

## *Let Alone Everything*



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Characters: (5m, 4f with maximum doubling)

Gustave Flaubert

Louise Colet, Flaubert's mistress

Pinard, Public Prosecutor (played by the actress who plays Louise)

Henriette, Louise's maid

*Additional characters from Flaubert's novel:*

Emma Bovary

M. Rouault, Emma's father

Charles Bovary

Félicité, Emma Bovary's maid (may be played by the actor who plays Henriette)

Homais, a pharmacist

Madame Lefrançois, owner of the *Lion d'Or* inn

Leon Dupuis, a law clerk

M. Lheureux, a merchant (may be played by the actor who plays M. Rouault)

Father Bournisien, a priest (may be played by the actor who plays M. Rouault)

Rudolph Boulanger (played by Flaubert)

Lieuvain, Regional Counselor (may be played by the actor who plays Leon)

Boulanger's servant (may be played by the actor who plays Leon.)

M. Guillaumin, a notary (may be played by the actor who plays Charles.)

A pronunciation guide follows the play text.

Place: in and around Gustave Flaubert's imagination.

Time: 29 January, 1857;

the six preceding years;

the time covered by *Madame Bovary* (the mid-1840s).

The action of the play compresses 6 years in the lives of Flaubert and Louise Colet.

The action of the novel compresses 9 years in the lives of its characters.

The translation of de Musset's *Tristesse* is by William Frederic Giese.

## Synopsis

*Let Alone Everything* follows Gustave Flaubert as he struggles to write *Madame Bovary*. We see him negotiate with his characters, rack his brain for ideas, and beg patience of his neglected mistress, Louise Colet. Intermittently, he defends his work against an obscenity charge brought by the Imperial Prosecutor.

As Louise and Gustave exchange letters, we see him appropriate her attitudes and language to create his heroine, Emma Bovary. He becomes obsessed with Emma to the point of entering the novel himself as her lover, Rudolph. The operation succeeds too well: Emma is soon infatuated with Rudolph and requires more attention than he can give her. Early in the second act, Gustave (as himself) must fight off the prosecutor while (as Rudolph) assuring Emma of his undying love. Any slip-up would demolish him.

Gustave makes matters worse by sending manuscript pages to Louise for comment inadvertently revealing that the signet ring she gave him as a love token he's re-gifted to his character. Furious; she invades Gustave's study and demands the ring back. He gets rid of her, but the alternating assaults of the mistress and the prosecutor -- played by the same actor -- send him further into his own imagination. *Madame Bovary* is practically writing itself, but the author can no longer escape it: he finds himself playing the title role. The timing couldn't be worse: Emma has been dumped by her second lover, Leon, and is horribly in debt. Desperate for money and understanding, Gustave (as Emma) races back to Rudolph only to discover that Rudolph is now played by Louise. Flaubert's implacable mistress has pursued him into the climactic scene of his own novel. What's more, the confrontation has to go badly; any other outcome would violate the author's artistic principals. When Rudolph refuses to help her, Emma swallows poison. As Emma/Gustave lies dying, the prosecutor sums up for the audience: creating literature is difficult, unpredictable and unpleasant. Reading it can lead to immorality, so why should anyone bother?

*Let Alone Everything* moves in and out of the trial, the novel, and Flaubert's stormy life with Louise. While the action is fanciful, the attitudes and many of the actual words are taken from Flaubert's letters and the oral arguments presented at Flaubert's 1857 obscenity trial. Of the three main plots, only the trial is left unresolved. The audience must reach its own verdict on which trade-offs are permissible between art and life.

## Let Alone Everything

### Prologue

*The stage is arranged so it can quickly (if sketchily) represent a variety of locales: a Paris courtroom; Flaubert's study in Normandy; Louise's apartment in Paris. From his study, Flaubert will conjure up different locales for his novel: the Lion d'Or; Homais' pharmacy; Lheureux's shop and the Bovarys' house in Yonville. When they aren't appearing in scenes, Flaubert's characters lurk in the shadows. Their devotion to their creator is absolute; they're quite willing to move furniture or do anything else that will help Flaubert with his work. While they don't understand much of what's at stake in Flaubert's interaction with Pinard and Louise, they're hostile to anything that distracts him from writing the novel that contains and defines them. Flaubert enters and bows to invisible judges in the house. Pinard follows and does the same. After acknowledging his opponent, Flaubert speaks.*

#### FLAUBERT

I, Gustave Flaubert, declare before this tribunal that *Madame Bovary* is NOT obscene, that the process by which I wrote it is not corrupt. That it is, in fact, the first *modern* novel, the first novel in which the author's personality is present on every page, but the author's opinions are nowhere to be found. In writing it, I walked, as it were, a tight-strung hair between lyricism on one hand and vulgarity on the other. You cannot possibly appreciate what it cost me to write this novel. For *five* years I went ahead like a mole, my head buried in my text. I didn't know where I was going and I didn't care what anybody thought.

*(The characters in the novel have emerged to watch. Their continued existence depends on this man.)*

#### PINARD

The judges will have ample occasion to appreciate M. Flaubert's skill at using words to paint pictures -- whether spied from his mole-heap or from some other vantage point, I cannot say.

#### FLAUBERT

If the Imperial Prosecutor doesn't like my characters, well and good. I don't much like them myself. My choice of characters was not subject to my personal taste but to the profound affinity I felt for them as a writer. Emma Bovary is not my friend; she is not my hero; she is not a portrait of someone I know -- Emma Bovary is me!

PINARD

The prosecution is less interested in M. Flaubert's method of composition than in protecting society from the filth to which it has given birth. Honorable judges, the safety of the Empire requires that you stamp out this contagion at its source.

*(Lights change. Pinard exits. The characters in the novel have exited severally during Pinard's speech -- except for Emma. She wears her wedding dress.)*

EMMA

I want to go back to the beginning. I want to start over. It's hard to remember. How did it start?

FLAUBERT

September 19, 1851. My Dearest Louise, I've made a start. I have begun *Madame Bovary!*

*(Louise has entered with a letter and a cup of tea. Although she and Pinard are played by the same actor, they are distinct entities. Except for one scene, all dialog between them is epistolary. )*

LOUISE

My Dear Gustave, I received your Tuesday letter this morning.

FLAUBERT

It will be unlike anything I've written before. It won't be set in some far-off land, but right here in Normandy. And it happens today; not in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century. It will lay bare the life of a small-town doctor and his wife.

LOUISE

I'm delighted to hear that you've begun your novel at last.

FLAUBERT

The subtitle might be "Patterns of Provincial life."

LOUISE

Come and see me. Since I left my detestable and detested husband I've been lonely in Paris.

FLAUBERT *(to himself.)*

"Patterns of Provincial life."

LOUISE

I long for you.

FLAUBERT

Dearest Louise, Since I first saw you posing for Pradier in his studio, you have been my Muse as you were his! Literature can be as hard as Pradier's marble and require just as much effort to shape. How I remember our carriage ride in the Bois de Boulogne afterwards! I think of it and I long to hold you in my arms again!

LOUISE

Your Louise.

FLAUBERT

I'm working diligently on the outline of my novel. The doctor, a recent widower, takes as his second wife the daughter of a well-off farmer who's one of his patients. All the relatives come to the church. Afterwards they spend sixteen hours at the wedding banquet...

## First Draft

*(Wedding banquet. Charles, Emma, M. Rouault, others as necessary. Flaubert need not and probably should not be writing as we see his characters in action. He summons them, arranges them, cues them, and hands them props as needed, a bit like a stage director keeping volunteer actors in order.)*

ROUAULT

Not one of those fancy doctors from Rouen could have cured my broken leg better than the man I'm happy to call my son-in-law. My daughter was moody and romantic, but now she's in the hands of someone who can take good care of her, a man of science and a man of common sense. I give you the happy couple: David and Hortense!

*(Sound of paper tearing. The characters on stage back up.)*

... a man of science and a man of common sense. I give you the happy couple: Charles and Delphine.)

*(sound of paper tearing. The characters on stage go back again.)*

The happy couple: Charles and... Emma.

CHARLES

Thank you. Thank you. You know... it was a simple fracture. Easy to set.

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

It was a very simple fracture. Easy to set. *(Pause.)* It's nice of all of you to come today.

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

It's very nice of all of you to come today. *(Pause.)* Emma and I hope to be very happy.

FLAUBERT

Charles' conversation is as flat as a sidewalk and all the most commonplace opinions parade down it in their everyday clothes.

CHARLES

I hope it doesn't rain.

*(Charles sits down. Emma rises but is interrupted by the entrance of Pinard.)*

PINARD

Learned judges, this book is petty and sordid – the whole story is petty and sordid.

FLAUBERT

You think I don't know that? But if I'd diminished the sordidness, I'd have diminished the scale of the novel as a whole. I had no choice.

PINARD

It is as vile as a book can be. It defiles religion and the institution of marriage. It depicts the worst misadventures of a woman without blush or shame.

FLAUBERT

You don't know how to read it! Your honors, I have been made to stand in this dock for scoundrels and pederasts because the Imperial Prosecutor doesn't know how to read! There's never been a book like this before.

PINARD

For that, we can only be grateful.

*(Gavel. Pinard exits)*

FLAUBERT

Dearest Louise, it's going well. The doctor and his wife set up housekeeping. Emma buys two blue vases for the house. She finds new ways of folding the dinner napkins. Her attentions to Charles are like a sprinkling of powdered gold that make his most ordinary days shine.... As for Charles, he rides all over the district looking into bedpans and turning back filthy sheets. The peasants love him because he's not a snob. He comes home late. He tells her every person he's seen, every village he's been to, every prescription he's written. He eats what's left of the stew, cuts himself a piece of cheese, munches an apple, pours himself the last drop of wine, goes to bed, falls asleep face up and snores.

LOUISE (*entering*)

Is Emma happy?

FLAUBERT

What is happiness?

LOUISE

Happiness results when the capacity for love is joined with the opportunity for love.

FLAUBERT

She *tries* to love her husband; she recites poems to him by moonlight, but nothing makes her feel the way people feel in novels.

LOUISE

Poor thing!

FLAUBERT

But then something extraordinary happens -- and I need your help with it, dear muse: Charles and Emma are invited to a ball by a local bigwig whom Charles cured of a nasty boil. It's been so long since I've been to a ball; I don't know how to describe it.

LOUISE

I remember my first ball perfectly. My sisters and I were invited to the Chateau de Villeneuve. There were grooms in livery to take care of the horses, and footmen in powdered wigs with trays of iced champagne in tall glasses. There were flowers everywhere and wonderful things to eat. My gown was pale saffron, trimmed with pompon roses -- and I had a rose in my hair with artificial dewdrops on the leaf-tips. The orchestra played waltz after waltz as we whirled amid crystal and lace. I still have the satin slippers I wore. The soles are stained yellow from the wax on the parquet. I remember thinking afterward that I had just spent the best night of my life.

FLAUBERT

And when it was done?



LOUISE

When it was done, I went back to my normal life, a young girl growing up in Provence.

FLAUBERT

Your slippers and your heart both stained, marked forever by their first contact with luxury!

LOUISE

I don't know about that.

FLAUBERT

When Emma comes home from the ball, her normal life seems as cold as an attic with a single window facing north.

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

No similes. When Emma comes home from the ball she becomes restless and dissatisfied. She fires the housekeeper who's looked after Charles for years and hires a maid.

*(Félicité enters and curtseys as Emma has taught her to.)*

EMMA

Has the mail come?

FÉLICITÉ

Not yet.

EMMA

Hmm?

FÉLICITÉ

Not yet, *Madame*.

FLAUBERT

Emma buys a blotter, paper, envelopes and a pen case: she has no one to write to. She dusts her shelves; looks at herself in the mirror; picks up a book... She can't concentrate.

EMMA

Why -- *Why?*

FLAUBERT

She wants to travel... or go back to the convent where she went to school. She wants to die, she wants to live in Paris.

EMMA

Why did I get *married*?

FLAUBERT (*testing his prose here.*)

It was chiefly at meal-times that she couldn't stand it anymore. In that little room on the ground floor, with its stove that smoked, its door that creaked on the hinges, its walls that sweated, the flagstones always damp...

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

At meal-times she couldn't stand it anymore: in that little ground-floor room, with the stove that smoked, the door that creaked, the walls that sweated, the flagstones always a bit moist; it seemed as though all the bitterness of life was being served up on her plate, and, with a kind of rancor...

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

Mealtimes were the worst: in that little room with the smoking stove, the creaking door, the sweating walls... It seemed as though all the bitterness of life had landed on her plate with a kind of rancid staleness. Charles was a slow eater; she would nibble a few nuts until he finished, or else, leaning on one elbow, she would draw lines on the oilcloth with the point of her knife.

*(Emma runs at Flaubert and beats on his chest hysterically.)*

EMMA

Stop it, I beg you! Stop. Just... make it stop!

*(Flaubert hands her off to Charles, who's clearly alarmed at her condition.)*

CHARLES

What's wrong?

FLAUBERT

To improve his wife's state of mind, Charles decides to transfer his practice to Yonville, a larger town, fourteen miles from Rouen. When they arrive...

LOUISE

Gustave! You haven't visited me for three weeks. I long for you. I want to breathe your body. Feel your touch. I long to be on my knees before you...

FLAUBERT

Louise, You are my muse; you are the light of my soul. I kiss you madly and I long to be with you.

LOUISE

Then why don't you come?

FLAUBERT

I can't.

LOUISE

Why not?

FLAUBERT

I'm writing.

LOUISE

You can't write on the train?

FLAUBERT

I can't write on the train. I can only write in my study, here in my mother's house in Normandy.

LOUISE

Then I could come to you...

FLAUBERT

I would like nothing better, my adored Louise. But this isn't my house. I'm not sure how my mother would receive you.

LOUISE

You've stayed with me on your visits to Paris. I should think she'd want to thank me for putting you up. She doesn't have to know I've been putting you up in any other sense.

FLAUBERT

Perhaps. Or we could meet halfway: in the town of... Mantes.

LOUISE

Mantes?

*(The characters have grown impatient.)*

FLAUBERT

But not *now*, my beloved. I'm taut as a cello string. I've spoiled piles of paper, crossed out so many lines! It's a very devil of a style I've adopted! You know how many pages I've written this week? Four! I've got to read every sentence, every paragraph out loud, several times, bellowing till I'm hoarse. There mustn't be any unwanted assonance. No adjectives or nouns repeated.

*(The characters mutely promise to be careful.)*

I want the prose to be perfect -- a book whose sentences are like leaves in the forest, each one different in its similarity. Right now, for example: when Charles and Emma get off the coach in Yonville, they're welcomed by the local pharmacist, M. Homais.

HOMAIS

Dr. Bovary? Homais, pharmacist, at your service.

CHARLES

M. Homais. It's very good of you to meet us. My wife, Emma.

HOMAIS (*to Emma*)

Madame.

EMMA

M. Homais.

FLAUBERT

He takes them to have a meal at the Inn, *le Café d'Angleterre*,

*(sound of paper tearing)*

*le Café Impérial*

*(sound of paper tearing)*

*le Lion d'Or.*

*(Madame Lefrançois enters.)*

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Messieurs--dames, welcome to the *Lion d'Or*. I've got a nice table for you here by the fire, you'll be quite comfortable.

HOMAIS

Thank you, Madame Lefrançois. But you've set four places!

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

I've put M. Leon with you. He's here every evening all alone, poor thing. You don't mind, do you?

HOMAS

No. An excellent idea.

*(Leon enters and takes off his overcoat.)*

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

And here's the young man now!

LEON

*Bonsoir.*

HOMAS

Good evening, Leon. Dr. Bovary, may I present M. Leon Dupuis? M. Dupuis is lodging at my house while finishing his studies.

CHARLES

Pleased to meet you.

LEON

Doctor.

CHARLES

My wife, Emma.

LEON

*Enchanté.*

HOMAS

Do join us, Leon. There's no point in eating alone. Bad for the digestion, don't you agree, Doctor?

LEON

Thank you.

HOMAS *(to Madame Lefrançois.)*

You may bring the soup directly, I think.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

And to drink?

HOMAIS

A pitcher of good red. And cider for me, of course.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Very well, *messieurs–dames*.

*(Madame Lefrançois exits.)*

HOMAIS

I hope you weren't shaken about too badly on the road; the *Hirondelle* is a veritable antique.

CHARLES

Oh, you know...

EMMA

It's an old coach, but I find the commotion agreeable. It amuses me. I like going places.

LEON

Oh yes! There's nothing worse than being stuck in one place.

CHARLES

Well, if you're like me, always having to saddle up to go see patients...

LEON *(to Emma)*

But riding is very agreeable, I think -- when one has the opportunity.

HOMAIS *(to Charles)*

You'll find the practice of medicine isn't particularly arduous in this part of the world. Aside from enteritis, bronchitis, and liver complaints we get an occasional fever at harvest time. Nothing serious except for a good deal of scrofula, probably the result of deplorable hygienic conditions in our countryside! You'll have to fight many prejudices, M. Bovary. Every day your scientific efforts will be thwarted by our peasants' stubborn adherence to their old ways: many still have recourse to novenas and relics and the priest instead of doing the natural thing and coming to see the doctor or the pharmacist.

CHARLES

Hmmm.

EMMA *(to Leon)*

Are there any nice walks in the neighborhood?

LEON

There's a place called the Pasture on top of the bluffs. I go there with a book sometimes and watch the sunset.

EMMA

I do love sunsets, especially over the ocean.

FLAUBERT

There's nothing harder than small talk.

LEON

I adore the sea!

FLAUBERT

It's got to stay small, but it still has to be *well written*.

HOMAIS (*to Charles*)

The climate isn't bad. We have some nonagenarians. The temperature goes down to four degrees in winter. Never above twenty-five or thirty in summer (fifty-four degrees Fahrenheit, to use the English scale). That's the maximum! You see, we're sheltered from the north winds by the forest and from the west winds by the hills.

CHARLES

Hmmm.

EMMA

I look at the sea and it lifts my soul -- like a glimpse of infinity!

LEON

Mountain scenery does the same. A cousin of mine traveled to Switzerland last year -- the lakes! The waterfalls! Those majestic glaciers! They build their chalets right on the edge of precipices. If you look down, you can see whole valleys a thousand feet below. Think what it must be like to see that every morning! I'd fall on my knees! I'd want to pray. I can understand the famous composer who used to play the piano in such places to get inspiration.

EMMA

Are you a musician?

LEON

No, but I do love music.

FLAUBERT (*impatient*)

Can't you get on with it?

EMMA

What sort of music do you prefer?

LEON

German music, the kind that sets you dreaming.

EMMA

Have you been to the opera?

LEON

No, but I plan to go next year when I'm in Paris to get my law degree.

FLAUBERT

They could have a sort of Platonic love affair...

HOMAS (*to Charles*)

This relative warmth, however, poses another problem. Because of the humidity given off by the river and the cattle in the pastures, which themselves exhale, as you know, a great deal of ammonia, that is nitrogen, hydrogen, and oxygen (no, just nitrogen and hydrogen) and the moisture expelled by the humus in the soil, well, you mix all these emanations together and you get noxious vapors, like in the tropics.

CHARLES

Hmmm.

EMMA

Do you read a lot?

LEON

Oh yes. Hours go by as I turn the pages. Even though I don't move, I'm wandering in countries where I can see every detail as if I were there. I'm playing a role in the story: I actually feel I'm *in the characters' skin!*

EMMA

I know! I feel the same way!

FLAUBERT (*not unkindly*)

Idiots.



HOMAIS

This warmth, I was saying, is actually moderated by the direction from which it comes, or rather the direction from which it *would* come, namely the south, by southeast winds, which, having been cooled as they cross the Seine, sometimes burst on us all of a sudden -- like arctic air from Russia!

CHARLES

Really?

FLAUBERT

I've got to get them out of this fucking inn.

*(Madame Lefrançois is miffed by this characterization of her inn, but continues serving.)*

LEON

Have you ever had the experience of finding in a book some vague idea you've had, some image that's been lurking in the back of your mind and suddenly it seems to express your most private feelings perfectly?

EMMA

Yes!

LEON

That's why I'm especially fond of poetry; it's more *emotive* than prose. Could I read you my favorite poems some time?

EMMA

I'd like that very much.

FLAUBERT

This is my chance!

*(Sound of quill. Pinard enters.)*

PINARD

Gentlemen! No sooner has Madame Bovary arrived in Yonville than her eyes alight on this young law clerk. They talk about literature, an innocent beginning. But what will be the nature of the friendship that develops between them?

*(We see Leon reading to Emma in a café.)*

LEON

*When Truth unveiled her shining face,  
I thought to find in her a friend...*

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

PINARD

You will no doubt say, gentlemen, that there's no lubricity in poetry. The prosecution agrees. But what will these poems lead to?

*(Leon is reading to Emma in The Pasture, her head on his lap.)*

LEON

*When Truth unveiled her shining face,  
I thought to find...*

PINARD

Anyone other than Charles Bovary would suspect the young clerk's motives, but M. Bovary is naïve; he trusts in his wife's virtue. He opens his home to his rival.

*(We see Leon reading to Emma at home while Homais plays dominos with Charles.)*

LEON

*When Truth unveiled her shining face,  
I thought to find in her a friend;  
But day by day she lost her grace,  
I grew to hate her in the end.*

EMMA

That's so romantic! Who's it by?

LEON

Alfred de Musset.

EMMA

It was lovely.

HOMAIS

Double six! How much does that make?

CHARLES

Hummm.

LEON

Emma, ....

PINARD

To the reader, however, the equivocal nature of Emma Bovary's feelings for Leon Dupuis is already apparent on page 125. We can only tremble when we think of the turpitude and vulgarity that attend us in the remaining pages.

FLAUBERT (*abandoning his revision to address Pinard.*)

It's not a question of vulgarity or the absence of vulgarity. The *events* don't matter. The book is held together internally by the strength of its style, just as the earth, suspended in the void, needs nothing from outside to prop it up!

PINARD

A book, however carefully conceived and exquisitely written, cannot be noble if its subject is ignoble!

FLAUBERT

There are no noble or ignoble subjects. There is no *subject* at all; the writing itself is a *way of seeing things*. If you don't understand that, you'll never be touched by literature. It will only be a *vehicle* for you, or something *abstract* like music or algebra.

PINARD

You're evading the question of morality! Who do you think will *read* these pages? Will they be read by graduate students of literature? NEVER! These passages will be read by young girls and married women. Who knows what will become of them?

FLAUBERT

Who knows what ingredient in manure gives flowers their fragrance and melons their flavor? If I spread the putrefaction of humanity under my readers' noses it's so lilies can grow there. The Fact is distilled in the Form and rises towards the eternal, the purest incense our minds can offer -- immutable, absolute, ideal!

PINARD

The judges will appreciate these sophistries at their proper value.

*(Gavel. Pinard exits. Pause.)*

FLAUBERT

So what have I got?

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

What have I got?

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

Of course!

(*Sound of quill..*)

I've got the Yonville dry-goods merchant.

(*Monsieur Lheureux enters with a parcel.*)

LHEUREUX

Dear Madame Bovary, good afternoon! Please... Please... I understand only too well why my poor shop hasn't yet been honored with Madame's patronage. My little boutique could scarcely be expected to attract so elegant a lady. But Madame has only to give the word and I will undertake to supply anything she desires: accessories, lingerie, hosiery? I go to the city four times a month. I'm in touch with the biggest firms. Madame might mention my name at the *Trois Frères*, at the *Barbe d'Or*, at the *Grand Sauvage* -- everyone knows me. Today, if Madame permits, I would just like to show a few articles I happen to have with me, thanks to a lucky buy...

EMMA

I don't need anything.

LHEUREUX

Have a look, have a look.

EMMA

How much are they?

LHEUREUX

Absurdly cheap, Madame. Pay whenever you like; we're not Jews!

EMMA

I really don't need anything.

(*Brief pause*)

LHEUREUX

That's quite all right. You and I will do business some other time. I always know how to get along with ladies -- except my wife. (*Emma smiles.*) I just want you to know that I'm never in a hurry for payment. In fact, I can *lend* you money if you need it. Loans are a sideline of mine. Well, *au revoir*, Madame Bovary, at your service, any time.

EMMA

*Au revoir.* (*Lheureux exits.*) I'm such a sensible shopper.

(*Emma exits. Louise enters.*)

LOUISE

Dear Gustave, I'm happy that Madame Bovary is safely installed in Yonville. I long to take you in my arms. My bed is empty.

FLAUBERT

As is mine, my dearest love...

LOUISE

Come to Paris.

FLAUBERT

I can't. Not this week.

LOUISE

How can you keep putting me off?

FLAUBERT

I kiss you madly and tenderly. When I see myself naked, I think of you. Yours, Gustave.

*(Louise exits. Sound of quill. Emma enters.)*

Emma! What is she feeling?

*(Emma bursts into tears. Félicité enters and sees her.)*

FÉLICITÉ

Madame, is something wrong?

EMMA

It's nothing -- just nerves.

FÉLICITÉ

Why don't you tell Monsieur?

EMMA

No. Don't tell him. It would only upset him.

## FÉLICITÉ

You're just like the daughter of old Guerin, the fisherman at Le Pollet. She used to be so sad -- when she stood in her doorway it was like a funeral pall in front of her house. There was some kind of a fog in her head that ailed her. The doctors couldn't do anything, or the priest neither. When it came over her worst, she'd go off by herself along the beach. Sometimes the customs officer would find her curled up on the pebbles, crying. When she got married it went away.

## EMMA

When I got married it started.

## FLAUBERT

Emma's unacknowledged love for Leon torments her. Instead of putting it out of her mind she cherishes it. She never misses an opportunity for pain. A dish poorly served or a door left ajar grates on her nerves. What exasperates her most is that Charles can't see how miserable she is.

## CHARLES

Give us a kiss, little woman!

*(Emma exits.)*

## FLAUBERT

He thinks he's making her happy. She takes this as an insult. After all, it's for *his* sake that she's being faithful – *he's* the cause of all her wretchedness. One day she can't take it anymore. She goes to see... the doctor? No, she *lives* with the doctor. She goes to see the priest, Father Faquet.

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

...Father *Bonnetête*.

*(Sound of paper tearing.)*

... Father *Bournisien*.

*(Emma re-enters with a prayer book and genuflects. She waits. After a moment, the priest enters, calling back into the parish school room.)*

## BOURNISIEN

Why won't you behave? No respect! No respect at all! *(turning)* Excuse me, I didn't place you for a minute. How are you?

## EMMA

Not well at all.

BOURNISIEN

Neither am I. These first hot days are a terrible shock, aren't they? But what can we do? We're born to suffer, as St. Paul says. What does your husband think?

EMMA

My husband?

BOURNISIEN

He must have prescribed something, no?

EMMA

It's not an earthly remedy I need, father. Could you tell me . . .

*(Noise offstage.)*

BOURNISIEN

Just wait, Boudet! I'll whack you when I get you! *(to Emma)* That's the carpenter's son. His parents don't keep after him; let him do what he pleases. He'd learn fast if he wanted to. And M. Bovary . . . how is he? All the time bustling about, he and I are certainly the busiest people in the parish. He takes care of the bodies and I look after the souls!

EMMA

People must come to you with all sorts of problems.

BOURNISIEN

Believe me they do, Madame Bovary! This very morning I had to go to Bas-Diauville because a cow had the colic. The peasants thought it was a spell. All their cows for some reason . . . Excuse me. Longuemarre! Boudet! I've had enough of you both -- just cut it out! *(to Emma)* Well! As we were saying, farmers have plenty of troubles.

EMMA

Other people, too.

BOURNISIEN

Of course! Workers in the cities, for instance.

EMMA

I wasn't thinking of them . . .

BOURNISIEN

Ah, but I assure you I've known good women, true saints, who didn't have a crust of bread to feed their families.

EMMA

I was thinking of women who have bread, monsieur le curé, but who lack...

BOURNISIEN

Firewood?

EMMA

No, that's not it . . .

BOURNISIEN

It seems to me that to be warm and well fed . . .

EMMA (*Soft.*)

My God! My God!

BOURNISIEN

Are you feeling ill? You'd better go home, Madame Bovary. Drink a cup of tea...or a glass of water with a little brown sugar.

EMMA

What for?

BOURNISIEN

You were holding your forehead; I thought you might be feeling faint.

EMMA

It's not...

BOURNISIEN

But weren't you asking me something? What was it?

EMMA

No, nothing.

BOURNISIEN

Well... you'll excuse me, but duty calls. First Communion will be here soon. I keep them an extra hour on Wednesdays after Ascension. You can't begin steering young souls onto the Lord's path too soon. That's what He Himself tells us through the mouth of His divine Son. Keep well, Madame Bovary, my best wishes to your husband!

*(Father Bournisien exits. Fade out on Emma. Flaubert enters unwrapping something -- a ring. He looks at it closely, then unfolds the letter that's with it.)*



LOUISE

Dear Gustave, I'm sending you a present, an agate signet ring with a motto on it. I saw it in a shop on the *Quai des Orfèvres* the other day and thought of you. You needn't wear it -- I know you *won't* wear it. But keep it, to think of me.

FLAUBERT (*trying the signet in wax and reading the result*)  
*Amor nel cor.* What's she getting at?

(*Sound of quill. Leon enters.*)

Leon! What's Leon doing? He's walking in the Pasture...

(*Sound of paper tearing.*)

No, I need the Pasture later. Leon is alone in his room. He's got a book open, but in fact he's thinking about... the rectangle of white stocking that showed above Emma's boot when she climbed the stairs. He puts down his book and says...

LEON

My life is so boring.

(*Sound of quill.*)

FLAUBERT

At his next meeting with Emma, he finally declares his love. He says he *must* have her.

LEON

I *must* have you!

FLAUBERT

But she refuses.

EMMA

It's impossible. I'm a married woman.

LEON

But it's your duty! We were made to love each other! How can you keep putting me off?

EMMA

I have a husband... And he's..., he's *good*.

LEON

He can't love you the way I love you.

EMMA

Maybe not, but he does love me.

FLAUBERT

She's so loyal.

LOUISE (*entering*)

Gustave. It's been *five weeks*. What are you *doing* out there in Normandy?

FLAUBERT

My love, I want to be with you. I long to be beside you. I long to be *inside* you. This accursed Bovary woman is driving me mad. I'm managing no more than five or six pages a week.

LOUISE

You are my only love, Gustave.

FLAUBERT

Louise!

(*Sound of quill.*)

LEON

If you could look into my heart... I long to be beside you.

EMMA

Don't. Just... tell me. Right now, Leon... is your cock hard?

(*Sound of violent paper tearing.*)

FLAUBERT

Damn! Damn! DAMN!

LOUISE

Why don't you give it a rest?

FLAUBERT

It's an *bitch* of a thing to write good. To write *well*.

LOUISE

Alfred de Musset came to call on Wednesday. Afterward he took me for a carriage ride in the Bois de Boulogne. He made advances.

FLAUBERT

Alfred de Musset! That broken-down fart! How dare he? He's drunk on absinthe half the time. Hasn't published anything in years except his acceptance speech to the Academy -- sniveling, narcissistic, and stuffed with platitudes -- the speech, not the *Académie*. No, the speech AND the *Academy*.

LOUISE

He's our best poet.

FLAUBERT

The prose novel is *every bit* as exacting as poetry. I'd like to see de Musset do what I'm doing with *Bovary* -- his quill has gone limp!

LOUISE

That's not the only thing.

FLAUBERT

My God, Louise. You don't mean you allowed him -- or *encouraged* him?

LOUISE

You've kept me waiting for *two months*.

FLAUBERT

I've been writing; you know that.

LOUISE

There's no trifling with love, Gustave.

FLAUBERT

Don't be funny! It's literature there's no trifling with. You disappoint me.

LOUISE

As you have me.

FLAUBERT

De Musset has never been able to separate poetry from the feelings that poetry engenders. With him it's always too *personal*. Why couldn't you fuck Victor Hugo?

LOUISE

He's in exile, as well you know.

FLAUBERT

Or that new fellow... Baudelaire?

LOUISE

I don't know him.

FLAUBERT

Oh, Louise! You must read *les Fleurs du Mal*! His poems breathe new life into romanticism...

LOUISE

It's you I want.

FLAUBERT

Yes. I see it.

LOUISE

Good.

*(Sound of quill.)*

FLAUBERT

I see all of it! It's enormous!

*(Sound of quill.)*

LOUISE

You see the depth of your own selfishness?

FLAUBERT

I see an agricultural fair. It will be gigantic – 30 pages at least. All the secondary characters will be there and they'll all have something to do: a whole line-up of hicks puffed to bursting with agrarian pomposity. Cattle mooing and people chattering -- I see a big speech by Prefect, and... *(Sound of quill.)* at the same time, on the deserted balcony of the town hall, a man is putting moves on a woman.

LOUISE

The woman is Emma.

FLAUBERT

Of course.

LOUISE

Who's the man?

*(Leon steps forward, ready to serve..)*

FLAUBERT

Certainly not that pip-squeak Leon. He pisses verse.

*(Leon is mortified.)*

No, we need a new man, a man who can get under my little lady's petticoats.

LOUISE

And who would that be?

FLAUBERT

I'll invent somebody. You'll see. It's going to be exquisite!

LOUISE

You're some kind of monstrosity!

*(Sound of quill. Lights change. Leon is rehearsing what he'll say to Emma.)*

LEON

Emma, you can't be ignorant of my sentiments... No... You *know my feelings for you*. I've told you often. But in your eyes I'm... some kind of monstrosity!

*(Charles and Emma at home.)*

CHARLES

Have you heard? Leon is leaving us for Paris.

EMMA

No. I hadn't heard.

HOMASIS *(entering)*

Good evening, all and sundry! Have you heard? I'm losing my lodger and Paris is gaining a law student!

CHARLES

I guess so.

HOMASIS

My wife was quite vexed when she heard the news. You know how easily women get upset.

EMMA

Excuse me. *(exits)*

HOMAIS

We men have no right to complain, their nervous systems are much more susceptible than ours.

CHARLES

Will he manage in Paris, do you think?

HOMAIS

Don't worry on that score! Think of the parties in upstairs rooms, the masked balls! The champagne!

CHARLES

I don't think he's much for parties...

HOMAIS

He'll have to go along with the others or they'll take him for a Jesuit. You have no idea how those Bohemians live it up in the Latin Quarter with their actress-mistresses!

CHARLES

It's just that in the city...

HOMAIS

I know what you mean! In the city you've got to keep your hand in your watch pocket every minute. Suppose you're sitting in a park: some fellow comes up to you, well dressed, offers you a pinch of snuff. You get friendlier. He takes you to a cafe. Invites you to visit him in the country, introduces you to all kinds of people -- three-quarters of the time he's only trying to get his hands on your money.

CHARLES

I was thinking of diseases. Students from the country can get typhoid.

HOMAIS

Because of the city diet! The dishes they serve in restaurants -- all those spicy foods overheat the blood. I've always said there's nothing like home cooking... What is it?

FÉLICITÉ (*who's just entered.*)

Excuse me for disturbing you, M. Homais. They've sent from the pharmacy. The postman says you promised him an ointment for hemorrhoids.

HOMAIS

Oh my! I forgot the postman's hemorrhoids.

FLAUBERT

It sounds so contrived...

HOMAIS

Not a moment's peace! *Merci, ma petite.* I'm like a plough-horse, my friends! A plough-horse sweating blood! Oh, have you heard the other piece of news?'

CHARLES

What news?

HOMAIS

It's very likely that this year's Agricultural Fair will be held right here in Yonville. There's a rumor to that effect in this morning's paper.

CHARLES

My, my!

HOMAIS

An event of the first magnitude for our town! A speech by the Prefect in person! But we'll talk about it later. *Bonsoir.*

FLAUBERT

Now the goodbye.

*(Emma and Leon alone. Leon has his bags packed.)*

LEON

I couldn't wait any longer. I'm sorry.

EMMA

It's going to rain.

LEON

I have a coat.

*(Pause.)*

EMMA

Ah...

LEON

Well, good-bye, then.

EMMA

Yes, good-bye, you must be on your way.

*(They both step forward. He holds out his hand. She hesitates.)*

A handshake, then, English style.

*(They shake hands. He is gone.)*

FLAUBERT

And then...

*(Emma crosses to Monsieur Lheureux's shop. Sound of a shop bell.)*

EMMA

Monsieur Lheureux, you have two scarves in your window. What are they made of?

LHEUREUX

Ah, Madame Bovary... Yes, the two scarves. Eh, the one on the right is cashmere, of course. The one on the left is raw silk. *(Slight pause.)* The best Lyon silk...

EMMA

I'll take them both.

*(Blackout.)*

## Second Draft

*(Gavel. Pinard enters.)*

PINARD

What are we to think of the way in which Emma encounters Rudolph Boulanger at the Agricultural Fair? Is it an accident -- or has he waited for the opportunity to offer his arm *knowing* that Dr. Bovary would be visiting patients in outlying villages? And who is Rudolph Boulanger? Not a timid, young law clerk. No, Boulanger is a wealthy wastrel of 34, a bachelor who's quickly running down his inheritance as he goes through the motions of being a gentleman farmer. But first and foremost, honored judges, he is a ladies' man, a seducer, a breaker of hearts, a man who knows what he wants and gets it. He saw the doctor's wife, your honors, and he *desired* her. Boulanger personifies the immorality into which this detestable book would have us plunge to our very earlobes. I might add that M. Flaubert seems to have *lavished* his literary gifts on this rascal, depicting him with a felicity which betrays his relish for the character.



*(Flaubert enters as Rudolph, primping a bit. It should be clear that this is not an actor doubling in an additional role but the author living vicariously through his character. Father Bournisien enters opposite.)*

BOURNESIEN

M. Boulanger, good day to you, sir.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Monsieur le curé.

*(The two men exit in opposite directions. Madame Lefrançois has also entered, muttering to herself.)*

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Agriculture fair! A bunch of cowherds and riffraff.

PINARD

And doesn't M. Flaubert's choice of an agricultural fair imply a nasty parallel between human and animal procreation?

*(Pinard exits. Homais enters briskly.)*

HOMAIS

Good morning all and sundry! Madame Lefrançois! A great day! A great day!

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

You mean this fair?

HOMAIS

Of course, the fair. Don't you know I'm President of the Prize Committee?

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

What do you know about farming?

HOMAIS

Madame Lefrançois, a pharmacist is above all a chemist: the composition of manure, the fermentation of liquids, analysis of gases, effects of noxious effluvia . . . what's that if not chemistry -- chemistry in the strictest sense of the word? And then botany, Madame Lefrançois. To be able to tell one plant from another . . . which ones harmless, which ones poisonous? Pull them out here and re-sow them there or just leave them alone? I could well wish every farmer were a chemist, or at least listened to what science...

MADAME LEFRANCOIS *(interrupting)*

Oww! Look at the crowd going into the Café Français. How can they patronize that filthy place? Anyway, it won't be open much longer.

HOMAIS

How's that?

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Haven't you heard? Lheureux is foreclosing on them. All those promissory notes Tellier signed sent them under.

HOMAIS

What an unspeakable catastrophe!

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

That Lheureux; he's a wheedler. Ah, speak of the devil...

*(Lheureux enters.)*

LHEUREUX

Madame Lefrançois, M. Homais.

HOMAIS

Your servant, M. Lheureux.

LHEUREUX

What a marvelous day! Everybody's out.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Isn't that Madame Bovary? There, in the blue dress.

LHEUREUX

It's Madame Bovary, all right, but that's not M. Bovary.

HOMAIS

No...

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Why, it's Rudolph Boulanger!

LHEUREUX

Boulanger?

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Shush! They're coming this way.

*(Flaubert re-enters as Boulanger with Emma on his arm.)*

LHEUREUX

Ah, Madame Bovary... A fine good morning to you. M. Boulanger...

EMMA

M. Lheureux.

LHEUREUX

What a marvelous...

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Good day, M. Lheureux! We'll be seeing you!

LHEUREUX

Beg your pardon?

*(Emma and Rudolph cross away from the others.)*

HOMAIS

*They're in a hurry.*

EMMA *(to Rudolph.)*

You certainly got rid of him!

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Maybe they're interested in chemistry.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH *(to Emma.)*

Why should I talk with anybody else when I'm with you?

LHEUREUX

Or in something agricultural.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

If we go to the balcony of the town hall, it'll be empty and we'll have a bird's-eye view of the prefect when he makes his speech.

EMMA

What an exquisite idea.

*(Emma and Flaubert/Rudolph seat themselves on "the balcony". The others are grouped below. A lectern is set. Conversations interleave and overlap.)*

EMMA

Oh my! Look at the dress that woman is wearing.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

An extraordinary combination of patterns! Where do they learn to dress / like that?

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Stifling, isn't it?

EMMA

The men are no / better.

HOMAIS

It was hotter yester / day.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

When you live in the country . . .

EMMA

Why bother!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Why indeed?

HOMAIS

It's the / wind.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

There isn't a single person here capable of appreciating the cut of / a coat.

HOMAIS

The *east* wind.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Life in the provinces is slow death by mediocrity.

EMMA

You gradually cease to make distinctions.

LHEUREUX

There *is* no wind.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

It's suffocating. I get gloomier and gloomier as time goes on . . .

EMMA

Do you? I think of you as jolly.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

No.

LHEUREUX

They should have set up a pair of Venetian flagstuffs trimmed with something rich, but not gaudy, to frame the platform.

HOMAS

Certainly, but what can you expect? The mayor took charge of everything. He's / got no taste.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

The jolliness is a mask I wear.

EMMA

Even with your friends?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

What friends? I've always / been alone.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

There's the Regional Councilor's carriage!

HOMAS

Regional Councilor? It was supposed to be the Prefect!

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

The Prefect / was busy.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

If I'd had a purpose in life, if I'd met anyone who cared . . .

EMMA

You're scarcely to be pitied.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Oh?

EMMA

You're free. You're rich.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Don't make fun of me.

But I'm not!

EMMA

*(drum roll )*

EMMA and LHEUREUX  
Looks like they're starting.

*(Fanfare. M. Lieuvain, the regional councilor, enters. Applause from those on stage.)*

LIEUVAIN

Gentlemen. With your permission, before speaking on the subject of today's meeting -- and this sentiment, I am sure, will be shared by all of you -- I should like to pay tribute to the monarch, gentlemen, to our sovereign for whom every branch of public or private prosperity is a matter of / concern.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

I should stay further back.

LIEUVAIN

And who, with so firm and yet so wise a hand guides the chariot of state past the constant perils of a stormy / sea...

EMMA

Why?

LIEUVAIN

... maintaining public respect for industry, for commerce, / for agriculture, and for the fine arts.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

They might see me from down there. I'd have to spend weeks explaining. / With my bad reputation . . .

LIEUVAIN

Gone forever, gentlemen, are the days when civil discord drenched our streets / with blood.

EMMA

You're exaggerating.

LIEUVAIN

Gone are the days when subversive principles undermined the / foundations of France.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

No, no, my reputation's terrible, I assure / you.

LIEUVAIN

Commerce and the arts are thriving.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Moreover, from society's point of view, I probably / deserve it.

LIEUVAIN

Our great manufacturing centers are / humming.

EMMA

What do you / mean?

LIEUVAIN

Shipping fills our / ports.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Some men are tormented....

LIEUVAIN

At long last -- France breathes again!

*(applause)*

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

...lost in dreams one minute, scurrying around the next to make / them reality...

LIEUVAIN

And this point has not been lost / on you.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

We end up in unlikely / relationships.

LIEUVAIN

No, not on you, the farmers / and workers of our fields!

EMMA

We women don't even have that / option.

LIEUVAIN

Not on you, champions of progress / and morality!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

It's not much of an option.

LIEUVAIN

The point has not been lost on you that the storms of political strife are more to be dreaded than the worst visitations of nature!

HOMAS

Hear! Hear!

*(applause)*

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

It doesn't lead to happiness.

EMMA

Do we ever find / happiness?

LIEUVAIN

Where can you find more intelligence than in rural / areas?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

It comes along / one day.

And by intelligence, I don't mean superficial cleverness, the futile ornament of idle minds. / No!

EMMA

When?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Just when we've given up hope / a new horizon opens;

LIEUVAIN

I mean a deep and well-tempered intelligence which contributes to the general welfare, to public improvement / and the stability of the nation.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

We pour our hearts out to someone. Words aren't / necessary.

*(He lets his hand fall over hers; she withdraws it.)*



LIEUVAIN

I'm talking about the intelligence that results from respecting the law and carrying out one's duty!

*(Lieuvain sips water.)*

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

There they go again! Duty, always duty. Our duty is to feel what is great and love what is beautiful -- and to reject all the stupid social / conventions that hinder us!

LIEUVAIN

Who among you has not thought of the immense benefit we derive from that modest creature, / denizen of our kitchen yards which provides...

EMMA

Don't we have to be guided by society's opinions?

LIEUVAIN

-- at one and the same time -- a downy pillow / for our beds, succulent meat for our tables and eggs?

EMMA

And follow its standards of morality?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

There are two moralities: the petty, conventional / one,

LIEUVAIN

Were I to enumerate the products which properly-cultivated soil lavishes upon us, my speech would never end!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

the one that / keeps changing,

LIEUVAIN

The cabbage, the grape, the cider apple, a thousand kinds of / cheese...

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

...screaming its head off like that crowd / of fools

LIEUVAIN

and flax! Gentlemen, do not forget / flax!

...and the other morality, / the eternal one,...

LIEUVAIN

Flax is a crop which has developed considerably in the / past few years  
and one to which I particularly call your attention.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

...the one that's all around us and above us like a landscape -- or the light from a clear,  
blue sky!

*(A cow bellows.)*

EMMA

I never thought of it / that way.

LIEUVAIN

And finally, I address the servants, humblest members of the household,  
whose labors have by no government till the present been given the  
slightest consideration, present yourselves now / and receive the reward of  
your silent heroism!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

We beat our wings against the bars of the cage; we call to each other. Eventually / we  
come together.

LIEUVAIN

Rest assured: the state has its eyes on you!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Two people come together / and love one another...

LIEUVAIN

The state encourages you, protects you, and strives to lighten the / burden  
of your painful sacrifices!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

because they were born for each other!

LEFRANCOIS

Well, they ought to!

*(Applause)*

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Take *us*, for example. Why should we have met? / How did it happen?

*(He takes her hand; she doesn't withdraw it.)*

LIEUVAIN

Without further ado let me present M. Homais, / President of the Prize Committee.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Something deep within us brought us closer and closer, like two rivers flowing / into one another.

LIEUVAIN

He will announce the prizes voted / by the juries.

*(Applause. Lieuvain sits down. Homais gets up. )*

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

When I walked by your house today, did I have *any idea* we'd be / coming to the fair?

HOMAIS

Thank you, my friends, thank / you.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

A hundred times I was on the point of making some excuse to leave, yet I stayed with you as I'd stay with you tonight, tomorrow, every day, all my life!

HOMAIS

Manure! / A gold medal to M. Caron, / of Argueil!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Never have I been so utterly charmed / by anyone.

HOMAIS

Merino stud service: a silver medal to M. Bain, / of Givry-Saint-Martin!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

I'll carry the memory of you with me whereas you'll forget me. I'll vanish like a / shadow.

HOMAIS

Swine... a tie! To Messieurs Herisse and Culbourg, / sixty francs each!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Tell me it isn't so! Tell me I'll have a place in your thoughts, a place in your life!

*(Rudolph squeezes her hand; she moves her fingers.)*

HOMAIS

For domestic service: to Catherine-Nicaise-Elizabeth Leroux for fifty-four /  
years of service on the same farm!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Oh! Thank God! You're not rejecting me!

HOMAIS

A silver medal valued at twenty-five francs! Where is / Catherine Leroux?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

How sweet, how kind! I'm yours.

A VOICE

Stand up!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Let me see you!

ANOTHER VOICE

Don't be scared!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Let me look at you!

A THIRD VOICE

Stupid thing!

*(Rudolph and Emma have stopped speaking. They're staring at each other, their  
fingers intertwined. He kisses her.)*

HOMAIS

Is she here or isn't she?

FIRST VOICE

Yes! Here she is!

HOMAIS

Let's have a big hand for Catherine Leroux!

*(Applause. The agriculture fair vanishes. Emma is on horseback, speaking to an  
invisible Rudolph as they ride back from their tryst in the woods.)*

EMMA

At the convent school there was an elderly maid who came every week to do the linen. She was from a noble family ruined by the revolution. We'd slip out of study-hall to talk to her. She'd lend us novels about love affairs. There were broken hearts, vows, sobs, tears, boat rides in the moonlight, nightingales in thickets. The noblemen were always virtuous, always beautifully dressed... and they wept tears of true love. For six months when I was fifteen I read those novels constantly.

LOUISE

Gustave?

EMMA

And the illustrations! I'd blow back the tissue paper that covered the engravings: on a balcony a young man clasps a girl in a white dress to his chest. She has one of those little velvet bags fastened to her belt. Later, the girl is reclining on a sofa, a letter lying beside her. She's gazing at the moon through a window that's half open, half draped with a black curtain. On another page, a maiden with tears on her cheeks is kissing a turtledove through the bars of a Gothic bird cage.

LOUISE

Gustave!

EMMA

Finally there's a landscape with pine trees and palm trees, tigers and lions, minarets on the horizon and ruins in the foreground with a few kneeling camels. All of it set in a virgin forest with sunbeams quivering on a lake. Out on the water, a few swans are floating, just the right distance apart.

LOUISE

Why don't you answer my letters?

EMMA

I turned the pages one by one as I lay in the dormitory, late into the night. There wasn't a sound.

LOUISE

Gustaaave!

FLAUBERT (*as himself*)

Louise! After a week of work, I've gotten them to the big fuck. For nine hours (with 25 minutes off for supper) I've been writing *Bovary*! I'm sweating; my head is spinning. I've almost lost my voice trying things out. I wrote a scene of two lovers, riding in the forest on an autumn afternoon under a canopy of yellowing leaves. I was the lover and the mistress, both! I was the horses; the leaves; the wind, the very words they spoke to each other. I was the ruby sunlight making them half-close their eyes, eyes that were brimming with love. What a thing it is *to write*, to move in a universe of your own creation! Praise the Lord for not making me a cotton merchant or... an actor! I'll meet you at the *Hotel du Grand Cerf* in Mantes on Thursday afternoon. I'm taking the train that arrives at 3:40. I love you. I kiss you on all your lips!

LOUISE

I'll see him at last!

*(Louise exits.)*

EMMA

I have a lover. I have a lover! I have a lover!

*(The other characters applaud as the lights fade.)*

## Third Draft

*(Gavel. Pinard enters.)*

PINARD

You have now seen, gentlemen, by what means M. Rudolph Boulanger contrives to have his way with Madame Bovary. Not only is her husband duped in the affair, his complicity is *active*: believing that regular horseback riding is necessary for his wife's health, he solicits the favor of Rudolph Boulanger that he accompany her on these jaunts and *thanks* him for the loan of a horse!

CHARLES *(reading the note he's just written)*

"My wife will be at your disposition Saturday afternoon. I rejoice at the thought of the healthful exercise she has already received in your company..."

*(He finds the note good, folds it and puts it in an envelope.)*

FLAUBERT

My dearest Louise, the hours we spent in Mantes were lovely. Getting older does that: one takes one's joys more seriously, which makes them sweeter. The idea that one can be loved for one's mind alone seems strange to me; inevitably and necessarily, one fucks. Our sturdy genitalia are the cornerstones of human tenderness – not tenderness itself, but the *substrate* of tenderness. No woman has ever loved a eunuch: If mothers caress their children more than fathers, it's because the child came from the belly and the umbilical remains in the heart; the cord is never really cut. Today I've gotten back to *Bovary*; it's hard – in every sense. Yours with kisses, Gustave.

*(The following scenes flick by like pages turning. Sound of quill. Charles and Emma.)*

CHARLES *(coming from behind to embrace her.)*

*Mon amour....*

EMMA

That's enough, Charles!

CHARLES

What did I say?

FLAUBERT

My sweet and faithful Muse, I've done next to nothing since I left you except think of you and be bothered. My cold is worse. I keep a big fire going and watch the snow fall. I did a bit of *Bovary* today.

*(Sound of Quill. Emma and Charles.)*

EMMA

I need a new riding suit.

CHARLES

Order it from Lheureux. Don't worry about the money.

FLAUBERT

I'm having trouble feeling it. Erections of the mind are like those of the body; you can't *will* them to happen.

*(Sound of quill. Lheureux passes Charles' house just as Charles is leaving.)*

CHARLES

Good morning, M. Lheureux.

LHEUREUX

Your servant, Doctor! Your house is particularly elegant. Lovely curtains.

CHARLES

Why, thank you. You know my wife has excellent judgment in such things.

*(Madame Lefrançois comes by on her way to market.)*

LHEUREUX

Madame Lefrançois, a very good morning to you.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

And to you, M. Lheureux. Doctor.

CHARLES

Madame.

LHEUREUX

I was just complimenting M. Bovary on the appearance of his house: new curtains and all.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Very nice.

CHARLES

She's getting a new poker for the fireplace, too.

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Oh, a new poker. That will be good, won't it, M. Lheureux?



LHEUREUX (*picking up the joke*)

Indeed it will. You might think about getting the flue cleaned at the same time.

CHARLES

Do you think so?

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

You never know what foreign objects can get into a flue.

CHARLES

Hmmm.

FLAUBERT

It's such a strange book I'm writing. I've done fifty pages now where nothing happens, nothing you could possibly call an *event*.

*(Félicité enters with a letter for Flaubert. He reads as Louise speaks.)*

LOUISE

My Dear Gustave, Today I read your letter about umbilical cords again. It's a wonderful letter; I think about it often. My period is ten days late. I feel a great longing to have a child by you. You could take me away somewhere in the south, somewhere warm. Or we could go abroad. We could make each other / so happy.

*(Henriette enters with the post. There's a letter from Flaubert.)*

FLAUBERT

Dear Louise, I read your letter with interest. My next project is to read *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in English. You mustn't think that I'm prejudiced against it because of its success. *Bovary* is going very slowly -- only TWO pages this week! Sentences keep rushing into my head. Instead of one idea I have six. I find myself writing metaphors and similes. (I'm plagued by similes -- I swat them like flies.)

*(Félicité hands him another letter.)*

LOUISE

You're selfish, Gustave, monumentally selfish, and not even *intelligently* selfish. It would cost you nothing to love me: I'm not asking *to live* with you, to displace your Buddha-like mother that way. I'm not even asking you to DO anything. All I ask is that you love me and make some room in your leathery heart for a child. Is that unreasonable coming from someone who's shown you nothing but devotion since five years?

FLAUBERT

For five years.

LOUISE

How can you speak to me only of writing? How can you correct the style of my letters and ignore the sentiments the letters convey? Why are you only interested in Emma? Could your endlessly-fascinating Madame Bovary / give you a child?

*(Henriette brings the response.)*

FLAUBERT

Louise, you are in love with life; you are a pagan and a southerner; you believe in passion and hope for happiness. That was all right when we were young and ideas sung in the sky like sparrows, but I *loathe* life. I'm a Catholic; my heart is choked with the green moss that grows on our Norman Cathedrals. If I could, I'd spend my life dreaming. Dressing and undressing, eating -- all the rest of it -- exasperate me. How can you expect a man as besotted with Art as I am, a man perpetually hungry for an ideal he never attains, a man with a sensibility sharper than a barber's razor, who spends his life banging it on rock in hopes of producing a spark (and so hacks the blade to pieces) -- how can you expect / such a man to love with the heart of a twenty-year-old?

*(Félicité hands him a letter even before he finishes.)*

LOUISE

It's because I love you. I love you so much that I can't do without you. You know that, don't you? Sometimes I want to see you so much I can't bear it. Where is he? Is he with other women? They're smiling at him, he's going up to them . . . They can't love you the way I do. I'm your slave and your concubine. You're my king, my idol. You're beautiful! / You're strong! You're wise!

*(Henriette brings the next letter.)*

FLAUBERT

You should write more coldly. Never put your heart's blood on the page; what goes on the page is ink. Beware of inspiration. Everything should be done coldly, with poise. Try to live like a bourgeois and think like a demigod, / that's the ticket!

LOUISE *(to herself)*

What sort of man *is* he?

FLAUBERT (*continuing*)

Our recent correspondence has given me occasion to reflect on the difference between a man's heart and a woman's. On our side there's honesty: if I were less honest with you, Dear Muse, I wouldn't hurt you so often. But then, what higher compliment can I pay you than to treat you exactly as I would a man? Women keep everything pent-up in the bottom of their sack. You never get the whole story. When they finally reveal something, the meat is hidden under ladles of gravy. It's very strange; I rack my brains to understand. / *Uncle Tom's Cabin* is another disappointment. Your Gustave.

*(Félicité enters with a letter as before.)*

LOUISE

Dear Gustave, Be at peace, you gibbering spigot of flawless prose. You have no son, no, nor daughter either, at least not by me. The redcoats have landed -- a bit late, but they're bivouacking on the beach just the same. All your progeny are paragraphs. No Gustavo! No Gustavette! You'll never dip your tool in anything more fertile than an inkwell. I pity you. The fluid you spill into eternity is dark as midnight. I shall call you my octopus, he-who-flees-in-a-cloud-of-ink. I kiss your beautiful tentacle, there, the callused one that holds the quill. Your / Louise.

*(Henriette enters with a letter, a bit winded.)*

Louise! I begin by devouring you with kisses, for I am transported with joy. Your letter has lifted a terrible weight from my heart. The idea of causing the birth of someone appalls me. No! I desire my flesh to perish. I have no wish to transmit the trouble of existence to anyone.

LOUISE

How considerate.

FLAUBERT

Tomorrow I'll be thirty-one. It's the age when a man settles down, marries, chooses a trade. Paternity would have forced me to live like other people. Why did you desire this bond between us?

LOUISE

He's crossed himself out. He's drawn a line through his line.

*(Louise exits.)*

FLAUBERT

Adieu! I love you more than ever, and I smother you with kisses in honor of my birthday. -- Gustave.

*(Sound of quill. Emma enters. Shop bell. Lheureux emerges.)*

LHEUREUX

Ah, Madame Bovary. Here is the ring: a gentleman's signet, agate in plain gold. Exactly as you ordered... "*Amor nel cor.*" That means "love in the heart," doesn't it?

EMMA

Yes.

LHEUREUX

A charming device, Dr. Bovary will be very gratified. Is it for an anniversary?

EMMA

A birthday.

LHEUREUX

He's a lucky man.

EMMA

Yes. What does that come to?

LHEUREUX

With the engraving and the case, two hundred and seventy francs.

EMMA

Could you put it on my bill?

*(Slight pause.)*

LHEUREUX

Very well, Madame.

EMMA

Thank you, M. Lheureux.

FLAUBERT

Not bad. It's simple.

*(Sound of quill. Madame Lefrançois enters and talks directly to the audience.)*

## MADAME LEFRANCOIS

M. Homais tells me I should get a new billiard table for the Lion d'Or; claims mine is falling apart and the one at the Café Français is nicer. Says everybody today wants narrow pockets and heavy cues. I don't know why he thinks he's an expert on the subject; I've never seen him at a billiard table. As for the Café Français, I'm not afraid of that fly-specked place! As long as the Lion d'Or exists, we'll keep our customers! A new billiard table! Mine is perfect when I fold the washing -- and in the shooting season I've slept six on it!

## FLAUBERT

Stop! Louise addles my brain with her letters and I write nonsense afterwards!

*(Madame Lefrançois exits, miffed. Emma has something wrapped in paper.)*

## EMMA

Oh my darling, I've come running across the fields. I don't care if it's daylight; I had to see you.

## FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

My dear girl...

## EMMA

Look what I have for you!

## FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

It's lovely. But really, you shouldn't have. First the riding crop, now this...

## EMMA

It makes me happy to give you things.

## FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

I know... but you shouldn't have. *(Pause.)* What does it say?

## EMMA

"Amor nel cor!"

## FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

"Love in the heart"?

## EMMA

It's what I have for you.

## FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

You shouldn't have.

(Gavel. Pinard enters.)

PINARD

Gifts! Assignations! Fornication in the garden by moonlight! A lesser writer might claim that haste, or inattention, or a craving for local color resulted in these obscenities. But we have already seen with what precision M. Flaubert dissects the heart of his characters: if he paints a scarlet portrait of Emma Bovary, it's because he *wants to do so*. *Deliberately* he strips the veil away and shows us nature unvarnished—nature in all her brutality! Alas, his command of language is only too adequate to the task.

FLAUBERT (to the judges)

Language is a cracked cauldron on which we beat crude rhythms to make bears dance when what we *want* to do is beg mercy from the stars.

EMMA

Do you love me?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

I've told you so a hundred times.

PINARD

He glorifies adultery. He creates *a poetics* of adultery!

EMMA

Tell me again.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

I love you.

PINARD

Tell the tribunal why Emma Bovary becomes more beautiful as she becomes less virtuous.

FLAUBERT

She's beautiful because she's happy and she's admired.

EMMA

Very much?

FLAUBERT (to Pinard.)

She's very much admired.

EMMA

Do you *love me* very much?

PINARD

By you?

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH (*responding to Emma*)

Of course.

PINARD

By you, Gustave Flaubert?

EMMA

You've never loved anyone else, have you?

FLAUBERT

Me?

EMMA and PINARD

Of course, you.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH (*to Emma*)

Do you think you're my first?

PINARD

Do you *admire* this woman?

EMMA

Aren't I?

FLAUBERT (*to Emma, then Pinard, then back to Emma*)

Yes – No -- Yes!

PINARD

Yes. That much is clear. There's no one else in your mole-heap *to admire*. But how is it *possible*?

EMMA

It's because I love you. I love you so much that I can't do without you. You know that don't you?

PINARD

How can you admire this wanton and shallow creature when so many nobler and finer persons offer themselves to your regard?

FLAUBERT

I don't know. The heart... I don't know. (*exits.*)

EMMA (*going after him.*)

Sometimes I want to see you so much I can't bear it. Where is he? Is he with other women? They're smiling at him; he's going up to them... They can't love you the way I do. I'm your slave and your concubine! You're my king, my idol! You're beautiful! You're strong! You're wise!

(*Homais, Charles and Bournisien are in the Lion d'Or, drinking cider.*)

HOMAIS

The theatre teaches virtue *under the guise* of entertainment. *Castigat ridendo mores!* Of course, there's bad theatre just as there's bad pharmacy, but to condemn the greatest of the performing arts...

BOURNISIEN

The simple fact that people of both sexes are brought together in a glamorous auditorium -- the heathenish disguises; the painted faces; the effeminate voices... If the church condemns play-going, she has good reason to do so.

HOMAIS

But why does the church excommunicate actors?

(*Crossfade: Emma reads poetry by moonlight to Rudolph, whom we do not see.*)

EMMA

*My little life I've lived in vain,  
Friendship has fled and gaiety,  
And pride can never bloom again  
That once the Muses woke in me.*

(*Back at the Lion d'Or.*)

HOMAIS

Actors used to take part in church ceremonies, you know. They used to put on farcical plays right in the sanctuary.

BOURNISIEN

Oh now really....

CHARLES

You know....

HOMAIS

It's the same with the Bible. There are some very raunchy parts in that book, you know, some pretty daring things!



BOURNISIEN

These are old arguments...

HOMAIS

But you'll agree it's not for young people! I wouldn't want my daughter to read it.

BOURNISIEN

We don't recommend reading the Bible! It's the Protestants!

*(Emma continues reading to Rudolph, who is now visible.)*

EMMA

*When Truth unveiled her shining face,  
I thought to find in her a friend;  
But day by day she lost her grace,  
I grew to hate her in the end.*

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Who's it by?

EMMA

Alfred de Musset.

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

I think it's swill.

*(The Lion d'Or again.)*

HOMAIS

Whatever you say, it's astonishing in this day and age that anyone should persist in denigrating the theatre, a form of intellectual diversion that's harmless, and sometimes even good for the health – don't you agree, Doctor?

CHARLES

I suppose so. Doesn't it depend on the play?

*(Emma and Rudolph at a different moment.)*

EMMA

He's so... He's so *Charles*! I can't live with him anymore. Take me away somewhere. We could make each other so happy. We could go to Italy!

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH (*cool*)

That would be lovely, wouldn't it?

EMMA

Oh my love... Tell me that we'll go...

FLAUBERT/RUDOLPH

Alright, we'll go.

*(Back to the Lion d'Or.)*

HOMAIS

I've known priests who would put on normal clothes and sneak out to see dancing girls.

BOURNISIEN

Come now.

HOMAIS

Oh yes, I've known some! I . . . have . . . known . . . some!

BOURNISIEN *(exiting in a rage.)*

Well...they did *wrong!*

HOMAIS *(to Charles)*

Quite a squabble! Did you see how I got to him? Pretty good, eh?

*(Emma and M. Lheureux. Shop bell.)*

EMMA

I need a trunk. I also need a cloak, a long cloak with a deep collar and a lining.

LHEUREUX

Are we going on a trip?

EMMA

No. But . . . You can get them, can't you? Soon?

LHEUREUX

My dear lady, I am your servant, but the notes you signed for the riding clothes and the signet ring are already past due.

EMMA

Nevertheless, I need these articles. What do you suggest?

LHEUREUX

Perhaps you could see your husband about a power of attorney. That would allow you to renew your credit and secure future accounts with real property.

EMMA

I'm not sure I follow you.

LHEUREUX

I can give you more credit if I have real estate as a guarantee. You can pledge the collateral if you have a power of attorney -- and we can do business as usual.

EMMA

I should ask my husband.

LHEUREUX

Here's a sample contract. Why don't you take it to whoever gives you legal advice. Our local notary, M. Guillaumin, would be delighted to help you with it.

EMMA

You understand my problem so well.

LHEUREUX

How big a trunk are we thinking of?

*(Lights change.)*

FLAUBERT

Dearest Louise, Six pages this week! Cruel, pages, perhaps, but I like a touch of bitterness in everything -- a dash of desolation even in moments of triumph. When I was in Palestine, walking near Haifa one day, I caught a whiff of the most extraordinary odor -- a mixture of lemon trees and corpses. I went closer and saw that the orchard beside the road was actually a caved-in cemetery. Half-crumbled skeletons lay about while over my head green branches bent low with golden fruit. Don't you see the supreme poetry in this? Don't you see that / this is the grandest possible synthesis?

*(Louise enters, reading from Flaubert's letter and carrying the enclosed MS pages.)*

LOUISE

"...this is the grandest possible synthesis..." If you like, Gustave.

FLAUBERT

I enclose a few pages from my manuscript; Rudolph finally dumps Emma. I think it's rather good. Read it and tell me what you think.

*(Louise turns to the manuscript pages and begins to read. In response, Rudolph enters and prepares to write. Though Rudolph is still played by Flaubert, we sense in this passage that he no longer possesses Flaubert's initiative: he's bound by the manuscript in Louise's hand.)*

LOUISE

"... like boys on a playground, pleasures had so trampled Rudolph's heart that nothing green grew there anymore. He dipped his pen and wrote..."

RUDOLPH

"Dearest Emma, The last thing I want to do is ruin your life. Do you realize the abbess I would be hurling you into?" *(Louise squints at the page.)* "...abyss I would be hurling you into? I'm sure you don't. The world is cruel, Emma. It would have pursued us everywhere. You'd have been subjected to indiscreet questions - scorn, even..."

LOUISE *(prompting from the pages in her hand)*

"insult"

RUDOLPH

"even *insult*. You, *insulted!* And I wanted to set you on a throne! I shall be far away when you read these unhappy lines. I dare not linger; the temptation to see you again is all but irresistible!"

LOUISE

He's a smooth one.

RUDOLPH

"I shall come back. Perhaps one day we'll be able to speak of our love with detachment, as a thing of the past. Adieu!" That's rather good.

*(He signs it.)*

LOUISE

"A touch of bitterness in everything"?

RUDOLPH

Needs a tear.

*(He dips his pinky in his water glass and lets a single drop fall on the letter.)*

LOUISE *(RE Flaubert.)*

You bastard.

RUDOLPH *(repeating because Louise re-reads the line.)*

Needs a tear.

*(He repeats the business with the water drop.)*

LOUISE

"The drop of water made a pale circle in the ink. Rudolph looked for something to seal it with..."

RUDOLPH (*who's found the ring*)

"Amor nel cor"

LOUISE (*as if kicked.*)

Umh!

RUDOLPH

Not very appropriate...

LOUISE

That's *my* ring!

RUDOLPH

Bah... who cares?

LOUISE

I GAVE HIM THAT RING!

*(Rudolph rings for his servant, then puts the letter at the bottom of a basket of apricots. The servant enters.)*

RUDOLPH

Give this to the doctor's wife *personally*. See that you don't spill the apricots.

SERVANT

Like the others, then. Very good, sir.

*(Servant exits.)*

RUDOLPH

Italy!

LOUISE

YOU PRICK, GUSTAVE! YOU INK-STAINED, TREASONOUS, DOUBLE-FOLIO PRICK! Henriette! You'll regret this -- I'll make you pay! Henriette, I'm taking the train for Normandy.

*(Henriette helps Louise into a traveling cloak. Louise conceals a dagger in her reticule and exits. Lights change. Rudolph's servant re-enters with the apricots, gazes out over the river and sighs, regretting, perhaps, that Flaubert has left him undeveloped as a character. Train whistle. Louise re-enters walking quickly.)*

LOUISE

Excuse me. I'm looking for Madame Flaubert's house, Le Croisset?

SERVANT

Follow the river. It's the large white house with the pavilion in the garden.

LOUISE

Thank you.

FLAUBERT *(testing his prose.)*

"Emma ran into the kitchen and dumped the apricots out of the basket. She found the letter and opened it, and, as if she were fleeing a fire, ran panic-stricken up the stairs toward her room. She hurried on up the second flight of stairs, breathless, distracted, reeling, clutching the horrible piece of paper that rattled in her hand like a sheet of tin."

*(Louise arrives through the French windows from the garden.)*

Louise! How did you get here?

LOUISE

I took the train!

FLAUBERT

This is unexpected.

LOUISE

I let myself in through the garden gate.

FLAUBERT

Did my mother see you?

LOUISE

I don't wish to discuss your mother; I wish to discuss the ring.

FLAUBERT

What ring?

LOUISE

The ring I gave you.

FLAUBERT

"Amor nel cor"?

LOUISE

Rudolph uses it to seal his letter. It's a mockery! Are you trying to humiliate me?

FLAUBERT

Dear Louise...

LOUISE

Don't "Dear Louise" me. I want my ring back. I *paid cash* for that ring.

FLAUBERT

I haven't got it.

*(Flaubert hunts in his pockets and desk drawers.)*

LOUISE

Well who does?

FLAUBERT

What does it matter? I'll get you a new ring – or pay you back for the old one.

LOUISE

Who did you give it to?

FLAUBERT

Uh.. Lheureux had it... then Emma...

LOUISE

Always that Emma! I'm sick of Emma Bovary! You slept with her, didn't you?

FLAUBERT

Louise.

LOUISE

You inky slug! I worshipped you like a God!

FLAUBERT

My mother will hear you!

LOUISE

Let her hear! I'll tell her what a slug she has for a son.

FLAUBERT

You must leave this house. I'll write you a check for the ring. It was two-seventy, wasn't it?

LOUISE

Don't you know what anything costs? For two-seventy I could have had *emeralds*.

FLAUBERT (*writing the check*)

I'll leave the amount blank.

LOUISE

You write checks to all your whores, don't you? All drawn on your mother's bank.

FLAUBERT

Please leave.

LOUISE

And I'm the most expensive because *I write letters*.

FLAUBERT

I regret this *contretemps* between us, sincerely...

LOUISE

I'll make it all corpses.

FLAUBERT

Keep your voice down.

LOUISE

For you, nothing but corpses!

FLAUBERT

When you call again, come the front door. That way my mother's servant can tell you I'm not at home.

LOUISE

I'm not done with you, feather man.

FLAUBERT

It's only decent to tell you: I won't be home -- ever.

LOUISE (*fumbling for her knife.*)

No, you won't.



FLAUBERT

Shush! Go quietly.

LOUISE

Nooo!

*(Flaubert gives her the check and pushes her back toward the French windows. Simultaneously, we hear Emma's voice offstage.)*

EMMA

Noooo!

LOUISE

Noooooo!

FLAUBERT

Adieu.

EMMA (*Offstage-- loud.*)

Nooooooo! Noooooo, he didn't... He couldn't...

*(Félicité knocks furiously at Homais's pharmacy.)*

FÉLICITÉ

M. Homais! M. Homais! You must come quickly. Madame is having a terrible fit. Monsieur doesn't know what to do.

HOMAIS

What kind of a fit?

FÉLICITÉ

She cries and stares at the wall and then cries some more. She won't talk to us. We think she ate some apricots.

HOMAIS

I'll come.

*(Lights fade)*

## Fourth Draft

*(Gavel.)*

PINARD

Emma Bovary falls gravely ill, gentlemen; she is at death's door. The nervous shock of Rudolph's abandonment strikes her prostrate during forty-three days. Charles neglects his practice to stay at her bedside. He is devotion itself. Under his care, Madame Bovary slowly comes back to life. She sees her first visitors...

*(Madame Lefrançois visits the convalescing Emma, whom we do not see.)*

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

The Lion d'Or is famous for its lentil soup, Madame Bovary. When my husband was alive we'd sometimes make twenty liters on a market day. The country people would take it home in pails because it's just as good reheated -- some say better. I'll just leave it here by the bed; you'll have some when you feel up to it...

*(Madame Lefrançois exits, Bournisien enters.)*

BOURNISIEN

God in His mercy grants us suffering as a means of bringing us closer to His kingdom. We should be thankful for the chance to reflect on our unworthiness and the price of our salvation. But we are peevish; we rebel. We refuse His gift and think only of our comfort, especially in these first days of winter when it gets so cold, so quickly.

*(Bournisien exits, Lheureux enters.)*

LHEUREUX

Dear Madame Bovary! It wounds me to see you prostrate like this. Nervous upsets are very bothersome, very bothersome indeed. I suffer from palpitations myself – I should consult your husband, professionally, I mean. *(Pause.)* Have you had a chance to see M. Guillaumin about the power of attorney?

*(Lheureux fades out.)*

PINARD

The invalid agrees to take a walk in the garden on her husband's arm, but at the sight of the bower where she and Rudolph met by moonlight she collapses again. Hitherto M. Flaubert's mole-heap has been a mound of lasciviousness and promiscuity. With his heroine's relapse, however, the author plunges into blasphemy. The scenes of Emma's supposed penitence and piety are too shocking to read in court, and yet duty compels me to mention them....

*(Emma, pale and haggard, kneels at a gothic prie-dieu.)*

EMMA

...by our sweet lord Jesus Christ, I pray, whose perfect body was stretched upon the cross, and from whose tender lips came assurance of his love for us, of his love for this, thy servant. That he would cherish and hold this, thy servant, folding me in his caress, in his embrace, dear lord, dear lord, hold me...

PINARD

Not even in Italy or Spain would the Court find a woman so immodest as to murmur in God's ear the adulterous endearments with which she recently greeted her lover!

*(Homais is addressing Charles, whom we do not see.)*

HOMAIS

Charles, your wife would do credit to a nunnery. An evening at the theatre, that's what will bring color to her cheeks! Take her into Rouen to see Lagardy in *Lucia di Lammermoor*. From what they say, he's quite a lad; everywhere he goes he takes along three mistresses and a cook. These theatre people lead a wild life -- stimulates the imagination. Don't worry about what you owe me for medicine, go ahead and spend the money. You'll see: it'll work wonders.

*(Music. Charles and Emma in a box at the opera. They're flanked by other opera-goers who are visibly irritated by their talking.)*

CHARLES

Why's the big fellow shaking her like that?

EMMA

That's her lover.

CHARLES

Then why is he swearing vengeance on her family?

EMMA

What difference does it make?

CHARLES

He walked off arm-in-arm with her father...

EMMA

Yes.

CHARLES

That was her father, wasn't it, the ugly one with the hat?

EMMA

Be *quiet!*

CHARLES

I'd understand the words if it wasn't for the music.

EMMA

Shush!

CHARLES

I like to know what's going on.

EMMA

*Will* you be quiet!

*(Music ends. Applause. Lights change.)*

CHARLES

Phew, such a crowd! Look over there! It's M. Leon!

EMMA

Where?

CHARLES

M. Leon! M. Leon! Come say hello!

EMMA

Leon, here? What a strange coincidence!

FLAUBERT

Don't rub it in.

LEON

Doctor Bovary. This is an agreeable surprise!

EMMA

My dear Leon!

LEON

Madame Bovary! What an intense pleasure to see you again!

CHARLES

Indeed it is. Are you living in Rouen?

LEON  
Yes.

EMMA  
Since when?

LEON  
I finished my studies in May.

CHARLES  
My, my...

LEON  
Are you enjoying the opera?

CHARLES  
I can't understand everything, but they sing well.

EMMA  
*He does. She overdoes it.*

CHARLES  
Maybe... a little.

LEON  
I saw Tambourini and Rubini in Paris. Compared to them, Lagardy is a rusty hinge, believe me.

CHARLES  
Well, Lagardy, in my opinion...

LEON  
It's so hot.

EMMA  
Stifling.

CHARLES  
Yes. . . unbearable.

LEON  
Why don't we go to the Place des Arts for a sorbet?

CHARLES

But we'll miss the ending! Her hair was all tangled up. I think it's going to be tragic.

EMMA

I couldn't possibly stay tonight.

LEON

There's another performance tomorrow. You could see the third act then.

CHARLES

I have to be back in Yonville in the morning, but you could certainly stay an extra night in town.

EMMA

I really don't know whether...

LEON

They say Lagardy is wonderful in the last act: superb; altogether sublime!

CHARLES

If there's the slightest chance it would do you good, you really ought to stay.

EMMA

Well, let's have our sorbet... perhaps I *could* go back Sunday.

CHARLES

That way you can tell me what I'm missing.

LEON

Yes. The concluding act.

EMMA

Well, then...

CHARLES

Can we stop by the hotel? I want to change my shoes.

*(Charles vanishes. Leon walks Emma out of the opera and into his room. As he undresses her, she speaks, trance-like to the audience.)*

## EMMA

The opera was wonderful. When Lucia di Lammermoor was being wed against her will, I thought of my own wedding to Charles. Why didn't I resist and plead like Lucia? I was light-hearted, / unaware of the chasm I was rushing toward. I was still fresh; I hadn't been defiled by marriage or disillusioned by adultery. If at that moment I had given over my life to a man whose soul was great and noble, then love and duty would have been one and the same ..."

*(Flaubert enters, reading his own prose to test it.)*

FLAUBERT (*overlapping*)

"unaware of the chasm I was rushing toward. I was still fresh; I hadn't been / defiled by marriage or disillusioned by adultery. If at that moment I had given over my life to a man whose soul was great and noble, then love and duty would have been one and the same ..."

*(Pinard enters, reading to the judges. The three voices become one.)*

## PINARD

"...defiled by marriage or disillusioned by adultery. If at that moment I had given over my life to a man whose soul was great and noble, etcetera, etcetera ..."

*(Pinard's 'etceteras' silence the other speakers and the prosecutor continues alone.)*

Now isn't that an extraordinary inversion! "Defiled by marriage or disillusioned by adultery"! He might have said "*disillusioned* by marriage and *defiled* by adultery." This would be forgivable. Young married couples often encounter sacrifice and bitterness instead of the unclouded happiness they first expect. The word "disillusioned" might be justified in reference to the married state -- but "defiled"? No, gentlemen, "defiled" is out of the question!

## FLAUBERT

The degree to which you refuse to countenance Emma Bovary's behavior is the exact degree to which you hate and fear life itself. You *accuse me* of writing fiction as if it were a conveyance for all the world's unhappiness. You are right only in the most limited sense: everything the artist invents is true -- poetry is as precise as geometry; *induction* is as true as *deduction* -- after a certain point in his calculations an artist is never wrong about matters of the soul. Without a doubt my poor Madame Bovary is weeping in twenty villages of France at this very moment, but is it my fault?

*(During the above, Leon, embraces Emma from behind, running his hands over her body. He freezes when Emma speaks.)*

EMMA

In the opera they make a gigantic scene of passion – with trombones and drums – but real life isn't like that. If I could look at my marriage as a sort of opera, maybe it wouldn't be too bad.

*(Lights change. To music from Luccia di Lammermoor, Emma is coiffed with a wedding veil; receives a dagger from Bournisien; stabs Leon; is offered flowers by Lheureux and Homais, then is passionately embraced by Charles as the music crescendos.)*

FLAUBERT *(to Pinard.)*

Is this what you want? This delirium *a la* Donizetti where even the dishwater smells like hyacinths? Why don't you have the courage to look life in the eye?

PINARD

It's not life you're showing us, but a compilation of vulgarity and filth.

FLAUBERT

Your honors, the Imperial Prosecutor reads my novel like a debauched adolescent intent on masturbation.

PINARD

What about the music lessons? The judges will please bear the music lessons in mind!

*(Courtroom vanishes. Emma waters the garden. Charles enters.)*

CHARLES

Dear, do you remember what you told me about Lheureux and the power of attorney?

EMMA

Oh... yes.

CHARLES

I've got an idea.

EMMA

What is it?

CHARLES

Why don't we ask Leon?

EMMA

Leon?



CHARLES

He studied law. He must know about powers of attorney.

EMMA

I suppose he does.

CHARLES

Of course, you'd have to go into Rouen. You'd probably have to spend the night...

EMMA

Oh...

CHARLES

I know it's a nuisance, but Leon is someone we know. Someone we trust.

EMMA

Why don't you do it?

CHARLES

You know I would, dear, but I've got my patients.

EMMA

It's such a bother – just for a power of attorney.

CHARLES

I might be able to take one day off...

EMMA

No, no... You do your doctoring. I'll go.

CHARLES

I knew you would. You're so good to me, dear.

EMMA

No, *you're* good to me.

*(During the following speeches, Emma enters Leon's room on tiptoe, undoes her corset with a brutal gesture, slipping out of it like a snake shedding its skin. She goes on tiptoe to check one more time that the door is closed, then, dropping her clothes with a single movement, she throws herself into Leon's arms with a shudder.)*

## PINARD

Personally, I find the fact of Emma's adultery less harmful than the levity with which M. Flaubert presents it. Where shame and condemnation are called for, we are offered scenes that could well be part of a fairground farce.

*(Rouault enters holding a plucked turkey in one hand and a letter in the other.)*

## ROUAULT

Dear Emma, I hope this one is as good as last year's. It seems a little tenderer, and meatier, too. The flesh should stay on the bones better when you cook it. Had a big wind the other night, blew the roof off the cart shed. I heard from a peddler who stopped in Yonville to have a tooth pulled that my son-in-law keeps busy. He showed me the tooth. I'm glad business is good. I kiss you on both cheeks. Your loving father, Theodore Rouault

*(Rouault finishes reading; he finds the letter good and folds it to mail. In the darkness, Emma and Leon come noisily to orgasm. Lights up on Homais and Charles.)*

## HOMAIS

Your wife has a fine singing voice. She should take lessons. If you encourage your wife to study music, you'll save money on the musical education of your children later on. Mothers should take charge of their children's education. It's an idea whose time has come -- like breast feeding!

*(Shop bell. Lheureux examines the signed power of attorney while Emma changes behind a screen.)*

## LHEUREUX

Ah yes! I agree entirely. When one has musical talents, one should cultivate them. You'll be taking a singing lesson every week?

## EMMA

That's right. In Rouen.

## LHEUREUX

Then you'll want another traveling coat, something for the midseason... Where did I see that in your color?

EMMA *(emerging.)*

What do you think?

## LHEUREUX

Very elegant, nice cut here at the shoulders. But the first one was better with your eyes.

EMMA

Do you think so?

*(We hear music by Donizetti. Emma takes both dresses. Under the following speeches, there's a montage of Emma offering presents to Leon, bringing home a new poker for the fireplace, trying out new dresses, hats and accessories.)*

FLAUBERT

Dear Louise, Your intemperate visit to my mother's house was an act of madness, but I forgive you. I forgive you everything. Please write to me, my love. I have momentous news about...

LHEUREUX (*reading*)

Madame Bovary, I have the honor to enclose a memorandum of sums past due to my establishment. These fall into three categories: 1) articles ordered on credit; 2) cash advanced short-term without collateral. 3) Principle and interest due on notes secured (by power of attorney) on real property in Yonville, notably the house you currently occupy with your husband in the *Rue des Ecoles*. The third category offers particular grounds for concern as these notes have already been renewed and are currently in default of payment. Madame will appreciate that in advancing these sums, I did not intend to subsidize her affairs indefinitely.

*(The montage ends with a crescendo of shop bells.)*

Yours faithfully, Maurice Lheureux, merchant

*(He is re-reading his letter when Emma enters the shop.)*

EMMA

Am I to understand that you're refusing me credit?

LHEUREUX

Not only am I refusing you credit, I'm proceeding to foreclose.

EMMA

Please inform me of the sum I owe.

LHEUREUX

Eight thousand francs and change.

EMMA

I'm willing to sign a recognizance of debt.

LHEUREUX

I've gotten as many of your signatures as I need or want.

EMMA

I'll sell something.

LHEUREUX

You have nothing to sell.

EMMA

I beg of you, M. Lheureux, where am I going to find eight thousand francs?

LHEUREUX

When one has friends, one has resources.

FLAUBERT

That Lheureux! I can always count on him.

EMMA

M. Lheureux...

LHEUREUX

Good day, Madame Bovary.

FLAUBERT

Louise, it's the most amazing thing -- *Bovary* seems to be writing itself. Nine pages this week! I'll soon be free to take another break in Mantes.

*(Emma and Leon)*

EMMA

Oh, Leon! Leon my love, you're going to do something for me. I need eight thousand francs.

LEON

You must be mad!

EMMA

Not yet.

LEON

It's a considerable sum.

FLAUBERT

Of all the rough winds that blow across our loves, demands for money bite the hardest.

EMMA

But you could find it for me; I know you could.

LEON

Where?

EMMA

You're a notary; you could get it from your office.

LEON

The money at the office belongs to clients.

EMMA

Don't be a baby, Leon.

LEON

You want me to *steal* it?

EMMA

I'd love you to death afterward.

*(Pause.)*

LEON

I'll tell you what: Morel is coming back this evening. His father is very rich; he won't refuse me. Perhaps you won't get the whole eight thousand, but maybe enough to calm things down. Three thousand?

FLAUBERT

Does she sense the lie?

LEON

I'll try and bring you the money tomorrow. If I'm not there by three, don't wait for me.

*(Leon disappears.)*

FLAUBERT

Louise, Why aren't you answering my letters?

FÉLICITÉ

Madame! Have you seen it?

FLAUBERT

Wait, not yet!

*(He tries to prevent Félicité from entering, but the novel can no longer be stopped.)*

FÉLICITÉ

Oh Madame! It's too horrible!

EMMA

What have you got there?

FLAUBERT

Louise!

EMMA *(taking a handbill from Félicité)*

"forfeitory attachment of furniture ..."

*(They look at each other in silence.)*

FÉLICITÉ

If I were Madame, I'd go to the other notary. You know, M. Guillaumin?

EMMA

Do you think so?

FÉLICITÉ

It's worth a try.

*(Sound of rain. Lights change. Emma arrives at the notary's house.)*

FLAUBERT

I assume you've been ill, dear Louise, or otherwise indisposed...

GUILLAUMIN

But of course! I've seen you many times at the market place. The doctor's wife, Madame...

EMMA

Bovary.

GUILLAUMIN

Madame Bovary. Please come in.

EMMA

This is just the kind of dining room I want.

GUILLAUMIN

Your feet are wet from the rain. Come right over here and put them up on the stove.

EMMA

Thank you, monsieur, I wanted to ask you . . .

GUILLAUMIN

What, Madame? I'm at your service.

EMMA

M. Guillaumin, if I don't find three thousand francs, they'll sell my furniture.

GUILLAUMIN

Three thousand francs! My, my.

EMMA

It's been going on for weeks -- the threats, the registered letters...

GUILLAUMIN

Go ahead, put your feet up. Higher -- against the porcelain.

EMMA

I'm afraid of getting it muddy.

GUILLAUMIN

Pretty things never do any harm.

EMMA

I'm terribly embarrassed. I even owe wages to my maid.

GUILLAUMIN

An elegant woman like yourself! . . . What a pity you should undergo these inconveniences. Why didn't you ask me to invest your capital from the beginning? There are a hundred ways even a lady can invest money profitably: the new peat farm; building lots in Le Havre... Speculations like these are excellent, almost risk-free. Why didn't you come to me?

EMMA

I really don't know.

GUILLAUMIN

Did I seem frightening to you? Not a bit of it! I feel warmly toward you. You realize that now, I hope?

EMMA

Monsieur...

*(He presses her hand to his lips, then lowers it to his knee, fondling her fingers.)*

GUILLAUMIN

This little hand should never be forced to unseal a bill collector's threats, such a soft, little hand.

EMMA

Monsieur! I'm waiting!

GUILLAUMIN

What for?

EMMA

The money.

GUILLAUMIN

But... Madame. *(She rises.)* Yes! Yes! I'll get you the money. Please!*(He seizes her by the waist.)*

EMMA

Have you no shame, monsieur? To take advantage of my distress!

GUILLAUMIN

Don't go! I love you!

EMMA

I'm not for sale!

GUILLAUMIN

I love you! I love you!

*(Music. Lights change. Emma waltzes with her creditors in a grotesque parody of the ball she attended in act one. After each line she's passed off to a new partner.)*

LHEUREUX

Eight thousand francs within 24 hours.

LEON

If I'm not there by three, don't wait for me.



ROUAULT

... two hundred to fix the cart house roof...

MADAME LEFRANCOIS

Twenty-three coach rides to Rouen, round trip...

CHARLES (*trying to cut in*)

Dear, where have you been?

BOURNISIEN

... an annual gift for the poor of the parish...

FLAUBERT (*attempting to stop the dance*)

That's enough! Let her be.

FÉLICITÉ

It's about my wages, Madame...

CHARLES

My love, I forgive you!

LHEUREUX

It's time to pay!

*(Emma screams. Flaubert, with a shout, wrestles her away.)*

FLAUBERT

Emma! Emma, you're safe. You're safe with me. You are me.

*(She whimpers in his arms. Lights fade.)*

## Final Copy

*(A gavel. Pinard enters. )*

PINARD

The woman's depravities seem to compete with each other in utter odiousness. Which is worse: her audacity? Her lack of scruples? Her reckless expenditure? Why does M. Flaubert never raise his authorial voice to condemn the follies of his protagonist? He relates the story, but draws no conclusion! Does he have no opinion? Were he conscious of his duty, he would stand astride his narrative like a beacon, guiding the reader past the moral shoals this fallen woman represents. But where is he, Gentlemen? Where is Gustave Flaubert?

*(Pinard exits, Charles enters with the handbill.)*

CHARLES

Emma? Emma!

LHEUREUX *(entering opposite with legal papers)*

Where is Madame Bovary? I have an order for the inventory of her movables.

HOMAIS *(entering with a handbill)*

Charles, what's this about an auction? Where's Emma?

CHARLES

Where are you?

FÉLICITÉ

Madame! Madame Bovary!

*(Lights change. Flaubert enters as Emma. He wears Emma's dress and bonnet, but still has his signature moustache. If Flaubert assumed the character of Rudolph from the pure joy of make-believe, his appearance as Emma seems forced, as if he'd been sucked in against his will. )*

FLAUBERT/EMMA *(not to any of them)*

Here I am! Emma. Emma again. Emma at last! I should have thought of him right away: he was so good to me; so sensitive; so generous. He loved me. He loves me still. Rudolph! *C'est moi*. Your Emma! I've come running across the fields, just as I used to when we were together. I've let myself in by the garden gate. Through the side door, down the corridor, looking in each room -- I find you in the last one, the trophy room.

*(Rudolph is now visible, seated before the grate, his back to us.)*

Rudolph...

*(Rudolph rises from the heavy armchair; the role is now played by Louise.)*

LOUI... FLAUBERT/EMMA

It's you. LOUISE/RUDOLPH

Ahhh... Yes,,, It's me. I need your advice. FLAUBERT/EMMA

You're as beautiful as I remember you. LOUISE/RUDOLPH

It seems I was never so beautiful you couldn't grow tired of me. FLAUBERT/EMMA

I never grew tired of you. Our separation was vital to the reputation of another person. LOUISE/RUDOLPH

Who? FLAUBERT/EMMA

I can't tell you. LOUISE/RUDOLPH

It hurt me just the same. FLAUBERT/EMMA

Life is like that -- a touch of bitterness in everything... LOUISE/RUDOLPH

It hurt me terribly. FLAUBERT/EMMA

-- a dash of desolation even in moments of triumph. LOUISE/RUDOLPH

Maybe we shouldn't have gone our separate ways. FLAUBERT/EMMA

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

Separations are painful.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Once you've found happiness, you can't give it up like that. The letter in the apricots... I thought I'd die. You've had other women, haven't you? Admit it! Oh, I know; you seduced them as you seduced me. You're a man. You know how to make women want you. But we can start again. Don't we love each other? I forgive you. I'm happy. Say something.

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

You've been crying. Why? (*Emma begins crying again.*) What's the matter? Poor Emma. I love you. I'll love you always. Tell me what's making you cry.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

I'm ruined! You have to lend me three thousand francs.

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

But...

FLAUBERT/EMMA

My husband invested all our money with a broker who ran off with it. We had to borrow. The patients wouldn't pay. The foreclosure isn't finished; there'll be some money coming to us. But today, right now, they'll take our furniture if we don't give them at least three thousand francs.

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

Ah...

FLAUBERT/EMMA

So, counting on your friendship...

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

But my dear friend... I haven't got three thousand francs.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

What?

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

I haven't got them.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

You *haven't got* three thousand francs? I should have spared myself this shame; You're no better than the rest of them!

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

I'm hard up myself right now.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

I'm so sorry for you. Tremendously sorry, but when you're as poor as all that you don't put silver in the stock of your gun! You don't buy things with tortoise-shell inlay, or a silver-gilt watch chain!

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

The umbilical cord...

FLAUBERT/EMMA

You have everything: a chateau, farms, woods -- even a liqueur case in your bedroom! You pamper yourself: you live well; you hunt; take trips to Paris! Why, even things like this, the tiniest trifles, you can raise money on . . .

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

But...

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Oh, keep them! I don't want them.

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

If I weren't being honest with you...

FLAUBERT/EMMA

I'd have given you everything, I'd have sold everything, worked my fingers to the bone, begged in the streets just for a smile from you, just to hear you say 'thanks'. And now you sit there -- as though you hadn't made me suffer enough! What made you do it? Was it a bet?

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

No...

FLAUBERT/EMMA

You used to say you loved me. You said so again just now. You led me in a dream for two years: our plans for going away, remember? And now when I come back and find you rich and happy and free . . . and beg you for help that anybody would give, you refuse because it would cost you *three thousand francs*!

LOUISE/RUDOLPH

*I haven't got three thousand francs.*

FLAUBERT/EMMA (*sobbing uncontrollably.*)

Traitor! On my knees.... This beautiful dream... If you loved me...

*(Henriette comes out to help Louise into the judicial robe she wears as Maitre Pinard.)*

PINARD *(as Emma's sobs gradually die down.)*

We come now, gentlemen, to a particularly grave chapter in the charges the state prefers against this book.

*(Homais enters with a blue glass jar of arsenic.)*

HOMAIS

An infestation of rats is nothing to be taken lightly.

PINARD

M. Flaubert claims to have written a realistic novel. That is his only excuse.

HOMAIS

These filthy quadrupeds are vectors of disease. I've brought you the best remedy, a substance of the utmost toxicity.

*(He exits. Emma eats the poison as if it were candy.)*

PINARD

Self-murder is a sin. It is also, perhaps, a sociological fact. But nowhere else in literature does it become a fresco of such voluptuous self-cruelty. Why does M. Flaubert – with all the talent which the prosecution readily acknowledges in him – why does he subject us to every stage and every slope of Emma Bovary's voyage towards death?

*(Flaubert/Emma is in bed. Charles and Homais hold a panicked consultation.)*

FLAUBERT/EMMA

I'm thirsty!

HOMAIS

Now, let's just be calm a moment. We have to do *an analysis*...

CHARLES

Just save her!

PINARD

Over fourteen excruciating pages we learn of her chills,

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Get me the quilt!

PINARD

...her suffocation,

FLAUBERT/EMMA

The window; I can't breathe...

PINARD

...her nausea,

*(Flaubert/Emma vomits)*

and her growing terror.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Oh God why arsenic! Why Goddamned arsenic. WHY DAMNED ARSENIC WHY GODDAMN?

HOMAIS

I don't understand. Her stomach has been purged. When the cause is removed...

CHARLES

...the effect should cease!

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Oh God. Oh God.

PINARD

Why must we hear such things? Balzac feels no obligation to depict the death of Madame de Mortsauf in clinical detail. Dickens invites his readers to share the sentiments attendant on the death of Little Nell, not the sensations of death itself. Only M. Flaubert depicts the effects of arsenic with an exactitude that forever poisons the reader's memory.

CHARLES

Oh, Emma! Emma!

FLAUBERT/EMMA *(to Charles)*

Stop crying. Soon I won't be here to torment you.

CHARLES

Why? Who made you do this thing?

FLAUBERT/EMMA

I had to do it.

CHARLES

Weren't you happy? I did everything I could.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Yes. You're... *good*.

CHARLES

You're feeling better, my love, aren't you?

FLAUBERT/EMMA

Yes. A little better. *(Then, suddenly.)* Aieeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

PINARD

M. Flaubert has confided that when he wrote these pages he experienced the same symptoms as his character: a metallic taste under the tongue, dizziness, repeated vomiting. So he *must have known* how pernicious were the words he put to paper.

*(Father Bournisien appears to give extreme unction.)*

BOURNISIEN

Indulgentiam, absolutionem, et remissionem peccatorum nostrorum tribuat nobis / omnipotens et misericors Dominus.

FLAUBERT/EMMA

AIEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE !

ALL *(except Pinard.)*

Amen

PINARD

I pity M. Flaubert. I would not change places with him. He has led his readers between his heroine's adulterous sheets and into the jaws of death itself. To what end?

FLAUBERT/EMMA *(soft)*

Aieeeeeeeeeeee.

PINARD

What benefit has M. Flaubert derived from crawling after this woman on her short and twisted path through life? From forcing his reader into the intimacy of such a heedless and immoral person?

*(Charles breaks down and weeps loudly.)*



We have lives of our own; why should we know anything at all about Emma Bovary, let alone everything? Let alone *everything*? That is the question I put to you, gentlemen: that is the question I leave you with.

*(Gavel. End of play.)*

## Pronunciation guide

Académie Française	□	AKA-DEMI FRAN-SAYS
Alfred de Musset	□	ALFRED Deh MOO-SAY
Amor nel cor	□	AMOR NELL COR
Argueil	□	ARE-GHOYL
au revoir	□	OH RI-VWARR
Barbe d'or	□	BARB DOOR
Bas Diauville	□	BAH-DEE AU VILLE
Bois de Boulogne	□	BOOAH Deh BOO-LOWGN
Bonsoir	□	BEWHN-SWAAR
Boudet	□	BOO-DEH
Bovary	□	BO-VAREE
Café d'Angleterre	□	KA-FEH DAHANG LATERRE
Café Français	□	KA-FEH FRAN-SAY
Café Impérial	□	KA-FEH EM PEAR EE AL
Catherine Nicaise Elizabeth Leroux	□	KATHRENE-KNEE-KAIZ-EE-LIZ-A-BET-LE-RHOU
Cullembourg	□	KUHL-LAM-BOORGE
Diauville	□	DEE-OH-VEELE
Father Bournisien	□	BOOR-KNEE-SeNH
Givry-Saint-Martin	□	JEEV-REE-SAEHN-MAR-TAHN
Grand Sauvage	□	GRANHD SO-VAGE
Grumesnil	□	GREW-MEZ-KNEEL
Gustave Flaubert	□	GOO-staave FLOW-BEAR
Hirondelle	□	HERE-EWHN-DEL
Homais	□	HO-MAY
Hôtel de Provence	□	HOTEL DEH PROVEHNCE
Hôtel du Grand Cerf	□	HOTEL DEUH GRANHD SAIRF
Léon Dupuis	□	LAY-OWN DO-PWEE
Lheureux	□	LER-REH
Lieuvain	□	LEUH-VEHN
Lion d'or	□	LEE-OWN DOOR
Longuemarre	□	LONGE-GE-MARR
Louise Colet	□	LOO-EASE CO-LAY
Ma petit' dame	□	MAH PETIT DHAME

Madame de Mortsauf	<input type="checkbox"/>	MAHDAME DE MORS OAUF
Madame Lefrançois	<input type="checkbox"/>	MA-DAHME LE-FRAN-SWA
Mantes	<input type="checkbox"/>	MHANTES
merci	<input type="checkbox"/>	MER-SI
Messieurs dames	<input type="checkbox"/>	MUSSEURS-DHAMES
Monsieur Bain	<input type="checkbox"/>	MUS-EUH BAEHN
Monsieur Caron	<input type="checkbox"/>	MUS-EUH KA-RHON
Monsieur Guillaumin	<input type="checkbox"/>	MUS-EUH GEEY AU MAHN
Monsieur le curé	<input type="checkbox"/>	MUS-EUH LE CURE-AY
Paris	<input type="checkbox"/>	PAR-EE
Pinard	<input type="checkbox"/>	PEA-NAAR
Place des Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	PLAHCE DEZ ARS
Quai des Orfèvres	<input type="checkbox"/>	KAY DEZ OR FEVRES
Rouen	<input type="checkbox"/>	ROO-EHN
Rudolph Boulanger	<input type="checkbox"/>	BOO-LAUN-JEH
Sussetot-la-Guerrière	<input type="checkbox"/>	SEUS-TOE-LA-GAIRE-YAIRE
Tellier	<input type="checkbox"/>	TELL-YEAH
Trois Frères	<input type="checkbox"/>	TROAH FRERS
Vernon	<input type="checkbox"/>	VAIR-NOHN
Yonville l'Abbaye	<input type="checkbox"/>	EYHON-VILLE LA-BAY-EE