Crowd begins to drift off from watching Charles Dickens speak. Harriet Martineau approaches Catherine.

HARRIET
Mrs Dickens!

CATHERINE
Oh, Miss Martineau?

HARRIET
If Mr Dickens can spare you for an hour I could introduce you to some Transcendentalists...

Catherine hesitates, sees her husband Charles being led away by Hamlet, the minder, gives him a tentative wave, sees that he’s preoccupied and decides to accept Harriet’s invitation.

CATHERINE
It would be a positive relief!

Stage transitions from the Docks and we see that we are in front of the Transcendentalist Bookstore on West Street. Harriet leads Catherine into the Bookstore where we see Elizabeth Peabody with Maria Lowell and Caroline Sturgis.

HARRIET
Friends, this is Mrs Catherine Dickens.

CATHERINE
(nodding and smiling)
Hello.

HARRIET
This is Elizabeth Peabody who is bringing a revolution to education...

CATHERINE
How so?

ELIZABETH
(confidently)
By encouraging children to an
enjoyment of learning at an early age...

CATHARINE
Extraordinary...

MARIA
(approaching CD and shaking her hand)
Maria, welcome to New England.

CAROLINE
Catherine? Caroline. Pleased to meet you.

ELIZABETH
We’re also expecting Margaret Fuller, lately arrived from Groton. They say she is the best read person in America. And possibly the world.

CAROLINE
(cheekily)
She is also the only virgin north of Mason Dixon...

Catherine Dickens gasps, the rest giggle slightly. Bell rings. Margaret Fuller enters the bookstore, head held high and glances at the books lying on the table.

MARGARET
(announcing toward the group)
Today a reader, tomorrow a leader.

ELIZABETH
Margaret! How is the great book coming along?

HARRIET
(to CD)
She is writing her magnum opus, to be called Woman in the Nineteenth Century...

CATHARINE
How wonderful, I am also a writer... here...

Trying to impress, she takes a book from her bag and hands it to Margaret Fuller.
MARGARET
(looking quizzically at the book)
*What Shall we Have for Dinner?*
*Satisfactorily Answered by*
*Numerous Bills of Fare for from Two to Eighteen Persons*

CAROLINE
(feigning enthusiasm)
*How useful…*

*MF fakes a smile and hands the book back*

HARRIET
*We are all dying to know how your travels have enlightened you?*

MARGARET
*Very early, I knew that the only object in life was to grow and yet it seems most men for the sake of getting a living forget to live. Of all those I have met across America I have yet to find an intellect comparable to my own. Perhaps meeting the great man himself will sway my opinion.*

CATHERINE
*My husband?*

MARGARET
*No, Mr Emerson*

CATHERINE
*…he exists?*

ELIZABETH
*Yes, although he has been locked up in his study for several months. And we have more than enough to discuss without him.*

CAROLINE
*We meet here regularly to have our Conversations…*

CATHERINE
*You are all quite remarkable… Forgive me, may I ask, where are your husbands?*
MARGARET
Do you not see? There exists in
the minds of men a tone of feeling
toward women as toward slaves.

CATHERINE
Oh but what do you talk about, in
that case?

MARIA
Mythology...

MARGARET
...fine art and literature

ELIZABETH
History...

CATHERINE
Goodness me!

Music begins to play, Margaret Fuller starts to sing
Transcendentally... Choreography TBD, the song is staged
mostly surrounding Catherine Dickens, think 'Oliver'
'consider yourself one of us' style staging. Same chords
played throughout, G B7 C D7

TRANSCENDENTALLY

MARGARET
G          B7
WHAT IS A WOMAN
C          D7
FOR WHAT ARE WE BORN?
G          B7
BY THE TIME WE FIND OUT
C          D7
OUR BEST YEARS ARE GONE

CATHERINE
WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
WHAT D’YOU EXPECT
YOU FIND A MAN, BE A WIFE

CAROLINE
WITH ALL DUE RESPECT, THERE’S MUCH MORE TO LIFE

MARGARET
OH CAN’T YOU SEE
YOU CAN BE ANYTHING
YOU WANT TO BE
THINK FOR YOURSELF
AND YOU CAN BE FREE

TRANSCENDENTALLY

CATHERINE
OH, I THINK THAT IF I WERE NOT MARRIED TO A GENIUS I WOULD LIKE TO BE PART OF YOUR LITTLE SOCIETY...

MARGARET
PUT DOWN YOUR KNITTING
THROW OFF YOUR CORSET
IT’S A PRISON

CATHARINE

BUT, MR DICKENS
WOULD NEVER ENDORSE IT
I LOVE HIM...

MARGARET
SHOVE HIM, GET A BRAIN OF YOUR OWN!

CAROLINE

WHY SHOULD A WOMAN BOW AT A MAN’S THRONE?

MARGARET

OH CAN’T YOU SEE
YOU CAN BE ANYTHING
YOU WANT TO BE

HARRIET

THINK FOR YOURSELF

CATHARINE

TEACH ME HOW TO SEE

ALL

TRANSCENDENTALLY

CATHARINE

WHAT DOES IT MEAN? WHAT’S IT ABOUT?

MARGARET

IT’S LOOKING WITHIN AND LIVING WITHOUT

HARRIET

RELIGION, TRADITION AND ALL OF THAT STUFF

ALL

THE LIGHT INSIDE YOU IS MORE THAN ENOUGH

MARGARET

CAN’T YOU SEE
YOU CAN BE ANYTHING
YOU WANT TO BE

CAROLINE

THINK FOR YOURSELF

CATHARINE

TEACH ME HOW TO SEE

ALL

TRANSCENDENTALLY

CATHARINE

CAN ANYONE BE PART OF YOUR SOCIETY?

MARGARET

JOINING IS FREE

CAROLINE

‘CAUSE YOU CAN’T PUT A PRICE ON...
MARGARET

I’D LIKE TO BE ABLE TO THINK, INDEPENDENTLY TRANSCENDENTALLY - SPEAKING THAT IS KEY

YOU’VE GOT IT! I’VE GOT IT?

YOU’RE A NATURAL, TRUST ME

ALL FEEL PROUD TO BE PART OF OUR TRANSCENDENTAL FAMILY!

IT’S NOT A CULT?

NO! PHILOSOPHY, MAKE DREAMS REALITY

(MARGARET BEGINS TO RANT SLIGHTLY ON A TANGENT)

IF YOU’RE BORN A GIRL YOU’RE SUPPOSED TO BE CUTE SUPPOSED TO BE PRETTY TO GROW UP A BEAUT YOU’RE TOLD TO BE CHARMING SO SWEET AND SO NICE TO BE JUST LIKE SUGAR AND TASTE JUST LIKE SPICE YOU’RE MEANT TO BE FINER THAN BOYS LIKE CHINA THE BEST YOU CAN HOPE FOR IS A WORKING VAGINA IF YOU DON’T MARRY WELL...

MALE VOICE OFF STAGE

DON’T BE A WHINER YOU HAG, YOU OLD TIMER!!

ALL OH MISOGYNY THAT IS THE CURSE OF THE CENTURY DON’T BE A VICTIM STAND UP AND FIGHT TRANSCENDENTALLY

(ALL FACING CATHERINE)
SERIOUSLY!