

Switch Libretto Extract

**Anne snaps her fingers and gets Henry to focus back on the mirror
Henry is dragged to the mirror, fully in trance.**

A: Wow! What a piece of work! It's always like this.

Pause. Anne takes a long drag from her cigarette

A: They're always so mixed up about their love life. At least I've been given some real talent. Some great people to work with. Sure, highly problematic. But we got good work done!

Slipping the ring off of Henry's finger and holding it up to the light

A: Henry, do you know about the Magnet of Euripides? The magnet attracts iron rings, and imparts to them the power of attracting other rings. Imagine many rings suspended from one another. In like manner, the Muse first of all inspires artists herself; and from these inspired persons a chain of others is suspended. For all good poets, epic as well as lyric, compose their beautiful poems not by art, but because they are inspired and possessed.

The lyric poets are not in their right mind when they are composing their beautiful strains: but when falling under the power of music they are inspired, like Bacchic maidens who draw milk and honey from the rivers when they are under the influence of Dionysus. Like the bees, winging their way from flower to flower. For the poet is a light and winged and holy thing, and there is no invention in him until he has been inspired and is out of his senses, and the mind is no longer in him.

Many are the noble words in which poets speak concerning the actions of men; but they do not speak of them by any rules of art: they are simply inspired to utter that to which the Muse impels them: for not by art does the poet sing, but by power divine.

[Pause]

Oh, how amazing it is to be an artist! And here he is wasting it on these petty problems! If only he could just see how Molly loves him, poor boy! But if he really wants to be a writer, he'll have to let me in. To hook his ring onto my magnet. And I don't think he can take it. No. He's too young—falling in love with me like that.

You see, there's only so much I can do once I'm called to help. If the divine inspiration breaks him, it's not my fault. I do what the muses do. And believe me, it's not all that it's cracked up to be. It's not all floating on clouds and bathing in heavenly light, with the harps and the togas....

I mean, eternity? It's actually no fun.

What Henry here really wants is pure passion. In his *living* wholeness and his *living* unison, not his own isolated salvation of his soul. No! He wants physical fulfillments first and foremost, since now, once and only once, he is in the flesh and potent. For Henry, the vast marvel is to be alive. For Henry, as for flower and beast and bird, the supreme triumph is to be most vividly, most perfectly, alive. Whatever the unborn and the dead may know, they cannot know the beauty, the marvel of being alive. The magnificent here and now. Yours, and yours alone, and yours only for a time. There is nothing of yours

that is alone and absolute except your mind. And you will find that the mind has no existence by itself, it is only the glitter of the sun on the surface of the waters.

[Pause]

A: You can love me, but you can't be *in* love with me.

H: Why not?