

Scene 1



SETTING

The home of Judge William C. Archer, Hollywood Avenue,
Crestwood, New York

OCCASION

The wedding of George F. Griffiths Jr. to Mary Anita Archer

DATE

January 26, 1940

Upon arriving at the Archers' home, with plenty of time
before the wedding ceremony—

JUDGE ARCHER: Welcome to our home. I'm so very glad to finally
meet you and Ruby!

The two of you are always welcome here—if you are ever
caught in a storm on the walk home from the station, please
feel free to stop in here, and either of my daughters, Anita or



The fireplace in the Archer home.

Margaret, can always drive you home. Come and sit by the fire and let's get better acquainted.

GEORGE GRIFFITHS SR.: Yes, thank you for your consideration—that is a great comfort to know. If we go to war soon, and I think we will, I am sure I will take the train more often, and I will be taking you up on your offer.

(Looking out the window) Those trees must surely keep this home cooler in the summer than my home up on the ridge of our beloved street. This is such a beautiful setting for a wedding ceremony.

ARCHER: Yes, we were blessed to locate this home several years after we moved here from Caldwell, Ohio. We first lived in Mount Vernon before acquiring this home some years later.

Have you lived in the Empire State all your life?

GRIFFITHS SR.: No I was born in Smethwick, England. I left home after my father caught me eating some peas from the pods that I was shucking for dinner one night. He then whipped me. So I took off the next morning and never looked back. For many years I traveled around England prior to leaving for America when I was 19 years old.

I left because there was no future for me in England. The working conditions for adult men were horrible.

I remember traveling to England in 1922 for a visit. When I returned home to New York, my own daughter Martha, five at the time, refused to unlock the storm door to let me in! I had grown this mustache while in England, and she didn't recognize me!

My three brothers also came to this country, and we are in contact with each other most often. You know, my brother Arthur was one of the founders of the *Reader's Digest*. And my brother Francis started Turner & Seymour company in Torrington, Connecticut.*

(Shaking his head) Do you know things were so bad in England that we schoolchildren used to sing a song in the schoolyard called "The Steam King." It was actually written by Edward P. Mead of Birmingham. Let me read it for you, to give you a sense of the kind of background I came from.

ARCHER: You need not impress me, for long before we met I had seen what you have done for your workers. But go ahead and read the poem for me again. It has so many political and moral meanings, like Jonathan Swift's books.

GRIFFITHS SR.: There is a King, and a ruthless King,
 Not a King of the poet's dream;
 But a tyrant fell, white slaves know well,
 And that ruthless King is steam.

 He hath an arm, an iron arm,
 And tho' he hath but one
 In that mighty arm there is a charm,
 That millions hath undone.

 Like the ancient Moloch grim, his sire
 In Himmon's vale that stood,
 His bowels are of living fire,
 And children are his food.

 His priesthood are a hungry band,
 Blood-thirsty, proud, and bold,
 'Tis they direct his giant hand,
 In turning blood to gold.

* Turner & Seymour (www.turnerseymour.com), still in business today, is one of the oldest manufacturers of welded and weldless chain in the world. In addition to chains, the company manufactured other parts which they sold to the Noesting Pin Ticket Company during the 1940s.