

DECORATIVE OBJECTS (Pilot "These Women")

An hour-long television period drama written by
Christy Escobar, Caroline Hewitt, and Paul Hufker

Inspired by real-life people and events

November 4, 2021

Made in Highland

PROLOGUE:

BLACK. QUOTE appears: "If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the world upside down, these women together ought to be able to turn it right again. -- Sojourner Truth"

FADE to BLACK.

1 EXT. NYC. MORNING.

1

Delicate pink hands in a fine lady's dressing room hold an intricately embroidered corset around a narrow waist. Pull the laces tight. A sharp intake of breath.

A tattered, sweat-stained corset in a plain bedroom. Chapped fingers tug the laces hard and a wide waist becomes much smaller. A suppressed groan.

A third woman hoists her breasts so she can cinch her plain muslin corset as tight as possible in her middle class bedroom. More groaning. Something cracks.

Quickly now, several more pairs of female hands on laces, cinching, tightening, again and again.

TITLE OVER: New York City, 1883

And now, ANNIE BRACKETT (early 50s) pulls the laces of her dingy corset tight in her austere MANHATTAN room, despite severe bruising on her arms and chest. She slowly knots the laces, and breaks into a primal cry of pain and frustration, as if for all the women.

ANNIE BRACKETT
Arrrrrggghhhh!!!

The scream continues, morphs into...

2 INT. HEWITT HOME, SALLY'S BEDROOM. MORNING.

2

Close up on NELLIE's lips, as she mock-screams.

NELLIE
Arrrrrggghhhh! Please sir, I'm
just a simple girl! Weak and frail
and... "delicate as a flower..."

NELLIE (19) has her back PRESSED against her BEDROOM wall, a SWORD to her THROAT.

Made in Highland

Pinning her against the wall is a body clad in a tricorn hat and long tattered coat. TIGHT on NELLIE'S frightened face.

PIRATE

You should know better than to
walk these murky shoals after
dark--Weak and frail my arrrrse!

NELLIE

But Pirate King, I shall swoon!

PIRATE

I know your female wiles, and
manipulatin' ways! You girllies
always faint just when trouble is
at its worst. Tryin' to trick us,
y'arrrr...

AMY, (26) the oldest HEWITT sister, enters the room.

AMY

If the Pirate King is going to
slit her throat, he'd better hurry
up about it. Mother asked us to be
ready half an hour ago.

The "PIRATE KING"--SALLY HEWITT, 23--turns to face AMY. Under the tricorn and coat, she is wearing a camisole and bloomers, as well as an eye patch and a painted-on mustache. NELLIE is also in a state of creative undress.

SALLY

Nellie got out the dress-up box
and we couldn't help ourselves--

AMY

Nell, I need your eye. Which is
better with my gown? The
cornflower or the freesia?

AMY holds up two purple flowers to her hair. NELLIE regards them briefly, and expertly.

NELLIE

The freesia. A symbol of trust and
faith. And the color brings out
the grey in your eyes.

SALLY

James won't be able to resist you.
(pirate voice)
Quite a specimen, y'arrrr...

NELLIE puts the flowers in AMY's hair. AMY is pleased. She holds up ornate pants.

Made in Highland

AMY

Are you actually planning to wear trousers to the Vanderbilt ball tonight?

NELLIE

When we dress up the way we want to, we almost always choose to be men.

SALLY

Because we can move in men's clothing! And breathe!

AMY

You do our sex a disservice by saving the fun for when you put on pants.

SALLY

But don't men have more fun, generally?

NELLIE tucks another flower into AMY'S hair.

NELLIE

When the world believes you're a delicate flower, adventure isn't easy--

AMY

Have you met Annie's replacement?

SALLY

Not yet, she only arrived this morning.

NELLIE

Mother says she's from Ireland.

AMY

Poor thing, her first day, the day of the Vanderbilt Ball.

SALLY

Coming to a house where the... patriarch...

NELLIE

How can we think about something as selfish as attending a ball when Grandfather is ill?

3 INT. HEWITT HOME, HALLWAY. MORNING. 3

BRIDGET WALSH, 20's, the NEW MAID, listens intently outside SALLY'S bedroom door, laden with more costumes.

4 INT. HEWITT HOME, SALLY'S BEDROOM. MORNING. 4

SALLY
Grandfather would be the first to
say we ought to enjoy ourselves
while we're young.

NELLIE
When will he get well again, do
you think?

AMY
(gently)
Nell. He's 92. No one recovers
from old age.

NELLIE
But he's Peter Cooper! He's made
of the toughest stuff. They don't
call him the greatest citizen of
New York for nothing.

5 INT. HEWITT HOME, HALLWAY. MORNING. 5

In the hallway just outside SALLY'S BEDROOM, BRIDGET straightens her back, arranges her face into something resembling deferential humility. She makes sure that her humble silver claddagh necklace is visible outside the collar of her uniform, pinches her cheeks, and knocks on the door.

AMY (from off)
Come in!

6 INT. HEWITT HOME, SALLY'S BEDROOM. MORNING. 6

BRIDGET enters.

BRIDGET
(Irish accent)
Excuse me, misses, is there
somewhere you'd prefer these items
be placed?

SALLY
Just throw them anywhere. Bridget,
is it? You're just in time to
dress me.

Made in Highland

Bridget enters. She LOOKS AROUND Sally's room and sees many eccentric, rare, ornate pieces of art and artifacts from around the world. On every shelf, on every desktop, in every cranny, there is something bizarre and wonderful.

BRIDGET
Of course Miss... Sally..?

NELLIE
And I'm Nellie! And this is our
older sister, Amy.

BRIDGET sets down the items and laces SALLY's corset. The sisters watch her work.

NELLIE
Are you new to the city?

BRIDGET
Just arrived two days ago, Miss.
Your father had a man recruiting
at the docks. I was meant to be
working on my cousins' farm in a
place called Connect-i-cut, only I
waited at the station like her
letter said and her husband didn't
fetch me.

AMY
I'm so sorry, that must have been
very distressing.

BRIDGET'S face shows that it was distressing.

SALLY
(suddenly galant)
Sweet Bridget, you don't need to
be rescued by a man -- your
cousin's husband, or my father's
man at the docks, or whomever! You
have us!

BRIDGET
Thank you, Miss Nellie.

SALLY grimaces as BRIDGET tugs the laces.

NELLIE
(a realization)
Perhaps we swoon because the
unconscious female is the only
really safe female!

SALLY
You mean playing dead, like a
possum?

AMY
It's just a physical reaction.
Corsets restrict blood flow to the
brain and lungs.

NELLIE
Torture devices.

AMY
Men may have invented them, but
women persist in wearing them.

BRIDGET is interested in the conversation but tries to be
DISCREET as she finishes tying SALLY's corset. SALLY admires
herself in the mirror.

SALLY
Hmmm. I think I shan't wear a
corset tonight after all. I shall
enjoy feeling--uninhibited.

SALLY unlaces the corset, undoing all of BRIDGET's hard work in
a swift movement. AMY raises an eyebrow at SALLY.

7

INT. BLACKWELL RESIDENCE. MORNING.

7

Etta Blackwell (18) cinches her sister RUTHIE (15) into a plain
corset. Their modest bedroom is a sharp contrast from the
luxurious world of the HEWITT SISTERS.

RUTHIE
Do I have to wear it?

ETTA
You're not a little girl anymore,
Ruthie.

RUTHIE
What are corsets even for?

ETTA
Think of them as armor. To keep
unwanted hands from reaching you.
To keep your backbone straight and
your chest proud.

RUTHIE
Whose unwanted hands are trying to
reach you?

Made in Highland

ETTA

That's not for you to worry about.
C'mon. Mrs. Fletcher's laundry
won't wait.

RUTHIE regards herself in the mirror.

RUTHIE

How am I supposed to work when I
can hardly breathe?

RUTHIE burps and erupts into giggles. ETTA rolls her eyes.

ETTA

Finish getting dressed and get on
downstairs. I'll be along in a
minute.

RUTHIE pauses putting on her dress.

RUTHIE

Mama's gonna be mad.

ETTA

I'll be along in one second. I got
a picture in my head and I need to
put it down on paper.

RUTHIE

You get yourself into an awful
lotta trouble just for some
drawings. You almost got caught
last time!

ETTA pulls out charcoal and paper from under the sister's
shared bed.

ETTA

I didn't. And I keep telling you,
I got pictures in my head. Some
people talk, or write--I see
things, in my heart. And with
charcoal and a piece of paper, I
can make 'em come alive. I can
make my world exactly the way I
see it. And if we can't picture
what we want, how do we set about
getting it?

RUTHIE

How about you picture us a world
without Mrs. Fletcher's crusty old
drawers!

Made in Highland

ETTA suppresses a laugh. She has a point. RUTHIE gives ETTA a look and exits.

ETTA takes a shallow breath. She looks at her paper and charcoal, and closes her eyes. Her hands draw expertly.

8

INT. LI XIU'S CHINATOWN APARTMENT. DUSK.

8

A HEAVY, ANTIQUE, TEA TRAY is held by a pair of female hands. LI XIU (26), a recent Chinese immigrant, is balancing it, as she NAVIGATES the many sitting, standing, lying, laughing, eating, drinking, and shouting male bodies in her home. She grudgingly hands the teacups to the men, while they POUR their tea and replace the heavy teapot on the tray. Some men are less friendly than others. Li is clearly above this kind of work and is not happy about doing it. The scene is in Cantonese, with English subtitles.

HOUSEGUEST #1

--overnight shift. Not bad pay.

HOUSEGUEST #2

Metalwork?

HOUSEGUEST #1

Stonework. Lifting limestone blocks.

HOUSEGUEST #2

Last I'd heard they only wanted Irish or Eastern European workers.

HOUSEGUEST #3

The white men only let us work for them because no one else will. After fourteen years, even the Irish aren't stupid enough to return to that death trap.

HOUSEGUEST #1

The Irish aren't the Chinese. We're stronger, smarter, better workers.

HOUSEGUEST #2

Can you get me a job?

HOUSEGUEST #1

Line up with the rest of us. If they need more men maybe you'll get picked.

Made in Highland

HOUSEGUEST #3

Picked by the angel of death! That bridge is bad luck. I wouldn't work there for anything.

HOUSEGUEST #1

No, you'd rather lie around here getting fat off Huang's wife's cooking.

They laugh. LI looks on in disgust.

The door to the tenement opens, LI's husband, HUANG (35) enters. LI happily sets down the tray and rushes toward him.

LI

Any luck?

HUANG shakes his head.

HUANG

Twelve years as a surgeon in Shanghai means nothing here. Ridiculous: a body is a body, blood is blood. Not even fit to be an orderly, they said.

LI

This country is not what we were promised.

HUANG

And tonight: back to working 300 feet above a river.

She saddens. He embraces her.

HUANG

Was it worth it?

LI

Marrying you?

HUANG

These last sixteen days of marriage?

LI smiles.

HUANG

Your parents will never release your money.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

HUANG (CONT'D)

As long as you stay with me and do not marry your family's choice, this is where we live.

LI

I know, but--

HUANG

But your family's name got us to America, didn't it? Simply presenting a document or two and spending the little cash we had pushed us past the new immigration regulations. To pursue our own lives, and not the one your parents envision.

LI

And what about what we envision?

She turns to the room, subtly gesturing in the slouched bodies.

HUANG

Yes, we live in this small apartment now, but not forever. Not forever with all these...men. We need them now, Li, but not forever.

LI

(hoping against hope)
You will find work in a hospital?

HUANG

(nodding)
As a surgeon. And what will you do?

She thinks. Before she can answer...

GUEST #1

Huang! Are you on second-shift with me again, or are those surgeon's hands too fragile to move rock?

HUANG kisses LI, moves to talk to his friends. LI picks the tea set up and moves on. So many men, so many legs and arms. Which is the best path to the kitchen? She surveys, snorts an angry, DEEP BREATH.

Made in Highland

9

INT. HEWITT HOME, NELLIE'S ROOM. NIGHT.

9

NELLIE, SALLY, and AMY wait outside a closed door. They are dressed in their lavish costumes for the ball: SALLY wears a Persian Princess costume, and carries a sword. NELLIE is dressed as Madame Le Diable, in a red dress with a black velvet demon embroidered on it. AMY wears the costume of summer, with light blue and white satin trimmed with sheaves of wheat, and with a jeweled scythe and freesias in her hair.

NELLIE

I feel ridiculous looking in on
Grandfather dressed like this.

SALLY

A visit from a Persian Princess
and Madame le Diable will amuse
him.

BRIDGET hands AMY a steaming cup on a saucer.

BRIDGET

Tea with lemon and ginger, for Mr.
Cooper. My granny in Ireland swore
by it.

AMY

Thank you, Bridget. That's
thoughtful.

The door to the room opens, the matriarch, AMELIA COOPER HEWITT, (53) exits, along with a dour looking, mutton-chopped, DR. CROSBY (50s) in whispered conversation.

DR. CROSBY

Are you certain you don't want me
to apply leeches?

AMELIA

Quite certain, thank you.

DR. CROSBY

I'll leave my bill with your
housekeeper.

AMELIA

Of course.

He ducks into a nearby room to retrieve his items.

NELLIE

(to SALLY, sotto voce)

He'll bleed grandfather dry one
way or another.

Made in Highland

SALLY giggles a bit.

As DR. CROSBY passes SALLY on his way down the narrow hallway, his hand brushes her thigh, only to encounter a sword resting there.

SALLY
I beg your pardon!

DR. CROSBY continues as though nothing has happened.

SALLY
Dr. Crosby just tried to pinch me!

NELLIE
They don't call him Crabhands
Crosby for nothing.

AMELIA
Girls, come.

10 INT. HEWITT HOME - CONT.

10

A large, plainly-furnished bedroom. Peter Cooper lies awake on a bed, propped up by pillows, breathing with difficulty.

PETER COOPER
(with effort)
The Vanderbilt Ball?

AMY
The grandest of the century.

NELLIE
We'd rather stay here with you.

PETER COOPER
Nonsense. You must go. Everywhere
you want to go, you must go.
Especially when people tell you
you cannot.

SALLY
Is that what you did, Grandfather?

PETER COOPER
No. I was rarely forbidden from
going anywhere. I was lucky. But
you girls--how I wish I could live
another 92 years to see the world
you will create.

Made in Highland

SALLY
But what can we create? We can't
work. We can't travel alone.

NELLIE
We can't even vote.

SALLY rolls her eyes.

PETER COOPER
Ah, but they're you're wrong. You
can vote with your lives. Vote
with your money. Vote with your
choices.

NELLIE makes a face.

PETER COOPER
And most of all, show the people
who say you can't--show them the
world as you'd like it to be. I--

PETER begins to cough.

PETER COOPER
I wasn't anyone special. I was
simply lucky. And so are you, in
many ways. Use your privilege for
good, use your privilege--

He coughs uncontrollably. AMY tries to help him drink the tea,
but PETER COOPER continues to cough.

AMELIA
Go ahead darlings, I'll be down in
a minute.

AMY kisses her grandfathers' forehead. SALLY, NELLIE, and AMY
start to leave.

AMY
(quietly)
We love you grandfather!

NELLIE
(quietly)
We love you.

They go. SALLY is affected by her grandfather's words. PETER
COOPER continues to cough.

Made in Highland

11 INT. LI XIU'S CHINATOWN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

11

HOUSEGUESTS EXIT the apartment, off to their night shifts. LI holds the door for them, but only because she wants them out. HUANG is last. He lingers. Cantonese with SUBTITLES.

LI

I like the quiet. Just us two.
Reminds me of back home. So many
rooms in my father's house for us
to escape into. And now...

Li sighs as Huang kisses the top of her head. Li snuggles into Huang's chest.

LI

I can hear your heartbeat.

HUANG

I know it hasn't been easy, but
Li, soon we will start a family.
We will-

LI

(suddenly dejected)
We will be forced west! I despise
this country.

HUANG

We won't be forced west.

LI

Everyone we know who can't find
work is being pushed from the
city!

HUANG

(he's asked this before)
I will find real work. And you:
will you sew? You love it and your
brilliant hands can help keep us
afloat.

LI

(she's said this before)
My sewing is for family honor.
Work for money is beneath us.

Suddenly, there is FOOTMAN, a servant of the VANDERBILTS, in the doorway. The following lines are in English.

FOOTMAN

Lee Zyoo? For you. It's urgent.

Made in Highland

He hands LI a CARD. It reads, "Tear in gown. Come post-haste.
-- Alva Vanderbilt."

FOOTMAN

Mrs. Vanderbilt's carriage is
downstairs.

Li refuses to even look at the card, and tries to hand the card
to HUANG.

HUANG

(Cantonese)

You read English well, why not
read it yourself.

She just waves the card at him. He takes it.

HUANG

Mrs. Vanderbilt--the rich lady
having the big ball--has a tear in
her dress and she wants you to fix
it.

LI

(Cantonese)

How does she know of me?

HUANG

(Cantonese)

I've been telling everyone I can
that you're a first-rate
seamstress. I guess somehow word
got around.

FOOTMAN

She won't take no for an answer.
Extremely keen on Chinese for some
reason. I'll be waiting in the
hansom.

He goes.

LI

I don't want to go. These rich
white women sicken me, Huang. They
don't want women to vote; their
own kind! Remember, back home, I
helped organize? I even gave a
speech. My family's standing kept
the government from saying a
single word against me. I'd like
to do that here, but on these
streets I am only fodder for every
wild comment about my appearance.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

LI (CONT'D)

The rich men create this ugly pattern and the rich women carry it out.

HUANG

I know, my love. But here on the street we are free, not beholden to any government or any family. And your will, your sense of yourself is so strong, even Mrs. Vanderbilt cannot break it. Besides, if she has any sense at all she'll recognize how talented you are. These hands.

He takes her hands.

HUANG

Yes, you are educated, my love, and I know it is beneath your family. But what about our family?

She considers, looking around their home.

LI

If it's one step closer to getting these men out...

HUANG

When I'm done working I'll wait for you outside the Vanderbilt mansion? Northwest corner?

LI

(reluctantly)

Northwest corner. Full moon tonight.

He smiles, kisses her on the head, and exits. She looks at the CLOCK. 8PM.

12

EXT. A COURTYARD, BROOKLYN TENEMENT HOUSING. NIGHT.

12

The full moon reflected in the water of a basin. Suddenly LAUNDRY is PLUNGED into the large BASIN, scrambling the image of the moon. With each dunk, steam rises. ETTA and RUTHIE are finishing their work, washing the last load of the day. ETTA is hurrying, while RUTHIE stops frequently to stare up at the MOON, which hangs high and full in the sky.

Made in Highland

ETTA
Come on, we're almost done, don't
dawdle now, Ruthie.

RUTHIE snaps out of it and returns to her work.

13 INT. BLACKWELL HOUSE. NIGHT - CONT.

13

ETTA and RUTHIE come into the house, their MOTHER and FATHER are in the kitchen. The girls try to get upstairs before...

MR. BLACKWELL
Wait a minute. Come on in here in
the light.

ETTA takes RUTHIE'S hand, and the girls approach their parents. MR. BLACKWELL holds up a garment with a stain.

MR. BLACKWELL
This came back from Dr. and Mrs.
Crosby.

MRS. BLACKWELL
Which one of you was supposed to
launder this? Etta?

ETTA and RUTHIE look at each other. ETTA nudges RUTHIE.

RUTHIE
I was, papa.

ETTA hides her smile, delighted that her sister took the fall. MR. BLACKWELL is not pleased.

MR. BLACKWELL
That's twice Ruthie, in three
days! These people are hard enough
to please as it is. No room for
things to be done halfway. Halfway
means we don't get paid. Get on
upstairs.

14 INT. ETTA'S ROOM. NIGHT - CONT.

14

ETTA scrambles to put on a DRESS while her sister watches.

RUTHIE
I'm not doing that again.

ETTA
Come over here and help me.

Made in Highland

RUTHIE

No! You get me into trouble.

ETTA

Are you my sister? And do you love me?

RUTHIE rolls her eyes.

ETTA

'Cause if I get real good and they hang my pictures in a museum, I'll be rich. And I'll give you and mama and papa money and you'll be rich, too, ok? Now, help me get this dress on.

RUTHIE reluctantly comes over.

RUTHIE

Papa's gonna be angry at me.

ETTA

No, he's not. When I get home tonight, I'm gonna do all the extra mending, even if I gotta stay up all night.

RUTHIE

You're gonna get caught again.

ETTA

There's nothing to get caught at. I'm going to a party for lots of fancy white people. "The Ball of The Century" the newspapers are calling it.

RUTHIE

They won't let you in.

ETTA

I don't intend to try. I'll be outside, watching.

RUTHIE

You're gonna draw rich white people?

ETTA

Yes, I am. For the papers. For money!

Made in Highland

RUTHIE

What about everything you said
before? Drawing the world the way
you wanna see it?

ETTA

I'm trying. Now help me.

RUTHIE helps ETTA get on the DRESS that she has clearly
OUTGROWN.

RUTHIE

If momma and papa ask me where you
are, I'm gonna tell the truth!

They struggle to get the DRESS on.

ETTA

Ruthie, truth is just somebody's
rules. And people like us gotta
bend the rules sometimes to make
the world the way we want.

ETTA starts to go, but she can see RUTHIE is dismayed. She pets
her sister's head and looks in her eyes.

ETTA

You're too young to see it, but
this is for both of us.

She kisses RUTHIE on the forehead, and DUCKS out the window, a
big, excited GRIN on her face.

RUTHIE rushes to the window to watch her go.

15 EXT. GREENWICH VILLAGE COURTYARD. NIGHT.

15

ANNIE BRACKETT (late 40s) sweeps. The slate stones of the
sidewalk are spotless, and yet she keeps sweeping, almost
fearfully. PRUDENCE WILLIAMS watches her through the window of
her apartment across the courtyard.

16 INT. MANHATTAN APARTMENT. NIGHT.

16

PRUDENCE WILLIAMS, late 30's, sits at her SMALL WRITING TABLE
in her APARTMENT, looking out her window. A degree from OBERLIN
COLLEGE hangs on the wall, as well as THREE FRONT PAGE articles
from the Boston Herald: "Graft at Tammany Hall," "Women's
Suffrage Gains Momentum in Albany," "Tammany Hall Weakened as
Tweed Scandal Deepens," all WRITTEN BY HER.

Made in Highland

PAN TO: words written on the PAPER in front of her, "Vanderbilt Ball: Fashions and Foibles." PRUDENCE is bored, frustrated, and antsy. She taps her fingers on her desk, trying desperately to drum up some enthusiasm for this assignment. She LOOKS at a CLOCK hanging on the WALL. 10:00PM.

PRUDENCE

Arghh!

She balls up the paper she's been writing on and unbuttons the top button of her collar. She panics and unballs the paper, smooths it. She stands up and looks out the window, catching sight of ANNIE BRACKETT, still sweeping the sidewalk in front of the house across the street.

ANNIE is graceful, hardworking, mesmerizing. Suddenly a HANDSOME MAN (30s) comes out of the house, speaks harshly to her and grabs her arm, pulling her down the street.

PRUDENCE buttons her collar and rushes outside. When she gets outside ANNIE and the HANDSOME MAN are gone. PRUDENCE looks around, eager for a fight.

17

EXT. VANDERBILT MANSION. NIGHT.

17

A slightly limping ANNIE BRACKETT, an eye blackened by a fist, passes the VANDERBILT MANSION. She marvels at A LINE OF CARRIAGES that stretches all the way down 5th avenue and into the distance, right up to the stately VANDERBILT MANSION itself (660 5th Avenue), lit brilliantly by electric lights.

A large crowd gathers outside the mansion. Police officers, enamored onlookers, paparazzi, etc.

Reporters stand poised with pencil and paper. There are two standing cameras -- the most ever assembled in one place at-the-time! Amidst a sea of sketch artists, pencils fly as they capture the likenesses of the attendees, but ETTA stands still, her paper blank. Her eyes search.

An AGED MAN DRESSED AS LOUIS XIV and wearing pumps stumbles as he climbs the step to the mansion. He is frail, sad almost. Several FOOTMEN (20s) rush to help him. ETTA holds her charcoal to paper, but she makes a face; she cannot bring herself to draw him.

The NEXT GROUP to emerge are three middle-aged women DRESSED IN MEDIEVAL GARB, their faces giddy with anticipation. ETTA sighs, uninspired.

A THIRD CARRIAGE door opens and two new bodies emerge, a couple dressed as HENRY VIII and ELIZABETH I, quickly overtaken by a throng as the crowd surges forward. ETTA is swallowed in the chaos.

Made in Highland

The FOOTMEN and POLICEMEN slowly regain order, but ETTA remains determined and calm inside the frenzy.

18

INT. CARRIAGE, VANDERBILT BALL. NIGHT.

18

A yawning ABRAM HEWITT checks his pocket watch: 10:30 PM. AMY, NELLIE and SALLY sit eagerly on one side of the carriage, ABRAM and AMELIA, in Shakespearean garb, sleepily slump on the other.

NELLIE

So Amy, will you abandon us and spend the entire ball with James?

AMY

(with a smile)

Oh, the minute I get inside I'll find James directly, and won't see the likes of you until it is time to leave.

ABRAM

James is a fine young man.

AMELIA ELBOWS him. SALLY and NELLIE laugh.

ABRAM

What? What did I say?

SALLY

Amy is chained to James.

NELLIE

Shackled to him.

The carriage turns a corner, and they all take in the crush of onlookers, cameras, etc.

ABRAM

Has an era ever known such a maddening obsession with the press? There must be over a hundred of them out there.

AMELIA

The press has been kind to you, Abram. And to our girls.

AMY

Yes--when they print my likeness, they always leave out the chains.

Laughter.

Made in Highland

SALLY
Well, if they get my likeness
wrong, I shall take revenge! Their
pens may be their swords, but I
have a real one!

SALLY makes a motion to pull at her SWORD.

NELLIE
You'll need it tonight, Sal, to
keep Charles Drexel at bay.

SALLY
AGGGH! That man.

ABRAM
Drexel? His father and I were at
Columbia together.

SALLY
That man, with his many childish
attempts to--

NELLIE
Woo you...

SALLY
...I was going to say "establish
himself in business."

ABRAM
Randolph Drexel -- both his sons
work for him now, I believe.

SALLY
He has done nothing but denigrate
his father's name, and prey on the
poor.

NELLIE
And woo you.

SALLY
I will never be won over by a man
who makes his living off squeezing
out struggling tenants. Filthy,
ignoble beast.

AMELIA
Has he courted you so seriously?

A KNOCK on the carriage door. We see BRIDGE MAN.

BRIDGE MAN
(muffled)
Congressman Hewitt? A word,
please.

ABRAM
That's Mrs. Roebling's assistant
-- somehow she always knows where
to find me.

NELLIE
Bridge updates at a ball?

ABRAM
I'll see you all inside. And
Sally, you're a fine fencer -- but
keep the bout to wordplay, and do
not let Drexel best you!

He kisses AMELIA, EXITS the carriage, and approaches the BRIDGE
MAN a few feet away.

AMELIA
Why must they harass your father?
It's been over a decade since he
awarded the contracts. It's not as
though he's mayor.

SALLY
There's an idea! Father as mayor.

19 INT. HEWITT HOUSE. SERVANT'S QUARTERS, BRIDGET'S ROOM. 19

BRIDGET is poking about the empty house. She opens the door to
Sally's room, and peers in. She looks to see if anyone's coming
and then steps into the room. She holds up an artifact and
marvels at it. She sees a costume the girls left lying around.
She holds it to her and looks in the mirror. She smiles at her
appearance. Could she ever be this fancy?

20 EXT. VANDERBILT MANSION. NIGHT. 20

PRUDENCE turns a corner onto 5th Avenue and is face-to-face
with the chaotic crowd. MRS. ASTOR emerges from a carriage,
dressed as Marie Antoinette.

PAPARAZZI
Mrs. Astor! Mrs. Astor, look
here!

MRS. ASTOR revels in the attention, poses for pictures. In the
crush, PRUDENCE is shoved into ETTA. She gives ETTA an
apologetic smile, and raises her voice above the din.

Made in Highland

PRUDENCE

My apologies! Has it been this rough long?

ETTA

Only when they get out of their carriages.

PRUDENCE

And when they do, that's when you pounce. Don't wait for your subject to catch their breath or make a move. When they're vulnerable, hit them hard with everything you've got. That's how you end up on the front page.

PRUDENCE sticks out her hand.

ETTA

Oh, I'm not a reporter. I'm an artist.

PRUDENCE

May I have a look?

ETTA

It's not very good yet.

ETTA presents her sketch pad. She has sketched the heads, hands, faces, of the people in the crowd and some of the partygoers - stripped of the trappings of their wealth, they look vulnerable, human.

PRUDENCE

It's certainly good enough to sell to a paper.

PRUDENCE leafs through the pages of ETTA's notebook and laughs.

PRUDENCE

They try to make themselves look as important as they want to feel. You've captured something underneath all that.

ETTA

But it's not hopeful. Newspapers like hope.

PRUDENCE

Newspapers like what sells. It's our job to give them something the public will buy.

Made in Highland

ETTA

Be that as it may, I am looking
for a woman who allows herself to
be strong, even when others do
their best to keep her small..

PRUDENCE smiles.

PRUDENCE

You think like me, Etta. Don't be
afraid to make your mark. And when
you make it, stamp it down so damn
hard that it bleeds through the
paper. Prudence Williams.

ETTA

Henrietta Blackwell. People call
me Etta.

They shake.

PRUDENCE hands ETTA her card.

PRUDENCE

I work for the New York Sun. Call
on me when you have drawings to
sell.

ETTA

(nodding)
I'll do that.

PRUDENCE looks around, surveying the CROWD. ABRAM and the
BRIDGE MAN are talking rather animatedly, and they catch her
eye.

PRUDENCE

Excuse me, Etta. I'm off to do
some stamping.

PRUDENCE moves closer to ABRAM and BRIDGE MAN. LI passes, her
head held high and clutching the letter. She weaves her way
through the chaos. ETTA's eyes follow her, inspired by her
dignity, and she begins to sketch.

LI finally elbows her way to FOOTMAN #1 standing a bit away
from the main entrance. She hands him MRS. V's card.

FOOTMAN #1

Go to the servant's entrance.
(louder) The ser-vants entrance.

He points to the CORNER she needs to turn down.

Made in Highland

FOOTMAN #1
Go. That. Way.

Li's back straightens, her dignity rising with each cruel word. She turns to go.

FOOTMAN #1
(under his breath)
Stupid Chinese.

Li turns the CORNER, she sees a small door, with FOOTMAN #2 standing guard. She makes her way to him and reluctantly hands him the CARD. He reads, grunts, opens the door. She tries her best to exhibit elegance as she enters.

Etta appraises her quick sketch -- she's successfully captured Li's disdain. She smiles, then sighs -- who will buy a drawing of an angry servant? She flips to a blank page.

21 INT. CARRIAGE, VANDERBILT BALL. NIGHT.

21

NELLIE
We're near the front now!

AMY
Finally! It feels like we've been waiting hours.

SALLY
Amy. We've been waiting all our lives! For months we've been waiting for this ball. Amy is waiting for James to make a proposal of marriage--

AMY
Sally!

SALLY
Nellie is waiting to be interested in something other than fabrics and flowers--

NELLIE!
Sal!

SALLY
And I am waiting to do something of lasting consequence.

Made in Highland

AMELIA
(wryly)
Darling--you've done any number of
things which have had
consequences.

SALLY
I'm done waiting. I intend to
live, not wait for life!

SALLY flings the carriage door open. She draws her SWORD, and
hoists herself out in order to yell...

SALLY
I intend to live!

SALLY bursts forth from the carriage. NELLIE follows her.

NELLIE
Hear, hear!

AMY
Mother do you mind, if I...?

AMELIA
It's alright Amy, go to James.
I'll join you inside.

22 EXT. VANDERBILT BALL. NIGHT - CONT.

22

SALLY, NELLIE, and AMY approach the BALL. They see SUFFRAGISTS
protesting. Signs read "Votes for Women" and "Suffrage First."
SALLY charges past them while NELLIE stops to ponder them.

The girls pass ETTA, who is slowly shading one of the drawings
she showed Prudence.

SALLY
I intend to live!

NELLIE and AMY laugh, salute SALLY.

As SALLY walks past ETTA, ETTA surveys this woman, her sword,
her power -- someone hopeful AND lucrative! ETTA begins drawing
in earnest.

23 INT. VANDERBILT MANSION. NIGHT.

23

LI is ushered into a sizable inner room. Every inch of the room
is decorated with CHINESE ARTIFACTS. LI peers in horror and
fascination at sacred artifacts from her culture.

Made in Highland

In the corner of the room LI sees a young girl, CONSUELO VANDERBILT (6), reading a book. She looks up, notices LI.

CONSUELO

Hello. I suppose you are here to help my mother with something?

LI

(english with an accent)

Your mother is Mrs. Alva Vanderbilt?

CONSUELO

Please don't tell her I'm in here. I thought I might escape from her party if I hid in the Oriental Room.

ALVA VANDERBILT (30), explodes into the room, wearing a gown with electric light woven through, and followed by two LADIES MAIDS and a GOVERNESS.

MRS VANDERBILT

Consuelo! Upstairs, now. You are to bathe, then dress for the party. I have not invited European royalty here for fun--they are to see you at your best. They all have sons with titles.

CONSUELO

But mother--

ALVA

Do you think Queen Victoria waited until her daughters were of age to plan their matches? Go!

GOVERNESS ushers CONSUELO out of the room. LI stands near the door still, baffled. ALVA turns to her.

MRS VANDERBILT

You! Finally. Have you come all the way from China this evening? Marco Polo's journey was quicker.

LI forces a fake smile, trying to hide her contempt. MRS VANDERBILT whips around to reveal the tear in the back of the gown.

MRS VANDERBILT

Well, there it is.

LI takes a deep breath and leans in to examine the TEAR.

Made in Highland

MRS VANDERBILT

I'd have one of my seamstresses do it, but their stitches are never quite precise enough and it really must be seamless for tonight. "Get a Chinese," they said, "you need a Chinese."

LI's knowing hands search the fabric.

MRS VANDERBILT

Mind the electric cables. Five months planning this party, and I'm undone by faulty stitching. Everything must be perfect when I introduce the Prince of Bavaria to my Consuelo. You! Go and spy--has he arrived?

LADIES MAID #1 dashes off to spy.

MRS VANDERBILT

Are you minding the electric? Mind the electric!

Li stitches with precision, her hands fluid and perfect.

MRS VANDERBILT

European royals need money and we have more than anyone on earth. Fully one-third of the American economy relies on my husband's family's businesses -- are you nearly finished?

More precision in Li's hands as VANDERBILT rattles on.

MRS VANDERBILT

Most people prefer sons, but daughters are chess pieces. Give me three more daughters and I'd own the world.

LI finishes, and stands back. LADIES MAID #2 presents a mirror to MRS VANDERBILT who inspects herself; she loves what she sees.

MRS VANDERBILT

You see, this. This is why I would give women the vote. More competent than any man, quicker, and without a word. Votes for women!

Made in Highland

MRS VANDERBILT smiles at LI who doesn't smile back nor break eye contact.

MRS VANDERBILT
Well - not alien women, of course.

LI saw that coming. MRS V. sweeps out of the room into --

24

INT. VANDERBILT BALL. THE GREAT HALL. NIGHT - CONT.

24

A cluster of BLINKING LIGHTS, woven through CLOTH. It's MRS. V'S impeccably repaired gown. MRS. VANDERBILT moves to reveal the most expensive party thrown in American history to-that-point. (\$6 million in today's money!)

Servants, decor, food, and a vast assortment of odd and brilliant costumes:

A woman with a taxidermied cat on her head, a choker on her neck with the word "PUSS," and seven cat tails sewn into the back of her dress.

A woman dressed as Queen Elizabeth I.

A group of four women dressed as the Dresden Quadrille, "reflective of the time of Frederick the Great and giving them the eerie and intentional look of living porcelain dolls." (NYTIMES)

The band strikes up. The evening's first dance is a cotillion. SALLY and NELLIE enter and take it all in. AMY is just behind them.

SALLY
(to AMY)
Off you run then!

AMY kisses each sister on the cheek.

AMY
Wordplay not swordplay, Sal!

AMY turns, and there is JAMES (30), dressed as the KING OF HEARTS. It's clear how in love they are. SALLY and NELLIE stare after them.

DREXEL
Sally Hewitt. You look stunning,
as always.

SALLY turns to find CHARLES DREXEL (26), standing just behind her. He is annoyingly cocky, but also stunningly handsome. He is dressed as a Pirate King.

Made in Highland

SALLY

AGGH! Not you. And wearing--that!

DREXEL presents his HAND for SALLY to shake. When SALLY goes to shake it he pulls her to him and kisses her cheek instead. SALLY's face reddens -- she does not dislike the way the kiss feels. But people are watching!

SALLY

The invitation tonight was to come as a great historical figure. You have come as... a common thief? Appropriate really, considering that you steal from the poor and give to the rich.

One point for SALLY. NELLIE stifles a laugh.

DREXEL

I never liked the Robin Hood stories. Why take something from someone who earned it?

SALLY

And how did you earn your father's money?

DREXEL

The same way you earned your beauty. By being born. It's not my fault I'm lucky.

SALLY

Perhaps not, but it's what you do with that luck that matters. And as far as I'm concerned, you've been squandering it.

DREXEL

And what about you? I suppose you haven't spent a penny of dear old Grandfather Cooper's millions?

She glares. DREXEL takes a step toward her and lowers his voice.

DREXEL

The fire inside you smolders,
Sally Hewitt.

He puts his hand on her waist as the next Quadrille begins. SALLY bites her lip; his touch is exciting.

Made in Highland

DREXEL
Come closer and let me feel some
of its warmth.

They dance, SALLY drawing close to DREXEL.

SALLY
(awkward)
Well, I'm glad someone is warm!
Last month you turned a family of
twelve onto the street, during a
blizzard, didn't you?

Somehow, they keep dancing.

DREXEL
Without financial accountability
the entire economic system of this
great country would collapse. You
know that.

SALLY
Did I miss where Adam Smith wrote
that capitalism must erase all
sense of human decency?

DREXEL hasn't read Adam Smith. SALLY looks to NELLIE for
validation of another scored point, but NELLIE is gone.

DREXEL
Once you've come to your senses,
I'll be happy to dance with you
again.

SALLY
And once you have come to your
senses, you'll understand why my
intestinal fortitude cannot allow
it.

DREXEL
(quietly, in her ear)
You may not like me, Sally Hewitt.
But you know you want me.

DREXEL goes. SALLY is knocked off-balance.

25

EXT. VANDERBILT BALL, SERVANTS' ENTRANCE. NIGHT.

25

LI exits the servants' door, where FOOTMAN #4 (40s) stands
guard. As she goes, he blocks her way.

Made in Highland

FOOTMAN #4

You. China. Got a question for you. Who is our president?

She is first startled, then seething, but refuses to display either.

FOOTMAN #4

HEY. Who is our president?

LI's face refuses to break. With dignity, she turns to leave.

FOOTMAN #4

I'm asking a simple question.

She keeps walking. She keeps her back straight, but when we see her face, it fills with dismay. He yells after her.

FOOTMAN

Chester Arthur. Or in your language (something racist, sounding like Chinese). He signed the Chinese Exclusion Act. How the hell did you get in here anyway?

LI rushes away. She goes to the Northwest corner of 5th avenue -- No HUANG. She checks the other corners.

Back in the crowd of PAPARAZZI, ETTA's drawing of SALLY is really taking shape. ETTA allows a tiny smile.

26

INT. VANDERBILT BALL. GARDEN MAZE. NIGHT.

26

NELLIE wanders into a massive GYMNASIUM transformed into a green paradise of FLUTTERING BIRDS, blooming flora, and a 6ft tall HEDGE MAZE. She stops to smell an American Beauty rose. Remembering SALLY's criticism, she turns from her enjoyment of the flowers and toward the maze.

NELLIE enters the maze, turns left. Dead end. She turns right, follows the hedge. She takes a DEEP BREATH, closes her eyes, and feels her way around a corner. She turns LEFT, and then RIGHT. Her HANDS OUTSTRETCHED, she encounters a statue. She opens her eyes. This must be the middle of the maze. She INSPECTS THE STATUE.

RENARD

That little fellow is from Africa.

NELLIE jumps. Olivier Renard (27) stands before her, dressed as Napoleon and with a French accent.

Made in Highland

RENARD
Excusez-moi, I didn't mean to
startle you.

NELLIE
Il vient de l'Afrique?

RENARD
Yes. A fertility statue. From the
Dogon peoples. Mali, Western
Africa. Men use it in a ritual
ceremony to make certain their
wives bear them children.

NELLIE
I've seen something like it. In a
book.

RENARD
Have you?

He's genuinely pleased and surprised. He EXTENDS A HAND.

RENARD
Olivier Renard. Ou Napoléon, on
dirait...

NELLIE
Madame Le Diable. Eleanor Hewitt.
Vous pouvez m'appeler Nellie.

They SHAKE.

NELLIE
Monsieur Renard, do you make a
habit of speaking to unaccompanied
women about... fertility?

RENARD
Only when they are very beautiful.

NELLIE tries not to smile.

RENARD
And very clever.

NELLIE smiles.

NELLIE
How is it that you've come to have
such a deep understanding of
antiquity?

RENARD
Les achats sont mon métier.

Made in Highland

NELLIE
Acquisitions?

RENARD
One of the latest fashions for the American elite: finding and purchasing exquisite artifacts -- often from destitute European nobles whose desire for cash is stronger than their taste for culture.

NELLIE EYES HIM cautiously as he hands her his CARD.

NELLIE
That's a rather blunt assessment of collecting.

RENARD
Peut-etre, but it is true.

NELLIE looks at the card. CLOSE UP on the CARD. "Mr. OLIVIER RENARD, Achats, Musée des Arts Décoratifs, Paris."

NELLIE smiles at him.

NELLIE
I know this museum! I love this museum! My sisters and I, we were there last spring. Monsieur Fayol -- the curator, he gave us a personal tour! The eye that man has! Why, he must be your boss!

RENARD
Yes, Monsieur Fayol and I work closely together.

NELLIE
I credit Monsieur Fayol with changing the way I see the world! I will write and tell him I met you.

Does RENARD look the slightest bit uncomfortable?

RENARD
I'm certain he'll be glad to hear from a young lady as charming as you.

NELLIE
Oh, and the exhibition of the Swiss timepieces last spring!
(MORE)

Made in Highland

NELLIE (CONT'D)

But you must have helped to obtain
the Forfaict calendar watch? I
could swoon just thinking about
it!

RENARD smiles, as NELLIE continues gushing.

27 **EXT. VANDERBILT BALL, 5TH AVE NW CORNER. NIGHT.**

27

LI waits. A clock strikes 1 AM. The crowd outside the ball has thinned. Attempting to maintain decorum, LI makes a decision and BEGINS TO WALK home alone. She passes the EXHAUSTED SUFFRAGETTES whose arms are heavy from holding signs. One of them smiles at her.

28 **EXT. MIDTOWN MANHATTAN, LADIES MILE. NIGHT.**

28

Now scared and lost, LI stops to pull herself together. The moon is reflected off of a 6th Avenue STOREFRONT. The GOWNS in the window are stunning. We see HER MIND WORKING as she begins to imagine the assembly of the gown. Her FINGERS TWITCH as, in her mind, they actually TOUCH the gown. We see Li's imaginings: she is the proprietor of a very fancy dress shop, her employees are all well-paid, happy Chinese women, and the customers are white. Mrs. Vanderbilt smiles at her and hands her a large sum of money. LI opens her eyes and the FANTASY is over. If this is what working means, then perhaps it isn't as beneath her as she thought. She breathes, gets her bearings, continues walking. She can do this.

29 **EXT. VANDERBILT BALL, FRONT STEPS. NIGHT.**

29

A frustrated PRUDENCE waits in the large crowd of onlookers who are now watching the party-goers leave the ball. She scans the crowd until her eyes light on the HEWITT FAMILY, who stand in front of the VANDERBILT mansion, waiting for their CARRIAGE. A shadowy figure reaches out and touches Abram's shoulder. PRUDENCE ducks behind TWO WOMEN dressed as GREEK GODDESSES, to listen to the conversation.

IRISH MAN

Congressman Hewitt?

Abram turns.

IRISH MAN

The wires are weak.

ABRAM

Excuse me?

Made in Highland

IRISH MAN
The wires are weak.

ABRAM
I'm afraid I don't follow.

IRISH MAN
Snap! And it's all over.

ABRAM
To what are you referring?

But IRISH MAN has gone. ABRAM is at a loss, disturbed. PRUDENCE writes furiously in her notebook. The grin on her face says this may well be her scoop.

The CARRIAGE has ARRIVED.

AMELIA
Who was that, darling? One of your constituents?

ABRAM
I've no idea.

They get into the carriage. As SALLY goes to follow them, DREXEL calls to her.

DREXEL
I was hoping for another dance, Sally Hewitt. Well, to be honest I was hoping for a quiet moment alone behind the potted palms, but I would have settled for a dance.

SALLY
And I was hoping you had fallen off the face of the earth.

DREXEL
I could have any number of women at the ball tonight, but I've chosen you. You could at least--

The HEWITT carriage pulls away, without SALLY, who is STARTLED to watch it go.

SALLY
You choosing me, Mr. Drexel, does not mean I choose you. It does not mean I am yours. And it certainly does not mean that I owe you anything!

Made in Highland

SALLY darts through the crowd to make a beeline to the departing carriage. As she rushes through the PAPARAZZI and REPORTERS, she bumps ETTA, whose drawings fall to the ground.

SALLY
Oh, I'm so sorry.

SALLY helps ETTA gather her drawing and looks at the pictures.

SALLY
Is that...me?

ETTA nods. SALLY is stunned with admiration.

SALLY
Thank you. You captured my good side and I was certain I didn't possess one. Will you sell it to the papers?

ETTA
I will try, miss.

SALLY
This may sound like the height of vanity, but if the papers don't buy it from you, I will.

ETTA is thrilled. SALLY turns to leave, her CARRIAGE slows and the door opens.

SALLY
(with a wave to ETTA)
Good luck!

ETTA returns the wave.

ETTA
Wait, how would I get in touch
-- ?

But SALLY is gone.

30

EXT. LI'S APT. PRE-DAWN.

30

LI enters her apartment, cold, and worried.

LI
Huang?

There is no response. The apartment is empty.

Made in Highland

31 INT. PRUDENCE WILLIAMS' APT. PRE-DAWN.

31

PRUDENCE at her WRITING DESK. Her NOTEPAD reads, "Hewitt scandal? Abram involved" And, underlined twice, "WIRES!"

She takes a deep breath, quickly scribbles the beginnings of the other article: "A sumptuous exhibition of New Yorks' finest families was on display at the Vanderbilt Mansion--palatial playground of the city's elite--yesterday evening." She intends to get through this stupid task as quickly as possible, and keeps writing.

32 INT. HEWITT HOME. PRE-DAWN.

32

A hallway. One by one, the Hewitt ladies peel off into their respective rooms, discarding objects and ornaments from their costumes. Sally, exhausted, glances further down the hallway. There is a light from under the door of her grandfather's room. A faint sounding cough. She delicately pushes it open, peering in.

33 INT. PETER COOPER'S BEDROOM. PRE-DAWN CONT.

33

SALLY

Grandfather? Are you still awake?

PETER COOPER

Sally? Is that you?

SALLY

Are you all right?

She sits down next to him, as he coughs. He looks weak. His speech is labored.

PETER COOPER

You... are just getting back... from the ball?

SALLY

Yes. It's almost dawn.

PETER COOPER

Ah. Good girls.

He manages a small smile.

PETER COOPER

Did you have fun?

SALLY

I think so. I don't know.

(MORE)

Made in Highland

SALLY (CONT'D)
These society parties, I --
they're fun for a laugh and yet I
can't help but feel sort of empty
afterwards.

PETER COOPER
Hmm.

SALLY
I feel--I don't know -- restless?
That I'm meant for something more
than quadrilles and champagne and
gossip. How did you know what you
wanted to do with your life?

PETER COOPER
I started working when I was young
because we had no money, but it
wasn't until I saw a need for
something--something that no one
else had ever made before--that I
felt a passion, a--calling--and I
followed it.

SALLY
Is that when you started the Iron
Works?

He nods, starts to speak but coughs. SALLY looks on, worried.
It sounds bad.

PETER COOPER
What... do you... feel a passion for?

She gives him some water.

SALLY
So many things. Art. Education.
Beauty. Life! How do I choose just
one? And what would I even do with
it?

PETER COOPER
My dear... Time is precious. Waste
it wisely.

SALLY looks on, wheels turning.

PETER COOPER
And I'm afraid my time is up. I
must try to... sleep.

SALLY
Of course Grandfather.

Made in Highland

She leans down, kisses his forehead. Tucks him in and turns off the light.

34 INT. / EXT. NEW YORK. PRE-DAWN.

34

MONTAGE OF OBJECTS in disarray in the aftermath of the ball:

VANDERBILT MANSION. Grey dawn through the huge windows. An ornate mask cracked on the ground. A smashed champagne flute. A single bejewelled shoe left behind, Cinderella-style.

HEWITT HOME. A kid leather glove crumpled on the ground beside NELLIE'S bed, her hand dangling down as she sleeps. SALLY'S jewels in a glittery heap on her dressing table, her sword propped up beside it. AMY'S freesias, now wilted, strewn in a pile.

35 EXT. NEW YORK STREETS. PRE-DAWN.

35

ETTA is walking back home from the ball, when she sees the SUN just coming up over an alleyway. The beauty strikes her. She climbs a ladder with her easel and charcoal. Her rooftop view is obscured by trees and buildings. She crosses the roof, climbs down another ladder and into an alley, chasing the perfect scene.

A DIRTY MAN comes out of the alley shadows. ETTA is frozen with fear. He says nothing, but approaches her. Just as he reaches for her, she turns to run, but smacks into garbage cans and drops her drawings. She reaches to pick up the drawings, but abandons this as the MAN gets closer. She goes to run, but the DIRTY MAN GRABS ETTA and puts his hand over her mouth. The trashcan ruckus alerts a WOMAN in a nearby window, who sticks her head out to see what's going on. It's ANNIE BRACKET. The DIRTY MAN sees her, and releases ETTA, who grabs her drawings and takes off running.

36 INT. HEWITT HOME, SITTING ROOM. MORNING.

36

SALLY and NELLIE lounge in the sitting room, sprawled on a couch, sipping coffee. BRIDGET enters.

BRIDGET

Morning papers, Miss Sally, as requested.

SALLY

Thank you Bridget.

NELLIE

Aghh!

Made in Highland

NELLIE LEAPS at the PAPERS and DEVOURS them. SALLY also looks, but with less fervor. NELLIE pages through them quickly.

NELLIE
(scanning headlines)
Suffrage, suffrage, suffrage,
graft, more suffrage...

SALLY gives her a bemused look.

NELLIE
I know it's all very
important, and I will read it, but
first...

She comes to a page of sketches from the ball.

NELLIE
Voila!

SALLY peers over NELLIE's shoulder.

SALLY
How is it that the only flattering
likeness of me ever captured
hasn't made its way into this
morning's papers? There was a
sketch artist last night. She saw
something in me. Something I've
been trying to see in myself, but
haven't been able to find.

BRIDGET
It's not my place, miss, but I
think you look lovely in all the
pictures.

SALLY
Thanks Bridget, you're a dear.

BRIDGET curtsies and goes.

NELLIE
Oh, they've done me splendidly!

AMY enters, sipping tea.

SALLY
You were up early.

AMY
I never slept! I tried but was too
excited. I have news--

SALLY

I am prepared to accept both of
your apologies for leaving me with
that horrid Drexel.

NELLIE

That horrid Drexel who sings your
praises to anyone who'll listen?

SALLY

Not after last night he won't.

AMY

Is he really all that bad?

SALLY

No. Yes. He has a sort of... animal...
power over me when I'm near him.
Don't be shocked, but I'd be very
glad to enjoy the pleasures of his
body without the impediment of his
mind. Or his heart. Well, lack of
heart.

NELLIE

Sally!

SALLY

He believes the world is his for
the taking. In his eyes is
ownership. Of everything he sees,
me included.

AMY sits.

AMY

But you value ownership.

SALLY

Do I?

AMY

Your bedroom is bursting with
beautiful things.

SALLY

Well, yes, I value art.

AMY

How does art exist without
ownership?

SALLY

It-- Well, it -- Art should be--
Art should be for anyone who views
it, not just people with enough
money to own it.

(putting together the
thought-pieces)

Museums are wonderful because
their doors are open. The public
can see the world's most glorious
things. I think that--If I had a
museum, I would fill it with
beautiful objects, but also
practical ones -- things to help
people do, and make, and see!
Objects don't make the world
better simply by their existence
-- they make the world better
because they have purpose and use.
Once something has meaning, it's
more than a thing. I want to give
everyone the chance to find that
meaning. For themselves.

AMY

You're having a vision, Sally!

SALLY

Am I?

NELLIE stands. She can't hold it in any longer.

NELLIE

Speaking of museums...

NELLIE hands the CARD to AMY, who hands it to SALLY.

SALLY

Olivier Renard? I've never heard
the name.

NELLIE

Oh, is there anything more
thrilling than the promise of the
morning after a night of magic?

37

INT. LI XIU'S APARTMENT. LATE MORNING.

37

LI wakes up in her bed, a few hours later. She reaches for her
HUSBAND, who isn't there.

She WALKS to the bedroom DOOR, OPENING it only enough to PEEK
out. No men. Where are they? Suddenly, she RUSHES to a nearby
BUCKET and vomits.

Made in Highland

The APARTMENT DOOR opens slowly. LI hears and wipes her mouth. Her husband's coworker and their roommate, CHENG (28), is in the doorway. He looks haggard. Cantonese with subtitles.

CHENG

Hi, Li.

LI

Cheng. Where have you been? Where is everyone?

CHENG

There was an accident. I'm so sorry.

LI

Where's Huang?

CHENG

He fell. Something was not secure. He fell. He's gone. He died. I'm sorry.

LI CRUMPLES to the floor. CHENG enters the apartment, closes the door, and KNEELS down to her.

A long pause.

CHENG

Do you want us to move out?

Li's grief overtakes her.

LI

(frantic)

No! They will throw me in the streets! I'm a single woman. They'll label me a prostitute and ban me from housing! No, Cheng!

She clings on to Cheng as this new realization sinks her even further down.

38

INT. THE NEW YORK SUN, PRUDENCE'S DESK. MORNING.

38

PRUDENCE approaches her desk, a finished copy of her article about the ball in-hand. She tosses it on her desk in mild disgust, looks around the large NEWS BUREAU, sees men with their FEET UP on their desks, palling around, smoking. She MAKES EYE CONTACT with JACOB STROKE (31), who sits alone. He sees her, POPS UP from his desk, and eagerly makes his way over.

Made in Highland

JACOB
You're Prudence Williams.

PRUDENCE
You're the new city reporter.

JACOB
Jacob Stoke. Down from the Boston
Globe.

They SHAKE.

JACOB
You're the only female reporter in
the whole of the Northeast to make
it onto the front page three
times.

PRUDENCE
Yes, well, that was a long time
ago. I am literally old news.

JACOB
You're being modest. One of those
articles helped take down Boss
Tweed and weaken the entire
Tammany machine. Those
improvements Commissioner
Roosevelt made to the police force
wouldn't have happened without
you. But those stories were for
The Times, not The Sun.

PRUDENCE thinks about what to reveal.

PRUDENCE
Let's just say there was a
discrepancy between myself and
management.

STOKE
You wanted more than they'd offer?

PRUDENCE
I found many exciting things to
want, Mr. Stoke, while they wanted
only for me to be a man.

STOKE
I see. In any case, I am honored
to work alongside you--whatever
the paper.

He is warm, and seems honest. PRUDENCE takes the risk.

Made in Highland

PRUDENCE

Alright, Mr. Stoke. Time to prove your mettle. How far would you go to test a hunch about a lead?

JACOB

Go on.

PRUDENCE

There's a politician. A family, really. High society, politics, all that.

JACOB

Respectable?

PRUDENCE

They seem to be. But every facade has its cracks.

JACOB

Ok, so you have a lead indicating that all may not be as it seems. What's the problem?

PRUDENCE

I can't get close enough.

JACOB is intrigued. The EDITOR of the NEW YORK SUN, ERNIE WOLF (52), emerges from his office.

ERNIE

Stoke! 500 words on the Chinese bridge worker who died last night. Need it by noon.

JACOB

What's the angle?

ERNIE

Cable snapped as they were laying stone on the pylon. Negligence. Hasty contracts and shoddy materials.

PRUDENCE grabs her hat and coat, rushes out of the office. JACOB and ERNIE watch her go.

39

EXT. NEW YORK SUN BUILDING. MORNING.

39

ETTA, looking like she's been up all night, fixes herself in a window reflection.

Made in Highland

PRUDENCE exits the office, bumps into ETTA.

PRUDENCE
Watch out! Oh, it's you! Miss
Blackwell. Here to sell your
drawings.

ETTA smiles.

PRUDENCE
I'd love to go back in and help
you face down the dragons, but I'm
afraid I'm--

ETTA
Thank you all the same miss, but
I'm gonna build up my own rapport
with these fellas.

PRUDENCE
I'd wish you luck, but you don't
need it!

PRUDENCE goes.

40

INT. NEW YORK SUN, EDITOR'S OFFICE. MORNING.

40

ETTA'S drawings are laid out on ERNIE'S desk, including the
drawing of LI, which ERNIE doesn't even consider.

ERNIE
I'll have the one of Mrs. Astor.
And these two.

ERNIE scrutinizes the drawing of SALLY HEWITT, and makes a
decision.

ERNIE
And that one.

ETTA
She's the most hopeful drawing I
have.

ERNIE
Sally Hewitt?

ETTA
Excuse me?

ERNIE
This is Sally Hewitt. Of the
Cooper-Hewitts. Their father is a
friend of mine.

Made in Highland

ELLA's lack of reaction is unusual in ERNIE's world. She holds tight to the drawing.

ERNIE

Peter Cooper is the grandfather-- as in the Cooper Union?

Still nothing from ETTA.

ERNIE

You must be new to the city.

ETTA

No, I grew up here.

ERNIE

Everyone in New York knows the Hewitts.

ETTA

Maybe everyone in your New York does.

ERNIE smiles.

ERNIE

Yes, well, the patriarch, Peter Cooper, founded Cooper Union design school -- though it's recently come under fire for admitting...Negroes. Women and Irish too. Unusual for a place with free tuition.

ETTA

An art school with no tuition?

ERNIE

That's right.

ETTA's mind is racing, she continues to clutch the drawing.

ERNIE

You're not going to let me buy that drawing are you Miss Blackwell?

ETTA catches her REFLECTION on a bit of metal from ERNIE'S desk. She wipes a smudge from her forehead and remembers the DIRTY MAN in the alley.

ETTA

It takes me quite a lot of effort to do them.

41 INT. LI XIU'S APARTMENT. MORNING.

41

LI, alone now, sits motionless near a massive pile of dishes and a BUCKET. She has the rag in her hands but her mind is on HUANG. A KNOCK at the door. She is FROZEN for a moment. Another KNOCK. She answers.

Standing in the doorway are two well-dressed, slimy looking men, DREXEL ASSOCIATES (40s).

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
Is this you?

He THRUSTS a piece of paper into her FACE. It reads "Huang Xiu, Wife - Li Xiu - 171 Canal St, Apartment 4"

Numb, she nods.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
May we come in?

LI is motionless as they push their way in.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
The long and the short of it is
that your husband--

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
--who tragically passed away--

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
--owed a good deal of money to our
employer.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
Your husband was delinquent...

Li's mind searches for the meaning of the word.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
Here's the sum you owe.

He THRUSTS another piece of paper into her face.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
Now, you've got a couple of days
to figure this out.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
Yes, don't feel as though you
haven't got a couple days...

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
We'll be back in two days.

Made in Highland

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
And you'll have something for us
then.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
Or maybe you got something for us
now?

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2 grabs LI by the waist, pulls her close into
his pelvis, breathes heavy in her ear.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2
(whispering)
There's more than one kind of
payment.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #2 release LI who is sickened by his touch.
They go to leave. DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1 turns back.

DREXEL ASSOCIATE #1
Again, condolences.

LI remains motionless as the men turn their backs and disappear
going down the stairs. She looks at the papers, on the
letterhead: "Charles Drexel and Associates." The numbers start
to make her head spin.

42 INT. HEWITT FAMILY HOME, SITTING ROOM. MORNING.

42

Seated around the large room are the HEWITT family, including
brothers PETER (19), EDWARD (15) and Erskine (8). ABRAM reads
The New York Sun. BRIDGET brings in tea service.

BRIDGET
Tea, ma'am.

AMELIA
Thank you Bridget.

AMY and JAMES enter.

AMY
We have an announcement! You can
probably guess what it is.

AMY looks at JAMES. ABRAM puts down the paper.

JAMES
Yes! Your sister -- your daughter
-- has agreed to make me the
luckiest man in the world.

AMY
We're engaged to be married!

Made in Highland

AMELIA smiles, raises a teacup.

AMELIA
To Amy and James, starting a new
life!

ALL
To Amy and James!

NELLIE hugs AMY tight, tears in her eyes. ABRAM shakes hands
with JAMES.

AMELIA
Have you decided whether you'll
get married in town or at
Ringwood?

AMY
A Ringwood wedding, this summer.
We were thinking June.

AMELIA
The countryside is lovely in June.

SALLY
Excuse me all! I don't mean to
upstage Amy and James' moment, but
I think it's only fitting to tell
you. Grandfather's legacy is
strong, and I want to make sure
that it remains strong, and that...
well, his words have been ringing
through my ears... 'everywhere you
want to go, you must go...'

Everyone looks at SALLY, deeply intrigued -- NELLIE most of
all. They make eye-contact.

SALLY
Well. I'll just say it. I am
starting a museum!

Everyone is stunned. NELLIE grins.

ABRAM
A museum?

SALLY
Yes! Grandfather started a school,
we're making a museum to go along
with it!

AMY
We?

Made in Highland

SALLY

A design museum. Open to the public. A practical museum. Students can go for inspiration and learn to make the patterns. They'll sell them and make their living!

ABRAM

Oh, my, well... it seems this has all been thought through.

SALLY

Well, a woman like me ought to exert her influence with her life, her money and her choices.

NELLIE and SALLY hadn't spoken about this. Nevertheless...

NELLIE

And I'm handling acquisitions!

SALLY smiles, TAKES her sister's HAND. They BEAM. AMY takes their hands also.

AMY

Well, I'm delighted. You two have been closest to my heart my whole life. And I should hate you to think that could change once I'm married.

(she starts to tear up)

What I mean to say, is that doing something out of love is always the right thing.

DOCTOR CROSBY enters, grave. The whole room hangs on his words.

DOCTOR CROSBY

I'm afraid it's not good news.

AMELIA leads DOCTOR CROSBY out of the room. ABRAM follows. The rest sit in somber silence.

NELLIE starts crying. BRIDGET offers NELLIE a handkerchief.

43

INT. / EXT. - MONTAGE.

43

Classical music plays.

1. ETTA APPROACHES 30 COOPER SQUARE, drawings in her satchel.

Made in Highland

She stops and looks up at the sign "Cooper Union School for the Advancement of Science and Art" She takes a DEEP BREATH, pulls open the heavy doors, and enters.

2. AMELIA sits beside her father's bedside. The family is gathered. DR. CROSBY holds PETER COOPER's wrist and looks at his pocket watch, taking his pulse. He gives AMELIA a somber nod. Peter Cooper is dead.

3. LI sits on the floor of her bedroom, SEWING fine fabrics, her bedroom door opens just a crack so all the men who still live there are visible. Tears run down her face.

4. As the sun rises, PRUDENCE is walking through the area where the Brooklyn Bridge cable wires snapped. She's dressed as a MAN, complete with a MOUSTACHE, and a CITY OFFICIAL'S outfit. She's gotten what she needs, and writes in her final notes in her pad, as she discreetly leaves the scene, which is crawling with POLICE and other CITY OFFICIALS.

5. BURIAL of PETER COOPER. We watch the CASKET being LOWERED into the ground. The HEWITT family holds each other. The sky is angry yellow.

6. The sidewalk outside the Greenwich Village courtyard. ANNIE BRACKETT stands, resting her weight on her broom. Two men in top hats walk by, one flicks the but of his cigar onto the sidewalk. With a sigh, ANNIE BRACKETT sweeps it up.

Classical music ends abruptly.

44

EXT. DESERTED ALLEY NEAR THE EAST RIVER. MORNING.

44

A ROUGH MAN'S FEET on cobblestone. No one else is around. ROUGH MAN waits, smokes a cigarette. Sound of feet approaching. ROUGH MAN hands a wad of cash to another pair of hands, which counts it. The hands are BRIDGET's.

BRIDGET
(no Irish accent)
That's not the amount we agreed
on.

Screen goes black.

END of PILOT.

Made in Highland