

ACT IIScene 1

SETTING: Portland street, one month later. Entrance to an auditorium, before a drop depicting a Portland street scene. A large banner proclaims "Portland Oregon Women's Congress."

AT RISE: TOWNSPEOPLE mingle at the entrance. There is a lot of activity as both men and women anticipate the start of the congress. Many of the MEN carry canes or umbrellas. The WOMEN carry concealed fans and handkerchiefs.

MEN

ONLY IN OREGON CAN YOUNG MEN MAKE THEIR MARK.
 ONLY IN OREGON CAN OLD MEN FIND NEW SPARK.
 PULLING AN OAR IN ROARING RAPIDS UNDER THE NORTHWEST SKY.
 BLAZING A TRAIL TO SCALE A HILLSIDE WATCHED BY A HAWK'S KEEN EYE.
 IT'S YOURS TO TRY!
 TRY IT IN OREGON.
 ONLY IN OREGON.
 ONLY IN OREGON THE MAVERICK HAS A HOME.

WOMEN

ONLY IN OREGON WILL WOMEN FIND RESPECT.
 ONLY IN OREGON, WE'LL OVERCOME NEGLECT.

ALL

HEAR AS THE BREEZES TEASE THE NEEDLES OF A TALL SCOTCH PINE.
 WATCH AS A BEAVER CLEAVES HER WAY, DRAGGING A BOUGH BEHIND.
 IT'S YOURS TO FIND.

MEN

FIND A FRONTIER WIFE.

WOMEN

BURY YOUR PAST LIFE.

ALL

ONLY IN OREGON THE MAVERICK HAS A HOME.

(ZULEIKA, MOTHER and LIZETTE enter as the TOWNSPEOPLE begin filing into the auditorium and taking seats behind the drop.)

LIZETTE

And would you look at this! Holy Mother Mary, I've never seen the like of it!

MOTHER

Zulie, you helped organize this?

ZULEIKA

Yes, Mother, I served on the committee that planned the schedule and invited the speakers.

MOTHER

Including yourself!

ZULEIKA

Yes, that's right, Mother.

MOTHER

I am blessed to live to see this day! A women's congress!

LIZETTE

An' if it be a women's congress, then what're all the men doin' here, I might ask?

ZULIEKA

They've been invited, Lizette, and we have men on the speakers' roster as well, some very prominent men.

LIZETTE

Well, that sure sounds daft to me. Men at a women's congress! Whatever for?

ZULEIKA

Lizette, it's essential that men be here. Men carry all the political power in this state and country. They own our property and control our lives. We must turn them to our cause for equal rights. If we cannot bring powerful men into our fold, our efforts are in vain.

MOTHER

And what powerful men have you coerced to speak?

ZULEIKA

Judge David Dunson, for one.

MOTHER

David Dunson!

ZULEIKA

Yes, Mother, David Dunson, one of the most prominent jurists in Oregon.

MOTHER

And the rat who broke your heart!

LIZETTE

Oooh, sweet Mother Mary!

ZULEIKA

Mother, I will deal with David Dunson in my own time and in my own way. Right now, I need him here. Let's go in!

(End of scene.)

(Transition to Scene 2. Raise drop.)

ACT II

Scene 2

SETTING: The drop rises to reveal the interior of the auditorium, Women's Congress. A podium stands on a raised platform facing the stage audience, on seats or benches.

AT RISE: Excepting children, the entire cast is on stage. Various dignitaries including CHAIRMAN, DUNSON, MCCLURGE, and ZULIEKA take seats on the platform. Some women are elegantly dressed and adorned with fans and feathered hats. Many of the men carry canes and umbrellas. The audience buzzes with conversation. Some audience members greet one another and have not yet taken seats. Throughout the scene they are boisterous but attentive. Last to enter is GENERAL VALE, who remains aloof but observant, seated in clear view of the audience, but out of MOTHER's view.

(PRESIDENT approaches the podium and bangs a gavel.)

PRESIDENT

Order! Order, please!

(More gavel banging. The audience members take seats and come to order.)

Ladies and gentlemen, I will now call the meeting to order. It gives me great pleasure to introduce this session's invited dignitaries and distinguished speakers, who have joined me today on the platform. First, allow me to present the president of the Seattle Women's Suffrage League, Mrs. Leona Hampstead.

(Applause as she stands.)

Next, a gentleman well-known to many of you, Dr. Phineas McClurge.

(Polite applause. MCCLURGE stands and bows lavishly.)

The chairman of our organization's Boise, Idaho chapter, Mrs. Violet McKinnon.

(Applause. She acknowledges.)

Our next speaker is our planning committee Chair, Miss Zuleika Shannon. The courageous and tireless lady largely responsible for organizing this Congress, Miss Zuleika Shannon.

(ZULEIKA acknowledges louder applause.)

Our first speaker this afternoon needs little introduction. He is known throughout the area as a preeminent jurist, and we are gratified that he has graciously accepted our invitation to speak today. May I present the Honorable David Dunson.

(Applause. DUNSON approaches the podium, shakes hands with PRESIDENT, who sits down.)

DUNSON

Madam President, ladies and gentlemen: I thank you for the high honor you have conferred upon me. Accustomed as I am to addressing multitudes of men, I confess that I am not used to associating in this manner with the fair sex. The brilliant array of plumage up here on the platform quite dazzles me.

(Light laughter.)

Madam President, I am fully aware that this conference is for the purpose of women's rights --

PRESIDENT

(Interrupting, along with some female audience members shouting *Equal rights!*) Equal rights, Judge Dunson.

DUNSON

Very well then, equal rights.

I have been told that I might speak my mind and voice my honest opinions in this forum. That is what I intend to do.

(Polite applause. "Hear, Hear!" from the men.)

(Beat. DUNSON clears his throat.)

The charms of woman have inspired the poet's pen and painter's brush from the earliest ages. Her charms have been considered worthy of the genius of a Raphael, or the pen of a Dante. All we have and are, we men owe to woman. With her by our side, we are blessed in all things; without her, we are -- without her, we are miserable.

(Applause. The women wave their fans and handkerchiefs and

the men pound the floor with their canes and umbrellas.)

It is in the serene atmosphere of a love-lit home where woman's star shines brightest. There she ministers to our wants; there her virtues have the fullest play; there her services are most keenly appreciated. To be a beloved wife and honored mother is to be a queen of earth and heaven!

(Applause and cane-pounding.)

I had a good wife once. She was queen of my home. The household management was kept in equilibrium by the magic of her skill, and through the deep subtleties of her intellect, its machinery worked like the human heart. But she – died! Yes, *died!* My home was left to me desolate. My children cried in vain for their mother who was gone, and I, bereaved of my bosom companion, was bereft indeed!

(He pauses, wipes his eyes, clears his throat, blows his nose.)

But I must not intrude my private griefs upon you. Pray excuse me if I have betrayed my feelings.

(WOMEN: "Go on! Go on!" MEN thunder renewed applause with their canes. DUNSON replaces his handkerchief and moves toward the crowd.)

I dislike taking issue with any of my countrywomen, but I would be disloyal to their dearest interests if I failed to do my whole duty. The time was when a woman's highest ambition was to be a wife and mother. The time was when no woman thought of rights other than those chosen for her by her legal protector and head, her husband.

(Applause from the men.)

Those were the great days of this republic. Women were keepers at home.

I do not deny that woman's lot is hard. But – the ladies will pardon me – when she stoops from her high estate as queen of home, to mingle with the common herd, or array her cohorts before the public in a demand for rights, she compromises much of her high dignity.

(The President and other women on the stage look dismayed. Cries of "Hear, hear!" are heard from a few of the men in the audience, and a few canes pound.)

Women ask for equality before the law! Why, Madam President,

they are our rulers already, and we – (Striking his chest with his open palm) – are their humble subjects.

(Applause, but noticeably weaker.)

Let woman remain content within the realm of home. Let her avoid politics and raise babies! Let her look well to the ways of her household and be sure that she "eateth not the bread of idleness." This is woman's true sphere, and these constitute her highest duties.

I thank you very much.

(Applause, mostly from the men. DUNSON sits as the PRESIDENT approaches the podium.)

PRESIDENT

Thank you, Judge Dunson.

(Applause and cane-pounding. ZULEIKA approaches the podium.)

ZULEIKA

Thank you, Madam President.

Does the honorable Judge Dunson forget that there are laws on the books, made by these male protectors of ours, that deny to us pampered creatures called women, the inalienable right to the use and control and benefit of a father's legacy, if we protected and shielded darlings happen to be married? Will all his pretty talk check the greed of husbands who may choose to deny to wives the equal protection of the law, which is the inalienable right of every American citizen?

(A hush falls on the audience, in striking contrast with the previous hilarity.)

(A murmur of approval greets this question. GENERAL VALE can be seen paying particular attention.)

The Judge grows eloquent over the duties of motherhood, but forgets to consider how many mothers he knows who are so badly hampered by the unjust jurisdiction over them, and that is guaranteed to husbands by the law, that they cannot do their duty to their children as their hearts tell them and their intelligence suggests.

Just recently, a sad case came to my attention, illustrating a woman's lack of power in the home. A child was gravely ill with severe fever, and crying for help to his mother – a child of ten or eleven years – and the father, in a fit of

rage, and in spite of his wife's entreaties, refused medical help of any sort for the trembling lad. The mother, poor thing, was paralyzed from doing anything to help her boy, and she could not protect him. What's more, and what's the real crime here, is that she had no legal power to do so. The child died.

(DUNSON is confused and visibly upset hearing this account.)

(ZULEIKA is resolute, speaking with great conviction. Music up.)

Madam President, wise women see the existing wrongs on every hand that have filled our penitentiaries, blighted infancy, destroyed motherhood, ravished girlhood, made drunkards, licensed vice, robbed wives and widows and defrauded children. They know there is a grander, truer, purer, better side of life, for they themselves have found it and basked in its sunshine.

WOMEN, LIKE MEN, HAVE SPECIAL VALUE,
EQUAL AS PARTNERS IN THIS WORLD.
JUSTICE LIVES IN ACTIONS EVERY DAY;
WE CAST OUR LOT IN ALL WE SAY.

EVIL STANDS POISED OVER YOUR SHOULDER.
GOODNESS, IN FRONT, BEYOND YOUR GRASP.
TRUTH IS MORE THAN JUST LAW AND FACT,
SO LEARN TO FEEL BEFORE YOU ACT.

TURN AWAY FROM YOUR THOUGHTLESSNESS.
TURN AWAY FROM YOUR WICKEDNESS.
NEVER STRAY FROM THE PATHWAY OF HUMILITY.
ALL THE FAME AND ACCLAIM AND THE POWER THAT YOU NOW
EXALT
WILL LEAVE YOU STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.

SEE THE VIRTUE IN A STRANGER'S EYES.
HEAR THE DECEPTION IN A RICH MAN'S LIES.
SERVE YOUR SERVANT AND YOU WILL SAVE YOUR SOUL
WHEN THE BRIMSTONE RAINS DOWN ON GOMORRAH.

TURN AWAY FROM YOUR THOUGHTLESSNESS.
TURN AWAY FROM YOUR WICKEDNESS.
NEVER STRAY FROM THE PATHWAY OF HUMILITY.
ALL THE FAME AND ACCLAIM, AND THE POWER THAT YOU NOW
EXALT
WILL LEAVE YOU STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.
YOU WILL BE STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.

They say that the government of these United States is theoretically perfect, but they see every day the result of its refusal to guarantee equal rights and equal protection to every citizen within its jurisdiction. There is but one remedy for all these evils. It will not work a speedy cure, for the disease is of long standing and is chronic. But it will come in time, if it is rightfully administered. That remedy is equality for all under the law.

CHORUS

TURN AWAY FROM YOUR THOUGHTLESSNESS.
 TURN AWAY FROM YOUR WICKEDNESS.
 NEVER STRAY FROM THE PATHWAY OF HUMILITY.
 ALL THE FAME AND ACCLAIM, AND THE POWER THAT YOU NOW
 EXALT
 WILL LEAVE YOU STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.
 YOU WILL BE STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.

(DUNSON leaps to his feet, forcefully challenging the crowd before him. Music segue.)

DUNSON

I must object to this poppycock! It is the duty of every gentleman, as a woman's protector and guide, to shield her from her own ambition by the circumscribing power of the law. There can be no other way!

Alpha and Omega, beginning to end.
 We live by the letter of the law.
 While some try to fool us, they can only pretend.
 We live by the letter of the law.
 The system is more than just words on a page.
 It's the civilized language that makes a man sage.
 So, don't ever challenge what God must intend,
 and live by the letter of the law.
 We must live by the letter of the law.

CHORUS

TURN AWAY FROM YOUR THOUGHTLESSNESS.
 TURN AWAY FROM YOUR WICKEDNESS.
 NEVER STRAY FROM THE PATHWAY OF HUMILITY.
 ALL THE FAME AND ACCLAIM, AND THE POWER THAT YOU NOW
 EXALT
 WILL LEAVE YOU STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.
 YOU WILL BE STANDING AS A PILLAR OF SALT.

(Applause, cheering, cane-pounding. Audience members surround and congratulate ZULEIKA and form small groups to discuss the day's events. VALE attempts to reach the podium to speak to ZULEIKA, but he is unable to reach her through the crowd. As

he does so, MOTHER notices him, stares at him, and reacts visibly.)

MOTHER

Lizette!

LIZETTE

Yes, Mum.

MOTHER

Help me! We must leave immediately. We must go at once!

LIZETTE

Yes, Mum, but why? This is all so wonderful!

MOTHER

Lizette, just get me out of here. Now help me!

(They exit.)

(Blackout)

(End of scene)

ACT II

Scene 3

SETTING: Portland street, before the drop. A few minutes later.

AT RISE: Various attendees are leaving the Women's Congress. ZULEIKA and McCLURGE are having a discussion center.

MCCLURGE

The truth is, Miss Shannon, that in a wisely ordered state, man is woman's best friend and woman man's. Wherever justice is, there is harmony.

ZULEIKA

Is that what you think, Doctor McClurge?

(VALE enters, walking toward ZULEIKA's back as MCCLURGE continues, waxing eloquent.)

MCCCLURGE

Indeed I do. There is no natural antagonism between the sexes, except what's created by women's rights movements. Think of the tens of thousands of happy homes where the husband loves his wife and the wife honors and obeys her husband! Think, I say, of these homes, where children grow up happy and prospering, nurtured by a mother's love and protected by a father's care. And you, madam, ask me to yield up this ideal state of affairs to the unsafe hands and turbulent hearts of quarrelsome women – present company of course excepted – who neglect their homes and families and would steal man's God-given right to protect and love and cherish those whom God has made dependent upon his manly arm and loving heart for sustenance and affection.

ZULEIKA

Doctor McClurge, I am acquainted with many unenlightened men, and you, sir, have joined their ranks today. Your opinion is pure balderdash. You will excuse, me, sir.

(ZULEIKA turns to leave but is blocked by VALE.)

VALE

Miss! Miss Shannon!

It is "Miss Shannon," is it not?

ZULEIKA

Yes it is.

VALE

Wonderful. Excellent. Miss Shannon, please honor me by allowing me to introduce myself: Dudley vale of Schenectady, at your service, Miss. (He bows).

ZULEIKA

Mister Vale. (She puts out a hand, and he shakes it.)

VALE

(To MCCLURGE) And you, sir. (Extending his hand.) You look somehow familiar. Have we met before?

MCCLURGE

(Recognizing VALE, but trying to cover it.) Doctor Phineas McClurge, sir. I don't believe we have met. As a matter of fact, I'm sure of it. Positive! I would have remembered the uniform.

Miss Shannon, I have appointments and must take my leave. Good day to both of you.

(He exits.)

VALE

Strange. I know I've seen him before.

Thank you for taking a moment to talk with me, Miss Shannon. I heard your speech, and I must say it was most impressive, most impressive indeed.

ZULIEKA

Thank you. I don't know what to title you, sir. I'm unable to decipher the symbols on your uniform.

VALE

General. Brevet General Dudley Vale. I have worn the uniform with pride since Second Bull Run. But please, enough about me. A most eloquent speech, Miss. And very timely, I might add. The times are changing for sure, and we must all be ready.

ZULEIKA

Is that so? Do you think so, General Vale? Doctor McClurge certainly did not.

VALE

I will admit to some personal misgivings related to the equal rights movement, which I would love to discuss with you. But if women as lovely and brilliant as you are

promoting the cause, there's not a doubt minds will change and justice will prevail.

ZULEIKA

It is my fervent hope, General.

And what brings you from Schenectady all the way to Portland, if I may ask.

VALE

A mission of personal redemption, my dear. I am here to right a wrong, and that's all I can say about it. I was fortunate enough to have my visit here correspond with the Women's Congress, and I could not keep myself away. A most electrifying speech! How fortunate I was to witness it!

Miss Shannon, it would be my supreme honor to escort you to supper this evening after the Congress, where we might further discuss the pressing issues of the day.

ZULEIKA

I'm afraid that would not be possible, General. My invalid mother left the Congress without telling me, and I fear something may be wrong. I must go to her.

VALE

Of course, my dear. Perhaps another time.

ZULEIKA

Perhaps. And now, please excuse me.

(VALE bows as ZULEIKA exits. Music up.)

VALE

A most exquisite young woman!

CIVILIANS TODAY DRESS IN SUCH A CASUAL WAY.
 FORMALITY IS ON THE PATH TO EXTINCTION.
 IF CLOTHES MAKE THE MAN, MEN SHOULD LOOK THE BEST THEY
 CAN.
 A FRILL OR TWO CAN ADD AN AIR OF DISTINCTION.
 YET MEMBERS OF THE FAIRER SEX ARE NOT IMPRESSED BY
 STYLE.
 ONE UNIVERSAL FASHION IS SURE TO RAISE A SMILE.

WOMEN LOVE A MAN IN A UNIFORM.
 METICULOUSLY TIDY AND PRESSED.
 THERE'S PRIDE IN HIS APPEARANCE. HE'S WILLING TO CONFORM
 IN THE MANNER AND THE WAY HE IS DRESSED.
 WOMEN LOVE A MAN,
 WOMEN LOVE A MAN,

WOMEN LOVE A MAN IN A UNIFORM.

LADIES SWARMING SO THICK, I'D BEAT THEM OFF ME WITH A
STICK.

THEY'D TEAR THE STARS RIGHT OFF OF MY STARCHED COLLAR.
FOR EACH DAME DRESSED IN A BLOUSE HUNTING A MILITARY
SPOUSE,
I WISH I HAD A SOLITARY SILVER DOLLAR.

BRAIDS AND BUTTONS ADD TO ONE'S AUTHORITY,
WHICH STIMULATES THE FEMININE MAJORITY.

WOMEN LOVE A MAN IN A UNIFORM.
METICULOUSLY TIDY AND PRESSED.
THERE'S PRIDE IN HIS APPEARANCE. HE'S WILLING TO CONFORM
IN THE MANNER AND THE WAY HE IS DRESSED.
WOMEN LOVE A MAN,
WOMEN LOVE A MAN,
WOMEN LOVE A MAN IN A UNIFORM.

STATUS IN APPAREL'S GOES BEYOND THE RICH,
WHEN BRAVERY STANDS OUT IN EVERY SINGLE STITCH.

WOMEN LOVE A MAN IN A UNIFORM.
METICULOUSLY TIDY AND PRESSED.
THERE'S PRIDE IN HIS APPEARANCE. HE'S WILLING TO CONFORM
IN THE MANNER AND THE WAY HE IS DRESSED.
WOMEN LOVE A MAN,
WOMEN LOVE A MAN,
WOMEN LOVE A MAN IN A UNIFORM.

(Blackout)

(End of scene)

ACT II

Scene 4

SETTING: ZULEIKA's home, 30 minutes later.

AT RISE: LIZETTE is tending to MOTHER, fanning her face, etc.

(ZULIEKA enters, concerned.)

ZULEIKA

Mother, are you all right?

MOTHER

No.

LIZETTE

I'm sure I can't get a thing out of her, Miss. She just said to bring her home, so I did.

ZULEIKA

Mother, what happened? You look as if you've seen a ghost!

MOTHER

I have!

ZULEIKA

What?

MOTHER

I have seen a ghost! Zuleika, I saw The ghost of your father!

LIZETTE

Oh, Holy Mother Mary!

ZULEIKA

My *father*? But you told me --

MOTHER

I know. I told you he was dead. And what I told you was the truth, because that's what I believed. But now I have seen him.

ZULEIKA

But where? When?

MOTHER

Today, just a while ago, at the Congress.

ZULEIKA

My father?

MOTHER

Zuleika, I have not told you very much about your father.

(Music up.)

ZULEIKA

No, Mother. He married you, he went away to the war, he disappeared. You never saw him again. That's all I ever knew.

MOTHER

HE SAID HE LOVED ME, AND I BELIEVED HIM;
HIS ONE AND ONLY, AND I BELIEVED HIM.
HE SAID THAT DEATH ALONE WOULD RENDER US APART.

HE MADE MY HEART SOAR, SO I BELIEVED HIM.
ALL I HAD LONGED FOR, SO I BELIEVED HIM.
HE WAS SO STRONG AND YET SO TENDER FROM THE START.

BUT HE NEVER SAID GOOD-BYE OR SPOKE A PARTING WORD.
NO EXPLANATION WHY; NO REASONS WOULD BE HEARD.
AND ALL MY TEARSTAINED LETTERS, THROUGH SILENT YEARS,
WERE SENT WITH NO REPLY.

BUT HE NEVER SAID GOODBYE, JUST LEFT WITHOUT A TRACE,
AND ALL THAT I RECALL LAST TIME I SAW HIS FACE:
HE WHISPERED HE'D BE BACK SOON, AND WAVED WITH SUCH
AFFECTION IN HIS EYE, BUT HE NEVER SAID GOODBYE.

THEY WERE PACKED ON TRAINS LIKE CATTLE,
AS OUR MEN WERE SHIPPED OFF TO BATTLE.
THROUGH THE LONG MONTHS ANTICIPATING,
I SAT HOME, JUST PATIENTLY WAITING.
I WAS YOUNG AND NAIVE, TOO BLIND TO BELIEVE IT WAS OVER.

IN TIME, THE WAR PASSED, STILL I BELIEVED HIM.
MY HOPE WAS STEADFAST, 'CAUSE I BELIEVED HIM.
HE LEFT HIS OLD LIFE, HE LEFT A DAUGHTER, AND HE LEFT
ME, AND HE NEVER SAID GOODBYE.

(Music remains up. ZULEIKA and LIZETTE wipe away tears.)

LIZETTE

Oh, my! That's the saddest thing I ever did hear!

Mum, now that Miss is here, I'll go fix you some tea.

(LIZETTE exits.)

MOTHER

I never saw a need to tell you more. What was the point? The War Department told me he was missing, presumed dead.

I waited for him, Zulie. I waited for two years, alone, with a baby to care for. Every day I prayed for his return, but it never happened.

BUT HE NEVER SAID GOODBYE, JUST LEFT WITHOUT A TRACE,
AND ALL THAT I RECALL LAST TIME I SAW HIS FACE:
HE WHISPERED HE'D BE BACK SOON, AND WAVED WITH SUCH
AFFECTION IN HIS EYE, BUT HE NEVER SAID GOODBYE.

And now I learn he's alive.

ZULEIKA

(Goes to MOTHER, hugs her.)

You and I share a common fate, Mother. We both loved men who left us.

MOTHER

I know how people talked after we came to Portland - a single and independent woman who never mentioned a husband, and with a young child - I know how women, and even young girls, can be ruined by the talk of others.

ZULEIKA

(Beat)

Mother - I have lived my whole life with your maiden name, Shannon. Why is that?

MOTHER

Every time I heard my married name, I thought of your father, wondered what had happened to him. I wondered if he had left us deliberately for some reason. It was too much. When we came west, I changed my name back.

ZULEIKA

Mother - You never told me. What is my father's name?

MOTHER

Vale. Lieutenant Dudley Vale.

(ZULEIKA stares in astonishment.)

(Blackout)

(End of scene)

ACT II

Scene 5

SETTING: DUNSON's Parlor, the next day.

AT RISE: DUNSON is in a chair reading a newspaper,
left.

(A knock. MCCLURGE enters.)

MCCLURGE

Good morning, Your Honor.

DUNSON

What do you want now?

MCCLURGE

Why, my dear Judge! What's the matter?

DUNSON

Don't insult my intelligence, McClurge.

MCCLURGE

I ran into your Irishwoman in the hallway as I came in. You know, she bears a strange resemblance to someone I've seen recently. I can't quite place it, though. It's uncanny.

She's still working for you, I see.

DUNSON

Yes she is.

MCCLURGE

And she hasn't robbed you of house and home, as I suspected she might.

DUNSON

Far from it. I give her a hundred and fifty dollars on the first of each month. I don't know how she manages to get along, but I can see the result. She has hired a cook, a housekeeper, and a nanny. The children love her, they are well dressed, the house is in good condition, and I defy anyone to come here as a guest and find things out of order at mealtime. I was comparing accounts yesterday, looking over last year's bills comparing them with this year's, and I find that Bridget's plan is actually saving me money. Dora's drug and doctor bills alone sometimes ran higher than a hundred and fifty dollars a month.

McCLURGE

But you forget, that Mrs. Dunson was nearly always in delicate health. She was your wife, the mother of your children, and it was not to be expected that she work like a common servant.

DUNSON

But she did, doctor. She was always at work. I'm sure I can't imagine how she managed, but I do know that she got through, on her own, with all the work that under Bridget's supervision requires three pairs of hands. My conscience troubles me every time I think about it. I can't help thinking that if I had given my wife the power that Bridget has, Dora would be sane and well today. I don't know, after all, but that women have something to complain of.

(ZULEIKA, as BRIDGET, enters. She sees what is going on and conceals herself from the conversation.)

MCCLURGE

Lofty sentiment, I'm sure, Judge. But that's not why I'm here.

DUNSON

I figured as much.

MCCLURGE

It's time to put an end to our financial arrangement. I'd like a final payment from you, and then I will ask for no more. Ten thousand should do.

DUNSON

Ten thousand! You must be joking!

MCCLURGE

(In a low and sinister voice.) Draw me a check for ten thousand, and I'll consider our arrangement terminated.

DUNSON

And you'll not ask me for more money, and you'll never mention this to anyone again if I give you a check for ten thousand dollars?

MCCLURGE

Yes. I'm planning on leaving the city soon anyway.

(Smiling, gesturing toward the desk.)

Here's pen and ink. Write the check.

(DUNSON thinks, trembles.)

DUNSON

No, sir. I will not. Get out of my house.

MCCLURGE

All right. I shall take the necessary steps at once to have you arrested for manslaughter. Good day, my dear Judge!

(He exits. Dunson sits, buries his head in his hands. ZULEIKA (as BRIDGET) enters, carrying a large vase. SADIE and ANDREW follow, each with an armful of cut flowers. Music up.)

ZULEIKA

This way, my darlin's!

(The children hand her flowers as ZULEIKA arranges them in the vase. She makes a game of it. DUNSON observes them.)

ZULIEKA AND CHILDREN

ORANGE AND BLACK BLOOMS THE BRIGHT MARIGOLD
AND THE DAISY HAS PETALS OF WHITE.
PURPLE THE PANSY;
YELLOW THE TANSY.
BUT ALL DROP THEIR BLOSSOMS WHEN WINTER'S IN SIGHT.
ALL DROP WHEN WINTER'S IN SIGHT.

ZULIEKA

FRAGRANT THE ROSE WHOSE RARE COLOR IS SHOWN
IN RED PETALS, TENDER AND LIGHT.
IRIS, AND CROCUS,
MUMS AND HIBISCUS,
WILL ALL DROP THEIR BLOSSOMS WHEN WINTER'S IN SIGHT.
ALL DROP WHEN WINTER'S IN SIGHT.

DUNSON

MY OLD WAY OF THINKING SEEMED STRAIGHT AND CRYSTAL
CLEAR.
NOW MY THOUGHTS TWIST AND TURN DOWN A PATH MY BRAIN
CAN'T STEER.
SHE HAS LED ME THROUGH A MAZE
FOR THE PAST FEW MONTHS AND DAYS.
IT SEEMS THAT I'VE ARRIVED AT THE OTHER SIDE,
AND NOTHING HOLDS ME BACK EXCEPT MY PRIDE.

I'LL RECONSIDER MY POSITION.
BE PATIENT, AND NOT PHYSICIAN.
I'LL LEAVE MY CALLOUSED NOTIONS BEHIND,
AND LISTEN TO ANOTHER VOICE;
CONTEMPLATE ANOTHER CHOICE
AND CALCULATE THE FACTS THAT I MIGHT FIND.
SHE HAS CHANGED MY HEART, SO I CAN CHANGE MY MIND.

ANDREW

Flowers all gone!

ZULIEKA

Aye, my sweet, they are. But see how pretty! As beautiful as the two of you!

(She hugs the children.) Thank you, my darlin's. Now, off you go!

(The children exit. ZULIEKA turns to DUNSON)

Excuse me, yer honor...

DUNSON

What is it, Bridget?

ZULEIKA

Are ye all right, there, sir? You're lookin' a bit tichy around the gills, if ye don't mind me sayin' so.

DUNSON

Oh no, I'm quite all right. Well - Perhaps not completely...

ZULEIKA

I hear you gave a grand speech at that Women's Convention the other day.

DUNSON

I spoke from my mind and heart, Bridget. But now I'm not so sure of what I was saying.

ZULEIKA

I guess that Miss Shannon gave a bang-up speech too. A friend told me about it.

DUNSON

Yes, I guess you could say she did. She pretty much put me in my place, I'd say.

ZULEIKA

And what place would that be, sir, if I may ask.

DUNSON

That's a good question, Bridget, and I'm not sure yet of the answer.

ZULEIKA

Ah! Well, it's most likely a secret, then.

DUNSON

What?

ZULEIKA

Well, I said, it's probably some sort of secret. May have to do with a past deed or something--but how would I know?

Mister Dunson, I have something to tell ye. I'll be leavin' your employment soon. This'll be servin' as my notice to you.

DUNSON

Leaving? How can I get along without you, Bridget?

Please sit down, Bridget.

(Zuleika sits)

ZULEIKA

Well?

DUNSON

Bridget, I need you. Will you become my wife?

ZULEIKA

(Laughs) What are you askin' me, sir? Absolutely not! I have a feelin' it's a servant without wages ye'd be after procurin', more than a wife--one as wouldn't give notice and quit!

DUNSON

But--I think I love you, Bridget.

ZULEIKA

No. You love yourself, sir. An' it's a wife you'll be wanting who can *manage you*, sir, and not just your house - someone who's yer equal, or maybe even a bit more, if ye don't mind me sayin' so.

DUNSON

But you have come closer to managing me than anyone has, Bridget. If you will marry me, I promise I will never cross you. You will have command of the entire house.

ZULEIKA

Oh, You mistake Bridget O'Canally entirely, Mister Dunson. Marryin' the likes of you would be a step backwards, don't you see, and I'm only concerned with steppin' forward, and takin' as many women as I can with me. I wouldn't marry a king unless I could be queen. With all due respect to your exalted station in life, you're not quite ready for the likes of me, Mister Dunson. I will say, though, that you seem to be movin' in the right direction.

I'll leave your house in one week, sir. It strikes me mind that you'd better be lookin' for a housekeeper in the evenin' paper.

(She exits. DUNSON puts head back in hands. ZULEIKA re-enters.)

Oh, and Judge Dunson -

(He looks up.)

One more thing. I'm somewhat acquainted with Miss Zuleika Shannon, and I'm thinkin' you might want to consider callin' on her. She's let it be known to me she has some items of importance to discuss with you.

(ZULEIKA exits. DUNSON sits in thought for a moment, then gets up.)

ACT II

Scene 6

SETTING: Portland street, in front of drop, a few minutes later.

AT RISE: Zuleika, as Bridget, waits to meet someone. TOWNSPEOPLE mill about.

(MCCLURGE enters and notices ZULEIKA, crosses to her.)

MCCLURGE

Excuse me, Miss O'Andrewly.

ZULEIKA

(As Bridget.) Yes, sir? Oh, and it's Doctor McClurge.

MCCLURGE

Indeed it is, miss. How fortunate I ran into you here. I'd been meaning to speak with you.

ZULEIKA

With me? And whatever about, sir?

MCCLURGE

About my great interest in the Honorable David Dunson. Miss O'Andrewly, the Judge is in great trouble. His children are sadly in need of a mother's care; and there is some serious secret weighing upon his mind.

ZULEIKA

And is that so? What has all that to do with me, sir?

MCCLURGE

Miss O'Andrewly, do you know what troubles him?

ZULEIKA

And how should I know that?

MCCLURGE

You cannot trifle with me, Miss O'Andrewly. I know you better than you think. You are Zuleika Shannon's double.

ZULEIKA

Whatever do you mean, sir?

MCCLURGE

Miss O'Andrewly, you know that woman.

ZULEIKA

Who said I didn't?

MCCLURGE

And you have learned the Judge's secret through her treachery.

ZULEIKA

Well? What would that have to do with me?

MCCLURGE

I must see to it that she keeps the secret in her own bosom. She is devious and treacherous, and —

ZULEIKA

And my double!

MCCLURGE

Miss O'Andrewly. I did not mean your double as an individual. I should have said, your shadow. She is unaccountably like you.

ZULEIKA

Is that so? And what would this secret be that she and you know?

MCCLURGE

The Judge has a terrible fate hanging over him.

ZULEIKA

So I have heard.

MCCLURGE

AHA! I'd suspected as much. How did you come to know? Did *she* tell you?

ZULEIKA

(Toying with him, laughing.) Who? Zuleika?

MCCLURGE

Yes, Zuleika!

ZULEIKA

(Turning serious and beginning to assume her own identity, gradually leaving Bridget behind.)

You claim to be Judge Dunson's friend, I believe?

MCCLURGE

Yes. As his physician, I possess his secret; and if I chose,

I could see him imprisoned. I could do so.

ZULEIKA

And why don't you choose to do that?

MCCCLURGE

For reasons I keep to myself.

(VALE enters behind MCCLURGE, unseen by him, and witnesses the rest of the conversation.)

ZULEIKA

Zuleika Shannon suspects, sir, that you are rendering blackmail! She knows both sides, Dr. McClurge. She knows Judge Dunson is guilty of a fit of temper in which he committed a terrible act, an act he regretted from the first minute after the deed was done. She knows he would give anything to undo his misdeed, and that he is trying hard to conquer the evil temper that led him to commit the act. The Judge is not without friends. *Be careful, Dr. McClurge! Be careful!"*

VALE

Oh, I'd be more than careful, *Doctor Peabody!*

MCCLURGE

(Turning around) Peabody! Whatever do you mean, sir?

VALE

Yes, Peabody! I *knew* I'd seen you before!

MCCLURGE

I'm sure I don't know what you're talking about.

VALE

No, I'm sure you do! Vicksburg it was, the field hospital. Rebel shells landing close by, and you, doctor, *taking flight* – deserting your post and your duty to the Union!

MCCLURGE

I never -

VALE

Oh yes you did. I know. I know because I was there! I was at that hospital, on a cot, badly wounded. I watched you run away! And now, the next time I see you, I witness you here attempting to bully this unfortunate woman! I won't have it, I tell you!

(The scene is being noticed by TOWNSPEOPLE, who begin to gather around.)

(Buzzing from the gathering crowd.)

This man's name is *Peabody*, not whatever he says it is! He deserted his post at Vicksburg and left me and my comrades to die! And now he bullies this poor Irishwoman!

(The crowd grows restless and hostile. MCCLURGE makes a quick decision and runs off. The crowd follows, chasing him, leaving VALE and ZULEIKA alone on stage.)

ZULEIKA

(Entirely herself now.)

Thank you, General Vale.

VALE

You know me, Miss?

ZULEIKA

Yes, General. We've met.

(She removes enough of her disguise to be recognized by him.)

VALE

Miss Shannon! But...

ZULIEKA

I will explain my disguise later, General. What about our friend there, Doctor Peabody McClurge?

VALE

I daresay he is on his way out of town if he knows what's good for him, and I'll soon have the federal authorities on his tail. You'll not see him again. He has serious charges to face.

ZULIEKA

He approached me as I was waiting here to meet you. Thank you for coming here on short notice.

VALE

(Bows.) An honor, my dear.

I hope you will pardon me, Miss Shannon, but I really think it my duty to express myself plainly. I could hardly believe my eyes last night when I saw so superb a woman occupying that platform. A brilliant creature like yourself – beautiful as an angel's dream and intelligent far beyond the ordinary herd – ought to have a husband; ought to live for him, shine for him, and keep herself out of sight of the public rabble.

ZULEIKA

I am told that I am like my father.

VALE

Ah!

ZULEIKA

Yes. My mother tells me I inherit from him my strong love of freedom and independence. I never knew him. My mother tells me he was a soldier during the rebellion, a brave and gallant man, who freely laid his dearest interests upon the altar of his country, and holding aloft the flag of the Union, fought to free the colored slaves of the land from the oppression that had held them in bondage without wages. Yes, General Vale, my father risked his life to secure the blessings of liberty to the colored man. Is it not proper that I should risk my life, if need be, to secure the same blessings to white and colored women?

ZULEIKA

My mother was a beautiful woman once.

General, please! As women will, she met her fate and fell in love. And she was married – or thought she was married – to a young lieutenant of the Home Guards, to whom she gave her pure young heart. They lived in comfort together as husband and wife till the war came on, and then my father, sensing his duty, heeded the cry of Abraham Lincoln, and donning the blue uniform, led a company of volunteers to the battlefields of the Carolinas. And then he disappeared. He was never heard from again.

VALE

(Can't help interrupting eagerly.)

Strangely akin to my own story! I too was a young officer, newly married, sent to the battlefields of the South. I was grievously wounded at Vicksburg, which is where I encountered our Dr. Peabody at the hospital and witnessed his disgrace. We were overrun by a Rebel advance, and I barely escaped capture and certain death in the Andersonville stockade. After days of wandering the swamps, barely alive, I was found and nursed back to health by a Cajun healer. It was a long and painful recovery. By the time I was able to work my way back to civilization and a military unit, the war had been over for months. More time went by before I was able to try locating my wife – and she had disappeared! I will admit that I gave up looking after trying every way I knew to find her.

It is only recently I have managed to trace her here to

Portland.

But your mother; what of her?

ZULEIKA

My mother believed in my father's promises. She loved him faithfully and tenderly and never doubted his honor. But when my father disappeared, she had nothing. She waited faithfully for eighteen months, and then took me west. When we got to Virginia City, Mother found work in a local hotel. But my mother was neither maiden, wife nor widow, according to the law, and I was considered illegitimate.

In her shame, General, my mother gave up her married name, and never told me what it was. I learned only yesterday that that name was Vale.

General, you are my father.

(Vale falls to his knees, overcome.)

VALE

My daughter! My child! I have a daughter!

(He rises and tries to embrace ZULEIKA, but she turns away from him.)

Is it possible for me to repent?

ZULEIKA

Repentance is always possible, General Vale.

(End of Scene)

ACT 11

Scene 7

SETTING: ZULKEIKA's house, a short time later.

AT RISE: MOTHER sits in her chair with a cup of tea.
LIZETTE tends to her, primping, fixing hair.
ZULEIKA has removed her wig, but still wears
Bridget's dress.

MOTHER

Zulie, do you think I'm doing right?

ZULEIKA

Yes, Mother, I do. I have told you General Vale's story just
as he told it to me. I see no reason to doubt him. He seems
an honorable man.

MOTHER

I'd thought he was honorable. I'd believed that.

ZULEIKA

Then, Mother, at least listen to what he has to say.

MOTHER

Lizette, do I look all right?

LIZETTE

Aye, Mum. You're a pretty picture for sure.

MOTHER

All right, then. Bring him in.

(LIZETTE stands protectively by MOTHER while ZULEIKA exits
and returns with VALE. He approaches MOTHER slowly as LIZETTE
exits.)

VALE

Hello, Bertha—

MOTHER

Is it you, Dudley?

VALE

It is. Older, sadder, wiser, but it is indeed Dudley Vale.

(Beat)

Bertha, I have crossed the country looking for you, and At
last I have found you. And I have been doubly rewarded by

discovering I have a lovely daughter.

(He gets on one knee.)

This is no time for idle talk. I trust Zuleika has given you a true account of my life since I last saw you, and she has brought me into the light, helped me understand at least part of what you have endured, struggling to make a living while raising and educating her so well. Bertha, Zuleika: I would beg your forgiveness, and I would ask for the opportunity to redeem myself.

MOTHER

In what way?

VALE

By being allowed into your lives. By offering to ease whatever financial burdens you may be under. And Bertha, if you will have me back, by offering to renew our vows as husband and wife.

MOTHER

Stand up, Dudley.

This is all very sudden, and perhaps premature.

ZULEIKA

General Vale, I must speak. Look at my mother! Look at me! Think of yourself, sir! Think of the harrowing experiences that must be endured by women in our situations.

VALE

I wonder that you do not despise and spurn me, Bertha. I am the veriest miscreant alive.

MOTHER

Oh, most likely you are, Dudley. But to err is human; to forgive, divine. I promise I shall never bring this painful subject up again, nor will Zuleika, if you refrain from opposing the great principle of equality and justice for women upon which she has set her heart.

VALE

God bless her!

MOTHER

(Softly) God bless her!

Oh, and one more thing.

VALE

What is it?

MOTHER

Should I consent to return to you, I must bring Lizette, and you must agree to pay for her education, so that she will be able to become something more than my caretaker, and she will be able to do it on her own.

VALE

Done!

Now, Bertha, talk to me about yourself. Let me get to know you again.

(Before she can begin, ZULEIKA enters with DUNSON, who is confused at the scene he sees.)

MOTHER

Oh, Lord! David Dunson!

DUNSON

(To MOTHER.) Hello, Miss Shannon.

ZULEIKA

No David, it's not Miss Shannon. It's Mrs. Vale. Allow me to present my father, General Dudley Vale. General Vale, Judge David Dunson.

(They shake hands, both now confused.)

DUNSON

Zuleika—why are you wearing Bridget O'Cannaly's dress?

ZULEIKA

(In Bridget's voice.)

Well because, Mister Dunson, I surely promised poor Dora I'd look out for the wee ones, now didn't I?

(As Zuleika now.)

And I needed a way to keep an eye on you, David. I knew I couldn't do it as myself, so I put on a character. I became Bridget.

DUNSON

Keep an eye on me?

ZULEIKA

Yes, I learned the secret of Davy's death early on, and I knew that you were being blackmailed by Dr. McClurge.

VALE

McClurge! That scoundrel!

ZULEIKA

I'll confess to you, David, that I was testing you. I was testing your character.

DUNSON

Oh Zuleika. I am afraid you have seen me at my worst.

ZULEIKA

No, not recently. The day you left me -- *That* was your worst.

MOTHER

Amen!

(DUNSON hangs his head.)

ZULEIKA

David, I asked you before: Why did you leave me? You never said a word, never explained. *Why?*

DUNSON

Zuleika, we were so young! I was ambitious. I had high hopes, lofty goals. I was going to become a lawyer in Virginia City, perhaps a judge, and I would mingle in the highest levels of society.

But you—I am ashamed to say it and I have regretted all my life I ever thought it—I loved you. But I heard people talk. About you. About your family. About you being *illegitimate*.

Zuleika, I have been an awful fool. Through my own selfish nature, I have lost a wife and son, and I have lost you too.

I love you still, Zulie, and I ask your pardon and forgiveness for the hurt I brought you so many years ago.

ZULEIKA

Be honest with yourself, David. You are here to turn your sick heart wrong side out so that the source of your sin may be discovered and cauterized. God has made me your judge and jury.

DUNSON

(Bitterly) And executioner.

Zuleika, tell me the honest truth.

(He takes her hands.)

ZULEIKA

What would you have me tell you, David?

DUNSON

This, only this, Zuleika – that you love me!

ZULEIKA

I do love.

DUNSON

And will you allow me the opportunity to prove myself worthy of your love?

ZULEIKA

You have shown me, David, that deep inside you are still the good man I loved those many years ago. I will allow this. But David – I will not be ruled by you. If this is to succeed, we must be partners.

(Music up.)

DUNSON

Partners!

ZULEIKA

Equals.

DUNSON

Equals!

MOTHER

ZULEIKA

SUDDENLY, WE'VE SEEN A CORNER TURNED.
 SUDDENLY, THERE'S BEEN A LESSON LEARNED.
 HOPEFULLY, THE PAST'S A BRIDGE WE'VE BURNED.
 A BRIDGE OF INEQUALITY.
 THE OLD IDEAS THAT USE TO BE ARE GONE.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY,
 OUR GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN WILL SAY
 WE STAYED THE COURSE AND FIRMLY STOOD OUR GROUND.
 EVEN WHEN PROGRESS IS SLOW,
 IN TIME IMPROVEMENT WILL SHOW.
 WE'LL FIND A WAY TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS SOMEHOW.
 WE'LL SHAPE THE WORLD ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.

(The Cast filters onto the stage.)

DUNSON

SUDDENLY, I'VE TURNED A WHOLE NEW LEAF.
SUDDENLY, I'M FEELING JOY, NOT GRIEF.
THANKFULLY, THE TRUTH HAS BROUGHT RELIEF.
RELIEF TO MEND MY WRETCHED WAY.
MY SELFISH LIFE OF YESTERDAY IS DONE.

CHORUS

ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY,
OUR GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN WILL SAY
WE STAYED THE COURSE AND FIRMLY STOOD OUR GROUND.
EVEN IF PROGRESS IS SLOW,
IN TIME IMPROVEMENT WILL SHOW.
WE'LL FIND A WAY TO CHANGE THEIR MINDS SOMEHOW.
WE'LL SHAPE THE WORLD ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM NOW.

FINALLY, WE'VE UNIFIED OUR VOICES.
FINALLY, WE STATE OUR CASE AS ONE.
TRUTHFULLY, WE HAD NO OTHER CHOICES.
THE BATTLE MAY BE OVER.
THE BATTLE MAY BE OVER,
BUT THE FIGHT HAS JUST BEGUN.

ONE HUNDRED YEARS FROM TODAY,
OUR GREAT-GRANDCHILDREN WILL SAY
WE STAYED THE COURSE AND FIRMLY STOOD OUR GROUND.

(End of scene)

(End of ACT II)