The Elephant Man was produced on Broadway at The Booth Theatre, on April 22, 1979, with the following cast:

**FREDERICK TREVES**
Belgian Policeman

**CARR GOMM**
Conductor

**ROSS**
Bishop Walsham How

**JOHN MERRICK**
Pinhead Manager
London Policeman
Will
Earl
Lord John

**PINHEAD**
Miss Sandwich
Countess
Princess Alexandra
Mrs. Kendal
Pinhead
Orderly
Cellist

Kevin Conway
Richard Clarke
L. M. Hobson
Philip Anglim
John Neville-Andrews

**CHARACTERS**

**FREDERICK TREVES**, a surgeon and teacher

**CARR GOMM**, administrator of the London Hospital

**ROSS**, Manager of the Elephant Man

**JOHN MERRICK**, the Elephant Man

Three Pinheads, three women freaks whose heads are pointed

Belgian Policeman

London Policeman

**MAN**, at a fairground in Brussels

Conductor, of Ostend-London boat train

**BISHOP WALSHAM HOW**

**PORTER**, at the London Hospital

**SNORE**, also a porter

**MRS. KENDAL**, an actress

**DUCHESS**

Countess

**PRINCESS ALEXANDRA**

**LORD JOHN**

**NURSE, MISS SANDWICH**

This production was directed by Jack Hofsiss; set by David Jenkins; costumes by Julie Weiss; lighting by Beverly Emmons; produced by Richmond Crinkley, Elizabeth I. McCann, and Nelle Nugent; Ray Larsen and Ted Snowden, associate producers.
SCENE I

HE WILL HAVE 100 GUINEA FEES BEFORE HE'S FORTY

The London Hospital, Whitechapel Rd. Enter GOMM, enter TREVES.

TREVES: Mr. Carr Gomm? Frederick Treves. Your new lecturer in anatomy.

GOMM: Age thirty-one. Books on Sclerema and Applied Surgical Anatomy—I'm happy to see you rising, Mr. Treves. I like to see merit credited and your industry, accomplishment, and skill all do you credit. Ignore the squalor of Whitechapel, the general dinginess, neglect and poverty without, and you will find a continual medical richness in the London Hospital. We study and treat the widest range of diseases and disorders, and are certainly the greatest institution of our kind in the world. The Empire provides unparalleled opportunities for our studies, as places cruel to life are the most revealing scientifically. Add to our reputation by going further, and that'll satisfy. You've bought a house?

TREVES: On Wimpole Street.

GOMM: Good. Keep at it, Treves. You'll have an FRS and 100 guinea fees before you're forty. You'll find it is an excellent consolation prize.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

TREVES: Consolation? I don't know what you mean.

COMM: I know you don't. You will. (Exits.)

TREVES: A happy childhood in Dorset.
A scientist in an age of science.
In an English age, an Englishman. A teacher and a
doctor at the London. Two books published by my thirty-
first year. A house. A wife who loves me, and my god,
100 guinea fees before I'm forty.
Consolation for what?
As of the year AD 1884, I, Freddie Treves, have excess-
sive blessings. Or so it seems to me.

Blackout.

SCENE II

ART IS AS NOTHING TO NATURE

Whitechapel Rd. A storefront. A large advertisement of a
creature with an elephant's head. ROSS, his manager.

ROSS: Tuppence only, step in and see. This side of the grave,
John Merrick has no hope nor expectation of relief. In
every sense his situation is desperate. His physical agony
is exceeded only by his mental anguish, a despised crea-
ture without consolation. Tuppence only, step in and see.
To live with his physical hideousness, incapacitating
deformities and unremitting pain is trial enough, but to
be exposed to the cruelly lacerating expressions of horror
and disgust by all who behold him—is even more difficult
to bear. Tuppence only, step in and see! For in order to
survive, Merrick forces himself to suffer these humilia-
tions, I repeat, humiliations, in order to survive, thus he
exposes himself to crowds who pay to gape and yawp at
this freak of nature, the Elephant Man.

Enter TREVES who looks at advertisement.

ROSS: See Mother Nature uncorseted and in malignant rage!
Tuppence.

TREVES: This sign's absurd. Half-elephant, half-man is not
possible. Is he foreign?

ROSS: Right, from Leicester. But nothing to fear.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

TREVES: I'm at the London across the road. I would be curious
to see him if there is some genuine disorder. If he is a
mass of paper-mâché and paint however—

ROSS: Then pay me nothing. Enter, sir. Merrick, stand up. Ya
bloody donkey, up, up.

_They go in, then emerge. TREVES pays._

TREVES: I must examine him further at the hospital. Here is
my card. I'm Treves. I will have a cab pick him up and
return him. My card will gain him admittance.

ROSS: Five bob he's yours for the day.

TREVES: I wish to examine him in the interests of science, you
see.

ROSS: Sir, I'm Ross. I look out for him, get him his living.
Found him in Leicester workhouse. His own ma put him
there age of three. Couldn't bear the sight, well you can
see why. We—he and I—are in business. He is our capi-
tal, see. Go to a bank. Go anywhere. Want to borrow capi-
tal, you pay interest. Scientists even. He's good value
though. You won't find another like him.

TREVES: Fair enough. (_He pays._)

ROSS: Right. Out here, Merrick. Ya bloody donkey, out!

_Lights fade out._

SCENE III

WHO HAS SEEN THE LIKE
OF THIS?

TREVES lectures. MERRICK contorts himself to approximate
projected slides of the real Merrick.

TREVES: The most striking feature about him was his enor-
mous head. Its circumference was about that of a man's
waist. From the brow there projected a huge bony mass
like a loaf, while from the back of his head hung a bag of
spongy fungous-looking skin, the surface of which was
comparable to brown cauliflower. On the top of the skull
were a few long lank hairs. The osseous growth on the
forehead, at this stage about the size of a tangerine, al-
most occluded one eye. From the upper jaw there pro-
jected another mass of bone. It protruded from the mouth
like a pink stump, turning the upper lip inside out, and
making the mouth a wide slobbering aperture. The nose
was merely a lump of flesh, only recognizable as a nose
from its position. The deformities rendered the face ut-
terly incapable of the expression of any emotion whatso-
ever. The back was horrible because from it hung, as far
down as the middle of the thigh, huge sacklike masses of
flesh covered by the same loathsome cauliflower stain.
The right arm was of enormous size and shapeless. It
suggested but was not elephantiasis, and was overgrown
also with pendant masses of the same cauliflower-like
THE ELEPHANT MAN

skin. The right hand was large and clumsy—a fin or paddle rather than a hand. No distinction existed between the palm and back, the thumb was 'like a radish, the fingers like thick tuberous roots. As a limb it was useless. The other arm was remarkable by contrast. It was not only normal, but was moreover a delicately shaped limb covered with fine skin and provided with a beautiful hand which any woman might have envied. From the chest hung a bag of the same repulsive flesh. It was like a dewlap suspended from the neck of a lizard. The lower limbs had the characters of the deformed arm. They were unwieldy, dropsical-looking, and grossly misshapen. There arose from the fungous skin growths a very sickening stench which was hard to tolerate. To add a further burden to his trouble, the wretched man when a boy developed hip disease which left him permanently lame, so that he could only walk with a stick. (To MERRICK) Please. (MERRICK walks.) He was thus denied all means of escape from his tormentors.

VOICE: Mr. Treves, you have shown a profound and unknown disorder to us. You have said when he leaves here it is for his exhibition again. I do not think it ought to be permitted. It is a disgrace. It is a pity and a disgrace. It is an indecency in fact. It may be a danger in ways we do not know. Something ought to be done about it.

TREVES: I am a doctor. What would you have me do?

VOICE: Well. I know what to do. I know.

Silence. A policeman enters as lights fade out.

SCENE IV

THIS INDECENCY MAY NOT CONTINUE

Music. A fair. PINHEADS huddling together, holding a portrait of Leopold, King of the Congo. Enter MAN.

MAN: Now, my pinheaded darlings, your attention please. Every freak in Brussels Fair is doing something to celebrate Leopold's fifth year as King of the Congo. Him. Our King. Our Empire. (They begin reciting.) No, don't recite yet, you morons. I'll say when. And when you do, get it right. You don't, it's back to the asylum. Know what that means, don't you? They'll cut your heads. They'll spoon out your little brains, replace 'em in the dachshund they were nicked from. Cut you. Yeah. Be back with customers. Come see the Queens of the Congo! (Exits.)

Enter MERRICK, ROSS.

MERRICK: COSMOS? COSMOS?

ROSS: Congo. Land of darkness. Hohol (Sees PIN.) Look at them, lad. It's freer on the continent. Loads of indecency here, no one minds. You won't get coppers sent round to roust you out like London. Reckon in Brussels here's our fortune. You have a little tête-à-tête with this lot while I see the coppers about our license to exhibit. Be right back. (Exits.)
THE ELEPHANT MAN

MERRICK: I come from England.

FINS: Allo!

MERRICK: At home they chased us. Out of London. Police. Someone complained. They beat me. You have no trouble? No?

FINS: Allo! Allo!

MERRICK: Hello. In Belgium we make money. I look forward to it. Happiness, I mean. You pay your police? How is it done?

FINS: Allo! Allo!


FINS: Allo! Allo!

MERRICK: Little vocabulary problem, eh? Poor things. Looks like they put your noses to the grindstone and forgot to take them away.

MAN enters.

MAN: They’re coming.

(People enter to see the girls’ act.)

Now.

FINS (dancing and singing):

We are the Queens of the Congo,
The Beautiful Belgian Empire
Our niggers are bigger
Our miners are finer
Empire, Empire, Congo and power
Civilizuzu’s finest hour
Admire, perspire, desire, acquire
Or we’ll set you on fire!

BERNARD POMEGRANCE

MAN: You cretins! Sorry, they’re not ready yet. Out please.

(People exit.)

Get those words right, girls! Or you know what.

MAN exits. FINS weep.

MERRICK: Don’t cry. You sang nicely. Don’t cry. There there.

Enter ROSS in grip of two POLICEMEN.

ROSS: I was promised a permit. I lined a tour up on that!

POLICEMEN: This is a brutal, indecent, and immoral display. It is a public indecency, and it is forbidden here.

ROSS: What about them with their perfect cone heads?

POLICEMEN: They are ours.

ROSS: Competition’s good for business. Where’s your spirit of competition?

POLICEMEN: Right here. (Smacks MERRICK.)

ROSS: Don’t do that, you’ll kill him!

POLICEMEN: Be better off dead. Indecent bastard.

MERRICK: Don’t cry girls. Doesn’t hurt.

FINS: Indecent, indecent, indecent, indecent!!

POLICEMEN escort MERRICK and ROSS out, i.e., forward.

Blackout except spot on MERRICK and ROSS.

MERRICK: Ostend will always mean bad memories. Won’t it, Ross?

ROSS: I’ve decided. I’m sending you back, lad. You’re a flop. No, you’re a liability. You ain’t the moneymaker I figured, so that’s it.

MERRICK: Alone?

ROSS: Here’s a few bob, have a nosh. I’m keeping the rest. For
THE ELEPHANT MAN


Enter CONDUCTOR.

CONDUCTOR: This the one?

ROSS: Just see him to Liverpool St. Station safe, will you?

Here's for your trouble.

MERRICK: Robbed.

CONDUCTOR: What's he say?

ROSS: Just Makes sounds. Fella's an imbecile.

MERRICK: Robbed.

ROSS: Bon voyage, Johnny. His name is Johnny. He knows his name, that's all, though.


MERRICK: Robbed! Robbed!

Fadeout on struggle.

SCENE V

POLICE SIDE WITH IMBECILE AGAINST THE CROWD

Darkness. Uproar, shouts.

VOICE: Liverpool St. Station!

Enter MERRICK, CONDUCTOR, POLICEMAN.

POLICEMAN: We're safe in here. I barred the door.

CONDUCTOR: They wanted to rip him to pieces. I've never seen anything like it. It was like being Gordon at bleedin' Khartoum.

POLICEMAN: Got somewhere to go in London, lad? Can't stay here.

CONDUCTOR: He's an imbecile. He don't understand. Search him.

POLICEMAN: Got any money?

MERRICK: Robbed.

POLICEMAN: What's that?

CONDUCTOR: He just makes sounds. Frightened sounds is all he makes. Go through his coat.

MERRICK: Jesus.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

Policeman: Don’t let me go through your coat, I’ll turn you over to that lot! Oh, I was joking, don’t upset yourself.

Merrick: Joke? Joke?

Policeman: Sure, croak, croak, croak, croak.

Merrick: Je-sus.

Policeman: Got a card here. You Johnny Merrick? What’s this old card here, Johnny? Someone give you a card?

Conductor: What’s it say?

Policeman: Says Mr. Frederick Treves, Lecturer in Anatomy, the London Hospital.

Conductor: I’ll go see if I can find him, it’s not far.

(Exits.)

Policeman: What’s he do, lecture you on your anatomy? People who think right don’t look like that then, do they? Yeah, glung glung, glung, glung.

Merrick: Jesus. Jesus.

Policeman: Sure, Treves, Treves, Treves, Treves, Treves.

Blackout, then lights go up as Conductor leads Treves in.

Treves: What is going on here? Look at that mob, have you no sense of decency. I am Frederick Treves. This is my card.

Policeman: This poor wretch here had it. Arrived from Ostend.

Treves: Good Lord, Merrick? John Merrick? What has happened to you?

Merrick: Help me!

Fadeout.

SCENE VI

EVEN ON THE NIGER AND CEYLON, NOT THIS

The London Hospital. Merrick in bathtub. Treves outside. Enter Miss Sandwich.

Treves: You are? Miss Sandwich?

Sandwich: Sandwich. Yes.

Treves: You have had experience in missionary hospitals in the Niger.

Sandwich: And Ceylon.

Treves: I may assume you've seen—

Sandwich: The tropics. Oh those diseases. The many and the awful scourges our Lord sends, yes, sir.

Treves: I need the help of an experienced nurse, you see.

Sandwich: Someone to bring him food, take care of the room. Yes, I understand. But it is somehow difficult.

Treves: Well, I have been let down so far. He really is—that is, the regular sisters—well, it is not part of their job and they will not do it. Be ordinarily kind to Mr. Merrick. Without—well—panicking. He is quite beyond ugly. You understand that? His appearance has terrified them.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

SANDBICH: The photographs show a terrible disease.

TREVES: It is a disorder, not a disease; it is in no way contagious though we don’t in fact know what it is. I have found however that there is a deep superstition in those I’ve tried, they actually believe he somehow brought it on himself; this thing, and of course it is not that at all.

SANDBICH: I am not one who believes it is ourselves who attain grace or bring chastisement to us, sir.

TREVES: Miss Sandwich, I am hoping not.

SANDBICH: Let me put your mind to rest. Care for lepers in the East, and you have cared, Mr. Treves. In Africa, I have seen dreadful scourges quite unknown to our more civilized climes. What at home could be worse than a miserable and afflicted rotting black?

TREVES: I imagine.

SANDBICH: Appearances do not daunt me.

TREVES: It is really that that has sent me outside the confines of the London seeking help.

SANDBICH: “I look unto the hills whence cometh my help.” I understand: I think I will be satisfactory.

Enter PORTER with tray.

PORTER: His lunch. (Exits.)

TREVES: Perhaps you would be so kind as to accompany me this time. I will introduce you.

SANDBICH: Allow me to carry the tray.

TREVES: I will this time. You are ready.

SANDBICH: I am.

TREVES: He is bathing to be rid of his odor.

(They enter to MERRICK.)
SCENE VII
THE ENGLISH PUBLIC WILL PAY FOR HIM TO BE LIKE US


BISHOP: With what fortitude he bears his cross! It is remarkable. He has made the acquaintance of religion and knows sections of the Bible by heart. Once I'd grasped his speech, it became clear he'd certainly had religious instruction at one time.

TREVES: I believe it was in the workhouse, Dr. How.

BISHOP: They are awfully good about that sometimes. The psalms he loves, and the book of Job perplexes him, he says, for he cannot see that a just God must cause suffering, as he puts it, merely then to be merciful. Yet that Christ will save him he does not doubt, so he is not resentful.

Enter Comm.

COMM: Christ had better; he damned if we can.

BISHOP: Ahem. In any case Dr. Treves, he has a religious nature, further instruction would uplift him and I'd be pleased to provide it. I plan to speak of him from the pulpit this week.

COMM: I see our visiting bather has flushed the busy Bishop How from his cruciform lair.

BISHOP: Speak with Merrick, sir. I have spoken to him of Mercy and Justice. There's a true Christian in the rough.

COMM: This makes my news seem banal, yet yes: Frederick, the response to my letter to the Times about Merrick has been staggering. The English public has been so generous that Merrick may be supported for life without a penny spent from Hospital funds.

TREVES: But that is excellent.

BISHOP: God bless the English public.

COMM: Especially for not dismembering him at Liverpool St. Station. Freddie, the London's no home for incurables, this is quite irregular, but for you I permit it—though god knows what you'll do.

BISHOP: God does know, sir, and Darwin does not.

COMM: He'd better, sir; he deformed him.

BISHOP: I had apprehensions coming here. I find it most fortunate Merrick is in the hands of Dr. Treves, a Christian, sir.

COMM: Freddie is a good man and a brilliant doctor, and that is fortunate indeed.

TREVES: I couldn't have raised the funds though, Doctor.

BISHOP: Don't let me keep you longer from your duties, Mr. Treves. Yet, Mr. Comm, consider: is it science, sir, that motivates us when we transport English rule of law to India or Ireland? When good British churchmen leave hearth and home for missionary hardship in Africa, is it science that bears them away? Sir it is not. It is Christian duty. It is the obligation to bring our light and benefits to benighted man. That motivates us, even as it motivates
THE ELEPHANT MAN

Treves toward Merrick, sir, to bring salvation where none is. Gordon was a Christian, sir, and died at Khartoum for it. Not for science, sir.

COMM: You're telling me, not for science.

BISHOP: Mr. Treves, I'll visit Merrick weekly if I may.

TREVES: You will be welcome, sir, I am certain.

BISHOP: Then good day, sirs. (Exits.)

COMM: Well, Jesus my boy, now we have the money, what do you plan for Merrick?

TREVES: Normality as far as is possible.

COMM: So he will be like us? Ah. (Smiles.)

TREVES: Is something wrong, Mr. Gomm? With us?

Fadeout.

SCENE VIII

MERCY AND JUSTICE ELUDE OUR MINDS AND ACTIONS

MERRICK in bath. TREVES, COMM.

MERRICK: How long is as long as I like?

TREVES: You may stay for life. The funds exist.

MERRICK: Been reading this. About homes for the blind. Wouldn't mind going to one when I have to move.

TREVES: But you do not have to move; and you're not blind.

MERRICK: I would prefer it where no one stared at me.

COMM: No one will bother you here.

TREVES: Certainly not. I've given instructions.

PORTER and SNOKE peek in.

PORTER: What'd I tell you?

SNOKE: Gawd almighty. Oh. Mr. Treves. Mr. Gomm.

TREVES: You were told not to do this. I don't understand. You must not lurk about. Surely you have work.

PORTER: Yes, sir.

TREVES: Well, it is infuriating. When you are told a thing, you must listen. I won't have you gaping in on my patients. Kindly remember that.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

PORTER: Isn't a patient, sir, is he?
TREVES: Do not let me find you here again.
PORTER: Didn't know you were here, sir. We'll be off now.
COMM: No, no, Will. Mr. Treves was precisely saying no one
would intrude when you intruded.
TREVES: He is warned now. Merrick does not like it.
COMM: He was warned before. On what penalty, Will?
PORTER: That you'd sack me, sir.
COMM: You are sacked, Will. You, his friend, you work here?
SNIFF: Just started last week, sir.
COMM: Well, I hope the point is taken now.
PORTER: Mr. Comm—I ain't truly sacked, am I?
COMM: Will, yes. Truly sacked. You will never be more truly
sacked.
PORTER: It's not me. My wife ain't well. My sister has got to
take care of our kids, and of her. Well,
COMM: Think of them first next time.
PORTER: It ain't as if I interfered with his medicine.
COMM: That is exactly what it is. You may go.
PORTER: Just keeping him to look at in private. That's all.
Isn't it?
SNIFF and PORTER exit.
COMM: There are priorities, Frederick. The first is discipline.
Smooth is the passage to the tight ship's master. Merrick,
you are safe from prying now.
TREVES: Have we nothing to say, John?
MERRICK: If all that'd stared at me'd been sacked—there'd be
whole towns out of work.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

MERRICK: I have a home. This is my home. This is my home. I have a home. As long as I like?

TREVES: That is what home is.

MERRICK: That is what is home.

TREVES: If I abide by the rules, I will be happy.

MERRICK: Yes, sir.

TREVES: Don't be shy.

MERRICK: If I abide by the rules I will be happy.

TREVES: Very good. Why?

MERRICK: Why what?

TREVES: Will you be happy?

MERRICK: Because it is my home?

TREVES: No, no. Why do rules make you happy?

MERRICK: I don't know.

TREVES: Of course you do.

MERRICK: No, I really don't.

TREVES: Why does anything make you happy?

MERRICK: Like what? Like what?

TREVES: Don't be upset. Rules make us happy because they are for our own good.

MERRICK: Okay.

TREVES: Don't be shy, John. You can say it.

MERRICK: This is my home?

TREVES: No. About rules making us happy.

MERRICK: They make us happy because they are for our own good.

BERNARD POMERANCE

TREVES: Excellent. Now I am submitting a follow-up paper on you to the London Pathological Society. It would help if you told me what you recall about your first years, John. To fill in gaps.

MERRICK: To fill in gaps. The workhouse where they put me. They beat you there like a drum. Boom boom; scrape the floor white. Shine the pan, boom boom. It never ends. The floor is always dirty. The pan is always tarnished. There is nothing you can do about it. You are always attacked anyway. Boom boom. Boom boom. Boom boom. Will the children go to the workhouse?

TREVES: What children?

MERRICK: The children. The man he sacked.

TREVES: Of necessity Will will find other employment. You don't want crowds staring at you, do you?

MERRICK: No.

TREVES: In your own home you do no: have to have crowds staring at you. Or anyone. Do you? In your home?

MERRICK: No.

TREVES: Then Mr. Gomm was merciful. You yourself are proof. Is it not so? (Pause.) Well? Is it not so?

MERRICK: If your mercy is so cruel, what do you have for justice?

TREVES: I am sorry. It is just the way things are.

MERRICK: Boom boom. Boom boom. Boom boom.

Fadeout.
SCENE IX

MOST IMPORTANT ARE WOMEN

MERRICK asleep, head on knees. TREVES, MRS. KENDAL foreground.

TREVES: You have seen photographs of John Merrick, Mrs. Kendal. You are acquainted with his appearance.

MRS. KENDAL: He reminds me of an audience I played Cleopatra for in Brighton once. All huge grim head and grimace and utterly unable to clap.

TREVES: Well. My aim’s to lead him to as normal a life as possible. His terror of us all comes from having been held at arm’s length from society. I am determined that shall end. For example, he loves to meet people and converse. I am determined he shall. For example, he had never seen the inside of any normal home before. I had him to mine, and what a reward, Mrs. Kendal; his astonishment, his joy at the most ordinary things. Most critical I feel, however, are women. I will explain. They have always shown the greatest fear and loathing of him. While he adores them of course.

MRS. KENDAL: Ah. He is intelligent.

TREVES: I am convinced they are the key to retrieving him from his exclusion. Though, I must warn you, women are not quite real to him—more creatures of his imagination.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

TREVES: Medically speaking, ulm, you see the papillomatous extrusions which disfigure him, ulm, seem to correspond quite regularly to the osseous deformities, that is, excuse me, there is a link between the bone disorder and the skin growths, though for the life of me I have not discovered what it is or why it is, but in any case this—part—it would be therefore unlikely to be afflicted because, well, that is, well, there's no bone in it. None at all. I mean.

MRS. KENDAL: Well. Learn a little every day don't we?

TREVES: I am horribly embarrassed.

MRS. KENDAL: Are you? Then he must be lonely indeed.

Fadeout.

SCENE X

WHEN THE ILLUSION ENDS HE MUST KILL HIMSELF

MERRICK sketching. Enter TREVES, MRS. KENDAL.

TREVES: He is making sketches for a model of St. Phillip's church. He wants someday to make a model, you see. John, my boy, this is Mrs. Kendal. She would very much like to make your acquaintance.

MRS. KENDAL: Good morning Mr. Merrick.

TREVES: I will see to a few matters. I will be back soon. (Exits.)

MERRICK: I planned so many things to say. I forget them. You are so beautiful.

MRS. KENDAL: How charming, Mr. Merrick.

MERRICK: Well. Really that was what I planned to say. That I forgot what I planned to say. I couldn't think of anything else I was so excited.

MRS. KENDAL: Real charm is always planned, don't you think?

MERRICK: Well. I do not know why I look like this, Mrs. Kendal. My mother was so beautiful. She was knocked down by an elephant in a circus while she was pregnant. Something must have happened, don't you think?
THE ELEPHANT MAN

MRS. KENDAL: It may well have.

MERRICK: It may well have. But sometimes I think my head is so big because it is so full of dreams. Because it is. Do you know what happens when dreams cannot get out?

MRS. KENDAL: Why, no.

MERRICK: I don’t either. Something must. (Silence.) Well. You are a famous actress.

MRS. KENDAL: I am not unknown.

MERRICK: You must display yourself for your living then. Like I did.

MRS. KENDAL: That is not myself, Mr. Merrick. That is an illusion. This is myself.

MERRICK: This is myself too.

MRS. KENDAL: Frederick says you like to read. So: books.

MERRICK: I am reading Romeo and Juliet now.


MERRICK: I like love stories best too. If I had been Romeo, guess what.

MRS. KENDAL: What?

MERRICK: I would not have held the mirror to her breast.

MRS. KENDAL: You mean the scene where Juliet appears to be dead and he holds a mirror to her breath and sees—

MERRICK: Nothing. How does it feel when he kills himself because he just sees nothing?

MRS. KENDAL: Well. My experience as Juliet has been—particularly with an actor I will not name—that while I’m laying there dead dead dead, and he is lamenting excessively, I get to thinking that if this slab of ham does not

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part from the hamhock of his life toute suite, I am going to scream, pop off the tomb, and plunge a dagger into his scene-stealing heart. Roméo are very undependable.

MERRICK: Because he does not care for Juliet.

MRS. KENDAL: Not care?

MERRICK: Does he take her pulse? Does he get a doctor? Does he make sure? No. He kills himself. The illusion fools him because he does not care for her. He only cares about himself. If I had been Roméo, we would have got away.

MRS. KENDAL: But then there would be no play, Mr. Merrick.

MERRICK: If he did not love her, why should there be a play? Looking in a mirror and seeing nothing. That is not love. It was all an illusion. When the illusion ended he had to kill himself.

MRS. KENDAL: Why. That is extraordinary.

MERRICK: Before I spoke with people, I did not think of all these things because there was no one to bother to think them for. Now things just come out of my mouth which are true.

TREVES enters.

TREVES: You are famous, John. We are in the papers. Look. They have written up my report to the Pathological Society. Look—it is a kind of apotheosis for you.

MRS. KENDAL: Frederick, I feel Mr. Merrick would benefit by even more company than you provide; in fact by being acquainted with the best, and they with him. I shall make it my task if you’ll permit. As you know, I am a friend of nearly everyone, and I do pretty well as I please and what pleases me is this task, I think.

TREVES: By god, Mrs. Kendal, you are splendid.
THE ELEPHANT MAN

MRS. KENDAL: Mr. Merrick I must go now. I should like to return if I may. And so that we may without delay teach you about society, I would like to bring my good friend Dorothy Lady Neville. She would be most pleased if she could meet you. Let me tell her yes?

(MERRICK nods yes.)

Then until next time. I’m sure your church model will surprise us all. Mr. Merrick, it has been a very great pleasure to make your acquaintance.

TREVES: John. Your hand. She wishes to shake your hand.

MERRICK: Thank you for coming.

MRS. KENDAL: But it was my pleasure. Thank you. (Exits, accompanied by TREVES.)

TREVES: What a wonderful success. Do you know he’s never shook a woman’s hand before?

As lights fade MERRICK sobs soundlessly, uncontrollably.

SCENE XI

HE DOES IT WITH JUST ONE HAND

Music. MERRICK working on model of St. Phillip’s Church. Enter DUCHESS. At side TREVES ticks off a gift list.

MERRICK: Your grace.

DUCHESS: How nicely the model is coming along, Mr. Merrick. I’ve come to say Happy Christmas, and that I hope you will enjoy this ring and remember your friend by it.

MERRICK: Your grace, thank you.

DUCHESS: I am very pleased to have made your acquaintance. (Exits.)

Enter Countess.

COUNTESS: Please accept these silver-backed brushes and comb for Christmas, Mr. Merrick.

MERRICK: With many thanks, Countess.

COUNTESS: I am very pleased to have made your acquaintance. (Exits.)

Enter LORD JOHN.

LORD JOHN: Here’s the silver-topped walking stick, Merrick. Make you a regular Piccadilly exquisite. Keep up the good work. Self-help is the best help. Example to us all.
MERRICK: Thank you, Lord John.

LORD JOHN: Very pleased to have made your acquaintance.

(Exits.)

Enter TREVES and PRINCESS ALEXANDRA.

TREVES: Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra.

PRINCESS: The happiest of Christmases, Mr. Merrick.

TREVES: Her Royal Highness has brought you a signed photograph of herself.

MERRICK: I am honored, your Royal Highness. It is the treasure of my possessions. I have written to His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales to thank him for the pheasants and woodcocks he sent.

PRINCESS: You are a credit to Mr. Treves, Mr. Merrick. Mr. Treves, you are a credit to medicine, to England, and to Christendom. I am so very pleased to have made your acquaintance.

PRINCESS, TREVES exit. Enter MRS. KENDAL.

MRS. KENDAL: Good news, John. Bertie says we may use the Royal Box whenever I like. Mrs. Keppel says it gives a unique perspective. And for Christmas, ivory handled razors and toothbrush.

Enter TREVES.

TREVES: And a cigarette case, my boy, full of cigarettes!

MERRICK: Thank you. Very much.

MRS. KENDAL: Look Freddie, look. The model of St. Phillip’s.

TREVES: It is remarkable, I know.

MERRICK: And I do it with just one hand, they all say.

MRS. KENDAL: You are an artist, John Merrick, an artist.
SCENE XII

WHO DOES HE REMIND YOU OF?

TREVES, MRS. KENDAL.

TREVES: Why all those toilet articles, tell me? He is much too deformed to use any of them.

MRS. KENDAL: Props of course. To make himself. As I make me.

TREVES: You? You think of yourself.

MRS. KENDAL: Well. He is gentle, almost feminine. Cheerful, honest within limits, a serious artist in his way. He is almost like me.

Enter Bishop How.

BISHOP: He is religious and devout. He knows salvation must radiate to us or all is lost, which it's certainly not.

Enter Comm.

COMM: He seems practical, like me. He has seen enough of daily evil to be thankful for small goods that come his way. He knows what side his bread is buttered on, and counts his blessings for it. Like me.

Enter Duchess.

DUCHESS: I can speak with him of anything. For I know he is discreet. Like me.

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All exit except Treves.

TREVES: How odd. I think him curious, compassionate, concerned about the world, well, rather like myself. Freddie Treves, 1889 AD.

Enter Mrs. Kendal.

MRS. KENDAL: Of course he is rather odd. And hurt. And helpless not to show the struggling. And so am I.

Enter Comm.

COMM: He knows I use him to raise money for the London, I am certain. He understands I would be derelict if I didn't. He is wary of any promise, yet he fits in well. Like me.

Enter Bishop How.

BISHOP: I as a seminarian had many of the same doubts. Struggled as he does. And hope they may be overcome.

Enter Princess Alexandra.

PRINCESS: When my husband His Royal Highness Edward Prince of Wales asked Dr. Treves to be his personal surgeon, he said, "Dear Freddie, if you can put up with the Elephant bloke, you can surely put up with me."

All exit, except Treves. Enter Lord John.

LORD JOHN: See him out of fashion, Freddie. As he sees me. Social contacts critical. Oh—by the way—ignore the bloody papers; all lies. (Exits.)

TREVES: Merrick visibly worse than 88-87. That, as he rises higher in the consolations of society, he gets visibly more grotesque is proof definitive he is like me. Like his condition, which I make no sense of, I make no sense of mine.

Spot on Merrick placing another piece on St. Phillip's. Fadeout.
SCENE XIII

ANXIETIES OF THE SWAMP

MERRICK, in spot, strains to listen; TREVES, LORD JOHN outside.

TREVES: But the papers are saying you broke the contracts. They are saying you've lost the money.

LORD JOHN: Freddie, if I were such a scoundrel, how would I dare face investors like yourself. Broken contracts! I never considered them actual contracts—just preliminary things, get the old deal under way. An actual contract's something between gentlemen; and this attack on me shows they are no gentlemen. Now I'm only here to say the company remains a terribly attractive proposition. Don't you think? To recapitalize—if you could spare another—ah.

(Enter COMM.)

Mr. Comm. How good to see you. Just remarking how splendidly Merrick thrives here, thanks to you and Freddie.

COMM: Lord John. Allow me: I must take Frederick from you. Keep him at work. It's in his contract. Wouldn't want him breaking it. Sort of thing makes the world fly apart, isn't it?

LORD JOHN: Yes. Well. Of course, mmm.

COMM: Sorry to hear you're so pressed. Expect we'll see less of you around the London now?

LORD JOHN: Of course, I, actually—eh! Overdue actually. Appointment in the City. Freddie. Mr. Comm. (Exits.)

TREVES: He plain fooled me. He was kind to Merrick.

COMM: You have risen fast and easily, my boy. You've forgot how to protect yourself. Break now.

TREVES: It does not seem right somehow.

COMM: The man's a moral swamp. Is that not clear yet? Is he attractive? Deceit often is. Friendly? Swindlers can be. Another loan? Not another cent. It may be your money, Freddie; but I will not tolerate laboring like a navvy that the London should represent honest charitable and compassionate science, and have titled swindlers mucking up the pitch. He has succeeded in destroying himself so rabidly, you ought not doubt an instant it was his real aim all along. He broke the contract, gambled the money away, lied, and like an infant in his mess, gurgles and wants to do it again. Never mind details, don't want to know. Break and be glad. Don't hesitate. Today. One-man moral swamp. Don't be sucked in.

Enter MRS. KENDAL.

MRS. KENDAL: Have you seen the papers?

TREVES: Yes.

COMM: Yes, yes. A great pity. Freddie: today. (Exits.)

MRS. KENDAL: Freddie?

TREVES: He has used us. I shall be all right. Come.

MRS. KENDAL, TREVES enter to MERRICK.

John: I shall not be able to stay this visit. I must, well, unravel a few things. Nurse Ireland and Snork are—?
THE ELEPHANT MAN

MERRICK: Friendly and respectful, Frederick.

TREVES: I'll look in in a few days.

MERRICK: Did I do something wrong?

MRS. KENDAL: No.

TREVES: This is a hospital. Not a marketplace. Don't forget it, ever. Sorry. Not you. Me. (Exits.)

MRS. KENDAL: Well. Shall we weave today? Don't you think weaving might be fun? So many things are fun. Most men really can't enjoy them. Their loss, isn't it? I like little activities which engage me; there's something ancient in it, I don't know. Before all this. Would you like to try John?

MERRICK: Frederick said I may stay here for life.

MRS. KENDAL: And so you shall.

MERRICK: If he is in trouble?

MRS. KENDAL: Frederick is your protector, John.

MERRICK: If he is in trouble? (He picks up small photograph.)

MRS. KENDAL: Who is that? Ah, is it not your mother? She is pretty, isn't she?

MERRICK: Will Frederick keep his word with me, his contract, Mrs. Kendal? If he is in trouble.


MERRICK: And will you?

MRS. KENDAL: I? What? Will I?

MERRICK silent. Puts another piece on model. Fadeout.

SCENE XIV

ART IS PERMITTED BUT NATURE FORBIDDEN

Rain. MERRICK working, MRS. KENDAL.

MERRICK: The Prince has a mistress. (Silence.) The Irishman had one. Everyone seems to. Or a wife. Some have both. I have concluded I need a mistress. It is bad enough not to sleep like others.

MRS. KENDAL: Sitting up, you mean. Couldn't be very restful.

MERRICK: I have to. Too heavy to lay down. My head. But to sleep alone; that is worst of all.

MRS. KENDAL: The artist expresses his love through his works. That is civilization.

MERRICK: Are you very shocked?

MRS. KENDAL: Why should I be?

MERRICK: Others would be.

MRS. KENDAL: I am not others.

MERRICK: I suppose it is hopeless.

MRS. KENDAL: Nothing is hopeless. However it is unlikely.

MERRICK: I thought you might have a few ideas.
MRS. KENDAL: I can guess who has ideas here.

MERRICK: You don’t know something. I have never even seen a naked woman.

MRS. KENDAL: Surely in all the fairs you worked.

MERRICK: I mean a real woman.

MRS. KENDAL: Is one more real than another?

MERRICK: I mean like the ones in the theater, the opera.

MRS. KENDAL: Surely you can’t mean they are more real.


MRS. KENDAL: You mean someone like Princess Alexandra?

MERRICK: Not so old.

MRS. KENDAL: Ah. Like Dorothy.

MERRICK: She does not look happy. No.

MRS. KENDAL: Lady Ellen?

MERRICK: Too thin.

MRS. KENDAL: Then who?

MERRICK: Certain women. They have a kind of ripeness. They seem to stop at a perfect point.

MRS. KENDAL: My dear she doesn’t exist.

MERRICK: That is probably why I never saw her.

MRS. KENDAL: What would your friend Bishop How say of all this I wonder?

MERRICK: He says I should put these things out of my mind.

MRS. KENDAL: Is that the best he can suggest?

MERRICK: I put them out of my mind. They reappeared, snap.

MRS. KENDAL: What about Frederick?

MERRICK: He would be appalled if I told him.

MRS. KENDAL: I am flattered. Too little trust has maimed my life. But that is another story.

MERRICK: What a rain. Are we going to read this afternoon?

MRS. KENDAL: Yes. Some women are lucky to look well, that is all. It is a rather arbitrary gift; it has no really good use, though it has uses, I will say that. Anyway it does not signify very much.

MERRICK: To me it does.

MRS. KENDAL: Well. You are mistaken.

MERRICK: What are we going to read?

MRS. KENDAL: Trust is very important you know. I trust you.

MERRICK: Thank you very much. I have a book of Thomas Hardy’s here. He is a friend of Frederick’s. Shall we read that?

MRS. KENDAL: Turn around a moment. Don’t look.

MERRICK: Is this a game?

MRS. KENDAL: I would not call it a game. A surprise. (She begins undressing.)

MERRICK: What kind of a surprise?

MRS. KENDAL: I saw photographs of you. Before I met you. You didn’t know that, did you?

MERRICK: The ones from the first time, in ’84? No, I didn’t.

MRS. KENDAL: I felt it was—unjust. I don’t know why. I cannot say my sense of justice is my most highly developed characteristic. You may turn around again. Well. A little funny, isn’t it?
THE ELEPHANT MAN

MERRICK: It is the most beautiful sight I have seen. Ever.

MRS. KENDAL: If you tell anyone, I shall not see you again, we shall not read, we shall not talk, we shall do nothing. Wait. (Undoes her hair.) There. No illusions. Now. Well? What is there to say? "I am extremely pleased to have made your acquaintance?"

Enter Treves.

TREVES: For God's sakes. What is going on here? What is going on?

MRS. KENDAL: For a moment, Paradise, Freddie. (She begins dressing.)

TREVES: But—have you no sense of decency? Woman, dress yourself quickly.

(Silence. MERRICK goes to put another piece on St. Phillip's.)

Are you not ashamed? Do you know what you are? Don't you know what is forbidden?

Fadeout.

SCENE XV

INGRATITUDE

ROSS IN MERRICK's room.

ROSS: I come actually to ask your forgiveness.

MERRICK: I found a good home, Ross. I forgave you.

ROSS: I was hoping we could work out a deal. Something new maybe.

MERRICK: No.

ROSS: See, I was counting on it. That you were kindhearted. Like myself. Some things don't change. Got to put your money on the things that don't. I figure. I figure from what I read about you, you don't change. Dukes, Ladies coming to see you. Ask myself why? Figure it's same as always was. Makes 'em feel good about themselves by comparison. Them things don't change. There but for the grace of. So I figure you're selling the same service as always. To better clientele. Difference now is you ain't charging for it.

MERRICK: You make me sound like a whore.

ROSS: You are. I am. They are. Most are. No disgrace, John. Disgrace is to be a stupid whore. Give it for free. Not capitalize on the interest in you. Not to have a manager then is stupid.
roses. In my time it'd do for a start.

Maurice: Not what makes this one. Yet I am like others.

roses: Then I'm condemned. I got no energy to try nothing new. I may as well go to the dothousie straight. Die there anyway, between filth and dothousie. Nothing gives me belly pain. Without a future (Pause) Five percent... (Pause) I'm sorry, Ross. It's just the way things are.

Maurice: By god. Then I am lost.

Fade out.

THE ELEPHANT MAN

Maurice: You see this church. I am building it. The people who visit are friends. Not clients. They are not a dog walking on its hind legs.

roses: I was thinking. Change those people. Pleasure of the Elephant Man's company. Something. Right spirit, they'd pay happily. I'd take ten percent. I'd be okay with ten percent.

Maurice: Bad luck's made you drift.


Maurice: They're the cream. Ross. They know it. Man like you tries to make them pay, they'll walk away.

roses: I'm talking about doing it in the right spirit.
SCENE XVI

NO RELIABLE GENERAL ANESTHETIC HAS APPEARED YET

TREVES, reading, makes notes. MERRICK works.

MERRICK: Frederick—do you believe in heaven? Hell? What about Christ? What about God? I believe in heaven. The Bible promises in heaven the crooked shall be made straight.

TREVES: So did the rack, my boy. So do we all.

MERRICK: You don't believe?

TREVES: I will settle for a reliable general anesthetic at this point. Actually, though—I had a patient once. A woman. Operated on for—a woman's thing. Used ether to anesthetize. Tricky stuff. Didn't come out of it. Pulse stopped, no vital signs, absolutely moribund. Just a big white dead mackerel. Five minutes later, she fretted back to existence, like a lost explorer with a great scoop of the undiscovered.

MERRICK: She saw heaven?

TREVES: Well. I quote her; it was neither heavenly nor hellish. Rather like perambulating in a London fog. People drifted by, but no one spoke. London, mind you. Hell's probably the provinces. She was shocked it wasn't more exotic. But allowed as how had she stayed, and got used to the familiar, so to speak, it did have hints of becoming a kind of bliss. She died.

MERRICK: If you do not believe—why did you send Mrs. Kendall away?

TREVES: Don't forget. It saved you once. My interference. You know well enough—it was not proper.

MERRICK: How can you tell? If you do not believe?

TREVES: There are still standards we abide by.

MERRICK: They make us happy because they are for our own good.


MERRICK: Oh.

TREVES: Look, if you are angry, just say so.

MERRICK: Whose standards are they?

TREVES: I am not in the mood for this chipping away at the edges, John.

MERRICK: That do not always make us happy because they are not always for our own good?

TREVES: Everyone's. Well, mine. Everyone's.

MERRICK: That woman's, that Juliet?

TREVES: Juliet?

MERRICK: Who died, then came back.

TREVES: Oh, I see. Yes. Her standards too.

MERRICK: So.

TREVES: So what?

MERRICK: Did you see her? Naked?
TREVES: When I was operating. Of course—
MERRICK: Oh.
TREVES: Oh what?
MERRICK: Is it okay to see them naked if you cut them up afterwards?
TREVES: Good Lord. I'm a surgeon. That is science.
MERRICK: She died. Mrs. Kendal didn't.
TREVES: Well, she came back too.
MERRICK: And Mrs. Kendal didn't. If you mean that.
TREVES: I am trying to read about anesthetics. There is simply no comparison.
MERRICK: Oh.
TREVES: Science is a different thing. This woman came to me to be. I mean, it is not, well, love, you know.
MERRICK: Is that why you're looking for an anesthetic.
TREVES: It would be a boon to surgery.
MERRICK: Because you don't love them.
TREVES: Love's got nothing to do with surgery.
MERRICK: Do you lose many patients?
TREVES: I—some.
MERRICK: Oh.
TREVES: Oh what? What does it matter? Don't you see? If I love, if any surgeon loves her or any patient or not, what does it matter? And what conceivable difference to you?
MERRICK: Because it is your standards we abide by.
TREVES: For God's sakes. If you are angry, just say it. I won't turn you out. Say it: I am angry. Go on. I am angry. I am angry! I am angry!
MERRICK: I believe in heaven.
TREVES: And it is not okay. If they undress if you cut them up. As you put it. Make me sound like Jack the, Jack the Ripper.
MERRICK: No. You worry about anesthetics.
TREVES: Are you having me on?
MERRICK: You are merciful. I myself am proof. Is it not so? (Pauses.) Well? Is it not so?
TREVES: Well. I. About Mrs. Kendal—perhaps I was wrong. I, these days that is, I seem to. Lose my head. Taking too much on perhaps. I do not know—what is in me these days.
MERRICK: Will she come back? Mrs. Kendal?
TREVES: I will talk to her again.
MERRICK: But—will she?
TREVES: No. I don't think so.
MERRICK: Oh.
TREVES: There are other things involved. Very. That is. Other things.
MERRICK: Well. Other things. I want to walk now. Think. Other things. (Begins to exit. Pauses.) Why? Why won't she?
Silence. MERRICK exits.
TREVES: Because I don't want her here when you die. (He slumps in chair.)
Fadeout.
SCENE XVII

CRUELTY IS AS NOTHING TO KINDNESS

TREVES asleep in chair dreams the following: MERRICK and COMM dressed as ross in foreground.

MERRICK: If he is merely papier maché and paint, a swindler and a fake—

COMM: No, no, a genuine Dorset dreamer in a moral swamp. Look—he has so forgot how to protect himself he's gone to sleep.

MERRICK: I must examine him. I would not keep him for long, Mr. Gomm.

COMM: It would be an inconvenience, Mr. Merrick. He is a mainstay of our institution.

MERRICK: Exactly that brought him to my attention. I am Merrick. Here is my card. I am with the mutations cross the road.

COMM: Frederick, stand up. You must understand. He is very very valuable. We have invested a great deal in him. He is personal surgeon to the Prince of Wales.

MERRICK: But I only wish to examine him. I had not of course dreamed of changing him.

COMM: But he is a gentleman and a good man.

MERRICK: Therefore exemplary for study as a cruel or deviant one would not be.

COMM: Oh very well. Have him back for breakfast time or you feed him. Frederick, stand up. Up you bloody donkey, up!

TREVES, still asleep, stands up. Fadeout.
SCENE XVIII

WE ARE DEALING WITH
AN EPIDEMIC

TREVES asleep. MERRICK at lectern.

MERRICK: The most striking feature about him, note, is the
terrifyingly normal head. This allowed him to lie down
normally, and therefore to dream in the exclusive personal
manner, without the weight of others’ dreams accumu-
ilitating to break his neck. From the brow projected a nor-
mal vision of benevolent enlightenment, what we believe
to be a kind of self-mesmerized state. The mouth, de-
formed by satisfaction at being at the hub of the best of
existential worlds, was rendered therefore utterly incapable
of self-critical speech, thus of the ability to change. The
heart showed signs of worry at this unchanging yet un-
tenable state. The back was horribly stiff from being kept
against a wall to face the discontent of a world ordered
for his convenience. The surgeon’s hands were well-
developed and strong, capable of the most delicate carv-
ings-up, for others’ own good. Due also to the normal
head, the right arm was of enormous power; but, so inca-
cpable of the distinction between the assertion of authority
and the charitable act of giving, that it was often to be
found disgustingly beating others—for their own good.
The left arm was slighter and fairer, and may be seen in

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typical position, hand covering the genitals which were
treated as a sullen colony in constant need of restriction,
governance, punishment. For their own good. To add a
further burden to his trouble, the wretched man when a
boy developed a disabling spiritual duality, therefore was
unable to feel what others feel, nor reach harmony with
them. Please. (TREVES shrugs.) He would thus be denied
all means of escape from those he had tormented.

PINS enter.

FIRST PIN: Mr. Merrick. You have shown a profound and un-
known disorder to us. You have said when he leaves here,
it is for his prior life again. I do not think it ought to be
permitted. It is a disgrace. It is a pity and a disgrace. It is
an indecency in fact. It may be a danger in ways we do
not know. Something ought to be done about it.

MERRICK: We hope in twenty years we will understand
enough to put an end to this affliction.

FIRST PIN: Twenty years! Sir, that is unacceptable!

MERRICK: Had we caught it early, it might have been
different. But his condition has already spread both East
and West. The truth is, I am afraid, we are dealing with
an epidemic.

MERRICK puts another piece on St. Phillip’s. PINS exit.
TREVES starts awake. Fadeout.
SCENE XIX

THEY CANNOT MAKE OUT WHAT HE IS SAYING

MERRICK, BISHOP HOW in background. BISHOP gestures, MERRICK on knees. TREVES foreground. Enter GOMM.

COMM: Still beavering away for Christ?
TREVES: Yes.
COMM: I got your report. He doesn’t know, does he?
TREVES: The Bishop?
COMM: I meant Merrick.
TREVES: No.
COMM: I shall be sorry when he dies.
TREVES: It will not be unexpected anyway.
COMM: He’s brought the hospital quite a lot of good repute. Quite a lot of contributions too, for that matter. In fact, I like him; never regretted letting him stay on. Though I didn’t imagine he’d last this long.
TREVES: His heart won’t sustain him much longer. It may even give out when he gets off his bloody knees with that bloody man.

COMM: What is it, Freddie? What has gone sour for you?
TREVES: It is just—it is the overabundance of things, quite inescapable that as he’s achieved greater and greater normality, his condition’s edged him closer to the grave. So—a parable of growing up? To become more normal is to die? More accepted to worsen? He—it is just a mockery of everything we live by.
COMM: Sorry, Freddie. Didn’t catch that one.
TREVES: Nothing has gone sour. I do not know.
COMM: Cheer up, man. You are knighted. Your clients will be kings. Nothing succeeds my boy like success. (Exits.)
BISHOP comes from MERRICK’s room.
BISHOP: I find my sessions with him utterly moving, Mr. Treves. He struggles so. I suggested he might like to be confirmed; he leaped at it like a man lost in a desert to an oasis.
TREVES: He is very excited to do what others do if he thinks it is what others do.
BISHOP: Do you cast doubt, sir, on his faith?
TREVES: No, sir, I do not. Yet he makes all of us think he is deeply like ourselves. And yet we’re not like each other. I conclude that we have polished him like a mirror, and shout hallelujah when he reflects us to the inch. I have grown sorry for it.
BISHOP: I cannot make out what you’re saying. Is something troubling you, Mr. Treves?
TREVES: Corsets. How about corsets? Here is a pamphlet I’ve written due mostly to the grotesque ailments I’ve seen caused by corsets. Fashion overrules me, of course. My patients do not unstrap themselves of corsets. Some cannot—you know, I have so little time in the week, I spend
Sundays in the poor-wards; to keep up with work. Work being twenty-year-old women who look an abused fifty with worn-outness; young men with appalling industrial conditions I turn out as soon as possible to return to their labors. Happily most of my patients are not poor. They are middle class. They overeat and drink so grossly, they destroy nature in themselves and all around them so fervidly, they will not last. Higher up, sir, above this middle class, I confront these same—deformities—bulged out by unlimited resources and the ruthlessness of privilege into the most scandalous dissipation yoked to the grossest ignorance and constraint. I counsel against it where I can. I am ignored of course. Then, what, sir, could be troubling me? I am an extremely successful Englishman in a successful and respected England which informs me daily by the way it lives that it wants to die. I am in despair in fact. Science, observation, practice, deduction, having led me to these conclusions, can no longer serve as consolation. I apparently see things others don’t.

BISHOP: I do wish I understood you better, sir. But as for consolation, there is in Christ’s church consolation.

TREVES: I am sure we were not born for mere consolation.

BISHOP: But look at Mr. Merrick’s happy example.


BISHOP: It is not exactly clear, sir.

TREVES: I am an awfully good gardener. Is that clear? By god I take such good care of anything, anything you, we, are convinced—are you not convinced, him I mean, is not very dangerously human? I mean how could he be? After what we’ve given him? What you like, sir, is that he is so grateful for patrons, so greedy to be patronized, and no demands, no rights, no hopes; past perverted, present false, future nil. What better could you ask? He puts up with all of it. Of course I do mean taken when I say given, as in what, what, what we have given him, but. You knew that. I’ll bet. Because. I I I I—

BISHOP: Do you mean Charity? I cannot tell what you are saying.

TREVES: Help me. (Weeps.)

BISHOP consoles him.

MERRICK (rises, puts last piece on St. Phillip’s): It is done.

Fadeout.
SCENE XX

THE WEIGHT OF DREAMS

MERRICK alone, looking at model. Enter SNOREK with lunch.

SNOREK: Lunch, Mr. Merrick. I’ll set it up. Maybe you’d like a walk after lunch. April’s doing wonders for the gardens.

(A funeral procession passes slowly by.)

My mate Will, his sister died yesterday. Twenty-eight she was. Imagine that. Wife was sick, his sister nursed her. Was a real bloom that girl. Now wife okay, sister just ups and dies. It’s all so—what’s that word? Forgot it. It means chance-y. Well. Forgot it. Chance-y’ll do. Have a good lunch. (Exits.)

MERRICK eats a little, breathes on model, polishes it, goes to bed, arms on knees, head on arms, the position in which he must sleep.

MERRICK: Chancey? (Sleeps.)

Enter VINESHEADS singing.

VINESHEADS: We are the Queens of the Cosmos
Beautiful darkness’ empire
Darkness darkness, light’s true flower,
Here is eternity’s finest hour
Sleep like others you learn to admire
Be like your mother, be like your sire.

BERNARD POMERANCE

They straighten MERRICK out to normal sleep position. His head tilts over too far. His arms fly up clawing the air. He dies. As light fades, SNOREK enters.

SNOREK: I remember it, Mr. Merrick. The word is “arbitrary.” Arbitrary. It’s all so—oh. Hey! Hey! The Elephant Man is dead!

Fadeout.
SCENE XXI

FINALE REPORT TO THE INVESTORS

COMM reading, TREVES listening.

COMM: "To the Editor of the Times, Sir; In November, 1886, you were kind enough to insert in the Times a letter from me drawing attention to the case of Joseph Merrick--"


COMM: Well. "--known as the Elephant Man. It was one of singular and exceptional misfortune" et cetera et cetera "...debarred from earning his livelihood in any other way than being exhibited to the gaze of the curious. This having been rightly interfered with by the police..." et cetera et cetera, "with great difficulty he succeeded somehow or other in getting to the door of the London Hospital, where through the kindness of one of our surgeons he was sheltered for a time. And then..." and then... and... ah. "While deterred by common humanity from evicting him again into the open street, I wrote to you and from that moment all difficulty vanished; the sympathy of many was aroused, and although no other fitting refuge was offered, a sufficient sum was placed at my dis-

posal, apart from the funds of the hospital, to maintain him for what did not promise to be a prolonged life. As--"

TREVES: I forgot. The coroner said it was death by asphyxiation. The weight of the head crushed the windpipe.

COMM: Well. I go on to say about how he spent his time here, that all attempted to alleviate his misery, that he was visited by the highest in the land et cetera, et cetera, that in general he joined our lives as best he could, and: "In spite of all this indulgence, he was quiet and unassuming, grateful for all that was done for him, and conformed readily to the restrictions which were necessary." Will that do so far, do you think?

TREVES: Should think it would.

COMM: Wouldn't add anything else, would you?

TREVES: Well. He was highly intelligent. He had an acute sensibility, and worst for him, a romantic imagination. No, no. Never mind. I am really not certain of any of it. (Exits.)

COMM: "I have given these details thinking that those who sent money to use for his support would like to know how their charity was used. Last Friday afternoon, though apparently in his usual health, he quietly passed away in his sleep. I have left in my hands a small balance of the money for his support, and this I now propose, after paying certain gratuities, to hand over to the general funds of the hospital. This course I believe will be consonant with the wishes of the contributors.

"It was the courtesy of the Times in inserting my letter in 1886 that procured for this afflicted man a comfortable protection during the last years of a previously wretched
existence, and I desire to take this opportunity of thank-
fully acknowledging it.

"I am sir, your obedient servant,
F. C. Carr Comm
"House Committee Room, London Hospital."
15 April 1890.

TREVES reenters.

TREVES: I did think of one small thing.

COMM: It's too late, I'm afraid. It is done. (Smiles.)

Hold before fadeout.