) Where?

MRS. GROSE

Anywhere--away from here--

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSING C BELOW OTTOMAN) If I took them away what good would that do?
I should have to bring them back--this is their home-- What reason
would I give their uncle for keeping them away--?

MRS. GROSE

He won't ask, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

He would want to know why, if I kept them away!

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES TO CHAIR R) But we must protect them--

MISS GIDDENS

From what? From my imagination? What if I have been imagining things?
Wouldn't it be better if I left?

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSING TO MISS GIDDENS. WITH HORROR) You can't leave, Miss!

MISS GIDDENS

I'm not trying to run from it!

MRS. GROSE

You can't leave unless you take them with you--away from here--

MISS GIDDENS

What if they see him--and pretend they don't--

MRS. GROSE

You mustn't think that-- They wouldn't--

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES L 2 STEPS) This morning--

MRS. GROSE

That--it was a childish game--!

MISS GIDDENS

It seemed a game to you! Was it more than that? Am I wrong in believing it more than that?

MRS. GROSE

(BEWILDERED, DESPAIRING) More?

MISS GIDDENS

You saw--and heard Miles!

MRS. GROSE

Playing a game!

MISS GIDDENS

You said Quint spoiled him--was too free with him--

MRS. GROSE

You can't blame Master Miles for that! No one could go against Quint!

MISS GIDDENS

What effect did it have on him?

MRS. GROSE

(SHE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND--BUT WHAT SHE SENSES MAKES HER PROTECT MILES-- ALWAYS SHE BELIEVES HIM INNOCENT) On Master Miles? I saw nothing, nothing wicked in him-- I've never said to you that I saw anything bad-- I saw the restlessness in him, yes, to be with Quint--to talk to him--to ask him questions. (BEFORE MISS GIDDENS CAN SPEAK) But could you blame him for that? It was what any boy would feel having no father, needing a man's companionship-- Quint encouraged him--

MISS GIDDENS

How!

MRS. GROSE

(UNABLE TO PULL BACK. CROSSES SLOWLY DRC) How--? I-- Taking him away from his lessons--continually-- Taking him away for hours-- (TRYING TO CLARIFY IT TO HERSELF, EXCUSE IT) Miss Jessel--she was the governess-- she didn't forbid it-- What could I do? I could only watch and yet do nothing--to see--as I saw, from early morning, the restlessness in Master Miles to--go out across the garden--with him--holding on to his hand and asking questions in a voice that came to me--clear as I stood at the window-- I heard his questions--but Quint's answers?-- I never heard them. --His voice kept low until it brought the child's down to a whisper--both figures moving away-- And I unable to go after them-- (MISS GIDDENS SEEMS HELD BY THE PICTURE CREATED.) Miss Jessel--she didn't forbid it--and I--I was told--to mind my business--

MISS GIDDENS

Then--you were aware of--

MRS. GROSE

Nothing wicked in Master Miles!

MISS GIDDENS

(THE PICTURE IS COMPLETE FOR HER, SUDDENLY--IT NEEDS GREAT CONTROL FOR HER TO BE ABLE TO SPEAK) But you knew Quint for what he was! (CROSSES TO MRS. GROSE) Couldn't Quint have corrupted Miles? And couldn't Miles have deceived you with pretended innocence!?

MRS. GROSE

Fooled me--?

MISS GIDDENS

Would he have wanted you to know?

MRS. GROSE

Know what, Miss--!?

MISS GIDDENS

Whatever they were--the things that Quint told him-- (SHE STOPS IN HORROR AT WHAT SHE SUGGESTED. SHE REMAINS STARING INTO SPACE AS THOUGH THE THOUGHT HOLDS HER--AS THOUGH SHE ELABORATES UPON IT WITHIN HERSELF--UNTIL, WHATEVER CONCLUSION SHE HAS REACHED, IT OVERPOWERS HER. WEAKLY, SPENT WITH EMOTION) I don't know-- Am I wrong--? I don't know-- I don't know--let me sit in your room for a while-- (SHE MOVES, SLOWLY, TO LEFT; MRS. GROSE FOLLOWS HER--NOT LOOKING AT HER) I must be careful-- (REACHES DESK, PICKS UP THE CANDLE ON DESK) I must be careful in what I think--

(THEY EXIT DOOR LEFT)

(STAGE AREA DIM. AS ROOM REMAINS DARK BUT FOR A FAINT GREY MOONLIGHT FROM THE GARDEN, A SOFT MUSIC ENTERS--A SUAVE ATONALITY--THEN A DIMINUENDO UNTIL NOTHING BUT THE LOUD TICKING OF THE CLOCK IS HEARD TO SHARPEN EACH SECOND THAT PASSES--THEN, CLEARLY, THE CLOCK CHIMES TWO-- AND A SILENCE FOLLOWS--SUDDEN AND APPALLING. FROM THE LANDING A SMALL

WHITENESS PASSES ONTO THE STAIRS AND DOWN TO THE ROOM AND ACROSS THE FAINT LIGHT FROM THE GARDEN--IT DISAPPEARS IN THE SHADOWS DOWN RIGHT-- ANOTHER WHITENESS DESCENDS THE STAIRS, THEN A QUICK BRIGHTNESS AS A MATCH IS STRUCK. SPINET LIGHT DIM UP. IN THIS LIGHT, FLORA BECOMES VISIBLE AS SHE LIGHTS A CANDLE ON THE CANDELABRA AND TAKES IT WITH HER TO CENTER. SHE WEARS A LONG WHITE NIGHTGOWN. MILES COMES FROM STAIRCASE. HE WEARS LONG WHITE NIGHTSHIRT. HE STOPS AND SITS ON FLOOR, CENTER. HE IS INTENT ON SOMETHING THAT HE CREATES ON THE FLOOR BEFORE HIM--SOMETHING THAT IS SOON RECOGNIZABLE AS BEING THE BEGINNING OF A HOUSE-OF-CARDS. FLORA, STANDING AT HIS SIDE, WATCHES SILENTLY AS THE MINIATURE PAPER WALLS RISE--THEN SHE BENDS DOWN, BLOWS AT THEM AND THEY COLLAPSE. SHE AND MILES LAUGH SOFTLY, AND THE BUILDING OF THE HOUSE STARTS AGAIN. THEY ARE PLAYING A GAME, AS CHILDREN WILL, DURING FORBIDDEN HOURS, AND THEIR MOVEMENTS ARE UNHURRIED AND SELF-ASSURED. IN THE SMALL LIGHT OF THE CANDLE, THEY SEEM SELF-CONTAINED, THOUGH AGAINST THE HIGH WALLS AND ALONG THE WIDE FLOOR, THEIR SHADOWS ARE DISTORTED AND ENORMOUS AS THOUGH OTHER BEINGS WITHIN THE SAME ROOM.)

MILES

(SOFTLY) There is some cake in the pantry--

(FLORA SMILES AND NODS. MILES MOVES, QUICKLY AND SILENTLY, TO DOOR RIGHT AND OFF. FLORA KNEELS BEFORE THE CARDS STREWN ON THE CARPET--HER LEFT HAND HOLDS THE CANDLE ABOVE HER HEAD--HER RIGHT HAND SHIFTS THE CARDS. SHE BRINGS ONE CLOSE TO HER, PEERING AT IT. GHOST LIGHT ON. AS SHE DOES THIS, THE FIGURE OF A WOMAN APPEARS ON THE LANDING, RIGHT--A WOMAN DRESSED IN DEEPEST BLACK--TALL AND RIGID. FLORA CAREFULLY RETURNS THE CARD TO ITS PACK, SLOWLY RISES TO HER FEET AND, TURNING TO LANDING, FACES THE FIGURE ON THE LANDING--STRETCHING OUT HER HAND TOWARD IT. AS THOUGH IN ANSWER, A DEEP MOAN COMES FROM THE FIGURE ON THE LANDING--A WRETCHED SOUND WITHOUT PITY FOR ANY--A SOUND WHICH CONTINUES FOR A LONG MOMENT. AS THIS MOAN DIES AWAY MISS GIDDENS TAKES A SINGLE STEP INTO ROOM FROM LEFT. SHE CARRIES A LIGHTED CANDLE. SHE STARES DIRECTLY AT THE FIGURE ON THE LANDING, THEN AT FLORA. SHE SWAYS AS THOUGH ABOUT TO FALL. THE FIGURE MOVES AWAY INTO THE SHADOWS OF THE LANDING AND IS NO LONGER SEEN. See Figure 5.)

FLORA

(FLORA TURNS SLOWLY AND KNEELS AGAIN BEFORE THE CARDS, HER CANDLE HELD HIGH--FULLY AWARE OF MISS GIDDENS. SINGING SOFTLY, IN A MONOTONE, AS SHE PICKS UP ONE CARD AND THEN ANOTHER)

The queen of hearts
She made some tarts
All on a summer's day--

FIGURE 5



MISS GIDDENS

(STILL AT DOOR. HER VOICE THIN AND LIKE THE SCRATCH OF A NAIL) Who is it--!

FLORA

(AS THOUGH STARTLED--DROPPING THE CANDLE) O--! I've burnt my finger! How you startled me, Miss Giddens, dear!

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES TO DL CORNER OF SOFA AS IF SHE WAKES FROM A NIGHTMARE) Who is it!

FLORA

It is I, Miss Giddens--and-- (SHE GIGGLES)--won't Miles be surprised-- He's in the pantry--

MISS GIDDENS

(STEPS IN 2 STEPS) Who is it!

FLORA

(GENTLY) It is I--Flora-- We've been naughty, Miles and I--

MISS GIDDENS

Who was that!

FLORA

Where--?

MISS GIDDENS

On the staircase!

FLORA

(TURNING TO LANDING--AS THOUGH BEWILDERED) There? There's no one there--
(LOOKING AT MISS GIDDENS--AS THOUGH ABOUT TO CRY) You're frightening me--

MISS GIDDENS

You're not frightened!

FLORA

(LAUGHS DELIGHTEDLY) O, you're teasing me--! (TURNING TO MILES AS HE
ENTERS, RIGHT, A PLATE OF CAKE IN HIS HAND) We're caught, Miles! Miss
Giddens has caught us being naughty!

(STAIR LIGHT DIM UP)

MILES

(SMILING) Is she very angry--?

FLORA

(TO MISS GIDDENS, WHO IS STANDING RIGIDLY) You're not, are you? (TO
MILES, WHO JOINS HER, CENTER) I don't think she is--she's still half-
asleep, I expect--and she'd like to get--to bed--and--so should we--
and-- (SHE LOOKS LONGINGLY AT THE PLATE IN HIS HANDS) --we'd better
not have any cake-- (HER VOICE DROPPING TO A WHISPER) I don't think
she'd like it if we did-- (FLORA PLACES PLATE ON SPINET) I've been
punished-- I burnt my finger--

(THEY CROSS TO STAIRCASE AND BEGIN TO GO UP TO LANDING. MISS GIDDENS
STARES AT THEM AS THOUGH SHE DOES NOT SEE THEM. SHE SEEMS SELF CON-
TAINED IN HER TERROR AND UNBELIEF OF WHAT SHE HAS WITNESSED. THEY
SMILE AT HER AS THEY REACH THE LANDING.)

FLORA

Good night, Miss Giddens--dear--

MILES

Good night, Miss Giddens--

(THEY EXIT UPSTAIRS)

MISS GIDDENS

(FOR A MOMENT, MISS GIDDENS DOES NOT MOVE. THEN HER HEAD CRANES FORWARD. NUMBLY) Who was it--? (SHE GOES TO FOOT OF STAIRCASE. AT THE FOOT OF THE STAIRS SHE STOPS. SHE LOOKS TOWARDS THE WINDOW. THERE IS NOTHING THERE BUT THE PALE MOONLIGHT, THE FAR, NEBULOUS DISTANCES OF THE GARDEN. SHE MOVES TO THE SCATTERED CARDS, CENTER, PLACES THE CANDLESTICK ON THE FLOOR AND KNEELS, SLOWLY, BESIDE IT. HER HAND MOVES AGAINST THE CARDS. WHISPERS) Who was it--? (SHE RISES SLOWLY, GOES TO WINDOW-- STANDS THERE, LOOKING OUT TO GARDEN. HER HAND GOES UP TO CURTAIN-CORD. SOUNDLESSLY, SHE DRAWS THE CURTAINS TOGETHER, CUTTING OFF THE PALE LIGHT FROM THE GARDEN, SHUTTING HERSELF IN WITH THE CANDLELIGHT AND THE DEEP SHADOWS OF THE ROOM. WHISPERS) Was it--? (HER VOICE IS THAT OF A WOMAN TALKING IN HER SLEEP, THE BROKEN SENTENCES MEANING LITTLE IN THEMSELVES-- BUT TOGETHER, FRAGMENTARY YET COMPOSING A WHOLE, FILLING THE ROOM WITH THE COMPLETENESS OF A NIGHTMARE. HER BODY PASSES THROUGH ALL THE EXTREMES OF TERROR--FROM UTMOST RIGIDITY TO SPASMODIC TREMBLINGS) I-- I must sleep-- I must sleep-- I can't sleep-- (HER MOVEMENTS TAKE HER TO THE DESK) I must write--their uncle-- What shall I write--? What shall I say--? I can't think-- But I must write-- (SUDDENLY--RUNNING TO FOOT OF STAIRS--STARING UP AT LANDING) Who was it--? (SHE BECOMES RIGID) Was it she--? (SHE MOVES, STEPPING BACKWARDS TO CENTER--HER EYES NEVER LEAVING THE LANDING WHICH, UNTOUCHED BY LIGHT, IS AN EMPTINESS BEYOND THE STAIRS. SHE SUDDENLY COLLAPSES ONTO OTTOMAN.)

(FLORA APPEARS ON THE LANDING. SILENTLY, SWIFTLY SHE MOVES DOWN THE STAIRS AND TO THE WINDOW--ALMOST WITHOUT DISTURBING THE CURTAINS; SHE GETS BEHIND THEM. ALL AT ONCE, A HIGH GIGGLE IS HEARD FROM THE WINDOW. MISS GIDDENS LIFTS HER HEAD AS THOUGH LISTENING. SHE LIFTS HERSELF FROM THE FLOOR. HER MOVEMENTS ARE UNCERTAIN AS SHE GOES TO THE WINDOW. THEN, SHARPLY, SHE PULLS AT THE CURTAIN. FLORA IS STANDING QUIETLY, FACING INTO THE GARDEN.)

FLORA

(SMILING AT MISS GIDDENS) Why, I thought I saw you walking in the garden-- (SHE SLIPS PAST MISS GIDDENS, WHO MAKES NO MOVE TO STOP HER, AND GOES RUNNING ACROSS THE ROOM AND UP THE STAIRCASE.)

(FROM UC, MILES APPEARS AT WINDOW. HE IS WEARING HIS NIGHTSHIRT--HIS FEET ARE BARE--HE REMAINS ON THE THRESHOLD.)

MISS GIDDENS

(HER VOICE BARELY AUDIBLE--UNEMOTIONAL--WITH THE PERSONALITY--HER WORDS ARE MERELY SPOKEN) How did you get into the garden--

MILES

(SMILING, WAITING A MOMENT) Through my window.

MISS GIDDENS

And why did you go out-- What were you doing there--

MILES

If I tell you--will you understand? (CROSSES ON PLANE WITH MISS GIDDENS. SMILES) I did it to have you do this--

MISS GIDDENS

Do what--

MILES

Think me, for a change, bad--when I'm bad I am bad-- (LAUGHS SOFTLY)

MISS GIDDENS

(STILL IN AN UNEMOTIONAL MONOTONE) And--how did you know I would find out--

MILES

Oh--I planned that with Flora. She was to get up and look out--and you were to find her--and you did, didn't you?

MISS GIDDENS

You didn't think that I might be displeased.

MILES

O, yes. How otherwise should I have been bad enough? Are you angry?

MISS GIDDENS

Your feet are wet--you might catch cold--you must go to bed--

(SHE DOES NOT MOVE, BUT STILL FACES THE WINDOW AS MILES COMES FROM WINDOW AND STARTS TOWARD STAIRCASE.)

MILES

(STOPPING AT STAIRS--TURNING TO HER SLOWLY--SPEAKING IN A VOICE THAT IS LOW AND SEEMINGLY GENTLE) Why don't you stop it?

MISS GIDDENS

(NOT TURNING--HER VOICE STILL FLAT AND UNEMOTIONAL) Stop what, Miles--

MILES

(AFTER A LONG PAUSE) What you are doing--

MISS GIDDENS

(NOT TURNING) What am I doing, Miles--

MILES

(ALTHOUGH HE DOES NOT RAISE HIS VOICE THERE IS A NEW SHARPNESS IN IT) For one thing, you're meddling-- You can't stop me going out if I choose to-- You're just a governess-- Wouldn't it be better if you remembered that? (HIS VOICE NOW CHARMING AND CASUAL. HE LAUGHS SOFTLY, CHARMINGLY) It is difficult, isn't it? This whole situation? (REACHES STAIRCASE--STARTS UP IT. SPEAKING OVER HIS SHOULDER) Couldn't you write to my uncle? (AS MISS GIDDENS NEITHER ANSWERS NOR MOVES) You can't, can you? He so hates being bothered-- (STOPS AND LOOKS AT HER FOR A MOMENT) O, it isn't that I mind being with you and Mrs. Grose and Flora-- (SMILING) I rather like it--and I do like you-- (TURNS AND CONTINUES UP TO LANDING; ON LANDING, HE LOOKS DOWN AT HER AND SHE, AS THOUGH AGAINST HER WILL, TURNS AND LOOKS UP AT HIM. HE STARES DOWN AT HER, SMILING) But is it the best thing? Being with a governess all the time? (PAUSE. THEN, VERY SOFTLY, CASUALLY) A boy wants other things, you know-- (HE TURNS AWAY AND EXITS)

(MISS GIDDENS REMAINS IN THE STRAINED, STARING POSITION SHE HAS TAKEN. HER SHADOW CURVES AND FLICKERS IN THE CANDLELIGHT--THEN, AS THOUGH HER BODY IMITATES THE QUIVERING OF HER SHADOW, SHE BEGINS TO TREMBLE. HER MOUTH OPENS--NO SOUND COMES FROM HER. SHE REMAINS THUS, CAUGHT WITHIN A PALPITATION OF TERROR. THEN, AS THOUGH AWAKENING FROM A NIGHTMARE, SHE SCREAMS:)

MISS GIDDENS

Mrs. Grose--! (AS SHE SCREAMS, SHE MOVES--RUNNING TO DOOR, LEFT. SHE LEANS INTO THE DARKNESS, OFF) Mrs. Grose--! (AS HER SCREAMS DIE AWAY, A SILENCE FALLS FOR A MOMENT-- SHE TURNS FROM THE DOOR. HER MOVEMENTS ARE MECHANICAL, AS THOUGH SHE FEELS THE NEED OF MOVEMENT WITHOUT REASON. CROSSES BELOW SOFA, AROUND L END, TO L OF C. MRS. GROSE ENTERS FROM DOOR, LEFT. A SHAWL IS ABOUT HER SHOULDERS. AS MRS. GROSE ENTERS, MISS GIDDENS' WORDS COME POURING FROM HER--HER VOICE RISING AND FALLING-- QUESTIONING--NOT WAITING FOR AN ANSWER. MRS. GROSE STANDS IN STUNNED SILENCE. SHE LOOKS RAPIDLY INTO EVERY CORNER OF THE ROOM. Why have you kept it from me!

MRS. GROSE

Miss-- Miss-- I-- (CROSSES TO DL CORNER OF SOFA)

MISS GIDDENS

What have you kept from me? (TWISTING TO LOOK UP AT LANDING) You must tell me-- Miss Jessel--why did she leave! (TURNING AGAIN, TO MRS. GROSE) And-- Miles-- (GOING TO MRS. GROSE--CLOSE TO HER) I'll make you tell me!

MRS. GROSE

(A DEEP EMOTION BENEATH THE BEWILDERMENT) What has she to do with Master Miles--?

MISS GIDDENS

What have you kept from me?

MRS. GROSE

Nothing-- I promise you--nothing that could concern you--

MISS GIDDENS

Why did she leave!

MRS. GROSE

(AGAINST HER WILL) I thanked heaven she left--

MISS GIDDENS

Why! Why?

MRS. GROSE

(NOT UNDERSTANDING--AGAINST HER WILL) She couldn't have stayed--
 (RETURNING MISS GIDDENS' STARE) You ask why I held back what I know?
 About her? Because I couldn't bring myself to think about her! When
 she left-- (WITHOUT INTERRUPTION) --when she left I wouldn't see her--
 Here--with two children! Not caring, you see! Thinking only of herself
 and of him! (DISGUST DISTORTS HER VOICE) Using this house, every room--
any room-- I came upon them once in this very room, sitting together,
 laughing together loudly. And then at night the dreadful silence that
 toward morning was broken by her weeping. I would hear her walking
 through the halls calling his name. He did what he wished with her.
 She left to go home, she said. And then we heard she had killed herself.

MISS GIDDENS

(HARSHNESS AND REPULSION) And yet you let the children be with them?
 You should have taken them away!

MRS. GROSE

(SOBBING) They were not in my charge-- I was in no position--

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES TO L OF OTTOMAN. HARSHLY) What if the children were aware of
 the relationship?

MRS. GROSE

(1 STEP IN) No--!

MISS GIDDENS

What if they used the children to hide what went on between them?

MRS. GROSE

(1 STEP IN) No-- Miss--

(WARN LIGHTS)

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSING SLOWLY ABOVE OTTOMAN TO R OF IT) They made the children lie to you! How did they use them? What did they tell them, show them, make them do--!

MRS. GROSE

No, Miss--no--it's not possible--

MISS GIDDENS

(IT IS AS THOUGH SHE SPEAKS IN HER SLEEP; SHE SPEAKS NOT ONLY TO MRS. GROSE, BUT ALSO TO HERSELF--QUESTIONING AND ANSWERING. AND MRS. GROSE LISTENS AS THOUGH SHE IS CAUGHT BY THE SAME DREAM.) She was here-- (LOOKING AT THE FLOOR, CENTER. SHE, SLOWLY, LOOKS UP AT LANDING) --up there--a woman--Miss Jessel--her eyes fixed on Flora--fixed with a fury of intention--as though to get hold of her--to share with the child the torments she suffers. She's come back! (PAUSE) You don't believe me-- Then ask Flora! (HER HANDS OVER HER FACE) No--! She'll lie!

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES IN 1 STEP, WITH DIFFICULTY) Miss--how can you!

MISS GIDDENS

(HER HANDS DROP TO HER SIDES) And Miles-- You should have heard him! Reminding me to keep my place!--not to meddle--in what? (LOOKING UP AT LANDING) The look he gave me as he reached the top of the stairs-- (HER HEAD JERKS AWAY IN REVULSION) It is difficult--even as one woman to another--to tell you what I felt as he stared down at me-- He was not a child! I felt obscene. (SITS ON OTTOMAN)

MRS. GROSE

(GOING QUICKLY TO HER) Stop it, Miss--! Stop it--! (TAKES MISS GIDDENS BY THE SHOULDERS.)

MISS GIDDENS

(PAUSES AS THOUGH FOR BREATH. A LONG DRAWN-OUT SIGH COMES FROM HER--HER VOICE IS NOW PITEOUS AND PLEADING) I am so tired-- (SLOW DIM OUT BEGINNING. AS MRS. GROSE AGAIN GOES TO HER, TAKES HER ARM, GENTLY BUT

WITH AN EMOTION THAT IS AKIN TO FEAR) Dear God help me-- I am so tired--

(MUSIC)

Scene II

MUSIC FADE. LIGHTS UP.

SCENE: THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON. SUNDAY.

THOUGH IT HAS NOT RAINED FOR HOURS, IT IS A GREY DAY. THE CURTAINS ARE PULLED OPEN, THE CENTER FRENCH WINDOW IS OPEN. NOW AND AGAIN, THROUGH THE SCENE, THE LIGHT BRIGHTENS AND FADES AS CLOUDS MOVE AWAY FROM OR CROWD OVER THE SUN. A FEW MOMENTS PASS.

MISS GIDDENS APPEARS ON LANDING.

AS MISS GIDDENS REACHES LAST STAIR, MRS. GROSE APPEARS IN GARDEN, AT WINDOW. SHE WEARS A BONNET.

MRS. GROSE

(ENTERS ROOM. TO MISS GIDDENS) Good afternoon, Miss-- (SHE REMAINS AT WINDOW. SHE IS OBVIOUSLY UNEASY--UNCERTAIN AS TO WHAT SHOULD BE HER NEXT MOVE) I didn't wake you, Miss. I hope I did right.

MISS GIDDENS

(HER VOICE IS FLAT, UNEMOTIONAL. CROSSES TO CHAIR R) I heard you leave --I was not sleeping--I was writing a letter.

MRS. GROSE

(WAITS A MOMENT. THEN, SOFTLY--SIGHING) I am glad, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(SINKS INTO CHAIR) I have written to their uncle-- I am resigning from this post--

MRS. GROSE

(COMING TOWARDS HER--ANXIOUSLY) Ah, Miss--

MISS GIDDENS

(FLATLY) You suggested I should write--

MRS. GROSE

Only to have him come here--to have him help--

MISS GIDDENS

He could only ask me to leave-- I am saving him that trouble-- (WITH TREMENDOUS CONTROL TO KEEP HERSELF FROM SCREAMING) The responsibility is too great--

MRS. GROSE

(UPSTAGE OF CHAIR R) No, Miss, please--you can't--

MISS GIDDENS

(HER VOICE UNDER CONTROL) --it is not an hysterical letter, Mrs. Grose --I shall wait for his answer-- Then I shall leave-- (DESPERATELY-- THOUGH CONTROLLED) I cannot stay here-- (MRS. GROSE IS AT A LOSS FOR WORDS--BUT IS OBVIOUSLY NEAR TO TEARS.) Until I leave, I shall do my best--after that-- Where are the children--?

MRS. GROSE

In the garden, Miss-- I--

MISS GIDDENS

(RISES, CROSSES ABOVE OTTOMAN LOOKING OUT TO GARDEN) You left them--?

MRS. GROSE

(TAKEN ABACK) It isn't too damp, Miss.-- They promised to keep near the house--and--

MISS GIDDENS

(HARSHLY) Tell them to come in--

MRS. GROSE

(SHE STARES FOR A MOMENT AT MISS GIDDENS, CROSSES UP TO WINDOW) Yes, Miss-- (TO FLORA, OUTSIDE WINDOW) O, there you are. Miss Giddens wants you to come in. (SHE TURNS ABRUPTLY AWAY--GOES TO WINDOW AND INTO GARDEN OFF R.)

FLORA

(FLORA APPEARS AT WINDOW FROM DL. SHE WEARS A BONNET, GLOVES. AS FLORA ENTERS MISS GIDDENS CROSSES TO END TABLE--BACK TO FLORA. AS SHE ENTERS THROUGH WINDOW) Very well. Miles and I were talking about the soloist. She had such a squeaky voice! Tra-la, she sang--but I thought she was choking. I wouldn't sing in a choir if I had a voice like that. Good afternoon, Miss Giddens--

MISS GIDDENS

Good afternoon--Flora-- (THEY REMAIN WHERE THEY ARE--AS THOUGH EACH SIZES UP THE OTHER.) Flora--

FLORA

(CROSSES RC BETWEEN CHAIR AND OTTOMAN. LOOKING DOWN AT THE FLOOR. QUICKLY) O, look--a dead beetle! (KNEELING DOWN TO LOOK) You'd never know it was dead except that it's on its back and isn't kicking-- Miss Giddens? Can you hear a beetle's heart beating?

MISS GIDDENS

No.

FLORA

Can't you? I can. This one is quite dead--it isn't trampled on or anything. It's just dead. Decidedly dead. Do you suppose it smells? (SHE BENDS DOWN UNTIL HER NOSE TOUCHES THE FLOOR) It doesn't.

MISS GIDDENS

Throw it outside--Flora--

FLORA

(PICKING UP THE BEETLE) O, no! Mayn't I keep it? (RISING QUICKLY BEFORE MISS GIDDENS HAS A CHANCE TO SPEAK) I shall put it with my handkerchiefs and ribbons-- (RUNNING TO STAIRCASE) Beetles don't decay, you know-- (RUNNING UP STAIRCASE) They get drier and drier like a twig-- (SUDDENLY SINGING AS SHE RUNS UP TO LANDING)

Beetles don't decay--

Beetles don't decay--

Beetles don't decay, my love,

Beetles don't decay--

(SHE RUNS INTO ROOM, OFF LANDING.)

MISS GIDDENS

(FROM L OF CENTER, TURNS TO STAIRS--AGAIN A STRANGE PANIC BEGINS TO POSSESS HER) Flora--!

FLORA

(FROM HER ROOM) I won't be long. (SINGING)

Choose a ribbon-blue--

Choose a ribbon-red--

Better choose a ribbon-black,

For the beetle's dead--

O, Miss Giddens!

MISS GIDDENS

(UNABLE TO MOVE--STARING UP TO LANDING) What is it!

FLORA

(SHE APPEARS AT TOP OF STAIRS) Another one! Another beetle! He was on my bed! Imagine finding beetles on Sunday!

Beetles on Sunday!

Beetles on Sunday!

What a lovely thing to find

Two beetles on Sunday!

(COMING OUT TO LANDING) There-- They're tucked away in my ribbons.
(RUNNING DOWN STAIRS) Mrs. Grose hates beetles. (SHE STOPS--STARING AT MISS GIDDENS FOR A LONG MOMENT. THEN IN AN EXCITED WHISPER ON BOTTOM STEP) Do you know what happened once?

MISS GIDDENS

(GOING TO MEET HER--ALMOST INAUDIBLY) Here--let me take off your hat--

FLORA

(ON LOWEST STAIR AS MISS GIDDENS UNTIES RIBBONS) Once Mrs. Grose gave me some porridge and I ate all of it. And the last spoonful had a beetle in it! I chewed on it and I chewed on it and it tasted like twigs.

MISS GIDDENS

Let me take off your gloves--

FLORA

(STRETCHING OUT HER HAND) I said to Mrs. Grose: "O, look! I'm eating a beetle!" And she said: "Spit out the nasty thing, Miss Flora!" But I couldn't because I had swallowed it--and Mrs. Grose wouldn't believe it was a beetle--so I said: "Shouldn't I know how beetles taste?" And she got quite angry. (AS MISS GIDDENS SUDDENLY KNEELS TO PULL HER CLOSE AND HOLD HER TIGHTLY) Why--you're crying-- Miss Giddens, you're crying-- Why are you crying? Are you ill, Miss Giddens, dear? You mustn't cry-- It's not going to church that makes you feel that way, I expect-- (PULLING AT MISS GIDDENS TO MAKE HER RISE--VERY GENTLY) We'll sit--over there-- (NODDING AT LOVE-SEAT) And you may help me cut out pictures for my paste-book-- (SHE LEADS MISS GIDDENS OVER TO LOVE-SEAT--AND MISS GIDDENS; SOBBING WITH A LOW, DRY SOUND, ALLOWS HER, AS THOUGH SHE HAS NO WILL OF HER OWN) Now--sit here and don't worry about a thing-- (MISS GIDDENS SITS--HER EYES TIGHTLY CLOSED.) When Miles and Mrs. Grose come in we'll sing a song or two or maybe play a game--quietly, as it's Sunday-- (LOOKS OFF L, GOING TO FRENCH WINDOW--LOOKING OUT) I can see them--at the end of the garden. Miles has lost his hat, I think--the careless boy-- (PAUSES) He's running away from Mrs. Grose and she's having difficulty chasing him-- He's throwing leaves at her, now-- They're having fun--but so are we-- I don't wish I were out there. I'd rather be here with you-- (GOING TO DESK, PULLING OPEN A DRAWER, TAKING A SHEAF OF PAGES AND A SCISSORS) I haven't cut out pictures since last summer-- Now you can tell me what they mean-- Here's a picture of a porcupine--but it says it's a "Hysterix cristata"-- (CROSSES AROUND R END OF SOFA) And here's a lizard--but underneath is written "Lacerta Calotes"-- Why? Miss Giddens, why? (SHE SITS ON LOVE-SEAT R--FROWNING.)

MISS GIDDENS

(IN A LOW VOICE--NOT OPENING HER EYES) Those are Latin names--

FLORA

But isn't this a porcupine?

MISS GIDDENS

(OPENING HER EYES TO STARE AT PAGE--BLANKLY--HER MIND FILLED WITH OTHER THOUGHTS) Yes.

FLORA

Then I shall paste it in my book and write "Porcupine" under it-- (SHE BUSIES HERSELF WITH THE SCISSORS.)

MRS. GROSE'S VOICE

(DISTANTLY--FROM THE GARDEN) Master Miles! Master Miles!

FLORA

Miles is being naughty. (CONTINUES TO CUT) I can't get all the bristles. They're too little. But they're so many that I don't think one or two will matter. (SHE PLACES CUT-OUT BESIDE HER, CAREFULLY, AND STARTS TO CUT ANOTHER) If it's clear tomorrow may we go out on the pond? It's pretty, though it's full of leaves and twigs-- There's a little boat tied under the willows. Miles used to go there before he went away to school--

MISS GIDDENS

(IN A SMALL, TIGHT VOICE) Alone?

FLORA

(INTENT ON HER CUTTING) O, no. And he told me he saw a hand waving on the bottom but Mrs. Grose said: "Stuff and nonsense!" "Stuff and nonsense," she said!

MRS. GROSE'S VOICE

Master Miles! Master Miles!

MISS GIDDENS

(SUDDENLY SITTING UP--HER BACK RIGID--HER HANDS CLENCHED IN HER LAP--HER VOICE SHARP AND COLD) With whom did Miles go?

(FLORA STARES AT HER--THE LIGHT SEEPS AWAY. EVERYTHING IN THE ROOM SEEMS TO LOSE ITS SOLIDITY AND TO UNDULATE AS THOUGH UNDER WATER.)

FLORA

(SHARPLY) O, dear! I know it's going to rain again! How dark everything's getting-- I can hardly see--and it isn't even two o'clock. I must cover my beetles, poor things! (SO QUICKLY DOES SHE MOVE THAT MISS GIDDENS HAS NO TIME TO STOP HER. SHE RUNS UP STAIRCASE--SINGING AS SHE RUNS:)

Beetles don't decay!
 Beetles don't decay!
 Beetles don't decay, my love!
 Beetles don't decay!

MRS. GROSE'S VOICE

(NEARER NOW) Master Miles! Master Miles!

FLORA'S VOICE

(FROM HER ROOM OFF LANDING)

Choose a ribbon--blue!
 Choose a ribbon--red!
 Better choose a ribbon--black!
 For the beetle's dead!

(MISS GIDDENS DOES NOT CALL AGAIN--INSTEAD HER EYES TURN TO LOOK DOWN RIGHT, WHERE, A PART OF THE SHADOWS, STANDS THE FIGURE OF A WOMAN AS THOUGH JUST ENTERING. RIGIDLY, THIS SILHOUETTED FIGURE REMAINS FACING UPSTAGE, ITS HEAD TILTED TOWARDS THE LANDING ON WHICH FLORA NOW RE-APPEARS--HER EYES DOWNCAST AS SHE STEPS SLOWLY FROM ONE STAIR TO ANOTHER. HER VOICE IS LOW, AS THOUGH SHE SPEAKS TO HERSELF.

FLORA

(SOFTLY) The poor, poor things--thought I'd forgotten them--thought I'd leave them there--getting colder and colder--of course I wouldn't--
 (SINGING SOFTLY, EYES STILL ON HER FEET AS SHE DESCENDS STAIRCASE)

Put him in a box--
 Put him in a box--
 Put the beetle in a box--

MRS. GROSE

(APPEARING AT FRENCH WINDOW. BREATHLESSLY, AS SHE ENTERS ROOM) Master Miles has hidden himself, Miss! I've called and I've called--and--

(WARN LIGHTS)

MISS GIDDENS

(RISING FROM LOVE-SEAT IN ONE MOVEMENT. FORCING HERSELF NOT TO SCREAM) She's there-- She's there! (MRS. GROSE, A STEP BEYOND THRESHOLD, STOPS SHORT. SHE STARES AT MISS GIDDENS.) Flora!

FLORA

(ON LAST STAIR--STARING AT MISS GIDDENS) Yes--?

MISS GIDDENS

(RIGID--BEFORE LOVE-SEAT) Look, Flora!

FLORA

(HER EYES FIXED ON MISS GIDDENS) I--I don't see anything--

MISS GIDDENS

There! There! There! You see her! You see her as well as you see me!

FLORA

I don't-- I don't see anyone--really--truly-- I don't-- I don't see anyone-- (SCREAMING AS SHE RUNS ACROSS ROOM TO MRS. GROSE, WHO IS STARING, HER HANDS OVER HER MOUTH, AT THE FIGURE DOWN RIGHT) I'm frightened!

MRS. GROSE

(SWIFTLY TAKING FLORA IN HER ARMS) She isn't there! Nobody's there! How can she be? She's dead and buried! (SHE FACES MISS GIDDENS--ALL HER PROTECTIVE INSTINCTS TOWARDS FLORA BLOTTING OUT HER TERROR.)

FLORA

(HER FACE DISTORTED WITH HATRED--HER VOICE CHOKED AND UGLY--SPITTING WORDS AT MISS GIDDENS) I see nothing! I never have! You're cruel! Wicked! I hate you! I hate you! I hate you! (BURYING HER HEAD AGAINST MRS. GROSE) Take me away--take me away from her--She's cruel! --Take me away from her--Take me away-- She's cruel--wicked-- I don't want to see her again-- I hate her-- I hate her!

(MUSIC)

(LIGHTS DIM QUICKLY, ON FLORA'S SOBS.)

Scene III

(LIGHTS UP: MUSIC FADE.)

SCENE: TWILIGHT. THE SAME AFTERNOON.

THE RAIN HAS PASSED, BUT THROUGH THE WINDOW COMES A SULPHUROUS LIGHT, COMING DIRECTLY INTO THE ROOM, WHICH SEEMS TO DEEPEN THE SHADOWS OF THE FAR CORNERS, TO STRESS THEM SO THAT THE ROOM IS DIVIDED INTO SHADOW AND SUBSTANCE.

MISS GIDDENS IS ON THE LOVE-SEAT. MRS. GROSE COMES FROM THE ROOM LEFT. SHE HAS A COAT OVER HER ARM. SHE IS DRESSED FOR TRAVELLING.

SHE IS CAUGHT BY THE AGITATION OF DEPARTURE. EVERY MOMENT SHE REMAINS IN THE HOUSE IS ONE OF ADDED TERROR.

SHE COMES, QUICKLY, DOWN TO THE STAIRS. SHE SPEAKS IN A HUSHED VOICE.

MRS. GROSE

Miss? Miss Giddens? (UP TO WINDOW, LOOKING OUT TO GARDEN) Miss Giddens?

MISS GIDDENS

(FROM LOVE-SEAT) I am here.

MRS. GROSE

(STARTLED--TURNING TO HER) The carriage is waiting, Miss-- Everything we'll need is packed; we must leave, now--

MISS GIDDENS

And Miss Flora?--where is she?

MRS. GROSE

In my room-- (EMBARRASSED--BUT THE IMPORTANCE OF DEPARTURE UPPERMOST IN HER MIND) She is dressed and waiting--

MISS GIDDENS

But she won't come down?

MRS. GROSE

(NEAR TO TEARS--FUMBLING) She will--when we are about to leave-- I tried to get her to come to you--

MISS GIDDENS

(QUIETLY) But she wouldn't. I didn't expect her to.

MRS. GROSE

She will, Miss-- (CROSSES TO END TABLE) It's only that she is afraid-- She's frightened as long as she is in this house--

MISS GIDDENS

Frightened? That is anger, Mrs. Grose.

MRS. GROSE

(CROSSES TO FRONT OF SOFA) Ah, Miss-- If you could have heard her--

MISS GIDDENS

Crying? I did. And I heard you comforting her. I know all the tricks she must have played to get your sympathy.

MRS. GROSE

(TEARS) It isn't that--it isn't. It's fear--so much fear in that child-- She even made me promise--made me lock her in my room--

MISS GIDDENS

(QUIETLY) So that I could not get to her.

MRS. GROSE

But only because--because you might ask, again--

MISS GIDDENS

And because I wouldn't question her once we were in the carriage? I couldn't, could I?-- With you there to stop me?

MRS. GROSE

I would have to. (DESPERATION) You are wrong about it--you couldn't be right-- Thinking that--about her-- (WITH TREMENDOUS AGITATION) Please, Miss-- You will see--once out of this house--how wrong you have been-- (LOOKING DOWN AT THE COAT SHE IS HOLDING) Here is Master Miles' coat-- Where is he? He must put his coat on-- We must leave, quickly--

MISS GIDDENS

He is in the garden.

MRS. GROSE

(TURNING TO WINDOW. CROSSES UP TOWARD WINDOW) He must put his coat on-- The carriage is waiting--

MISS GIDDENS

He knows that.

MRS. GROSE

I shall call him-- We must all leave, now--

MISS GIDDENS

He is hiding. He's been hiding ever since he came back from church. He won't come to you.

MRS. GROSE

(TURNING BACK--BEWILDERED) Then--you call him, Miss-- The carriage is waiting--

MISS GIDDENS

He is not going.

MRS. GROSE

(NOT GRASPING IT) We all are--

MISS GIDDENS

He is staying here. With me.

MRS. GROSE

(UNABLE TO MOVE) Why--?

MISS GIDDENS

I think it best.

MRS. GROSE

(HORROR) To keep him here? In this house? (CROSSES DOWN 2 STEPS)

MISS GIDDENS

You must take Miss Flora to her uncle.

MRS. GROSE

And not--Master Miles?

MISS GIDDENS

No. Not Master Miles.

MRS. GROSE

(DESPERATION--HORRIFIED BEWILDERMENT) Why? (CROSSES TO END TABLE) Why? You'd keep him here? Instead of taking him away? Why? (See Figure 6.)

MISS GIDDENS

To face him with it.

MRS. GROSE

What you imagine? You'd face him with that?

MISS GIDDENS

(HER CONTROL IS WEARING THIN) What I imagine? After what you saw this morning?

MRS. GROSE

Because of it--because of what I saw--we must take them away-- (RUNNING TO WINDOW) Master Miles! Come in, Master Miles!

MISS GIDDENS

(RAISING HER VOICE, BUT STILL WITH A TREMENDOUS CONTROL) He won't come to you!

MRS. GROSE

(STANDING AT WINDOW, HER HEAD BENT, HER WHOLE BODY FORCED AGAINST HER TEARS) Make him!

MISS GIDDENS

He is hiding-- I went looking for him-- I called to him-- Once, I thought I saw him, amongst the trees--spoke to him as if he might be there--telling him that I wanted to help him--asking him to come to me-- There was no answer. Then I saw clearly--what I must do.

MRS. GROSE

And if he doesn't come--back?



FIGURE 6

MISS GIDDENS

The carriage will leave. He will think we've all gone. Then he will come to the house.

MRS. GROSE

If he does--how will you bring yourself to ask him-- Can you face it?
(CROSSES 3 STEPS DOWN) Not caring what you make a child meet with?

MISS GIDDENS

Not caring? You have seen--

MRS. GROSE

(VIOLENTLY--AS CREDO) Whatever I have seen--I cannot believe them part of it! That this house is filled with evil, yes, I believe that-- But that the children are--? I cannot believe it! I cannot believe it!

MISS GIDDENS

They are.

MRS. GROSE

Take them away--let us take them away! (MOVES TO SOFA, SITS)

MISS GIDDENS

You can take Flora--she is young--she can be made to forget away from here-- But Miles? Must end it here. It isn't easy for me--Mrs. Grose. I almost ran from it-- I sat there and had my thoughts take hold of me so that I would have screamed had my breath obeyed me-- All that was base in Quint lives in Miles. He lives with the memory, the longing for all that Quint taught him. I must free him of it. Even if I must hurt him.

MRS. GROSE

You'll drive him too far--! No child could survive such terrors--!

MISS GIDDENS

You will take Flora to her uncle. (RISES, CROSSES AROUND L END OF SOFA TO DESK) And you must give him my letter! I have written what I believe to be true. (SEARCHING DESK DRAWER) It isn't here--

MRS. GROSE

Think of the danger-- Come away-- (RISES, CROSSES TO DESK)

MISS GIDDENS

(BLANKLY) I put it here--in this drawer--

MRS. GROSE

Then where is it? No! He wouldn't do that--

MISS GIDDENS

(COLDLY, WITHOUT EMOTION) You shall have to tell their uncle-- I know you will tell him the truth. As much of it as you understand. And, now, you must go. (AS THOUGH HOLDING HERSELF IN READINESS.)

MRS. GROSE

(AS SHE GOES, SLOWLY, LEFT) God help you. God help you both-- (EXITS, L DOOR)

(STAGE AREA DIM)

(MISS GIDDENS DOES NOT MOVE FOR A MOMENT. THEN SHE TURNS FROM THE DESK MECHANICALLY AND GOES TO LOVE-SEAT AND SITS THERE, AROUND R END OF SOFA. HER FACE IS EXPRESSIONLESS. SHE IS RIGID, WAITING. A LOW MUSIC IS HEARD: A SONOROUS, SLOW-MOVING, PASSING-OF-TIME. WITH THIS MUSIC THE TWILIGHT FADES--SEEPS AWAY--UNTIL SHE CAN BE BARELY SEEN. THE STRONG CLATTER OF CARRIAGE WHEELS PASSES THROUGH THE GARDEN AND IS GONE. THE CLOCK IS HEARD. MILES APPEARS AT THE WINDOW, DIMLY SEEN--ENTERS ROOM. HE COMES INTO THE ROOM--CROSSES--STARTS TO CLIMB STAIRS--STOPS.)

MILES

(BACK TO MISS GIDDENS) Why are you sitting in the dark, Miss Giddens? I knew you'd still be here. You know--I might have stayed out there, in the garden, quite a bit longer. --Only I thought of you sitting here. I thought: "How dull for Miss Giddens!" I thought: "Why, I'm

not doing anything to amuse her!" Rude of me, wasn't it?--leaving you alone? But I won't anymore. (SITS CHAIR RIGHT) Well, here we are. The two of us alone. I hope you don't mind?

MISS GIDDENS

Being alone with you? Not at all. What else should I stay on for? Miles, I want to talk to you. (SHE IS AFRAID BUT DOES NOT SHOW IT) Miles-- (CROSSES TO R END OF DESK) You know--or perhaps you don't--but, this is the first position I have ever held--

MILES

(LIGHTLY) It's been too much for you? But Flora's gone and you were her governess-- So it's sort of a holiday for you, isn't it?--not having her here?

MISS GIDDENS

You--are still in my charge.

MILES

Actually, I'm not your responsibility, you know.

MISS GIDDENS

You might as well accept me as being in charge of you.

MILES

Does it make you happier to think that you are? (WITH A LITTLE BOW) Very well, then, whatever you wish.

MISS GIDDENS

What were you doing in the garden? (CROSSES BETWEEN OTTOMAN AND END TABLE.)

MILES

Haven't you ever been in a garden?

MISS GIDDENS

Yes.

MILES

Well? (LAUGHS LIGHTLY.)

MISS GIDDENS

(PAUSE) Miles-- You could help me by being honest.

MILES

I haven't lied--you haven't asked me anything I don't want to answer.

MISS GIDDENS

Are there such things?

MILES

You ask such funny questions! What was I doing in the garden. As though there were other things to do besides looking at or picking flowers or wading in the pond or climbing trees--

MISS GIDDENS

Then why didn't you come to me when I called you? (STEPS IN 2 STEPS)

MILES

(AMAZEMENT) Did you? I saw you, you know. You were walking around, almost in a circle, looking from side to side as though you expected to meet someone--

MISS GIDDENS

Then why didn't you come to me!

MILES

I thought you wanted to be alone. I was quite close to you. I said:
"Miss Giddens!"--in quite a loud voice--

MISS GIDDENS

That is not true! You never called to me! I should have heard you!

MILES

(AS THOUGH HURT) Why on earth do you ask me questions if every time I
answer you you say it isn't true?

MISS GIDDENS

Because you are not answering me! Why don't you tell me the truth!

MILES

I do. But you pay no attention to it. (SMILING) Would you like it if
I started asking you questions?

MISS GIDDENS

I'd answer them--

MILES

(WITH TERRIBLE DIRECTNESS) Why, then, aren't we with Mrs. Grose and
Flora?

MISS GIDDENS

Because-- (ALMOST CRYING) Ah, Miles, (SINKS ONTO DOWNSTAGE SIDE OF
OTTOMAN) you won't come out with it yourself-- How, then, can I?

MILES

(WITH DELIGHT) You see? You won't answer my question!

MISS GIDDENS

(PLEADING--NO LONGER TRYING TO CONTROL HER TEARS--HER TENDERNESS) Miles, I'm not a cruel person--However unfair I may seem to you--I am not cruel. Sometimes I am foolish-- I make mistakes, and, at the moment, I am very tired. But I am not cruel. I was taught to love people and to help them-- I was taught to help them even if, sometimes, they didn't want to be helped. Even if, sometimes, it should hurt them. Whatever you may have done, whatever you may have done--I am not against you. I have stayed here to help you-- I don't think it's your fault. It isn't your fault-- Won't you let me help you, won't you?

MILES

(HIS WHOLE BODY RIGID. RISES SLOWLY, CROSSES TO MISS GIDDENS. A SNEERING SMILE ON HIS FACE. HE STARES AT HER FOR A FULL MOMENT) Why don't you stop pretending?

(THEY DO NOT MOVE, NOR DO THEY TAKE THEIR EYES FROM EACH OTHER FOR A LONG MOMENT. AN ABSOLUTE SILENCE FASTENS ITSELF ONTO THE ROOM. THEN MISS GIDDENS RISES SLOWLY. HER BODY IS AS RIGID AS MILES'--HER BACK AS THOUGH HELD BY STEEL. SHE IS STUNNED, EMOTIONALLY, BUT SHE HAS NOT BEEN SWAYED IN HER DECISION. SHE MOVES STIFFLY AND WITH DELIBERATE STEPS.)

What are you doing?

MISS GIDDENS

(AS SHE CROSSES TO DESK, PICKS UP TRAY OF FOOD) You must be hungry-- You--had--no--tea. I kept something for you. Sit down. (PUTS TRAY ON OTTOMAN.)

MILES

I'm not hungry.

MISS GIDDENS

Sit down.

MILES

(SITTING DOWN ON OTTOMAN) I've never eaten in here. It isn't a dining-room. What would Mrs. Grose think? (AS MISS GIDDENS GOES TO LOVE-SEAT) I'll get crumbs on the carpet-- (AS MISS GIDDENS PAYS NO ATTENTION TO HIM) Is Flora really ill?

MISS GIDDENS

(NOT LOOKING AT HIM) She might have become so had she remained.

MILES

Why did Mrs. Grose lock her in her room today?

MISS GIDDENS

Don't you know?

MILES

I can guess.

MISS GIDDENS

What?

MILES

(SLIGHT SMILE) She had a fever.

MISS GIDDENS

(LOOKING DOWN AT HER EMBROIDERY) She--did not have a fever. You know that.

(VIBRATION. THE FIGURE OF QUINT APPEARS AT THE WINDOW, OUTLINED AGAINST THE DARKNESS OF THE GARDEN, HIS EYES ON MILES' BACK. A HIGH VIBRATION IS HEARD, RISING AS MILES STIFFENS, FULLY AWARE OF QUINT. HE BEGINS TO TURN HIS HEAD SLOWLY. AS HE BEGINS TO TURN HIS HEAD, MISS GIDDENS RAISES HERS TO LOOK AT HIM. SHE IS NOT AWARE OF QUINT. MILES REALIZES THIS. WITH A SUDDEN SWEEP OF HIS HAND HE KNOCKS HIS PLATE ONTO THE FLOOR. AS THE PLATE HITS THE FLOOR, THE VIBRATION STOPS. QUINT DISAPPEARS FROM WINDOW.)

MISS GIDDENS

Why did you do that! (RISES)

MILES

(VISIBLY TREMBLING) Because--because I (RISES) wanted to. Now--I've made you angry.

MISS GIDDENS

I'm not angry, Miles.

MILES

(HIS FACE STRANGELY DRAWN) Yes. You are. You're angry. We're alone and there isn't anyone to talk to and you're angry.

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES IN ABOVE OTTOMAN, SHE KNEELS TO PICK UP TRAY) If I am--you've given me reason to be.

MILES

(TIGHT-LIPPED. AFTER A MOMENT) Weren't your brothers ever naughty?

MISS GIDDENS

Sometimes they were--when they were young.

MILES

(TIGHT-LIPPED) And now? Are they wicked in a grown-up way?

MISS GIDDENS

I don't know.

MILES

(CROSSES DR TO CHAIR. HIS VOICE DYING AWAY--ALMOST PEEVISHLY) I--I wish I could go away--

MISS GIDDENS

(AFTER A LONG MOMENT) To another school--?

MILES

I don't think I should suit any school--

MISS GIDDENS

Why do you say that--?

MILES

(LOOKING AWAY FROM HER) Do you think I would? (TURNS TO MISS GIDDENS)

MISS GIDDENS

I don't see any reason why you wouldn't-- (PAUSE) You're like any boy--

MILES

(ALMOST A WHISPER) Am I? It would be easier, wouldn't it, if we were all alike? There would be no need for these conversations, and you wouldn't be upset and I--I'd be left alone. It's odd, though, but I don't think I'd like it much, and yet I am alone, even now, quite alone.

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES R OF OTTOMAN) Miles!

MILES

(DOES NOT LOOK AT HER) And everything you do makes it worse. (CROSSES UP 3 STEPS) Because you don't think I'm like any boy, and you're so certain. (TURNING HIS HEAD TO LOOK AT HER, SLOWLY) But you may be wrong, you know. (SLOW SMILE) And if you are--what on earth shall you do? (AS MISS GIDDENS CONTINUES TO LOOK AT HIM) Is that why you're afraid? (SOFTLY BUT WITH TERRIBLE DIRECTNESS) You are afraid, you know-- (LOOKING AT HER. THEN A SUDDEN BURST--AND A STRANGE TEMPER) Why is it so bad--my throwing things on the floor! Why! Other people can do--

MISS GIDDENS

But there's so much more--isn't there!

MILES

Is there--? (SOFTLY) Other kinds of--naughtiness--? --or what?

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES TO MILES) The real reason why you were out in the garden when you were supposed to be in bed!

MILES

(QUICKLY--TRYING TO FORCE A SMILE) I told you it was to show you that I--

MISS GIDDENS

And you took a letter from the desk.

MILES

Yes. I took it.

MISS GIDDENS

(A SHARP WHISPER THAT HAS THE QUALITY OF A SCREAM) Why did you take it!

MILES

To see what you said about me-- (CROSSES 2 STEPS DR)

MISS GIDDENS

You opened the letter?

MILES

I opened it--

MISS GIDDENS

(WITH A TREMENDOUS EFFORT) And--what did you find--?

MILES

You said you were leaving--you said you had to leave-- (SLOWLY LOOKING UP AT HER. HE SPEAKS THE WORDS WITH A CAREFUL DIRECTNESS--STRAIGHT AT HER) You said: "Dear Sir, I think that I am ill--"

MISS GIDDENS

(STARING AT HIM--HER VOICE IS LOW AND UNEMOTIONAL) What did you do with the letter--

MILES

I burnt it--

MISS GIDDENS

Did you take other things--Is that what you did at school--

MILES

Did I steal--?

MISS GIDDENS

Was it for that that you won't be allowed to go back--?

MILES

(CROSSES DOWN C. HE WAITS--AS SHE DOES NOT ANSWER) No. I didn't steal.

MISS GIDDENS

Then--Miles. What did you do--

(A LOW VIBRATION, BEGINNING AS AN ALMOST INAUDIBLE HUM, FILLS THE PAUSE --CEASING WITH MILES' NEXT WORDS.)

MILES

(CROSSES DL SLOWLY, AGONIZINGLY. LOOKING, AS THOUGH IN VAGUE PAIN, ALL AROUND THE ROOM--DRAWING HIS BREATH WITH DIFFICULTY) I--well--I said things--

MISS GIDDENS

To whom did you say them--

MILES

(HE GIVES A SICK LITTLE HEADSHAKE) I don't remember their names--

MISS GIDDENS

Were there so many--?

MILES

No--only a few-- Those I liked--

MISS GIDDENS

And they--repeated them--

MILES

To--those they liked. The Masters heard-- I didn't know they'd tell.

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES C) The Masters never told-- That's why I ask you--

MILES

(TURNS TO MISS GIDDENS. IN A LOW VOICE) I suppose they were too bad-- the things I said--to write home--

MISS GIDDENS

Miles--

MILES

(ALMOST A WHISPER AS HE LOOKS DOWN AT HIS FEET) Yes--?

MISS GIDDENS

Where did you first hear these things--?

(AGAIN THE VIBRATION IS HEARD. MILES AND MISS GIDDENS SEEM TO FREEZE ON MISS GIDDENS' LAST QUESTION.)

MILES

Why--I--I made them up--

MISS GIDDENS

Miles!

(AN ANSWERING THROB, DEEP AND VIBRATING, IS HEARD.)

MILES

(WHISPER) Yes--?

MISS GIDDENS

Who told you to say them?!

MILES

I made them up --I just told you that-- They came into my head-- I would like to go to bed now. I am tired-- May I? (CROSSES TO MISS GIDDENS)

MISS GIDDENS

What were they?! These things you said--?!

MILES

You wouldn't like them.

MISS GIDDENS

What were they, Miles?!

MILES

You know so much--can't you guess, then?

MISS GIDDENS

Shall I tell you who it was that said them?

MILES

(LOOKING AT HER--QUICKLY) It was a boy--a boy at school--that's all-- I won't say them again-- I promise-- (CROSSES, PAST MISS GIDDENS, TO CHAIR.)

MISS GIDDENS

Shall I tell you his name?!

MILES

(MOVING TOWARDS STAIRS, DOWN--LOOKING AT THE FLOOR AS HE WALKS SLOWLY) What does it matter? It wasn't anything--

MISS GIDDENS

It wasn't a boy at school--!

MILES

(TURNS TO MISS GIDDENS) You can't get away with this, you know! I know why you're doing this!

MISS GIDDENS

What did he say to you when you went walking by the pond?

MILES

(DESPERATELY) This afternoon? Why, no one was there-- Who would be there?

MISS GIDDENS

Not this afternoon!

MILES

When then? Yesterday?

MISS GIDDENS

(STRONGLY) Not yesterday. Before I came here--to live in this house.

(POWERFUL VIBRATION, SHARP, RINGING.)

MILES

I was at school!

MISS GIDDENS

And before that?!

(STRONGER, SHARPER VIBRATION.)

MILES

(HIS HEAD THRUST OUT TOWARDS HER) I know why you're asking me all these questions! You're afraid! That's why!

MISS GIDDENS

(CUTTING IN SHARPLY) And not only the things you said--things you've done!--and what you might do--!

MILES

(UGLY) O, yes, I might! You're afraid--that's why you try to make me admit something--

MISS GIDDENS

Miles!

MILES

You're in it and you won't stop at anything, will you?

MISS GIDDENS

(CROSSES IN TO L OF STEPS) Miles! I want to help you! Let me help you!

MILES

(BACKING TO STEPS) You keep saying that! But there's nothing you can do, is there? Because I know Flora isn't ill-- You frightened her because you didn't know what else to do!

MISS GIDDENS

(MOVING TOWARDS HIM) Miles!

MILES

(STEPPING BACKWARDS TO STAIRCASE) But I'm not a baby! What are you going to do! What will you say to my uncle! He'll laugh at you!
 (THE VIBRATION GROWS ALL THE WHILE: STRANGE TONALITIES PASS ABOVE IT. A DESPERATION GROWS IN MILES) I'll tell him! I'll tell him what you're like! He'll believe me! He'll see what you are! Flora will tell him! I'll tell him! I'll tell him that you're vile-- He won't believe what you say! Because you're dirty! Dirty! Dirty! (ON 4TH STEP)

MISS GIDDENS

You've never stopped seeing him, have you, Miles!

MILES

Don't ask me, Miss Giddens.

MISS GIDDENS

You still want to be with him, don't you, Miles?

MILES

(BEFORE HE CAN STOP HIMSELF--A TERRIBLE SCREAM) He's dead!

(AS MILES SCREAMS, THE FIGURE OF QUINT APPEARS AT THE WINDOW--STANDING THERE, AGAINST THE DARKNESS OF THE GARDEN.)

MISS GIDDENS

(NOW WITH A DESPERATE PLEADING) Who, Miles! His name! Give me his name!

MILES

He's dead. He's dead.

MISS GIDDENS

Give me his name.

MILES

He'll hurt me. Stop it, Miss Giddens. (DOWN TO 2ND STEP)

MISS GIDDENS

Reject him, for he is here, now, at the window.

MILES

Miss Giddens, you don't know, you don't know.

MISS GIDDENS

Reject him or he'll destroy you. (CROSSES TO FOOT OF STAIRS) I'm here to help you.

MILES

You can't. Don't you see? You can't. You don't understand. He'll hurt me. You can't help.

MISS GIDDENS

You will be free. Confess. His name.

MILES

(WITH A TREMENDOUS DIRECTNESS) Quint! Peter Quint!

MISS GIDDENS

Now. Miles, now.

(FOR A MOMENT, THERE IS ALMOST ABSOLUTE SILENCE-- FOR A SECOND MILES IS STILL AT LANDING, THEN, WITH A TREMENDOUS SHUDDER, HE FORCES HIMSELF TO TURN TO THE WINDOW.)

MILES

(FACING THE WINDOW--HIS ARMS FLUNG BEFORE HIM. A SCREAM) Leave me--! Leave me--! (AS HE SCREAMS, QUINT'S ARMS RISE BEFORE HIM AS THOUGH TO TOUCH MILES ACROSS THE DISTANCE. MILES' BODY BEGINS TO CRUMPLE. HE HALF-TURNS BACK TO MISS GIDDENS. HIS VOICE COMES THINLY AND PITEOUSLY) Miss Giddens--Miss Gidde-- (HE SPINS AS THOUGH TO ESCAPE SOMETHING. HE TRIES TO CRY OUT AGAIN--BUT HE FALLS TO THE GROUND.)

(THE SOUND OF A HEART STOPS. QUINT CLOWLY DISAPPEARS INTO THE DARKNESS OF THE GARDEN.)

(WARN LIGHTS)

MISS GIDDENS

(MOVING AS THOUGH SUDDENLY RELEASED--SWIFTLY SHE GOES TO MILES AND KNEELS BESIDE HIM, TAKING HIM IN HER ARMS AS IF CRADLING HIM. See Figure 7.) He is gone--he is gone, Miles,--and we're alone and nothing can hurt you anymore--nothing can hurt you--I am here and he--has gone-- He can never return. He has lost you and you are free-- Nothing can hurt you anymore-- There is only good in you now-- Miles,-- (SHE STRAINS HIM TO HER) You see? You are safe--you are safe and I am here with you--to hold you--to help you--to love you-- (HER WORDS ARE A SOFT, WEEPING HYSTERIA) I have always wanted to help you--never to hurt you-- It was almost too late, dear Miles--but you've won-- You won back goodness and kindness-- You are free-- (ON THESE LAST WORDS SHE LOOKS DOWN AT MILES. MUSIC UP.)

(SLOWLY, HER ARMS RELEASE HIS BODY, AND ABSOLUTE HORROR MARKS HER FACE. AS MILES' BODY FALLS BACK, A SUDDEN WIND COMES FROM THE GARDEN. EVEN THE MOONLIGHT, COLD AND GREY, SEEMS TO ENTER AND SURROUND MISS GIDDENS AS SHE KNEELS BESIDE MILES' BODY.)



FIGURE 7

MISS GIDDENS

(MISS GIDDENS' VOICE COMES SOBBINGLY) --you are free--you're free.
You're free--

(THEN HER SOBS DISTORT HER WORDS AND COVER THEM AND HIDE THEM AS--)

LIGHTS DIM OUT.

PART III

PART III

CRITICAL EVALUATION

The purpose of this chapter is to present the director's personal critical evaluation of his work on The Innocents. The analysis will be handled by discussing the following: (1) goals and achievements in interpretation, style, and mood, (2) actor-director relationships, and (3) audience reaction.

Goals and Achievements in
Interpretation, Style, and Mood

The director fully realized when he chose The Innocents for a thesis production that he was creating problems for himself. He also recognized that if he could overcome them to some degree he might be able to produce exciting theatre. If, however, he fell short of an exciting or challenging concept he would have succeeded more than if he had chosen a completely "safe" play to do.

There are only four speaking roles in The Innocents, which means, of course, that each part is large. Compound this problem with the fact that two of the characters are children and an even bigger problem exists. This director had never directed children before, and fully realized that having such young actors in the cast would cause difficulties.

It was necessary to repeat many things from one night to the next for the sake of the children. As a result of this repetition, blocking the play took more time than usual, but once the young actors caught on

to the procedure, they learned quickly, and accomplished a great deal in a relatively short time. This was the first play the girl had ever taken part in, so naturally she had no knowledge of stage technique. The director had to explain to her very carefully basic rules of stage movement. On one occasion, upon explaining to her why an actor starts to move on the upstage foot, her reply to the fact that it "opens the actor up to the audience" was that if the first step opened her up, the second would close her up. Another time, when she was shown how to move like a little lady of 1880, she quickly informed the rest of the cast and the director that she was not that much of a sissy.

The original concept of the blocking was to make it as natural as possible. The director did not want to call attention to it; he did not want to present "pretty pictures" because he felt that they would be distracting for the audience rather than contributing to the over-all effect of the play. He wanted the relationships of the characters to be as normal as possible. The set itself was theatrical; what took place inside it should be realistic. There was some concern about the shallowness of the set, which necessitated horizontal blocking and movement. A great deal of space was required behind the back wall of the set for the projection of the garden, so it was impossible to make the room deeper. Some vertical blocking was worked in, however, between the front part of the stage and the French doors. One criticism of the set was that the entrances were too far apart, which made the acting areas too separated from each other, and that this created lags in the action while the actors made their entrances and exits. This director was aware of the vast space, and he felt that the set had to be that way to give

the feeling of the immensity of the house, and to create the feeling that the characters were almost lost in the shadows and recesses of the place. The separation of the players by space seemed to make them more individual, more dependent upon themselves, more alone against the evil forces.

One thing about the set that frightened the director was the fact that the stairs were very high, almost eleven feet, and that there was no railing or bannister. He had visions of one or both of the children having an accident on them, so at the first rehearsal at which the stairs were ready to be used he asked the cast, and crews, to explore the stair unit completely, and make sure they knew their way up and down it, since much of the action of the steps took place in semi-darkness. As a result of this exploration the stairs presented no problems at all during the run of the play.

The projections that were used for the garden did not come up to expectations, but it was known from the outset that they would pose some problems. The initial plan was to project the slides that had been photographed earlier, but it was impossible to find projection equipment to serve the purpose, even if the money had been available for the rental of such equipment. Painted projections were therefore resorted to, and, though the right dyes were not used to paint them, they were reasonably effective. They set the mood of the garden, and helped to reinforce the feeling of evil when Quint appeared.

The costumes and the furniture were realistic, even though the projections and the set itself were highly selective. The costumes were especially effective in establishing the period, and giving the actors the feel of the period. Except for Flora's dress, dark colors were used

throughout to set the mood. One objection, however, was that there was not enough contrast between the two dresses of Miss Giddens. Many in the audience were not aware that she had made a costume change. By keeping all the shades dark, though, the feeling of people passing in and out of shadows and almost becoming a part of the murky atmosphere of the house was created.

Even though the lighting set the mood rather well, there were problems with it. There were many dark spots on the stage, and some of the long scenes were played in too little light. Some of the problems could be attributed to the lack of available lighting instruments, but others would have to be blamed on the lack of time, imagination, and ingenuity on the part of the director and lighting designer. There was some discussion about the use of follow spots, very subtly moved from acting area to acting area so as not to call attention to themselves. This would have allowed other parts of the stage still to be in shadow. The idea was not followed through, however, and as a result the lighting of the show had its faults.

The director felt that it was extremely important to have effective music to enhance the mood of the play. The original music for the production was written by an undergraduate student at The University of North Carolina at Greensboro, and did just what it was hoped it would do--it created an atmosphere of suspense and evil. In the initial discussions about the music the suggestion was made to the composer that the opening music have a child-like, almost nursery rhyme quality to it; that a repetition of the same theme with the addition of minor chords and more dissonance would create an air of evil and suspense. Some have expressed

the opinion that there was not enough change in the music from the beginning to the end. This may be true, but in spite of that criticism the director feels that the music did a great deal to enhance the mood of the play. The sound in general, and specifically the vibration on Quint's entrances, was effective. The timing of the sound effects was extremely difficult, but due to the dedication of the sound technician, was always precise.

There was no curtain call for The Innocents, and the production has been criticized on that point. The critic felt that the actor is entitled to make that final appearance and that the audience should have a chance to express what it felt about the performances. All of this was considered, but due to the nature of the play the decision was made by the director not to have a curtain call.

The director considered, for a brief time only, the use of English accents. Accents of any kind can be very distracting if they are not done well, and on this production there were already speech problems that had to be dealt with. It would have been difficult, too, for the children to try to get an accent in such a short time when there were so many other things on which to concentrate, so the decision was made not even to attempt a British accent.

The director was reasonably well satisfied with the style and the mood of the production, but felt that much was lacking in interpretation. There were many subtleties, especially about the evil in the children, that should have been brought out. The age, maturity, and comprehensive abilities of the children, coupled with the shortness of rehearsal periods, contributed to the shortcomings in interpretation in certain

scenes. There was one scene in particular with which the director was never satisfied: the last scene in the first act, where Miles and Flora are pretending to console Miss Giddens because they think she has a headache. The children played the scene more sincerely than it should have been, but this, of course, was the fault of the director for not spending more time with them in explaining the situation.

The ambiguity of Henry James, even though Archibald wrote the play as a ghost story, made many matters of interpretation very difficult. For example, nowhere in the script is it stated why Miss Jessel went away and committed suicide. The actress playing Mrs. Grose had great difficulty in imagining why the housekeeper had such hatred for Miss Jessel, and why she was so happy when Miss Jessel went away. It was explained to her that possibly Miss Jessel was pregnant, and the attitude toward that sort of misconduct in Victorian times was extreme. The director suggested to her that she subtly place her hand on her own stomach when talking about Miss Jessel's departure to indicate that she may have been pregnant. The gesture, though, rather than being an indication, came out as a definite statement of the reason for the former governess's leaving Bly.

Another point in the play that is unclear is how much the children know. A decision had to be made about the degree of evil that infected them. That decision was to try to show that they were perfectly aware of what was going on at Bly, and that they were purposely trying to pretend that they knew nothing. Flora's line at the end of act one--"Knows what, Miss Giddens?"--and the way in which she said it, indicated what the children were up to.

The speech of all the actors presented problems. Because of their lack of experience, their age and their size, it was difficult for the children to be heard many times. They were constantly made aware of the fact that they would be performing for several hundred people, and that those people had to hear them in order to enjoy the play. They tried valiantly, but were unable to overcome the difficulties completely. The boy playing Miles had a tendency to slur words, even whole phrases, and try as he might, he could not concentrate on the scene and the speech problem at the same time.

Even though the older members of the cast were more experienced, they had their own problems. One actress had a monotonous quality, and the other had that same problem combined with a nasal voice quality. Hours were spent on trying to improve these two things, and some progress was made, but more could have been accomplished.

Another problem, especially of the more mature, and thus a more inhibited actress, was that of natural movement and physical reactions. One actress had an extremely small amount of energy and useful tension in her body, and as a result, even though she understood intellectually what was happening, her body showed no reaction whatsoever. During the last few rehearsals, after many nights of special rehearsal on certain lines and scenes, she began to use her body for gesture and reaction, and her performance was greatly improved.

The method used at some of the special rehearsals to improve movement was to give the actresses a similar situation on which to improvise. They were allowed at first to speak and create dialogue to go along with the situation. Then they were asked to do the same scene

again, but without speaking. They were to try to show the meaning of the scene through action only. At that point the importance of gesture and movement began to make itself apparent to them.

The other actress had been coached in a former role to use her arms and hands as little as possible, and this carried over into her creation of Miss Giddens. Again, after calling much attention to this problem she began to break out of it, but much valuable rehearsal time that should have been spent on other things was spent on basics.

The director was never satisfied with the over-all tempo of the production. It always seemed a little slow to him, but the script itself is constructed to begin very slowly and gradually build. He felt that this build may be too gradual, and tried to work for better pacing. Some success in this area was attained. The children added to the problem of tempo, since they could not "feel" it as well as a more experienced actor could. The meaning of the word "tempo" was carefully explained to them, however, and when the director would ask for improvement in it, they tried.

Considering everything, the director felt reasonably satisfied with the achievements in interpretation, style, and mood. That does not mean, though, that if he were to do the play again there would not be changes and improvements.

Actor-Director Relationships

No director could expect more co-operation from a cast. From the very outset there was harmony and hard work. There were brief moments when tensions made tempers flare, but these moments were rare.

The director was wary at the beginning about how the children would react to being told what to do, and to do the same thing over and over again. He realized that there would be times when he would become impatient, and when they would become impatient. At one of the early rehearsals it was made clear to the children that whenever they were told to do a line again, or to repeat a bit of blocking, or to concentrate, or to speak louder, it was for their own benefit. It was because the director wanted them to be good in the play, and to do a good job for him. They seemed to understand this completely, and they never complained or seemed to resent what they were told to do. On one occasion, for example, when the girl was clearly not thinking about what she was doing, the director took her aside and told her confidentially that this production was like a test for him, just as she had in school, and that he had to get a good grade. She was asked to concentrate and do her best so everyone "would think I am a good director." From that moment on she was all business, and dedicated to trying to do what was asked of her. The director will forever be grateful for her attitude and co-operation.

The boy had had some theatrical experience, whereas the girl had not. He knew his way around the stage, and did not have to be coached in basic technique as she had to be. He was self assured, but when he was asked to change a reading or a piece of business he never objected.

The two adult actresses were equally co-operative, even though the director expected more of them, and also expected them to make up for some of the shortcomings of the children. When they encountered a situation that could not be solved during the regular rehearsal period, they requested more rehearsal time. Several nights they stayed two or

three hours, after the younger members of the cast had gone home, to work on a difficult scene.

As is usual in a rehearsal situation, each actor or actress has his or her own particular failings to contend with. When these things were pointed out to the individual the director was careful to explain that he was not trying to be nasty or to embarrass them. He explained that the only way to get to the root of a problem was to point it out and try to find some way to solve it. They seemed to appreciate this fact, and worked diligently to improve themselves.

A major difficulty that each actor had to overcome in one way or another was concentration. The girl's attention span was extremely short, and for this reason the director tried to impress on the crews who worked on the play the importance of getting everything ready early. By doing this there would be fewer things for Flora to "discover" during the final rehearsals. This fascination with everything though, controlled as it was, turned out to be an asset for the child, as it gave her very relaxed, natural behavior on stage.

Only once or twice during rehearsals did the director find it necessary to show disfavor to get the actors to try harder. For such a difficult play as this one is, and especially with two children in the cast, that is a great compliment to the attitude of the actors. The shortcomings of the production were on the part of the director, and not due to a lack of willingness or co-operation on the part of the cast.

Audience Reaction

Again, the director was reasonably well satisfied with the audience reaction. Most of the things said to him, and that got back to him, were

complimentary. Generally, the audience seemed to be caught up in the play and reacted much as the director had hoped they would.

The physical reaction and gasping that went through the audience on Quint's appearances, especially after the realization that he was a ghost, was an exciting thing to watch and hear. That is exactly the response that was worked and hoped for, and the director was gratified when the audience reacted in the way that it did. Another pleasing thing was that the audience leaned forward en masse in order to see better when the children knelt to play with the cards.

The director's initial desire was that there would be complete silence during the blackouts between scenes, and he was a little disturbed when the audience began to talk. After listening to some of the conversations, however, he realized that they were talking about the play and what had just happened on the stage, and they were trying to predict what was to come. There is a possibility that some of the blackouts were too long, and this contributed to the murmur between scenes, but it is felt that generally the talk and audience reaction was favorable.

During the playing of the scenes the audience was extremely quiet. They seemed to be involved with the characters and in the situation, and intent on what was going to happen.

Some laughter was anticipated, even though the line or scene was not funny or being played for laughs, and this was discussed with the cast. Unfamiliar situations often seem funny to people, and since very few people have relationships with ghosts it is not surprising that there was some laughter. What laughter there was, though, did not seem derisive or disruptive of the mood of the play.

The director hoped that the production would make people think and talk about the meaning of The Innocents, and it seemed to do just that. Many things were read into the play that were not thought of or worked for, which is a sign that people were seriously affected by the play. Some members of the audience even saw faces and figures in the projections, and thought they were put there purposely to reinforce the feeling of spirits in the garden and outside world. However, there were no faces or figures there, at least not intentionally. But it shows what the imagination, if stimulated, can create.

This director would not presume to think that great improvements could not be made on his production of The Innocents. Considering everything, though, he feels that the play was reasonably successful, and stimulated some thought on the dual nature of man, and on the good and evil that exists in everything, even a thesis production.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. [Faint text]

2. [Faint text]

3. [Faint text]

4. [Faint text]

5. [Faint text]

6. [Faint text]

7. [Faint text]

8. [Faint text]

9. [Faint text]

10. [Faint text]

11. [Faint text]

12. [Faint text]

13. [Faint text]

14. [Faint text]

15. [Faint text]

16. [Faint text]

17. [Faint text]

18. [Faint text]

19. [Faint text]

20. [Faint text]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Archibald, William. The Innocents. New York: Samuel French, 1951.
- _____. "The Innocents," Theatre Arts, January, 1951, p. 58.
- Brown, John Mason. Still Seeing Things. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1950.
- Clair, John A. The Ironic Dimension in the Fiction of Henry James.
Pittsburg, Pa.: Duquesne University Press, 1965.
- Cranfill, Thomas Mabry, and Robert Lanier Clark, Jr. An Anatomy of "The Turn of the Screw." Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965.
- Fadiman, Clifton. "The Meaning of The Innocents," in The Playbill of the original Broadway production, 1950.
- Gardner, R. H. The Splintered Stage. New York: The McMillan Company, 1965.
- James, Henry. The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels. New York: New American Library, 1962.
- Kimbrough, Robert. The Turn of the Screw: An Authoritative, Backgrounds and Sources, Essays in Criticism. New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1966.
- Mielziner, Jo. Designing for the Theatre. New York: Atheneum, 1965.
- Nathan, George Jean. Theatre Book of the Year. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1950.
- Siegel, Eli. James and The Children. New York: Definition Press, 1968.
- Sievers, W. David. Freud on Broadway. New York: Hermitage House, 1955.
- Willen, Gerald. A Casebook on Henry James's "The Turn of the Screw." New York: Thomas E. Crowell Company, 1960.

APPENDICES

UNC-G THEATRE
presents



THE INNOCENTS

April 24, 25, 1970
8:30 p.m.
April 26, 1970
2:30 p.m.

UNC - G THEATRE

presents

The M. F. A. Thesis Production of

THE INNOCENTS

by William Archibald

Based in The Turn of the Screw by Henry James

Directed and Set Design by Newton Neely

Costumes Designed by Diane G. Rough

Lighting by Carolyn McDonald*

Original Music for the Production Composed
and Played by John Morrow*

CAST

(in order of appearance)

- Flora Kelly Collins
- Mrs. Grose Linda Fink*
- Miss Giddens Kay Cortez*
- Peter Quint. Nelson Allison
- Miles. Steven Jacobson
- Miss Jessel. Gunta Jankavs

The play is set in the drawing room of an English country house. The time is 1880.

ACT ONE

- Scene 1: An early autumn afternoon
- Scene 2: Three Hours Later
- Scene 3: The following morning
- Scene 4: Twilight. The same day
- Scene 5: The following morning.

ACT TWO

- Scene 1: Evening of the same day
- Scene 2: The next morning
- Scene 3: The same day. Twilight.

There will be a ten minute intermission between acts.

PRODUCTION

- Stage Manager. G
- Assistant to the Director. . . N
- Technical Director C

- Scenery T
- Kay Belcher, Debbie Austin,
Carlotta Burroughs, Debbie
Lowe, Jackie Morris, Kay T
Kevin Carle, Minehardt Fish
Marcie Garland.

- Lighting. B
- Wrenn Goodrum, Tim Morris
Underwood, Marcie Garland
Chris Slack*.

- Props K
- Nancy Kraeuter, Gerald Col
Margaret Inman.

- Costumes and Make-up M
- Susie Tucker*, Sarah Thore,
Pat Morris, Mary Lee Willie
Edmundson, Barbara Baker,

- Publicity. Je
- Shannon Campbell*, Kathy E

- Box Office G
- Sara Heath Collins, Mineha
Lowe, Marti Turner, Dan Se
Marilyn Cain, Cindy Lipe*.

- House H
- Jackie Morris, Amelia Penla
Johnny Clontz*.

- Sound S

PRODUCTION STAFF

Stage Manager. Gunta Jankavs
 Assistant to the Director. . . Nelson Allison
 Technical Director Carlton Ward

Scenery. Tim Morris,
 Kay Belcher, Debbie Austin, Jim Burroughs,
 Carlotta Burroughs, Debbie Wakefield, Cassandra
 Lowe, Jackie Morris, Kay Taylor*, Marilyn Cain,
 Kevin Carle, Minehardt Fishel, Marti Turner,
 Marcie Garland.

Lighting. Barry Bell,
 Wrenn Goodrum, Tim Morris, Terry Todd, Martha
 Underwood, Marcie Garland, Ruth Campbell,
 Chris Slack*.

Props. Kathy Woods Feddern*, head
 Nancy Kraeuter, Gerald Colbert, Gail Cowan,
 Margaret Inman.

Costumes and Make-up Michael Berg, head
 Susie Tucker*, Sarah Thore, Holly Hummel,
 Pat Morris, Mary Lee Williamson, Jodi
 Edmundson, Barbara Baker, Lynn Kirchgessner.

Publicity. Jerri McBride, head
 Shannon Campbell*, Kathy Brookshire.

Box Office Gladys Coddington, head
 Sara Heath Collins, Minehardt Fishel, Cassandra
 Lowe, Marti Turner, Dan Seaman, Jackie Morris,
 Marilyn Cain, Cindy Lipe*.

House. Hall Parrish, head
 Jackie Morris, Amelia Penland*, Bill Wagoner*,
 Johnny Clontz*.

Sound Susan Andrews*

STATEMENT FROM BEATRICE STRAIGHT

The following was in a letter from Beatrice Straight. The director wrote her asking for a statement on her approach to the role of Miss Giddens, which she created in the original Broadway production in 1950.

My memory is not very strong after twenty years, which is when we did the play--twenty years ago.

The director, Peter Glenville from England, had his first big success here with it. He's a director who gives "readings" of lines and then the actor has to make it his own. He's a dear friend of ours, and a fine director, but I find line readings hard as I work from inside out--trying to find the character inside and then finding the variety and color. But sometimes this is a slow process. Glenville knew what he wanted and got it, and gradually one made it one's own.

I remember one of his great difficulties with me was to have me move and pause and hold a position like a "star." The play needed that form and assurance, and the part couldn't be played timidly.

The stairs in the set were marvelous (the new play, Childs Play, now on Broadway designed by the same designer has a stair very much like the one we had, and people have referred to The Innocents because of this.)

Also playing with children is hard. To dominate them and be also playing with them. But the two children in the play were exceptional actors and understood the mood needed (understood the play very well, much to the shocked amazement of many interviewers) and sustained it wonderfully well. We had to work often with the director after the play opened as the line was so fine to sustain and keep believable. Many in the audience used to scream, and several times we had people who fainted from the fear of it all and the appearance of the ghost.

I feel that it's most important to stress the fact that it's a real ghost story. Many intellectuals and critics have tried to say that this is not a story about ghosts because of the mixed emotional feelings of Miss Giddens--her imagination. This is not true. She saw Peter Quint before she knew of his existence. As she arrived at the house she saw him standing

on the tower and described him to the housekeeper before she had any idea that such a man had existed. We spoke to Henry James' nephew and he also stressed the point that James had told him it was a ghost story. He always meant it as one. Of course Miss Giddens had many complex emotions because of her infatuation with the man who hired her. Her feeling for the boy--that was a mixture of many things. All of this, along with her upbringing and the times she lived in--all of which make such fascinating challenges to an actress, when working on the part.

We had several talks with people in the Psychic field, checking on the truth of the relation of the ghost to the boy, and his possession. All of the things relating to this in the script are genuine, according to their knowledge and beliefs--and of course they believe in ghosts. We spoke to one person (considered one of the three great mediums in the world) who has worked with scientists, etc., and has worked with the psychic research group in London that goes and examines ghosts, etc., when anything is reported, to see if it is genuine or fake. She told us that the story could be true and that the relationships in it and the results are all possible. I feel that this is important for the actors to believe--as you need that conviction when acting it to make it really terrifying. Also the battle for the poor boy's soul is a possibility, and that he couldn't take the strain and died (heart attack?) . . . Some people will laugh at all of this, but I think, now more and more, young people are beginning to believe in such things.