

## The Marriage Circle (1924) Ernst Lubitsch (1892-1947)

### OVERVIEW

*Auteur:* Ernst Lubitsch was a German-American film director, producer, writer, and actor. He is famous for urbane comedies of manners. With the growth of his prestige, his films came to be known as having *the Lubitsch touch*. Lubitsch was born in 1892 in Berlin, as the son of Simon Lubitsch, a tailor, and Anna (née) Lindenstaedt. His family was Ashkenazi Jewish. He did not enter his father's tailoring business, and by 1911, he was a member of Max Reinhardt's Deutsches Theater. Lubitsch was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Director three times for *The Patriot* (1928), *The Love Parade* (1929), and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). In 1946, he received an Honorary Academy Award for his contributions to the art of motion pictures. His best-known works are *Trouble in Paradise* (1932), *Design for Living* (1933), *Ninotchka* (1939), *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940), *To Be or Not to Be* (1942) and *Heaven Can Wait* (1943). Lubitsch died of a heart attack on November 30, 1947, in Hollywood at the age of 55.

*Film:* *The Marriage Circle* is a 1924 American silent comedy film. It was produced and directed by Ernst Lubitsch. The film stars Adolphe Menjou, Florence Vidor, Monte Blue, and Marie Prevost. Paul Bern wrote the screenplay. Intertitles were written by Victor Vance. The art direction was done by Lewis Geib and Esdras Hartley. The *circle* in the title refers to infidelities that are crucial to the plot. The film is extant and is preserved in a variety of formats. The Museum of Modern Art and the UCLA Film and Television Archive hold this film in their archives. Herbert Ihering, a German theater critic, found that: "this second American film by Ernst Lubitsch [...] is probably the most seamless, the most perfect film that has been created up to now. The most perfect, because the most cinematic." The Encyclopedia of International Film described *The Marriage Circle* as a "marriage farce with convincing actors, which already takes up all the ingredients that later make up the famous *Lubitsch touch*."

*Historical background:* After *Rosita* (1923), *The Marriage Circle* was the second film that Ernst Lubitsch shot in the USA. The film was made at Warner Brothers West Coast Studios from September to October 1923. The film premiered on February 3, 1924, at the Strand Theater in New York City and Grauman's Rialto in Los Angeles. The film is based on the play *Only a Dream* (German: *Nur ein Traum*) by Lothar Schmidt. Lothar Schmidt was a writer who was born in 1862 in Germany. He is known for *One Hour with You* (1932), and *Ringende Seelen* (1918). He died in 1931. Influential directors were fans of *The Marriage Circle*, including Alfred Hitchcock, Akira Kurosawa, Jean Renoir, Yasujiro Ozu, and Douglas Sirk. The film was remade by Lubitsch for Paramount as *One Hour with You* (1932).

### CHARACTERS

*Dr. Franz Braun:* A doctor, and husband of Charlotte, who tries to resist the romantic advances of Mizzi  
*Charlotte:* Wife of Dr. Franz Braun, her biggest worry is that her husband might cheat on her  
*Dr. Gustav Mueller:* Dr. Franz Braun's partner, has affection for Charlotte.  
*Prof. Josef Stock:* Husband of Mizzi, a man looking for ways to divorce Mizzi.  
*Mizzi:* Wife of Prof. Stock, a woman who is unhappy in her current marriage.  
*A detective:* A man hired by Prof. Stock to investigate whether Mizzi is unfaithful

### SYNOPSIS

Mizzi and Josef Stock are a married couple who always argue amongst themselves. They spend the morning being mean to each other. After their argument, Mizzi threatens to leave Josef. She takes back what she says because she knows how happy her husband would be if she left her. Later she receives a letter from her good friend Charlotte inviting her and her husband to visit them. Mizzi takes a taxi to get to

her friend. The taxi is reserved, however, Mizzi bribes the taxi driver but she takes pity when the actual passenger will be late for his destination because of her. They end up sharing the taxi and Josef sees them from his window and becomes suspicious. Josef goes to a detective to have his wife followed to be able to divorce her as quickly as possible on the grounds of infidelity. In the taxi, Mizzi flirts with the stranger so much that he decides to get off earlier. Mizzi is happy to finally see her friend Charlotte. Soon, Charlotte's husband Dr. Franz Braun arrives who turns out to be the stranger in the taxi. The next morning, Dr. Gustav Mueller picks Franz up from his home. Gustav is in love with Charlotte and takes a rose that Charlotte accidentally drops to be a token of her favor. Charlotte's aim, however, is to pick a bouquet for her husband who accidentally drops it while leaving for work. Charlotte decides to confront his husband regarding this. Mizzi also arrives at Dr. Braun's office and tries to seduce her. Charlotte, despite not seeing Mizzi, becomes suspicious of her husband and gets into a fight with him, but it is settled the next day. Later, Charlotte throws a house party. Because she suspects Franz is interested in Miss Hofer, she does everything she can to keep them separate and asks Mizzi to dance with her husband. Later, Franz has a secret meeting with Mizzi. After the party, Mizzi gives Franz a card that she is waiting for him in the car. Charlotte argues with Franz thinking he has an affair with Miss Huber. Franz goes to Mizzi after Charlotte rejects his attempts at reconciliation. He follows her to her apartment as he has to call for a taxi. The detective sees them entering the building and informs Josef about what happened. Meanwhile, Charlotte is visited by Gustav in the middle of the night and kisses him believing him to be her husband. Later, she throws him out of the house. The next morning, Mizzi leaves her house because of her proven infidelity and starts living in a hotel. She writes a letter to Franz blaming him for what happened and demands that he come and see her. Charlotte also appears at the hotel unexpectedly. When Mizzi leaves the room for a few minutes and Franz arrives, Charlotte believes that there is an affair between her husband and Mizzi. After Franz leaves the hotel room, Charlotte reads Mizzi's letter which exonerates her husband and forgives him. Back at home, she wants to take revenge on Franz by confessing her kissing Gustav. Her husband is, however, amused by this and thinks Charlotte is trying to trick him anyway, he gestures for Gustav to pretend they have kissed. Gustav admits everything, Charlotte is happy with the results and her husband remains amused, not knowing the truth of the situation. On his return, Gustav sees Mizzi driving by in the car, making eyes at him and inviting him into her car. Gustav runs to the car.

## SCENES

*A few days—and a few nights—in Vienna still the city of laughter and light romance. The day starts late, but gloriously, in the home of Prof. Josef Stock.*

**Preparing for the day** We see a man wearing his socks. His wife is not pleased with the messiness of their bedroom and the clothes that have been piled up. She takes all of his husband's piled-up belongings and clothes and throws them onto the bed. Prof. Stock looks at the topmost drawer where many white belts are. Then his wife Mizzi opens the drawer that is under it where there the socks are orderly and neatly arranged. She takes out one of the sock pairs. She sits on the bed to wear her socks, takes the clothes belonging to her husband, and throws them onto the chair, back to where they were in the first place. Prof. Stock starts to soap his face and looks at the mirror, preparing to shave. Mizzi comes and takes the mirror so she can look at her face. Prof. Stock, understanding that he will not be able to prepare for the day before his wife, goes to lie in bed. Mizzi gets angry with the man and leaves the room. Prof. Stock gets up and starts training.



### **Mizzi receives a letter from her best friend Charlotte**

Meanwhile, Mizzi is in the living room and receives a letter which says: 'Dearest Mizzi, I've just learned that you moved to Vienna two months ago and I feel hurt that you didn't let me know. I'm so anxious to see you again and have you meet my husband. You and your husband must call soon. Affectionately, Charlotte.' Mizzi is excited to read the letter. She goes back to the bedroom to notify



her husband. She shows him the letter that has arrived. Prof. Stock looks uninterested. Mizzi gets angry: 'Keep on with your cruelty—and someday I'll leave you!' The man smiles. Mizzi says: 'That's just what you want—but you'll not get rid of me so easily.' The man returns to his training, oblivious to his wife's anger.

**Mizzi and a stranger get on a taxi** Mizzi wishes to visit Charlotte. She sees a taxi to get on, however, the taxi driver says that he is engaged and waiting for his passenger. Mizzi gives him extra money to get in the taxi. The passenger catches the taxi at the last minute. Mizzi gets off the taxi and talks to the man. As the man seems to be in a hurry, she asks to take him part of the way. Meanwhile, Prof. Stock is shaving and sees his wife and the man talking near the taxi from out the window. He smiles after having seen this.



**Mizzi's preoccupation with her appearance irritates the stranger** In the taxi, the man seems to be impatiently waiting to arrive at his destination. The taxi driver loses control of the taxi for a moment and Mizzi and the man collide with one another. She looks at herself in the mirror to check her appearance. She asks the man whether she looks alright. The man nods and affirms her kindly. But Mizzi keeps on asking questions. The man finally says: 'Oh, sure—you look beautiful!' The taxi arrives at the man's destination. So, he gets off the taxi. However, the man has left his flowers in the taxi. Mizzi looks for the man but he seems already gone.



**Charlotte and Mizzi converse about Charlotte's perfect marriage** Charlotte is playing on the piano Edvard Grieg's 'I love thee'. Mizzi enters the living room where she is playing. The lyrics of the music are: 'I love thee, dear, I love thee now...' As Mizzi hears Charlotte singing, she says to her: 'You'll get over it—in time!' Charlotte is very pleased to see Mizzi. They hug each other. They start conversing. Soon, Charlotte says: 'Mizzi, you can't imagine the perfect happiness of our married life!' Mizzi sits down and shakes her head. She looks at the lyrics of the music. *I love thee more than any earthly creature...*



**Charlotte's husband Dr. Franz Braun turns out to be the stranger in the taxi** They hear the door opening and Charlotte knows it is her husband. She asks Mizzi whether she looks beautiful. Mizzi gives a cynical answer: 'Don't be silly—husbands are blind!' Charlotte's husband Dr. Braun hugs Charlotte. They seem to be very happy together. As he hugs her, he recognizes Mizzi, the woman who sat near him in the taxi. When Mizzi sees this, her arms fall and hit the keys of the piano. Charlotte, unknowing what has happened, introduces them to each other. Charlotte asks Mizzi whether she has ever seen a man like him. Mizzi shakes her head. Charlotte takes to her hand the flower package that she thinks Charlotte has bought for her. This package is the one that Dr. Braun had forgotten in the taxi. Charlotte and his husband thank Mizzi for the flowers. The man plays along.



**Mizzi tries to tempt Dr. Braun** As Charlotte goes to put the flowers in a vase, Mizzi takes the music sheet in her hand and shows the title to Dr. Braun: 'I love thee/Ich liebe dich'. Dr. Braun gets uncomfortable as if he is not able to breathe. Mizzi has a mischievous smile on her face. She starts playing the piano. Charlotte comes and says that this is her husband's favorite song. Mizzi plays the piano while temptingly looking at Dr. Braun.

**Prof. Josef Stock is at the detective agency** A man is looking at a photograph of Mizzi. Next, we see Prof. Stock in the room, signing a document. From the document, we see that he is at the Helios Viennese International Detective Agency. On it, it is written: 'I hereby employ the Helios Detective Agency to collect evidence against my wife and agree to pay the usual bonus for sufficient proof of misconduct to procure a divorce.' The detective says to Prof. Stock: 'Professor, I never fail— you're as good as divorced.' They shake hands.



**Prof. Stock finds proof for his doubts** At this very moment, Mizzi's husband Prof. Stock enters the room and sees them. Mizzi introduces Dr. Braun to her husband: 'This is Dr. Braun. Charlotte's husband.' They greet each other. Mizzi says that she had another attack of her heart trouble. Prof. Stock nods his head ironically. Then he sees the drinks. Dr. Braun gives a piece of paper in which he has taken notes about Pizzi's health to Prof. Stock. They shake hands and Dr. Braun leaves. Mizzi keeps on pretending to be ill. She says to her husband that he must take good care of her. Prof. Stock later calls the detective and gives him the address of Dr. Braun so he can follow and investigate him.



**Mizzi pretends to have a fainting spell to see Dr. Braun** Mizzi returns home. She looks like she is ill. She asks her servant to call Charlotte. The phone rings while Charlotte and Dr. Braun are hugging each other. She picks up the phone. The servant says to her: 'Mrs. Stock has a fainting spell, and wants Dr. Braun to come at once!' Dr. Braun hears what Charlotte has been speaking. He smiles slightly, then nods his head. Dr. Braun does not wish to go but Charlotte insists. Meanwhile, at the other end of the phone, Mizzi is smirking.



**Mizzi prepares for Dr. Braun** Mizzi is preparing at home, she wears her best clothes and powders herself. Then she sprays perfume into the room. Later, she lies down on the bed and pretends to be sick.

**Mizzi tries to tempt Dr. Braun once again** Dr. Braun arrives at Mizzi's house and enters the room. The doctor takes a sofa to put near her bed. Mizzi soon starts to mischievously smile and offers him a drink. Dr. Braun says to her: 'I thought you were ill.' The doctor pushes the drinks away. Mizzi once again pretends to be sick: 'It's my heart again.' He holds her hand and starts counting her pulse. When Dr. Braun stands up probably to leave, she holds his hand.



**Dr. Gustav Mueller, Dr. Braun's partner, has affection for Charlotte** Meanwhile, Dr. Gustav Mueller's car arrives at Braun's house. *Dr. Gustav Mueller calls at the Braun's every morning, ostensibly for his partner, but really for a glimpse of his partner's wife.* Charlotte looks out the window. Dr. Mueller looks at her with admiring eyes and says: 'I've never seen you look so—so beautiful!' Charlotte does not seem to care much about this compliment. At a later moment, she lovingly looks at her husband who is still eating his breakfast. Then she starts gathering from the flowers on her balcony. One of the flowers drops to the ground, near the feet of Dr. Mueller. He takes and smells the flower, perhaps delusional mistaking this accident.



**A happy breakfast** We see Charlotte and her husband happily having breakfast. They seem to be deeply in love with each other. We see the coffee that she is mixing with sugar. Then her husband starts to probably hug her. However, we do not see a scene of them hugging or kissing. We merely see the coffee cup.

**As Dr. Braun leaves the house, Charlotte finds out her husband accidentally dropped the bouquet**

Charlotte laughs and goes inside to give the bouquet to her husband. They kiss each other and Dr. Braun leaves the house. Meanwhile, Dr. Mueller is still looking at the flower that dropped near him. Dr. Braun and Dr. Mueller shake hands. Charlotte waves to her husband from the window. She says: 'I might come to your office someday— when you are not expecting me.' Dr. Mueller holds the flower in his hand and gestures to Charlotte. Charlotte does not seem to have understood what is going on or the feelings of Dr. Mueller for her. As she enters back to the living room, she sees the flowers that she gathered for and gave to her husband in a bouquet lying on the floor. She picks up the flowers from the ground.



**Dr. Braun does not wish to be Mizzi's physician** Prof. Stock and Mizzi are having breakfast. They are looking at the letters that have arrived. Mizzi opens a letter from Dr. Braun which says: 'My dear Mrs. Stock, I am convinced that I am not the right physician to treat your case, so please consult another. With best wishes for your speedy recovery. Sincerely, Dr. Braun.' The disappointment on Mizzi's face is visible.



**Mizzi comes to see Dr. Braun in his office** We see Dr. Braun and Dr. Mueller's office for those suffering from neurosis. A woman whose face is covered enters Dr. Braun's office and leaves a letter on the table. Dr. Braun comes to sit at his table and sees that this is the letter that he has sent Mrs. Mizzi. The woman takes off her covering. Dr. Braun looks nervous and tense. Mizzi sits at the table and tears the letter to pieces. She plays with Dr. Braun's hair.



**Dr. Mueller is fed up with a patient's unending complaints** Meanwhile, another patient is unendingly complaining about her problems to Dr. Mueller who looks already suffocated. He suddenly and angrily hits the table: 'Anyone who talks so much can't be sick.' The woman gets up and leaves the room.



**Dr. Mueller sees Dr. Braun has a complicated relationship with another lady** Dr. Mueller enters Dr. Braun's office. Mizzi's arms are wrapped around his neck. Dr. Mueller first smiles, thinking that it is Charlotte. He thinks to himself: 'Lucky devil—to be so loved by your own wife!' Dr. Mueller then leaves the room with a disappointed and sad look on his face.



**Charlotte arrives at Dr. Braun's office** He goes to the waiting room and sees Charlotte sitting and waiting there. He is utterly shocked and frozen when he realizes that it is another woman in Dr. Braun's office. He goes and kisses her hand. Charlotte says: 'I want to teach him not to throw my roses away.' Dr. Mueller takes Charlotte to his own room. Meanwhile, Dr. Braun and Mizzi are still talking. Mizzi seems to be arguing with Dr. Braun and soon a vase falls and breaks apart. Dr. Mueller and Charlotte hear the sound of the vase. Dr. Mueller says: 'It's a very serious case.' Finally, Mizzi leaves. Dr. Mueller goes to Dr. Braun's room. Dr. Braun points at the broken vase and says: 'You see—how crazy my wife is about me?' Dr. Mueller laughs and tells him to wait for a second. He opens the door and Charlotte comes in. The facial expression of Dr. Braun is that of utter shock.



### **Charlotte realizes that her husband may have an affair**

Charlotte shows her husband the flowers that he had dropped in the house. He smells them. She looks at how messy her husband's hair looks. Then her eyes catch the broken vase on the ground. Dr. Braun says: 'I—er—a nervous man knocked it over.' Then she finds a pair of gloves on the table. He husband tries to explain the situation away by saying that he has many patients. However, Charlotte is too angry to listen to any excuse her husband is ready to offer. Dr. Braun leaves the office. As he leaves, he tells Dr. Mueller: 'Gustav, you're my best friend. Please—please console her.' Gustav nods his head in utter seriousness. Meanwhile, Charlotte is crying. Gustav takes a look at himself in the mirror and goes inside the room to console Charlotte.



### **Charlotte and Dr. Braun prepare for their dinner party** *With*

*the first quarrel forgotten, the Brauns give a dinner party.* Charlotte is preparing the dinner table. Dr. Braun enters the room and smiles at his wife: 'We'll never quarrel again—never!' Then they shake hands as a sign of their agreement. Dr. Braun takes a look at the cards where the names of the guests are written. Franz sees that he will have to sit near Mizzi. Seeing this, he exchanges the cards of Mizzi and someone called Pauline Hofer. Charlotte sees that he has changed the places of the cards and says to him: 'You seem greatly interested in Miss Hofer.' In anger, she puts the cards back in their original places.



### **Prof. Stock will not attend the dinner party** Prof. Stock

introduces his wife to Dr. Schmidt who he says is a friend of his. In actuality, he is the detective that he has been seeing. Mizzi asks whether he will come to Charlotte's dinner party. Prof. Stock says: 'I'm sorry, but I have important business at the club—that will keep me there all night.'



### **Charlotte complains to Mizzi about Franz's changing the seat cards**

Mizzi arrives at the party. Charlotte pulls her aside and talks about Franz's card changing: 'He changed the place cards so he could sit by Miss Hofer—but I put them back. At that moment, Miss Hofer enters the room. Charlotte goes to her and says: 'Miss Hofer, I'm so glad to see you.'



### **Mizzi plays games to confuse minds**

The doors of the dinner room are opened and the guests come in. They all look at the cards to see where they will be sitting. Mizzi changes the places of her and Miss Hofer's cards. Then Dr. Braun comes and sees that the card places have been changed. He asks Mizzi to sit near him. Mizzi says that that is not her place. At that moment, Miss Hofer also comes to sit at the table. So, Miss Hofer and Dr. Braun end up sitting near each other. Charlotte sees and becomes very disturbed. Dr. Mueller sits near Charlotte. Both Miss Hofer and Dr. Braun; and Charlotte and Dr. Mueller drink together.



### **Charlotte asks Mizzi to dance with her husband** Miss Hofer

and Dr. Braun are dancing together. Charlotte is very upset to see this: 'Get him Mizzi—dance with him—talk to him—don't let him out of your sight!' Mizzi seems unwilling to do so. Charlotte insists that she help her. Finally, Mizzi pretends to give in and goes near Dr. Braun. Mizzi says to Miss Hofer: 'Your dress!' Miss Hofer immediately leaves. Mizzi starts dancing with Franz. Meanwhile, Gustav dances with Charlotte.



**Mizzi and Franz get closer** Soon, Mizzi gets bored of dancing and goes outside. Franz goes with her. He helps her put on her shawl, then offers her a cigarette. She throws the cigarette case away into the woods. She makes excuses as to why she threw the cigarette case away and pretends to be dizzy. Franz goes to find the cigarette case among the bushes. When he finds the case, he sees Mizzi near him. They start walking in the woods. Later, they sit on a bank. Franz asks whether it is not cold for Mizzi. She takes off her shawl. Then they start embracing and kissing each other.



**Charlotte mistakenly believes it is Miss Huber that his husband is interested in** Meanwhile, other guests also come outside. Charlotte is looking for her husband. Gustav is near her but she seems not to care about what Gustav is talking about. As they walk in the woods, Mizzi's shawl becomes attached to Gustav's shoe. As they keep walking, Charlotte notices the shawl and calls out to Mizzi. Mizzi and Franz separate once they hear Charlotte's voice. As Franz heads to go inside the building, he runs into Miss Hofer and starts talking to her. Charlotte runs into Mizzi and asks her about Franz's whereabouts. She pretends to not know anything. Charlotte looks around, Mizzi sees Franz and Miss Huber talking in the distance and shows them to Charlotte. Charlotte begins to cry in sadness, not knowing that her very friend is the one truly betraying her and not Miss Huber. Mizzi pretends to console her. She hugs Mizzi in despair.



**Mizzi leaves a note for Franz** As the guests leave, Franz is seeing them off. Mizzi writes a note to him and secretly gives the note to him as she is leaving. Franz later reads the secret note after people have left: 'Slip out if you can. I'll wait in the car at the corner for a few minutes.' After reading the note, he shakes his head and tears the note to pieces.



**Charlotte and Franz argue** Then he goes near Charlotte who is crying in their bedroom. Charlotte says: 'Your behavior with Pauline Hofer was simply—scandalous!' He laughs and tries to console her but she keeps on crying. He tries to explain himself to Charlotte but she covers her ears and does not want to hear anything from him. They start arguing. In particular, Franz starts to increase his voice volume and speak harshly against her.



**Franz leaves to see Mizzi** Then Mizzi's note comes to his mind and he decides to go to her. He takes advantage of the situation and to his wife: 'If you won't believe me—if you can't trust me—then I can't stay here!' Charlotte gets him his hat so he can leave. He takes his hat and leaves the building. Outside, he sees Mizzi who is waiting in the car.



**Gustav kisses Charlotte** Meanwhile, Charlotte regrets her decision and that she told him to leave. She looks for her husband in the house. Later on, she sees through the curtain the figure of a man with a hat sitting by himself whom she takes to be Franz. She looks relieved. She turns on the lights and calls the man to her with a gesture. Charlotte sits on a chair turning her back to the man coming. The man turns out to be Gustav. Believing him to be Franz, she says: 'Dear, even if I am cross sometimes—I love you just the same.' Gustav kisses her hand. Then he kisses her.



**Mizzi and Franz drive to Mizzi's house** Meanwhile, Mizzi and Franz are traveling in the car. Mizzi gives him the keys to her apartment.



**Gustav confesses his feelings for Charlotte** When Charlotte opens her eyes and sees the man who kissed her is Gustav, she looks surprised and asks him why he did what he did. Gustav says: 'I merely wanted to prove how frightfully careless your husband is to leave you alone in the dead of the night. How can a husband, who loves his wife, neglect her so!' Charlotte sits near the piano in a desperate state. Gustav tries to hug her but she pushes him away. Then she asks him to leave by opening the door. Gustav says: 'I love you—I just can't help it—nobody could!'



**Mizzi keeps on playing games** Mizzi and Franz arrive at Mizzi's apartment. Franz tells the taxi driver to wait for him. But Mizzi gives extra money to the taxi driver and sends him away. Mizzi, with a mischievous look on her face, says to Franz: 'Come upstairs— and phone for another taxi.'



**Prof. Stock leaves for his house** Meanwhile, Mizzi's husband Professor Stock is playing chess with his friends. He seems to have won and spent a fun time with his friends. He soon leaves for his house.



### **Mizzi's romantic advances toward Franz do not give results**

In Mizzi's apartment, Franz is looking for the phone number of a taxi company. Mizzi comes near him and tries to get physically and romantically close to him. She makes him sit on the sofa. Soon the phone rings. It is Charlotte calling. Charlotte talks to her about Franz who left. Mizzi, once again, smiles mischievously and says to her: 'Don't worry—he'll come back.' As she hangs up the phone, she starts laughing. Franz gets angry with her. She tells him not to go back to his house. She hugs her tightly but he pushes her away.



**Mizzi says she cannot live without Franz** She says that she cannot live without him. Franz looks at her with a mocking and unbelieving facial expression. Then she pulls out a gun and tries to shoot herself in the head. Franz runs to her and takes away the gun. When he looks at the gun, it turns out the gun was not loaded. Mizzi starts crying on the bed and Franz, seeing she is playing mere games, leaves her.

**Mizzi is in need of love** Prof. Stock arrives home and sees Mizzi crying on the bed. She comes near her husband and holds his hand. She says to him: 'Josef! I need love!' Then she hugs Josef. Prof. Stock has a very surprised look on his face and does not know how to behave. Then he smiles slightly. As they are hugging and kissing each other, the bell rings.





**The detective comes to see Prof. Stock** The detective comes near the friends of Prof. Stock who are still playing games. The detective asks about the whereabouts of Prof. Stock. His friends say that he has gone home.



**The detective arrives to tell Prof. Stock the results of his investigation**

Mizzi opens the door. It is the detective who has arrived. The detective says to her: '—I promised to tell Prof. Stock the result of the last chess game.' The detective gives Prof. Stock a piece of paper on which it is written that Dr. Braun and Mrs. Stock arrive in a taxi and enter the house at 1.10 am, a light is turned on in the room, shades are pulled down and when the detective left the house after 1.50 am, Dr. Braun was still there. At first, Prof. Stock does not believe the detective and thinks this is a joke. Then he finds a hat on the sofa. The initials of the person to whom the hat belongs are F and B, that is Franz Braun. Thus, Prof. Stock realizes that Dr. Braun was really in their house. He thanks the detective, then enters his bedroom. Mizzi pretends to be sleeping. He looks at her with investigative and enquiring eyes. Then he sits on a chair and tells her to pack her things. Mizzi is shocked at this.



**Charlotte's bad dream** Franz kisses Charlotte to wake her up. She pushes him away believing him to be Gustav. She shouts: 'Get out and leave me in peace—or I'll tell my husband!' Then, seeing her husband's surprised look she tries to explain why she said what she said: 'I had a terrible dream—Gustav was kissing me!' Franz begins to laugh frantically. Seeing her husband does not believe her, Charlotte smiles slightly: 'That's what happens—when you leave me alone.' Then they smile and kiss each other.



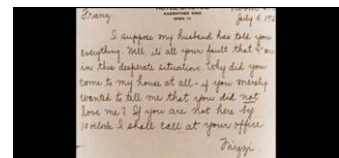
**Prof. Stock comes to talk with Franz** At that moment, their servant enters and tells them that Prof. Stock has arrived. Franz quickly goes downstairs. They shake hands. After courtly greetings, Prof. Stock stares at Franz without taking his eyes off him. He offers him cigarettes but Prof. Stock does not accept the offer. Prof. Stock takes out a hat from his bag and puts it on Franz's head. He says that it is not his. They both start laughing enthusiastically. Then Prof. Stock gives Franz the piece of paper that the detective had shown him. Franz gets very nervous as he reads the piece of paper. He says: 'That is true—but I give you my word—my visit was entirely innocent.' Prof. Stock smiles as if he does not believe what Franz is saying. Nevertheless, he says to Franz: 'I believe you—but nobody else will—and I'm delighted to have a man of your standing help me get rid of my wife.' Franz looks upset and tries to explain what happened but Prof. Stock does not seem to care for what he has to say.



**Charlotte thinks there's a man behind Mizzi's leaving** At that moment, Charlotte comes and after greetings, Prof. Stock leaves. As he leaves, he mentions that Mizzi is at the Hotel Bristol since that morning. Charlotte looks surprised: 'Franz! There's a man in this—but who?' Later on, Franz goes to his office with Gustav.



**Mizzi asks Franz to come to Hotel Bristol** In his office, Franz finds a letter written for him by Mizzi. In the letter, she blames him for the desperate situation she is in and asks him why he came to her house at all if he did *not* love her. She further says that if he does not come to Hotel Bristol by 10 o'clock, then she will call his office.



**Charlotte goes to see her best friend** Meanwhile, Charlotte also arrives at Hotel Bristol to see her best friend. Mizzi looks very nervous. She looks at the clock which shows it is ten to ten o'clock. At that moment, Charlotte knocks on the door. She enters the room and hugs her: 'Confide in me—who is this man?' Mizzi does not want to tell her the truth. Looking at the clock, she realizes it is almost ten. She gives an excuse to Charlotte so she can leave.



**Charlotte realizes the truth of the situation** She takes the elevator. Before she gets out of the elevator, Franz has already arrived at the hotel and takes the elevator to go to her room. When he sees Charlotte, he freezes up. Charlotte finally understands that her husband and her best friend have been betraying her. Franz looks down in guilt and shame. She sits on the sofa and starts crying. Franz tries to tell her that he is innocent: 'I'm innocent—I've done nothing. Here is the proof!' She tears up the letter that he gives her into two pieces. Franz's eyes are filled with tears. He takes his hat and leaves the room. After he has left, Charlotte reads the letter that she has torn to pieces and learns that Franz is innocent.



**Mizzi and Charlotte confront each other** Meanwhile, Mizzi is looking for Franz. Not being able to find him, she returns to her room. When Mizzi comes, Charlotte starts berating her. Mizzi has a smirk on her face: 'Is it my fault that your husband fell in love with me?' Charlotte laughs, she goes near Mizzi and shows her the letter that Franz gave her. Mizzi wants the letter back but Charlotte says that she will send her a copy of the letter.



**Charlotte teaches a lesson to Franz** Franz and Gustav are walking to Franz's house. Franz tells him to talk to Charlotte: 'You're the only one in whom she has perfect confidence.' Gustav does not want to talk to her but Franz insists that he does so. Charlotte sees them looking out the window: 'Wait, Franz, my boy—I'll teach you a lesson, so you'll never look at another woman.' Seeing the front door locked, they go in the back way. Charlotte gestures for Franz to come to her. Franz is looking to the ground in shame. She asks him to close the door. Franz sits on a chair and grabs her hand to ask for forgiveness. Charlotte tells him not to do so: 'I'm as guilty as you. Gustav's kiss was no dream—it was real—in this room—in that very chair!' Upon hearing this, Franz laughs frantically. Charlotte gets very angry seeing Franz does not believe her at all. She calls Gustav to the room. She says to her: 'Tell me—didn't you return to this room last night?' Gustav does not want to admit the truth in front of his friend, so he says no. However, because Franz thinks this is all made up, he secretly gestures to Gustav so he says yes. Meanwhile, Franz is laughing at the situation they find themselves in. Charlotte continues: 'And didn't we kiss each other?' Gustav looks at his friend for guidance who encourages him to play the game and say yes. Charlotte smiles as if she won a victory over her husband: 'Fifty-fifty.' Then she leaves. Her husband does still not know the truth and laughs to himself thinking all this is the imagination of his wife. He shakes hands with Gustav.



**Mizzi calls Gustav to her car** Gustav immediately leaves the house. As he is walking on the street, a car passes by in which Mizzi is traveling. He greets the car with his hat. The car stops. Mizzi smiles and invites him to the car. Gustav runs toward the car.



## CHARACTER ANALYSIS

**Dr. Braun:** Dr. Franz Braun is one of the four major characters. He is married to Charlotte. He is a loving and mostly loyal man. However, he has a weakness in that he is easily manipulable and temptable. He is tempted by Mizzi, the wife of Prof. Stock. We can see his reactions to Pizzi's romantic advances in different scenes.

*Manipulable:* His manipulable nature becomes apparent in his interactions with Mizzi. The first time Franz meets her is when they travel in a taxi together. Franz gets off the taxi earlier than he should because of her flirtatious nature and her inappropriate closeness to him. He also forgets the flowers that he bought for Charlotte in the taxi. The second time he sees Mizzi is at home where he becomes metaphorically suffocated because of her seductive behavior. Later on, she also visits him in the office and romantically hugs him. Franz's manipulability becomes most visible at the dinner party that Charlotte throws as this is where Mizzi and he kiss each other, meaning that he ultimately gives in to her temptations. If he were a strong character with a strong will, he wouldn't ultimately succumb to her temptations. Other signs of his weak character and manipulability are also seen in the scenes when he visits her both at her home and in the hotel. From all these instances, we can conclude that even though he loves his wife and wants to remain faithful to her, his will and character are not that strong to not succumb to Mizzi's seductions. So, his loyalty is controversial.

*Loving:* Even though he is manipulable and not completely loyal—at least not in the sense that he does not give in to temptations—it does not change the fact that he loves Charlotte. He has a harmonious relationship with her and loves her as can be seen, for instance, in the breakfast scene where they, presumably, kiss each other and we, the viewers, are only shown the coffee cups on the table, perhaps to let them have a little bit of privacy. Their innocent love for each other can be seen in the gifts they give each other. Franz wants to bring flowers to Charlotte but forgets them in the taxi because of Mizzi's flirtatious behavior which makes him uncomfortable. Likewise, Charlotte prepares a bouquet for him, again a sign of their innocent and harmonious relationship. Considering all these elements in mind, it can be concluded that Dr. Braun is loving in his relationship with Charlotte.

**Mizzi:** Mizzi is married to Prof. Stock. She is unhappy in her marriage. It can be said that the series of both dramatic and comical events occur because she attempts to distract herself from her unhappy marriage and to find happiness elsewhere that is in Dr. Franz Braun. She is also the best friend of Charlotte, the wife of Dr. Braun.

*Needy:* Mizzi is a needy character. What makes her needy is her want of affection, attention, or emotional support. As she is unhappy in her marriage, she needs love, affection, belonging, and romance. As her husband is rather indifferent toward her, she looks for other sources of support. That is why she targets Dr. Braun as he seems to be a loving and kind character. Her neediness and vulnerability come to the forefront reaching the end of the film when Dr. Braun leaves her apartment after her pseudo-attempt to kill herself and she hugs her husband who arrives later at home, telling him that she needs love. In that scene, we can see that all the cruel actions she takes are because she is deprived of love and affection in her own life.

*Selfish:* Even though Mizzi's actions are understandable when we look at the root causes of her behavior, it does not make her any less cruel and unempathetic. She is selfish as when she tries to seduce Dr. Braun, she does not take into account the emotions of her best friend Charlotte and does not think about the possible consequences of her behavior. Nevertheless, it can be said that her unhappiness might have turned her into a more selfish and cruel person who disregards her friend's happiness and family life.

*Tempting:* Mizzi does everything in her power to tempt Franz. Her failings do not stop her from taking further action. As stated in the character description of Dr. Franz Braun, Mizzi attempts to seduce him both in the taxi and at his home. She calls Franz to her home pretending to be sick where in truth she aims to get physically and romantically closer to him. Even when Franz writes her a letter that states that he cannot be her physician, she does not accept this rejection and goes to his office without any fear or second thoughts. She also tempts him at the dinner party where Franz finally gives in and kisses her. All these examples show us her tempting and seductive character.

**Prof. Stock:** Prof. Stock is the husband of Mizzi. In the first scene of the film, we witness their morning arguments where they bicker with each other. He is rather cold and indifferent toward Mizzi. His rather indifferent and uncaring attitude causes Mizzi to look for other sources of emotional support.

*Suspicious:* Because Prof. Stock is unhappy in his marriage, he wishes to be divorced from Mizzi as quickly as possible. For this reason, he looks for signs of her infidelity. When he sees Mizzi with another stranger in front of their house and getting in the taxi together, he becomes suspicious and thus hires a detective to investigate his wife.

*Hurtful:* It can be said that Prof. Stock is a rather harsh character. The hurtfulness of his character can be seen in various scenes. First of all, when Mizzi receives a letter from Charlotte and shares the news with her husband, he seems totally oblivious to the matter. It becomes to us viewers obvious that he is not interested in matters significant to her wife, such as her best friend's invitation to their home. When Mizzi witnesses his indifference, she 'gets angry: 'Keep on with your cruelty—and someday I'll leave you!' The man smiles. Mizzi says: 'That's just what you want—but you'll not get rid of me so easily.' The man returns to his training, oblivious to his wife's anger.' In this scene, we see that Prof. Stock does not care that Mizzi gets angry because of him. On the contrary, her negative emotions seem to not affect him at all, showing us his rather harsh nature.

**Charlotte:** Charlotte is the wife of Dr. Franz Braun. They have been married for a short amount of time. She is a loyal, jealous, and loving wife. Mizzi is her best friend whom she never suspects until approaching the end of the film where she finally discovers that it has been Mizzi all along who has had her eyes on her husband.

*Jealous:* Charlotte becomes jealous of her husband many a time. These instances can be enumerated. First of all, when she comes to his office, she sees gloves and a broken vase. Seeing the gloves and how her husband cannot explain their existence, she becomes very suspicious and gets sad thinking that her husband may have been infidel. A second instance where she becomes jealous is at the house party that she throws. She becomes jealous of Miss Hofer for whom her husband seems to change the places of the cards at the dinner table. There can be many reasons as to why she is jealous. One of these reasons might be that they have been married for only a short time. Another reason might be that she does not feel fully secure in her marriage or does not trust her husband enough. One peculiar scene is the morning when she talks in her sleep and confesses that Gustav had kissed her the night before. After her husband hears this and she tries to explain away the situation by saying she only had an awful dream, we the viewers see a slight smile on her face. What does this smile represent? And how can a person who is so jealous of her husband might smile that someone else kissed her? Perhaps it is because she feels like she has gained a sense of power when Gustav kissed her.

*Loving:* Charlotte is a loving person. Behind her jealousy, we can witness the love she has for her husband as can be seen, for instance, when she gathers flowers for him and prepares a bouquet which can be taken as a symbol of innocent love and affection. She also deeply cares for her friend Mizzi and tries to support her any time she has problems. When Mizzi goes to stay in the Bristol Hotel, she visits her because she wishes to support her in hard times, not knowing that it has been Mizzi all along who has had her eyes on her husband and thus deceived her. It can be said that her loving nature gives her an innocent and childish appeal.

**Dr. Mueller:** Dr. Gustav Mueller is Dr. Braun's work partner. He is in love with Charlotte, which is unbeknownst to her. His character is rather a naive and delusional one, marked by a need for love as in the case of Mizzi.

*Delusional:* Gustav has delusions that is fixed beliefs that are not easily amenable to change. He believes that Charlotte is in love with him. His delusions cause him to create an inner world in his own mind which changes his behavior in the external reality. For instance, there is a scene where Charlotte is gathering flowers and preparing a bouquet for her husband and she accidentally drops one flower to the ground, near Gustav. Gustav takes this flower as a sign or token of her love towards him which is a delusional idea but one which he holds on to nevertheless. It can be said that his delusions stem from his need for love which he searches everywhere but cannot find.

*Naive:* He has a rather naive nature. His love for Charlotte is a very innocent, almost childish one. When he first kisses Charlotte, he cannot admit his feelings toward her and slides over what he has done

by saying that: 'I merely wanted to prove how frightfully careless your husband is to leave you alone in the dead of the night. How can a husband, who loves his wife, neglect her so!' Thus, even after the moment he kisses her, he does not feel ready to confess her feelings. Nevertheless, he does so before Charlotte throws him out of the house by saying: 'I love you—I just can't help it—nobody could!' It can be said that he maintains this naïveté, innocence, and artlessness throughout the film.

**Needy:** He is someone in need of emotional and romantic support as is in the case of Mizzi. Gustav is someone hungry for love to such an extent that he creates delusional worlds in his mind where Charlotte is in love with him and even takes her accidentally dropping a flower as a sign of her love. His needy nature is also seen at the very end of the film where Mizzi gives him the eye and he runs toward her immediately. What Mizzi signifies for him is a source of love, affection, and support. Thus, when he runs toward Mizzi, he runs toward another source of love, metaphorically speaking.

**Detective:** Prof. Stock hires a detective to thoroughly investigate Mizzi's life and whether she engages in any acts of infidelity. The detective is an investigative, unemotional, and rational person who secretly follows and watches Mizzi. In the end, he has proof of her apparent infidelity and his investigation paves the way for the divorce of Mizzi and Prof. Stock.

**Investigative:** As part of his job, the detective is an investigative person and follows Mizzi and Dr. Braun. He sees Dr. Braun entering Mizzi's house and notes down how many minutes Dr. Braun stays in Mizzi's house. Thus, he gathers all the evidence he can to prove her infidelity.

**Unemotional:** The detective has an unemotional and unforgiving nature. He does not have any moral scruples about the fact that his job causes a divorce between a wife and her husband. He is only focused on his work and that he gets paid.

## THEMES

### RELATIONSHIP

**Marriage** Marriage is the main theme of the film. 'Circle' in the name of the film refers to the ring of suspected, perceived, or real infidelities. There are two married couples in the film: Josef and Mizzi; Franz and Charlotte. Because Josef and Mizzi are unhappy in their marriage, Josef looks for a way out, that is he tries to find some evidence so he can divorce Mizzi. Mizzi, on the other hand, looks for affection and love elsewhere, that is her best friend's husband, Franz. In contrast with the unhappy marriage of Prof. Stock and Mizzi; Franz and Charlotte are a newlywed couple who have a 'perfect happiness' in their marriage. Yet, as the film progresses we witness that their marriage is not perfect after all. Franz, despite being a loving man, is not a completely loyal and faithful husband as he, after quite a bit of resistance, gives in to Mizzi's temptations. Charlotte is a character filled with jealousy, so she needs constant assurance that her husband is not cheating on her or looking at other women that can be a threat to the continuance of their marriage. So, from these two types of marriage, we see that some are plainly dysfunctional and some, even though they look 'perfect' from the outside, have their problems as well. Throughout the film we see the interplay and the ups and downs of these two marriages which make the viewers question the concept of marriage, the responsibilities it brings with it, and whether a perfect marriage can exist or whether imperfections and conflicts are a natural part of any marriage.

**Friendship** Friendship is defined as a relationship of mutual affection between people. Mizzi and Charlotte are introduced to us as best friends in the film. However, we soon see that it is not a functional friendship. Charlotte loves Mizzi, yet Mizzi does not love her or care for her truly. If Mizzi had truly considered her friend's well-being, she would not have made romantic advances toward Charlotte's husband Franz in the first place. Mizzi not only tries to be romantically close to Franz, but she also does so without any moral scruples throughout the film. This shows us that their friendship is not a real one. Charlotte, on the other hand, trusts Mizzi as she specifically asks her to dance with Franz so he will be away from Frau Hofer. Approaching the end of the film, she sees Mizzi's real character. These events that take place make us the viewers of the film question the definition of true friendship, and what it consists of and remind us of the responsibilities that friendship brings.

**Loyalty/Betrayal** Unfailingly remaining loyal to someone, and putting that loyalty into consistent practice regardless of extenuating circumstances is a concept well-known all over the globe. In *The Marriage Circle*, the faithfulness or loyalty that is the subject of the film is that of devotion to one's husband or wife. So, we see that Mizzi behaves not loyally to Prof. Stock. She betrays him as she makes improper, romantic advances toward Franz. Can her disloyalty be justified? We can see that Josef has an indifferent and even callous attitude when it comes to Mizzi. He does not take an interest in her feelings, friendships, wants, and desires. It can be thus said that it is almost a natural reaction when looked at from Mizzi's perspective, that she looks for other sources of happiness and support. However, the morality of her actions and her trying to disrupt a happy marriage, that is the marriage of her best friend are debatable. However, Mizzi is not the only character who is engaging in disloyal actions. Franz, despite first resisting Mizzi's improper, romantic advances; gives in to her temptations. Therefore, he is not completely loyal to Charlotte either. His actions are likewise questionable. He does not resist Mizzi hugging him in his office. Furthermore, he kisses her at the dinner party and goes to her house willingly. When looked at from this angle, we can see that it is not only Mizzi who is to be morally blamed. Franz also behaves disloyally toward Charlotte. Moreover, Dr. Braun and Dr. Mueller are not only partners but also friends. However, Dr. Mueller behaves disloyally toward his friend when he kisses Charlotte in the middle of the night in his absence. He has always had an interest in and love for Charlotte, and his romantic advance is parallel to Mizzi's behavior toward Franz. His kissing Charlotte thus is of a kind that breaks the bonds of loyalty between friends and work partners. All in all, there is a complex network of relationships, actions, and behaviors that make morality uncertain and shaky rather than something set in stone.

**Attraction-Desire** Attraction and desire are another topic that is important to the plot of the film. At the beginning of the film, there seems to be no attraction between Mizzi and Prof. Stock as they constantly argue and have disagreements among them. Mizzi flirts with Franz when they first meet in the car. Her flirtatious and romantic advances toward Dr. Braun continue in various scenes of the film, for instance at Charlotte's house, in Dr. Braun's office, and at the dinner party. All these acts show us that Mizzi feels romantically and physically attracted to Dr. Braun. Given that Franz finally gives in to her temptations, it can be concluded that the attraction she feels is not unrequited. Furthermore, Dr. Mueller is attracted to Charlotte as can be witnessed in the scene where he kisses her as Charlotte believes it is her husband that she is kissing. Coming back to the relationship between Prof. Stock and Mizzi, when Mizzi is finally rejected by Dr. Braun and Dr. Braun leaves the building, she finally turns to her husband as a shelter and hugs him. This is the first time we see the attraction between Mizzi and Prof. Stock. When we look at the complex web of relationships and the feelings of attraction that the characters feel toward each other, we can conclude that acts of disloyalty or betrayal occur because of the romantic attraction that certain characters feel toward other characters.

## PSYCHOLOGY

**Jealousy** Jealousy, in general, refers to a complex emotion that encompasses feelings ranging from suspicion to rage to fear to humiliation, and most typically emerges when a person perceives a threat to a valued relationship from a third party. One of the major themes of the film is the jealousy of Charlotte. She has doubts and suspicions about the fidelity of her husband. It can be said that her suspicions stem from her lack of trust in her husband and a sort of low self-confidence. Thus, she needs constant assurance that Franz is faithful and devoted to her. The first time Charlotte becomes clearly jealous is when she goes to Franz's office and sees that something strange is going on as can be understood from the messy hair of her husband, the gloves she finds near her, and the broken vase. Therefore, they get into a heated argument which only resolves at the time they throw the dinner party. However, at the dinner party, Charlotte also becomes jealous of Miss Hofer. That is why she even asks her best friend Mizzi to dance with Franz because she does not want her husband to spend any time with Miss Hofer. There can be many reasons for her jealousy, ranging from low self-esteem to high neuroticism, from feeling possessive of one's partner to fear of abandonment. We can say that, in the particular case of Charlotte, it is probably a combination of all these factors to varying degrees.

## FLAW

**Greed** Greed is an intense and selfish desire for something. Mizzi is a character who is greedy for love, that is she has an intense and selfish desire for it, even at the expense of the happiness of other people. Because she lacks happiness in her own marriage, she hunts for or targets her best friend's husband Franz. Her behavior is immoral from a variety of perspectives. First of all, she tries to disrupt the marriage of a newly married couple. Second of all, the marriage she tries to break is that of her best friend Charlotte. What is even more intriguing is she does not seem to have any moral scruples regarding her actions. It is her greed not only for love, but also for power, possession, and winning. Therefore, she makes various romantic advances toward Franz. She flirts with him in the taxi, in his own home, at the dinner party, and so on. Her failings do not stop her from trying again. However, she does not know that she is being followed by a detective. In the end, Josef finds out everything about her infidelity. And she is told to pack her things. She starts to live in a hotel. Her ambitious and greedy nature does not make her win anything. However, even in the last scene of the film, she calls Dr. Mueller to her car. It can be concluded that she is always in need of fresh supply as she is driven by her greed, ambition, and unhappiness which all look for something or someone that can fill the void that she feels inside her.

## QUEST

**Investigation** The detective who is hired by Prof. Stock leads the investigation into Mizzi's infidelity. The detective is a careful, unemotional, and rational man who thoroughly investigates the case of Mizzi and finds objective evidence of her infidelity. He sees how Dr. Braun enters Mizzi's house at a late hour and observes the house from afar. He takes notes of the hours and how much Dr. Braun stays inside. This investigation gives Prof. Stock the evidence he needed to divorce Mizzi.

## APPEARANCE

**Secrets** The Marriage Circle is characterized by a web of secrets. First of all, Prof. Stock secretly hires a detective to follow Mizzi. He does so because he wishes to find pieces of evidence of her infidelity. Thus, the relationship between Mizzi and Prof. Stock is not transparent. Secondly, Dr. Braun does not tell his wife Charlotte that Mizzi shows an improper, romantic interest in him. Perhaps he does so in order not to sadden Charlotte. Nevertheless, this constitutes a big secret between the couple. Thirdly, Charlotte hides from her husband Franz that Dr. Mueller kissed her. She does not want her perfect marriage to be stained by this act of Gustav. It is interesting to note, however, that she does make Gustav confess what he did so as to feel powerful in comparison to her husband. She says that their situation is 'fifty-fifty' in the end, meaning that both Charlotte and Franz have engaged in unfaithful acts toward their partners. Thus, the only reason she reveals her secret is to feel powerful in comparison to her husband. This web of secrets shows us that the relationships are not fully transparent and they are always related to either suspected or real acts of infidelity between partners. Secrets thus disrupt marriages and the bond of trust between partners.

**Self-delusion** At the beginning of the film, we see that Dr. Mueller or Gustav has affection for Charlotte. When Charlotte accidentally drops a flower to the ground as Dr. Mueller is waiting for Dr. Braun to come outside, Dr. Mueller takes this flower as a token or sign of Charlotte's love and affection toward him. In truth, Charlotte does not have any such feelings for him. Therefore, Dr. Mueller is delusional as he constructs a world in his mind that aligns with his desires but that has no basis in reality. Thus, he retreats into a world of self-delusion. At the end of the film, he seems to have understood the truth that Charlotte does not have feelings for him as he finally changes his direction and decides to get in Mizzi's car.

## CHANGE

**Transience** We can see the transience of relationships in *The Marriage Circle*. At the beginning of the film, Mizzi and Prof. Stock have an unhappy marriage. Prof. Stock has doubts about her fidelity, so he hires a detective. In the end, it turns out that Mizzi has been infidel, and is told by Josef to pack her things and leave. So, Prof. Stock and Mizzi's relationship comes to an end which shows us the impermanent nature of human relationships. Moreover, Dr. Mueller is in love with Charlotte at the beginning of the film. However, he cannot say that he loves Charlotte when confronted with Dr. Braun. He confesses that he

kissed her only because Franz gestures and encourages him to do so. Later on, when Mizzi calls him to her car, he immediately runs toward her. Thus, this shows us that Dr. Mueller's feelings and affections are impermanent, unstable, and uncertain. From these instances, we can conclude that both human relationships and the feelings that constitute these are not something permanent or fully reliable as they are subject to the whims of the characters.