

MARY SHELLEY'S  
THE LAST MAN

Selections arranged and adapted for performance  
by Stephen Gnojewski

Cast of Characters

VERNEY

LIONEL

ADRIAN (TURK)

RAYMOND (FANATIC)

PERDITA

IDRIS

EX-QUEEN (NURSE)

EVADNE (WHITE GOBLIN)

RYLAND (SOLDIER, BLACK SPECTRE)

CLARA

ALFRED

*The last man? Yes, I may well describe that solitary being's feelings, feeling myself as the last relic of a beloved race, my companions extinct before me.*

Mary Shelley, Journal, May 1824

Setting

London, Greece, Switzerland, Rome

Time

Yesterday

The script arranges and adapts selections of THE LAST MAN, using the Chamber Theater technique of staged reading. Actors, combining pantomime with the use of selected props, deliver narration, as well as dialogue, often referring to themselves in third person speech. Two actors represent the narrator of the novel, LIONEL VERNEY. VERNEY represents the realistic point of view of the author. He primarily watches and conducts the action. LIONEL represents the romantic, idealistic, and hopeful point of view of the novel.

There is minimal scenery. Most location changes are indicated by the narration and underscored through lighting and sound. Since the major theme of THE LAST MAN is the failure of the imagination and of art to redeem the doomed characters, the set should suggest a wasteland of art, a ramshackle museum gallery. Selections of classical music and poetry are heard throughout the performance.

The script is structured into five acts: Act I and Act II - Volume I (The Power of Man), Act III and IV - Volume II (The Power of Nature), Act V - Volume III (Exodus).

ACT I  
VOLUME I (THE POWER OF MAN)  
SCENE I

(An elderly vagabond, VERNEY, dressed in rags, enters carrying a large manuscript entitled: THE LAST MAN. VERNEY opens the manuscript and reads.)

VERNEY

DEDICATION  
TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD.  
SHADOWS, ARISE AND READ YOUR FALL!  
BEHOLD, THE HISTORY OF THE  
LAST MAN.

(‘Introitus: Requiem aeternam’ from Mozart’s Requiem is played, as lights gradually reveal a wasteland of art: columns, piles of books, paintings, empty frames, sculptures, rich tapestries, musical instruments, and fine furniture. The COMPANY slowly enters through the shadows and take up their positions among the art.)

COMPANY

Let no man seek  
Henceforth to be foretold what shall befall  
Him or his children.

VERNEY

(Spinning a globe in what was once a magnificent library.) I AM the native of a sea-surrounded nook, a clouded-enshadowed land, which, when the surface of the globe, with its shoreless ocean and trackless continents, presents itself to my mind, appears only as an inconsiderable speck in the immense whole. So true it is, that man’s mind alone was the creator of all that was good or great to man, and Nature herself was only his first minister.

(VERNEY gestures to indicate LIONEL, who appears on top of a mountain of books.)

VERNEY

My first real knowledge of myself was as an unprotected orphan among the valleys and fells of Cumberland. I was in the service of a farmer; and with crook in hand, I shepherded a numerous flock on the near uplands.

LIONEL

I was rough as the elements, and unlearned as the animals I tended. I owned but one law, it was that of the strongest, and my greatest deed of virtue was never to submit.

(VERNEY has moved to stand before a replica of She-Wolf.)

VERNEY

Thus, I wandered among the hills of civilized England as uncouth a savage as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome. (Introducing PERDITA.) My sister was three years younger than myself.

PERDITA

Perdita was a singular being.

VERNEY

Often she would ramble to the most unfrequented places, that in those unvisited spots she might wrap herself in loneliness.

PERIDTA

Sometimes she sat beside a stream, and as her thoughts paused, threw flowers into the waters, watching how those swam and these sank. (Pause.) Orphans, in the fullest sense of the term, we were the poorest among the poor,

LIONEL

and despised among the unhonoured.

VERNEY

Years passed on; and years only added contempt for all that was not as wild and rude as myself.

LIONEL

I feared no man, and loved none.

VERNEY

The old began to point at me as an example, the young to wonder at me as a being distinct from themselves.

LIONEL

I hated them,

VERNEY

And began, the last and worst degradation, to hate myself.

LIONEL

I clung to ferocious habits,

VERNEY

Yet half despised them.

LIONEL

I continued my war against civilization,

VERNEY

And yet entertained a wish to belong to it.

LIONEL

I was born for something greater than I was – and greater I would become!

VERNEY

I stood upon a pinnacle, a sea of evil rolled at my feet; I was about to precipitate myself into it,

ADRIAN

(Enter ADRIAN.) When a stranger influence came over the current of my fortunes.

END OF SCENE

## SCENE II

VERNEY

(Introducing the EX-QUEEN, ADRIAN, and IDRIS.) England had been the scene of momentous struggles, during my early boyhood.

EX-QUEEN

In the year 2073, the last king, had abdicated, and a republic was instituted. Large estates were secured to the dethroned monarch and his family; he received the title of Earl of Windsor. He died soon after, leaving two children, a son and a daughter. The ex-queen cherished a love of power, and a bitter contempt for him who had despoiled himself of a kingdom. When she became a widow, she turned all her thoughts to educating her son Adrian, second Earl of Windsor. He was intended to grow up in the steady purpose of reacquiring his lost crown.

PERDITA

(To LIONEL.) All England rang with his name; and his coming like a thunderstorm, was heard from afar.

LIONEL

“And this pleases you?”

PERDITA

“Indeed it does, Lionel. I quite long to see him, he is the descendant of our kings, the first noble of the land: every one admires him, and they say that his rank is his least merit.”

LIONEL

“Why, all his virtues are derived from his station only. Let all England believe him to be thus – we know him – he is our enemy. His father injured my father. We, descendants from the one and the other, must be enemies also. He shall find that I can feel my injuries; he shall learn to dread my revenge!”

VERNEY

Here was an opening for my plans of offence. (Whispering in LIONEL’s ear.) I proposed the enterprise of poaching.

LIONEL

I crept along by the fern, on my hands and knees, seeking the shadowy coverts of the underwood,

(VERNEY grabs LIONEL from behind, and they wrestle with each other.)

VERNEY

when two keepers sprang an ambush upon me.

LIONEL

I and my enemy were still struggling, when the man exclaimed,

VERNEY

“The Earl!”

(ADRIAN slowly approaches VERNEY and LIONEL.)

ADRIAN

“How is this? For shame! Verney, Lionel Verney, do we meet thus for the first time?”

VERNEY

(To LIONEL.) I desired to reply, to acknowledge his goodness;

LIONEL

but words, fitting words, were not afforded to the rough mountaineer.

ADRIAN

“Come home with me. I have much to say to you.”

VERNEY

In person, he hardly appeared of this world; his slight frame was overinformed by the soul that dwelt within.

LIONEL

We sat in his library, and he spoke of the old Greek sages, and of the power, which they had acquired over the minds of men, through the force of love and wisdom only.

ADRIAN

“I have a tale to relate, and much explanation to give concerning the past. Do you remember your father?”

(VERNEY hands ADRIAN a letter, which has been hidden between the pages of the book.)

VERNEY

A short time before Adrian’s visit, the heir of the nobleman to whom my father had confided his last appeal to his royal master, put this letter, its seal unbroken, into the young Earl’s hand.

ADRIAN

It had been found cast aside with a mass of papers of old date, and accident alone brought it to light.

(ADRIAN breaks the seal and opens the letter.)

ADRIAN

Adrian read it with deep interest; he entertained the opinion that his father was to a degree culpable of neglect towards us. And he had been occupied in arranging a variety of plans for our benefit.

LIONEL

(Kneeling before ADRIAN.) "God bless you!"

(Overjoyed, LIONEL proudly ascends the mountain of books.)

VERNEY

He had touched my rocky heart with his magic power, and the stream of affection gushed forth, imperishable and pure.

LIONEL

"This is power! Not to be strong of limb, hard of heart, ferocious, and daring; but kind, compassionate and soft. Doubt me not, Adrian, I also will become wise and good!"

VERNEY

We are told by the wisest philosophers of the dangers of the world, the deceits of men, and the treason of our own hearts: but no the less fearlessly does each put off his frail bark from the port, to attain the streams of the sea of life. How few in youth's prime, moor their vessels on the 'golden sands,' and collect the painted shells that strew them. But all at close of day, make for shore, and are either wrecked ere they reach it, or find some wave-beaten haven, whereon to cast themselves and die unmourned.

LIONEL

Life is before me, and I rush into possession. What has been though sweet, is gone; the present is good only because it is about to change, and the to come is all my own!

END OF SCENE

### SCENE III

RAYMOND

Speak! – What door is opened?

(Enter RAYMOND escorted by EVADNE and PERDITA. A victory march is sounded.

VERNEY

At this period the name and exploits of one of my countrymen filled the world with admiration. Relations of what he had done, conjectures concerning his future actions were the never-failing topics of the hour.

LIONEL

I felt as if the praises, which this idol received were leaves torn from laurels destined for Adrian.

VERNEY

(To LIONEL.) But I must enter into some account of this darling of fame – this favorite of the wonder-loving world.

EVADNE

(Lavishing her affection.) His reckless courage and comprehensive genius brought him into notice.

PERDITA

(Lavishing her affection.) Among his other advantages, Lord Raymond was supremely handsome; everyone admired him. He was courteous, honey-tongued – an adept in fascinating arts.

EX-QUEEN

What could not this man achieve in the busy English world?

VERNEY

No two persons could be more opposite than Adrian and he.

RAYMOND

Power was the aim of all his endeavors. He looked on the structure of society as but a part of the machinery, which supported the web on which his life was traced.

ADRIAN

Adrian felt that he made a part of a great whole. He matured his views for the reform of the English government, and published his intention to diminish the power of the aristocracy.

EX-QUEEN

At first his mother treated his theories as the wild ravings of inexperience. She tried to reason with him, and finding him inflexible, learned to hate him. Lord Raymond became the favorite of the ex-queen, her daughter's destined husband. This aspiring noble revived the claim of the house of Windsor to the crown.

VERNEY

With her daughter, the noble widow constantly resided at Windsor; and admitted no visitors, except a few foreign ministers. (Introducing EVADNE.) Among these was young Princess Evadne, ambassador from the free states of Greece.

EVADNE

Although they spent much time together at Windsor, the extreme youth of Adrian prevented any suspicion as to the nature of their intercourse.

ADRIAN

But he had already leant to love, while the beautiful Greek smiled benignantly on the boy. This was the secret law of his life – he loved.

RAYMOND

And at this time, Lord Raymond returned from Greece.

EVADNE

He became an adventurer in the Greek wars, and led the Greek armies to victory. He became the darling hero of this rising people.

ADRIAN and RAYMOND

Adrian and Raymond now came into contact, and a spirit of aversion rose between them.

ADRIAN

Adrian despised the narrow views of the politicians,

RAYMOND

and Raymond held in supreme contempt the benevolent visions of the philanthropist.

VERNEY

With the coming of Raymond was formed the storm that laid waste at one fell blow the gardens of delight which Adrian fancied that he had secured to himself.

EVADNE

Raymond, the deliverer of Greece, the graceful soldiers, Evadne cherished as most dear.

ADRIAN

Raymond was loved by Evadne. He no longer deemed the world subject to him.

LIONEL

The rumor went that Adrian had become –

VERNEY

how write the fatal word –

RAYMOND

mad.

LIONEL

“Permit me to remark, that I am devotedly attached to the Earl of Windsor; he is my best friend and benefactor. I accord with his opinions, and bitterly lament his present, and I trust temporary, illness.”

RAYMOND

“Every man dreams about something, love, honor; you dream of friendship, and devote yourself to a maniac. Happy are dreamers, so that they not be awakened!”

ADRIAN

(To EVADNE.) “O wherefore are love and ruin forever joined in this our mortal dream? So that when we make our hearts a lair for that gently seeming beast, its companion enters with it, and pitilessly lays waste what might have been a home and a shelter.”

EVADNE

(To ADRIAN.) One day calls to another  
And in that manner linked  
A cry to a cry and a sorrow to a sorrow

(ADRIAN and EVADNE exit.)

VERNEY

None knew what past between them. He lived in seclusion, no one knew where.

END OF SCENE

#### SCENE IV

IDRIS

(Enter IDRIS.) “Dear friends, do not think it strange that now, visiting you for the first time, I ask your assistance. To you alone do I dare speak; you are my brother’s friends, therefore you must be mine. Doubtless you have both heard the current tale; perhaps believe the slander; but his is not mad! He is wronged, betrayed – save him!”

RAYMOND

“Pardon me, if I have offended. Whether you trust me or not, rely on my doing my utmost to further your wishes, whatever they may be.”

(RAYMOND and IDRIS exit together.)

LIONEL

Is there such a feeling as love at first sight?

PERDITA

And if there be, in what does its nature differ from love founded in long observation and slow growth?

VERNEY

Perhaps its effects are not permanent; but they are, while they last, as violent and intense.

LIONEL

The spirit of Idris hovered in the air I breathed.

VERNEY

(Flipping through pages of the manuscript.) On every leaf was imprinted the talisman of my existence – SHE LIVES! SHE IS! All was one idea, one feeling, one knowledge – it was my life!

PERDITA

But the die was cast – Raymond would marry Idris.

LIONEL

Yet, not so! She did not love him. My sister and I were left – truly like two fools,

PERIDTA

- two silly, luckless flies, who had played in sunbeams and were caught in a spider’s web. “Not now, or do you speak to me, my dear Lionel; you can say nothing, for you know nothing. I will see you to-morrow. Lord Raymond will probably return. Will you tell him that he must excuse me today, for I am not well.”

(PERDITA exits, as RAYMOND enters.)

RAYMOND

“What can I do? My dearest hopes appear to be near their fulfillment. The ex-queen gives me Idris; Adrian is totally unfitted to succeed to the earldom, and that earldom in my hands becomes a kingdom. I can do this – I can marry Idris.”

LIONEL

“Does Lady Idris love you?”

RAYMOND

(Laughing.) “What a question. She will of course, as I shall her, when we are married.”

LIONEL

“You begin late. Marriage is usually considered the grave, not the cradle of love.”

RAYMOND

“Love! I must steel my heart against that – that is to say the love which would rule me, not that which I rule. Tell me, Lionel, do you consent that I should marry this young lady?”

LIONEL

“Never! I can never consent that Lady Idris should be united to one who does not love her.”

RAYMOND

“Because you love her yourself.”

LIONEL

“I do not, dare not love her.”

RAYMOND

“At least she does not love you. I would not marry a reigning sovereign, were I not sure that her heart was free.”

LIONEL

“Thou most unaccountable being. Whither will thy actions tend?”

RAYMOND

“To a crown, a golden, begemmed crown, I hope; and yet I dare not trust. Though I dream, ever anon a busy devil whispers to me, that it is but a fool’s cap that I seek, and the were I wise, I should trample on it, and take instead, that which is worth all the crowns of the east and the presidentships of the west.”

LIONEL

“And what is that?”

RAYMOND

“If I do make it my choice, then you shall know. (As he dresses for an appearance before Parliament) I must apologize for my abstraction. The truth is, Ryland’s motion comes on tonight, and I am considering my reply.”

VERNEY

(Introducing RYLAND) Ryland was the leader of the popular party.

RYLAND

(Speaking as if before the Parliament) He had obtained leave to bring in a bill making it treason to endeavor to change the present state of the English government. This attack was directed against Raymond and his machinations for the restoration of the monarchy.

RAYMOND

After his motion had been seconded, Lord Raymond rose. He rose, to speak in favor of the honorable member’s motion, with one slight amendment subjoined. Nobly and greatly had last sovereign of England sacrificed himself to the apparent good of his country. In his amendment he proposed, that an exception should be made in favor of any person who claimed the sovereign power in right of the earls of Windsor. He asserted, that each individual under the English monarchy, was then as now, capable of attaining high rank and power.

RYLAND

The motion was lost; Ryland withdrew in rage;

EX-QUEEN

and Raymond retired to dream of his future kingdom.

(COMPANY sings the ‘Tyrolese Song of Liberty’. RAYMOND now stands before a replica of The Apollo Belvedere. RAYMOND takes PERDITA by the hand.)

RAYMOND

“I am called like that victor! A kingdom awaits my acceptance, my enemies are overthrown. (Indicating his heart) But here, here is the rebel. I am its slave. I will not act a part with you, dear girl, or appear other than what I am, weak and unworthy. Yet you do love me. I feel and know that you do. Turn from me, if you will - if you can. I do not deny that I have balanced between you and the highest hope that mortal man can entertain; but I do so no longer. Take me – possess my heart and soul to all eternity. Lionel, persuade your sister to forgive the injury I have done her; persuade her to be mine.”

PERDITA

“There needs no persuasion, except your own dear promises, and my ready heart, which whispers to me that they are true.”

(RAYMOND and PERDITA embrace and kiss.)

LIONEL

What must I do now?

VERNEY

First, I must seek Adrian.

IDRIS

“Verney, you must do this; find him, restore him to himself, to me – on the wide earth I have none to love but only him!”

LIONEL

“I cannot linger here; I long to cure the malady of my first and best friend. Farewell, Raymond; be happy in having chosen the better part in life.”

ADRIAN

One day calls to another  
and in that manner is linked  
a cry to a cry and a sorrow to a sorrow

LIONEL

Beloved friend, have those gentle eyes, those ‘channels of the soul’ lost their meaning?

ADRIAN

O happy earth! A stately place has God built for you, O man! And worthy are you of your dwelling! If mere existence, and not happiness, had been the final end of our being, why should our dwelling place be so lovely? Why should this be, if HE were not good? Worthy the giver, is the imagination! It takes from reality its leaden hue, and with a hand of beauty beckons us from the sterile seas of life.

(ADRIAN embraces LIONEL)

ADRIAN

I have consorted long with grief, entered the gloomy labyrinth of madness, and emerged, but half alive. Yet I thank God that I have lived! I am glad that I have seen the changes of his day; to behold the sun, and the gentle pilgrim moon; to have seen the fire bearing flowers of the sky, and the flowery stars of earth. Oh, that death and sickness were banished from our earthly home! The choice is with us; let us will it, and our habitation becomes a paradise. For the will of man is omnipotent. My soul is a fading spark, but I dedicate all of intellect and strength that remains in me to bestow blessings on my fellow-men!

END OF SCENE

## SCENE V

(VERNEY, LIONEL and IDRIS perform in front of GUSTAV KLIMT, The Kiss.)

VERNEY

Oh my pen! Haste thou to write what was, before the thought of what is, arrests the hand that guides thee. If I lift up my eyes and see the desert earth, and feel that those dear eyes have spent their mortal luster, forever I am mute! But you live, my Idris, even now you move before me!

LIONEL

There was a glade –

VERNEY

There am I now -

LIONEL

remember, Idris, in youth's dear prime, is by my side. We were alone together; the sun set; the evening star shone distinct.

IDRIS

“Which is that star's life? It seems to say that its state, even like ours upon earth, is wavering and inconstant; it fears, methinks, and it loves.”

LIONEL

“Gaze not on the star. Look not upon distant worlds; speak not of the mere imagination of a sentiment. I have long been silent; long have I desired to speak to you, and submit my soul, my entire being. Look not on the star, dear love, or do, and let that eternal spark be my witness and my advocate, silent as it shines – love is to me as light to the star; so long as that is uneclipsed, so long shall I love you.”

(The EX-QUEEN interrupts LIONEL and IDRIS, as they are about to kiss.)

EX-QUEEN

“Mad and foolish boy!”

(The EX-QUEEN grabs IDRIS's hand and drags her away from LIONEL.)

IDRIS

“Save me! O come with me, Lionel, to save and protect me!”

EX-QUEEN

“This is going too far. Were you indeed the insignificant person you deserve to be, I would willingly leave you to fate. But remember, Lady Iris, it is not alone the once royal

blood of England that colors your veins, you are a Princess of Austria, and every life-drop is akin to emperors and kings. Are you then a fit mate for an uneducated shepherd-boy?"

IDRIS

"I do not deny that I love Verney; prove to me that he is worthless; and I will never see him more."

EX-QUEEN

"We will talk of this another time. Tomorrow I trust your tone will be changed: be composed; I have agitated you; go to rest; and I will send you a medicine I always take when unduly restless – it will give you a quiet night."

IDRIS

"Save me! I am lost – we are both forever lost! Come with me, Lionel. O come with me to save and protect me!"

EX-QUEEN

"Pretty simpleton, little do you know that your game is already at an end forever. In Austria you will obey. Hasten, there is not time to lose. Take merely the clothes necessary for her journey. Softly; all sleep; though all have not been prepared for sleep, like her. Sweet one – rest."

LIONEL

"– rest – my beloved – I will make a fire."

IDRIS

"Rest! If you delay we are lost. I have discovered – tomorrow – that is today – already – my mother's hirelings are to carry me off to Germany, to prison, to marriage – to anything, except you and my brother – take me away, or soon they will be here!"

(IDRIS faints into LIONEL'S arms, and he carries her to the safety of ADRIAN.)

ADRIAN

Adrian wrote a brief note to his mother informing her that Idris was under his care.

EX-QUEEN

"Mad and foolish boy! It is well when flies are caught by such spiders' web; but it is for the high-born and powerful to bow their necks to these unmeaning pretensions." Her desires had been blasted, her schemes overthrown. It was useless for the Earl of Windsor and his sister to address again the injured parent. Under such circumstances, she positively declined any communication with them. (The EX-QUEEN exits.)

VERNEY

AND now let the reader, passing over some short period of time be introduced to our happy circle.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT I

ACT II  
SCENE I

(This sequence is played before a replica of Henri Matissee's, 'The Joy of Life'.)

VERNEY

Others said, we might be happy – we said –

COMPANY

We are!

(Mozart's 'Exsultate, Jubilate' is played.)

VERNEY

Then, we were as playful as children. Sometimes we passed whole days under the leafy covert of the forest with our books and music.

PERDITA

During the first year of their marriage, Perdita presented Raymond with a lovely girl.

LIONEL

(Introducing ALFRED and CLARA.) In progress of time, I also became a father, and our little darlings called forth a thousand new and delicious feelings.

ADRIAN

“our souls have a natural inclination to love, being born as much to love, as to feel, to reason, to understand and remember.”

VERNEY

At length, our tranquility was disturbed by obstacles, that woke us from our pleasant dream.

RYLAND

A new Lord Protector of England was to be chosen;

RAYMOND

and, at Raymond's request, we moved to London, to witness, and take a part in the election. “We will have a Protector of our own. We will set up a candidate, and ensure his success. We will nominate Adrian, and do our best to bestow on him the power to which he is entitled by his birth.”

ADRIAN

“And will you make common cause with Raymond, in dragging a poor visionary from the clouds? I thought you knew me better.”

LIONEL

“I do know you better. The time is arrived when you can put your theories into practice, and you may bring about such reformation and change.”

ADRIAN

“The visions of my boyhood have long since faded in the light of reality; I know now that I am not a man fitted to govern nations. But do you not see, Lionel, the drift of our noble friend. Lord Raymond was never born to find content in our pastoral life. He is fitted to be the Protector of England. If we propose him, he will assuredly be elected, and will find scope for the towering powers of his mind.’

RAYMOND

Lord Raymond presented himself to the House with fearless confidence and insinuating address. He spoke of the state of England; the necessary measures to be taken to ensure its security, and confirm its prosperity. His words flowed with ease; his language was full of vigor, and his voice of persuasion.

RYLAND

The question therefore lay between Lord Raymond and Mr. Ryland. Ryland was the popular candidate. Unwonted silence reigned in the house; the members spoke in whispers.

RAYMOND

When the chairman declared Lord Raymond duly chosen, it amounted to a shout of applause and victory.

VERNEY

One voice made of many voices, resounded through the chamber; it syllabled the name of

COMPANY

Raymond!

END OF SCENE

## SCENE II

RAYMOND

The spirit of Raymond was unbounded; he was continually surrounded by projects, which were to render England one scene of magnificence. Among other works of art in which he was engaged, he had projected the erection of a national gallery for statues and pictures. He was very fastidious in his choice of the plan on which it would be built. Hundreds were brought to him and rejected.

VERNEY

(VERNEY brings RAYMOND a drawing.) At length a drawing came, with an address where communications might be sent, and no artist's name affixed.

RAYMOND

The design was new and elegant, but faulty. It was evidently the work of one who was not an architect.

(VERNEY helps dress RAYMOND in a cloak.)

RAYMOND

Desiring to see the draughtsman, he threw such disguise over his person as a cloak afforded and went alone to the house named to him.

EVADNE

"Who is there?"

RAYMOND

"A friend."

(RAYMOND reveals himself to EVADNE.)

EVADNE

"Thus, kindness can do, what no want, no misery ever effected."

RAYMOND

The sight of Evadne Zaimi passed like an arrow into his soul. He took her hand, and said a thousand things, which breathed the deepest spirit of compassion and affection.

EVADNE

He was the hero of her imagination.

(RAYMOND and EVADNE embrace.)

RAYMOND & EVADNE

Together, they built a wall between them and the world. Within, was the peace as of innocence, reckless blindness, deluding joy, hope.

VERNEY

While Raymond had been wrapped in visions of power and fame, the territory of his own heart escaped his notice.

END OF SCENE

### SCENE III

LIONEL

In the mean time what did Perdita?

PERDITA

To be once in doubt,  
Is – once to be resolved.

VERNEY

The first secret that had existed between them was the visits of Raymond and Evadne.

PERDITA

The perfect confidence that subsided between Perdita and him, rendered every communication common between them. They opened each other's letters, even as, the inmost fold of the heart of each was disclosed to the other.

VERNEY

A letter came unawares.

(VERNEY hands PERDITA a letter. She opens it.)

EVADNE

The funeral note  
Of love, deep buried, without resurrection.

PERDITA

Dear Raymond,  
Allow me in some degree to explain my feelings; without that, we shall both grope in the dark, mistaking one another.

PERDITA and EVADNE

I believed that you read my heart, and knew its devotion. I loved you – I love you.

EVADNE

But under the present system, the breach between you and Perdita would widen each day, and that its result would destroy my lover's heart.

(EVADNE exits. Composing herself, PERDITA folds the letter and slips it back in its envelope.)

PERDITA

We are no longer lovers; nor can I call myself a friend to any, lost as I am. I beg you, with unalterable love, a last farewell.

RAYMOND

“My dear girl, you must pardon me. I was in the wrong to commence a system of concealment; but I did it for the sake of sparing you pain; and each day has rendered to more difficult for me to alter my plan.”

PERDITA

“Well, go on!”

RAYMOND

“That is all – this paper tells all. I have done my best, though perhaps I have done wrong. My love for you is inviolate.”

PERDITA

“It cannot be. You have deceived me.”

RAYMOND

“Do you not believe me?”

PERDITA

“To believe you, I would give up all – but that cannot be!”

RAYMOND

“Perdita, I knew that it was possible that your suspicions might be excited; but I trusted that my simple word would cause them to disappear. I built my hope on your confidence. Do you think that I will be questioned and disbelieved? I have not fallen so low. We have been friends - lovers - let us not become enemies. I cannot live the object of suspicion – if you cannot believe me - let us part!”

PERDITA

“Exactly so. Are we not already?”

RAYMOND

(To VERNEY) He forgot that each word he spoke was false. Have not actors wept, as they portrayed imagined passions? (To PERDITA) “The blow is given. I will not part from you in anger; - I love you too well. You have your child, your brother, Idris, Adrian.”

PERDITA

“And you, the writer of that letter.”

RAYMOND

“Entertain this belief and hug it to your heart – I am content. But, by the God that made me, hell is not more false, than the words you have spoken!”

END OF SCENE

#### SCENE IV

VERNEY

Truth and false-hood, love and hate lost their eternal boundaries.

RAYMOND

The council-chamber was deserted; projects were neglected. Festivity, and libertinism, became the order of the day.

PERDITA

(Addressing LIONEL and ADRIAN.) “Tell, Lord Raymond, that my presence shall no longer annoy him. That he needs not plunge into this destructive dissipation for the sake of disgusting me. He will never see me more.”

RAYMOND

“Because I am Protector of England, am I to be the only slave in its empire? But I will get rid of the whole together. Be witness. I renounce my office. I abdicate my power. Assume it who will!”

ADRIAN

“Let him assume it who can pronounce himself to be your superior. Master yourself, Raymond, and the world is subject to you.”

RAYMOND

“I cannot rule myself. My passions are my master. Perdita, wedded to an imagination. With her it was pretty enough to play a sovereign’s part. But we must live, and not act our lives; pursuing the shadow. I lost the reality – now I renounce both. I will be free. Again, I am a solitary man; and I will become again, a wanderer. I will return to Greece, to become again a soldier of fortune.”

LIONEL

“Reflect!”

RAYMOND

“Wherefore? I have done nothing else than reflect on this step. One word more concerning unkind, Perdita. Remember, that my dearest hope is that she will again be mine. I know, though she does not, how false the veil is which she has spread over the reality. Present her with a mirror, in which she may know herself; and wonder at her present mistake, and hasten to restore to me, what is by right mine, her love.”  
(RAYMOND exits.)

(VERNEY and PERDITA stand before each other as if looking into a full-length mirror. ‘Porgi, amor, qualche ristoro’ from Mozart’s, ‘The Marriage of Figaro’ is played.)

VERNEY

She stood before a large mirror.

PERDITA

She gazed on her reflected image.

PERDITA and VERNEY

“All things go on. All things proceed, decay, and perish! All proceeds, changes and dies.”

VERNEY

If I look again where I looked an hour ago, the face of the eternal heavens is altered. All proceeds, changes and dies,

PERDITA & VERNEY

Except the sense of misery in my bursting heart.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT II

END OF VOLUME I

ACT III  
VOLUME II (THE POWER OF NATURE)  
SCENE I

VERNEY

After a long interval, I am again impelled by the restless spirit within me to continue my narration. Time and experience have placed me on a height from which I can comprehend the past as a whole; and in this way I must describe it, bringing forward the disposing light and shade so as to form a picture in whose very darkness there will be harmony.

PERDITA

“This is not the end of love! – Yet not the end! O my Raymond, there is no safety for thee! I have such fearful dreams!” She knew that he was in danger. War could not prevent Perdita from following her lord. To be near him, to feel him again her own, was the limit of her desires; she resolved instantly to go to Greece.

LIONEL

I resolved at length to accompany Perdita.

CLARA

“Take me with you. Papa, I dare say, he will be glad to see you.”

(A ship’s horn is heard.)

PERDITA

During this voyage, the expectation of seeing her lover she had banished, the husband, friend, heart’s companion, wrapped her senses in delight.  
Her dear heart’s confessor – a heart within that heart.

VERNEY

On landing, the news spread through Athens, and the whole city poured out towards the harbor.

RAYMOND

“Perdita, I know what you would say; I know that you love me.”

PERDITA

“Beloved, embrace our child.”

RAYMOND

“Come hither, sweet one. Do you not know me? My best girl, relieves me from these phantasies. United to her, never again shall I know the misery of finding myself alone.”

VERNEY

Having affected the reunion of Raymond and Perdita, I was eager to return to England;

RAYMOND

but his earnest request, induced me to prolong my residence in Greece.

END OF SCENE

## SCENE II

(RAYMOND stands before a mosaic copy of 'The Battle of Issus' or 'Battle of Alexander and the Persians'.)

RAYMOND

The Turkish army were at this time besieging Rodosto; and the Greeks, were on the eve of forcing the enemy to battle. Each people looked on the coming struggle as that which would be to a great degree decisive, as, in case of victory, the next step would be the siege of Constantinople.

VERNEY

A battle, it was said, was inevitable.

LIONEL

"Now by the fells of Cumberland, I will stand at your side, draw my sword in the Greek cause, and be hailed as a victor along with you!"

VERNEY

We found that the scheme of battle arranged. Far different from anything the imagination had pictured. We fancy a spot, plain as a table, and soldiers small as chessmen.

LIONEL

When I came to the reality, and saw regiments, all in motion, I gave up all idea of understanding.

RAYMOND

The cannon roared; the music lifted up its voice,

VERNEY and LIONEL

and we beheld the regiments, now lost in smoke, while shout and clamor drowned every sound.

RAYMOND

The defeat became total. "The day is ours! The Turks fly!"

LIONEL

The order I had received was to make an observation of the direction the enemy might have taken. I looked far round – all was silent and deserted. None but the dead remained. I turned to the corpse-strewn earth; and felt ashamed.

(VERNEY gently raises EVADNE in his arms. She has fallen near a replica of the Dying Gaul.)

VERNEY

Suddenly, a form seemed to rise from the earth. The dress of this person was that of a soldier, but the shrieks discovered a female thus disguised.

EVADNE

“This is not the end of love! – Yet not the end! Many living deaths have I borne for thee, O Raymond, and now I expire, thy victim! By my death, I purchase thee! The instruments of war, fire, the plague are my servitors. I have sold myself to death, with the sole condition that thou shouldst follow me – Fire, and war, and plague, unite for thy destruction – O Raymond, there is no safety for thee!”

VERNEY

Crushed and o’verworn,  
The hours had drained her blood, and filled her brow  
With lines and wrinkles.

(VERNEY gently helps EVADNE to her feet. EVADNE walks towards some columns.)

EVADNE

“This is not the end of love!”

RAYMOND

(To LIONEL) “There is the end!”

RAYMOND and EVADNE

“Fire, the sword, and plague!”

RAYMOND

“They all may be found in yonder city; on my head alone may they fall! I have counted the hours of her life. One month, and she falls. Remain with me till you see the cross on St. Sophia; and then return to your peaceful glades.”

LIONEL

“You then still remain in Greece?”

RAYMOND

“Assuredly. I know not why; I seem to be entering a darksome gulf.”

(EVADNE beckons RAYMOND towards some columns.)

EVADNE

“I have sold myself to death, with the sole condition that thou shouldst follow me.”

RAYMOND

My friend, you will become the last resource of Perdita. You will take her back to Windsor.”

LIONEL

“Not without you. You do not mean to separate again?”

RAYMOND

“The separation at hand is one over which I have no control.

EVADNE

“Many living deaths have I borne for thee, O Raymond.”

RAYMOND

“Earth is to me a tomb, the firmament a vault, shrouding mere corruption.”

EVADNE

“By my death, I purchase thee!”

RAYMOND

“Time is no more, for I have stepped within the threshold of eternity; each man I meet appears a corpse.”

(The TURK enters from behind EVADNE and the columns.)

TURK

“Take it, Christian dogs! Take the palaces, the gardens, the mosques, the abode of our fathers – take plague with them; pestilence is the enemy we fly; if she be your friend, hug her to your bosoms. The curse of Allah is on Stamboul, share ye her fate.”

VERNEY

I have heard a picture described, wherein all the inhabitants of earth were drawn out in fear to stand the encounter of Death. The feeble and decrepit fled; the warriors retreated, while the grim Unreality hovered shaking his spectral dart, a solitary but invincible assailant.

RAYMOND

(Angry) Even so was it with the army of Greece. “By my sword I swear that no ambush endangers you. The enemy is already vanquished; the spoils of the city are already yours; force the gate; enter and possess the seats of your ancestors!”

SOLDIER

“General, we neither fear the courage, nor secret ambush of the Moslems. But we will not die in heaps, like dogs poisoned in summer-time, by the pestilential air of that city – we dare not go against the Plague!”

RAYMOND

“Cowards! I alone will enter!”

EVADNE and PERDITA

“O dearest Raymond, there is no safety for thee!”

PERDITA

“How beyond the imagination of man are the decrees of heaven!”

RAYMOND

“Foolish girl, are you like my valiant soldiers, panic-struck? I, and in a few brief years, all you will no longer be. But other generations will arise, and ever and forever will continue to be made happier by our present acts. The prayer of my youth was to be one among those who render the pages of earth’s history splendid. I well brave the plague. I am prepared, so that I leave behind a trail of light so radiant, that my worst enemies cannot cloud it.”

(RAYMOND proudly walks towards the columns and into the open arms of EVADNE. The mosaic copy of ‘The Battle of Issus’ or ‘Battle of Alexander and the Persians’ crumbles.)

VERNEY

But at that moment a crash was heard. Thunder-like it reverberated through the sky. Horrible sights were shaped to me in the turbid cloud that hovered over the city.

PERDITA

“This is not the end of love! – Yet not the end!”

LIONEL

For a moment I could yield to the creative power of the imagination, and for a moment was soothed by the sublime fictions it presented to me.

VERNEY

The beatings of my human heart drew me back to blank reality.

LIONEL

Where, in this burning chaos, art thou, O Raymond – ‘hero of unwritten story’?

VERNEY

- through the darkness of night, over the scorching ruins of fallen Constantinople, his name was heard;

LIONEL

Raymond!!

VERNEY

No voice replied – echo even was mute.

LIONEL

Raymond!!!

END OF SCENE

### SCENE III

PERDITA

“Hush! After much weeping, Clara sleeps; we must not disturb her. Lionel, he sleeps there; he who in my youth I first loved. Never – mark me – never will I leave this spot. I will live and die here! Go you to England, Lionel; return to sweet Idris and dearest Adrian; return, and let my orphan girl be as a child of your own house. Look on me as dead; and truly if death be a mere change of state, I am dead.”

LIONEL

“You cherish dreary thoughts, nor do I wonder that for a time your better reason should be influenced by a disturbed imagination.”

PERDITA

“I supposed that you would treat me as a mad, foolish girl. But do not deceive yourself – take my girl with you; wean her from sights and thoughts of sorrow; so could it never be, were she near me again. For myself, I will not voluntarily seek death, that is, I will not, while I can command myself; and I can here. But drag me from the country; and my power of self-control vanishes.”

LIONEL

“You clothe your meaning, Perdita, in powerful words, yet that meaning is selfish and unworthy of you. You have often agreed with me that there is but one solution to the intricate riddle of life; to improve ourselves, and contribute to the happiness of others: and now, in the very prime of life, you desert your principles, and shut yourself up in useless solitude – a home of love awaits you in England.”

PERDITA

“It is not a matter of choice; I can live here only; force only can remove me. Be it so; drag me away, confine me, imprison me, still I escape, and come here.”

LIONEL

All this appeared madness. I imagined, that it was my imperative duty to take her from scenes that thus forcibly reminded her of her loss. As night came on, I pretended to be alarmed by the feverish glow in her cheek; I poured out the medicine, which she took docilely from me.

VERNEY

Falsehood and artifice are in themselves so hateful, that, though I still thought I did right, a feeling of shame and guilt came painfully upon me.

NURSE

It was late in the day before Perdita awoke.

LIONEL

The blue and troubled sea sped past the vessel, and was spread shoreless around.

PERDITA

“Where are we? Where are we going?”

NURSE

“To England.”

PERDITA

“And my brother?”

NURSE

“Is on deck, Madam.”

LIONEL

The breeze that had flagged since sunset now rose again. The quiet was disturbed only by the rush of waters, as they divided before the steady keel, the wind whistling in the shrouds, and the regular motion of the engine.

PERDITA

“You know not what you have done!”

LIONEL

The clouds had disappeared, and dark ether clipped the broad ocean, in which the constellations vainly sought their accustomed mirror. Our rate could not have been less than eight knots.

PERDITA

“All things go on. All proceeds, changes and dies, except the sense of misery in my bursting heart.”

(A ship’s horn is sounded. PERDITA exits.)

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT III

ACT IV  
SCENE I

VERNEY

I returned to my family in the autumn of the year 2092. How unwise had the wanderers been, who had deserted its shelter, entangled themselves in the web of society, and entered on what men of the world call 'life' - that labyrinth of evil. To live, according to this sense of the word, we must not only observe and learn, we must also feel; we must not be mere spectators of action, we must act; we must not describe, but be subjects of description. I have lived. I have spent days and nights of festivity; I have joined in ambitions hopes, and exulted in victory: now, -shut the door on the world, and build high the wall. Let us live for each other and for happiness; let us seek peace in our dear home. Let us leave 'life' that we may live.

(ADRIAN, RYLAND, and LIONEL convene in the library.)

ADRIAN

"Let this last but twelve months, and earth will become a Paradise. The energies of man were before directed to the destruction of his species. They now aim at its liberation and preservation."

RYLAND

"Dreaming, forever dreaming, Windsor! Be assured that earth is not, nor ever can be heaven, while the seeds of hell are natives of her soil. When seasons have become equal, then sickness will cease. When love is no longer akin to hate, then brotherhood will exist: we are very far from that state at present."

(VERNEY enters with a newspaper that he hands to LIONEL.)

VERNEY

We have strange news here from Greece.

LIONEL

It seems that the total destruction of Constantinople, and the supposition that winter had purified the air of the fallen city, gave the Greeks courage to visit and begin to rebuild. But they tell us that every one who had ventured within the walls has been tainted by the plague; that this disease had spread in Thrace and Macedonia, and a strict quarantine exacted.

ADRIAN

The intelligence brought us back from the prospect of paradise. We discussed the best means of preventing infection, and of preserving health and activity in a large city thus afflicted – London, for instance.

RYLAND

“We are all dreaming this morning. It is as wise to discuss the probability of a visitation of the plague in our well-governed metropolis, as to calculate the centuries which must escape before we can grow pine-apples here in the open air.”

END OF SCENE

## SCENE II

(The COMPANY assembles before William Blake's, 'The Ancient Days, frontispiece of Europe, a Prophecy'.)

VERNEY

On the twenty-first of June, it was said that an hour before noon, a black sun arose: an orb, the size of that luminary, but dark, defined, whose beams were shadows, ascended from the west, and eclipsed the bright parent of day. Night fell upon every country, night, sudden, rayless, entire. Soon the dim orb passed from over the sun, and lingered down the eastern heaven. As it descended, its dusky rays crossed the brilliant ones of the sun, and deadened or distorted them. Birds, strong-winged eagles, suddenly blinded, fell in the market-places, while owls and bats showed themselves welcoming the early night. Gradually the object of fear sank beneath the horizon, and to the last shot up shadowy beams into the otherwise radiant air.

(‘Dies Irae’ from Mozart’s Requiem is played under dialogue.)

LIONEL

Through Asia, Europe, and Africa a sudden panic was driven.

IDRIS

The men filled the mosques; the women, veiled, hastened to the tombs, and carried offerings to the dead.

ADRIAN

The Christians sought their churches, filling the air with their hymns.

RYLAND

The Arabs joined the procession, praying Mahomet to avert the plague from their tents and deserts.

ADRIAN

The streets of Isphahan, of Pekin, and Delhi were strewn with pestilence-struck corpses.

LIONEL

In the sunny climes of Persia, in the crowded cities of China and along the Mediterranean the tale of the sun of darkness increased the fears and despair of the dying multitude.

FANATIC

The God sends down his angry plagues from high,  
Famine and pestilence in heaps they die.  
Again in vengeance of his wrath he falls  
On their great hosts, and breaks their tottering walls;

VERNEY

It was called an epidemic. But the grand question was still unsettled of how this epidemic was generated and increased.

LIONEL

If infection depended upon the air, the air was subject to infection.

ADRIAN

The evil was so wide spreading, that no care, no prevention could be judged superfluous, which even added a chance to our escape.

RYLAND

These reflections made our legislators pause, before they could decide on the laws to be put in force. Oh, for some medicinal vial to purge unwholesome nature, and bring back the earth to its accustomed health!

VERNEY

Ryland had been chosen Protector. He was a man of strong intellect, quick and sound decisions in the usual course of things, but he stood aghast at the multitude of evils that gathered round us.

RYLAND

Everyday added to his difficulties - the arrival of fresh vessels with emigrants, the total cessation of commerce, and the starving multitude that thronged around the palace of the Protectorate.

LIONEL

Bankers, merchants, and manufacturers, whose trade depended on exports and interchange of wealth, became bankrupt.

IDRIS

Families, bred in opulence and luxury, were reduced to beggary.

RYLAND

Poor and rich were now equal. We were all equal now; but near at hand was an equality still more leveling. The grave yawned beneath us all.

(VERNEY hands ADRIAN another newspaper.)

VERNEY

On the eighteenth of this month news arrived in London that the plague was in France and Italy.

ADRIAN

“We regret to state that there can be no longer a doubt of the plague having been introduced at leghorn, Genoa, and Marseilles.”

COMPANY

“What will become of us?”

LIONEL

(Addressing VERNEY.) Can it be true, that whole countries are laid waste, whole nations annihilated, by these disorders in nature?

VERNEY

We called to mind the plague of 1348, when it was calculated that a third of mankind had been destroyed. As yet England was uninfected.

COMPANY

Would it always be so?

RYLAND

Yes, it would – Countrymen, fear not! In this mortal life extremes are always matched; the thorn grows with the rose, the poison tree with the cinnamon mingle their boughs. Let us weep for our brethren. Let us lament over and assist the children of the garden of earth.

END OF SCENE

### SCENE III

VERNEY

I have lingered thus long on the extreme bank, dallying with the shadow of death. Here then I stand beside the fleet waters of the flowing years, and now away! I must complete my work.

LIONEL

Yet one moment, one brief interval before I put from shore – once again let me fancy myself as I was in 2094 in my abode at Windsor, let me close my eyes, and imagine.

VERNEY

I heard a lively strain of music.

(The COMPANY celebrates by dancing in a circle around LIONEL and ALFRED, who stand before a replica of ‘The Joy of Life’ by Henri Matisse.)

LIONEL

It was Alfred’s birthday, and children held a mock fair. The tripping measure lifted my spirit, and for a moment my eyes gladly followed the mazes of the dance.

VERNEY

Here were the future governors of England; who, when our projects completed or destroyed forever, when our drama acted; here were the beings who were to carry on the vast machine of society; now ready to appear on the stage. Strange system! Riddle of the Sphinx! That thus man remains, while we the individuals pass away. ‘The whole, at one time, is never old, or middle-aged, or young, but, in a condition of unchangeable constancy, moves on through the varied tenor of perpetual decay, fall, renovation, and progression.’

LIONEL

Willingly do I give place to thee, dear Alfred! Advance, on the road to which I have been the pioneer! Advance!

RYLAND

“The Plague! – Everywhere – we must fly – all fly – but wither? No man can tell – there is no refuge on earth, it comes on us like a thousand packs of wolves – we must all fly – where shall we go? Where can any of us go?”

ADRIAN

“Whither indeed would you fly? We must all remain; and do our best to help our suffering fellow-creatures.”

RYLAND

“Help! There is no help! – great God, talks of help! All the world has the plague!”

ADRIAN

“Then to avoid it, we must quit the world. The evil is come home to us, and we must not shrink from our fate. What are your plans, my Lord Protector, for the benefit of our country?”

RYLAND

“For heaven’s love! Do not mock me with that title. Death and disease level all men. I neither pretend to protect nor govern a hospital.”

ADRIAN

“Do you then intend, now in time of peril, to recede from your duties?”

RYLAND

“Duties! Speak rationally, my Lord! – when I am a plague-spotted corpse, where will my duties be? Every man for himself! The devil take the protectorship, say I, if it expose me to danger!”

ADRIAN

“Faint-hearted man! Your countrymen put their trust in you, and you betray them!”

RYLAND

“I betray them! The plague betrays me. Faint-hearted! It is well, shut up in your castle, out of danger, to boast yourself out of fear. Take the Protectorship who will; before God I renounce it!”

ADRIAN

“And before God, do I receive it! I was born for this. The blood of my forefathers cries aloud in my veins. My mother’s lessons awaken within me. It is not by flying, but by facing the enemy, that we can conquer.”

LIONEL

Ye are all going to die, I thought; already your tomb is built up around you. Not one of you, O! fated crowd, can escape – not one! Not my own ones!

VERNEY

Already the gay dance vanished, the green sward was strewn with corpses. Well known faces mingled with the distorted creation of fancy. Ashy pale, Raymond and Perdita sat apart looking on with sad smiles. The confusion grew – they nodded their heads in time to the music, whose clang became maddening.

END OF SCENE

#### SCENE IV

(The company forms a crowd around the FANATIC.)

FANATIC

‘It is too late to be ambitious’, says Sir Thomas Browne. ‘We cannot hope to live so long in our names as some have done in their persons; one face of Janus holds proportion to the other.’

VERNEY

Upon this text, many fanatics arose, who prophesied that the end of time was come.

FANATIC

“Hear, O ye inhabitants of the earth. Death is among us! The earth is beautiful, but she is our grave! The clouds of heaven weep for us – the pageantry of the stars is but our funeral torchlight.”

(The FANATIC stretches out his hand, following invisible shapes in the air.)

FANATIC

“There they are, the dead! They rise in their shrouds, and pass in silent procession towards the far land of their doom. We come. For why should we wait? Haste, my friend, apparel yourselves in the court-dress of death. Pestilence will usher you to his presence. Come, O come, while the dear ones are yet in sight, for soon they will pass away, and we never shall join them more.”

(EVADNE falls. The rest of the company scatters.)

FANATIC

“That woman has the plague!”

LIONEL

“This poor wretch is dying; God knows how soon any or all of us may be in like want. I am going to do, as I would be done by.”

COMPANY

But you will never be able to return to the Castle – Lady Idris – your children –

LIONEL

“Can you not silence your followers? What, I ask, do you require of us?”

FANATIC

“Repentance. Obedience to the will of the Most High. Do we not all die through your sins, O generation of unbelief, and have we not a right to demand of you repentance and obedience?”

LIONEL

“And if we refuse, what then?”

FANATIC

“Beware, God hears you, and will smite your stony heart in his wrath.”

LIONEL

“You labor under an entire mistake as to the nature of the plague; but I do not ask any of you to believe me. She was a woman, and she is dead.”

(LIONEL cradles the EVADNE in his arms.)

LIONEL

I had never before beheld one killed by pestilence. I raised her rigid limbs; I marked the distortion of her face.

COMPANY

But you will never be able to return to the Castle – Lady Idris – your children.

VERNEY

For the first time in my life I envied the sleep of the dead, where grief and fear have no power.

END OF SCENE

## SCENE V

LIONEL

(IDRIS enters with CLARA and ALFRED.) When I looked on my wife and children: the thought of danger to them possessed by whole being with fear. How could I save them?

IDRIS

Alfred in some degree understood the scenes passing around, but the hilarity of youth soon chased unreasonable care for his brow.

LIONEL

Clara, our lovely gentle Clara, was dear to all. There was so much intelligence combined with innocence that she hung like a pearl in the shrine of our possessions.

IDRIS

“We will save them. I will save them. Though they only should remain on the earth, still they shall live.”

LIONEL

I could not reproach the anxiety that never for a moment slept in her heart, but I exerted myself to distract her attention, as intelligence of another and yet another death reached us.

(VERNEY stands before John Henry Fuseli’s, ‘The Nightmare’.)

VERNEY

Nature, our mother, and our friend, had turned on us a brow of menace. She could take our globe in her hand, and cast it into space, where life would be drunk up, and man and all his efforts forever annihilated. The earth, vast theatre for a magnificent drama, now presented a vacant space, an empty stage – for actor or spectator there was no longer aught to say or hear. All slept – and from my window. I saw the land stretched out in placid rest. I was awake, and during the long hours of dead night, my busy thoughts worked in my brain, like ten thousand mill-wheels, rapid, acute, untamable. I was awake, alive, while the brother of death possessed by race.

LIONEL

Why should I oppose the cataract of destruction that swept us away? – why?

VERNEY

The silence of midnight became intolerable – I placed my hand on the beating heart of Idris, to assure myself that she still existed – for a moment I doubted whether I should not awake her.

LIONEL

Great God! Would it one day be thus? One day, all extinct, save myself, should I walk the earth alone?

VERNEY

Yet I would not call them  
Voices of Warning, that announce to us  
Only the inevitable. As the sun,  
Ere it is risen, sometimes paints its image  
In the atmosphere – so often do the spirits  
O great events stride on before the events,  
And in today already walks tomorrow.

LIONEL

At once, I seemed to awake, and my view of the future was suddenly made clear. The powers of love, poetry, and creative fancy will dwell even beside the sick of the plague. I have now found the secret!

VERNEY

What secret?

LIONEL

We must seek some natural Paradise, some garden of the earth. If we survive this coming summer, I will not spend the ensuing winter in England - neither I nor any of us. We could no longer say, this we will do, and this we will leave undone. A mightier power than the human was at hand to destroy our plans or to achieve the work we avoided. It was madness to calculate upon another winter. This was our last. We might no longer hope.

VERNEY

Old fable tells us, that his gentle spirit sprung from the box of Pandora, else crammed with evils. Each man's heart became her home. But like all gifts of the Creator to Man, she is mortal; her life had attained its last hour. We have watched over her; nursed her flickering existence; now she had fallen. Hope is dead! We are but mourners in the funeral train.

COMPANY

-move all together, if they move at all.

END OF SCENE

END OF ACT IV

END OF VOLUME II

ACT V  
VOLUME III (THE EXODUS)  
SCENE I

(Lights reveal VERNEY with the COMPANY assembled in a line across the stage before Michelangelo's, 'The Fall of Man and The Expulsion from the Garden of Eden'.)

VERNEY

In the autumn of this year 2096, the spirit of emigration crept in among the few survivors, who, congregating from various parts of England, met in London.

COMPANY

In vagabond pursuit of dreadful safety.

VERNEY

Our numbers amounted to not quite two thousand persons. We would not go, until we had assured ourselves that in all human probability we did not leave behind a single human being.

RYLAND

Many of those who remained, secluded themselves. Some deserted wife and child, and imagined that they secured their safety in utter solitude. Such had been Ryland's plan, and he was discovered dead and half-devoured by insects, in a house many miles from any other. (RYLAND exits.)

EX-QUEEN

(EX-QUEEN enters.) Others made long journeys to unite themselves to those they loved, and arrived to find them dead.

LIONEL

The period of our departure was fixed for the twenty-fifth of November.

IDRIS

(With CLARA and ALFRED at her side.) "The sun is alone, but we are not. A strange star, my Lionel, ruled our birth. Did I ever in the wide world seek other than thee? And since in the wide world thou remain, why should I complain? You and my children are left to me. We remain for each other."

ADRIAN

Adrian welcomed us on our arrival.

VERNEY

You could not guess that he was about to lead forth the English nation, into the tenantless realms, there to die, one by one, till the last man should remain in a voiceless, empty world.

ADRIAN

“Yet let us go! England is in her shroud – we may not enchain ourselves to a corpse. O come! Farewell to the dead! Farewell to the tombs of those we loved! We must live elsewhere.”

(The COMPANY begins to slowly pile the art into a massive cluster, which they bound together with thick ropes.)

EX-QUEEN

Farewell to the patriotic scene, to love of liberty, to kingly pomp; the crowns are in the dust.

LIONEL

Farewell to the giant powers of man, - to knowledge, to science that could set in motion wheels, and beams, and vast machinery.

ADRIAN

Farewell to the arts – to poetry and deep philosophy, for man’s imagination is cold, - to the graceful building, which in its perfect proportions transcended the rude forms of nature.

-to sculpture, where the pure marble mocks human flesh.

EX-QUEEN

Farewell to painting, the sentiment and deep knowledge of the artist’s mind encaged in the narrow frame,

IDRIS

-to music; to the marriage of instruments, where the concord of soft and harsh unites in sweet harmony.

LIONEL

Farewell to the stage; a truer tragedy is enacted on the world’s ample scene: to highbred comedy, and the low buffoon, farewell! – Man may laugh no more.

VERNEY

Alas! How supremely great man was. It is all over now. He is solitary; like our first parents expelled from paradise. The whole earth is before him, a wide desert.

COMPANY

Farewell, sad Isle, farewell, thy fatal glory  
Is summed, cast up, and cancelled in this story.

END OF SCENE

## SCENE II

(VERNEY is seen carrying ALFRED in his arms.)

CLARA

'Uncle, dearest uncle, do not hate me forever! I must tell you, for you must know, that Alfred...' Poor little Alfred had, while playing with her, been seized with sudden fever.

IDRIS

Yet he might be saved! He might be saved!

LIONEL

Was that my child – that motionless decaying inanimation?

IDRIS

Perhaps it was not the plague!

LIONEL

"Our child is dead, and the present hour is dark and ominous. But I am happy, most happy, Idris, for we are together. Even on this fatal night, I declare myself happy, beyond all name, all thought."

IDRIS

"I understand thee, my kind love. But I am not happy. There is no joy for us."

LIONEL

"But, sweet, we are so formed that we must love life, and cling to it. So it is the last hour of many happy ones is arrived; but, again and again, I say, this moment is ours!"

IDRIS

"One moment, only one moment, one moment, only one moment."

VERNEY

The very shroud of fear had taken its seat in her heart. She was as one:

LIONEL

In some lone watch-tower on the deep, awakened  
From soothing visions of the home she loves,  
Trembling to hear the wrathful billow roar;

IDRIS

"Do not let my state of feebleness deceive you. I feel that I am better. I shall continue long to make a part of this world. Trust me, dearest, my firm determination to remain with you to the last would keep me alive, even if grim death were nearer at hand than he really is. One moment, only one moment, one moment, only one moment..."

VERNEY

Were I subject to visionary moods, I might doubt my eyes, but reality is the world I live in. Idris must die, for her heart was broken.

LIONEL

If she were dead, what the difference? Were she dead, where would this mind, the dearer half of mine be?

VERNEY

I saw Idris pacing slowly towards a cave. Her head was bent down, her white dress was such as she was accustomed to wear, except that a thin crape-like veil covered her golden tresses, and concealed her as a dim transparent mist. She looked dejected, docilely yielding to a commanding power; she submissively entered, and was lost in the dark recess.

(ALFRED takes IDRIS by the hand and leads her to her grave through an empty picture frame.)

IDRIS

One moment, only one moment.

LIONEL

One moment, only one moment...

VERNEY

How intensely I then longed to lie down beside her, to gaze till death should gather me to the same repose.

EX-QUEEN

But death does not come at the bidding of the miserable. "She is so beautiful and plaid, even in death. There at least I may have her undisturbed. How did I treat her? Wounding her gentle heart with savage coldness. Does she forgive me now? Had I during her life once consulted her gentle wishes, I should not feel thus."

VERNEY

Poor mistaken woman! She cherished the idea, that a word, a look of reconciliation would repay long years of severity. Now that the time was gone for the exercise of such power, she fell at once upon the thorny truth, that love and life were the true emperors of our mortal state.

EX-QUEEN

"If our beloved angel sees us now, it will delight her to find that I do you even tardy justice. Lionel Verney, my son, you were worthy of her; and from my heart I am glad that you won her away from me. Pardon the many wrongs I have done you."

LIONEL

“Shall we look on her again?”

EX-QUEEN

“I cannot, and I pray neither do you. We need not torture ourselves by gazing on the soulless body, while her living spirit is buried quick in our hearts, that sleeping or waking she must ever be present to us.”

END OF SCENE

### SCENE III

ADRIAN

“Yet let us go! Farewell to the tombs of those we loved! We must live elsewhere.”

(The COMPANY congregates behind VERNEY.)

VERNEY

We resolved without delay, to commence our journey to Switzerland. On mustering our company, we found them to consist of fifteen hundred souls. I went first, Adrian last. His mother, with Clara remained also with him. Thus, our order being determined, we departed. To reach Switzerland, to plunge into rivers of snow, and to dwell in caves of ice, became the mad desire of all. As we never deserted any of the sick, until their death permitted us to commit their remains to the shelter of a grave, our journey was long, while every day a frightful gap was made in our troop – they died by tens, by fifties, by hundreds. No mercy was shown by death; we ceased to expect it, and every day welcomed the sun with the feeling that we might never see it rise again.

LIONEL

Will not the reader tire, if I should minutely describe our long-drawn journey?

VERNEY

Patience, oh reader! Whoever thou art? Lend thy attention to the tale, and learn the deeds and sufferings of thy predecessors.

EX-QUEEN

“I am afraid. Do you not perceive death in my face? It is strange; I ought to have expected this, and yet I confess it has taken me unawares. I never clung to life, or enjoyed it, till these last months, while among those I senselessly deserted: and it is hard to be snatched immediately away.” (The EX-QUEEN exits.)

VERNEY

The venerable lady was the last tie binding us to the ancient state of things. The crown of England had pressed her brow; the memory of my father and his misfortunes, the vain struggles of the late king, the images of Raymond, Evadne, and Perdita, who had lived in the world's prime, were brought vividly before us.

(RAYMOND, PERDITA, IDRIS, ALFRED and EVADNE enter behind the troop. ADRIAN breaks for the company.)

GHOSTS

Through the flesh that wastes away  
Beneath the parching sun, the whitening bones  
Start forth, and moulder in the sable dust.

ADRIAN

What are we, the inhabitants of this globe? While our minds embrace infinity, the visible mechanism of our being is subject to mere accident. Day by day we are forced to believe this. In the face of all this we call ourselves lords of creation, masters of life and death, and we allege in excuse of this arrogance, that though the individual is destroyed, man continues forever.

VERNEY

A man died of the plague last night. (RAYMOND falls.)

ADRIAN

Again and again will the tragedy be acted; again I must hear the groans of the dying, the wailing of the survivors. Why am I reserved for this? Why am I not struck to earth among the first?

VERNEY

A man died of the plague last night. (PERDITA and EVADNE fall.)

ADRIAN

Did God create man, merely in the end to become dead earth? Were our proud dreams thus to fade? Once man was a favorite of the Creator, 'God had made him a little lower than the angels, and had crowned him with glory and honor. God make him to have dominion over the works of his hands, and put all things under his feet.'

VERNEY

A man died of the plague last night. (IDRIS falls, and ALFRED cuddles next to her.)

ADRIAN

Look at him. I see plague! She has entwined herself with his being, and blinds his heaven-seeking eyes. Lie down, O man, on the flower-strewn earth; give up all claim of your inheritance, all you can ever possess of it is the small cell, which the dead require.

LIONEL

"We must go. We can quicken our march."

(The company, except for LIONEL, VERNEY, ADRIAN and CLARA, is a mass of corpses littering the stage. They remain dead until the end of the play.)

ADRIAN

A man died of the plague last night. Mother of the world! If my human mind cannot acknowledge that all that is, is right; yet since what is, must be, I will sit amidst the ruins and smile.

LIONEL

O, what mockery is this! Surely death is not death, and humanity is not extinct, but merely passed into other shape. Death is a vast portal, a high road to life: Let us hasten to pass; let us exist no more in this living death, but die that we may live!

ADRIAN

Pardon me, but I will no longer complain. Now I am myself again, or rather I am better than myself. I am alive again. For a few months, yet for a few months more, let not, O God, my heart fail, or my courage be bowed down. I have believed it to be my destiny to guide and rule the last of the race of man, till death; and to this destiny I submit.

VERNEY

A man died of the plague last night.

END OF SCENE

#### SCENE IV

(‘Overture: Die Vorstellung des Chaos’ from Hayden’s DIE SCHOPFUNG [THE CREATION] is played.)

VERNEY

We had accomplished the worst part of our journey, and Switzerland was near at hand – reader, there were just eighty of us in number. The last events that marked our progress were so full of strange horror and gloomy misery that I dare not pause too long in the narration. Sometimes realities took ghostly shapes.

(The WHITE GOBLIN appears dancing.)

LIONEL

Once, at the dusk of the evening, we saw a figure all in white, flourishing about the road, leaping to an astonishing height in the air, then turning several times successively. Now it leapt right up in the air, now sheer over a high hedge, and then springing up, as a last effort, it became almost invisible through the dusky night.

(The BLACK SPECTRE appears.)

ADRIAN

At another time we were haunted for several days by an apparition, the Black Spectre. Sometimes at the dead of night, when his coal black steed, his mourning dress, and plume of black feathers, had a majestic appearance, we heard the Black Spectre galloping through the town. When he was heard, the dying knew that their last hour had come.

LIONEL

Our goblin now perceived us; he approached and made a low bow.

WHITE GOBLIN

The lonely spectre was an opera-dancer. In access of delirium he had fancied himself on the stage, and eagerly accepted the last human applause.

(The WHITE GOBLIN exits.)

ADRIAN

One day at noon, we saw a dark mass on the road before us, and, beheld the Black Spectre fallen from his horse.

BLACK SPECTRE

He was a French noble, who, had wandered from town to town, seeking some survivor for a companion. When he discovered our troop, fear of contagion conquered his love for society; so he accompanied us in the spectral guise, till pestilence gathered him to a larger congregation.

(The BLACK SPECTRE exits.)

LIONEL

What was this, but the action of diseased imaginations?

VERNEY

At length the plague, slow-footed, but sure in her noiseless advance, destroyed the illusion.

END OF SCENE

SCENE V

ADRIAN

All Hail! To some new vision.

VERNEY

We had now reached Switzerland, so long the final mark and aim of our exertions.

ADRIAN & CLARA & LIONEL

“God reveals his heaven to us; we may die blessed.”

VERNEY

So we, a simple triad on empty earth, were multiplied to each other, till we became all in all. Behold, how my streaming eyes blot this senseless paper.

LIONEL

Now – soft awhile – have I arrived so near the end?

VERNEY

Yes! It is all over now – a step or two over those new made graves, and the wearisome way is done.

LIONEL

Can I accomplish my task? Can I streak my paper with words capacious of the conclusion? And who will read them?

ADRIAN

What would become of us?

VERNEY

Beware, tender offspring of the re-born world – beware! Let not day look on these lines, lest garish day waste, turn pale, and die. Seek a cypress grove. Seek some cave, deep in earth's entrails, where no light will penetrate, save that, which struggles, red and flickering.

CLARA

What would become of us?

VERNEY

There is a painful confusion in my brain, which refuses to delineate distinctly succeeding events.

(LIONEL takes the manuscript from VERNEY and flips to a page at the end.)

LIONEL

(Reading) With Adrian's earnest desire, we departed on our pilgrimage towards Rome.

ADRIAN

"That land. Tinged with the last glories of the day, is Greece."

CLARA

Greece? She reminded us that we had promised to take her once again to Greece, to the tomb of her parents.

ADRIAN

Why go to Rome? What should we do at Rome? We might take one of the many vessels to be found here, embark in it, and steer right for Albania.

CLARA

When winds that move not its calm surface, sweep  
The azure sea, I love the land no more;  
The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep  
Tempt my unquiet mind –

VERNEY

But, when the roar  
Of ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam  
Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst –

(LIONEL, ADRIAN, and CLARA now stand in front of  
THEODORE GERICULT, The Raft of the "Medusa".)

LIONEL

Adrian sat at the helm; I attended to the rigging, the breeze right aft filled our swelling canvas, and we ran before it over the untroubled deep. Lying in the boat, my face turned up to the sky, I thought I saw on its blue white, marbled streaks, so slight, so immaterial –

VERNEY

They are there – and now, it is a mere imagination.

LIONEL

Was there such a thing as death in the world?

VERNEY

Arise, black Melancholy! Bring with thee murky fogs from hell, which may drink up the day. Do this, sad visage power, while I write, while eyes read these pages.

LIONEL

A sudden fear stung me while I gazed. A dark line of ripples appeared to the east, gaining rapidly on us; and our boat lurched.

VERNEY

Arise, black Melancholy!

LIONEL

- swift as speech, the web of the storm thickened overhead, the dark sea was strewn with foam, and our skiff rose and fell in its increasing furrows.

VERNEY

Arise!

LIONEL

Great God! And we alone – we three –

ADRIAN

Alone –

CLARA

Alone –

LIONEL

Sole dwellers on the sea and on the earth, we three must perish!

ADRIAN

“Yet they shall be saved! Do you fear, sweet girl? O, do not fear, we shall soon be on shore!”

CLARA

“Why should I fear? Neither sea nor storm can harm us, if mighty destiny does not permit. And then the stinging fear of surviving either of you, is not here – one death will clasp us undivided.”

LIONEL

What to do, we knew not – the breakers here, there, everywhere, encompassed us – they roared, and dashed, and flung their hated spray in our faces.

ADRIAN

Adrian exclaimed that the rudder was gone – “we are lost. Save yourselves – O save yourselves!”

LIONEL

One scream I heard – one cry that we were gone; I found myself in the waters; darkness was around.

END OF SCENE

## FINAL SCENE

(Lights reveal VERNEY standing over LIONEL.)

VERNEY

I remembered the ancient fable, in which human beings are described as dissolving away through weeping into ever-gushing fountains. Ah! That so it were; and then my destiny would be in some sort akin to the watery death of Adrian and Clara. I awoke for the first time in the dead world – I awoke alone.

LIONEL

I ran to the water's edge, calling the beloved names!

VERNEY

Ocean drank in, and absorbed my feeble voice.

LIONEL

I accused earth and sky – and the Almighty power that misdirected it. It cannot be that I shall never behold a fellow being more! - never! - never! - never! – not in the course of years! Will day follow day endlessly thus? – No! A God rules the world. Certainly, I shall find this thought a horrible vision – a maddening dream. Away! Let me fly from the ocean-grave.

VERNEY

The tide of thought and feeling rolls on forever the same, though the banks, which govern its course, and the reflection in the wave vary. I wandered – now looking forward on the dread blank before me; shuddering to make an onward step.

LIONEL

I would continue to journey on towards Rome. I would write up in a part of each town, with white paint, in three different languages, that 'Verney, the last of the race, had taken up his abode in Rome. Friend, come! I wait for thee! I counted the days, and bore with me a peeled willow-wand, on which, I had notched the days that had elapsed since my wreck. Twenty-five were already traced – twenty-five long, weary days, succeeded by dark and lonesome nights, had mingled with foregone years, and had become a part of the past – the never to be recalled – a real, undeniable portion of my life – twenty-five long, long days.

(VERNEY takes the wand.)

VERNEY

Why this was not a month! Why talk of days, or weeks, or months. I must grasp years in my imagination, if I would truly picture the future to myself – three, five, ten, twenty, fifty anniversaries of that fatal epoch might elapse.

LIONEL

Can it be? Will it be?

VERNEY

(Breaking the wand.) Yes, this is the earth; there is no change – no ruin – no rent; she continues to wheel round and round, with alternate night and day, through the sky, though man is not her inhabitant.

LIONEL

I entered Eternal Rome by the Porta del Popolo, and saluted with awe its time-honored space. I repeated to myself, I am in Rome! I embraced the vast columns of the temple of Jupiter Stator, and tried to lose the sense of present desertion, by recalling to the haunted cell of my brain vivid memories of times gone by. I was long wrapped by such ideas;

VERNEY

but the soul wearies of a pauseless flight; and suddenly it fell ten thousand fathoms deep, into the abyss of the present – into self-knowledge. I roused myself – I cast off my waking dreams;

LIONEL

and I, who just now could almost hear the shouts of the Roman throng, now beheld the desert ruins of Rome sleeping under its own blue sky. I was alone in the Forum; alone in Rome; alone in the world. Would not one living man – one companion in my weary solitude, be worth all the glory and remembered power of this time-honored city?

VERNEY

I entered one of the palaces, and opened the door of a magnificent saloon. I started – I looked again with renewed wonder.

VERNEY & LIONEL

What wild-looking unkempt, half-naked savage was that before? I stretched out my hand, and it touched none whose sensations were responsive to mine.

VERNEY

I perceived that it was only myself whom I beheld in a large mirror at the end of the hall.

LIONEL

I now found the hardships and lawlessness of my youth turn to account.

VERNEY & LIONEL

I was ‘as uncouth a savage, as the wolf-bred founder of old Rome.’

LIONEL

I passed long hours in various galleries. I haunted the Vatican, and stood surrounded by marble forms of divine beauty. If those illustrious artists had in truth chiseled these forms, how many passing generations had their giant proportions outlived! And now they

were viewed by the last of the species they were sculptured to represent and deify. Often, half in better mockery, half in self-delusion; I clasped their icy proportions, and pressed the unconvincing marble.

VERNEY

I had shrunk into insignificance in my own eyes.

LIONEL

I endeavored to read, to conceal me from myself, and immerse myself in the subject traced on the pages before me.

VERNEY

Ah! While I streak this paper with tale of what my so named occupations were – while I shape the skeleton of my days.

LIONEL

I will write a book, I cried –

VERNEY

For whom to read? – To whom to dedicate?

LIONEL

I will write and leave in this most ancient city, a monument of the existence of Verney, the Last Man.

VERNEY

And then with silly flourish I wrote,

LIONEL

DEDICATION  
TO THE ILLUSTRIOUS DEAD.  
SHADOWS, ARISE, AND READ YOUR FALL!  
BEHOLD THE HISTORY OF THE LAST MAN

(The COMPANY stands.)

VERNEY

At first, I thought only to speak of plague, of death, and last of desertion; but I lingered fondly on my early years, and recorded with sacred zeal the virtues of my companions. They have been with me during the fulfillment of my task. I have brought it to an end.

(The COMPANY including LIONEL exits the stage. VERNEY remains alone. He closes the manuscript.)

VERNEY

I lift my eyes from my paper – again they are lost to me. Again, I feel that I am alone. No one had entered Rome. None will ever come. On that day I ascended St. Peter's, and carved on its topmost stone the aera 2100, last year of the world!

(VERNEY descends the mountain of books.)

VERNEY

A solitary being is by instinct a wanderer, and that I would become. I had been a fool to remain in Rome all this time. But it was still possible, that, could I visit the whole extent of earth, I should find in some part a survivor. Methought the seaside was the most probable retreat to be chosen. They would journey on, like me, in search of a partner for their solitude, till the watery barrier stopped their further progress. To that water – cause of my woes, I would betake myself.

(SAMUEL BARBER, 'Adagio For Strings' is played.)

VERNEY

Peril will now be mine' and I hail her as a friend – death will perpetually cross my path, and I will meet him as a benefactor; hardship, inclement weather, and dangerous tempests will be my sworn mates. Ye spirits of storm, receive me! Ye powers of destruction, open wide your arms, and clasp me forever! So that after long endurance I may reap my reward, and again feel my heart beat near the heart of another like me.

(LIONEL enters and joins VERNEY.)

LIONEL

These are wild dreams. Yet since, now a week ago, they have ruled my imagination.

VERNEY

I have chosen my boat, and laid in my scant store. I form no expectation of alteration for the better; but the monotonous present is intolerable to me.

+LIONEL

Neither hope nor joy, are my pilots - restless despair and fierce desire of change lead me on.

+RAYMOND

I long to grapple with danger, to be excited by fear,

+PERDITA

To have some task, however slight or voluntary, for each day's fulfillment.

+ADRIAN

I shall witness all the variety of appearance, that the elements can assume –

I shall read fair augury in the rainbow –  
+IDRIS

Menace in the cloud -  
+EX-QUEEN

Some lesson or record dear to my heart in everything.  
+EVADNE

Thus around the shores of deserted earth,  
+RYLAND

While the sun is high,  
+CLARA

And the moon waxes or wanes, angels, the spirits of the dead, and the ever-open eye of  
the Supreme, will behold the tiny bark, freighted with Verney –  
+ALFRED

The LAST MAN.  
VERNEY

END OF SCENE  
END OF VOLUME III  
END OF PLAY