

CD 1

1 PROLOGUE

The Narrator appears in front of a drop curtain.

It is a curious story.
I have it written in faded ink — a woman's
hand, governess to two children — long ago.

Untried, innocent, she had gone first to see
their guardian in London; a young man, bold,
offhand and gay, the children's only relative.

The children were in the country with an old
housekeeper. There had been a governess, but
she had gone. The boy, of course, was at
school, but there was the girl, and the
holidays, now begun.

This then would be her task.

But there was one condition: he was so
much engaged; affairs, travel, friends, visits,
always something, no time at all for the poor
little things. She was to do everything, be
responsible for everything, not to worry him at
all — no, not to write, but to be silent, and do
her best.

She was full of doubts.

But she was carried away: that he, so gallant
and handsome, so deep in the busy world,
should need her help.

At last
"I will," she said.

*(The lights fade and the drop curtain rises
in darkness.)*

ACT ONE

2 Interlude: Theme

Scene 1: The Journey

*The lights go up on the interior of a coach.
The Governess is in travelling dress.*

Governess

Nearly there.
Very soon I shall know,

I shall know what's in store for me.
Who will greet me? The children...
the children.

Will they be clever? Will they like me?
Poor babies, no father, no mother.
But I shall love them as I love my own,
all my dear ones left at home,
so far away... and so different.
If things go wrong, what shall I do?
Who can I ask, with none of my kind
to talk to?

Only the old housekeeper, how will she
welcome me? I must not write to their
guardian, that is the hardest part of all.
Whatever happens, it is I, I must decide.
A strange world for a stranger's sake.
Oh why did I come?

No! I've said I will do it, and for him I will.
There is nothing to fear. What could
go wrong?
Be brave, be brave. We're nearly there.
Very soon I shall know. Very soon I shall know.

(The lights fade.)

3 Interlude: Variation I

Scene 2: The Welcome

*The lights fade in on the porch at Bly. Mrs
Grose, with the children dancing about.*

Miles, Flora

Mrs Grose! Mrs Grose! Will she be nice?
Mrs Grose! Will she be cross?
Why doesn't she hurry? Why isn't she here?
Will she like us? Shall we like her?

Mrs Grose

Quiet, children!
Lord! How you do tease!
Will she be this, will she be that,
a dozen times I do declare.
You'll see soon enough. Now quietly, do!
Miss Flora, your pinafore!
*(She gives Flora a little good-natured tidying
shake and pats Miles's hair into place,
smooths down her own apron.)*
Master Miles, your hair!
Keep still dearie, or you'll wear me out!
Now show me how you bow.

(Miles bows.)

How do you curtsy? Bow! Curtsey!

(Flora curtseys, and they continue bowing and curtseying until Mrs Grose stops them.)

Here she is now.

(Enter Governess.)

Governess

You must be Mrs Grose? I'm so happy to see you...
so happy to be here.

Mrs Grose *(curtseying)*

How do you do, Miss. Welcome to Bly!

Governess

This must be Flora? And Miles?

(Flora curtseys, Miles bows.)

Governess

How charming they are, how beautiful too.
The house and park are so splendid,
far grander than I am used to.
I shall feel like a princess here.
Bly, I begin to love you.

Mrs Grose

I'm happy, so happy that you've come, Miss.
Miss Flora and Master Miles are happy,
so happy that you're here too.
They're good children,
yes, they are, they're good, Miss.
But they're lively,
too lively for an ignorant old woman.
They wear me out, indeed they do.
My poor head isn't bright enough.
The things that they think up!
I'm far too old a body for games, Miss,
far too old, and now they'll do better with a
young thing as lively as they are themselves.
Master Miles is wonderful at lessons,
and Miss Flora's sharp too.
Yes, they're clever... they need their own kind,
they're far too clever for me!
They'll do better now,
they'll do better with a young thing.

(Pardon the liberty, Miss.)

They'll do better now you're here!

Miles, Flora

Come along! Come along, do!
We want to show you the house.
We want to show you the park.
Don't stay talking here any more!

Mrs Grose

Quiet, children! Lord, how you do tease.
In a trice they'll be dragging you all over
the park.

Governess

No, they must show me everything!
For Bly is now my home.

(The scene fades as the children lead the Governess off.)

4 Interlude: Variation II

Scene 3: The Letter

The lights fade in again on the porch at Bly, to the side of which more of the house is now visible, including a low window.

Mrs Grose enters.

Mrs Grose

Miss! Miss! A letter for you.

(The Governess enters from the house.)

Here!

(She hands a letter to the Governess who reads it quietly.)

(aside)

A good young lady, I'll be bound,
and a pretty one too.
Now all will be well, we were far too long
alone!

Governess

Mrs Grose! He's dismissed his school.

Mrs Grose

Who?

Governess

Little Miles.

Mrs Grose

Miles!

Governess

What can it mean, never go back?

Mrs Grose

Never?

Governess

Never! Oh, but for that he must be bad!

Mrs Grose

Him bad?

Governess

An injury to his friends.

Mrs Grose

Him an injury? I won't believe it!

Governess

Tell me, Mrs Grose, have you known Miles to be bad?

Mrs Grose

A boy is no boy for me who's never wild. But bad, no, no!

Governess

I cannot think him really bad, not really bad, not Miles. Never!

Mrs Grose

Never! Not Master Miles. He can be wild, but not bad.

(They look towards the window, where the children are seen playing quietly together.)

Miles, Flora

Lavender's blue, diddle, diddle,
lavender's green,
when I am King, diddle, diddle,
you shall be Queen.

Call up your men, diddle, diddle,
set them to work,
some to the plough, diddle, diddle,
some to the cart.

Some to make hay, diddle, diddle,
some to cut corn,
while you and I, diddle, diddle...

Governess, Mrs Grose

See how sweetly he plays,
and with how gentle a look
he turns to his sister.

Yes! The child is an angel!

It is nonsense, never a word of truth.
It is all a wicked lie.

(The window fades, and the children disappear.)

Mrs Grose

What shall you do then?

Governess

I shall do nothing.

Mrs Grose

And what shall you say to him?

Governess

I shall say nothing.

Mrs Grose

Bravo! And I'll stand by you.
Oh, Miss, may I take the liberty?
(Mrs Grose kisses her.)

(The scene fades.)

5 Interlude: Variation III**Scene 4: The Tower**

The lights fade in again on the house. The tower is now visible. Evening, sweet summer. Enter Governess, strolling.

Governess

How beautiful it is. Each day it seems more beautiful to me.

And my darling children enchant me more and more.

My first foolish fears are all vanished now,
are all banished now.

Those fluttering fears
when I could not forget the letter.
When I heard a far off cry in the night,
and once a faint footstep passed my door.

Only one thing I wish,
that I could see him
and that he could see how well I do his bidding.
The birds fly home to these great trees,
I too am at home.
Alone, tranquil, serene.

(Quint becomes visible on the tower.)

Ha! 'Tis he!

(He looks steadily at her, then turns and vanishes.)

No! No! Who is it? Who?
 Who can it be?
 Some servant — no! I know them all.
 Who is it, who?
 Who can it be?
 Some curious stranger? But how could he
 get in?
 Who is it, who?
 Some fearful madman locked away there?
 Adventurer? Intruder?
 Who is it, who?
 Who can it be? Who?

(The scene fades.)

6 Interlude: Variation IV

Scene 5: The Window

The lights fade in on the interior of the hall at Bly, with window. Flora and Miles ride in on a hobby-horse.

Miles, Flora

Tom, Tom, the piper's son
 Stole a pig and away he run.
 Pig was eat and Tom was beat,
 Tom ran howling down the street.

Miles

Now I'll steal the pig, I'll steal the pig!

Flora

Go on then, go on!

Miles, Flora

Tom, Tom, the piper's son!
 Stole a pig and away he run.

Miles

Now chase me, chase me!

Flora

I'll catch you! I'll catch you!

Miles, Flora

Pig was eat, and Tom was beat,
 Tom ran howling down the street.

Flora

Let's do it again! Let's do it again!

Governess *(off)*

Children! Are you ready? Run along then.

Miles, Flora

Tom, Tom, the piper's son.
(They ride off as the Governess enters.)

Governess

I'll follow.

Miles, Flora *(off)*

Stole a pig and away he run, etc.

(The Governess looks about for a moment, picks up a pair of gloves, and is about to go out when she looks up and sees Quint appear suddenly in the window. They gaze at each other. He disappears. The Governess runs out and looks through the window as he had done. Mrs Grose enters as the Governess rushes back into the room.)

Mrs Grose

Ah! My dear! You look so white and queer.
 What's happened?

Governess

I have been frightened.

Mrs Grose

What was it?

Governess

A man looked through the window, a
 strange man.
 But I saw him before, on the tower.

Mrs Grose

No one from the village?

Governess

No.

Mrs Grose

A gentleman then?

Governess

No! Indeed no!

Mrs Grose

What was he like?

Governess

His hair was black, close-curling, a long,
 pale face, small eyes.
 His look was sharp, fixed and strange.
 He was tall, clean-shaven, yes, even
 handsome.

But a horror!

Mrs Grose

Quint! Peter Quint!

Dear God, is there no end to his
dreadful ways?

Governess

Peter Quint, who is that?

Tell me, Mrs Grose!

Do you know him then? Tell me!

Mrs Grose

Dear God! Is there no end?

(She weeps.)

Governess

Mrs Grose, what has happened here, in
this house?

Mrs Grose

Quint, Peter Quint, the Master's valet.

Left here in charge.

It was not for me to say, Miss,

no indeed, I had only to see to the house.

But I saw things elsewhere I did not like.

When Quint was free with everyone,

with little Master Miles!

Governess

Miles!

Mrs Grose

Hours they spent together.

Governess

Miles!

Mrs Grose

Yes, Miss, he made free with her too,
with lovely Miss Jessel, governess to
those pets,

those angels, those innocent babes,

and she a lady, so far above him.

Dear God! Is there no end!

But he had ways to twist them round his little

finger. He liked them pretty, I can tell you,

Miss, and he had his will, morning and night.

Governess

But why did you not tell your master?

Write to him? Send for him to come?

Mrs Grose

I dursn't. He never liked worries.

'Twas not my place.

They were not in my charge.

Quint was too clever.

I feared him, feared what he could do.

No, Mr Quint, I did not like your ways!

And then she went. She couldn't stay,
not then.

She went away to die.

Governess

To die? And Quint?

Mrs Grose

He died too.

Governess

Died?

Mrs Grose

Fell on the icy road, struck his head,

lay there till morning, dead!

Dear God, is there no end to his

dreadful ways?

Governess

I know nothing of these things.

Is this sheltered place the wicked world where
things unspoken of can be?

Mrs Grose

Dear God!

Governess

Only this much I know: things have been done
here that are not good, and have left a taste
behind them.

That man: impudent, spoiled, depraved.

Mrs Grose, I am afraid, not for me, for Miles.

He came to look for Miles, I'm sure of that,

and he will come again.

Mrs Grose

I don't understand.

Governess

But I see it now, I must protect the children,

I must guard their quiet,

and their guardian's too.

See what I see, know what I know,

that they may see and know nothing.

Mrs Grose

Lord, Miss! Don't understand a word of what

you say. But I'll stand by you. Lord, Miss,

indeed I will.

(The lights fade.)

7 Interlude: Variation V

Scene 6: The Lesson

The lights fade in on the schoolroom. The Governess is hearing Miles his Latin lesson. Flora is "helping."

Miles (with Flora echoing his words)

Many nouns in *is* we find
to the masculine are assigned:
amnis, axis, caulis, collis,
clunis, crinis, fascis, follis,
fustis, ignis, orbis, ensis,
panis, piscis, postis, mensis,
torris, unguis, and canalis,
vectis, vermis, and natalis,
sanguis, pulvis, cucumis,
lapis, casses, manes, glis...

Flora

... and glis, and mis, and lis, and guis, and nis,
and ris, and tis.

Miles

Many nouns in *is* we find
to the masculine are assigned.

Governess

That's good, Miles, you've learned that well!
Now say for me...

Flora

Shall we stop now? Let's do history!
Boadicea on her chariot! Look at me!
(*She frisks around.*)

Governess

Flora! Don't tease, dear!
We must do Miles's Latin.
Come now! What else do you remember?
Now think.

Miles

Malo... I would rather be
Malo... in an apple tree
Malo... than a naughty boy
Malo... in adversity.

Governess

Why, Miles, what a funny song!
Did I teach you that?

Miles

No, I found it. I like it. Do you?

Malo... Malo... Malo.

(*The scene fades.*)

8 Interlude: Variation VI

Scene 7: The Lake

The lights fade in on the lake in the park. A sunny morning. Flora and the Governess wander in, Flora with a doll, the Governess with a book.

Flora

O Rivers and Seas and Lakes!
Is this lake in my book?

Governess

No dear, it's far too small.

Flora

Small? It's huge.
It's a great wide sea!

Governess

A sea? Then you must name it.
Come Flora, what seas do you know?

Flora

Adriatic and Aegean...

Governess

Yes.

Flora

Baltic, Bosnian and the Caspian...

Governess

Good.

Flora

Black and Red and White and Yellow.

Governess

And.

Flora

Medi-medi-terra-anean.

Governess

Go on!

Flora

And... and... and... the Dead Sea.

Governess

And this one?

Flora

Is the Dead Sea.

Governess

Oh!

Flora

How can a sea be dead?

Governess

They call it dead because nothing can live in it.

Flora

Then I wouldn't go in it, and neither would Miles.

(They settle down, Flora on the ground with her doll, the Governess on a bench with her book.)

Flora

Go to sleep, my dolly dear. Go to sleep.

Governess

Sing to her, dear, dolly must sleep wherever you choose.

Flora

Dolly must sleep wherever I choose.

(She rocks her doll.)

Today by the dead salt sea,
tomorrow her waxen lids may close
on the plains of Muscovy.

And now like a Queen of the East she lies,
with a Turk to guard her bed,
but next, when her short-lived daylight dies,
she's a shepherdess instead.

But sleep, dear dolly, oh sleep, and when
you're lost in your journeying dream
the sea may change to a palace again,
for nothing shall stay the same...

That's right, my darling. How good you are.
Go to sleep.

(During this song Flora has rocked her doll, and put her down. When the song is over she goes on fussing over the doll as she murmurs the last two or three sentences, until Miss Jessel appears on the other side of the lake.)

Flora silently and deliberately turns round to face the audience away from Miss Jessel. Then the Governess, aware of Flora's silence, looks up and sees Miss Jessel, who at once disappears.)

Governess

Flora! Come along!
We must go now, go, and find Miles.

Miles *(shouting, off)*

Hullo! Where are you, you two?

Governess

There he is! Go to him! Go to him!

Miles *(off)*

Hullo!

(Flora runs out.)

Governess

Miss Jessel! It was Miss Jessel!
She returns too, she too, she too.
And Flora saw, I know she saw, and
said nothing.
They are lost! Lost!
I neither save nor shield them.
I keep nothing from them.
Oh, I am useless. What can I do?
It is far worse than I dreamed.
They are lost! Lost!... Lost!...

(The scene fades.)

9 Interlude: Variation VII**Scene 8: At Night****Quint** *(unseen)*

Miles! Miles! Miles! Ah, Miles!

(The lights fade in on the front of the house and the tower. Quint is on the tower, Miles in the garden below him, in his nightgown.)

Miles

I'm here, oh, I'm here!

Quint

I am all things strange and bold,
The riderless horse
Snorting, stamping on the hard sea sand,
The hero-highwayman plundering the land.
I am King Midas with gold in his hand.

Miles

Gold, oh yes, gold!

Quint

I am the smooth world's double face,
Mercury's heels
feathered with mischief and a god's deceit.
The brittle blandishment of counterfeit.
In me secrets, half-formed desires meet.

Miles

Secrets, oh secrets!

Quint

I am the hidden life that stirs
when the candle is out;
upstairs and down, the footsteps barely heard.
The unknown gesture, the soft, persistent word,
the long sighing night of the night-winged bird.

Miles

Bird!

Quint

Miles!

Miles

I'm listening.

Quint

Miles!

Miles

I'm here.

Quint

Miles!

Miss Jessel (*unseen*)

Flora! Flora! Come!

Quint

Miles!

(The lights now come up on Flora at the window and Miss Jessel by the lake.)

Flora

I'm here, oh, I'm here...

Miss Jessel

Come.

Miles

I'm listening, I'm here.

Quint

Miles!

Miss Jessel

Their dreams and ours
can never be one;
they will forsake us.
Oh come to me! Come!

Flora

Tell me, what shall I see there?

Quint (*to Miles*)

What goes on in your head, what questions?
Ask, for I answer all.

Miles

Oh!

Miss Jessel

All those we have wept for together;
beauty forsaken in the beast's demesne,
the little mermaid weeping on the sill,
Gerda and Psyche seeking their loves again,
Pandora, with her dreadful box, as well.

Quint

Ask! Ask! Ask!

Flora

Pandora with her box as well!

Quint (*to Miles*)

What goes on in your dreams? Keep silent!
I know and answer that too.

Miles

Oh!

Miss Jessel

Their knowledge and ours
can never be one;
they will despise us.
Oh come to me, come!

Quint, Miss Jessel

On the paths, in the woods, on the banks,
by the walls, in the long, lush grass,
or the winter leaves, fallen leaves, I wait...
I shall be there.
You must not fail.

Miles

I shall never fail.

Yes! I shall be there.

Flora

Yes, I shall be there.

I shall never fail.

Mrs Grose (*approaching*)

Flora! Are you there?

Governess (*approaching*)

Miles! Where are you?

Quint

Come! Miles!

Miss Jessel

Flora! Come to me!

(After these phrases have been repeated over and over again the Governess appears in the porch, Mrs Grose at the window. Quint and Miss Jessel disappear. The Governess runs to Miles.)

Governess

Mrs Grose! Go to Flora!

Mrs Grose

Why, whatever's going on? Miss Flora out of bed!

Governess

Miles! What are you doing here?

(Mrs Grose takes Flora away.)

Miles

You see, I am bad, I am bad, aren't I?

(Miles goes into the house followed by the Governess as the lights fade.)

CD 2

ACT TWO

1 Interlude: Variation VIII

Scene 1: Colloquy and Soliloquy

The lights fade in on Quint and Miss Jessel — nowhere.

Miss Jessel

Why did you call me from my schoolroom dreams?

Quint

I call? Not !!

You heard the terrible sound of the wild swan's wings.

Miss Jessel

Cruel! Why did you beckon me to your side?

Quint

I beckon? No, not !!

Your beating heart to your own passions lied.

Miss Jessel

Betrayer! Where were you when in the abyss I fell?

Quint

Betrayer? Not !!

I waited for the sound of my own last bell.

Miss Jessel

And now, what do you seek?

Quint

I seek a friend.

Miss Jessel

She is here!

Quint

No! Self-deceiver!

Miss Jessel

Ah! Quint, Quint, do you forget?

Quint

I seek a friend —

obedient to follow where I lead, slick as a juggler's mate to catch my thought, proud, curious, agile, he shall feed my mounting power.

Then to his bright subservience I'll expound the desperate passions of a haunted heart, and in that hour

"The ceremony of innocence is drowned."

Miss Jessel

I too must have a soul to share my woe.

Despised, betrayed, unwanted she must go forever to my joyless spirit bound.

"The ceremony of innocence is drowned."

Quint, Miss Jessel

Day by day the bars we break, break the love that laps them round, cheat the careful watching eyes,

"The ceremony of innocence is drowned"

"The ceremony of innocence is drowned"...

(The lights fade out on Quint and Miss Jessel and fade in on the Governess.)

Governess

Lost in my labyrinth I see no truth,
 only the foggy walls of evil press upon me.
 Lost in my labyrinth I see no truth.
 Oh innocence, you have corrupted me,
 which way shall I turn?
 I know nothing of evil
 yet I fear it, I feel it, worse, imagine it.
 Lost in my labyrinth which way shall I turn?...

(The scene fades.)

2 Interlude: Variation IX**Scene 2: The Bells**

The lights fade in on the churchyard with a table-tomb and indications of a church.

Miles, Flora *(chanting off, approaching)*

Oh sing unto them a new song:
 let the congregation praise him.
 O ye works and days:
 bless ye the Lord.

(They walk in like choirboys.)

O ye rivers and seas and lakes:
 bless ye the Lord.
 O amnis, axis, caulis, collis, clunis,
 crinis, fascis, follis: bless ye the Lord.
 Praise Him and magnify Him for ever.

(The children settle themselves on the tomb as the Governess and Mrs Grose enter.)

Mrs Grose

Oh Miss, a bright morning to be sure.

Governess

Yes.

Miles, Flora

O ye tombstones and trees: praise him.

Mrs Grose

Bright as the Sunday morning bells,
 how I love the sound.

Governess

Yes.

Miles, Flora

O ye bells and towers: praise him.

Mrs Grose

And the dear children, how sweet they are
 together.

Governess

Yes.

Miles, Flora

O ye paths and woods: praise him.
 O ye frosts and fallen leaves: praise him.
 O ye dragons and snakes, worms and
 feathered fowl:
 rejoice in the Lord.

Mrs Grose

Come Miss, don't worry. It will pass I'm sure.
 They're so happy with you. You're so good to
 them.

We all love you, Miss.

Miles, Flora

O Mrs Grose, bless ye the Lord:
 may she never be confounded.

Governess

Dear good Mrs Grose, they are not playing,
 they are talking horrors.

Mrs Grose

Oh! Never!

Governess

Why are they so charming? Why so
 unnaturally good?
 I tell you they are not with us, but with
 the others.

Mrs Grose

With Quint and that woman?

Governess

With Quint and that woman.

Mrs Grose

But what could they do?

Governess

Do! They can destroy them.

Mrs Grose

Miss! You must write to their uncle.

Governess

That this house is poisoned, the children mad,
 or that I am?
 I was charged not to worry him.

Mrs Grose

Yes. He does hate worry.

Governess

I shall never write to him.

Can you not feel them round about you?

They are here, there, everywhere.

And the children are with them,

they are not with us.

Mrs Grose

Come Miss, don't worry. It will pass I'm sure.

They're so happy with you,

you're so good to them.

We all love you so.

Never you mind, we'll be all right, you'll see.

Miles, Flora

O ye paths and woods: bless ye the Lord.

O ye walls and towers: bless ye the Lord.

O ye moon and stars, windows and lakes:

Praise Him and magnify Him for ever and ever.

Mrs Grose

Come Miss! It is time we went in.

Come to church my dear,

it will do you good. Flora! Miles!

Come along dears.

(She collects the children and goes towards the church, but Miles hangs back and turns to the Governess.)

Miles

Do you like the bells? I do.

They're not half finished yet.

Governess

No.

Miles

Then we can talk and you can tell me when

I'm going back to school?

Governess

Are you not happy here?

Miles

I'm growing up, you know. I want my own kind.

Governess

Yes, you're growing up.

Miles

So much I want to do, so much I might do.

Governess

But I trust you, Miles.

Miles

You trust me, my dear, but you think and think... of us, and of the others.

Does my uncle think what you think?

(Miles goes off into the church. The bells reach their climax and then stop. The Governess sits down suddenly on the table-tomb.)

Mrs Grose, Flora, Miles (from the church)

Praise Him and magnify Him for ever!

Governess

It was a challenge!

He knows what I know, and dares me to act.

But who would believe my story? Mrs Grose?

No, she's no good. She has doubts.

I am alone, alone.

I must go away, now, while they are at church;

away from those false little lovely eyes;

away from my fears,

away from those horrors,

away from this poisoned place,

away, away!

(The scene fades as she runs away.)

3 Interlude: Variation X**Scene 3: Miss Jessel**

The light fades in on the schoolroom.

The Governess enters immediately.

Miss Jessel is sitting at the desk.

Governess

She is here! Here, in my own room!

Miss Jessel

Here my tragedy began, here revenge begins.

Governess

Nearer and nearer she comes,

from the lake, from the stair.

Miss Jessel

Ah, here I suffered, here I must find my peace.

Governess

From the stair, from the passage.

Miss Jessel

Peace did I say? Not peace,

but the fierce imparting of my woe.

Governess

From the passage, into the very heart of my kingdom.

Miss Jessel

I shall come closer, closer, and more often.

Governess

There she sheds her ghastly influence. She shall not! She shall not! I won't bear it!

Miss Jessel

So I shall be waiting, waiting, hovering, ready for the child.

(The Governess braces herself to speak directly to her.)

Governess

Why are you here?

Miss Jessel *(rising, oblivious)*

Alas, alas!

Governess

It is mine, mine, the desk.

Miss Jessel

Alas, alas!

Governess

They are mine, mine, the children. I will never abandon them.

Miss Jessel

Alas, alas, I cannot rest.

I am weary and I cannot rest.

Governess

Begone! Begone! You horrible, terrible woman!

Miss Jessel

Alas!

(Miss Jessel disappears. The Governess sinks down in her place.)

Governess

I can't go, I can't...

But I can no longer support it alone.

I must write to him, write to him now.

(She writes. She reads what she has written.)

"Sir, dear sir, my dear sir:

I have not forgotten your charge of silence, but there are things that you must know,

and I must see you, must see and tell you, at once. Forgive me."
That is all.

(The scene fades.)

4 Interlude: Variation XI**Scene 4: The Bedroom**

The lights fade in on Miles's bedroom. He is sitting on the edge of his bed with his shoes and jacket off. He is restless. The room is lit by a candle.

Miles

Malo, Malo, than a naughty boy...
Malo in...

(The Governess is seen approaching the room.)

I say, what are you waiting for?

Governess *(entering)*

Why Miles, not yet in bed?
Not even undressed?

Miles

Oh I've been sitting, sitting and thinking.

Governess

Thinking? Of what were you thinking?

Miles

Of this queer life, the life we've been living.

Governess

What do you mean by that? What life?

Miles

My dear, you know. You're always watching.

Governess

I don't know, Miles, for you've never told me, you've told me nothing, nothing of what happened before I came. I thought till today that you were quite happy.

Miles

I am, I am. I'm always thinking, thinking.

Governess

Miles, I've just written to your guardian.

Miles

What a lot you'll have to tell him.

Governess

So will you, Miles.

(Miles changes his position, but does not answer.)

Miles, dear little Miles,
is there nothing you want to tell me?

(Miles shifts again.)

Quint *(unseen)*

Miles! Are you listening?

Governess

Miles, what happened at school?
What happened here?

(Miles turns away from her.)

Quint *(unseen)*

Miles! I am here.

Governess

Miles, if you knew how I want to help you,
how I want you to help me save you.

Quint *(unseen)*

Miles, I'm waiting, I'm waiting, waiting, Miles.

(Miles shrieks, and the candle goes out.)

Governess

Oh what is it? What is it? Why, the candle's
out!

Miles

'Twas I who blew it, who blew it, dear!

(The scene fades.)

5 Interlude: Variation XII

*During this variation Quint is seen hovering.
He sings.*

Quint

So! She has written.
What has she written?
What has she written?
What has she written?

She has told all she knows.

What does she know?
What does she know?
What does she know?

It is there on the desk,
there on the desk.
Easy to take
easy to take
easy to take!

Scene 5: Quint

(Miles is seen hesitating in his room.)

Quint

Take it!
Take it!
Take it!

*(Miles creeps across the stage and to the
schoolroom desk.)*

Take it! Take it!

*(Miles takes the Governess's letter across to
his bedroom. The lights fade.)*

6 Interlude: Variation XIII**Scene 6: The Piano**

*The lights fade in on the schoolroom. Miles is
sitting at the piano, playing. The Governess
and Mrs Grose are hovering about, listening.
Flora is sitting on the floor, playing at "cat's
cradle."*

Governess, Mrs Grose

Oh what a clever boy;
why, he must have practised very hard.

Mrs Grose

I never knew a little boy so good.

Governess

Ah! yes, there is no mistake,
he is clever, they both are.

Mrs Grose

They've come on wonderfully well with you,
Miss.

Governess

My dear, with such children anything
is possible.

(She takes Mrs Grose aside and whispers.)
I've done it! I've written it! It's ready for the post.

Mrs Grose

That's right, Miss. I'm sure that's right.

Governess *(aloud to Miles)*

Go on, dear, Mrs Grose is enjoying it. We're all enjoying it.

Governess, Mrs Grose

Oh what a clever boy!
I never knew a little boy so good.

(The Governess stays by the piano hanging over Miles. He finishes his first piece and turns the pages for the second.)

Mrs Grose *(walking over to watch Flora)*

And Miss Flora, playing at cat's cradle. There's a nimble-fingered little girl. *(She settles down near Flora.)*

Mrs Grose *(with Flora echoing her words)*

Cradles for cats
are string and air.

If we let go
There's nothing there.
But if we're smart
and nimble and clever
Pussy-cat's cradle will
go on for ever.

(During this conversation Miles begins showing off at the piano.)

Flora

Mrs Grose, are you tired?

Mrs Grose

Well, my head do keep nodding...
It's this warm room.

Flora

Shut your eyes then and you shall have a cradle,
a cradle, Mrs Grose's cradle.

Governess *(softly)*

Ah, Miles! Miles!

Mrs Grose

And Master Miles's playing.

Flora

Go to sleep! Go to sleep!

(She slips away unnoticed.)

Governess *(softly)*

Ah, Miles! Miles!

(Suddenly she stops him.)

Flora! Flora! Mrs Grose! Wake up!

She is gone.

Mrs Grose

What? Who, Miss?

Governess

Flora's gone, gone out to her.

Come, we must go and find her!

Mrs Grose

Lord, Miss! But you'll leave the boy?

Governess

Oh I don't mind that now, he's with Quint!
He's found the most divine little way to keep me quiet while she went.
Come! Come!

(They rush off as Miles goes on playing triumphantly and the scene slowly fades.)

7 Interlude: Variation XIV

Scene 7: Flora

The scene fades in on Flora by the lake, watching.

Mrs Grose *(off)*

Flora!

Governess *(off)*

Flora!

Mrs Grose, Governess *(off)*

Flora!

(They rush on and see the girl by the lake.)

Mrs Grose

There she is!

(She runs over to Flora.)

Fancy running off like that,
and such a long way, too,
without your hat and coat.

You are a naughty girl,
whatever made you leave us all?

(The Governess slowly walks over to them.)

Governess

And where, my pet, is Miss Jessel?

(Miss Jessel appears on the other side of the lake.)

Governess

Ah! She is there!

Look! She is there!

(pointing)

Look, you little unhappy thing!

Look! Mrs Grose! She is there!

Miss Jessel

Flora! Flora!

Do not fail me!

Mrs Grose

Indeed, Miss, there's nothing there.

Governess

Only look, dearest woman, don't you see!

Now! Now!

Miss Jessel

Nothing shall they know.

Mrs Grose (to Flora)

She isn't there, little lady, nobody is there.

Governess

But look!

Flora

I can't see anybody, can't see anything,

nobody, nothing, nobody, nothing;

I don't know what you mean.

Mrs Grose

There's nobody there.

Miss Jessel

We know all things, they know nothing.

Don't betray me. Silence! Silence!

Mrs Grose

She isn't there.

Why, poor Miss Jessel's dead and buried,

we know that, love.

It's all a mistake.

Flora

You're cruel, horrible, hateful, nasty.

Why did you come here?

I don't know what you mean.

Take me away! Take me away!

I don't like her!

(pointing at the Governess)

I hate her!

Governess

Me!

Mrs Grose

Yes, it's all a mistake,

and we'll get home as fast as we can.

There, there, dearie,

we'll get home as fast as we can.

Governess

Yes! Go! Go! Go!

Miss Jessel

Ah! Flora, Flora,

do not fail me.

Flora!

Flora

I can't see anybody, can't see anything,

nobody, nothing.

I don't know what she means.

Cruel, horrible, hateful, nasty,

we don't want you! We don't want you!

Take me away, take me away from her!

Hateful, cruel, nasty, horrible.

(Flora and Mrs Grose go off, the Governess watches them go, and Miss Jessel slowly disappears.)

Governess

Ah, my friend, you have forsaken me!

At last you have forsaken me.

Flora, I have lost you.

She has taught you how to hate me.

Am I then horrible?

No! No! But I have failed,

most miserably failed,

and there is no more innocence in me.

And now she hates me!

Hates me! Hates me!

(The scene fades.)

8 Interlude: Variation XV**Scene 8: Miles**

The house and grounds. As the lights fade in, Mrs Grose and Flora appear in the porch, dressed for travelling. Flora has her doll and a little bag. The Governess walks towards them; Flora deliberately turns her back. Mrs Grose comes to meet her.

Governess

Mrs Grose.

Mrs Grose

Oh Miss, you were quite right,
I must take her away.

Such a night as I have spent...
(She cries.)

No, don't ask me.

What that child has poured out in her dreams,
things I never knew nor hope to know,
nor dare remember.

Governess

My dear, I thought I had lost you,
thought you couldn't believe me, my dear.

Mrs Grose

I must take her away.

Governess

Yes, go to their uncle.

He knows now that all is not well,
he has had my letter.

Mrs Grose

My dear, your letter never went,
it wasn't where you put it.

Governess

Miles?

Mrs Grose

Miles must have taken it.

Governess

All the same, go, and I shall stay
and face what I have to face with the boy.

*(Mrs Grose goes quickly to Flora and takes
her off.)*

Oh Miles, I cannot bear to lose you!
You shall be mine, and I shall save you.

(Miles saunters on.)

Miles

So, my dear, we are alone.

Governess

Are we alone?

Miles

Oh, I'm afraid so.

Governess

Do you mind?

Do you mind being left alone?

Miles

Do you?

Governess

Dearest Miles, I love to be with you.

What else should I stay for?

Miles

So, my dear, for me you stay?

Governess

I stay as your friend, I stay as your friend.

Miles, there is nothing I would not do for you,
remember.

Miles

Yes, yes.

If I'll do something now for you.

Governess

To tell me what it is then
you have on your mind.

*(Miles looks round desperately, but cannot
see Quint.)*

Quint (unseen)

Miles!

Governess

I still want you to tell me.

Miles

Now?

Governess

Yes, it would be best, you know.

Quint (unseen)

Beware of her!

(Miles looks about again.)

Governess

What is it, Miles?

Do you want to go and play?

Miles

Awfully! I will tell you everything. I will!

Quint (unseen)

No!

Miles

But not now.

Governess

Miles, did you steal my letter?

(Quint appears on the tower.)

Quint

Miles! You're mine! Beware of her!

(The Governess sees Quint and pushes Miles around so that he can't see him.)

Governess

Did you? Did you?

Miles

No. Yes. I took it.

Governess

Why did you take it?

Miles

To see what you said about us.

Quint

Be silent!

(He descends the tower.)

Governess

Miles, dear little Miles, who is it you see?
Who do you wait for, watch for?

Quint

Do not betray our secrets.

Beware, beware of her!

Miles *(desperately)*

I don't know what you mean!

Governess

Who is it, who? Say, for my sake!

Quint

Miles, you are mine.

Miles

Is he there? Is he there?

Governess

Is who there, Miles? Say it! Say it!

Quint

Don't betray us, Miles!

Miles

Nobody! Nothing!

(Quint comes even nearer.)

Governess

Who? Who? Who made you take the letter?

Who do you wait for, watch for?

Only say the name
and he will go for ever, for ever.

Quint

On the paths, in the woods,
remember Quint.

At the window, on the tower,
when the candle is out,
remember Quint.

He leads, he watches, he waits, he waits.

Miles *(shrieking)*

Peter Quint, you devil!

(He runs into the Governess's arms.)

Governess

Ah, Miles, you are saved,
now all will be well.
Together we have destroyed him.

Quint

Ah, Miles, we have failed.

(He slowly disappears.)

Now I must go. Farewell.

(off)

Farewell, Miles, farewell.

Governess

No, what is it? What is it?

Miles, speak to me, speak to me.

Why don't you answer? Miles? Miles?

Ah! Don't leave me now!

(She holds him until at last she realises that he is dead and lays him down on the ground.)

Ah! Miles! "Malo, Malo!

Malo than a naughty boy

Malo in adversity."

What have we done between us?

Malo, Malo, Malo, Malo.

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