

FINAL SCRIPT

THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS

Screen Play  
by  
Orson Welles

OCTOBER 7, 1941

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THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS

FINAL

10/7/41

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Booth Tarkington's

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by

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<d1:cs> §13  
Characters

- </> Eugene
- Isabel
- Lucy
- George
- Fanny
- Jack
- Roger Bronson
- Major Amberson
- </> Narrator </>

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NARRATOR

The magnificence of the Ambersons began in 1873. Their splendor lasted throughout all the years that saw their Midland town spread and darken into a city...

In that town in those days, all the women who wore silk or velvet knew all the other women who wore silk or velvet --

-- and everybody knew everybody else's family horse-and-carriage.

The only public conveyance was the street-car. -- A lady could whistle to it from an upstairs window and the car would halt at once and wait for her while she shut the window, put on her hat and coat, went downstairs, found an umbrella, told the "girl" what to have for dinner and came forth from the house.

Too slow for us nowadays, because the faster we're carried the less time we have to spare. But in those days they had time for everything! --

-- Time for sleigh rides --

FADE IN on a dark screen.

IRIS INTO;  
(1885)

- 1 A house on a period street with a white picket fence. On the sidewalk, two ladies dressed in silk and velvet are passing three ladies dressed in silk and velvet. They greet each other.
  
- 2 A horse-and-carriage enters in the f.g., on right side of the screen, and as it crosses the occupants, dressed in silk and velvet, wave to the ladies on the street -- and the ladies wave back to the occupants. The moment the carriage leaves the frame:
  
- 3 A mule appears on opposite side of the frame, drawing the streetcar. An upper window of the house opens -- a lady whistles, shuts the window and disappears as the driver pulls the mule to a stop. The passengers wait patiently -- smoke, stroll around the car, chat or read their papers. The lady comes out of the house -- a hat, cloak, umbrella and pocketbook added to her costume. She gets on the car, the passengers resume their seats, and the driver slaps the reins on the mule's back.
  
- 4 The streetcar starts with a jolt and jumps off the track. All the passengers get off and push it back on. This time it stays on. The moment it leaves the left side of the frame, DISSOLVE TO:
  
- 5 The same house -- winter -- a moon. The house and street are covered with snow. A horse-drawn sleigh, filled with gay couples, rides through the f.g. -- and as it leaves the screen, DISSOLVE TO:

NARRATOR (cont'd)

-- and balls, and Assemblies, and cotillions, and open house on New Years -- and all day picnics in the woods --

-- and even that prettiest of all vanished customs -- the serenade. -- Of a summer night, young men would bring an orchestra under a pretty girl's window --

-- and flute, harp, fiddle, 'cello, cornet and bass viol would presently release their melodies to the dulcet stars.

During the earlier years of this period, while bangs and bustles were having their way with women --

-- there were seen men of all ages to whom a hat meant only that rigid, tall silk thing known to impudence as a "stove-pipe" --

-- In town and country these men would wear no other hat, and without self-consciousness, they went rowing in such hats. --

6 The house again -- summer -- night -- a party in progress. Carriages drawn up before the picket fence. All the windows are bright and Japanese lanterns are strung up in the front yard. Gay young couples are strolling on the lawn. DISSOLVE TO:

7 The same house -- night. The house is dark. Eugene Morgan and Jack Amberson, both tipsy, and a group of five or six musicians carrying their instruments, enter and walk by the house. CAMERA PANS with them as they pass a statue of Neptune and come to a lawn. They get set for the serenade, right in close to the camera, Eugene and Jack closest so their faces can be remembered when they again appear in the story.

8 Eugene trips over the bass viol, falls on top of it and collapses, sinking through the top of it as if it were a tub. DISSOLVE TO:

9 CLOSE SHOT of a window on the second floor of the Amberson Mansion. Isabel, looking hurt, closes the window. DISSOLVE TO:

10 CLOSE SHOT of Wilbur Minafer in a stove-pipe hat. DISSOLVE TO:

11 FULL SHOT of Wilbur Minafer rowing with Isabel in a boat. He wears a stove-pipe hat. DISSOLVE TO:

NARRATOR (cont'd)

-- But the long contagion of the "Derby" had arrived; one season the crown of this hat would be a bucket --

-- but next it would be a spoon.

Every house still kept its bootjack --

-- but high-topped boots gave way to shoes and "Congress gaiters"; and these were played through fashions that shaped them now with toes like box-ends and now with toes like the prows of racing shells --

-- Trousers with a crease were considered plebeian; the crease proved that the garment had lain upon a shelf, and hence was "ready-made" --

-- With evening dress a gentleman wore a tan overcoat, so short that his black coat-tails hung visible, five inches below the overcoat --

-- but after a season or two he lengthened his overcoat till it touched his heels --

- 12 CLOSE SHOT of Eugene, in his bedroom, observing himself in a mirror, as he puts on a derby hat with a bucket crown. DISSOLVE TO:
- 13 CLOSE SHOT of Eugene, still at the mirror, putting on a spoon-shaped hat. DISSOLVE TO:
- 14 CLOSE SHOT of Eugene's feet, in front of the mirror. One foot is part way in a high-topped boot -- the other foot is unshod. His hands insert the bootjacks and pull the boot on. As he reaches out of the picture, presumably to get the boot for the other foot, DISSOLVE TO:
- 15 SIMILAR SHOT of Eugene's feet, shoeless. His hand returns with a shoe that has toes like the prow of a racing shell. He starts to put on the shoe. DISSOLVE TO:
- 16 CLOSE SHOT of Eugene's feet with shoes on. As he pulls a pair of trousers up over his legs, CAMERA PANS up and we see him in front of, and facing, a full-length mirror, looking at himself in a pair of uncreased trousers, the last hat we saw him try on, and the shirt of a suit of long underwear. DISSOLVE TO:
- 17 FULL SHOT of Eugene, his back to the mirror, his body facing camera, so that we see what he is inspecting as he looks over his shoulder at the reflection of his back in the mirror; a light-colored overcoat over his full dress, his black coattails hanging five inches below the overcoat. DISSOLVE TO:
- 18 FULL SHOT of Eugene at the mirror, now wearing an overcoat that touches his heels. DISSOLVE

~~1-4~~

NARRATOR (cont'd)

-- and he passed out of his tight trousers into trousers like great bags.

The people were thrifty in that Midland town because they were the sons or grandsons of the "early settlers," who had opened the wilderness with wagons and axes and guns, but with no money at all. The pioneers were thrifty or they would have perished; they had to store away food for the winter, or goods to trade for food, and they often feared they had not stored enough -- they left traces of that fear in their sons and grandsons. In the minds of most of these, indeed, their thrift was next to their religion.

Against so homespun a background the magnificence of the Ambersons was as conspicuous as a funeral.

19 FULL SHOT of Eugene, observing himself in the mirror, dressed for the afternoon in a suit which includes trousers like great bags. He has on a straw hat now, and carries a bamboo stick. Satisfied with what he sees, he starts out of the shot. DISSOLVE TO:

20 Eugene comes out of his house wearing the same outfit as in previous scene. Outside his gate he turns and starts walking up the street.

21 A SERIES OF CUTS of period houses as Eugene walks past them; a lawn where a croquet game is in progress; a blacksmith shop; a schoolhouse; a grocery store or hardware store; more houses -- all evidences of the "homespun background."

26 Eugene walks past a little area of trees. Now CAMERA PANS with him and shows what his destination is -- the magnificent Amberson Mansion, its splendor a severe contrast to the homes Eugene has just passed. Just as the camera starts to take in the Mansion, we hear:

AN OLD CITIZEN'S VOICE

There it is! The Amberson Mansion!  
The pride of the town!

By the time the camera takes in the whole structure, it also includes in a corner of the shot, and close to camera, three men in a carriage, drawn up in front of a street signpost. The old man who has just spoken is lowering his arm from pointing at the Mansion. One middle-aged man is obviously an out-of-towner; the other middle-aged man is his friend, and a citizen of the town; the old man is his father. The out-of-towner is being shown the sights. Eugene pays no attention to them. He continues up the road toward the front door of the Mansion as they talk:

(CONTINUED)

THE MIDDLE-AGED CITIZEN

Sixty thousand dollars for the  
woodwork alone! Yes, sir --  
hot and cold running water  
upstairs and down, and  
stationary washstands in every  
last bedroom in the place!

THE OLD CITIZEN

Well, Sir, I presume the  
President of the United States  
would be tickled to swap the  
White House for the new Amberson  
Mansion, if the Major'd give him  
the chance -- but by the  
Almighty Dollar, you bet your  
sweet life the Major wouldn't!

By this time Eugene has reached the front door of the  
mansion and rung the bell. The door is opening as we  
come to:

27 CLOSE SHOT of Eugene at the door, which is being opened  
by Sam, the colored butler.

EUGENE

(right on  
top of the  
last word  
of the Old  
Man's above  
speech)

Is Miss Amberson at home?

SAM

No, suh, Mis' Mo'gan -- Miss  
Ambuhson's not at home.

Eugene looks at him for a moment.

EUGENE

Thanks, Sam.

He turns and starts away from the door.

REVERSE ANGLE - HOLDING the three men in carriage  
 CUT IN corner of frame. We see the other arm of the  
 signpost which says, "Amberson Boulevard," and in b.g.  
 the little area of trees and the street up which Eugene  
 has come. The men are looking up past camera toward the  
 mansion grounds.

THE MIDDLE-AGED CITIZEN

Look at that brick stable!

THE OLD CITIZEN

New kinds of fancy rigs -- and  
harness! -- Everybody in town  
 can tell when Amberson's are  
 out driving after dark, just by  
 the jingle.

Eugene enters from direction of the mansion.

THE OLD CITIZEN (cont'd)

, 'Lo, Eugene!

Eugene tips his hat and continues down the street away  
 from camera. The men look at him.

THE MIDDLE-AGED CITIZEN

Wonder if she's still mad at him.

THE OUT-OF-TOWNER

Who?

THE OLD CITIZEN

Miss Isabel.

THE MIDDLE-AGED CITIZEN

-- Major Amberson's daughter.

THE OLD CITIZEN

Eugene Morgan's her best beau.  
 Took a bit too much to drink  
 last night and stepped right  
 through the bass viol  
 serenadin' her.

DISSOLVE OUT

THE LITTLE AREA OF TREES AGAIN. Eugene enters again, on his way to the Mansion. He has on a different costume and this time a box of candy under his arm. CAMERA PANS with him to take in the Mansion. There is another group of people at the sign-post -- two couples, citizens of the town, who have obviously been shopping and have met. Eugene does not notice them.

THE FIRST HUSBAND

(choking  
with  
laughter)

-- Old Alex Minafer -- you know how close he is -- Well, seems Miss Isabel Amberson's got some kind of a dog -

THE FIRST WIFE

They call it a Saint Bernard.

THE FIRST HUSBAND

So Fanny Minafer was bound to have one, too. And, by golly, she says the Ambersons bought theirs, and you can't get one without payin' money for it! -- Honest!

Eugene has reached the door, has rung the bell, and now the door is being opened by Sam.

30 CLOSE SHOT of Eugene at the door.

SAM

No, suh, Mis' Ambuhson ain't at home to you, Mist' Mo'gan.

EUGENE

Thanks.  
(turns away)

SAM

Mist' Mo'gan --

EUGENE

Yes?

SAM

Dis time she really is out -- wid Mist' Wilbuh Minafuh -- yest'day dey wuz row-boatin'.

EUGENE

Thanks, Sam.

He starts away.

31 REVERSE ANGLE on the two couples.

THE FIRST HUSBAND

They cost from fifty to a hundred dollars up! Old Alex wanted to know if I ever heard of anybody wantin' to buy a dog before. He saw some sense in payin' somebody a dime, or even a quarter, to drown a dog for you, but to pay out fifty dollars or maybe more -- well, sir, he like to choked himself to death.

At this moment Eugene enters from direction of the Mansion behind the camera.

THE FIRST HUSBAND (cont'd)

'Lo, Eugene.

Eugene tips his hat as he passes, and goes down the street away from camera.

THE SECOND WIFE

Does seem pretty much like squanderin' -- yet, when you see that dog out walkin' with Miss Isabel, he seems worth the money.

THE FIRST WIFE

I haven't seen her since she got back from abroad.

THE FIRST HUSBAND

Well, sir, she's not more'n just about seventeen or maybe eighteen years old -- and I don't know as I know just how to put it -- but she's -- she's kind of a delightful lookin' young lady.

DISSOLVE IN

EXT. ICE CREAM PARLOR - DAY

- 32 A nickelodeon is heard playing inside. Isabel, with a St. Bernard dog on leash, and Wilbur Minafer at her side, is coming out. They encounter Eugene. Eugene tips his hat. Isabel cuts him, Wilbur nods coolly, they cross him out of the scene, leaving Eugene looking after them sadly.

DISSOLVE

INT. TINY BARBER SHOP - DAY

- 33 One man is sitting in the chair being shaved, and a couple of others are sitting on a bench under the racks holding the shaving mugs.

A CITIZEN

(incredulously)  
Wilbur Minafer!

THE BARBER

(dramatically,  
with a razor  
in one hand)  
Yes, sir!

THE CITIZEN BEING SHAVED

(looks up)  
Well, Wilbur may not be any  
Apollo, as it were, but he's a  
steady young businessman.

INT. SEWING ROOM - MRS. FOSTER'S HOME - DAY

- 34 Two matrons, a seamstress, and Mrs. Foster in a corset and the involved underwear of the period.

THE FIRST MATRON

Looks like Isabel's pretty  
sensible -- for such a showy  
girl.

THE SECOND MATRON

Wilbur Minafer! To think of  
her taking him, just because  
a man any woman would like a  
thousand times better was a  
little wild one night at a  
serenade!

MRS. FOSTER

What she minds was his making a clown of himself in her own front yard! Made her think he didn't care much about her. She's probably mistaken, but it's too late for her to think anything else now. The wedding'll be a big Amberson-style thing, raw oysters floating in scooped-out blocks of ice and a band from out-of-town -- And then Wilbur'll take Isabel on the carefulest little wedding trip he can manage, and she'll be a good wife to him, but they'll have the worst spoiled lot of children this town will ever see.

THE FIRST MATRON

How on earth do you make that out, Mrs. Foster?

MRS. FOSTER

She couldn't love Wilbur, could she?

Nobody answers this.

MRS. FOSTER (cont'd)

Well, it'll all go to her children, and she'll ruin 'em!

DISSOLVE OUT

EXT. CHURCH - DAY (1890)

35 The same two matrons and Mrs. Foster are in CLO EUP, in the corner of the frame. In b.g. is the church. As the scene starts, we see the backs of the matrons' heads, for they are watching Isabel, holding a little boy by the arm, walking up the steps of the church. Wilbur and Major Amberson are with her.

THE FIRST MATRON

Looks like Isabel isn't going to have any more children.

MRS. FOSTER

(turning toward the camera)

Yes, I guess there's just going to be the one -- but I'd like to know if he isn't spoiled enough for a whole carload.

DISSOLVE

EXT. A SAND PILE - DAY (1894)

36 A laborer is sieving sand. George, aged 9, gallops his white pony through the pile, enveloping the laborer.

THE LABORER

By golly, I guess you think you own this town!

GEORGE

(turns on his pony)

I will when I grow up. I guess my grandpa owns it now, you bet!

THE LABORER

Aw, pull down your vest!

GEORGE

Don't haf to! Doctor says it ain't healthy! But I tell you what I'll do: I'll pull down my vest if you'll wipe off your chin!

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With that he wheels the pony around, gallops back through the sand pile.

DISSOLVE OUT

. NARRATOR

There were people -- grown people they were -- who expressed themselves longingly: they did hope to live to see the day, they said, when that boy would get his come-upance! Something was bound to take him down, some day, and they only wanted to be there!

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DISSOLVE IN

BE

36a SHOT of Georgie galloping along the street on his pony.

DISSOLVE

EXT. THE REVEREND SMITH'S HOME - DAY (1895)

37 George, aged ten, wearing long curls and a Fauntleroy suit, is approaching at a gallop on his white pony. Elijah, the Reverend's nephew, is sitting on the gatepost.

ELIJAH

(shouts)

Look at the girly curls! Say, bub, where'd you steal your mother's ole sash!

GEORGE

(checking  
his pony)

Your sister stole it for me! She stole it off our clo'es line an' gave it to me.

ELIJAH

(hotly)

You go get your hair cut! Yah! I haven't got any sister!

GEORGE

I know you haven't at home. I mean the one that's in jail.

ELIJAH

I dare ya to git down off'n that pony! ←

As George jumps to the ground, Elijah descends from the gatepost -- inside the gate.

GEORGE

I dare ya outside that gate.

ELIJAH

Yah! I dare ya half way here.  
I dare ya --

George vaults the fence, catches Elijah who has started toward the house for shelter, and starts pummelling him. The Reverend Smith rushes out of his house to intervene. A next door neighbor has also been attracted into her front yard by the noise. After a grotesque tussle -- for George is hard, quick and remarkably tense in such matters -- Reverend Smith separates the fighting boys and shakes George while Elijah dashes into the house.

REVEREND SMITH

Here boy -- Boy! -- That'll be  
enough of that! You little --  
Ow!

GEORGE

(fiercely,  
wrenching  
himself away)  
You stop that, you! I guess  
you don't know who I am!

REVEREND SMITH

(angrily)  
Yes, I do know! And you're  
a disgrace to your mother!

GEORGE

You shut up about my mother!

REVEREND SMITH

(exasperated,  
unable to  
close the  
dialogue  
with dignity)  
She ought to be ashamed.  
A woman that lets a bad boy  
like you --

GEORGE

You pull down your vest, you  
ole billygoat, you! Pull down  
your vest, wipe off your chin,  
-- an' go to --

Isabel is reading a letter to George. Sam, the butler, is standing close by, his hand on the bridle of George's pony.

ISABEL

(reading)  
... "this was heard not only by myself but by my wife and the lady who lives next door -- "

GEORGE

He's an ole liar!

ISABEL

(putting  
down the  
letter)  
Georgie, you mustn't say "liar." Dear, did you say what he says you did?

GEORGE

Which one?

ISABEL

Did you tell him to -- to --

GEORGE

Lissen here, Mama; Grandpa wouldn't wipe his shoe on that ole story teller, would he?

ISABEL

Georgie, you mustn't --

GEORGE

I mean: none of the Ambersons wouldn't have anything to do with him, would they? He doesn't even know you, does he, Mama?

ISABEL

That isn't what we're talking about.

GEORGE

I bet -- I bet if he wanted to see any of us, he'd haf to go 'round to the side door!

ISABEL

No, dear, we --

GEORGE

Yes, we would, Mama! That kind of people, I don't see why you can't say anything you want to, to 'em.

ISABEL

No, Georgie. They were terrible words for you to use, dear. From his letter he doesn't seem a very tactful person, but --

GEORGE

He's just rillraff.

ISABEL

You mustn't say so. And you must promise me never to use those bad words again.

GEORGE

(promptly)  
I promise not to.  
(whispers  
under his  
breath)  
Unless I get mad at somebody!

He runs away.

QUICK DISSOLVE

EXT. DOWNTOWN STREET - AMBERSON BLOCK - DAY (1902)

39

George, aged seventeen, is driving his dogcart at criminal speed down the street, making pedestrians retreat from crossings and behaving as if he owns the earth. A hardware dealer, middle-aged, is forced to jump back on the sidewalk to avoid being run over.

HARDWARE DEALER

(shouts)  
Got 'ny sense! See here, bub,  
does your mother know you're out?

~~(CONTINUED)~~

George, without seeming to look at him, flicks the long lash of his whip dexterously, and a little spurt of dust comes from the man's trousers below the waist. He looks for a missile, then, finding none, yells:

HARDWARE DEALER (cont'd)  
Turn down your pants, you would-be  
dude! Rainin' in dear ole Lunnon!  
Git off the earth!

The dogcart turns a corner and halts in front of the Amberson Block -- an old-fashioned four-story brick warren of offices. George ties his lathered trotter to a telegraph pole, looks at the building critically, goes in and climbs the worn stairs.

INT. FOURTH FLOOR CORRIDOR - AMBERSON BLOCK BLDG. - DAY

- 40 George goes down the dark corridor to a door. Its upper half, of opaque glass, bears no sign to state the business or profession of the occupants within; but overhead, upon the lintel, the letters "F.O.T.A." are smearingly inscribed, and above the lintel there is a drawing of a skull and crossbones. George raps three times; three raps similar to his sound from within. The door is opened by Charlie Johnson, a well-dressed boy of 16. George enters quickly and the door closes behind him.

INT. CLUB ROOM - AMBERSON BLOCK BLDG - DAY

- 41 At one end of the room, beneath a damaged papiermache round shield with two battle-axes and two cross-hilted swords, is a little platform with a table on it. On the platform stands Fred Kinney holding, for a gavel, a Civil War horse-pistol. Facing him are seven boys, of congenial age, seated in a semi-circular row of damaged office chairs.

FRED KINNEY  
(to George)  
Welcome, Friend of the Ace

GEORGE  
Welcome, Friend of the Ace.

THE OTHER BOYS  
Welcome, Friend of the Ace.

FRED KINNEY

(to George)

Take your seat in the secret semicircle. We will now proceed to --

GEORGE

(interrupting,

turning to

Charlie Johnson)

Look here, Charlie Johnson, what's Fred Kinney doing in the president's chair? Didn't you all agree I was to be president just the same, even if I was away at school?

Fred raps loudly for order.

FRED

(sharply)

All Friends of the Ace will take their seats! I'm president of the F.O.T.A. now, George Minafer.

(again hammers

the table)

This meeting will now proceed to --

GEORGE

No it won't. You put down that gavel. It belongs to my grandfather.

FRED

I was legally elected here.

GEORGE

All right. You're president. Now we'll hold another election.

FRED

(shouting)

We will not! We'll have our reg'lar meeting, and then we'll play euchre, a nickel a corner, what we're here for. This meeting will now come to ord --

GEORGE

(to the members)  
Who's the founder of the F.O.T.A., if you please? Who got the janitor to let us have most of this furniture? You suppose you could keep this clubroom a minute if I told my grandfather I didn't want it for a literary club anymore? I'd like to say a word on how you members been acting, too! If that's what you want, you can have it. I was going to have a little celebration down here some night pretty soon, and bring some port wine, like we drink at school in our crowd there. Well, you got a new president now!

He starts toward the door.

GEORGE

(on way to  
door;  
plaintively,  
with disdain  
beneath his  
sorrow)

I guess all I better do is --  
resign!

As he opens the door, Charlie Johnson shouts hastily:

CHARLIE JOHNSON

All in favor of having a new  
election say "Aye!"

ALL THE BOYS

(excepting  
Fred Kinney)

Aye!

Fred Kinney begins a hot protest but it is immediately  
mothered.

GEORGE

(shouts)  
All in favor of me being  
president instead of Fred  
Kinney say "Aye!"

ALL THE BOYS

(excepting,  
of course,  
Fred Kinney)

Aye!

GEORGE

The "Ayes" have it.

FRED(gulping as  
he descends  
from the  
platform)

I resign.

Fred finds his hat and departs, amid jeers. George steps upon the platform and takes up the horse-pistol.

GEORGE

Old red-head Fred'll be around next week. He'll be around boot-lickin' to get us to take him back in again. Well, fellows, I suppose you want to hear from your president. I had a good time at the old school, back East, had a little trouble with the faculty and came home. But my family stood by me as well as I could ask. Now, I don't suppose there's any more business before the meeting. Anybody that's game for a little quarter-limit poker or any limit they say, why I'd like to have 'em sit at the president's card-table.

He officially closes his speech by a pound on the table with the horse-pistol. The members start to re-arrange the semicircle of chairs for the card game.

DISSOLVE OUT

NARRATOR

When Mr. George Amberson Minafer came home for the holidays at Christmastide, in his sophomore year, nothing about him encouraged any hope that he had received his comeuppance. --

-- Cards were out for a ball in his honor, and this pageant of the tenantry was the last of the great, long-remembered dances that "everybody talked about"

42 During the Narrator's first lines, the scene has been DISSOLVING in to a FULL SHOT of the Amberson Mansion. We now see it clearly -- its three floors brilliantly lighted for the gala affair which is in progress. Music is heard from within. Richly-dressed people are arriving in carriages, while crowds of the "uninvited" stand in the snow as close to the mansion entrance as possible, to watch. DISSOLVE TO:

43 CLOSE SHOT at the Mansion door to which a Christmas wreath is fastened. Eugene Morgan, his back to camera, is at the door which is opened by Sam, the butler, now a very old man. All of this is played as the scene is DISSOLVING IN --

GEORGE'S VOICE

(heard the moment  
the door opens)

Remember you very well, indeed.

ISABEL'S VOICE

George, you remember your Uncle John Minafer?

During this, Eugene has started over the threshold and the DISSOLVE is completed.

81

INT. RECEPTION HALL AND STAIRCASE - AMBERSON MANSION -  
NIGHT (1904)

44

REVERSE ANGLE - LONG SHOT - holding the door in far b.g. as Eugene comes through. We see him for only a second, for he is blocked out by people who cross between camera and the door.

The hall and adjoining rooms are embowered in flowers. Music, supplied by a zither, harp, cello and fiddle is heard. (The orchestra is off to one side in a grove of palms.) Guests are talking and laughing above the music.

Major Amberson, Isabel and George, now ages nineteen, are receiving guests. Uncle John Minafer is shaking hands with the Major, who is looking a little askance at the "Sunday suit" of black broadcloth which Uncle John is wearing.

GEORGE

Very well, indeed.

(Note: George's above speech occurs the moment we come to this shot so that there is no pause after Isabel's question on the preceding page.)

Almost on top of George's speech, Uncle John's tremulous, strident voice cuts like the whine of a sawmill over the music and shouting for, being partly deaf, he hears his own voice only faintly -- but he likes to hear it.

UNCLE JOHN

(to the Major)

Now don't you look at me like that, Major! I never have worn an' never will wear a swaller-tail coat.

(turns to George  
and offers his  
hand)

Georgie, you look fine -- ha! ha! -- There wuz a time though durin' your fourth month when you wuz so puny nobody thought you'd live.

George, in a fury of blushes, drops the old man's hand and turns to the next in line -- somebody's spinster aunt.

GEORGE

(fiercely)

'Member you v'ry well 'n deed!

CAMERA PANS a little, HOLDING Uncle John as he walks off into the crowd, his sawmill voice directed at nobody in particular.

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0779028

↳ UNCLE JOHN

Always gotta think o'funerals  
when I smell so many flowers!  
Right here's where the Major's  
wife was laid out at her  
funeral. They had her in a good  
light from that big bow window.  
I s'pose that's where they'll  
put the Major when his time  
comes...

Eugene Morgan enters the scene, and CAMERA PANS back with him as he comes up to Isabel.

Isabel --                   EUGENE

Eugene!                   ISABEL

They look at each other. George regards Eugene sharply. At length Eugene looks at George.

                              EUGENE  
Is this your boy?

George is taking in Eugene's unfashionable hair, his preoccupied tie and his old coat.

                              ISABEL  
George, this is Mr. Morgan --

                              GEORGE  
(cutting in  
before Isabel  
finishes the  
name)  
Remember you very well 'ndeed!

                              EUGENE  
George, you never saw me before  
in your life. But from now on  
you're going to see a lot of  
me -- I hope.

                              ISABEL  
I hope so, too, Eugene.

                              EUGENE  
Where's Wilbur?

(CONTINUED)

ISABEL

You'll find him in the game room with some of the others. He never was much for parties. Remember?

EUGENE

Yes, I remember -- I'll come back for a dance.

ISABEL

Please do.

Eugene turns to the Major and offers his hand.

CAMERA PANS away from George to favor Eugene and the Major, and over their dialogue we hear George's voice as he receives a family group.

EUGENE

(to the Major)

Eugene Morgan, Major Amberson.

ISABEL

Hello, Ruth -- Matt --

MAJOR AMBERSON

Of course, of course. Heard you'd come back to town. Is it true you're going to settle down here?

GEORGE'S VOICE

Remember you v'ry well.

EUGENE

I plan to, Major -- yes.

GEORGE'S VOICE

Remember you v'ry well, indeed --

Eugene sees Jack Amberson close by.

EUGENE

(calls)

Jack!

(to the Major)

Excuse me, Major Amberson.

CAMERA PANS slightly as Eugene and Jack meet and shake hands heartily, then walk away in the crowd.

CAMERS NOW PANS back to George and Isabel. George is shaking hands with Lucy Morgan.

GEORGE  
Remember you v'ry well,  
indeed!

In the middle of his speech his tone suddenly becomes less formal and more gracious. He is visibly affected.

ISABEL  
(laughing)  
George, you don't remember her either, though of course you will. Miss Morgan is from out of town.

Lucy is making a big impression.

ISABEL (cont'd)  
You might take her up to the dancing. I think you've pretty well done your duty here.

GEORGE  
Be delighted.

45 He offers his arm and they move slowly through the crowd to the stairs, passing Jack and Eugene. They start up the stairs.

LUCY  
Who's that?

GEORGE  
I didn't catch his name when my mother presented him to me. You mean that queer-looking duck?

LUCY  
Oh, I wouldn't say that.

GEORGE  
The one with him's my Uncle Jack. Honorable Jack Amberson. I thought everybody knew him.

LUCY  
He looks as though everybody ought to know him.  
(with sly intention)  
It seems to run in your family.

GEORGE  
(not catching  
the  
inference)

Well, of course, I suppose most everybody does, out in this part of the country especially. Besides, Uncle George is in Congress; the family like to have someone there.

INT. STAIRCASE AND THIRD FLOOR - AMBERSON MANSION -

46 George and Lucy continuing up the stairs. <sup>NIGHT (1904)</sup> The music is loud and gay, and the guests are shouting over it. Uncle John is working his way through the crowd, his sawmill voice heard above all others.

UNCLE JOHN  
Solid black walnut every inch of it, balustrades and all. Sixty thousand dollars worth o' carved woodwork in the house! Like water! Spent money like water! Always did! Still do! Like water! Gosh knows where it all comes from!

He sees Fanny close by.

UNCLE JOHN (cont'd)  
Hello, Fanny!

FANNY  
(joining  
him)  
Hello, Uncle John.

By this time they are close to Lucy and George.

FANNY  
(to George)  
Is this Lucy Morgan?

GEORGE  
Miss Morgan -- Miss Minafer.

FANNY  
You must favor your mother, dear. I never knew her.

UNCLE JOHN

Come on, Fanny, the dancin's  
broke out. Hoopla! Le's push  
through an' go see the young  
womenfolks crack their heels!  
Start the circus! Hoopse-  
daisy!

George starts dancing with Lucy as Uncle John sweeps  
Aunt Fanny past them in wild, dervish-like prancings.  
They have just gotten out on the floor when the music  
stops.

GEORGE

Give me the next one and the  
one after that, and give me  
every third one the rest of  
the evening.

LUCY

Are you asking?

GEORGE

What do you mean, "asking"?

LUCY

It sounds as though you were  
just telling me to give you  
all those dances.

GEORGE

Well, I want 'em!

LUCY

What about all the other girls  
it's your duty to dance with?

GEORGE

They'll have to go without.  
(with vehemence)  
Here! I want to know: Are  
you going to give me those --?

LUCY

Good gracious! Yes!

She laughs. Other applicants flock around her, urging  
contracts for what remains, but they can't dislodge  
George from her side, though he makes it quite evident  
that they have managed to annoy him.

Uncle John crosses the picture, with Aunt Fanny.

UNCLE JOHN

D'want any more o' that!  
Jus' sliddin' 'round! Call  
that dancin'? Rather see a  
jig any day in the world!

Wilbur Minafer joins him and relieves Fanny. During this, George has pushed his way out of the cluster of boys, with Lucy.

WILBUR

(to George)  
I'll take Uncle John home.

GEORGE

All right, Father.

Wilbur walks away with Uncle John.

UNCLE JOHN

They ain't very modest, some  
of 'em. I don't mind that,  
though. Not me!

George walks Lucy to the hall.

GEORGE

How'd all those ducks get to  
know you so quick?

LUCY

Oh, I've been here a week.

GEORGE

Looks as if you'd been pretty  
busy! Most of those ducks,  
I don't know what my mother  
wanted to invite 'em here for.

LUCY

Don't you like 'em?

GEORGE

Oh, I used to see something of a few of 'em. I was president of a club we had here, and some of 'em belonged to it, but I don't care much for that sort of thing any more. I really don't see why my mother invited 'em.

LUCY

(mildly)

Maybe she didn't want to offend their fathers and mothers.

GEORGE

I don't think my mother need worry much about offending anybody in this old town.

LUCY

It must be wonderful. It must be wonderful. Mr. Amberson -- Mr. Minafer, I mean.

GEORGE

What must be wonderful?

LUCY

To be so important as that?

GEORGE

(assuringly)

That isn't "important."  
Anybody that really is anybody ought to be able to do about as they like in their own town, I should think.

By this time they are sitting on the stairway, and the music has been playing for a few minutes. They look off toward the dancers.

47

SHOT on dance floor. Fanny and Eugene are dancing, rather gaily. Eugene sees Lucy and waves.

48

Stairway - Lucy and George. Lucy, smiling, returns the wave with a little gesture, but George stares stonily off.

GEORGE

How's that for a bit of freshness.

LUCY

What was?

GEORGE

That queer-looking duck waving his hand at me like that.

LUCY

He meant me.

GEORGE

(not mollified)

Oh, he did? Everybody seems to mean you! You certainly do seem to've been pretty busy this week you've been here!

Lucy presses her bouquet of violets and lilies-of-the-valley to her face and laughs into it, not displeased. A short silence. The music stops and there is loud applause. The music starts again.

GEORGE

See here! Are you engaged to anybody?

LUCY

No.

GEORGE

You seem to know a good many people! Do you live in New York?

LUCY

We've lived all over. Papa used to live here in this town, before I was born.

GEORGE

What do you keep moving around so for? Is he a promoter?

(CONTINUED)

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LUCY

No. He's an inventor.

GEORGE

What's he invented?

LUCY

Just lately, he's been working on a new kind of horseless carriage.

GEORGE

(not unkindly)

Well, I'm sorry for him. Horseless carriages! People aren't going to spend their lives lying on their backs in the road and letting grease drip in their faces.

LUCY

Papa'd be so grateful if he could have your advice.

GEORGE

(flushing)

I don't know that I've done anything to be insulted for!

LUCY

(laughs  
gaily)

You know, I don't mind your being such a lofty person at all. I think it's ever so interesting -- but Papa's a great man!

GEORGE

(deciding  
to be good-  
natured)

Is he? Well, let us hope so. I hope so, I'm sure.

LUCY

(shaking  
her head  
in gentle  
wonder)

I'm just beginning to understand.

GEORGE

Understand what?

LUCY

What it means to be a real Amberson in this town. Papa told me something about it before we came, but I see he didn't say half enough.

GEORGE

(taking this  
for tribute)

Did your father say he knew the family before he left here?

LUCY

I don't think he meant to boast of it. He spoke of it quite calmly.

GEORGE

Girls are usually pretty fresh! They ought to go to a man's college about a year! They'd get taught a few things about freshness!

49 The music stops and there is the customary applause. Eugene, Isabel, Jack and Fanny are coming toward them. Lucy still has the flowers pressed to her face.

GEORGE

Look here! Who sent you those flowers you keep makin' such a fuss over?

LUCY

He did.

GEORGE

Who's "he"?

LUCY

The queer-looking duck.

GEORGE

(laughs  
loudly)

Oh, him? I s'pose he's some old widower! Some old widower!

LUCY  
(becomes serious)  
Yes, he is a widower. I ought to have told you before; he's my father. <S>

GEORGE  
(stops laughing abruptly)  
Well, that's a horse on me. If I'd known he was your father --

Eugene, Isabel, Jack and Panny reach them.

EUGENE  
(to Lucy)  
I'm here to claim my dance but I guess I won't insist on it.

ISABEL  
George, dear, are you enjoying the party?

GEORGE  
Yes, Mother, very much. Will you please excuse us?  
(offering his arm to Lucy)  
Miss Morgan --

They walk away, the older people watching them as they go.

ISABEL  
It's charming, isn't it --

They look at her, not understanding.

ISABEL (cont'd)  
(explaining)  
Those children. -- It's touching. But of course they don't know it's touching.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

Do you know what I think whenever I see these smooth, triumphal young faces? I always think: "Oh, how you're going to catch it."

ISABEL

Jack!

JACK

Oh, yes, Life's got a special walloping for every mother's son of 'em!

ISABEL

(troubled)

Maybe -- maybe some of the mothers can take the walloping for them.

JACK

(with emphasis)

Not any more than she can take on her own face the lines that are bound to come on her son's. I suppose you know that all these young faces have got to get lines on 'em?

ISABEL

(smiling  
wistfully)

Maybe they won't. Maybe times will change, and nobody will have to wear lines.

EUGENE

Times have changed like that for only one person I know.

He laughs as she looks at him inquiringly, showing that she is the "only one person."

JACK

What puts the lines on faces? Age or trouble? We can't say that wisdom does it -- we must be polite to Isabel.

&lt;S&gt; EUGENE

Age puts some, and trouble puts some, and work puts some, but the deepest wrinkles are carved by lack of faith. The serenest brow is the one that believes the most. <S>

&lt;S&gt; ISABEL

(gently)

In what?

EUGENE

In everything.

Again Isabel looks at him inquiringly and again he laughs.

EUGENE (cont'd)

Oh, yes, you do!

ISABEL

(in a tone  
of surprise)

Why, I believe -- I believe I do!

Both men laugh.

JACK

Isabel! There're times when you look exactly fourteen years old!

50 During the preceding dialogue, they have started walking toward a punch bowl, and now they reach it, joining the Major and Wilbur. Jack hands a cup of punch to Isabel and the one to Eugene.

EUGENE

(rejecting it)

No, thanks.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(laughs)

I see you kept your promise, Eugene. Isabel, I remember the last drink Eugene ever had. Well, well, there's another thing that's changed; hardly anybody drinks nowadays. I had a pretty time with you that night, Jack, getting you upstairs. (cont'd)

MAJOR AMBERSON (cont'd)

(laughs again)

Fact is, I believe if Eugene hadn't broken that bass fiddle and given himself away, Isabel never would have taken Wilbur. What do you think, Wilbur?

WILBUR

I shouldn't be surprised. If your notion's right, I'm glad Gene broke the fiddle.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(emptying  
his cup)

What do you say about it, Isabel? By Jove! She's blushing!

ISABEL

(laughing)

Who wouldn't blush!

FANNY

(jovially,  
as George  
and Lucy  
go by)

The important thing is that Wilbur did get her, and not only got her but kept her!

Eugene is as embarrassed as Isabel, but he laughs.

EUGENE

(looking o.s.)

There's another important thing -- that is, for me. It's the only thing that makes me forgive that bass viol for getting in my way.

MAJOR AMBERSON

What is it?

EUGENE

(gently)

Lucy.

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(CONTINUED)

~~50 (CONTINUED)~~

George has retrieved Lucy, and now crosses with her in front of the group at the punch bowl, carrying plates of ice cream and cake.

WILBUR

(as they  
pass)

Do your ears burn, young lady?

George and Lucy continue on their way without stopping, CAMERA PANNING with them. Before Lucy can answer Wilbur, George is speaking:

GEORGE

What did you say your name was?

LUCY

Morgan.

GEORGE

Funny name!

LUCY

Everybody else's name always is.

GEORGE

I didn't mean it was really funny. That's just one of my crowd's bits of horsing at college.

LUCY

Is "Lucy" a funny name, too?

GEORGE

No. Lucy's very much all right!  
(smiles)

LUCY

Thanks about letting my name be Lucy.

Two couples enter from the opposite direction, their hands occupied with plates heaped with food. As George and Lucy pass them, one of the men has to leap out of the way. He spills a little of the food. George and Lucy walk on. The CAMERA HOLDS on the two couples. / < 15 >

~~(CONTINUED)~~

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bb

Look at that! MAN WHO JUMPED  
Look at that  
boy!

(calls after  
George, not  
too loudly)

Sorry, Your Highness!

Eugene and Jack have come up behind them at the end of the man's speech. They pass by, or through them, on their way to the buffet table, the CAMERA PULLING back in front of them.

JACK

(laughing  
a little)

I can't see why Isabel doesn't see the truth about that boy!

EUGENE

What's the matter with him?

JACK

Too much Amberson, I guess, for one thing. And for another, his mother just fell down and worshipped him from the day he was born. I don't have to tell you what Isabel Amberson is, Gene. She's got a touch of the Amberson high stuff about her, but you can't get anybody that ever knew her to deny that she's just about the finest woman in the world.

EUGENE

No, you can't get anybody to deny that.

51

They have come up to the buffet table which is now cut in in the extreme f.g., and busy themselves with putting food on plates during the following action and dialogue. /LS

LS JACK

Well, she thinks he's a little tin god on wheels. She actually sits and worships him! You can hear it in her voice when she speaks to him. You can see it in her eyes when she looks at him. My gosh! What does she see when she looks at him? LS

④15

←s> EUGENE  
 (smiles)  
 She sees something that we  
 don't see. 4/5

←s> JACK  
 What's that? 4/5

EUGENE  
 An angel.

People come up behind them and reach for food. They crane their necks looking over their shoulders down at something on the table.

A MALE GUEST  
 There they are.

A FEMALE GUEST  
 (calls out  
 to someone  
 out of scene)  
 Roger, come over here and look  
 at the olives.

Roger, aged 45, comes into the picture and looks vaguely toward the table.

THE FEMALE GUEST (cont'd)  
 (points  
 triumphantly  
 into camera)  
 You're supposed to eat 'em.

Roger, interested, picks up an olive from beneath the camera and holds it up between thumb and forefinger, examining it. People move into scene around him to inspect the olive.

THE MALE GUEST  
 Green things they are, something  
 like a hard plum. A friend of  
 mine told me they tasted a good  
 deal like a bad hickory nut.  
 (walks away)

ANOTHER  
 I hear you gotta eat nine, and  
 then you get to like them.  
 (walks on)

ANOTHER (ROGER)

Well, I wouldn't eat nine bad  
hickory nuts to get to like  
them.

(walks on)

ANOTHER

Kind of a woman's dish, anyway,  
I suspect.

(walks on)

ANOTHER MALE GUEST

(nudges  
Roger)

Well, I reckon most everybody'll  
be makin' a stagger to worm  
through nine of 'em, now  
Amberson's brought 'em to town.

Roger puts the olive back on the table and goes away with  
the man who nudged him, leaving one man who picks up the  
olive, looks around, and starts to eat it as he leaves.  
Eugene and Jack are alone.

JACK

(looking off)

Look at him -- my nephew --  
Do you see an angel?

EUGENE

No. All I see is a remarkably  
good looking fool-boy with the  
pride of Satan and a set of  
nice new drawing-room manners.

JACK

Then what --

EUGENE

Mothers are right. Mothers  
see the angel in us because  
the angel is there.

JACK

You mean Georgie's mother is  
always right.

EUGENE

(lightly)  
I'm afraid she always has been.

JACK

She was wrong once, old fellow.  
At least, so it seemed to me.

EUGENE

(a little  
awkwardly)

No -- no --

JACK

(laughs,  
relieves  
the slight  
embarrassment  
both are  
feeling)

Wait till you know young  
Georgie a little better.

EUGENE

Jack, if you were a painter,  
you'd paint mothers with angels'  
eyes holding imps in their  
laps. Me, I'll stick to the  
Old Masters and the cherubs.

JACK

(looks at him  
musingly)

Somebody's eyes must have been  
pretty angelic if they've been  
persuading you that Georgie  
Minafer is a cherub!

EUGENE

(heartily)

They are. They're more angelic  
than ever.

The music has stopped.

EUGENE (cont'd)

Good-bye, I've got this dance  
with her.

JACK

With whom?

EUGENE

With Isabel, of course.

The music starts.

JACK  
Eighteen years have passed --  
but have they? Tell me, have  
you danced with poor old Fanny  
too, this evening?

EUGENE  
Twice!

JACK  
My gosh!  
(groans,  
half in  
earnest)  
Old times are starting all  
over again.

EUGENE  
(laughing  
gaily)  
Old times? Not a bit! There  
aren't any old times. When  
times are gone, they're not  
old, they're dead! There aren't  
any times but new times.

CAMERA PANS with Eugene as he leaves Jack. He passes  
behind George and Lucy and continues on his way in the  
b.g. while the CAMERA HOLDS on George and Lucy, PULLING  
BACK ahead of them as they walk.

LUCY  
What are you studying in school?

GEORGE  
College! -- Lots o' useless  
guff!

LUCY  
Then why don't you study some  
useful guff?

GEORGE  
What do you mean: "useful"?

LUCY  
Something you'd use later, in  
your business or profession?

GEORGE  
(impatiently)  
I don't expect to go into any  
"business or profession."

LUCY  
No?

GEORGE  
(emphatically)  
Certainly not!

LUCY  
(mildly)  
Why not?

GEORGE  
(indicating  
the people  
within  
range of  
their vision)  
Just look at 'em. That's a  
fine career for a man, isn't  
it! Lawyers, bankers,  
politicians! What do they get  
out of life, I'd like to know!  
What do they ever know about  
real things? Where do they  
ever get?

LUCY  
(in lowered  
voice with  
deference)  
What do you want to be?

GEORGE  
(promptly)  
A yachtsman.

Lucy looks at him for a moment and then looks away to the  
ballroom.

DISSOLVE & SEGUE

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INT. BALLROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1904)

52

The dance floor, instead of being filled with people, now  
has only three or four dancers. The music is very  
sentimental. Eugene and Fanny are dancing.

DISSOLVE OUT

INT. RECEPTION HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT (1904)

53

Members of the dance orchestra -- their coats on, and instrument cases and hats on the floor beside them -- are standing in the middle of the hall, playing. Eugene and Isabel are dancing. Jack and Panny are watching from one side; George and Lucy from another near the stairway. Obviously the Morgans are the last guests to go, and Eugene has prevailed upon the musicians to play one final waltz.

LUCY

How lovely your mother is!

GEORGE

(gently)

I think she is.

LUCY

She's the gracefulest woman!  
She dances like a girl of  
sixteen.

GEORGE

Most girls of sixteen are bum  
dancers. Anyhow, I wouldn't  
dance with one unless I had  
to... The snow's fine for  
sleighbing; I'll come for you in  
a cutter at ten minutes after  
two.

LUCY

Tomorrow? I can't possibly go.

GEORGE

If you don't, I'm going to sit  
in the cutter in front of the  
gate, and if you try to go out  
with anybody else he's got to  
whip me before he gets you.

The music stops. Eugene and Isabel nod thanks to the musicians who pick up their cases, put their instruments away and leave. During this Eugene gets his overcoat and hat, and Lucy's wrap.

EUGENE

Come on, Lucy.

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(CONTINUED)

Lucy crosses to him. Jack joins George near the stairs, and for a moment they watch the others as they collect near the vestibule door, Eugene helping Lucy into her wrap. George turns to Jack.

GEORGE

See here: just who is this fellow Morgan?

JACK

(laughs)

He's a man with a pretty daughter, Georgie.

GEORGE

(impatiently)

He seems to feel awfully at home here, the way he was dancing with Mother and Aunt Fanny --

During the above, they have started moving slowly toward the door. As they near it, they speak in increasingly hushed voices.

JACK

(laughing)

I'm afraid your Aunt Fanny's heart was stirred by ancient recollections, Georgie.

GEORGE

You mean she used to be silly about him?

JACK

She wasn't considered singular. He was -- he was popular. Do you take this same passionate interest in the parents of every girl you dance with?

GEORGE

Oh, go on! I only wanted to know --

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They are too close to the group to speak any more. There are final good nights. Eugene starts out the door, Jack following. Isabel and Fanny exit.

(CONTINUED)

EUGENE

Don't come out, Jack.

JACK

I want to look at that horseless carriage of yours. If we're going to ride in it tomorrow, I want to see if it's safe.

George holds open the door for Lucy.

GEORGE

If you think I'm not in earnest you're at liberty to make quite a big experiment!

LUCY

(laughs)

I don't think I've often had so large a compliment as that, especially on such short notice -- and yet, I don't think I'll go with you.

GEORGE

You be ready at ten minutes after two.

LUCY

No I won't.

GEORGE

Yes, you will. Ten minutes after two.

LUCY

Yes, I will.

She goes through the door. George closes it.

54 As George turns into the room from the door, he sees Isabel standing in the center of the room, looking a little worried. George crosses to her.

GEORGE

Well, old lady, what's the matter? Isn't everything all right?

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(CONTINUED)

(53)

ISABEL

You're going away so soon!

GEORGE

Well, I'm coming back, don't you suppose? Commencement's only four months away. Is that all that worries you?

ISABEL

(smiles,  
but shakes  
her head)

I can never bear to see you go -- that's the most of it.

They walk to the stairs and start up them, CAMERA FOLLOWING.

ISABEL (cont'd)

And I'm a little bothered about your father, too.

GEORGE

Why?

ISABEL

It seems to me he looks so badly.

GEORGE

(laughs)

He isn't much different from the way he's looked all his life, that I can see.

ISABEL

He's been worrying about some investments he made last year. I think his worry has affected his health.

GEORGE

(demands)

What investments? He isn't going into Morgan's automobile concern, is he?

ISABEL

(smiles)

No. The "automobile concern" is all Eugene's. No -- your father's rolling mills ---

55

Isabel and George enter, coming up stairs. They see Wilbur, in bathrobe and dressing gown, who has come out of his bedroom. Isabel puts a restraining hand on George's arm.

ISABEL

(to Wilbur)

Hello, dear -- have you had trouble sleeping?

GEORGE

(abruptly)

Look here -- how about this man Morgan and his old sewing-machine? Doesn't he want to get Grandfather to put money into it? Isn't that what he's up to?

During George's speech, Fanny has come up the stairs and started for her bedroom. She stops.

FANNY

(sharply)

You little silly! What on earth are you talking about? Eugene Morgan's perfectly able to finance his own inventions these days.

GEORGE

I'll bet he borrows money from Uncle Jack.

ISABEL

(gravely  
perplexed)

Why do you say such a thing, George?

GEORGE

(doggedly)

He just strikes me as that sort of man. Isn't he, Father?

WILBUR

He was a fairly wild young fellow twenty years ago --

(glancing  
at Isabel  
absently)

(cont'd)

WILBUR (cont'd)

He was like you in one thing, Georgie: he spent too much money -- only he didn't have any mother to get money out of a grandfather for him. But I believe he's done fairly well of late years, and I doubt if he needs anybody else's money to back his horseless carriage.

GEORGE

Well, what's he brought the old thing here for then? People that own elephants don't take their elephants around with 'em when they go visiting. What's he got it here for?

WILBUR

I'm sure I don't know. You might ask him.

Wilbur exits into his bedroom.

ISABEL

(to George)  
I'll be in to say good night.

She follows Wilbur, exiting. Fanny starts toward her room, but is stopped by:

GEORGE

(to Fanny)  
Look here!

FANNY

What in the world's the matter with you?

GEORGE

I suppose you don't know why Father doesn't want to go on that horseless carriage trip tomorrow --

FANNY

What do you mean?

GEORGE

You're his only sister, and yet you don't know!

(CONTINUED)

FANNY

He never wants to go anywhere that I ever heard of. What is the matter with you?

GEORGE

He doesn't want to go because he doesn't like this man Morgan.

FANNY

(impatiently)

Good gracious! Eugène Morgan isn't in your father's thoughts at all, one way or the other. Why should he be?

GEORGE

(hesitates)

Well -- it strikes me -- look here, what makes you and -- and everybody -- so excited over him?

FANNY

(jeers)

Excited! Can't people be glad to see an old friend without silly children like you having to make a to-do about it? I've just been suggesting to your mother that she might give a little dinner for them.

GEORGE

For who?

FANNY

For whom, Georgie! For Mr. Morgan and his daughter.

GEORGE

(quickly)

Look here! Don't do that! Mother mustn't do that. It wouldn't look well.

FANNY

(mocking him; sharply)

Wouldn't look well! See here, Georgie Minafer, I suggest that you just march straight on into your room! Sometimes you say things that show you have a pretty mean little mind!

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

(astounded  
by this  
outburst;  
curiously)

Why, what upsets you this way?

FANNY

(sharply;  
her voice  
lowered)

I know what you mean. You're trying to insinuate that I'd get your mother to invite Eugene Morgan here on my account because he's a widower!

GEORGE

(gasps,  
nonplussed)

I'm trying to insinuate that you're setting your cap at him and getting Mother to help you? Is that what you mean?

FANNY

(gives him  
a white-  
hot look)

You attend to your own affairs!

She sweeps out, leaving him alone. George, dumbfounded, looks after her.

GEORGE

Well, I will be shot! I will --  
I certainly will be shot!

INT. A STABLE - NIGHT (1904)

56

A couple of horses in their stalls whinny as Eugene drives his car in. During the ensuing dialogue, he does whatever is necessary to keep the car motor from freezing -- covers the hood with horse-blankets, drains the water from the tank, etc. Lucy watches him in thoughtful silence for a few moments, then:

LUCY

Papa --

EUGENE

Yes, dear --

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Do you think George is terribly arrogant and domineering?

EUGENE

(consolingly)

Oh, he's still only a boy. There's plenty of fine stuff in him -- can't help but be, he's Isabel Amberson's son.

LUCY

You liked her pretty well once, I guess, Papa.

EUGENE

(quietly)

I do still.

LUCY

She's lovely -- lovely! Papa --  
(pause)  
-- I wonder sometimes --

EUGENE

What?

LUCY

I wonder just how she happened to marry Mr. Minafer.

EUGENE

Oh, Wilbur's all right.

LUCY

You know, I wish George wasn't so conceited and bad-tempered -- He -- he's really quite nice. Maybe I shouldn't call him exactly bad-tempered.

EUGENE

Of course not. Only when he's cross about something... You know, Lucy, you need only three things to explain all that's good and bad about George.

LUCY

What?

(CONTINUED)

EUGENE

He's Isabel's only child. He's an Amberson. He's a boy.

LUCY

Well, Mr. Bones, of these three things, which are the good ones and which are the bad ones?

EUGENE

All of them.

INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT (1904)

57

George is seated in a chair, staring moodily off into space. There is a light tap on the door, the door opens and Isabel comes into the room. George bends over and begins to unlace his shoes. Silence. Isabel searches his face with fond puzzlement.

ISABEL

Dear, I wish you'd tell me something --

GEORGE

Yes, old lady?

ISABEL

Why don't you like Eugene?

GEORGE

Eugene Morgan? I like him well enough -- in his place.

ISABEL

(hurriedly)

No dear, I had a feeling tonight that you didn't quite take to him. When you feel as you do about his daughter --

George stops unlacing abruptly and sits up.

GEORGE

How do I feel about his daughter?

Isabel smiles.

GEORGE (cont'd)  
Well, what of it? You've probably got plenty of friends, for instance, that don't care much about your son --

ISABEL  
(protests quickly)  
No, indeed! And if I knew anybody who felt like that, I wouldn't --

GEORGE  
I don't say I don't care about Mr. Morgan -- I don't say I care for him --

Isabel, still searching his face with her troubled gaze, seems not to have heard this last. George rises, goes to her and pats her reassuringly upon the shoulder.

GEORGE (cont'd)  
There, old lady, I won't let him see it! It's all right and you'd better toddle along to bed, because I want to undress.

ISABEL  
(earnestly)  
But, George -- you say you don't dislike him. Why don't you like him? What is it that you don't --

GEORGE  
There, there! It's all right and you toddle along.

ISABEL  
But, George --

GEORGE  
Now, now. I really do want to get into bed. Good night, old lady.

ISABEL  
Good night, dear. But --

57 (CONTINUED)

GEORGE

Good night, old lady. I'll be  
polite enough to him, never  
fear -- if we happen to be  
thrown together. So good night!

ISABEL

But George, dear --

GEORGE

I'm going to bed, old lady; so  
good night.

Isabel kisses him and leaves.

58 Isabel comes out of George's room, closes the door and  
stands there for a moment, thoughtful.

FADE OUT

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EXT. SNOW-COVERED ROAD - DAY (190')

- 59 CLOSEUP of the runner of George's cutter, as it snaps off.
- 60 FULL SHOT of the cutter and horse as the little sleigh upsets and, after dragging Lucy and George several yards, leaves them lying together in a bank of snow.
- 61 FULL SHOT of Eugene's car, a short distance down the road. In the car are Isabel, Fanny and Jack, looking horrified toward the overturned sled. From beneath the car appears Eugene who has been working on it. Eugene starts running toward the sleigh as the others quickly start getting out of the car.
- 62 SHOT at the overturned sleigh. The vigorous horse kicks himself free from the gear and gallops off. George and Lucy look at each other without speaking, flushed and breathing heavily. Suddenly George grabs Lucy and kisses her. She resists, but George prevails. Eugene rushes up and Lucy, catching his eye, pushes George away, terribly embarrassed. Eugene turns, grinning, to Isabel who is running toward them ahead of Jack and Fanny.

EUGENE

They're all right, Isabel!  
This snowbank's a feather bed  
-- nothing the matter with  
them at all.

Isabel comes into the scene.

ISABEL

(gasps)  
Georgie! Georgie!

GEORGE

Don't make a fuss, mother!  
Nothing's the matter. That  
darned, silly horse --

ISABEL

(tears in  
her eyes)  
To see you down underneath --  
dragging -- oh!  
(starts, with  
shaking hands,  
to brush him off)

GEORGE  
 Let me alone. You'll ruin  
 your gloves. You're getting  
 snow all over you, and --

ISABEL  
 No, no! You'll catch cold;  
 you mustn't catch cold!  
 (continues  
 to brush  
 him off)

Jack has brought Lucy's hat. Aunt Fanny acts as lady's  
 maid, and as they all help to restore George and Lucy to  
 their usual appearance, they begin to laugh -- all but  
 George.

GEORGE  
 That darned horse!

JACK  
 Oh, Pendenis'll be home long  
 before we will. All we've got  
 to depend on is Gene Morgan's  
 broken-down chafing-dish yonder.

They are moving toward the car.

EUGENE  
 She'll go.

JACK  
 What!

EUGENE  
 All aboard!

Eugene offers his hand to Isabel. Fanny gets in the  
 rear seat, George helps Lucy climb in beside her, and as  
 he himself starts in after Lucy, Isabel sees that his  
 light patent leather shoes have snow clinging to them.  
 She rushes to him, taking out a lace handkerchief, and  
 begins to wipe the snow off the foot he has placed on the  
 iron step, to mount.

ISABEL  
 You mustn't catch cold!

GEORGE

(furiously  
withdraws  
his foot)  
Stop that!

ISABEL

Then stamp the snow off. You  
mustn't ride with wet feet.

GEORGE

They're not wet! For goodness'  
sake get in! You're standing  
in the snow yourself. Get in!

Isabel turns to Eugene, who is watching her  
apprehensively. He helps her in, climbs in after her.

EUGENE

(in a low  
voice as  
he helps  
her in)  
You're the same Isabel I used  
to know! You're a divinely  
ridiculous woman.

He gets in beside her. Jack has climbed aboard from the  
other side.

ISABEL

(not displeased)  
Am I, Eugene? "Divinely" and  
"ridiculous" just counterbalance  
each other, don't they? Plus  
one and minus one equal nothing;  
so you mean I'm nothing in  
particular?

EUGENE

No, that doesn't seem to be  
precisely what I mean.

He has been tugging at a lever and now, as dismaying  
sounds come from beneath the floor:

EUGENE (cont'd)

There!

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The car plunges forward, then rolls on noisily.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

Look! We're going! It must  
be another accident.

EUGENE

She breathes, she stirs; she  
seems to feel a thrill of life  
along her keel!

EXT. SNOW-COVERED ROAD - DAY (PROCESS) (1904)

63 Group in car. Eugene starts to sing THE MAN WHO BROKE  
THE BANK AT MONTE CARLO. Jack joins him lustily.

FANNY

(to Lucy)

Your father wanted to prove  
his horseless carriage would  
run, even in the snow. It  
really does, too.

LUCY

Of course!

FANNY

It's so interesting! He says  
he's going to have wheels all  
made of rubber and blown up  
with air. I should think  
they'd explode -- but Eugene  
seems very confident. It's  
so like old times to hear him  
talk...

(becomes  
thoughtful)

LUCY

(turning  
to George)

You tried to swing underneath  
me and break the fall for me  
when we went over. I knew you  
were doing that, and -- it was  
nice of you.

GEORGE

Wasn't any fall to speak of --  
(quietly)

How about that kiss?

ISABEL

When we get this far out you can see there's quite a little smoke hanging over town.

JACK

That's because it's growing.

EUGENE

Yes, and as it grows bigger, it seems to get ashamed of itself so it makes that cloud and hides in it. You know, Isabel, I think it used to be nicer.

ISABEL

I know what you mean, Eugene. It's because we were young.

EUGENE

Maybe. -- It always used to be sunshiny, and the air wasn't like the air anywhere else. As I remember it, there always seemed to be gold dust in the air. ☞

Jack turns around to Lucy and George.

JACK

How about it, young folks? Notice any gold dust?

LUCY

(laughs)

I wonder if we really do enjoy it as much as we'll look back and think we did?

JACK

Of course not!

LUCY

I feel as if I must be missing something about it, somehow, because I don't ever seem to be thinking about what's happening at the present moment. I'm always looking forward to something -- thinking about things that will happen when I'm older.

GEORGE

(gently)  
You're a funny girl, but your voice sounds pretty nice when you think and talk along together like that!

Eugene bursts into song again, joined by Jack, and finally Isabel. They are driving by a section of the Amberson Estate.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Look at Minerva!

He points to a statue, a cast-iron sculpture, which has a blackish streak from Minerva's forehead to her nose-tip, and a few more streaks upon the folds of her drapery.

LUCY

That must be from soot. There're so many houses around here.

GEORGE

Somebody ought to see that these statues are kept clean. My grandfather owns a good many of these houses, I guess, for renting. Of course, he sold most of the lots -- but he ought to keep things up better. It's getting all too much built up. He lets these people take too many liberties: they do anything they want to.

Lucy lifts her muff to her face and laughs into it.

GEORGE (cont'd)

What are you laughing at now?

LUCY

Why?

GEORGE

You've got that way of seeming quietly superior to everybody else. I don't believe in that kind of thing.

LUCY

You don't?

GEORGE

(emphatically)

No. Not with me! I think the world's like this: There's a few people that their birth and position, and so on, puts them on the top, and they ought to treat each other entirely as equals.

(his voice  
betrays a  
little  
emotion)

I wouldn't speak like this to everybody.

Lucy laughs again.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I had a notion before I came for you today that we were going to quarrel.

LUCY

No, we won't. It takes two!

She starts to sing with the others.

64 LONG SHOT toward back of car as it rides away from camera. The lusty singing grows fainter. The car climbs a little hill and, as it dips over, out of view,

FADE OUT

FADE IN

(69) 82

EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY (1904)

65 FULL SHOT. A number of funeral carriages, and at least one automobile, are drawn up in the f.g.

DISSOLVE

EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY (1904)

66 CLOSE SHOT at the door to which a crepe is fastened. Eugene is in the f.g. Over his shoulder we see the door open. He starts across the threshold.

INT. HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY (1904)

67 LONG SHOT, HOLDING Eugene coming through the door in the distance. He is blocked from view for a moment by a person, in mourning, who crosses through the scene, close to camera. When we see Eugene again, he is walking across the hall in the background.

CAMERA PANS to HOLD him. Another person enters close to camera; he looks down sadly as he goes by and we see that, in panning, the camera has picked up the edge of a coffin which now forms the bottom of the frame. When the f.g. is clear, we see Eugene has stopped to talk with the Major and Jack, but they are far away and what they say is not heard.

Mrs. Foster, Mrs. Johnson, Uncle John Minafer, Lucy and others pass by the coffin, during which time Eugene comes forward -- seen for short moments when the f.g. is clear.

Eugene walks by the coffin, CAMERA PANS to HOLD on him as he passes Fanny to join Isabel and George by the window. Fanny is in a chair, her face swollen and terribly drawn from excessive weeping, and when Eugene passes her, she looks up at him and turns her head slowly, following him with her eyes.

68 REVERSE - CLOSE SHOT on Fanny. Her back is to camera, but her head is turned toward it as she watches Eugene over her shoulder. The tears, which had been checked before she saw Eugene, now begin to course down her cheeks.

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN

65

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (1904)

69

This is a scene of stone only -- not a tree or shrub in sight. In the background a white marble column, taller than any other in the neighborhood, with the name "AMBERSON" carved on it. In the f.g. a granite block with the name "MINAFER" chiselled upon its one polished side. In the intervening space, headstones marking the graves of Amberson and Minafer families. Close to camera is Wilbur's grave with a new headstone bearing his name and date of birth and death, and heaped high with flower tributes.

DISSOLVE

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (1904)

69a

The same scene. Months later, after a rainfall. The headstones are wet and the graves surrounded by puddles reflecting the sky. Some of the dirt has been washed off of Wilbur's grave, and on it is only a small bouquet.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

474

INSERT

A DIPLOMA which exactly fills the frame. It is a very impressive document, but its message is the usual one to effect: "This is to certify that George Amberson Minafer has completed the requirements of (name of college) and is therefore entitled, etc., etc."

DISSOLVE

INT. KITCHEN - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (RAIN) - (1905)

70

George, in mourning, is seated at the table, eating hungrily. His wet overcoat, hat and an umbrella are near the stove, drying out. A few pieces of luggage nearby. Fanny, also in mourning, enters with more food.

FANNY

Where did Isabel go to?

GEORGE

(his mouth  
full)

She was tired --

FANNY

(absently)

It never was becoming to her to look pale.

GEORGE

What'd you say, Aunt Fanny?

FANNY

Nothing. I suppose your mother's been pretty gay at the Commencement? Going a lot?

GEORGE

How could she? In mourning, of course all she could do was just sit around and look on. That's all Lucy could do either, for that matter.

FANNY

I suppose so. How did Lucy get home?

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(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

(astonished)

Why, on the train with the rest of us.

FANNY

I mean from the station. Did you drive out to their house with her before you came here? <15>

GEORGE

No. She drove home with her father, of course.

FANNY

Oh, I see. So Eugene came to the station to meet you.

GEORGE

To meet us? How could he?

FANNY

(drearily)

I don't know what you mean. I haven't seen him while your mother's been away.

GEORGE

Naturally. He's been East himself.

FANNY

Did you see him?

GEORGE

Well, naturally, since he made the trip home with us!

FANNY

He did? He's been with you all the time?

GEORGE

No; only on the train and the last three days before we left. Uncle Jack got him to come.

Her eyelids droop and she is silent. George rises.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE (cont'd)  
 You're a fine housekeeper, Aunt Fanny. You know just how to make things look dainty and taste good, too. I don't think you'd stay single very long if some of the bachelors and widowers around town could just once see --

FANNY  
 (not listening)  
 It's a little odd.

GEORGE  
 What's odd?

FANNY  
 Your mother's not mentioning that Mr. Morgan had been with you.

GEORGE  
 (carelessly)  
 Didn't think of it, I suppose.

Jack comes in the door behind Fanny. George stops him with a wink.

GEORGE (cont'd)  
 I'll tell you something, in confidence.

<3> FANNY  
 (looks up,  
 startled)  
 What?

GEORGE  
 Well, it struck me that Mr. Morgan was looking pretty absent-minded most of the time; and he certainly is dressing better than he used to.

JACK  
 He isn't dressing better. -- He's dressing up! Fanny, you ought to be a little encouraging when a prize bachelor begins to show by his haberdashery what he wants you to think about him.

GEORGE

Uncle Jack tells me the automobile factory's been doing quite well -- won a race, too! Honestly, Aunt Fanny, I shouldn't be a bit surprised to have him request an interview with me any day and declare that his intentions are honorable, and ask my permission to pay his addresses to you. What had I better tell him?

Fanny bursts into tears.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Oh, Aunt Fanny!

JACK

Fanny, we were only teasing --

FANNY

(lifelessly)

Let me alone.

JACK

Please, Fanny --

GEORGE

We didn't mean anything --

FANNY

Just let me alone.

GEORGE

(distressed)

I didn't know you'd got so sensitive as all that.

Fanny rushes out of the room. A moment's silence. Jack sighs, lights a cigar.

GEORGE (cont'd)

You just can't joke with her about anything any more. It all began when we found out father's business was washed up and he didn't leave anything.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I thought she'd feel better when we turned over father's insurance to her -- gave it to her absolutely without any strings to it. But now --

JACK

(interrupting)

I think maybe we've been teasing her about the wrong things. Fanny hasn't got much in her life. You know, Georgie, just being an aunt isn't really the great career it may sometimes seem to be. I really don't know of anything much Fanny has got except her feeling about Eugene.

George has moved to a window and is looking out.

GEORGE

Holy cats!

He rushes out of the room.

JACK

What's wrong, Georgie?

But George is gone. Jack picks up the umbrella and follows him.

EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - LAWN AND EXCAVATIONS - NIGHT -  
(RAIN) - (1905)

71

The sweep of lawn has been made unsightly by excavations for the cellars of five new houses, each within a few feet of its neighbor. Foundations of brick are already laid; everywhere are mud puddles, and drench piles of brick, stacked lumber, sand heaps, and mortar beds. George rushes in from the house and stops, oblivious of the rain. Jack joins him a moment later, and holds the umbrella over the two of them.

GEORGE

What is this? Looks like excavations! Looks like the foundations for a lot of houses!

(turns to Jack;  
points dramatically  
at the muddy chaos  
about them) /

Just what does Grandfather mean

(crosstalk)

JACK

(gravely)  
My private opinion is he wants to increase his income by building these houses to rent.

GEORGE

Well, can't he increase his income any other way but this?

JACK

It would appear he couldn't -- Your mother said not to tell you till we got home, so as not to spoil Commencement. She was afraid you'd be upset.

GEORGE

Upset! I should think I would be upset! He's in his second childhood. What did you let him do it for?

JACK

Well, I thought, myself, it was a mistake.

GEORGE

I should say so!

JACK

I wanted him to put up an apartment building instead of these houses.

GEORGE

An apartment building! Here?

JACK

Yes, that was my idea.

GEORGE

An apartment house! Oh, my gosh!

JACK

Don't worry! Your grandfather wouldn't listen to me, but he'll wish he had, some day.

GEORGE

Is he getting miserly in his old age?

JACK

Do you think so, Georgie?

GEORGE

I don't mean he's a miser, of course. He's liberal enough with mother and me; but why, on earth, didn't he sell something or other rather than do a thing like this?

JACK

(coolly)

I believe he has sold something or other, from time to time.

GEORGE

Well, in heaven's name, what did he do it for?

JACK

(mildly)

To get money. That's my deduction.

GEORGE

I suppose you're joking -- or trying to!

JACK

(amiably)

That's the best way to look at it.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

~~71~~

EXT. EUGENE'S 1ST FACTORY - DAY - (1905)

Over the entrance is a sign reading: "MORGAN HORSELESS CARRIAGES." Parked in front are Eugene's car and George's runabout. The vehicles are empty.

INT. FACTORY - DAY - (1905)

73

George, Isabel and Fanny are being escorted through Eugene's factory by Lucy and Eugene. The noise of machinery is great and we can tell more by their pantomime than by what we hear that Lucy is going through involved explanations about the machinery in answer to Isabel's eager questions. Eugene looks on and laughs at Lucy's mistakes. Isabel offers everything pleased exclamations. George is bored, and Fanny bleak. They have been slowly walking toward camera from the b.g., pausing occasionally for Lucy's explanation of some special feature.

Now CAMERA PULLS back ahead of them and brings them to a brand new car which is receiving a final checkup from a mechanic or two.

LUCY

(proudly,  
before we  
see the car)

-- And we're now turning out a  
car and a quarter a day.

They come to the car and observe it from all angles. Isabel's face glows with compliments. George's ennui disappears in spite of himself, and he laughs to see Isabel in such good spirits.

GEORGE

(to Isabel)

All this noise and smell seems  
to be good for you. You ought  
to come here every time you get  
the blues.

FANNY

(with a  
wan smile)

Oh, she doesn't get the blues,  
George. I never knew a person  
of a more even disposition.  
I wish I could be like that!

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(CONTINUED)

## ISABEL

No -- What makes me laugh so much at nothing is this place. Wouldn't anybody be delighted to see an old friend take an idea out of the air like that -- an idea most people laughed at him for -- wouldn't any old friend of his be happy to see how he'd made his idea into such a splendid, humming thing as this factory -- It makes us all happy, Eugene!

She stretches her hand out to him. He takes it quickly, giving her a look in which his laughter tries to remain but vanishes before a gratitude threatening to become emotional.

## ISABEL (cont'd)

(turning  
to Fanny)

Give him your hand, Fanny.

Fanny obeys mechanically.

## ISABEL (cont'd)

There! If Brother Jack were here, Eugene would have his three oldest and best friends congratulating him all at once. We know what Brother Jack thinks about it, though. It's just beautiful, Eugene!

## LUCY

(leaning toward  
George; in a  
whisper)

Did you ever see anything so lovely?

## GEORGE

(not  
misunderstanding  
but wishing to  
prolong the  
pleasant  
neighborliness  
of whispering)

As what?

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

As your mother! Think of her  
doing that! She's a darling!  
And Papa --

(imperfectly  
repressing a  
tendency to  
laugh)

-- Papa looks' as if he were  
either going to explode or  
utter loud sobs!

EUGENE

(commanding  
his features  
and resuming  
their customary  
apprehensiveness)

I used to write verse -- if you  
remember --

ISABEL

(gently)

Yes. I remember.

EUGENE

-- I don't recall that I've  
written any for twenty years  
or so. But I'm almost thinking  
I could do it again, to thank  
you for making a factory visit  
into such a kind celebration.

DISSOLVE

EXT. EUGENE'S 1ST FACTORY - DAY - (1905)

74

George and Lucy come out and get into George's runabout.

LUCY

Gracious! Aren't hey  
sentimental!

GEORGE

People that age are always  
sentimental. They get  
sentimental over anything at  
all.

They drive off.

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DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN

EXT. OPEN ROAD - DAY - (PROCESS) - (1905)

75

George and Lucy in the runabout. They hear a siren, and before the sound dies away, Eugene's car, with Isabel and Fanny in it, comes from behind and passes them.

GEORGE  
I'll still take a horse, any day.

He checks Pendennis to a walk.

LUCY  
Oh, don't!

GEORGE  
Why? Do you want him to trot his legs off?

LUCY  
No, but --

GEORGE  
No, but -- what?

LUCY  
I know when you make him walk it's so you can give all your attention to -- to proposing to me again! George, do let Pendennis trot again!

GEORGE  
I won't!

LUCY  
Get up, Pendennis! Trot!  
Go on! Commence!

Pendennis pays no attention and George laughs fondly.

GEORGE  
You are the prettiest thing in this world, Lucy! When are you going to say we're really engaged?

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(CONTINUED)

LUCY  
Oh, not for years! So there's  
the answer.

GEORGE  
Lucy! Dear, what's the matter?  
You look as if you were going  
to cry.  
(plaintively)  
You always do that whenever I  
can get you to talk about  
marrying me.

LUCY  
(murmuring)  
I know it.

GEORGE  
Well why do you?

LUCY  
One reason's because I have a  
feeling that it's never going  
to be.

GEORGE  
Why?

LUCY  
It's just a feeling.

GEORGE  
You haven't any reason or --

LUCY  
It's just a feeling.

GEORGE  
Don't you care enough about  
me to marry me?

LUCY  
(pathetically  
troubled)  
Yes.

GEORGE  
Won't you always care that  
much about me?

LUCY

I'm -- yes -- I'm afraid so, George. I never do change much about anything.

GEORGE

Well, then, why in the world won't you drop the "almost"?

LUCY

(her distress increasing)

Everything is -- everything --

GEORGE

What about "everything"?

LUCY

Everything is so -- so unsettled.

GEORGE

If you aren't the queerest girl! What is "unsettled"?

LUCY

Well, for one thing, you haven't settled on anything to do. At least if you have, you've never spoken of it.

She gives him a quick side glance of hopeful scrutiny; then looks away, not happily. George permits a significant period of silence to elapse before making any response.

GEORGE

(with cold dignity)

Lucy, haven't you perfectly well understood that I don't mean to go into business or adopt a profession?

LUCY

I wasn't quite sure. I really didn't know -- quite. -- But what are you going to do, George?

GEORGE

(with simple  
genuineness)

I expect to live an honorable  
life. I expect to contribute  
my share to charities, and to  
take part in -- in movements.

LUCY

What kind?

GEORGE

Whatever appeals to me.

Silence.

GEORGE (cont'd)

I should like to revert to the  
questions I was asking you, if  
you don't mind.

LUCY

No, George. I think we'd  
better ---

GEORGE

Your father is a businessman --

LUCY

(interrupting  
quickly)

He's a mechanical genius. Of  
course he's both -- and he's  
done all sorts of things.

GEORGE

Very well. I merely wish to  
ask if it's his influence that  
makes you think I ought to "do"  
something?

(his face  
darkening  
with resentment)

It's your father's idea, isn't  
it, that I ought to go into  
business and that you oughtn't  
to be engaged to me until I do?

LUCY

(starting;  
with quick  
denial)

No! I've never once spoken to  
him about it. Never!

GEORGE

But you know without talking to him that it's the way he does feel about it?

LUCY

(nodding  
gravely)

Yes.

GEORGE

(his brow  
growing  
darker still)

Do you think I'd be much of a man if I let any other man dictate to me my own way of life?

LUCY

George! Who's "dictating" your --

GEORGE

I don't believe in the whole world scrubbing dishes and selling potatoes and trying law cases. No, I dare say I don't care for your father's ideals any more than he does for mine! Giddap, Pendennis!

Pendennis quickens eagerly to a trot. They pass the Major's sleazy old buggy going the other way.

INT. MAJOR AMBERSON'S BUGGY - DAY - (PROCESS) - (1905)

76

Major Amberson and Jack are inside.

JACK

He seems to have recovered. Looks in the highest good spirits.

MAJOR AMBERSON

I beg your pardon --

JACK

Your grandson. Last night he seemed inclined to melancholy.

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(CONTINUED)

&lt;S&gt; MAJOR AMBERSON

What about? Not getting  
remorseful about all the money  
he's spent at college, was he?  
I wonder what he thinks I'm  
made of. </S>

JACK

Gold.  
(gently)  
And he's right about that part  
of you, Father.

MAJOR AMBERSON

What part?

JACK

Your heart.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(laughs  
ruefully)

I suppose that may account for  
how heavy it feels, sometimes,  
nowadays. This town seems to  
be rolling right over that old  
heart you mentioned, Jack --  
rolling over it and burying it  
under! When I think of those  
devilish workmen digging up my  
lawn, yelling around my house --

JACK

Never mind, Father. Don't  
think of it. When things are  
a nuisance, it's a good idea  
not to keep remembering 'em.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(murmurs)

I try not to. I try to keep  
remembering that I won't be  
remembering anything very long.

(becomes  
mirthful  
and slaps  
his knee)

Not so very long now, my boy.  
Not so very long now. Not so  
very long!

EXT. VERANDAH - AMBERSON MANSION - EVENING - (1905)

77

George is sitting with Isabel and Fanny on the verandah. He sits on the copingstone of the parapet, his back against the stone pilaster; his attitude not comfortable, but rigid, and his silence not comfortable either, but heavy. However, to the eyes of his mother and his aunt, who occupy wicker chairs at a little distance, he is almost indistinguishable except for the stiff, white shield of his evening frontage.

The five new houses on the lawn have progressed some in construction; one is already completed.

In the street flash the lights of silent bicycles riding by in pairs and trios, striking their bells, the riders' voices calling and laughing. Surreys rumble lightly by, and frequently there is a glitter of whizzing spokes from a runabout or sporting buggy. Interspersed, disrupting the peace of the night, comes an occasional racketing auto -- causing bicycles and people to scatter to cover.

ISABEL

It's so nice of you always to dress in the evening, George. Your Uncle Jack always used to, and so did Father, for years; but they both stopped quite a long time ago. It seems to me we don't see it done any more, except on the stage and in the magazines.

Isabel accepts his silence as acquiescence and turns her head to gaze thoughtfully out at the street.

FANNY

(in her  
lifeless  
voice as a  
lull falls  
after an  
auto roars by)  
I don't believe we'll see as  
many of those automobiles  
next summer.

ISABEL

Why?

(COMMENTED)

FANNY

I've begun to agree with George about their being more of a fad than anything else. Like roller skates. Besides, people just won't stand for them after a while. I shouldn't be surprised to see a law passed forbidding the sale of automobiles the way there is with concealed weapons.

ISABEL

Fanny! You're not in earnest?

FANNY

I am, though!

ISABEL

(laughs,  
sweet-  
toned)

Then you didn't mean it when you told Eugene you'd enjoyed the drive this afternoon?

FANNY

I didn't say it so very enthusiastically, did I?

ISABEL

Perhaps not, but he certainly thought he'd pleased you.

FANNY

(slowly)

I don't think I gave him any right to think he'd pleased me.

ISABEL

Why not? Why shouldn't you, Fanny?

FANNY

(hesitating  
then almost  
inaudibly  
but more  
reproachful  
than plaintive)

I hardly think I'd want anyone to get the notion he'd pleased me just now. It hardly seems time yet -- to me.

( Silence except for the creaking of the rocking chair; then a low musical whistle is heard, softly rendering an old air from "Fra Diavolo." The creaking stops.

FANNY (cont'd)  
(abruptly)  
Is that you, George?

GEORGE  
Is that me what?

FANNY  
Whistling "On Yonder Rock  
Reclining"?

ISABEL  
It's I.

FANNY  
(dryly)  
Oh.

ISABEL  
Does it disturb you?

FANNY  
Not at all. I had an idea  
George was depressed about  
something, and I just wondered  
if he could be making such a  
cheerful sound.  
(resumes her  
creaking)

ISABEL  
(quickly  
leaning  
forward to  
peer at  
George)  
You didn't eat a very hearty  
dinner, but I thought it was  
probably because of the warm  
weather. Are you troubled  
about anything?

No! (angrily) GEORGE

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(CONTINUED)

ISABEL

That's good. I thought we had such a nice day, didn't you?

GEORGE  
(muttering)  
I suppose so.

Satisfied, Isabel leans back in her chair. After a time she rises, goes to the steps and stands for several minutes looking across the street. Then her laughter is faintly heard.

FANNY

Are you laughing about something?

ISABEL

Pardon?

FANNY

I asked: were you laughing at something?

ISABEL

Yes I was!  
(laughs again)

78 REVERSE ANGLE - SHOOTING past Fanny, Isabel and George on the veranda, toward Mrs. Johnson's house beyond the passing traffic in the street. One of the windows is lighted and Mrs. Johnson's form can be discerned silhouetted in the window frame.

ISABEL

It's the funny fat old Mrs. Johnson. She has a habit of sitting at her bedroom window with a pair of opera glasses.

FANNY

Really!

ISABEL

Really. You can see the window through the place that was left when we had the dead walnut tree cut down. She looks up and down the street, but mostly over here. Sometimes she forgets to put out the light in her room, and there she is, saving for all the world to see!

FANNY

I've always thought her a very good woman.

ISABEL

(agreeing)

So she is, and if her poor old opera glasses afford her the quiet happiness of knowing what sort of young man our new cook is walking out with, I'm the last to begrudge it to her! Don't you want to come and look at her, George?

GEORGE

What? I beg your pardon. I hadn't noticed what you were talking about.

ISABEL

(laughs)

It's nothing. Only a funny old lady -- and she's gone now. I'm going, too -- at least, I'm going indoors to read. It's cooler in the house, but the heat's really not bad anywhere, since nightfall. Summer's dying. How quickly it goes, once it begins to die.

Isabel exits into the house. Fanny stops rocking, leans forward, drawing her black gauze wrap around her shoulders. She shivers.

FANNY

(drearily)

Isn't it queer, how your mother can use such words?

GEORGE

What words are you talking about?

FANNY

Words like "die" and "dying." I don't see how she can bear to use them so soon after your poor father --

(shivers again)

GEORGE  
 (absently)  
 Seems to me you're using them  
 yourself.

FANNY  
 I? Never!

GEORGE  
 Yes, you did.

FANNY  
 When?

GEORGE  
 Just this minute.

FANNY  
 Oh! You mean when I repeated  
 what she said? That's hardly  
 the same thing, George.

GEORGE  
 (not  
 interested  
 enough to  
 argue the  
 point)  
 I don't think you'll convince  
 anybody that mother's unfeeling.

FANNY  
 I'm not trying to convince  
 anybody. I mean merely that  
 in my opinion -- well, perhaps  
 it may be just as wise for me  
 to keep my opinions to myself.

She pauses expectantly, anticipating that George will urge her to reveal her opinion. But George is too occupied with himself. Fanny, disappointed, rises to leave. She halts with her hand on the latch of the screen door.

FANNY (cont'd)  
 There is one thing I hope. I  
 hope at least she won't leave  
 off her full mourning on the  
very anniversary of Wilbur's  
 death!

The door clangs shut behind her, and the sound annoys George.

He sits by himself on the steps -- worrying.  
 Now Lucy appears in old-fashioned transparency (the shadowy ghost figure from the silents). She throws herself on the steps at his feet.

LUCY

George, you must forgive me!  
 Papa was utterly wrong! I  
 have told him so, and the truth  
 is that I have come rather to  
 dislike him as you do, and as  
 you always have, in your heart  
 of hearts.

GEORGE

Lucy, are you sure you  
 understand me? You say you  
 understand me, but are you sure?

LUCY

(weeping,  
 head bowed  
 almost to  
 her waist)  
Oh, so sure! I will never  
 listen to Father's opinions  
 again. I do not even care  
 if I never see him again!

GEORGE

(gently)  
 Then I pardon you.

This softened mood lasts until he realizes that it has been brought about by processes strikingly lacking in substance. Abruptly he swings his feet down from the copestone to the floor of the verandah.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Pardon nothing!

Then George pictures Lucy as she probably really is at this moment: sitting on her own front porch in the moonlight with four or five boys, all of them laughing most likely, and some idiot probably playing a guitar.

GEORGE

Riffraff!

George, still harassed by his thoughts, begins furiously to pace the stone floor.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Riffraff!  
(again and  
again)  
Riffraff! Riffraff!

DISSOLVE

EXT. GRAPE ARBOR - AMBERSON MANSION - LATE AFTERNOON (1905)

82 Isabel and Eugene are sitting together in the arbor.  
Silence between them.

ISABEL

(smiling gently)  
Sometime it may come to that --

Silence.

ISABEL (cont'd)

(smiles another  
kind of a smile)  
It's been a happy summer, hasn't  
it, Eugene?  
(sighs, still  
smiling)  
It must have been a happy summer  
for George, too -- and Lucy --  
a real "summer of roses and  
wine" -- without the wine,  
perhaps. "Gather ye roses while  
ye may" -- or was it primroses?  
Time does really fly, or perhaps  
it's more like the sky -- and  
smoke --

Silence.

EUGENE

How's that, dear?

ISABEL

I mean the things we have that  
we think are so solid -- they're  
like smoke, and Time is like the  
sky that the smoke disappears  
into. (cont'd)

ISABEL (cont'd)

You know how a wreath of smoke goes up from a chimney, and seems all thick and black and busy against the sky, as if it were going to do such important things and last forever, and you see it getting thinner and thinner -- and then, in such a little while, it isn't there at all; nothing is left but the sky, and the sky keeps on being just the same forever.

Another silence.

EUGENE

Isabel, dear.

ISABEL

Yes, Eugene --

EUGENE

Don't you think you should tell George?

ISABEL

About us?

EUGENE

Yes.

ISABEL

There's still time --

EUGENE

He should hear it from you.

ISABEL

He will, dearest -- soon -- soon --

DISSOLVE

INT. DINING ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY - (1905)

83

The whole family is present, and Eugene is a guest. They are just finishing their dessert.

MAJOR AMBERSON

I miss my best girl.

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ISABEL

We all do. Lucy's on a visit, Father. She's spending a week with a school friend.

EUGENE

She'll be back Monday.

FANNY

George, how does it happen you didn't tell us before? He never said a word to us about Lucy's going away.

MAJOR AMBERSON

Probably afraid to. Didn't know but he might break down and cry if he tried to speak of it! Isn't that it, Georgie?

The Major's chuckle develops into laughter at George's silence and embarrassment.

FANNY

(during this)  
Or didn't Lucy tell you she was going?

GEORGE

(growls)  
She told me.

MAJOR AMBERSON

At any rate, Georgie didn't approve. I suppose you two aren't speaking again?

(Jack is nice enough to change the subject.)

JACK

Eugene, I hear somebody's opened up another horseless carriage shop somewhere out in the suburbs.

MAJOR AMBERSON

I suppose they'll either drive you out of the business, or else the two of you'll drive all the rest of us off the streets.

EUGENE

Well, we'll even things up  
by making the streets bigger.

MAJOR AMBERSON

How do you propose to do that?

EUGENE

It isn't the distance from the  
center of a town that counts,  
it's the time it takes to get  
there. This town's already  
spreading; automobiles are going  
to carry city streets clear out  
to the county line.

JACK

(skeptically)

I hope you're wrong, because if  
people go to moving that far,  
real estate values here in the  
old residence part of town are  
going to be stretched pretty  
thin.

MAJOR AMBERSON

So your automobiles are going  
to ruin all your old friends,  
Eugene. Do you really think  
they're to change the face of  
the land?

EUGENE

They're already doing it, Major;  
and it can't be stopped.  
Automobiles --

GEORGE

(in loud  
and  
peremptory  
voice)

Automobiles are a useless  
nuisance.

Silence.

MAJOR AMBERSON

What did you say, George?

GEORGE

I said automobiles were a nuisance. They'll never amount to anything but a nuisance. They had no business to be invented.

JACK

Of course, you forget that Mr. Morgan makes them, and also did his share in inventing them. If you weren't so thoughtless he might think you rather offensive.

GEORGE

(coolly)

I don't think I could survive it.

EUGENE

(laughs  
cheerfully)

I'm not sure George is wrong about automobiles. With all their speed forward they may be a step backward in civilization. It may be that they won't add to the beauty of the world, nor to the life of men's souls. I am not sure. But automobiles have come, and almost all outward things are going to be different because of what they bring. They're going to alter war, and they're going to alter peace. I think men's minds are going to be changed in subtle ways because of automobiles. And it may be that George is right. It may be that ten or twenty years from now, if we can see the inward change in men by that time, I shouldn't be able to defend the gasoline engine, but would have to agree with him that automobiles "had no business to be invented."

(looks at  
his watch)

Well, Major, I hope you'll excuse me -- and Isabel -- I've got to get down to the shop and talk to the foreman.

Murmured "good-byes" ---

MAJOR AMBERSON  
I'll see you to the door.

FANNY  
I'll come, too.

EUGENE  
Don't bother, sir. I know the way.

He goes out. Silence.

ISABEL  
George, dear, what did you mean?

GEORGE  
Just what I said.

Takes one of the Major's cigars.

<S> ISABEL  
(murmurs)  
Oh, he was hurt!

GEORGE  
I don't see why he should be. I didn't say anything about him. He didn't seem to me to be hurt -- seemed perfectly cheerful. What made you think he was hurt?

ISABEL  
(half-whispering)  
I know him!

JACK  
By Jove, Georgie, you're a puzzle!

GEORGE  
In what way, may I ask?

JACK

It's a new style of courting a pretty girl, I must say, for a young fellow to go deliberately out of his way to try and make an enemy of her father by attacking his business! By Jove! That's a new way of winning a woman.

George slams out of the dining room.

DISSOLVE

INT. STAIRCASE AND GEORGE'S BEDROOM - AMBERSON MANSION -  
DAY - (1905)

84

Fanny goes up to George, and they play the following scene going up the stairs to George's bedroom.

FANNY

George, you struck just the right treatment to adopt. You're doing just the right thing!

GEORGE

(chilly)  
Now, what on earth do you want?

FANNY

(a vehement  
whisper)  
Your father would thank you if he could see what you're doing.

GEORGE

You make me dizzy! Quit the mysterious detective business!

FANNY

(huskily)  
You don't care to hear that I approve of what you're doing?

She breaks down into silent weeping.

GEORGE

Oh, for Gosh sakes! What in the world's wrong with you?

FANNY

(wretchedly),  
You're always picking on me.  
Always -- ever since you were  
a little boy!

GEORGE

Oh, my Gosh!

FANNY

You wouldn't treat anybody in  
the world like this except old  
Fanny! "Old Fanny" you say.  
"It's nobody but old Fanny, so  
I'll kick her -- nobody'll  
resent it. I'll kick her all  
I want to!" And you're right;  
I haven't got anything in the  
world, since my brother died --  
nobody -- nothing!

GEORGE

(groans)  
Oh, my Gosh!

FANNY

I never, never in the world  
would have told you about it,  
or even made the faintest  
reference to it, if I hadn't  
seen that somebody else had  
told you, or you'd found out  
for yourself some way. I --

GEORGE

Somebody else told me what?  
I'd found what out for myself?

FANNY

How people are talking about  
your mother.

GEORGE

(incredulously)  
What did you say?

(CONTINUED)

## FANNY

Of course I understood what you were doing. It puzzled other people when you began to be rude to Eugene, because they couldn't see how you could treat him as you did when you were so interested in Lucy. But I knew you'd give Lucy up in a minute, if it came to a question of your mother's reputation, because you said that --

## GEORGE

(voice shaking)  
Look here. Look here, I'd like --  
(greatly agitated)  
Just what do you mean?

## FANNY

(woefully, wiping her reddened nose)  
I only wanted to say that I'm sorry for you, George, that's all -- But it's only old Fanny, so whatever she says -- even when it's sympathy -- pick on her for it! Hammer her!  
(sobs)  
Hammer her! It's only poor old lonely Fanny!

## GEORGE

(harshly)  
You look here! Uncle Jack said if there was any gossip it was about you! He said people might be laughing about the way you ran after Morgan, but that was all.

## FANNY

Yes; it's always Fanny!  
Ridiculous old Fanny -- always -- always!

## GEORGE

You listen! You jumped on me because I said Morgan was coming here too often. You made me think Mother let him come just on your account, and now you say --

FANNY

(desolately)

I think he did. I think he did come as much to see me as anything -- for a while it looked like it. Anyhow, he liked to dance with me. He danced with me as much as he danced with her ---

GEORGE

You told me there wasn't any talk.

FANNY

(protesting)

I didn't think there was much, then. I didn't know how much there was.

GEORGE

(fiercely)

You told me Mother never saw him except when she was chaperoning you.

FANNY

You don't suppose that stops people from talking, do you?

(choking)

They just thought I didn't count! "Only old Fanny Minafer," I suppose they'd say! Besides, everybody knew that he'd been engaged to her ---

GEORGE

What's that?

FANNY

Everybody knows it. Everybody in this town knows that Isabel never really cared for any other man in her life! Poor Wilbur! He was the only soul alive that didn't know it!

GEORGE(gazing  
wildly  
at her)

I believe I'm going crazy. You mean you lied when you told me there wasn't any talk?

FANNY

It wouldn't have amounted to anything if Wilbur had lived.

GEORGE

You mean Morgan might have married you?

FANNY

(gulps)

No. Because I don't know that I'd have accepted him. I certainly didn't care enough about him to marry him; I wouldn't have let myself care that much until he showed that he wished to marry me. I'm not that sort of person! What I mean is, if Wilbur hadn't died, people wouldn't have had it proved before their very eyes that what they'd been talking about was true!

GEORGE

You say -- you say that people believe -- they believe my mother is -- is in love with that man?

FANNY

Of course!

GEORGE

And because he comes here -- and they see her with him driving -- and all that -- they think they were right when they said she was in -- in love with him before -- before my father died?

FANNY

(gently)

Why, George, don't you know that's what they say? You must know that everybody in town thinks they're going to be married very soon.

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George is on the verge of nausea from shock.

(CONTINUED)

Who told you? GEORGE

What? FANNY

GEORGE  
Who told you there was talk?  
Where is this talk? Where does  
it come from? Who does it?

FANNY  
Why, I suppose pretty much  
everybody. I know it must be  
pretty general.

Who said so? GEORGE

What? FANNY

GEORGE  
How did you get hold of it?

FANNY  
Why --  
(hesitates)

GEORGE  
You answer me!

FANNY  
I hardly think it would be fair  
to give names.

GEORGE  
Look here. One of your most  
intimate friends is that  
mother of Charlie Johnson's.  
Has she ever mentioned this  
to you?

FANNY  
She may have intimated --

GEORGE  
You and she have been talking  
about it!

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(CONTINUED)

FANNY

She's a very kind, discreet woman, George; but she may have intimated --

George starts toward the door.

FANNY (cont'd)

What are you going to do, George?

But George leaves. Fanny stares after him, terrified at what she has done.

DISSOLVE

EXT. MRS. JOHNSON'S HOME - DAY - (1905)

85 George strides through the gate, up to the house.

INT. MRS. JOHNSON'S HOME - DAY - (1905)

86 The front doorbell is ringing insistently. Mrs. Johnson hurries to it and opens the door, admitting George.

MRS. JOHNSON

Mr. Amberson -- I mean Mr. Minafer. I'm really delighted.

GEORGE

(in a strained  
loud voice)

Mrs. Johnson, I've come to ask you a few questions.

MRS. JOHNSON

(becoming  
grave)

Certainly, Mr. Minafer. Anything I can --

GEORGE

I don't mean to waste any time, Mrs. Johnson. You were talking about a -- you were discussing a scandal that involved my mother's name.

Mr. Minafer! MRS. JOHNSON

GEORGE  
My aunt told me you repeated  
this scandal to her.

MRS. JOHNSON  
(sharply)  
I don't think your aunt can have  
said that. We may have discussed  
some few matters that've been a  
topic of comment about town --

GEORGE  
Yes! I think you may have!  
That's what I'm here about,  
and what I intend to --

MRS. JOHNSON  
(crisply)  
Don't tell me what you intend,  
please. And I'd prefer it if  
you wouldn't make your voice  
quite so loud in this house,  
which I happen to own.

GEORGE  
I can't stand this!

MRS. JOHNSON  
I had a perfect right to  
discuss the subject with your  
aunt. Other people may be  
less considerate.

GEORGE  
(viciously)  
Other people! That's what I  
want to know about -- these  
other people! How many?

She doesn't answer.

How many? GEORGE (cont'd)

What? MRS. JOHNSON

GEORGE

I want to know how many other people talk about it.

MRS. JOHNSON

Really, this isn't a courtroom and I'm not a defendant in a libel suit.

GEORGE

(losing control)

You may be! I want to know just who's dared to say these things, if I have to force my way into every house in town, and I'm going to make them take every word of it back! I mean to know the name of every slanderer that's spoken of this matter to you and of every tattler you've passed it on to yourself. I mean to know --

MRS. JOHNSON

(rising)

You'll know something pretty quick! You'll know that you're out in the street. Please to leave my house!

George stiffens sharply - bows and strides out the door.

DISSOLVE

INT. JACK'S BATHROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT -

(MOONLIGHT) - (1905)

97

Jack and George. Jack is in the tub.

JACK

(in dismay,  
in a low  
voice)

Oh, now you have done it!

GEORGE

What have I done that wasn't honorable and right? Do you think these riffraff can go around bandying my mother's good name?

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(CONTINUED)

JACK  
They can now.

GEORGE  
What do you suppose I'll be doing?

JACK  
Nothing helpful.

GEORGE  
I'm going to stop this thing if I have to force my way into every house on National Avenue and Amberson Boulevard!

JACK  
Georgie, gossip's never fatal till it's denied.

GEORGE  
If you think I'm going to let my mother's good name --

JACK  
Nobody has a good name in a bad mouth! Nobody has a good name in a silly mouth, either.

GEORGE  
-- Didn't you understand me when I told you people are saying my mother means to marry this man?

JACK  
Yes, I understood you.

GEORGE  
If such a - such an unspeakable marriage did take place do you think that would make people believe they'd been wrong in saying -- you know what they say.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

(deliberately)

No. I don't believe it would. There'd be more badness in the bad mouths and more silliness in the silly mouths, I dare say. But it wouldn't hurt Isabel and Eugene. If they've decided to marry --

GEORGE

Great gosh! You speak of it so calmly!

JACK

Well, why shouldn't they marry if they want to? It's their own affair.

GEORGE

Why shouldn't they? Why  
shouldn't they?

JACK

Yes. Why shouldn't they? I don't see anything precisely monstrous about two people getting married when they're both free and care about each other. What's the matter with their marrying?

GEORGE

(shouting)

It would be monstrous! Monstrous even if this horrible thing hadn't happened, but now in the face of this -- oh, that you can sit there and even speak of it! Your own sister!

JACK

For Heaven's sake, don't be so theatrical!

(seeing that  
George is  
leaving the  
room)

Come back here. You mustn't speak to your mother of this.

George stops and looks at him.

JACK (cont'd)  
I don't think she's very well,  
George.

GEORGE  
Mother? I never saw a  
healthier person in my life.

JACK  
She doesn't let anybody know,  
but she goes to the doctor  
regularly.

GEORGE  
Women are always going to  
doctors regularly.

Silence.

JACK  
I'd leave her alone, George.

George exits.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - MOONLIGHT -  
(1905)

88 George comes out of Jack's room and starts toward his  
own. As he nears it, the door of Isabel's room opens.

ISABEL  
Georgie, dear?

George steps into shadow and does not answer. Isabel  
crosses to his door, opens it and looks in. The light  
has been left burning. Seeing George is not in his room,  
she returns to her own. George noiselessly goes to the  
stairs and exits up them to the ballroom.

INT. STAIRCASE AND BALLROOM - AMBERSON MANSION -  
MOONLIGHT - (1905)

89 Moonlight, coming through the glass ceiling, floods the  
room. George walks to the center of the ballroom and  
stands there, reflected in the pier glass mirrors that  
line all sides of the room. Then he hears a quick  
footfall, and Isabel's voice again.

ISABEL  
Georgie -- is that you?

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0779111

Isabel is heard coming up the stairs. George has nowhere to retreat, so he just stands there. Isabel stops on the stairs, seeing his lonely figure standing in the ballroom.

ISABEL (cont'd)  
I've been wondering where you were, dear.

GEORGE  
Had you?

Silence.

ISABEL  
(timidly)  
Wherever it was, I hope you had a pleasant evening.

Silence.

GEORGE  
(without expression)  
Thank you.

Silence.

ISABEL  
You wouldn't care to be kissed good night, I suppose?  
(with a little flurry of placative laughter)  
At your age, of course!

Silence, blanker than those which had preceded.

ISABEL (cont'd)  
(her voice blank, too)  
Good night.

She goes down the stairs.

INT. LIBRARY - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY-(1905)

90 George enters, unwraps a framed photograph of Wilbur, places it on a table and stands looking at it.

GEORGE  
(whispering  
brokenly)  
Poor, poor father! Poor man,  
I'm glad you didn't know!

He walks to the drawing room.

INT. DRAWING ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY-(1905)

91 George goes to a front window and sits looking through the curtains. The house is quiet. Then a ripple of song by Isabel is heard.

ISABEL'S VOICE  
(singing)  
Lord Bateman/was a noble lord,  
A noble lord of high degree;  
And he sailed West and he sailed East,  
Far countries for to see...."

The words become indistinct; the air is hummed absently, the humming shifts to a whistle, then drifts out of hearing, and the place is still again. George looks out the window.

EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY-(1905)

92 ANGLE past George peering through the drawing room window curtain, toward the street. An automobile stops, and Eugene jumps lightly down from it. The car is of a new pattern, low and long, with an ample seat in the tonneau; a professional driver sits at the wheel, goggled out of all personality. Eugene is richly dressed in the new outdoor mode; his motoring coat is soft gray fur; his cap and gloves of gray suede. He looks like a millionaire as he comes happily up the path. George leaves the window.

| 93

The doorbell rings. George enters and waits at the entrance of the reception room until Mary comes through on her way to answer it.

GEORGE

You needn't mind, Mary. I'll see who it is and what they want. Probably it's only a peddler.

MARY

Thank you, sir, Mister George.  
(she exits)

George goes slowly to the front door and halts, regarding the misty silhouette of Eugene upon the ornamental frosted glass. After a minute of waiting, Eugene's arm can be distinguished outstretched toward the bell -- to ring a second time. But before the gesture is completed, George abruptly throws open the door and steps squarely upon the middle of the threshold. A slight change shadows the face of Eugene; happy anticipation gives way to something formal and polite.

EUGENE

How do you do, George? Mrs. Minafer expects to go driving with me, I believe - if you'll be so kind as to send her word that I'm here.

GEORGE

(making not the slightest movement)

No.

EUGENE

I beg your pardon. I said --

GEORGE

I heard you. You said you had an engagement with my mother, and I told you, No!

Eugene gives him a steady look.

EUGENE

(quietly)  
What's the - the difficulty?

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(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

(keeps his  
own voice  
quiet; this  
does not  
mitigate the  
vibrant fury  
of it)

My mother will have no interest  
in knowing that you came here  
today. Or any other day!

Eugene continues to look at him with a scrutiny in which  
begins to gleam a profound anger.

EUGENE

I'm afraid I don't understand  
you.

GEORGE

(raising  
his voice  
slightly)

I doubt if I could make it much  
plainer, but I'll try. You're  
not wanted in this house, Mr.  
Morgan, now or at any other time.  
Perhaps you'll understand - this!

He slams the door in Eugene's face. Then, not moving  
away, he stands just inside the door and notes that the  
misty silhouette remains upon the frosted glass for  
several moments; the silhouette disappears. George  
exits toward the drawing room.

EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - DAY-(1905)

- 95 MED. LONG SHOT past Eugene's car toward mansion doorway.  
Eugene, in baffled retreat, walks slowly down the steps  
and comes down the path to his car.
- 96 REVERSE ANGLE through drawing room window -- over George's  
shoulder as he watches Eugene get into his car slowly,  
not looking back at the house. Observing the heaviness  
of his movements, George indulges in a sickish throat  
rumble which bears a cousinship to mirth. When the car  
has left George leaves the window.

97

George again seats himself beside the table where on he has placed the photograph of his father, picks up a book and pretends to read it. Isabel, still whistling "Lord Bateman," comes into the library. She has a fur coat over her arm. As the large room contains too many pieces of heavy furniture and the inside shutters exclude most of the light of day, she does not at once perceive George. She goes to the bay window and glances out expectantly; then bends her attention upon buttoning a glove; after that she looks out toward the street again, ceases to whistle and turns toward the interior of the room.

ISABEL

Why, Georgie!

She comes to him, leans over from behind him and kisses his cheek.

ISABEL (cont'd)

Dear, I waited lunch almost an hour for you, but you didn't come! Did you lunch out somewhere?

George doesn't look up from the book.

GEORGE

Yes.

ISABEL

Did you have plenty to eat?

GEORGE

Yes.

ISABEL

Are you sure? Wouldn't you like to have Maggie get you something now in the dining room? Or they could bring it to you here, if you think it would be cosier.

GEORGE

No.

A bell tinkles and she moves to the doorway into the hall.

ISABEL  
I'm going out driving, dear.  
I -

She interrupts herself to address Mary who is passing through the hall.

ISABEL (cont'd)  
I think it's Mr. Morgan, Mary.  
Tell him I'll be there at once.

MARY  
Yes, ma'am.

A few seconds pass and Mary returns.

MARY (cont'd)  
'Twas a peddler, ma'am.

ISABEL  
(surprised)  
Another one? I thought you said  
it was a peddler when the bell  
rang a little while ago.

MARY  
Mister George said it was, ma'am;  
he went to the door.  
(leaves)

ISABELL  
There seem to be a great many of  
them. What did yours want to  
sell, George?

GEORGE  
He didn't say.

ISABEL  
You must have cut him off short!  
(she laughs and  
then, still  
standing in  
the doorway,  
notices the  
big silver  
frame)

Gracious, Georgie! You have  
been investing! (cont'd)

ISABEL (cont'd)

(she comes  
across the room  
for a closer  
view; then,  
half-timidly,  
half-archly)

Is it - is it Lucy?

But the next instant she sees whose likeness it is -  
and she is silent, except for a long, just-audible:

ISABEL (cont'd)

Oh!

George neither looks up nor moves.

ISABEL (cont'd)

That was nice of you, Georgie.  
I ought to have had it framed  
myself, when I gave it to you.

He says nothing and, standing beside him, she puts her  
hand gently on his shoulder, then as gently withdraws  
it and goes out of the room. After a time George rises  
and goes warily into the hall.

INT. HALL AND RECEPTION ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY -  
(1905)

98 George comes out of the library and, taking care  
to make no noise, obtains an oblique view of Isabel  
through the open double doors of the reception room. She  
is sitting in a chair looking out the window expectantly  
-- a little troubled. He goes back to the library.

DISSOLVE

INT. HALL AND RECEPTION ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY -  
(1905)

99 A half hour later George returns noiselessly to the  
same position in the hall where he can see Isabel. She  
is still sitting patiently by the window.

DISSOLVE

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY-(1905)"

100 The door of George's room is open. As we hear the  
sound of the front doorbell, George comes out of his  
room and crosses to the stairs.

INT. STAIRCASE AND LOWER FLOOR - AMBERSON MANSION

112

101

REVERSE ANGLE - SHOOTING down the stairs to hall below. George enters, goes halfway down the stairs and stands in f.g. of shot to listen. Mary appears in the hall below him, but after a glance toward the front of the house she turns back and withdraws. Isabel has evidently gone to the door. A murmur is heard.

JACK

(quick and  
serious)

I want to talk to you, Isabel...

Another murmur. Then Isabel and Jack pass the foot of the stairway. Isabel carries her cloak upon her arm, but Jack has taken her hand and as he leads her silently into the library there is something about her attitude and the pose of her slightly bent head that is both startled and meek. They disappear into the library and the massive double doors close. Through the doors comes the indistinct sound of Jack's voice. He is explaining something at considerable length. There are pauses when Isabel is speaking, but her voice is too low to be heard. Then suddenly:

ISABEL'S VOICE

(clear and  
loud)

Oh, no!  
(it is a  
cry of  
protest  
and a  
sound of  
sheer pain)

The sound of vehement sniffing breaks out just above George. He looks up past camera.

INT. STAIRCASE AND SECOND FLOOR HALL - DAY-(1905)

102

ANGLE UP stairway past George. He sees Fanny on the landing, leaning over the banisters and applying her handkerchief to her eyes.

FANNY

(whispers  
huskily)

I can guess what that was about. He's just told her what you did to Eugene!

GEORGE

You go on back to your room!

He begins to descend the stairs, but Fanny rushes down and catches his arm, detaining him.

FANNY

(whispering  
huskily)

You're not going in there?  
You don't --

GEORGE

Let go of me!

FANNY

(clings to  
him savagely)

No, you don't, Georgie Minafer!  
You keep away from there!

GEORGE

You let go of --

FANNY

I won't! You come back here!  
And let them alone!

(She clutches and tugs at him with determination; and though George tries to wrench away, nevertheless she forces him, stumbling upward, to the landing.)

GEORGE

(furious)

Of all the ridiculous --

Fanny takes one hand from its grasp of his sleeve and claps it over his mouth.

FANNY

(still in a  
husky whisper)

Hush up! Hush up! It's indecent  
-- like squabbling outside the  
door of an operating room! Go on  
to the top of the stairs -- go  
on!

George unwillingly obeys and Fanny plants herself in his way on the top step.

(CONTINUED)

FANNY (cont'd)

There! The idea of your going in there now! Jack's telling Isabel the whole thing --. You stay here and let him tell her; he's got some consideration for her!

GEORGE

I suppose you think I haven't!

FANNY

You! Considerate of anybody!

GEORGE

(hotly)

I'm considerate of her good name! Look here: it strikes me you're taking a pretty different tack --

FANNY

I thought you already knew everything I did! I was just suffering so I wanted to let out a little -- oh, I was a fool! Eugene never would have looked at me even if he'd never seen Isabel. And they haven't done any harm. She made Wilbur happy, and she was a true wife to him as long as he lived. And here I go, not doing myself a bit of good by it, and just --

(wrings  
her hands  
again)

-- just ruining them.

GEORGE

My Gosh, it's sickening! You told me how all the riffraff in town were busy with her name, and then the minute I lift my hand to protect her, you begin to attack me and --

FANNY

Sh!

(she checks  
him, laying  
her hand on  
his arm)

Your uncle's leaving.

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0779121

(CONTINUED)

The library doors are heard opening and a moment later there comes the sound of the front door closing. George moves toward the head of the stairs, and stands listening, but the house is silent. Fanny makes a slight noise with her lips to attract his attention and when he glances toward her she shakes her head at him urgently.

FANNY (cont'd)

(whispering)

Let her alone. She's down there by herself. Don't go down. Let her alone.

She moves a few steps toward him and halts, her face pallid and awestruck, and then both stand listening. No sound comes to them.

Fanny breaks the long silence with a stifled gasp and retires softly to her room.

After she is gone, George looks about him bleakly, then on tiptoe crosses the hall and goes into his own room.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DUSK - (1905)

103 Still tiptoeing George goes across the room and sits down heavily in a chair facing the window. Outside there is nothing but the darkening air and the wall of the nearest of the new houses. George's gaze at the grayness beyond the window is wide-eyed and bitter. Darkness has closed in when there is a step in the room behind him. Isabel kneels beside the chair, her two arms go round him with infinite compassion, her gentle head rests against his shoulder.

ISABEL

(whispers)  
You mustn't be troubled,  
darling.

DISSOLVE

INT. LITTLE OUTSIDE PARLOR - MORGAN HOME - NIGHT - (1905)

104 Jack, looking sad and uncomfortable, his overcoat on, his hat in his lap, is sitting, waiting.

CAMERA PANS around a wall into an adjoining room where Eugene is seen sitting at a desk writing a letter. He lifts the pen from the paper, and looks down at what he has just written.

CLOSEUP - Eugene looking down at the letter before him. He starts to write again, and on sound track we hear the scratching of his pen, and his voice speaking the words he is writing, but his lips do not move. 116

EUGENE'S VOICE

(on the track)

Dearest one, yesterday I thought the time had come when I could ask you to marry me, and you were dear enough to tell me "some time it might come to that." But now we're faced -- not with slander and not with our own fear of it, because we haven't any, but someone else's fear of it -- your son's. And, oh, dearest woman in the world, I know what your son is to you, and it frightens me! Let me explain a little: I don't think he'll change -- at twenty-one or twenty-two so many things appear solid and permanent and terrible which forty sees are nothing but disappearing miasma. Forty can't tell twenty about this; twenty can find out only by getting to be forty. And so we come to this, dear: Will you live your own life your way, or George's way? Dear, it breaks my heart for you, but what you have to oppose now is the history of your own selfless and perfect motherhood. Are you strong enough, Isabel? Can you make the fight? I promise you that if you will take heart for it, you will find so quickly that it has all amounted to nothing. You shall have happiness, and only happiness. I am saving too much for wisdom, I fear. But oh, my dear, won't you be strong -- such a little short strength it would need! Don't strike my life down twice, dear -- this time I've not deserved it.

106

George, wearing his long black velvet dressing gown, has just finished reading Eugene's letter. Isabel is standing at the other end of the room, her back to him, her head drooping a little. George tosses the letter abruptly from him so that one sheet falls upon his bed and the others upon the floor. At the faint noise of their falling, Isabel comes and, kneeling, begins to gather them up.

ISABEL

Did you read it, dear?

GEORGE

Yes, I did.

ISABEL

(gently, as  
she rises)

All of it?

GEORGE

Certainly! It's simply the most offensive piece of writing that I've ever held in my hands!

Isabel steps back from him, startled.

ISABEL

But, dear, I thought --

GEORGE

I can't understand your even showing me such a thing! How did you happen to bring it to me?

ISABEL

Your uncle thought I'd better. He thought it was the simplest thing to do, and he said that he'd suggested it to Eugene, and Eugene had agreed. They thought --

GEORGE

(bitterly)  
Yes! I should like to hear what they thought!

135-223  
0779124

(CONTINUED)

<S> ISABEL

They thought it would be the most straightforward thing. <S>

<S> GEORGE

(draws a long breath) /  
Well, what do you think mother? <S>

ISABEL

I thought it would be the simplest and most straightforward thing; I thought they were right.

GEORGE

Very well! We'll agree it was simple and straightforward. Now what do you think of that letter itself?

ISABEL

(hesitates, looking away)  
I -- of course I don't agree with him in the way he speaks of you, dear --

GEORGE

(breaking in)  
Don't you think this was a pretty insulting letter for that man to be asking you to hand your son?

ISABEL

Oh, no! You can see how fair he means to be.

GEORGE

Do you suppose it ever occurs to him that I'm doing my simple duty? That I'm doing what my father would do if he were alive? That I'm doing what my father would ask me to do if he could speak from his grave out yonder? Do you suppose it ever occurs to that man for one minute that I'm protecting my mother?

135-223  
0779125

He raises his voice, advancing upon Isabel fiercely. Isabel bends her head before him.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE (cont'd)

He's got my mother's name  
banded up and down the streets  
of this town till I can't stop  
in those streets without  
wondering what every soul I  
meet is thinking of me and of  
my family, and now he wants you  
to marry him so that every  
gossip in town will say, "There!  
What did I tell you? I guess  
that proves it's true!" He said  
he and you don't care what they  
say, but I know better! He may  
not care -- probably he's that  
kind -- but you do. Is it fair  
of him to want you to throw away  
your good name just to please  
him? That's all he asks of you  
-- end to quit being my mother!  
You're my mother and you're an  
Amberson -- and I believe you're  
too proud! You're too proud to  
care for a man who could write  
such a letter as that!

(he stops,  
faces her,  
and speaks  
with more  
self-control)

Well, what are you going to do  
about it, Mother?

Her head droops.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(demanding,  
like a judge  
on a bench)

What answer are you going to  
make to such a letter?

ISABEL

(murmurs)

I -- I don't quite know, dear.

GEORGE

Do you think if you did what he  
wants you to I could bear to  
stay another day in this town,  
Mother? Do you think I could  
ever bear even to see you again  
if you married him? I'd want  
to, but you surely know I just--  
couldn't!

Isabel makes a futile gesture, and seems to breathe with difficulty.

ISABEL

(faltering)

I -- I wasn't -- quite sure about -- about it's being wise for us to be married -- even before knowing how you feel about it. I wasn't even sure it was quite fair to -- to Eugene. I have -- I seem to have that family trouble -- like father's -- that I spoke to you about once.

(she manages  
a deprecatory  
little dry  
laugh)

Not that it amounts to much, but I wasn't at all sure that it would be fair to him. Marrying doesn't mean so much, after all -- not at my age. It's enough to know that -- that people think of you -- and to see them. I thought we were all -- oh, pretty happy the way things were, and I don't think it would mean giving up a great deal for him or me, either, if we just went on as we have been. I -- I see him almost every day, and--

GEORGE

(loudly and  
sternly)

Mother! Do you think you could go on seeing him after this!

Isabel had been talking helplessly before -- her tone is a little more broken now.

ISABEL

Not -- not even -- see him?

GEORGE

How could you? Mother, it seems to me that if he ever set foot in this house again -- oh! I can't speak of it! Could you see him, knowing what talk it makes every time he turns into this street, and knowing what that means to me! (cont'd)

GEORGE (cont'd)

Oh, I don't understand all  
this -- I don't! If you'd told  
me, a year ago, that such things  
were going to happen, I'd have  
thought you were insane -- and  
now I believe I am!

His anguish is none the less real for its vehemence; and the stricken Isabel comes to him instantly and bends over him, once more enfolding him in her arms. She says nothing but suddenly her tears fall upon his head. She sees them and seems to be startled.

ISABEL

Oh, this won't do! I've never  
let you see me cry before,  
except when your father died.  
I mustn't!

She runs from the room. A little while after she has gone, George rises and, happening to catch sight in his pier glass of the picturesque and medieval figure thus presented in his dressing gown, he pauses to regard it; something profoundly theatrical in his nature comes to the surface. His lips move.

GEORGE

(half-aloud,  
whispering)  
" 'Tis not alone my inky cloak,  
good Mother,  
Nor customary suits of solemn  
black...."

His own mirrored princely image with hair dishevelled on the white brow, the long tragic fall of black velvet from the shoulders, reminds him of that other gentle prince and heir whose widowed mother was minded to marry again.

GEORGE (cont'd)

"But I have that within which  
passeth show;  
These but the trappings and the  
suits of Woe."

He looks and feels like Hamlet.

DISSOLVE OUT

INT. ISABEL'S ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT (1905)

107

CLOSE SHOT of Isabel at her writing table. The scratching of her pen is heard and over it on sound track, her voice speaks the words she is writing, but her lips do not move.

## ISABEL'S VOICE

(on sound  
track)

George, my own dearest boy: --  
I think it is a little better  
for me to write to you, like  
this, instead of waiting till  
you wake up and then telling  
you, because I'm foolish and  
might cry again, and I took a  
vow once, long ago, that you  
should never see me cry. Not  
that I'll feel like crying when  
we talk things over tomorrow.  
I'll be "all right and fine"  
(as you say so often) by that  
time -- don't fear. I think  
what makes me most ready to cry  
now is the thought of the  
terrible suffering in your poor  
face, and the unhappy knowledge  
that it is I, your mother, who  
put it there. It shall never  
come again. I've written  
Eugene just about what I think  
you would like me to -- though  
I told him I would always be  
fond of him and always his best  
friend, and I hoped his  
dearest friend. He'll  
understand about not seeing him.  
He'll understand that though I  
didn't say it in so many words.  
You mustn't trouble about  
that -- he'll understand.  
Good night, my darling, my  
beloved, my beloved! You  
mustn't be troubled. I think  
I shouldn't mind anything very  
much so long as I have you  
"all to myself" -- as people  
say -- to make up for your  
long years away from me at  
college. We'll talk of what's  
best to do in the morning,  
shan't we? And for all this  
pain you'll forgive your  
loving and devoted --

INT. GEORGE'S BEDROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY

~~SECRET~~

(1905)

108

George is lying in bed, reading Isabel's letter. Pinned to the cover of the dressing table beside him is a crumpled square envelope with the words, "For you, dear" written on it. Obviously George has pulled the letter out of the envelope without removing it from its mooring. There is no pause on the sound track between Isabel's last word "devoted" and:

GEORGE

(looking at  
the letter)

--Mother.

FADE OUT

EXT. STREET - DAY - (1905)

109

George, walking up National Avenue, sees Lucy coming toward him on the same side of the street. For a moment he thinks of facing about in flight. He expects her to rebuff him. But Lucy comes straight to meet him, smiling, her hand offered to him.

GEORGE

(stammering,  
as he takes  
her hand)/

Why -- you -- haven't you -- ?

LUCY

Haven't I what?

He sees Eugene hasn't told her.

GEORGE

(gasping)  
Nothing. May I -- May I  
walk with you a little way?

LUCY

(cordially)  
Yes, indeed.

They start walking down the street.

GEORGE

(huskily)  
Lucy, I want to tell you  
something.

LUCY

I hope it's something nice.  
(laughs)  
Papa's been so glum today he's  
scarcely spoken to me.

GEORGE

Well --

LUCY

Is it a funny story?

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

(bitterly)

It may seem like one to you.  
Just to begin with: when you  
went away you didn't let me  
know; not even a word -- not  
a line --

LUCY

(persisting  
in being  
inconsequent)

Why, no. I just trotted off  
for some visits.

GEORGE

Well, at least you might have --

LUCY

((briskly))

Why, no. Don't you remember,  
George? We'd had a quarrel and  
we didn't speak to each other  
all the way home from a long,  
long drive! And since we  
couldn't play together like  
good children, of course it was  
plain that we oughtn't to play  
at all.

GEORGE

Play!

LUCY

Yes. What I mean is we'd come  
to the point where it was time  
to quit playing -- well, what  
we were playing.

GEORGE

At being lovers, you mean, don't  
you?

LUCY

(lightly)

Something like that. It was  
absurd!

GEORGE

It didn't have to be absurd.

LUCY

(cheerfully)

No, it couldn't help but be!  
The way I am and the way you  
are, it wouldn't ever be  
anything else.

GEORGE

This time I'm going away.  
That's what I wanted to tell  
you. I'm going away tomorrow  
night -- indefinitely.

LUCY

(nodding  
sunnily)

I hope you'll have ever so nice  
a time, George.

GEORGE

I don't expect to have a  
particularly "nice" time.

LUCY

(laughing)

Well, then, if I were you I  
don't think I'd go.

It seems impossible to make her serious

GEORGE

(desperately)

This is our last walk together.

LUCY

Evidently! If you're going  
away tomorrow night.

GEORGE

Lucy - this may be the last  
time I'll see you - ever - ever  
in my life.

At this she looks at him quickly, across her shoulder,  
but she smiles as brightly as before.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Mother and I are starting  
tomorrow for a trip around the  
world. We've made no plans --  
at all -- for coming back.

LUCY

(admiringly) /  
That does sound like a long trip! Do you plan to be traveling all the time, or will you stay in some one place the greater part of it? I think it would be lovely to --

. GEORGE

Lucy!

He halts and she stops with him. They have come to a corner at the edge of the business section of the city and people are everywhere about them, brushing against them, sometimes, in passing.

GEORGE (cont'd)

(in a low voice)

I can't stand this. I'm just about ready to go in this drug store here and ask the clerk for something to keep me from dying in my tracks! It's quite a shock, Lucy.

. LUCY

What is?

GEORGE

To find out just how deeply you've cared for me! To see how much difference this makes to you.

LUCY

(her cordial smile tempered with good nature)

George!

GEORGE

I can't stand this any longer. I can't! Good-bye, Lucy.

She doesn't say anything.

GEORGE (cont'd)

It's good-bye -- I think it's  
good-bye for good, Lucy!

LUCY

Good-bye! I do hope you'll  
have the most splendid trip.  
Give my love to your mother.

He turns heavily away.

CAMERA PULLS back ahead of him, holding Lucy in b.g.  
A moment later he pauses, glances back at her over his  
shoulder. She stands watching him, the same smile on  
her face. She waves cheerily. George strides savagely  
onward, not looking back. Lucy remains where she is  
until he is out of sight. Then she goes slowly into the  
drug store.

INT. DRUG STORE - DAY - (1905)

110 Lucy walks up to the clerk.

<5> LUCY

(with the  
utmost  
composure)

Please let me have a few drops  
of aromatic spirits of ammonia  
in a glass of water.

CLERK

Yes, ma'am!

CAMERA STAYS on him as he turns to the shelves to get  
the spirits of ammonia. When he turns back with the  
bottle in his hand, his expression changes to one of  
astonishment, and he makes a quick move toward the  
counter.

CLERK (cont'd)

For goshes' sake, Miss! --

111 The drug store clerk is telling his friends what happened.

CLERK

-- an' 'f I hadn't been a bright, quick, ready-for-anything young fella she'd a' flummixed plum'! I was watchin' her out the window - talkin' to some young s'iety fella, and she was all right then. She was all right when she come in the store, too. Yes, sir; the prettiest girl that ever walked in our place and took one good look at me. I reckon it must be the truth what some a' you town wags say about my face!

FADE OUT

EXT. FIVE NEW HOUSES - NIGHT - (1910)

- 112 The five new houses, built so closely where the Mansion's fine lawn had been -- a sad panorama. Before this is a steady stream of passing automobiles, with now and then a bicycle, or, at long intervals, a surrey or buggy.
- 113 REVERSE ANGLE toward the Mansion, where Major Amberson and Fanny are dimly seen, seated on the verandah.
- 114 CLOSER ANGLE on Major Amberson and Aunt Fanny seated on the verandah. The Major is looking toward the houses.

MAJOR AMBERSON

Funny thing -- those new houses were built only a year ago. They look old already. -- Cost enough money, though -- I guess I should have built those apartments after all --

FANNY

Housekeeping in a house is harder than in an apartment.

MAJOR AMBERSON

Yes. -- Where the smoke and dirt are as thick as they are in the Amberson Addition, I guess the women can't stand it. Well, I've got one painful satisfaction -- I got my taxes lowered.

(laughs  
ruefully)

FANNY

How did you manage such an economy?

MAJOR AMBERSON

I said it was a painful satisfaction, Fanny. The property has gone down in value, and they assessed it lower than they did fifteen years ago.

FANNY

But farther out --

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(CONTINUED)

MAJOR AMBERSON

Oh, yes, "farther out!" Prices are magnificent "farther out" and farther in, too! We just happen to be in the wrong spot, that's all.

He sighs; and both are silent, looking out at the constantly passing traffic.

FANNY

(thoughtfully)

There seem to be so many ways of making money nowadays. Jack had some scheme he was working on before he went abroad.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(laughing)

Yes -- that invention. "Millions in it!" Some new electric headlight. He's putting half he's laid by into it. Had a letter from him the other day asking me to go into it, too.

FANNY

He seemed certain it would pay twenty-five percent the first year, and enormously more after that; and I'm only getting four on my little principal.

Again both are silent, watching the passing traffic.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(gravely)

Isabel wants to come home. Her letters are full of it. Jack writes me she talks of nothing else.

No answer from Fanny.

MAJOR AMBERSON, (cont'd)

She's wanted to come for a long while. She ought to come while she can stand the journey.

Another pause.

FANNY

People are making such enormous fortunes out of everything to do with motor cars, it does seem as if -- I wrote Jack I'd think it over seriously.

MAJOR AMBERSON

(laughing)

Well, Fanny, maybe we'll be partners. How about it? And millionaires, too!

FADE OUT

EXT. DRIVEWAY - MORGAN MANSION - DUSK - (1910)

115 The Morgan mansion is a great Georgian picture in brick with four acres of its own hedged land between it and its next neighbor. A car appears, driven by a chauffeur, with Lucy and Jack inside. It turns in between the stone and brick gate pillars and starts up the driveway.

116 SHOT of Lucy and Jack in the car,

JACK

(laughs  
wistfully)

I wonder, Lucy, if history's going on forever repeating itself. I wonder if this town's going on building up things and rolling over them, as poor father once said it was rolling over his poor old heart. It looks like it.

117 The car comes to a stop at the house. Lucy, and Jack get out and go up the stairs.

JACK

Here's the Amberson Mansion again, only it's Georgian instead of nondescript Romanesque; but it's just the same Amberson Mansion my father built long before you were born.

Lucy doesn't quite understand, but she laughs as a friend should, and they go into the house.

118 Lucy and Uncle Jack come in. A butler relieves him of his hat and coat.

JACK

By Jove! You have been going it! Fanny tells me you had a great "house-warming" dance, and you keep right on being the belle of the ball, not any softer-hearted than you used to be. Fred Kinney's father says you refused Fred so often he got engaged to Janie Sharon just to prove that someone would have him in spite of his hair.

Lucy laughs, a little embarrassed. Jack has moved to a window.

JACK (cont'd)

Well, you're pretty refreshingly out of the smoke up here.

LUCY

(laughing)

Yes, for a while. Until it comes and we have to move out farther.

JACK

No, you'll stay here. It'll be somebody else who'll move out farther.

DISSOLVE

INT. LIBRARY - MORGAN MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

119 A grey and shadowy room. Lucy, Jack and Eugene are having after-dinner coffee. Jack's attention for a moment is occupied with a cigar, then he speaks in a casual tone of Isabel and George.

JACK

I found Isabel as well as usual, only I'm afraid "as usual" isn't particularly well. It struck me Isabel ought to be in a wheel-chair.

He pauses, bestowing minute care upon the removal of the little band from his cigar. Eugene speaks out of the shadow beyond a heavily shaded lamp.

EUGENE

(quietly)

What do you mean by that?

JACK

(still not  
looking at  
either of  
them)

Oh, she's cheerful enough. At least, she manages to seem so. But she's pretty short of breath for such a slender person. Father's been that way for years, of course; but never nearly so much as Isabel is now. I told her I thought she ought to make George let her come home.

EUGENE

(in a low  
voice)

"Let her?" Does she want to?

JACK

She doesn't urge it. George seems to like the life there -- in his grand, gloomy, and peculiar way; and of course she'll never change about being proud of him and all that -- he's quite a swell. But she does want to come. She'd like to be with father, of course; and I think she's -- well, she intimated one day that she was afraid it might even happen that she wouldn't get to see him again.

(he can hardly  
say it)

I think she was really thinking of her own state of health.

(CONTINUED)

EUGENE

(his voice even  
lower than  
before)

I see. And you say he won't  
"let" her come home?

JACK

(laughs, but  
continues to  
be interested  
in his cigar)

Oh, I don't think he uses force!  
He's very gentle with her. I  
doubt if the subject is  
mentioned between them, and  
yet - and yet, knowing my  
interesting nephew as you do,  
wouldn't you think that was  
about the way to put it?

EUGENE

(slowly)

Knowing him as I do - yes.  
Yes, I should think that was  
about the way to put it.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

137

EXT. RAILROAD STATION - DUSK - (1910)

120 Against a background of loud station noises, Jack and Fanny are standing beside a car platform with a wheel chair. George, carrying Isabel, appears and places Isabel in the chair. Isabel can't speak, but she pats Fanny's and Jack's hands.

FANNY

(finding  
desperate  
courage)

You look very sweet.

They wheel Isabel to a waiting carriage. George lifts her into the carriage, they get in and the carriage pulls away.

INT. CARRIAGE - DUSK - (1910)

121 Isabel, George, Aunt Fanny, and Uncle Jack. Isabel seems a little stronger. She has been holding George's hands and looking out the carriage window. Now she takes her hand from George and waves it feebly toward the window.

ISABEL

(whispering)

Changed. So changed.

JACK

You mean the town. You mean the old place is changed, don't you, dear?

ISABEL

(smiles and  
moves her  
lips)

Yes.

JACK

It'll change to a happier place, old dear, now that you're back in it, and going to get well again.

Isabel looks at him wistfully, her eyes a little frightened.

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DISSOLVE OUT

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

122 At the end of the hall are Jack, George, and Major Amberson, clustered in a stricken group.

MAJOR AMBERSON

When are they going to let me see my daughter? They told me to keep out of the way while they carried her in, because it might upset her. I wish they'd let me go in and speak to my daughter. I think she wants to see me.

The Major is right - the doctor comes out and beckons to him. The Major shuffles forward, leaning on a shaking cane; his figure has grown stooping and his untrimmed white hair straggles over the back of his collar. He looks old as he creeps toward Isabel's room. Isabel's voice is stronger, for the waiting group hears a low cry of tenderness and welcome as the Major reaches the open doorway. Then the door closes. Fanny comes up the stairs and calls out in a whisper:

FANNY

George -- George.

Jack moves off down the hall in the other direction. Fanny comes up to George.

FANNY (cont'd)

(whispers)  
Eugene is here.

There is no answer. She isn't sure that George has heard

FANNY (cont'd)

(a little  
louder)  
George --

GEORGE

(after a  
moment)  
Hm?

(CONTINUED)

FANNY  
(whispering)  
He's downstairs.

GEORGE  
(after  
another  
moment)  
What?

FANNY  
(still  
whispering)  
Eugene is here.

George looks at her sharply.

FANNY (cont'd)  
He's downstairs.  
(she gulps)  
He wants to know if he can't  
see her. I didn't know what  
to say. I said I'd see. I  
didn't know -- the doctor said --

GEORGE  
(sharply)  
The doctor said we "must keep  
her peaceful." Do you think  
that man's coming would be  
very soothing? Why, it would  
be like taking a stranger into  
her room. Doesn't he know how  
sick she is? You tell him the  
doctor said she had to be quiet  
and peaceful. That's what he  
did say, isn't it?

Fanny goes. George watches her go down the stairs.

INT. RECEPTION ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

123 Eugene seated. He rises as he sees Fanny coming toward  
him. She enters. He starts toward her and then is  
stopped by something he sees in her face.

FANNY  
The doctor says she ought to  
be kept quiet.

(CONTINUED)

EUGENE

If I could only look into the  
room and see her for just a  
second --

FANNY

(with a  
dull  
sniffle)

The doctor says she mustn't  
see anyone --

A short silence.

EUGENE

All right, Fanny.

He turns to go

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

124 George is standing at the window, looking out.

EXT. AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT

125 SHOOTING over George's shoulder - through the window -  
as he watches Eugene walk to his car.

NURSE'S VOICE

She wants to see you --

George wheels, his mouth opens in terror.

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALL - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

126 George's terrified mouth shuts with a click and he nods  
and follows the nurse. She stays outside while he goes  
into Isabel's room.

INT. ISABEL'S ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

127 Isabel's eyes are closed, and she does not open them or  
move her head, but smiles and edges her hand toward  
George as he comes to her bed and sits on a stool. He  
takes her hand and puts it to his cheek.

(CONTINUED)

ISABEL  
(whispering  
slowly and  
with difficulty)  
Darling, did you -- get something  
to eat?

GEORGE  
Yes, mother.

ISABEL  
All you -- needed?

GEORGE  
Yes, mother.

Isabel does not speak for a time, then:

ISABEL  
Are you sure you didn't --  
didn't catch cold -- coming  
home?

GEORGE  
I'm all right, Mother.

ISABEL  
That's good. It's sweet --  
it's sweet --

GEORGE  
What is, Mother darling?

ISABEL  
To feel -- my hand on your  
cheek. I -- I can feel it.

She seems proud of this, as though it were a miraculous thing accomplished, and this frightens George. He cannot speak and fears she will know he is trembling. But she is unaware, and again silent. Finally:

ISABEL  
I wonder if -- if Eugene and  
Lucy know that we've come --  
home.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE  
I'm sure they do.

ISABEL  
Has he -- asked about me?

GEORGE  
Yes, he was here.

ISABEL  
Has he -- gone?

GEORGE  
Yes, Mother.

ISABEL  
(sighs,  
faintly)  
I'd like --

GEORGE  
What, Mother?

ISABEL  
(just audibly,  
like a little  
regretful  
murmur)  
I'd like to have -- seen him.

Pause.

ISABEL (cont'd)  
Just -- just once.

Isabel is still, as though asleep, but when George moves to go, a faint pressure on his fingers detains him and he stays, her hand still pressed against his cheek. After a while he moves again, to let the nurse come in, and this time there is no pressure of fingers. After he has left, Isabel opens her eyes and looks after him.

INT. GEORGE'S ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - NIGHT - (1910)

128 As George enters his room he is startled to find the Major and Jack there. The Major is lying on the bed dozing uneasily, even occasionally snoring. Jack is leaning against the wall.

(CONTINUED)

JACK

The doctor thought we'd better --

George sits on the edge of the bed. From time to time he wipes heavy sweat from his forehead. The Major snores, stops suddenly and moves as if to rise, but Jack puts his hand on the Major's shoulder to reassure.

GEORGE

(finally  
gasping  
defiantly)

That doctor in New York said she might get better! Don't you know he did? Don't you know he said she might?

Jack doesn't answer. Suddenly there is a sound in the hall and both the men start violently -- the Major sits up in bed. They hear the nurse speaking to Fanny and then Fanny appears in the doorway making contorted efforts to speak. Jack goes out with the Major. Fanny utters a long, loud cry, throws her arms around George and sobs in agony of loss and compassion.

FANNY

She loved you! She loved you!  
She loved you! Oh, how she  
did love you!

FADE OUT

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NARRATOR

And now Major Amberson was engaged in the profoundest thinking of his life. He was occupied with the first really important matter that had taken his attention since he came home after the Gettysburg campaign, and went into business; and he realized that everything which had worried him or delighted him during this lifetime between then and today -- all his buying and building and trading and banking -- that it was all trifling and waste beside what concerned him now. For the Major knew now that he had to plan how to enter an unknown country where he was not even sure of being recognized as an Amberson -- not sure of anything, except that Isabel would help him if she could.

FADE IN

~~141~~

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (1910)

129 The Minafer plot. Beside Wilbur's grave now is Isabel's, his headstone aged with the weather -- Isabel's headstone bright and new, with the words: ISABEL AMBERSON MINAFER and the date. Her grave is heaped with flowers, and some have been laid on Wilbur's grave also.

DISSOLVE

130 The dark screen flickers, and when the DISSOLVE completes itself, we see from a LOW ANGLE, SHOOTING up, CLOSE SHOT of Major Amberson's face. He is seated, with the flickering light of a fireplace (not in scene) playing on him. (1910)

As soon as the Narrator's voice stops, we hear:

JACK'S VOICE

That's true, Fanny.-- You know, it's a funny thing about the deed to the house. -- Father --

FANNY'S VOICE

(interrupting)  
But it must go right! We saw with our own eyes how perfectly it worked in the shop.

~~(CONTINUED)~~

JACK'S VOICE

I'm only glad you didn't go into the confounded thing to the extent I did.

FANNY'S VOICE

But the light was so bright no one could face it, and so there can't be any reason for it not to work. It simply --

JACK'S VOICE

It certainly was a perfect thing -- in the shop! Our headlight just won't work, Fanny. -- Father -- Father!

The Major's eyes brighten a little.

JACK'S VOICE (cont'd)

The house was in Isabel's name, wasn't it?

MAJOR AMBERSON

Yes.

JACK'S VOICE

Can you remember when you gave her the deed, Father?

MAJOR AMBERSON

No -- no, I can't just remember.

GEORGE'S VOICE

It doesn't matter --

JACK'S VOICE

The whole estate's about as mixed up as an estate can get, and I haven't helped out any by this infernal headlight scheme. You ought to have that deed, George.

GEORGE'S VOICE

No, don't bother.

Suddenly the Major slaps his knee as if he has made a discovery or remembers something he has forgotten.

(CONTINUED)

MAJOR AMBERSON

It must be in the sun! There wasn't anything here but the sun in the first place, and the earth came out of the sun, and we came out of the earth. So, whatever we are, we must have been in the sun. We go back to the earth we came out of, so the earth will go back to the sun that it came out of. And time means nothing -- nothing at all -- so in a little while we'll all be back in the sun together. I wish --

He moves his hand uncertainly as if reaching for something.

GEORGE'S VOICE

Did you want anything, Grandfather?

MAJOR AMBERSON

What?

GEORGE'S VOICE

Would you like a glass of water?

MAJOR AMBERSON

No -- no. No -- I don't want anything.

He drops his hand upon the arm of the chair and after a few moments of silence resumes:

MAJOR AMBERSON (cont'd)

I wish -- somebody could tell me!

DISSOLVE

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY (1910)

131 The Amberson plot. The Major's grave, with its new headstone and mound of flowers.

FADE OUT

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FADE IN

-147

INT. KITCHEN - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY (1911)

132

George is staring down at Fanny who has just sunk to the floor, her back resting against the hot water boiler. The kitchen has been dismantled. There is a pot of coffee on the stove and some glasses and broken dishes on otherwise empty shelves.

FANNY

(gasps)  
You're going to leave me in  
the lurch!

GEORGE

Get up, Aunt Fanny.

FANNY

I can't. I'm too weak.  
You're going to leave me --  
in the lurch!

GEORGE

(protesting)  
Aunt Fanny! I'm only going to  
get eight dollars a week at the  
law office. You'd have to be  
paying more of the expenses  
than I would.

She stares at him with forlorn blankness.

FANNY

(feebly)  
I'd be paying -- I'd be paying --

GEORGE

Certainly you would. You'd  
be using more of your money  
than --

FANNY

My money!  
(her chin  
droops;  
she laughs  
in misery)  
I've got twenty-eight dollars.  
That's all.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

You mean until the interest  
is due again?

FANNY

I mean that's all. I mean  
that's all there is. There  
won't be any more interest  
because there isn't any  
principal.

GEORGE

Why, you told --

FANNY

I know. I told Jack I didn't  
put everything in the  
headlight. But I did -- every  
cent except my last interest  
payment -- and it's gone.

GEORGE

Why did you wait till now to  
tell me?

FANNY

(piteously)  
I couldn't tell till I had to.  
It wouldn't do any good --

(she takes  
out her lace  
handkerchief  
and begins  
to cry)

Nothing does any good, I guess,  
in this old world! I knew your  
mother'd want me to watch over  
you and try to have something  
like a home for you --

(her voice,  
hoarse and  
wet, is  
tragically  
sincere)

And I tried -- I tried to make  
things as nice for you as I  
could -- I walked my heels down  
looking for a place for us to  
live -- I walked and walked over  
this town -- I didn't ride one  
block on a street car -- I  
wouldn't use five cents no matter  
how tired I -- Oh! -- (cont'd)

(CONTINUED)

FANNY (cont'd)

(sobbing  
uncontrollably)

Oh! And now -- you don't want  
-- you want -- you want to  
leave me in the lurch! You --

GEORGE

Aunt Fanny! Quit spreading  
out your handkerchief and  
drying it and then getting it  
all wet again! And get up!  
Don't sit there with your back  
against the boiler and -- <15>

FANNY

(sniffling)

It's not hot. It's cold. The  
plumbers disconnected it. I  
wouldn't mind if they hadn't.  
I wouldn't mind if it burned  
me, George.

GEORGE

For gosh sake, get up!

He lifts her to her feet and leads her to the dining  
room.

INT. DINING ROOM - AMBERSON MANSION - DAY (1911)

133

This room has also been dismantled and contains only  
two kitchen chairs and a rough table. George leads  
Fanny in from the kitchen and seats her in one of the  
chairs.

GEORGE

There!

He exits to the kitchen and returns with the coffee pot,  
some lumps of sugar in a tin pan, and a couple of water  
glasses. He pours some of the pale coffee into the  
glasses.

GEORGE (cont'd)

Let's see where we stand.  
Let's see if we can afford  
this place you've picked out --

(CONTINUED)

FANNY

(brightening)

I'm sure the boarding house is practical, George -- and it is a comfort to be among nice people.

GEORGE

I was thinking about the money, Aunt Fanny. You see --

FANNY

(quickly)

There's one great economy. They don't allow any tipping. They have signs that prohibit it.

GEORGE

(grimly)

That's good. But the rent's thirty-six dollars a month; the dinner's twenty-two and a half for each of us. I've got about a hundred dollars left. We won't need any clothes for a year, perhaps --

FANNY

Oh, longer! So you see --

GEORGE

I see that forty-five and thirty-six make eighty-one. At the lowest we need a hundred dollars a month -- and I'm going to make thirty-two --

QUICK DISSOLVE

INT. BRONSON'S OFFICE - DAY (1911)

134 It is early and Bronson, who has just seated himself at his big, flat-topped desk, is surprised when George walks in. He is also pleased and rises, offering a cordial hand.

BRONSON

The real flare! The real flare for the law. That's right! Couldn't wait till tomorrow to begin! The law is a jealous mistress and a stern mistress, but a --

(CONTINUED)

GEORGE

(bursting out)  
I can't do it! I can't take  
her for my mistress.

BRONSON

What?

GEORGE

I've come to tell you I've got  
to find something quicker.  
Something else that pays from  
the start.

BRONSON

(getting  
ready to  
be angry)  
I can't think of anything just  
at this minute that pays from  
the start.

GEORGE

I've heard they pay very high  
wages to people in dangerous  
trades; people that handle  
touchy chemicals or high  
explosives -- men in dynamite  
factories. I thought I'd see  
if I couldn't get a job like  
that -- as soon as possible.  
I wanted to get started  
tomorrow if I could.

BRONSON

Georgie, your grandfather and  
I were boys together. Don't  
you think I ought to know  
what's the trouble?

GEORGE

It's Aunt Fanny. She's set her  
mind on this particular boarding  
house and -- it seems she put  
everything in the headlight company  
-- and -- well -- she's got some  
old cronies there, and I guess  
she's been looking forward to  
the games of bridge and the kind  
of harmless gossip that goes on  
in such places. Really, it's  
a life she'd like better than  
anything else -- and it struck  
me she's just about got to have  
it.

(CONTINUED)

BRONSON

I got her into that headlight business with Jack. I feel a certain responsibility myself --

GEORGE

I'm taking one responsibility.  
 ((smiles with  
 one corner  
 of his mouth))  
 She's not your aunt, you know, sir.

BRONSON

Well, I'm unable to see, even if she's yours, that a young man is morally called upon to give up a career at the law to provide his aunt with a favorable opportunity to play bridge whist!

George looks at him. Bronson returns a long stare.

BRONSON (cont'd)

All right. If you'll promise not to get blown up, I'll see if we can find you the job -- You certainly are the most practical young man I ever met!

DISSOLVE

INT. RAILROAD STATION - DAY (1911)

135 Jack and George are sitting together on one of the waiting benches. Jack's valise is on the floor beside him.

JACK

-- Just a hundred, George. I know you can't spare it, but I really must have something to tide me over in Washington till things are settled.

George has already taken out his wallet. He looks around uncertainly.

JACK

(with a grin)  
 Nobody's looking.

(CONTINUED)

George hands him the money. Jack puts it away and starts to laugh, but now with great cheerfulness.

JACK (cont'd)  
 We'll survive, Georgie -- you will especially. For my part, I'll be content with just surviving, and I can do it on an eighteen-hundred-dollar-a-year consulship. An ex-Congressman can always be pretty sure of getting some such job, and I hear from Washington the matter's about settled. I'll live pleasantly enough with a pitcher of ice under a palm tree, and native folk to wait on me -- that part of it will be like home --

GEORGE  
 (growing red)  
 I wish you'd take more.

JACK  
 (declining)  
 One thing I'll say for you, young George; you haven't a stingy bone in your body. That's the Amberson stock in you.

(puts his hand on George's shoulder; his voice a little husky)

I -- ah -- I may not see you again, Georgie -- it's quite probable that from this time on we'll only know each other by letter -- until you're notified as my next of kin that there's an old valise to be forwarded to you, and perhaps some dusty curios from the consulate mantelpiece. Well, it's an odd way for us to be saying good-bye; one wouldn't have thought it, even a few years ago, but here we are, two gentlemen of elegant appearance in a state of bustitude. (cont'd)

JACK (cont'd)

We can't ever tell what will happen at all, can we? Once I stood where we're standing now, to say good-bye to a pretty girl -- only it was in the old station before this was built and we called it the "depot." We knew we wouldn't see each other again for almost a year. I thought I couldn't live through it -- and she stood there, crying. Well, I don't even know where she lives now, or if she is living -- and I only want to think of her sometimes when I'm here at the station waiting for a train. If she ever thinks of me she probably imagines I'm still dancing in the ballroom at the Amberson Mansion, and she probably thinks of the Mansion as still beautiful -- still the finest house in town. Life and money both behave like loose quicksilver in a nest of cracks. And when they're gone we can't tell where -- or what the devil we did with 'em! But I believe I'll say now -- while there isn't much time left for either of us to get embarrassed about it -- I believe I'll say that I've always been fond of you, Georgie, but I can't say that I always liked you. We all spoiled you terribly when you were a boy. But you've got a pretty heavy jolt -- and you've taken it pretty quietly and -- well, with the train coming into the shed, you'll forgive me for saying that there have been times when I thought you ought to be hanged -- but I've always been fond of you, and now I like you; And just for a last word: there may be somebody else in this town who's always felt about you like that -- fond of you, I mean, no matter how much it seemed you ought to be hanged. You might try -- Hello, I must run.

He grabs his valise and jumps up.

(CONTINUED)

JACK (cont'd)

I'll send back the money as  
fast as they pay me -- so  
good-bye and God bless you,  
Georgie!

He rushes off to catch the train and is lost from  
sight in the hurrying crowd.

DISSOLVE OUT

NARRATOR

George Amberson Minafer walked homeward slowly through what seemed to be the strange streets of a strange city; for the town was growing and changing as it never had grown and changed before. It was heaving up in the middle incredibly; it was spreading incredibly; and as it heaved and spread, it befouled itself and darkened its sky. In this alley he'd fought with two boys at the same time, and whipped them. On that sagging porch a laughing woman had fed him and other boys with doughnuts and gingerbread. Yonder the relics of the iron picket fence he'd made his white pony jump, on a dare. And in the shabby stone-faced house behind the fence he'd gone to children's parties -- and when he was a little older he'd danced there often and fallen in love with Mary Sharon and kissed her, apparently by force, under the stairs in the hall --

136 ~~(1911)~~  
DISSOLVE IN - George is walking slowly up the street away from camera. CAMERA FOLLOWS, MOVING FASTER than he does until it is so close that his body creates a dark screen for a DISSOLVE.

In a SLOW MOVING SHOT we see the following (with a sort of slight dissolve or wipe from one scene to the other, but retaining a moving-forward speed) for the camera, which is now George, is slowly walking along the street and we are seeing what George sees:

- 137 A shabby, stone-faced house behind a fence, its double front doors, of carved walnut, once glossily varnished, have been painted smoke gray, but the smoke grime shows; and over the doors a smoked sign proclaims the place to be a "Stag Hotel."
- 138 Other houses that have become boardinghouses too genteel for signs, but many are franker, some offering "board by the day, week or meal," and some, with the label: "Rooms."
- 139 One, having torn out part of an old stone-trimmed bay window for purposes of commercial display, showed forth two suspended petticoats and a pair of oyster-colored flannel trousers to prove the claims of its black-and-gilt sign: "French Cleaning and Dye House."
- 140 Its next neighbor also sports a remodeled front and permits no doubt that its mission in life is to attend cosily upon death: "J. M. Rolsener, Caskets. The Funeral Home."
- 141 A plain old honest four-square, gray-painted brick house decorated with a great gilt scroll on the railing of the old-fashioned veranda: "Mutual Benev't Order Cavaliers and Dames of Purity."

NARRATOR (cont'd)

This was the last "walk home" he was ever to take up National Avenue to Amberson Addition and the big old house at the foot of Amberson Boulevard --

-- But even the name had been changed --

185-223  
0779 166

142 CAMERA IS MOVING up National Avenue to Amberson Addition. It stops at the intersection. (1911)

143 CLOSEUP of the street sign. The arm of it now bears the name "10th Street" where the name "Amberson Boulevard" used to be.

Over this CLOSEUP we hear the sound of a car coming to a stop, very close to camera, and we hear:

YOUNG LADY'S VOICE

One sees so many nice-looking people one doesn't know nowadays.

CAMERA PANS across to the car -- a red one, glittering in brass, with half a dozen young people in it whose motorism has reached an extreme manifestation in dress. The ladies of this party are looking favorably at the camera.

YOUNG LADY (cont'd)

This old town of ours is really getting enormous. I shouldn't mind knowing who he is.

YOUNG MAN

(loudly)

I don't know. I don't know who he is, but from his looks I know who he thinks he is: he thinks he's the Grand Duke Cuthbert!

144 SHOT of George, from ANGLE of the people in the car.

GEORGE

(scornfully)

Riff raff!

The driver of the car is heard throwing it into gear. The CAMERA PULLS AWAY SLOWLY, then FASTER (as though it is the car), leaving George, a very

## NARRATOR

The city had rolled over his heart and buried it under as it rolled over the Major's and the Ambersons' and buried them under to the last vestige.

Tonight would be the last night that he and Fanny were to spend in the house which the Major had forgotten to deed to Isabel. Tomorrow they were to "move out."

Tomorrow everything would be gone; the very space in which tonight was still Isabel's room would be cut into new shapes by new walls and floors and ceilings. And if space itself can be haunted as memory is haunted, then it may be that some impressionable, overworked woman in a "kitchenette," after turning out the light, will seem to see a young man kneeling in the darkness,

145 FULL SHOT of the Amberson Mansion, seen from behind George who is standing in front of camera. He starts walking toward the mansion. CAMERA FOLLOWS, moving faster than he does and soon is so close to him that his body creates a dark screen for a DISSOLVE TO:

146 CAMERA is on the steps of the Amberson Mansion, MOVING up to the door and STOPPING. George's hands enter the scene, insert a key in the lock, turn it --

147 On the Narrator's words, "move out" the door opens and CAMERA MOVES thru it into the house.

MOVING SHOT as CAMERA WANDERS SLOWLY about the dismantled house -- past the bare reception room; the dining room which contains only a kitchen table and two kitchen chairs; up the stairs, close to the smooth walnut railing of the balustrade. Here CAMERA STOPS for a moment, then PANS down to the heavy doors which mask the dark, empty library. HOLD on this for a short pause, then CAMERA PANS back and CONTINUES, even more slowly, up the stairs to the second floor hall where it MOVES up to the closed door of Isabel's room. The door swings open and we see Isabel's room is still as it always has been; nothing has been changed. FADE OUT

Narrator talks through the Fade --

## NARRATOR

with arms outstretched through the wall,  
clutching at the covers of a shadowy bed. It  
may seem to her that she hears the faint cry,  
over and over ----

-- Something had happened -- a thing which, years  
ago had been the eagerest hope of many, many  
good citizens of the town. And now it came at  
last: George Amberson Minafer had got his  
comeuppance. He got it three times filled and  
running over. But those who had so longed for  
it were not there to see it, and they never knew  
it.

Those who were still living had forgotten all  
about it and all about him --

148 The dark screen FADES INTO a VERY CLOSE SHOT on George's back, and immediately CAMERA PULLS AWAY showing George, kneeling beside Isabel's bed, his hands clutching the covers. Right after the Narrator's words: "over and over" we hear:

GEORGE  
Mother, forgive me! God  
forgive me!

CAMERA CONTINUES PULLING AWAY until it holds a FULL SHOT of the room, with George kneeling motionless at the bed. HOLD on this until:

Narrator says, "and they never knew it." The scene starts SLOW DISSOLVE TO:

149 SHOT of the Amberson Mansion -- massive as the old house is, it manages to look gaunt: its windows stare with the skull emptiness of all windows in empty houses that are to be lived in no more. Of course, the rowdy boys of the neighborhood have been at work; many of these haggard windows are broken; the front door stands ajar, forced open; and idiot salacity, in white chalk, is smeared everywhere upon the pillars and stone-work of the veranda. FADE OUT

JP

FADE IN

489

EXT. GARDEN - MORGAN MANSION - DAY (1912)

150 Lucy and Eugene are walking in their garden.

LUCY

Did you ever hear the Indian name for that little grove of beech trees?

EUGENE

(laughing)

No -- and you never did either!

LUCY

The name was "Loma-Nashah" and it means "They-Couldn't-Help-it."

EUGENE

Doesn't sound like it.

LUCY

Indian names don't. There was a bad Indian Chief lived there -- the worst Indian that ever lived, and his name was -- it was "Vendonah." That means "Rides-Down-Everything."

EUGENE

What?

LUCY

His name was Vendonah, the same thing as Rides-Down-Everything.

EUGENE

(thoughtfully)

I see.

(gives her a quick look, then fixes his eyes upon the end of the garden path)

Go on.

(CONTINUED)

LUCY

Vendonah was unspeakable. He was so proud that he wore iron shoes and he walked over people's faces with them. He was always killing people that way, and so at the last the tribe decided that it wasn't a good enough excuse for him that he was young and inexperienced -- he'd have to go. They took him down to the river and put him in a canoe, and pushed him out from shore; and the current carried the canoe out into the middle and then on down to the ocean, and he never got back. They didn't want him back, of course. But still they didn't elect another chief in his place. They hated Vendonah but they weren't able to discover any other warrior they wanted to make chief in his place. They couldn't help feeling that way.

EUGENE

I see. So that's why they named the place, "They-Couldn't-Help-It!"

LUCY

It must have been.

EUGENE

(musingly)

And so you're going to stay here in your garden. You think it's better to keep on walking these sunshiny gravel paths between your flower beds, and getting to look like a pensive garden-lady in a Victorian engraving.

LUCY

I suppose I'm like the tribe that lived here, Papa. I had too much unpleasant excitement. It was unpleasant -- but it was excitement. I don't want any more; in fact, I don't want anything but you.

EUGENE

You don't?

(CONTINUED)

(He looks at her keenly and she laughs and shakes her head; but he seems perplexed, rather doubtful.

EUGENE (cont'd)

What was the name of the grove?  
The Indian name, I mean.

LUCY

Mola-Haha.

EUGENE

No, it wasn't; that wasn't the  
name you said.

LUCY

I've forgotten.

EUGENE

(his look of  
perplexity  
remaining)

I see you have. Perhaps you  
remember the chief's name  
better.

LUCY

(shaking  
her head  
again)

I don't.

EUGENE

I hope some day you can forget  
it.

DISSOLVE

EXT. BUSY STREET CORNER - DAY (1912)

151

As the scene is DISSOLVING in, an ambulance is swinging around the corner and coming to a stop. It backs around a big crowd of people. Attendants take a stretcher from the back of it, disappear with it behind the crowd for a few moments, and then reappear and return the stretcher to the ambulance with a body on it. During this a smallish young man in a duster fidgets among the crowd, explaining and protesting. Simultaneously with this, a policeman is talking to a fellow patrolman who has joined him. The policeman dominates the scene.

(CONTINUED)

<S>POLICEMAN  
 It's wunnerful the  
 damage them little  
 machines can do --  
 you'd never think it --  
 but I guess they ain't  
 much case ag'in this  
 fella that was drivin'  
 it...

Funny what he says to  
 the little cuss that  
 done the damage. That's  
 all he did call him --  
 nothin' else at all --  
 an' the cuss had broke  
 both his legs fer him and  
 gosh-knows-what-all!

YOUNG MAN  
 (with bitterness)  
 You bet your life they  
 ain't no case on me!  
 I'm sorry fer him, all  
 right, but it wasn't  
 any more my fault than  
 the statehouse! He run  
 into me, much as I run  
 into him, and if he gets  
 well he ain't goin' to get  
 not one single cent out o'  
 me! I'm perfectly willin'  
 to say I'm sorry fer him,  
 though, an' so's the lady  
 with me. We're both  
 willin' to say that much,  
 but that's all, understand?

During the above, the ambulance clangs away and the  
 crowd disperses.

2ND POLICEMAN  
 I wasn't here then. What was  
 it?

POLICEMAN  
 Riffraff!

DISSOLVE

INT. EUGENE'S OFFICE - MORGAN AUTOMOBILE PLANT - DUSK  
 (1912)

152 CLOSEUP - item in newspaper, under an out-of-focus  
 headline -- "AUTOMOBILE BUTCHERY" -- reading:

"STREET ACCIDENT  
 G.A. Minafer, an employee of the  
 Akers Chemical Co., was run down  
 by an automobile yesterday at  
 the corner of Tennessee and Main  
 and had both legs broken...."

Eugene, with his hat on the back of his head and one  
 arm through the sleeve of his overcoat, is looking down  
 at the paper. He sticks the other arm into the coat,  
 picks up the newspaper and puts it in his pocket.

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN

153

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE MORGAN AUTOMOBILE PLANT - DUSK (1912)

153 CLOSE SHOT at Eugene's car, ANGLING past the chauffeur in driver's seat, toward back of the car. Eugene, the newspaper in his pocket, steps quickly into the car and pulls the door closed behind him.

EUGENE

(during the  
above)

I won't go home now, Harry.  
Drive to the City Hospital.

HARRY

Yes, sir. Miss Lucy's there.

Eugene looks up sharply.

HARRY (cont'd)

She said she expected you'd  
come there before you went home.

EUGENE

She did?

HARRY

Yes, sir.

EUGENE

(stares)  
I suppose Mr. Minafer must be  
pretty bad.

HARRY

Yes, sir.

Harry puts the car in gear and drives off.

DISSOLVE

EXT. CITY HOSPITAL - DUSK (1912)

154 Eugene's car drives up and stops. Eugene gets out and goes into the hospital.

DISSOLVE OUT

DISSOLVE IN  
EXT. CITY HOSPITAL - NIGHT (1912)

155 Eugene's car waiting. Eugene comes out of the hospital sadly and quietly, and gets in the car.

EUGENE  
Take me home, Harry.

DISSOLVE

EXT. MORGAN HOUSE - NIGHT (1912)

156 The car pulls up to the door. Eugene gets out.

HARRY  
Good night, Mr. Morgan.

EUGENE  
Good night.

He goes into the house.

DISSOLVE

INT. LIBRARY - MORGAN MANSION - NIGHT (1912)

157 Eugene comes into the library, goes to his secretary and takes out his diary, unlocks the clasp with a tiny key on his watch chain, opens it, picks up a pen and starts to write.

158 CLOSEUP of Eugene as he writes. We hear only the scratching of his pen, and on the sound track his voice.

EUGENE'S VOICE

(on sound track)

Dearest Isabel -- your boy was hurt in a street accident today -- run down by an automobile. I thought at first I wouldn't go to see him at the hospital, but of course I did. I thought it would be hard not to be bitter but I found it was easy -- he looked so much like you, dearest one. As I came in, he lifted his hand in a queer gesture, half-forbidding, half-imploring, then let his arm fall back on the covers. (cont'd)

(CONTINUED)

EUGENE'S VOICE (cont'd)

(on sound track)

He said, "You must have thought my mother wanted you to come so that I could ask you to -- to forgive me." Lucy was beside him and she shook her head. "No," she said, "just to take his hand - gently." She was radiant...But for me another radiance filled the room - and I knew I'd been true at last to my true love and that through me you had brought your boy under shelter again....

FADE OUT

THE END

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