

The Player and the Advocate - Treatment

The film opens on the blank page of an old, leather-bound book. A hand comes into frame holding a quill pen, and writes the title of the film - *The Player and the Advocate*. The camera pulls back to reveal the DIRECTOR, sitting at an editing suite putting together the final cut of the movie. Scenes in progress are playing silently on the monitors. The Director looks up from his handiwork, takes a sip of coffee, and then, surprisingly, turns to camera. He (or she) delivers a soliloquy in blank verse, straight to camera, about the plot of the film they are about to see. He congratulates the audience on their wise choice of entertainment, thanks them for their generosity in supporting independent cinema, and warns them not to get their hopes up too high. As he ends his speech on a rhyming couplet, black velvet curtains snap shut over the scene.

The city of Wellington from the harbour, early in the morning. The water is still and glassy. But this isn't the traditional Wellington of tourist postcards - the harbour is filled with tall-masted sailing ships, for a start. As the camera leaps up into the air like a seagull and heads toward the city, there are other anomalies: among the skyscrapers are church spires and temples, including the massive Gaudi-inspired Cathedral on the waterfront. A title appears on-screen: Wellington, 1601AD.

The camera swoops in low over the water, weaving between the ships, closing in on a young man hurrying along the waterfront. OSCAR is 21, and currently, he's late for rehearsal.

The curtains shut again over the scene, and we're looking at the stage of a black box theatre. There is a murmur of anticipation in the audience. Oscar bursts through the curtain, and straight into the "To be or not to be" speech from 'Hamlet'. He is captivating to watch, charismatic and handsome and obviously in love with the sound of his own voice.

But half-way through the speech he starts veering off course, improvising on the words of the play and twisting the meaning of the speech into a comic riff on love and venereal disease. This is obviously what the audience came to hear, as they roar with laughter at the double entendres Oscar draws out of the text.

Out of nowhere, a voice bellows "Silence!" The voice belongs to GRAVITAS, the director and owner of the theatre company, and he's not happy about what Oscar is doing to his production. Gravitas is white-haired with a large beard and bigger gut, but he's a commanding figure, used to being feared and obeyed. From the balcony he bellows down at Oscar, calling him arrogant and unprincipled for 'playing the flippant' to Shakespeare. Oscar stands his ground on-stage - he roars back at Gravitas, telling him Gravitas should be thankful to him for livening up the performance, that Shakespeare's not fit for a theatre audience and that if it weren't for him pulling the crowds, Gravitas' theatre, and his coffers, would be empty. This is the last straw for Gravitas: he publicly fires Oscar in front of the whole company and the audience, and tells him he'll never work in Wellington again. Oscar, for the first time in his life, doesn't have a comeback, and storms off the front of the stage, through the audience and out the doors.

While Gravitas is wiping his brow and trying to calm down the rest of the actors, a girl appears in the background. It's AMY, Gravitas' daughter. She asks Gravitas who the young man was who just stormed past her in the lobby. Gravitas brushes her off at first before recognising her, and his manner changes immediately. He is deeply fond of his daughter, despite being so wrapped up in his work. He embraces her and asks what she's doing in Wellington - shouldn't she still be in school? His memories stretch back to her as a child clutching a teddy-bear, and as a teenager with posters on her walls obsessing about teen celebrities. Amy, embarrassed, reminds her father that she is 18, and has graduated from school this past spring. She brings up the promise he made to her mother, that when she turned 18 she be allowed to choose her own path in the world without interference from him. Gravitas concedes that he remembers this - what has she decided to do

with her life?

Amy sets out a well-rehearsed speech. She is young and idealistic, and it shows: she wants to become a lawyer (an "Advocate of the people") to protect human rights and defend the weak and vulnerable in society. To do this, she needs to attend the Thorndon Law Academy in Wellington and study with the best professors in the Southern Hemisphere. She ends her speech triumphantly, as though that is the end of the matter. But Gravititas points out a flaw in her logic: the Thorndon Law Academy "holds not with women" - they won't accept her. Amy protests that Gravititas is an important man in the City, and he should be able to use his clout to get her a place. She rails against the injustice of discriminating against women on the basis of their presumed inferiority. But Gravititas will not hear of it. He reveals that he would like her to follow in his footsteps, becoming Office Manager for the Company, where she can work behind the scenes. But he will not help her in this dream of hers.

An actor interrupts and Gravititas goes off to sort out matters with his play. Amy waits until he is gone before launching into a passionate soliloquy about the unfairness of men and the world in general. She vows to get into the Thorndon Law Academy any way she can.

It's late morning in Wellington and time for brunch at a trendy local café. GEORGE and SPEEDWIT, best friends of Oscar, are sitting at a table outside, joking about Oscar's legendary lateness. George is working on a poem to impress a girl - Speedwit advises him, cynically, to ditch the poem and just buy her jewellery. Oscar finally arrives and explains what's happened with his job. They express their sympathy in typical guy-fashion, by taking the piss out of him, and ask him what he intends to do for a job. At that moment, George's beloved appears in the distance: ROSALIND. Oscar and Speedwit encourage him to pursue her. Oscar slips in to his pocket a condensed pocket Shakespeare edition to help the wooing. George hurries off after his dream girl.

Left at the table, Speedwit confronts Oscar with his prospects: he has no marketable skills, besides being a Player. He's never done a moment's work in his life and spends his waking hours in the coffee shoppes. Oscar protests ("I care not for manual labour; I prefer automatic") but he's worried. The Poor Laws, passed by the previous National Government, decree that all men not in official occupations may be put in indentured servitude or deported. He needs to find a job, and fast.

George is in the Botanical Gardens, attempting to woo Rosalind. He reads from the pocket Shakespeare, but manages to mispronounce, misconstrue and misinterpret every word of the love poems and ends up insulting the target of his affections. Rosalind manages to keep evading him through the rows of roses, but he finally catches up with her by the fountain. Rosalind tells George that if he wants to win her heart, he must prove himself by going on a quest for her. George's eyebrows rise as he listens...

Meanwhile, Oscar is job-hunting. He opens a gigantic leather-bound, gold-leaf tome, entitled 'The Insider's Guide to Employment for Actors', and flicks to the As. 'Acting'. Oscar heads off to the other local theatres in Wellington hopefully... but Gravititas has put the word around that Oscar is blacklisted, and all the theatres slam the door in his face. Oscar flicks forward in the book: 'Arts Administration'. He gamely goes to the headquarters of Creative New Zealand, the NZSO, and the Film Commission... only to have the doors slammed in his face as before. Getting more despondent, he decides to go out for a walk to clear his head.

Amy has gone out too, to let off some steam. She runs into Oscar on the City to Sea bridge. Amy asks him where she's seen him before, and Oscar retorts to ask her whether she's one of the paparazzi, come to find out the juicy gossip about his sacking. Amy apologises, and points out that her father has wronged them both today. They suddenly recognise where they've seen each

other before - Oscar was the child star, a mainstay of the theatre company as Amy was growing up, but she hasn't seen him since she went to boarding school. They reminisce about the old days of the Company when Amy's mother was alive and acting as the Production Manager. "He was happier, then" Oscar notes, speaking of Gravitus.

The two of them bond over their shared grievances, and it becomes apparent that Amy is falling for Oscar's legendary charm. They have a spirited debate over the merits of Theatre versus the Law, and which serves the Publick better. As they walk down to the waterfront, Oscar encourages Amy to sneak on-board a harbour cruise ship with him.

From the ship, we get a feel for the world of Renaissance / Elizabethan Wellington - the wharves and warehouses, the markets, temples, shrines to many deities, gambling halls and open-air share markets. Wellington is a mercantile city, home to whalers, missionaries, merchants, thieves and prostitutes from hundreds of cultures, all lured by the energy and dynamism of a city on the cutting edge of the world.

On-board the ship, Oscar spins Amy a story of the creation of New Zealand - the place God drafted first, before moving on to other, grander things. "He was moving quickly, so He left all the edges rough... He couldn't decide on forest, or ocean, or lake, or desert or jungle or cliffs, so He did everything, all piled on top of each other. Other places are taller, bigger, and wider, but New Zealand was first." Amy laughs at his story, and it's clear he is winning her over. She tells her own version of the story: New Zealand was created by a woman, Papatuanuku, who got fed up with lazy, layabout sons and husband, so she tossed them out of bed, creating the world in the process. Oscar cracks up at this.

As they disembark from the ship, a PAPER-BOY gets their attention and hands them a flyer. It's a caricature of a boxing kangaroo, wearing a crown: "King Louis le Roo", the monarch of Australia. The Paper-Boy warns them of the "bronze peril" from over the Tasman, but Oscar and Amy laugh it off. Amy tells Oscar she's planning to go to the Thorndon Law Academy the next day to enrol for classes. Oscar wishes her good luck, and invites her out to coffee after the lecture. She agrees and they part, both smiling.

Oscar is still grinning as he walks back through town. It's the beginning of the new year, and students are moving in flats all over town - proud parents with the yellow U-haul trailers trying to back their horse and carts loaded with the students' computers, desks etc.

Strolling along Lambton Quay Oscar notices the preparations for the Queen's coronation. The old Queen passed away suddenly, and her young daughter, only 16, is assuming the throne. There is a note of worry as well as anticipation in the air, with the throne being entrusted to a young and untested woman. Oscar notices more of the kangaroo posters being put up - the image is clear, of a war-like threat to the country.

As Oscar is studying the poster, he hears a carriage draw up at the traffic lights behind him. He turns around slowly, feeling eyes burning into the back of his skull. He turns to meet the gaze - it's the new Queen, cloistered in her carriage. Her eyes are ice blue, and they look ancient and regal. The New Zealand electricity grid surges for a moment. Then, with a start, the carriage launches off, snatching her from his view. Oscar shakes himself loose of the feeling, and continues walking.

George and Speedwit are still at the café, puzzling over the scrap of paper of paper Rosalind gave George. "She set thee a quest?" asks Speedwit. George can't work it out: "the strongest element in the world, the most sacred element in the world, and the most pure element in the world." What can it mean? Oscar arrives to interrupt them. He waxes lyrical about this girl he's just met - her eyes, her hair, her mind... Speedwit interrupts to say he's heard this before from Oscar, usually

about once a week. Oscar insists that this time it's for real, but Speedwit is sceptical: "how many dream-women are there, Oscar?" Oscar gets fed up and explains why this girl is different: she's Gravitass' daughter. "Oh shit", says Speedwit. Oscar exits, annoyed, and then George leaps up from the table shouting 'Eureka! I've found it!' before sprinting off in the other direction. Speedwit, as usual, is left to pick up the tab.

Amy and Rosalind are having a girl's bonding session, in a high-end fashion boutique. Amy's not used to Wellington fashion prices: £6,000 for a skirt, £23,000 for a jacket. Rosalind is chattering away in her usual manner about how she needs to find a new dress for the coronation, she being the new Queen's handmaiden and all. Rosalind is a Hutt girl at heart. Amy finds a pair of size-0 jeans, with legs the circumference of a drinking straw. Rosalind says "ooh, cute!" and snatches them. She talks about being chased around the Botanical Gardens by the poetry-spouting George. Why can't boys give up on the poetry stuff and just give girls what they really want - jewellery? She describes the quest she's set George, which Amy thinks is superficial. "Yeah, but surfaces can be so deep, y'know?" Amy says she had a weird non-date, and describes her harbour cruise with Oscar. Rosalind is impressed - she's wanted to shag Oscar for ages, but doesn't think she's "intellectshul" enough.

Midnight at the Caketin. George, dressed in camouflage and wearing black face paint, sneaks on to the middle of the pitch. He produces a shovel and a sack, and starts digging up a square of turf right on the half-way line to put in his first glass vial. Suddenly, all the stadium lights go up, and the Hurricanes (or the "Tempests" as they're now called, ba-doom ba!) storm on to the pitch. George runs, spins, beats one, dummies, beats the fullbacks and leaves the Tempests strewn all over the pitch. He does a victory dance on the tryline. Suddenly he's completely spear-tackled and dumped from behind - Tana Umaga. The whole forward pack piles on top of him.

The next morning. Oscar is off to meet Amy at the Law Academy. On his way down Cuba Street, he meets all the fixtures of Renaissance Wellington street life - the hawkers, food vendors, prostitutes (who seem to know him very well). There's also something different on the street - soldiers, drilling and marching in formation. It seems the new Queen is taking the military threat from Australia very seriously...

Amy approaches the Law Academy with her arms full of books, clutched tightly to her chest. She's determined to look and be taken seriously on her first day at school. As she approaches the building, the groups of boys standing around talking all go silent and stare at her. She stares back ferociously.

As Amy enters the lecture theatre, the whole room goes silent, and 300 pairs of eyes bore into her. There's only one seat, in the middle of the first row. Boys stand up as she squeezes past them, in deathly silence. One of the boys reaches down and pinches her ass as she passes. In the blink of an eye, Amy smashes him in the nose with her elbow and continues on to her seat without a word. The PROFESSOR motions the class to be seated. He states that this morning's lecture will be about equality before the law. He immediately selects a young man, MARK, in the first row and start picking on him for answers. When Mark stammers and can't respond quickly enough, Amy leaps to his defence and provides the correct answer. The Professor rounds on her and demands to know what she's doing there - the Thorndon Law Academy clearly does not accept women. Amy says she know that, and would the Professor kindly like to continue his point about equality? The Professor demands that she leave the class. Amy exits the lecture theatre, humiliated.

As she leaves the building, the young man, Mark, catches up with her. He thanks her for helping him out. Amy, still furious, blows up at him. Mark is taken aback, but offers to help her by lending her his course notes - she won't be able to sit the exams, but at least she'll be able to keep up with the learning. Amy brightens up at this prospect, and apologises for yelling at him. Mark

compliments her legal reasoning in answering the lecturer's questions.

While Amy and Mark are talking, Oscar arrives at the Law Academy. He sees Amy and Mark chatting, and raises an eyebrow at this new development. Oscar walks up to say hello and greet Amy, and he and Mark take an instantaneous dislike to one another. Mark asks Amy whether she knows this guy; Oscar replies they were just about to go out for coffee. Mark says that there must be a mistake - Amy has just agreed to go out to coffee with him. The situation very nearly comes to blows, when loud chanting is heard and a giant crowd marches past the building. Oscar convinces the others to go and check it out.

The three of them, Oscar, Mark and Amy get swept along in the crowd towards Civic Square. This isn't a peaceful affair - there is an edge, an anticipation in the air. Things could get violent. This is a patriotic pro-war march. Protesters carry placards denouncing Australians, with black-and-silver face paint on.

The crowd reaches Civic Square where a stage has been set up, as the tension reaches a fever pitch. But there is obviously no leader or speeches prepared, and the crowd waits for something to happen. Oscar gets it into his head to get up on stage. but Mark shoves past him and gets there first. Mark gives a halting, limpid patriotic speech in favour of backing the Queen and country, regardless of whether it's right or wrong. There is a smattering of polite applause as he steps down, and then Oscar takes to the stage. He sends a charge through the audience at once, with wry insinuations about the Queen's character, and questioning why it should be so important to go to war against a nation previously regarded as a friend? "We are an honest country; an honourable country." As he speaks, the anti-Australian placards slowly come down, and the crowd begins to respond with shouts of "yeah!" "that's right!" and "you tell her!" As Oscar ends on a triumphant note ("Let the Queen go to war, and let me stay home in bed!") there is a huge cheer from the crowd - Oscar, through oratory alone, has managed to turn the crowd 180 degrees. The anti-Australian placards have been hurriedly amended to profess friendship and solidarity with their trans-Tasman brethren. Amy is beaming at Oscar's brilliance, and Mark is fuming.

Suddenly, there's the sound of boots marching on concrete. Soldiers line up in formation surrounding the crowd, loading their muskets. Oscar and Mark notice it first, but the crowd is oblivious, still chanting and shouting. We see the Queen, high up in the Council Chambers, looking down on the crowd. The CAPTAIN of the guard is awaiting her order to fire on the Mobbe. Oscar leaps to the stage again, trying to get the crowd's attention. If they don't move, there's going to be a bloodbath. More soldiers form up around the Square, weapons drawn. Oscar finally manages to drown out the crowd with his voice: "Mobbe, disperse! The day is won!" The soldiers tense, ready for the order to fire. The crowd's chanting swells for a moment... ..and then they disperse, quietly. The crisis is averted. The Captain relaxes, everybody relaxes, except the Queen. Oscar is mobbed by screaming fans and the protest organisers, all wanting to shake his hand and enlist his help. Amy tries to get through, but her way is blocked by all the people trying to get to Oscar. He shrugs his shoulders at her through the crowd. Amy is disappointed that she can't share his triumph.

On a distant hilltop in another deserted part of the city, George struggles uphill in the face of a ferocious squall, with a vial in his hand. He is blown and buffeted, forced to his knees by the howling wind, but fights back, digging his hands into the soil to keep from being blown away. He finally reaches the top of the mountain, and by the Brooklyn windmill (an actual, real windmill) overlooking the city, he fills his vial with the strongest element in the world - the Wellington Southerly.

That evening, we're at a typical Wellington flat party. All the guests are jammed in the kitchen, everyone is smoking, there's a guy with a lute in the living room playing 'No Woman No Cry', surrounded by a group of adoring girls. Oscar and Amy are there, determinedly ignoring each

other. The camera tracks the width of the room - Amy, at one end, with a swarm of entranced young men... ..across to Oscar, with an equally besotted crowd of young women, hanging on his every word. Oscar talks about the impending war, trying to get people involved. Speedwit and George are also there in a corner, propping up the wallpaper. Rosalind and Mark (who, it turns out, are twin brother and sister) are chatting in another corner; Rosalind trying to avoid the attentions of George, and Mark keeping an eye on Oscar and Amy's interaction. The party heats up, people start dancing in the living room. Oscar and Mark, both drunk, get into an argument about politics and the pending war. Mark calls Oscar an idiot. Oscar replies that Mark is a "neo-conservative idiot". Mark throws a punch and Amy, Speedwit and George all leap in to separate them. Mark challenges Oscar to a duel at dawn, and Oscar, to everyone's surprise, accepts.

At the same time, across town in the Queen's chambers atop the Majestic Centre, the young Queen is hard at work over a pile of papers. Her PORTER enters to tell her she has a visitor. The visitor enters, hooded, and strides to the centre of the chamber. Gravitus removes his cloak and bows low before the Queen. The Queen seems to have expected him - she is currently writing the New Years' Honours list, and would he care to peruse the list of names and give his approval? Gravitus is flattered to note that his name is at the top of the list, and puts up a mock protest, but the Queen cuts him off sharply, telling him not to question her judgement. They discuss the problem that is Oscar - he's too troublesome to keep employed, and the Publick worship him, which makes him a threat to the Crown. Something must be done, they agree, but what? The pair plot deeply into the night...

It's dawn at the waterfront, and the scene is swamped in fog so thick the characters can barely see. Mark enters first, shouting hoarse challenges into the fog. Oscar enters at a different location in the frame, obviously with a splitting headache and wishing he'd never agreed to this: "Dawn? I'm an actor. I don't *do* dawn." He taunts Mark: "I may not send your soul to Heaven this day, Mark - in this fog, you won't be able to take off." Finally, Amy enters, determined to put a stop to the duel. She imitates the sound of the boys' voices, luring them away from each other in the fog by hurling insults at them. But the boys end up standing back-to-back, surprising each other. They draw pistols, start counting off 10 paces, turn to fire... and find Amy standing in the way. Oscar and Mark both yell at her to get out of the way, but she shouts that she won't move. The boys shrug, take one side-step to the left, and fire. BANG!!! Oscar collapses. Amy rushes over to him. Mark is shocked - he drops his weapon, stuttering that he never meant to hurt him, Oscar should have known he was a better shot. Mark runs away from the scene of the duel. Amy cradles Oscar's body and laments that her pride has led to someone's death.

Then Oscar wakes up. "Enough about your pain: I've just been shot." Amy does a double take for the ages. Then she hits him. Oscar opens his coat to reveal a 17th-Century bullet-proof vest. Amy protests that this isn't very chivalrous, and he could have killed Mark, but Oscar shows her that his gun was filled with blanks. Amy then asks: "What if he'd aimed for your head?" Oscar thinks for a second and replies that Mark is far too noble to do that; but the look on his face suggests he hadn't thought of that... Speedwit enters the scene bearing two cups of steaming hot espresso. Oscar grabs one and downs it like the elixir of life.

Meanwhile, George is sliding down gullies, being stung by nettle, and generally experiencing all the rest of the unpleasantness of the New Zealand bush. He finally comes to the object of his search: a bubbling stream, which he traces to its source. He fills his third vial with the most pure element in the world: New Zealand spring water.

George returns to Rosalind in the Rose Garden, dirty and dishevelled from his trials. He presents her ceremoniously with the three vials containing the sacred elements she asked for. To his complete surprise, she embraces him and swears she will love him for as long as she lives. George promptly collapses in a heap from exhaustion.

Oscar and Amy are moving into Amy's flat together. We see a comic montage of them unloading furniture, Amy vetoing Oscar's choice of posters for the living room, and the two of them happily comparing their book collections and marvelling over the number of duplicate copies they now possess.

George and Rosalind are moving in together too, although things are moving a bit faster than George may have expected. We see a comic montage of Rosalind looking at bridal magazines, on the phone with her mother with a giant date planner, and holding up china patterns and swatches for George to inspect. George's expression is growing rapidly more worried...

The year rolls on, and Wellington enters autumn. Clouds blow at high-speed over the capital.

Oscar is leading another anti-war protest, this time at Parliament. In between encouraging the crowd, he's still the same Oscar, making time to sign autographs and chat up the pretty protest girls. There's a party, carnival atmosphere. At the far end of the Parliament grounds, the Queen's motorcade appears, heading full-speed towards the protesters. The protesters start to move out of the way, but Oscar, perhaps remembering his last smouldering exchange with the Queen, stands his ground as the car races towards him. Inside the car, the Queen bites her lip. The MINISTERS, packed in around her, lean forward in anticipation. They urge the driver to "run him down!" The car hurtles towards Oscar. He raises an eyebrow - perhaps this wasn't the wisest course of action...

The car slams on the brakes and screeches to a halt just centimetres away from Oscar's kneecaps. Protesters swarm in and surround the car, rocking it up and down and beating on the doors. Security guards leap out of the car with clubs and swords and start beating a path through the protesters to get to the doors of Parliament. Stones and clumps of mud rain down on the guards and Queen as they try to form a moving pocket. Somehow, Oscar manages to slip inside the cordon and get next to the Queen. He manages a quick smile before having to duck as a guard nearly takes his head off with a sword. The Queen blocks another blow that nearly falls on him, and he returns the favour a moment later. Finally the guards manage to drag the Queen to safety inside Parliament, bringing Oscar along with them.

Oscar is thrust into a chamber and forced to kneel. The guards have their clubs out, ready to give him a beating but the Queen stays their hands. Oscar notices her face is smudged with dirt, and offers her his handkerchief. She takes the handkerchief and thanks him for his courtesy. She dismisses the guards, to their protests. Oscar and the Queen are left alone in the chamber. For the first time we can see how young the Queen is: only 16, but with steely resolve. She demands to know why Oscar is stirring up the Publick against her. "Just being a good citizen" he replies flippantly, and she strikes him across the face. The Queen, in a soliloquy more to herself than to Oscar, describes the circumstances of her rule: her mother was once a feared ruler, but age slowed her and she became prey to the Cabinet Ministers, who manipulated her for their own ends. The Publick, she says, will not trust her as a young female monarch with no consort or male heir to the throne. The Ministers are just waiting for an opportunity to seize power for themselves. "Don't you see?" she says. A war will unite the Publick behind her against a common enemy, and show the Ministers she has the support of the People. The Queen explains that she has reform in mind, to broaden Parliament and give more representation to the People. The Ministers want to stop this at all costs. "If you think my rule is harsh," she says, "you would not like to see them in power". All she needs is a little time, she begs of Oscar, to coax the Publick into supporting her. Then a pretext can be found to call off the war before a shot is even fired. In one swift movement, she swoops down to Oscar on his knees and kisses him deeply. "Will you help me keep control of the country until my reforms can take place?" Oscar slowly nods his assent to her proposal.

Outside Parliament, the anti-war crowd has grown to several thousand, all chanting for the release

of Oscar, their champion. Oscar emerges on to the steps of Parliament, to the cheers of the crowd. But when the Queen and the Ministers take their place alongside him, the cheers become muted and the crowd mutters darkly under its collective breath. The Queen motions Oscar to speak. Oscar says he has talked to the Queen, and is satisfied there will be no war. He implores the crowd to trust and support their new Queen and to pledge their allegiance to her. The crowd is uncertain, but they trust Oscar. En masse, they bend to one knee and collectively pledge allegiance to the Queen. The Queen basks in the glory of this, but her smile is tinged with cruelty. Oscar smiles back hopefully, wondering whether he has made the right decision.

Amy is unpacking and folding laundry in her flat, when the letter flap rattles. She flicks through the mail and finds a postcard addressed to her. On the back is a photo of Mark, dressed in soldier's camouflage gear, with a group of other soldiers on a snowy plain, with Mt Ruapehu smoking in the background. He's waving to the camera. Amy reads the postcard aloud: Mark regrets Oscar's death, but hopes that Amy will forgive him. He has joined the army to regain his honour by serving his country, and on his return he will come to claim her. Amy shakes her head ruefully, but suddenly she hears the sound of Oscar coming in the front door. Quickly she slips the postcard into the pages of her law textbook and puts it on the shelf. Oscar is in a great mood: he's just averted the war. Amy doesn't seem to share his enthusiasm, saying she's heard that the army is training in earnest for an invasion. Oscar tells her to trust him: he has friends in high places. Despite her lack of good cheer, Oscar gives her a kiss on the forehead and bustles off to the kitchen to make dinner, obviously pleased with himself. Amy notices something different (the Queen's perfume, perhaps?) which unnerves her, but she can't put a finger on it. She stares at the law textbook on the shelf concealing Mark's postcard.

Late at night in the Queen's chamber, the Queen and Rosalind are alone. The Queen is at her writing desk, waiting impatiently for Rosalind to be done with her needlework. Finally, Rosalind hands the item over - it's Oscar's handkerchief, with the Royal emblem embroidered ornately in the corner, entwined with a rose. The Queen is pleased with the work, and dismissed Rosalind early for the evening. The Queen delivers a sly, rhyming soliloquy to camera: with this piece, she will ensnare Oscar like a fowl, for her to feast upon.

Oscar and Amy have fallen asleep over their books in their cozy living room. Oscar's face rests upon a page of his play. As he snores, the lines begin to tremble, twisting themselves into the shape of a growling, snapping Rottweiler. Oscar jumps awake with a shout. Amy calms him down and asks him how the writing is going. "Doggerel", replies Oscar.

The next morning, Amy and Rosalind are at a bridal shop, looking at dresses. Amy muses in verse: "I'm in love with a boy; a boy's in love with me / and I'm not sure I want him in my life." Rosalind opines that Oscar won't be good for her; Amy replies "rarely are men *good* for women. And yet we want them anyway. Like chocolate." Rosalind explains that she doesn't have any grand dreams or ambitions like Amy; Rosalind wants a quiet life, a house in the suburbs, children, dogs, a reasonable mortgage. Men like Oscar, she says, are dangerous. Amy says she isn't sure what she wants, or whether Oscar represents some part of it. Rosalind finds a dress she likes and tries it on, and then forces Amy to stand beside her in the mirror to play the part of the groom, with a top hat on. As Amy admires their reflections in the mirror, we see the glimmer of an idea form in her eyes...

The camera follows Amy, approaching the Law School again from over her shoulder. As we swing around in front of her, we see she is dressed in man's garb, complete with fake moustache glued on to her face. She crosses the carpark without anyone seeming to notice her disguise. Inside the lecture theatre, no one remarks on her disguise - it's working! She squeezes down the row to her old seat, passing a young man with a bandage on his nose, the same guy she hit earlier. The Professor begins the lecture, but first announces that the topic has changed, and the lecture on pornography in the media has been cancelled and will be replaced by Equal Rights and

Representation. The young men in the lecture theatre boo. The Professor explains that in today's legal landscape, equal rights for women are an unnecessary burden with no scope for improvement. Amy can't hold her tongue at this, and engages the Professor in a spirited debate. She manages to stump him on an arcane piece of law. The Professor asks the young man's name: she replies "Lawrence Olivier". The bell sounds for the end of the class, and the Professor indicates she should stay behind. He says he is in need of a law clerk over the summer to take over some of his magistrate functions, and would she be interested?

Across town we see the empty hallway of Amy's flat... ..until the door is kicked in by a POLICEMAN. He enters the flat cautiously after his conspicuous entrance, and produces from his pocket: Oscar's handkerchief. Spying the bookcase, he reaches for a large volume and slips the handkerchief in-between the pages, making sure the corner pokes out of the top to attract the attention of the next person who sees it. His work done, the Policeman quickly reassembles the door and exits the flat.

In the giant, Gothic Wellington Cathedral, George and Rosalind's wedding rehearsal dinner is not going at all well - the groom-to-be is nowhere to be found. Speedwit has two drinks in his hands, and is drinking from both of them. Oscar climbs the tower, looking for George. He finds him at the highest point in the tower, overlooking the city. George laments that finding your dream girl isn't all it's cracked up to be. Oscar assures him that it's true - sometimes, the hunt is more fulfilling than the feast at the end of the day. If he wants an "out", says Oscar, there is something he can do to buy some time. Speedwit comes up the stairs to find out what's going on. Oscar then outlines his plot he's conceived, which will at one swoop net him a job and get his revenge against Gravitas. There is a Playbook, which contains all the intellectual property for every show the Company performs - plot, character, dialogue, stage directions, set and wardrobe. Without it, the Company can't perform. "We", says Oscar, "are going to steal the Playbook." Speedwit stares at him. "WE?" "What about my marriage?" asks George. "Tell her you've got another quest," Speedwit suggests.

George goes back down to face the wedding party. He says he cannot marry Rosalind until he finds a ring. "A ring?" "The One Ring!" says Speedwit, helpfully. Rosalind is furious - "you mean you haven't bought a ring yet?!" Rosalind and her parents all attempt to strangle George, and Oscar and Speedwit spring in to protect him. The boys are are kicked out of the Cathedral and down the steps by the CHAPLAIN who excommunicates them until they return with a ring.

Winter descends on the capital - icebergs float in the harbour.

Amy is going through her morning routine, doing her hair, make-up, brushing her teeth and so on, while Oscar is lying in bed obviously dying to have her out of the house. He finally rushes around making her lunch, tying her shoes, gluing on her moustache and virtually throwing her out the door in his eagerness to have some space. Having got rid of her, he sits down to his pristine desk with a clean sheet of paper, and attempts to write. We get a quick comic montage: Oscar trying to write... Oscar doing the dishes. Oscar trying to write... Oscar vacuuming. Oscar trying to write... Oscar dusting the bookshelf.

As he's removing each book to dust it, he notices the handkerchief poking out. He pulls the book off the shelf and opens it up, and recognises it as his, with the Queen's emblem. How on earth did that get in there??? Then some more paper falls out of the book. Oscar bends down to the floor to pick them up; they are all postcards from Mark, addressed to Amy. Oscar flicks through the postcards for a moment, and then carefully, deliberately, places the book back on the shelf exactly as he found it. When Amy returns home later in the evening, the flat is spotless, and Oscar is writing up a storm on the couch, inspired by something.

Later on that evening, Oscar is still writing. Amy is frustrated with the lack of attention coming

her way. She walks over to the bookcase, distracted. Skimming along the spines of the books, she notices the handkerchief poking out of the top of her law notes. She recognises it as Oscar's and pulls it out, and she spies the Queen's emblem. Delicately, precisely, Amy asks Oscar whether the Queen has seen fit to reward him for his loyalty. Perhaps she could send some financial recompense his way, and then they wouldn't have to sit around on the couch every evening. Oscar retorts that he can't afford to go out because her father won't let him get a job. They shout at each other for the first time, then Oscar breaks off the argument. He suggests they go out to a show. Amy is bewildered, and agrees, but the tension is not dispelled.

At the theatre, Oscar and Amy sit up in the cheap seats, not speaking to each other. The Theatre has changed since Oscar saw it last - where it was once a rough-and-ready playhouse for the public, with rough planks for seats and shabby curtains, the new Company Theatre is an opulent palace for the upper middle classes. The whole interior is gilt and velvet, and covered in mirrors for the spectators to admire themselves and the rest of the audience. The lights in the auditorium dim as if by magic, and while the audience gasps, Oscar just rolls his eyes. "Really Gravitass, gimmicks?" In the darkness, the Queen slips into the Royal Box unseen. She is keenly interested in the interaction between Oscar and Amy.

An actor comes on stage and launches into a xenophobic stand-up comedy routine, full of jokes insulting Australians and other nations in general. Oscar's eyes really widen when the audience laps it up, laughing uproariously at the lame jokes. Is this what the theatre has come to since he left? After one more minute, he can't stand it any more and leaps to his feet, jumping over rows of seats and hurling abuse at the actor on-stage. "What is this, Gravitass? Propaganda? Since when could you get away with foisting this crap on audiences?" The actor tries to retort, but Oscar demolishes him with heckling and drives him off stage. Oscar calls out for Gravitass to come down and answer his Publick. Gravitass appears on-stage and baits Oscar. "I thought you had decamped for the bright lights of London? Wasn't Wellington getting a bit too small for a man of your talents?" Oscar retorts that Gravitass wasn't pushing him hard enough. He tells Gravitass (and the seated audience) that theatre must be truthful above all, and that producers have an obligation to serve their audiences honestly. Gravitass boils over and calls in security guards to throw Oscar out. Oscar escapes through the audience, upsetting the rich men and their mistresses with the front row seats. Amy abandons her seat, keeping her face covered so Gravitass doesn't see her. The theatre is left in an uproar as Gravitass tries to reassure his patrons.

Back at home, Amy is in bed, and Oscar has been banished to the couch, when there's a loud knock at the door. Amy goes to answer the door, and it's roughly pushed open by two POLICEMEN. They're looking for the "vagabond Oscar", but when they get into the living room, Oscar is nowhere to be found. They leave Amy with a warrant for Oscar's arrest. After showing them the door, Amy returns to the living room, mystified as to where Oscar concealed himself. Oscar sticks his head in the window upside-down - he's on the roof. Amy joins him on the roof, overlooking the city, and hands him the warrant. "Things are getting out of hand", remarks Oscar. "The time has come for a spot of action."

Gravitass is pacing about in the Queen's chambers. Oscar's outburst has made him nervous: "the boy's a Vandal, he throws stones in History's windows". Gravitass summons his security chief and demands that security on the theatre be doubled. The Queen, who has been silent up until now, demands to know what Gravitass is going to do to control him. Sticking in the knife further, she says bluntly, "oh, and he's sleeping with your daughter." Gravitass goes into a fury.

The Porter enters to tell the Queen there's a young man wanting to see her. The Queen ushers Gravitass and the others into another room, then straightens her hair, checks her appearance, and bids the Porter let Oscar in. Oscar comes bearing gifts - a bunch of flowers for the Queen. She pretends to be charmed. Oscar asks the Queen for her help - the police are on his back, and Gravitass has made it impossible for him to get a job in the city. Can she pull some strings in

return for the assistance he's rendered her? In the background, Gravitus and his security chief listen in on the conversation. Oscar and the Queen are now flirting aggressively, overtly, toying with each other. Oscar produces his handkerchief, and asks her why she put it in his girlfriend's flat - was it to make her jealous? The Queen replies it was merely a token of her affection. She asks Oscar what other "talents" he has besides acting, and the camera pans off them falling into bed, on to Gravitus and the Captain, still eavesdropping on the proceedings...

The next morning, Oscar and George are at their normal table for coffee. Oscar tries to console George about his marriage woes, but George seems distracted. George hands Oscar the paper - he's on the front page, with a large "WANTED" sign over his head. George asks him what he intends to do about this state of affairs. Oscar assures him that he has the Queen's protection, but George isn't convinced. At that moment, Oscar gets a text message. He reads it, and suddenly takes off from the table at a sprint. George is left blinking in surprise before getting up and chasing after Oscar.

Speedwit is waiting for them at the top of Mount Victoria staring out to sea. An armada of ships - the New Zealand fleet, wakas mixed with tall-masted European sailing ships, heading out to Cook Strait. The faces of the paddlers look grim, as they head into the massive black clouds roiling on the horizon. The Queen has launched the war.

Oscar and Speedwit are still sitting at the lookout a while later. "I've been used by a girl," Oscar comments mildly. Speedwit points out that now the Queen has no use for him in controlling the Publick, he had better head underground to hide from the police. But Oscar has a different plan.

Oscar races around town, gathering protesters and riling up the Publick with speeches. By evening, he's leading a huge crowd down Lambton Quay carrying burning torches and weapons.

At Parliament, Oscar leads the crowd in chanting anti-war, anti-monarch protest slogans. There are small fires burning across the city. The police have amassed around the fringes of the park, and on the signal of the captain, charge the crowd. It's full-on hand-to-hand combat, protesters wading in with signs, bats and crash helmets, while the police wield batons and riot shields. George finds Rosalind in the crowd and manages to protect her from the violence. Oscar is separated from his supporters and dragged off by the police.

Oscar is thrust into an empty drawing room in the House of Parliament. He turns to hammer ineffectually at the locked door. The drawing room is lit by moonlight and the distant fires on Mount Victoria. The Queen is standing in the shadows. The Queen attempts to justify her actions in deceiving Oscar: "people don't want to be ruled. They want to kill and rape and murder each other. Every day, I come in to work and try to prevent the nation from falling into anarchy." The Queen orders her guards to take Oscar up north and execute him. But Oscar is staring out the window at something in the harbour. There's the whistle of an artillery shell, and Oscar rushes forward to tackle the Queen as the whole side of the room explodes.

Massive wide shot. In the harbour ships from the Australian Navy are fanned out from Queens Wharf to Oriental Bay. Artillery shells shriek across the sky. The central city is already ablaze as high explosives erupt everywhere. The Michael Fowler Centre and Town Hall are both hit by shells. Te Papa has a huge hole ripped in its side - the city is visible through the middle of the building. For the grand finale, the Creative New Zealand building explodes in a shower of protected-heritage masonry.

Oscar and the Queen sit up in the rubble of Parliament. It looks like there might be a tender moment for a second, but then the Queen screams at her guards to take Oscar away.

The remaining protesters who have survived the bombing are gathered in Parliament grounds.

Amy, Speedwit, George and Rosalind are there, covered with dust and scratches but otherwise in one piece. There is a disturbance at the side door of the Parliament Building. The security guards appear, dragging Oscar through the crowd towards a van. Amy lets out a scream and starts running towards him. The crowd surges forward. Speedwit manages to grab her and haul her back before a guard can hit her. Oscar is bundled into the van, which takes off quickly. Amy crumples to the ground, devastated. Rosalind and George try to comfort her.

Oscar is on a sealed train, his head leaned against the window. The camera pulls back four heavily armed guards tightly packed around Oscar and watching him like a hawk. The rest of the carriage is empty. Oscar sighs and rolls his eyes to indicate he would like some space. He spies something ahead in the window. The train plunges into darkness as it speeds through a tunnel. There is the sound of a scuffle... ..grunts, a thud. A window on the train opens in the dark, air whistling through the carriage. Suddenly the train emerges from the tunnel. The guards are in a comic entanglement, latched on to each other's legs and arms. Oscar is not in the carriage. On the train tracks in the moonlight, Oscar starts walking back to Wellington.

On the waterfront, heavy fog again blankets the scene, mixed with the smoke from the fires which have been burning all night. Ships' bells are tolling in the harbour, answered by the church bells from the city. The camera tracks along the pier, as a line of people emerges from the fog. Some are limping, some are on crutches, some pushed along in barrows. They are the New Zealand veterans, returned from the Tasman War. The camera comes to rest on the face of Mark, blank-eyed with shock at returning home. He is now a cripple with a bent back and a lame arm.

Mark walks through the streets of Wellington, marvelling at the devastation that war has wrought on the city. Amy enters, wearing a Red Cross armband and carrying a medical kit. She sees Mark, and they run across the street to embrace each other.

Speedwit and George are seated at their bombed-out café. Oscar's usual seat is poignantly empty. Smoke and dust fill the air. Then, out of nowhere, Oscar enters: "I need coffee like no man has ever needed coffee before in the history of the world." Speedwit looks up without surprise: "Well, you know how long the service takes at this place - you might get it by the next war." But he smiles as he says it. The three friends embrace in a big bear hug. Oscar sits down and gets his coffee. Speedwit tells him the Queen was executed by the Mobbe in his absence, but the Ministers are now in control of the Government and he's been declared an Enemy of the People. The Mobbe is out for his blood as well; after all, he promised them there would be no war, and now Wellington's a pile of smoking rubble. There's still a warrant out for his arrest for being a vagabond, and in the current state of lawlessness, hasty trials are being held secretly with no juries - he's likely to be summarily executed just to get him out of the way. Oscar absorbs this, and then comes back with an answer: tonight they're going to steal the Playbook. This is not what Speedwit and George wanted to hear. Oscar argues with them and tells them to meet him at the Company Theatre after dark. He slips away to head to Amy's flat, avoiding the patrols of Australian troops on the streets.

Oscar arrives at Amy's flat, nearly catching Mark and Amy together in an embrace. Mark quickly hides behind a curtain as Oscar comes in the door. Oscar embraces her, glad to see she is okay; Amy embraces him back, shocked to see him, and tries to steer him away from the wall-hanging where Mark is concealed. Oscar explains his predicament, and that he intends to break into the Company Theatre tonight to steal the Playbook. Amy explodes at him: how dare he threaten to bankrupt her father? Without the Playbook, his business will be ruined. How dare he involve her in his plot by telling her about it? She's training to be a judge, for Christ's sake! If anyone found out she knew about the theft, her career would be over. She's studying to uphold the law, not to be a party to breaking it. Oscar asks what he's supposed to do, and Amy says he needs to get out of Wellington, hide in the country until things settle down. At that moment, Mark sneezes behind the arras. Oscar, smelling a rat, draws his pistol and fires into the curtain. Mark emerges from

behind the curtain, unhurt but shaken. Oscar asks Amy if this is why she wanted him out of Wellington. He exits before waiting to hear her answer. Mark tells Amy he will hurry to Gravitass to warn him of Oscar's plan. He tries to console her, but Amy doesn't want to have anything to do with men at the moment and pushes him away.

Oscar hurries back through the burning city, as darkness approaches. He has to avoid street patrols of Australian troops who are shooting looters, as well as roving bands of the Mobbe who hurl stones at him and accuse him of setting the country up for invasion. Oscar is stung by this accusation - the Publick, who loved him once, have turned on him.

Mark reaches the Company Theatre, and demands to speak to Gravitass. He tells Gravitass that Oscar is planning to break into the Theatre tonight, and he should double his security. Gravitass issues orders to his security chief for more men. Tension builds as night falls, and more supplies are brought in, turning the Theatre control room into a fortified bunker with tv screens and remote cameras.

Suddenly, we have flash-forwarded to after the heist, at the plaza in front of the theatre. Speedwit and George burst into frame, running hard. They pull up when they realise Oscar isn't with them. "Where saw you him last?" Speedwit asks. George narrates the course of the theft, which happens in flashback.

Oscar, Speedwit and George break in through the window of the theatre. They stumble, crash into things and generally make a huge racket. Waiting in the darkness are the security guards Gravitass has hired. As the young men move deeper in the theatre, the guards trail them moving with the grace and stealth of seasoned predators. The hunters and the hunted move into the backstage area, cluttered with props and bits of costume. Suddenly, Oscar catches sight of the guards in a mirror. He yells a warning to the others, and they all bolt in different directions. The guards split up and follow them.

On his home turf now and free of Speedwit and George, Oscar moves nimbly around backstage, leading his guards on a merry chase through costume rooms, spooking them with puppets, dropping sand bags and bits of set from the flies in their path. Oscar grabs a smoke machine and sows more confusion by filling the space with dry ice. The guards catch sight of Oscar, and open fire with their pistols. But it is only a reflection Oscar has set up.

Mark is waiting on stage for Oscar to be flushed out by the security guards. He has a pistol drawn and ready. George and Speedwit burst out through the backstage curtain and onto the stage. They pull up abruptly as Mark covers them with his pistol. The two security guards step up on stage from the orchestra pit to flank Mark. Oscar slips on-stage from the wings, and sizes up the situation.

Oscar draws a pistol. Mark raises his to cover him. Oscar raises his pistol deliberately to point it at Mark's chest, then swings his arm right and fires a shot off-stage. Oscar's bullet hits a lever in the wings, which knocks it downwards. Speedwit and George suddenly plunge downwards as trapdoors open beneath them. Mark and the security guards' mouths drop open as their prey disappears before their eyes. A rope snaking across stage snaps taut and starts reeling up into the flies. Oscar grabs hold of the rope as it flies upwards, hoisting him into the ceiling. Mark and the security guards run forward to get a shot at Oscar. Oscar looks down triumphantly... and then looks up. The rope Oscar is travelling up on is being wound fiercely through a pulley system. If he hangs on, he's going to lose his fingers...

Oscar takes one more look down, counts to three, and flings himself backward off the rope. Mark and the guards draw their weapons like the Three Musketeers and fire at him. The musket balls hit Oscar square in the chest in slow-motion... ..pushing him back up in the air... ..and flipping him onto the railing on the lighting grid! Oscar, clinging on to the grid, grins as he looks

down at his torn shirt, through which we can see his lucky bullet-proof vest again. Oscar climbs over the railing and disappears up a flight of stairs. Mark and the security guards are left dumbfounded for a moment, before regaining their wits and charging after Oscar.

Speedwit and George stand and dust themselves off after being dropped through the trapdoor. They're in the basement of the theatre, the props room. George shifts uncomfortably and extracts something from this posterior - a mannequin's extended arm, on the fourth finger of which is a giant diamond ring! George's eyes light up, and he stuffs the ring in his pocket. Speedwit and George suddenly realise they're still in the theatre, and rush for the exit. As they pass a corridor, we get a brief glimpse of Oscar sitting in a room with the Playbook in his hands. But he's not running - he seems to be writing...

...but that shot is quickly snatched away in a flash-forward to George, finishing his narration of the theft. "That was the last I saw of him." As George comes to the end of his recounting of the theft, he looks up to see a circle of guards pointing guns at them. George and Speedwit meekly raise their hands above their heads.

We're in a small, dimly-lit wood-panelled room, luxuriously furnished. Speedwit and George are dragged in by the guards, their hands tied. Gravitass and Mark are there, triumphantly overseeing the arraignment. From a separate entrance, Oscar is hauled into the courtroom by two burly guards. Gravitass gloats, thrilled to have the last laugh. Oscar refuses to meet his eye. "All rise for the magistrate!" shouts the CLERK. All the men straighten and look towards the door. The camera focuses first on the boots of the incoming magistrate, and pans tightly up the black robe and chains of office as he sweeps into the room and behind the desk.

It's Amy. Dressed as a man, in beard, wig and glasses, but nonetheless recognisably feminine. She takes the seat at the desk, and looks expectantly at the men assembled in the courtroom. Reaction shot on each of the men: Gravitass, Mark, Oscar. They are understandably stunned by this development. Amy asks the clerk to read the charges. "The People versus the Vagabond Oscar, on the charge of theft of intellectual property." Amy requests the plaintiffs to step forward - Mark stands forth and asks to move the trial to another time and location. Amy rebuffs this immediately - the plaintiffs demanded this trial be held urgently, so they're going to have it now or they can drop the case. Mark and Gravitass look shocked - neither of them have ever heard this authoritative tone from her before. Amy asks for the evidence to be brought forth, and the Clerk produces a giant leather-bound volume with a padlock on top. Amy unlocks the book deliberately, and flicks through the pages dismissively, then calls for Oscar to step forward. "What say you, Player?" Oscar attempts to extemporise on the quality of mercy not being strained, but Amy shuts him up with a look. She explains to the courtroom that the punishment for theft, in normal times, would be amputation of the hands and tongue, so that thieves could neither pass goods on, nor tell of their triumph to others. But in the current political climate, she would feel quite comfortable in sentencing to death a thief who had knowingly tried to ruin an honest businessman, and had recently led a revolt against the State. The grin has been wiped off Oscar's face - for the first time in the film, he realises he may not be able to get out of this situation. He has gambled his life on being more clever and more charming than the next person, but the woman he deceived now holds his life in her hands. And they parted fighting.

Amy, in her robes as a Judge, examines the Playbook again. The whole courtroom leans forward to discern what she is looking for. She says:

"A play within a play."

Everyone blinks, looks around. Amy elaborates: "Look you here - within these pages lie the words of the immortal bard; poems and stories of legend which people will imitate centuries from now. But look closer - between them lie the idle scribblings of a hack." We get a close-up on the Playbook for the first time. In black, spidery writing, we see the immortal lines of 'Hamlet' - "To

be or not to be". But between those lines, are lines written in another hand, in blue ink - Oscar has become a Writer. "I am that hack Your Honour so highly praises!" shouts Oscar. "The words are mine!" Gravitas suddenly senses where this is going: "The words are his, but the book is mine." Amy replies, "But the words are *in* the book; therefore, you must learn to share." "SHARE???" Oscar, Gravitas and Mark all shout at once.

Amy hands down her judgement. "Oscar shall have the Playbook. He shall recompense the complainant (Gravitas) one half of all the proceeds from plays put on, for the rest of his natural life. The charge of 'vagabond' is dropped. The defendant shall hereby be known as 'Oscar, the Player'." Oscar, Gravitas and Mark all shout for a retrial in unison, but Amy will not be swayed - the Judge's decision is final, no correspondence shall be entered into. The court is adjourned, the Clerk calls for all to rise for the Magistrate. The men struggle to their feet, still comprehending what Amy has done to them. Amy is beaming at her own cleverness, and George and Speedwit rush to give her a hug for dismissing their charges. Mark and Gravitas stare grimly as Amy then goes over to Oscar and gives him a hug. Oscar is complaining bitterly even as Amy embraces him and gives him a kiss on the lips - he'll have to put on at least 8 shows a year just to break even, the expense of hiring actors and marketing will drive him into the ground, when will he have time to stage his own productions??? But it's already dawning on his face what a great opportunity this is.

Amy turns to Mark and her father. "Forgive me both. What's the point of power if you don't abuse it occasionally?" Amy and Oscar join hands and lead the others out of the courtroom...

...to outside, where the rest of the characters, cast members and crew of the film are assembled. Everyone cheers as Oscar and Amy arrive. George presents Rosalind with the diamond ring he "found".

There's a musical dance number to end the film. The Director comes back on to deliver the Epilogue:

"If we shadows have offended,
 Think but this, and all is mended.
 This whims'cal satire on the Bard,
 Is but the Writer's calling card.
 A feature film, it is his first
 (and hopefully 'twill be the worst)
 Good things take time, and the fact is -
 Good writing only comes with practice.
 So lend us your hands, if we be friends,
 At least before the credits end.
 Your applause 'twill the box office truly portend,
 And in the rewrites, we will amend."

Roll credits.

THE END.