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*Dramatic Publishing*



*A Play in Three Acts*

# Wings of the Dove

by

HENRY JAMES

Adaptation by GUY BOLTON



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(WINGS OF THE DOVE)

WINGS OF THE DOVE is currently playing at the Haymarket Theatre in London as this play is put into print. The cast of the London production includes Susannah York and Wendy Hiller.

From the London critics:

"Rich in texture, subtle in motivation, distinguished in dialogue and delicate in resonance . . . a triumph of the spirit."

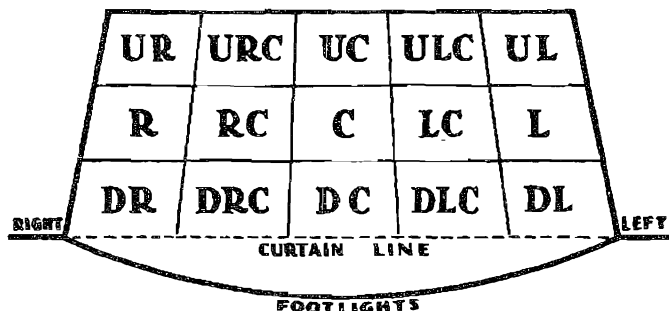
THE LONDON TIMES

"It offers two great and distinct pleasures. One is the precision of James' dialogue . . . like an iceberg of cut diamond, gleaming on the surface and trailing beneath it a huge hidden area of unexpressed emotion. The other joy is the character of Milly herself."

THE LONDON OBSERVER

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## CHART OF STAGE POSITIONS



## STAGE POSITIONS

*Upstage* means away from the footlights, *downstage* means toward the footlights, and *right* and *left* are used with reference to the actor as he faces the audience. R means *right*, L means *left*, U means *up*, D means *down*, C means *center*, and these abbreviations are used in combination, as: UR for *up right*, RC for *right center*, DLC for *down left center*, etc. A territory designated on the stage refers to a general area, rather than to a given point.

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**NOTE:** Before starting rehearsals, chalk off your stage or rehearsal space as indicated above in the *Chart of Stage Positions*. Then teach your actors the meanings and positions of these fundamental terms of stage movement by having them walk from one position to another until they are familiar with them. The use of these abbreviated terms in directing the play saves time, speeds up rehearsals, and reduces the amount of explanation the director has to give to his actors.

# WINGS OF THE DOVE

*A Play in Three Acts*

For Five Men and Six Women

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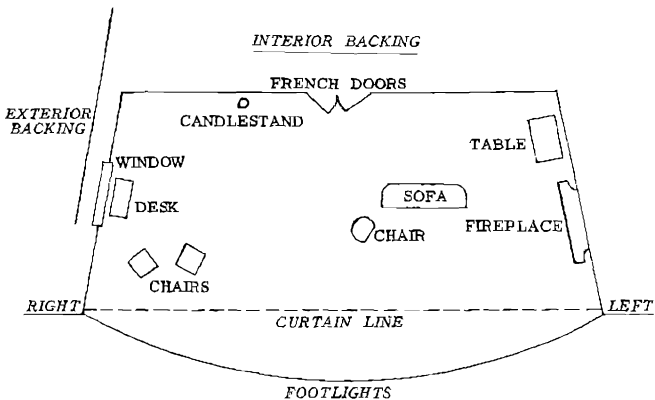
## CHARACTERS

MILLY TEMPLE. . . . . *an American girl*  
RICHARD DENNING. . . . . *a writer*  
KATE CROY. . . . . *an English girl*  
LIONEL CROY. . . . . *her father*  
MRS. LOWDER. . . . . *her aunt*  
SUSAN SHEPHERD. . . . . *Milly's chaperone*  
SIR LUKE STRETT. . . . . *a doctor*  
LORD MARCUS ANNERSLEY. . . . . *a suitor*  
BENNETT. . . . . *servant at Mrs. Lowder's*  
EUGENIO. . . . . *major domo at the Palazzo*  
BIANCA. . . . . *a maid*

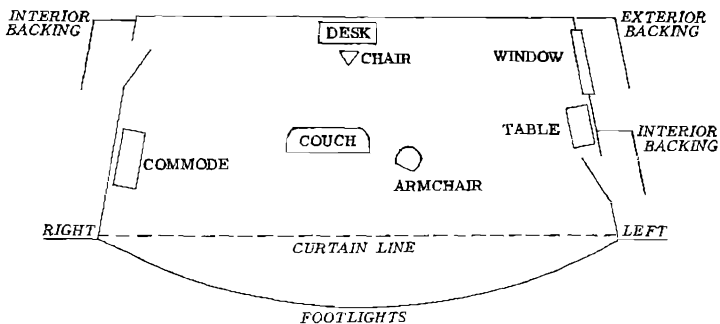
PLACE: *London and Venice.*

TIME: *1902.*

## STAGE CHART



### ACT ONE: LANCASTER GATE



### ACT TWO AND ACT THREE: THE PALAZZO LEPORELLI

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## PROPERTIES

**GENERAL: LANCASTER GATE:** Fireplace, velvet curtains, antimacassars, settee, chair, table, candlestand, desk, accessories on desk, two chairs, other furnishings as desired. **PALAZZO LEPOR-ELLI:** Couch, desk, chair, table, armchair, commode, bowls of flowers, bowl of fruit, candlesticks; paper, pen and inkwell on desk, other furnishings as desired. **Act Three, Scene One:** Lighted lamp on desk, box of flowers on table, pillows and coverlet on couch. Remove portrait. **Act Three, Scene Two:** Portrait, bowl of violets, manuscript on table.

**CROY:** Gold watch chain and seal, black crepe armband, hat, cane, gloves, cigar in pocket, sheaf of papers, photograph, legal document, gold watch on chain.

**MILLY:** Keys in pocket, bunch of violets, engraved invitation in envelope, handkerchief.

**SIR LUKE.** Watch, doctor's bag, hat, legal document (will) in envelope.

**KATE:** Wrapped packages, hat, gloves.

**RICHARD:** Painting (a portrait) with velvet cover.

**SUSAN:** Bowl of violets; tray containing rouge and powder, hand mirror and hairbrush.

**BIANCA:** Two portmanteaus (suitcases).



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# ACT ONE

## Scene One

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SCENE: The mansions that were strung along Lancaster Gate (a majority have been replaced with flats or have been converted into residential hotels) had their drawing rooms on what we would call "the second floor." This was, of course, true to other great houses but particularly so here, where the facades face south on Hyde Park and Kensington Palace Gardens. Hence in these drawing rooms, a visitor was not "shown in" but "shown up." The Morning Room has doors U C in the rear wall, leading to hall. A fireplace is in the wall L, the wall R contains a window that looks out on Hyde Park. The room, large, lofty and bespeaking the solid British wealth of the Victorian age, is filled with furniture of its period, tables with tops of polished malachite, upholstery of plush, curtains of velvet, lace antimacassars. A settee or couch is L C, a chair right of it. There is a table above the fireplace against the L wall. Against the rear wall, right of the hall door, is a candlestand. Against the window R is a small desk or table. Two chairs are D R. When we see the room, it is the morning about an hour before lunch time. The month is June, its very end, when the London season is drawing to a close. The date is 1902.

NOTE: It is not necessary, of course, to make this set elaborate. It is only important that the Victorian era be suggested.

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: The stage is empty. BENNETT appears U C, ushering in LIONEL CROY. CROY is dressed in a morning coat and tight-fitting checked trousers, creased on the sides in the fashion followed throughout his life by King Edward VII. His appearance is, in fact, immaculate. He has a heavy gold watch chain stretched across his waistcoat, from the center of which a seal dangles. On his coat there is a crepe arm band. He carries hat, cane and gloves. BENNETT is a typical housemaid of the period, wearing a black dress with small white apron and cap with streamers. BENNETT goes to right of doors.

CROY

I believe my daughter is expecting me.

BENNETT

Yes, sir, she told me to show you in here.

CROY

How long have you been in Mrs. Lowder's service?

BENNETT

Going on seven years, sir.

CROY

Oh, then you missed my last visit by quite a wide

margin. There was a butler then--what was his name? Meech.

(Crosses D L to front of couch. Puts hat, gloves and cane on couch)

BENNETT

Meech was pensioned off by the late Mr. Lowder.

CROY

Poor old Lowder, he was never allowed to smoke in this room. Is that still the rule?

(Taking cigar out of pocket. Crosses C a few steps)

BENNETT

Yes, sir.

CROY

*Nihil mutantur* . . . well, well!

(Puts cigar back. KATE enters U C. She wears semi-mourning. She crosses D C to right of CROY)

KATE

Pappa.

CROY

How are you, my dear? But no need to ask. The bloom of youth and health is on your cheek.

(As he speaks BENNETT withdraws, closing the doors)

You look charming. That dress suits you.

KATE

I shan't be wearing it much longer. Aunt Maud has begged me to put aside my mourning. She says it depresses her.

CROY

Quite right. I am sure your poor mother would understand.

KATE

Is that crepe arm band for her?

CROY

Naturally. I may not have been invited to the funeral but I observe the decencies.

(As KATE makes no comment)

By the way, your aunt, I take it, is not here?

KATE

No, I named an hour when I knew she would be out.

CROY

I'm afraid I am somewhat late.

KATE

It doesn't matter.

CROY

Unfortunately, I have no present means of keeping an eye on time.

(He pulls chain from his pocket and dangles it)

KATE

Your appearance doesn't suggest that you are in money straits.

CROY

The lower I am in funds the more I try to give the impression of prosperity. . . . The watch pocket may be empty but there will always be the watch chain.

KATE

(With a little laugh)

You are quite beautiful, Pappa!

(CROY sits on couch)

CROY

And now may I know to what I owe the honor of being invited to visit this Temple of Moloch? It hasn't changed an iota since its doors were closed on me some twenty years ago.

(KATE sits on chair C)

KATE

Aunt Maud has been kind enough to ask me to make it my home.

CROY

Good, good.

KATE

I prefer not to accept her offer.

CROY

Why not?

KATE

For one thing I can't get over my resentment that she never offered to help us when poor Mother was alive.

CROY

When anyone says "for one thing," you can be sure it's some other thing that is the crux of the matter.

KATE

She's too possessive. She wants to run my life, interfere in my friendships.

CROY

Ah, I smell a rat! When you say "friendships" you mean love affairs.

KATE

In a sense that's true. She has offered to furnish a handsome dowry if I marry someone of position.

CROY

One sees why. She finds there are doors that fail to open to tradesmen's widows, however wealthy.

KATE

Her excuse is that she wants to stop me from committing the same "romantic folly" as my sister.

CROY

I should think a visit to that squalid abode of unpaid bills and unwashed children would convince you how right she is.

KATE

I would certainly loathe such an existence as Marion's.

CROY

Nevertheless it's pretty obvious that you too have fallen in love with some poverty-stricken wretch.

KATE

You're very clever, but it's not quite like Marion. My young man is not a penniless curate.

CROY

Oh? What is he then?

KATE

A journalist.

CROY

A penny-a-liner! You think that better?

KATE

He has talent--as a writer.

CROY

And it's that you'd be depending on?

(He surveys her critically)

I can't believe it. You have looks, you have style,  
I used to think you had brains.

KATE

You don't understand.

CROY

I understand everything excepting why you have sent  
for me.

KATE

If I tell Aunt Maud that I intend to marry against her  
wishes I shall have to leave here. A girl can't live  
alone.

CROY

You surely can't mean that you want to live with me?

KATE

Now that Mother is dead I have no one else to turn  
to.

CROY

Your journalist is unable to provide you with a home?

KATE

Not at the moment. If I come to you I can bring a-  
long almost a hundred pounds a year as my share.

I don't know what you have or how you manage,  
but----

CROY

(Interrupting)

I don't know, either. I only know I couldn't manage if I had you with me.

KATE

Why not? Why can't I share your home until I  
can . . .

CROY

(Again interrupting)

"Share my home"? My home is my hat. I live on the bounty of the rich and sing for my supper. But if it were doubly possible for me to have you with me I should refuse--for your own sake.

KATE

I'm in love. Does that mean nothing?

CROY

Your mother was in love--and look what she got!

KATE

Yes, at least I wouldn't have to endure what poor Mother did.

(Rises, crosses D R)

CROY

Oh, so you show your claws, do you?

KATE

I'm sorry.

CROY

In other words your husband wouldn't suffer public



disgrace? A barely-escaped prison sentence?  
(KATE sits in chair D R)

KATE

I didn't ask you here to rake up old scores.

CROY

No. You're more generous than your dear sister. But then, in her case, the virtues of the mother have been visited upon the child to a degree that is quite painful. . . . With you it's different. You have a streak of me in you.

KATE

(Faintly amused)

Really? What sort of streak?

CROY

My old failing, darling--you're not quite straight.

KATE

(Indignantly)

What an outrageous thing to say!

CROY

I don't mean that you're dishonest. But you've my way of seeing 'round a corner, and you're willing to turn it if you have to.

(The doors U C are opened by BENNETT but RICHARD enters impetuously without waiting to be announced. RICHARD DENNING is a handsome young man with charm and a quickly evident intelligence. He goes swiftly to KATE and takes her hand. BENNETT withdraws)

RICHARD

Kate. . . . how are you?

KATE

So you got my letter?  
(They kiss)

RICHARD

Yes, I found it waiting for me when I arrived.  
(Turns, sees CROY)

KATE

This is my father, Richard.

RICHARD

How do you do, sir?  
(Crosses L C)

KATE

I asked Richard to come here to meet you.  
(CROY rises)

CROY

(Shaking hands)  
"Denning"? Is that the name?

RICHARD

Yes.

KATE

He's just back from Ireland.

RICHARD

I've not seen Kate for several weeks.  
(Turning to her. Crosses C to her, holds  
her hands)  
Let me have a look at you.