

FADE IN:

EXT. THE MERRIMACK RIVER (WINTERTIME), MASSACHUSETTS (1912)

We see a wide stretch of the river and are easily deceived into thinking this might be an open sea.

ELIZABETH "GURLEY" FLYNN (V.O.)
1912. The year the Titanic crashed
into an iceberg.

THREE SMOKESTACKS BILLOWING SMOKE

A very close shot again convinces us that we're staring at the Titanic. But as our camera pulls back, we discover the stacks belong to a large factory on the Hudson River.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)
This was the time of corporate monopolies. A few enterprising men had amassed fortunes simply by combining companies to eliminate competition.

EXT. MANHATTAN SKYLINE, NEW YORK - DAY

Grainy newsreel footage of the skyscrapers shows the city at the height of the industrial age. In the distance to the west, we see those same smokestacks.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)
These combinations were known as the Great Trusts.

EXT. RAILROAD YARD, SOUTHERN ITALY - DAY

A mob of angry RAIL HANDS clashes with POLICE.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)
As for the rest of us, needless to say, there were problems. The world economy was in a tailspin. Europe was besieged by unemployment and strikes. As in times past, people began migrating to the new world in large numbers.

EXT. VILLAGE OUTSIDE DAMASCUS, SYRIA - DAY

A bucolic setting, lush with unpicked fig and olive trees. The village itself is nearly abandoned. Among the last to leave is the ROUMI FAMILY. We see them boarding a mule-driven wagon outside the only open store in town. Among the passengers are ALI and MRS. ROUMI, both in their early forties; JOHN, 18; and beautiful JULIA, 16. Julia takes a last glimpse of the home she's leaving behind.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)

In Syria and elsewhere, villages disappeared virtually overnight when the market for their agriculture simply collapsed.

AN ADVERTISING BILL

blows off the back as the vehicle lurches ahead. It depicts a happy immigrant worker in America toting two bulging money sacks from a textile mill directly into a bank.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)

So some made the journey to America, hearing of opportunity.

EXT. HARBOR OFF ELLIS ISLAND, NEW YORK - DAY

The steamship Canopie chugs away from the island towards Manhattan. It's loaded with IMMIGRANTS, including the Roumis. Everyone's out on deck getting their first view of the Manhattan cityscape that looms in the distance.

EXT. STEEL MILL, PITTSBURGH - DAY

A picket line of STEELWORKERS surrounds the entrance gate as PINKERTON GUARDS escort a terrified contingent of REPLACEMENT WORKERS into the yard.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)

But here in the states, we had troubles of our own. Perhaps the only real opportunity in those days existed in law enforcement...

A mob of REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS is on hand to document the confrontation.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)

... and of course, in the growing field of journalism.

EXT. THE MERRIMACK RIVER - DAWN

It's the same stretch of current we saw before, but this time the view incorporates the surrounding wilderness. On shore, a DEER looks up, as if startled by our camera. We follow the river as it makes its way to the edge of --

THE GREAT STONE DAM, LAWRENCE, MASSACHUSETTS

The floating snow piles are stacking up like a log jam against the dam's edge.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)

It was in January of 1912 when a storm of protest gathered momentum from around the world. And it would come to a head in a place few people had even heard of.

On the other side of the dam, the river branches off into a canal. Further down the waterway, we arrive at --

A CITY OF BRICK TEXTILE MILLS,

packed along the edge of both the canal and the river.

GURLEY (V.O. CONT.)

Lawrence, Massachusetts.

INT. DYE ROOM, WASHINGTON MILLS, LAWRENCE - DAY

Ali Roumi and son John submerge heavy sheets of material into boiling vats of purple dye. OTHER WORKERS labor beside them in the intense heat.

INT. DRAWING FRAMES ROOM, EVERETT MILLS

Frames worker JOSEPHINE LIS (18, Polish) is not intimidated by the lecherous FOREMAN eyeing her with a cigar in his mouth. She meets his stare with defiance: Stay away from me, you moron.

Down the aisle, CAMILLE TEOLI, 13, grapples with the gears on her machine. The task just completely overwhelms her. And she doesn't notice her long, untied hair dangling dangerously close to the moving parts.

Across from Camille, a demure and hardworking ANNA LA PIZZO 27, monitors her machines with seasoned efficiency. Her frames draw up the thread onto large spools that spin and accumulate thread. Anna spots a full spool and steps over to replace it with an empty one.

INT. WEAVE ROOM

A stone-faced Polish weaver in her fifties, GRETA, waits skeptically while one of her looms is serviced.

AT GRETA'S LOOM

An English LOOM FIXER applies soap to the belts. Beside him, her OVERSEER looks on.

LOOM FIXER
She'll run two hours faster now.

OVERSEER
Enough to get us the bonus?

LOOM FIXER
I'm not doing this for my health.

OVERSEER
You sure it ain't gonna chew up the cloth?

LOOM FIXER
Long as their hands keep up.

The fixer gestures behind him at Greta.

OVERSEER
They're sure gonna be in a tit when they find out about the pay cut.

LOOM FIXER
Better them than us.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICES, 2ND FLOOR, AMERICAN WOOLEN COMPANY, LAWRENCE - DAY

The hand of C.E.O. WILLIAM WOOD, (50; sporting a groomed mustache and heavy dark brows) lays a sheet of accounting figures down on a mahogany table. A gold chain hangs from the vest of his precisely tailored woolen suit. A group of COLLEGE-AGED STAFFERS sit at their desks, stealing looks at a clock that reads 12:15. MR. SHERMAN, 48, Wood's assistant, is really the only attentive listener.

WOOD
The lower cost to process the wool was offset in this case by the cost of the newer machines, in addition to the reduced output, naturally, during the period of installation.

WOOD (CONT.)

But thereafter the ratios should reverse themselves. The increased margin of profit begins to "kick in", as they say, if everyone is doing their job. Does that make sense?

(The staffers nod.)

And to make sure everyone is doing their job, I asked you last week to start compiling these reports on a weekly basis. Now pass those forward, if you would.

A few sheets are proffered. Most of the young men, however, avert their gaze, not having done their assignments.

WOOD (CONT.)

Be advised, gentlemen, that it is precisely such figures I refer to when calculating your salaries. Make sure you have them on Sherman's desk by the close of business. Edwards, are the new fire hoses set up?

EDWARDS, one of the staffers, snaps out of a daydream.

EDWARDS

Yes, Mr. Wood. Except the superintendent at the Ayer Mill says the old hoses will do for another year.

WOOD

I want them all replaced now. Tomorrow at the latest. Is that clear? We don't need a repeat of the Triangle Fire in Lawrence.

EDWARDS

God help us.

WOOD

That blunder cost Blanch and Harris a year's inventory. Idiots.

EDWARDS

I think they were damned lucky to beat the manslaughter charges.

WOOD

Baloney. Do you think every businessman has a crystal ball?

EDWARDS
(eyes the reports)
No, sir.

WOOD
Accidents happen. Regrettably,
people die. Sherman. Hours of
operation.

SHERMAN
As you all know, effective January
First, a new state law lowered the
maximum workweek from 56 to 54
hours for women and children.

WOOD
I assume a notice went up in all
the departments.

More guilty faces. Wood walks over to the window,
restraining his temper.

SHERMAN
Due to the large number of
operatives affected by this change,
the new hours must apply to the
entire workforce.

WOOD
And the first paycheck showing the
reduction shall be issued when?

SHERMAN
This Friday, Mr. Wood.

WOOD'S WINDOW POV

Pretty Josephine Lis is sauntering down the sidewalk below.
Flanked by TWO GIRLFRIENDS, they're enjoying their lunch
break outside the mill. Lis happens to look up at the
window and see Wood staring at her. She gives him the same
glare she gave her foreman on the shop floor earlier.

GURLEY (V.O.)
The son of a Portuguese immigrant,
William Wood controlled America's
Wool Trust. This included most of
the factories pitched along the
Merrimac River. If the workers
planned to take him on, they were
going to need some help.

STREET

Lis glances back at the window as her friends continue
walking. But Wood is no longer there.

EXT. POLLY HALLIDAY'S RESTAURANT, GREENWICH VILLAGE, NEW YORK - DAY

The entrance to the popular bohemian rendezvous is adorned with nautical paraphernalia: ropes, a helm, bouys, etc. Through its rustic doors stride many chatting pairs of WELL-TO-DO WOMEN. They're dressed in multiple layers on this chilly afternoon.

INT. UPSTAIRS HALL, SAME

The room's decor is in keeping with the mariner's theme we saw outside. Old nautical maps cover the walls. The same chatty pairs pass through double doors and settle in for a meeting. In place of chairs, they sit at long tables and benches recycled from old sailing vessels.

A CLUB DIRECTOR stands before the group.

CLUB DIRECTOR

The Heterodoxy Club is delighted to have someone with us today whom the New York Times refers to as "that ferocious socialist haranguer from the East Side".

GURLEY (V.O.)

(embarrassed; apologetic)

That would be me.

ANTEROOM

Through a small doorway, the main attraction checks her look and straightens her clothes. ELIZABETH GURLEY FLYNN (in her youthful prime, with a mischievous gleam, magnolia face and swarm of deliciously wild dark hair) awaits the end of her introduction. She wears a full black skirt, white blouse and a man's red tie.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)

In reality, she's an organizer for the IWW, that notorious new union which bargains not only for the rough and ready miners of the west, but also immigrant workers, colored people of the south, and women.

A reporter, MARY HEATON VORSE, 36, locates Gurley by way of a side door.

MARY

Excuse me. I'm Mary Vorse, with *Harper's Magazine*.

GURLEY
(impressed)
How do you do.

MARY
Would you have time for an
interview later?

GURLEY
Oh, I promised to be home by four.
We're having a sendoff dinner for a
family friend. He's going back to
Ireland.

DIRECTOR (O.S.)
Now please welcome Miss Elizabeth
Gurley Flynn.

MARY
Of course. Would you possibly be
free sometime next week?

GURLEY
I think so.

Gurley hurries off to make her curtain call.

HALL - A LITTLE LATER

The room is packed and the club members hang on Gurley's every word. Mary sits among them, not quite as caught up in the oratory. She surveys the room, notices many parlor types here, nicely addressed. There's a LESBIAN COUPLE, and a wide variety of fashions, some more appealing than others.

GURLEY
A male friend recently said to me,
"Well if we give women their rights
then they won't be treated so
chivalrously."

The audience BALKS at this claim.

GURLEY (CONT.)
Chivalry. A man walks a pretty
girl home from a party. Meanwhile
the less attractive ones have to
trot off alone. He'll carry an
umbrella for a lady, but will he
carry a baby?

The ladies SCOFF in unison. Gurley theatrically drifts along a wall, glancing at the maps. One of them depicts the abrupt ends of a flat earth, with sea serpents lying in wait. She stares at it and pauses. Finally:

GURLEY (CONT.)

Truth be known, our sex has not advanced in civilization as far as men. Our progress has been retarded, first by false doctrines, second by lack of education, third by the laws, and fourth... by our own submission.

As the crowd meditates on the maps, Gurley sizes up a suave-looking YOUNG GENTLEMAN curiously looking on from the doorway. She quietly muses: Hmmm, I might submit to him. Mary is happy to discover this counter-balance to Gurley's feminist vitriol.

CUT TO:

EXT. ROW OF WORKING CLASS FLATS, EAST SIDE, NEW YORK - DUSK

It's nighttime as a thunderstorm rumbles in the sky. A gust of wind beats down the dandelions in the sidewalk cracks. But the dandelions still manage to hang on.

INT. DINING/LIVING ROOM, FLYNN FLAT - NIGHT

Gurley sets to rights the room after a dinner party. There's a BABY in a crib watching her every move. On the walls are portraits of James Connolly and other heroes of the Irish resistance. There's also a photograph of her at age 16, autographed by Alfred Stieglitz. Beside that are a series of news clippings. One from the *N.Y. Times* reads "Mere Child Talks Bitterly of Life", with a photo of Gurley at age 14 preaching from a soap box.

Her mother, ANNIE GURLEY (reserved, old-world charm) sits at a sewing table, hand-stitching a pocket on a man's custom-made suit. Quite a few other projects stacked on her work table suggests she's a professional seamstress.

Gurley stops to admire the photograph of Connolly.

GURLEY

It's a shame Connolly is leaving now. We could sure use him.

ANNIE

His heart's in Ireland. I imagine he'll want to start another rebellion. What did Fred's father have to say in his letter?

GURLEY

(picking up the baby)
He's found a job at last in one of the copper mines.

ANNIE

Has he.

GURLEY

He wants me to give up agitating
and settle down with him in Butte.

ANNIE

Sounds like a once in a lifetime
opportunity.

GURLEY

I hope so.

Gurley returns the baby to the crib and now massages her
mother's shoulders.

ANNIE

I should never have let you go out
west at that age.

GURLEY

The Federation of Miners paid me
twenty dollars to speak!

ANNIE

But you didn't have to marry the
first one you met.

GURLEY

He wasn't the first. Besides, he
was an organizer.

ANNIE

Then you named your son after
another man.

GURLEY

My attorney in Spokane... Fred did
get me out of jail, it was the
least I could do. At the meeting
today, I heard more rumors about a
strike in Lawrence.

ANNIE

Is the IWW getting involved?

GURLEY

They haven't asked us yet. Imagine
shutting down all those mills.

ANNIE

You sound almost wistful, darling.
A strike can be a terrible strain
if it goes on too long. And in the
dead of winter.

GURLEY

Better a little hardship now than a lifetime of grief. If I'm asked to go there, will you willing to watch Fred?

ANNIE

Your sister and I will take care of him. But I think you're too much of an idealist for your own good.

GURLEY

(gazes at portraits)

Perhaps I've been drifting with the wrong crowd.

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