

The Language Archive
Scene Breakdown

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7	I.1	George's House	George is worried about his wife - she's crying all the time. He begins to discover notes about marriage in unlikely places. Mary claims no knowledge of them. After an argument about George's reactions to the deaths of their dog and his grandmother, Mary says she's leaving him. And then time s-l-o-w-s down.	George's sitting room. Books piled around with papers. Space for Mary to vacuum and later to wash dishes. Later, slips of paper for George to discover - in his book and teacup.	Different light for George's solo moments at the top and middle of scene. Motivated light for "real" scenes. Lamp practical. Light change for time slowing down at end of scene.	May need vacuuming sound - not sure if vacuum is on. Maybe some ambient sound change with time slowing down.
12	I.2	George Alone	George introduces himself as a linguist who specializes in collecting dying languages. He also shows that this is his true love.	Could be in George's sitting room, or in neutral space.	Direct address to the audience - needs to be a different state than sitting room.	Maybe a light underscore of text in different languages?
13	I.3	The Lab	George arrives at work, stunned by Mary's announcement. Emma reminds him that he has two of the last speakers of Elloway. Emma brings George back to the moment as Alta and Resten walk in.	George's workplace. A table with 4 chairs, recording equipment. Shelves with other equipment, books, recordings. It needs to look more institutional than George's home.	More institutional lighting. Less homey than George's house - cooler, more generalized light.	George tests the recording equipment - so need to either playback this recording, or pre-record it.

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14	I.4	George's House	Mary is alone, packing her belongings. She says she is not depressed, just overwhelmed by the many reasons for weeping. She is radiant in her weeping and on her way out, deposits another slip of paper in George's slippers.	Takes place in the sitting room? Or nearby?	Softer lighting than earlier?	
15	I.5	The Lab	George has shown Alta and Resten the lab, and explains why it's important to document their language before beginning the recording. Alta and Resten immediately begin to argue - in English! When George stops them, they explain that Elloway is too beautiful and that English is the language of anger. More arguing, and then A & R each cast a ghost curse. There's a shift while George and Emma regroup and it seems that Alta and Resten won't ever speak again. The scene ends with George finding another note.	Back in the lab after a period of time spent elsewhere. George starts the recording equipment, and later stops it. Emma needs access to research materials.	A light shift when George calls a staff meeting - isolating on George and Emma? Shift in tone?	No sound called for in script.

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20	I.6	The Lab	George explains to Alta and Resten how much he wants to document Elloway which is nearly extinct. They speak around one another. Alta asks George to taste her cooking (a key point of conflict) which he's about to do when Mary comes into the lab. Mary and George attempt a connection as George reminds her of their first date. But he's unable to say the words "I love you" that she's craving, and she leaves a second time. George slumps to the ground as she exits...	Back in the lab. George reading from a research book. Alta has tupperware container of food for George to try.	Initially, the colder, more institutional lab, but perhaps a softening and warming with George's attempted reconciliation with Mary?	No sound called for in script.

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24	1.7	An office	Emma is learning Esperanto from a German language instructor who is convinced that Emma's difficulties are her fault. The instructor then says that second languages are learned because of love, and talks of the Dutch girl in her past. She tries to get Emma to name and then face her fears.	Rendered simply - a pair of rolling office chairs in a neutral space.	Isolated lighting on chairs to define office. Needs to be distinct from the lab.	No sound called for in script.

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26	I.8	The Lab	George lies alone on the floor of the lab having a waking dream about scraps of languages and the things he should have said to Mary. She appears elsewhere on the stage telling him that it's possible their marriage isn't irretrievable, if he can only say the right thing. Alta and Resten enter, telling each other the hurtful things they'll do when they get home. George yells for them to stop, and Alta and Resten tell him they could hear he and Mary. Alta tells him that loss of language is not end of the world - worlds end first, languages follow. And talking won't bring it back.	The lab.	Initially, focused on George on floor. Mary appears at a remove. Alta and Resten enter, and the Lab appears as it did in I.3; Mary disappears.	Perhaps some underscoring with George's imagined encounter with Mary?

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29	I.9	The Lab	This scene is almost a continuation of I.8. George leaves and Alta and Resten are alone. They speak in Elloway and reconcile. All is looking good, when Alta gets out her food. Resten gamely tries to eat it, but collapses.	The lab again, but more focused?	Softer lighting than the lab - warmer. There's a sense of togetherness in this scene that is important. With Resten's collapse, the script says: "The lights go out, as if [Resten's] blown them out."	Sound to punctuate Resten's collapse and lights going out?
30	I.10	Train Station	Mary is waiting on a train platform and is joined by an insightful Old Man. They talk and both are tranforming their lives by leaving. Neither is sure of what to do next, but Mary might have thrown her ring on the tracks and the Old Man might have jumped in front of the train had they not met. They see wonder in having nothing. The train passes by and they decide to live another day and leave together.	The platform is someplace completely new, and imbued with power. It's a place of transformation and change, and maybe, of death. The train passing changes the direction of the scene. And it needs a gust of wind for passage?	Need to have clear delineation of the space for the platform - a sense that if one falls it's hazardous. With train approaching, a headlight, light from the windows of the cars, and as it passes, taillights?	The sound of the train approaching, passing by, and receding.

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33	I.11	George's House	George is alone in his house, "haunted by regret". He's thinking through what he might have done differently and searches the room. He finds scotch, his slippers, and the final note Mary left.	George is in his sitting room, looking through his things as he searches for Mary.	More isolated than the previous scenes in the sitting room. Colder, lonelier.	No sound called for, but perhaps something to suggest the longing and loneliness?
34	I.12	Hospital	Alta is with Resten; they're visited by Emma who tells Alta that Resten is dying. Emma asks about the Ghost Curse; what they did was in English, so it wasn't permanent. Alta speaks of how Elloway is not equivalent to English, and how "I love you" is "don't leave me". Alta suggests Emma should say that to George. Emma leaves as Resten wakes up and he and Alta make out...	Hospital room appears twice, but shouldn't be as fully rendered as the lab or George's house. Perhaps Resten is in a wheelchair? Or a rolling bed?	A bit harsh and sterile - suggestive of a clinical situation. Also somewhat sad. The Ellowans way of life is dying, and Resten is literally dying.	No sound called for.

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36	I.13	George's House	Emma comes into the sitting room, looking for George. She sees him, asleep on the floor, and is a bit disappointed. She talks to him, and when he wakes up, tells him that Alta and Resten are talking again.	The sitting room. George is sleeping on floor, Emma has to be able to get around him.	The sitting room from before, but maybe warming up with Emma looking at George?	No sound called for.
38	I.14	Hospital	Resten is better and invites George to come sit and talk. Alta has gone to cook for Resten. Resten tells George the story of the Golden Fleek, a bird that transforms into ferocious animals when trapped by a warrior, before finally becoming a lamb. It's an allegory for their love. Emma comes in and finds George weeping and learns of Mary's leaving. The act ends with their embrace: perfect joy for Emma, perfect sadness for George.	The hospital room again. Seating for George. Need room for both Resten and also the embrace at the end.	Similar lighting to earlier scene for George and Resten. Focus and change with embrace.	Beep and boop for machines monitoring Resten. Musical or aural punctuation for the embrace and to close out the act?
Intermission						
41	II.1	The Lab	George gives a short lesson in Esperanto: how to talk about love in various tenses.	A non-defined space - probalby not the lab or his house.	Neutral lighting - isolated. Maybe the house lighting is up a bit?	Only George and the audience.

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41	II.2	An office	Emma is with the Instructor again; she confesses that she loves George. Emma speaks English, the Instructor Esperanto. The Instructor tells her she has to confess it to him, and tells another story of the Dutch girl and her leaving with the Basque Man. It's a story of missed love, and Emma should heed it.	Same as in I.7: two rolling chairs.	Same as in I.7 - isolated office space lighting.	No sound called for in script.
43		Street	Emma leaves the shop excited to confess her love, and on the street encounters the enticing aroma of bread.	No special setting for the street - it's a transitional moment	Lighting expands to show street and passerby.	Street noises? Muffled if used.

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44		Blue Tulip Bake Shop	Emma enters the bakery and sees the baker kneading bread. The baker offers her the most exquisite bread, and Emma realizes it's Mary. They talk of bread and happiness, and how Mary was given the shop and starter by the Old Man at the train station who wanted to move onto something else in his life. She's found happiness in making bread. Emma leaves with a loaf of bread.	The most beautiful setting in the play. The bake shop exudes sensual pleasure. It's almost unreal - is it a fantasy? Door to the shop?	Golden light that disguises Mary at first - she's almost a silhouette. The audience needs to take a moment to recognize her - just like Emma.	Tinkling bell of the door. Perhaps something else to suggest the wonder of the bakery?

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46	II.3	The Lab	Emma runs into the lab, anxious to confess her love, but finds it empty. She finds the tape George is recording when he comes in: he's been splicing snippets of langauges, all saying the same thing. Emma realizes George is crying over Mary's leaving. Rather than telling him her feelings, she instead directs him to Mary's bakery. She gives him the tape, and when he leaves, records "I love you" in Esperanto and Elalloway.	The lab as before, but with tapes and recording equipment scattered all over the table.	The lab much as before. Perhaps warmer and more exciting with Emma's entrance, growing cooler and more business-like with her decision to send George to see Mary. Iris in with final recording of her message to George.	Apparent playback of George's recording, and ability to show Emma recording her message to George.

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48	II.4	Blue Tulip Bake Shop	George enters the bakery to find Mary at work - it's an awkward moment. He still doesn't seem to understand what happened. He speaks of how languages die and how they are replaced by socially dominant languages. He also talks of misunderstandings in the private language between people. Mary doesn't understand what he's saying - they private language is dead. He leaves the tape, and she gives him bread as he leaves.	The bake shop as before. Door with bell as before.	Less idyllic than the prior scene? Sense of that, but it's harmed by George's intrusion - he carries disconnections with him.	No sound called for beyond the door bell.
49	II.5	George Alone	George is musing about the loss of language and what it means. The death of his grandmother and her language finally hits him. In sadness, he give Mary's bread to a passerby and leaves.	The street outside the bake shop. George alone for most of the scene.	Bakery dimly visible? Mary back at work - more of the idyllic lighting?	Street noises?

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50	II.6	Train station	Emma on the train platform in a scene echoing Mary's departure. She decides to be more outgoing, more open to new things. She attempts to strike up conversation with the Old Man, but when he rebuffs her, she decides she has plenty to read instead.	Train platform as in I.10.	Lighting should be the same as in I.10 to show the platform.	Perhaps the sound of a train idling?
51		Train car	Emma and the Old Man sit together on the train while the Conductor gives Emma instructions. The Old Man asks about Emma's eyes, and conducts an eye exam. She is going blind. The cause? Unrequited love. He also turns out to be Zamenhof, the inventor of Esperanto.	Space transforms from the platform to the interior of the train car in motion. Happens seamlessly, and so needs a fluid transition. Seats for Old Man and Emma, and Old Man needs an eye chart.	Lighting shifts to indicate car interior. Also something to indicate motion?	Sound changes from idling train to train in motion. Whistle prior to Zamenhof's exit.

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52		Train car	George enters, having also gotten on the train. Emma asks if he's seen her note - she's taking a trip and won't be back to the lab. George is not sure he can manage without her. He is heading nowhere - just likes trains. Emma asks if he found the bakery - George says no. Emma's vision clears, and she realizes that as much as she loved George before, it was simply a lead in to her love for him now. She decides to go back to the lab with him.	The train is probably unchanged from before.	Lighting change to denote stopping and starting?	Sound for stopping and starting? Sound again when train stops for good.
54		The Lab	Emma and George return to the lab. He checks their equipment and Emma's recording plays - she quickly takes the tape. They receive a letter from Alta and Resten. They've returned home, and are happy that Resten will die at home. Time is short for them, but they're content.	The lab as before.	Warmer lighting, less institutional. Softer.	Sound of Emma's recording is played back.

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56		Vignettes	Play shifts to be series of vignettes that begin to wrap up character arcs. Emma seems Zamenhof; her eyesight is still bad, her love unrequited. He tells her he never despaired, language and love are acts of faith. George realizes Emma speaks Esperanto; she says she learned it for him. He still doesn't understand.	The lab and other space?	Focused lighting on the vignettes.	No sound called for.

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56		Finale	Actors drop their characters and address the audience. Alta says Resten lived longer than expected, and that instead of dying, he and Alta transformed into intertwined trees. Mary continued baking, and one day played George's tape: it was beautiful, and sad, and the bread was salty for a while after. George didn't read Mary's final note, and never fell in love with Emma. His final thought, however, was of their embrace: her perfect joy, his perfect sadness.	Space is more neutral for this. Less tied to specific place - non-defined.	Focused lighting on each actor as they speak, building to a lovely whole. Iris in on George and Emma for final moment and tableau.	Some light underscoring during actor's text? Build to playing of George's "I love you" tape.