**7) Sir Thomas and Lady Marvel (Podgers and Windermere)**

**Windermere:** Come, Sir Thomas, show Mr Podgers yours.

(Sir Thomas pauses, and with a final look at his wife, offers his hand to Podgers. Lady Marvel sits in the Downstage Left chair.)

**Thomas:** I would be delighted, Lady Windermere.

**Podgers: (Examining the right hand of Sir Thomas, and again with quiet exclamations)** An adventurous nature. Four long voyages in the past, and one to come. Been shipwrecked three times. No, only twice… but in danger of a shipwreck your next journey.

(Sir Thomas reacts to this.)

**Podgers:** A strong Conservative, very punctual, and with a passion for collecting curiosities. Had a severe illness between the ages of sixteen and eighteen. Was left a fortune when about thirty. Great aversion to cats and Radicals.

**Thomas:** Extraordinary! You must really tell my wife's hand, too.

**Podgers: (Quietly, still holding Sir Thomas’ hand)** Your second wife’s, sir. Your second wife's. I shall be charmed.

(During the following, Podgers and Sir Thomas approach Lady Marvel, who is not happy with the proposition.)

**Windermere:** He lost his first wife whilst on a visit to South America. She was taken from him by a slight chill… or was she taken from him by a slight *Chilean*, I can’t quite recall.

**Marvel: (To Podgers)** Oh no, I really can’t…

**Windermere:** But you must my dear.

**Marvel:** No, I don’t think…

**Thomas: (Jokingly)** Come on, dear, you’ve heard my sins…

**Marvel:** Not all of them, I fear.

(Podgers clutches at her hand. Lady Marvel looks uncomfortable, feeling pressurised to partake)

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**Duchess:** Oh, but I have seen specimens of the inhabitants. I must confess that most of them are extremely pretty. And they dress well, too. They get all their dresses in Paris. I wish I could afford to do the same.

**Thomas:** They say that when good Americans die they go to Paris.

**Duchess:** Really! And where do bad Americans go to when they die?

**Windermere:** They go to America.

(They laugh. The Duchess rises. As she does, Sir Thomas also rises. Podgers remains seated.)

**Duchess:** How annoying! I must go! I have to call for my husband at his club. If I am late he is sure to be furious, and I couldn't have a scene in this bonnet. It is far too fragile. A harsh word would ruin it.

**Thomas:** It is very fetching, Duchess.

**Duchess:** Oh Sir Thomas! You have quite made me blush!

**Thomas:** A blush is very becoming, Duchess.

**Duchess:** Only when one is young. When an old woman like myself blushes, it is a very bad sign. Ah, Sir Thomas, I wish you would tell me how to become young again.

**Thomas:** Can you remember any great error that you committed in your early days, Duchess?

**Duchess:** A great many, I fear.

**Thomas:** Then commit them over again. To get back one's youth, one has merely to repeat one's follies.

**Duchess:** A delightful theory, I must put it into practice! Come Flora.