

# **The Ripper**

**michael devine**

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

In order of appearance:

ARTHUR BARRET,	30, a pianist at the Prince of Whales
GEORGE CHAPMAN,	34, the owner of the Prince of Whales
MARY JANE KELLY,	25, a barmaid at the Prince of Whales
ADELAIDE BARTLETT,	32, a regular at the Prince of Whales
JACK THE RIPPER,	a man of indeterminate age and origin
WOMAN,	representing Mary Ann Nichols, a whore
WOMAN 1,	representing Elizabeth Stride, a whore
WOMAN 2,	representing Catherine Eddowes, a whore

The action takes place in the Prince of Whales alehouse, in late fall, 1888; and in the world of Jack the Ripper, based in the streets of London, particularly Whitechapel.

For Reid, and the pursuit of the whole

First Produced by Scheme of Things Theatre Ensemble, August 8-17, 1985 at the Poor Alex Theatre, Toronto. Directed by Michael Devine, designed by Georg D.

*Adelaide sits on a bench, smoking. Her sitting manner is not particularly feminine, nor is it relaxed. She shifts about, unconscious of her anxiety. As she looks off in one direction, rising and looking off in the distance, Mary clumps in hurriedly from the other, plunking herself down on the bench.*

**Adelaide:** JESUS!

**Mary:** (*cheerfully*) Hello! I didn't know if I should come.

**Adelaide:** I thought you weren't going to come. You arrived out of nowhere.

**Mary:** You must have been preoccupied; Arthur says if I was a ghost I wouldn't scare anybody.

**Adelaide:** And what if I told you I've watched you move with grace and beauty in that dog pit of an alehouse?

**Mary:** I wouldn't believe you.

**Adelaide:** Because I'm a woman?

**Mary:** I don't know what you mean.

**Adelaide:** If you're going to be my friend, you'll have to stop defining yourself through men's eyes, that's all.

**Mary:** I never did.

**Adelaide:** You just did.

**Mary:** Look, I don't even know you, really.

**Adelaide:** Come with me to France.

**Mary:** France. I'm happy just to be outside of Whitechapel, even here.

**Adelaide:** Would you like to come to my home?

**Mary:** Well, that's different, isn't it? Someone's home. What's it like?

**Adelaide:** Oh, it's big, with a fire in every room. And an indoor privy.

**Mary:** This side of London just gets worse.

**Adelaide:** Trust me as a friend. A sister.

**Mary:** We'll see. What's so interesting about me?

**Adelaide:** Hmm. Well, I don't like being outside. That horrible man who's been murdering the whores is quite capable of mistaking us for harlots.

**Mary:** They're really something, aren't they?

**Adelaide:** What are?

**Mary:** The murders. I mean, he's not just killing them is he?

**Adelaide:** He's not even a man. He's a wild animal.

**Mary:** I wonder if he just wants to feel sensation...

**Adelaide:** Killing is a male sensation.

**Mary:** I don't mean killing.

**Adelaide:** I don't know what you mean.

*(An uncomfortable silence)*

**Mary:** I thought you'd be the kind of person who was interested in everything.

**Adelaide:** *(Exasperated)* I am. It's never as simple as it seems. There are consequences. We have to live in this world, and if we reduce it to ash and shadow we are lost.

**Mary:** I don't know what you're on about. I just want to have some liberty, that's all. *(Takes out flask)*

**Adelaide:** That's what Pandora said.

**Mary:** Is she the tart the slasher got?

**Adelaide:** Look, you asked me why you're so interesting to me. It's because I can help you become better than you are, I can take you away. I can give you that liberty. Aren't you glad?

**Mary:** First you say you'll give me liberty, then you say you'll do it all for me...sounds like George, really.

**Adelaide:** There's a difference.

**Mary:** Is there?

**Adelaide:** Yes there is! Don't contradict me before I finish!

**Mary:** 'Scuse me. *(Brings out small flask and drinks from it)*

**Adelaide:** What's in that?

**Mary:** What, are you my mother now?

**Adelaide:** He's really got you, hasn't he?

**Mary:** It's just something to keep off the chill. George doesn't know anyway.

**Adelaide:** Do you want to be like Arthur? To give up?

**Mary:** You got your wine, don't you?

**Adelaide:** I don't live on the edge of a chasm. Oh, you're hard. You've got it all sussed out.

**Mary:** I'm not a child. I lived in a lot of places after my dad died.

**Adelaide:** You still don't know enough to realize when you're sliding down and not climbing up.

**Mary:** *(pause)* And you're going to help me.

**Adelaide:** No. You're going to help yourself. I'll show you how.

**Mary:** I can handle George, you know. He's not as bad as some of the regulars.

**Adelaide:** I know his kind. He wants you. You have something which draws him like a magnet. I've seen his eyes.

**Mary:** Arthur says he's had a tough time since his second wife kicked off.

**Adelaide:** Please don't tell me you feel sorry for George!

**Mary:** No. Still, it's worse than some, isn't it? Same illness and everything. I don't mind if George sees me as filling a bit of a gap. As long as he doesn't try anything, of course. And it's fun there, sometimes.

**Adelaide:** Like when he slaps you.

**Mary:** That's just Whitechapel.

**Adelaide:** Exactly! I was married, once. Did you guess that?

**Mary:** No, I'd've never thought of it. No offense, of course.

**Adelaide:** He died. There was something of a scandal. I'm surprised you didn't read it in the penny papers.

**Mary:** I don't read much.

**Adelaide:** Well, before someone else tells you: I was charged with murder \*\*, but I was acquitted.

**Mary:** How did he die?

**Adelaide:** It's senseless to talk of the past. Let's talk about what we'll do together.

**Mary:** What was it like?

**Adelaide:** It was very peaceful. My mother was French you know. Would you like to learn French?

**Mary:** Oh yes! I've always dreamt of going to Paris...Did you see it?

**Adelaide:** See what?

**Mary:** Him die...your husband, dying.

**Adelaide:** It wasn't a game!

**Mary:** I'm sorry. It's just- I've never seen anyone die, you see. My dad died when I was young. I never saw him dead. He was too deep down the mine. It wasn't profitable to bring him up.

**Adelaide:** It might have been better if you had seen him.

**Mary:** Did you see it?

**Adelaide:** Yes. There was no flash of lighting.

**Mary:** "Bloody horrible murder". Oh, nothing personal. It's just a headline they use in the Police Gazette. Right beside what they call "The artist's rendering".

**Adelaide:** Can we talk about something else?

**Mary:** I'm sorry.

**Adelaide:** And stop apologizing!

**Mary:** I know, it's a terrible habit. But, you see, I'm interested, because I don't know about it, I don't know anything, really. I have been having some peculiar dreams, though. Like life and dreaming blurring together. I'm standing in front of all this colour...bright colour...you know, like a church window. And there's this dark spot- it gets bigger and bigger and bigger until all the colour is gone. And I reach out- I want to go, but I can't. It's so real. Is that possible?

**Adelaide:** I was married, too young, to a man I didn't know, and didn't choose.

**Mary:** You didn't love your husband.

**Adelaide:** I didn't know my husband. I was dropped into his family when I was twelve, because my father was a man of position who couldn't afford to acknowledge my existence. Instead, he could afford to pay for a sort of upbringing.

**Mary:** So you're really a bastard! I mean-

**Adelaide:** Illegitimate. Yes. My father and mother both were of high birth but I was abandoned into a family of shopkeepers. Oh, they had enough money, but very little of anything else; manners or knowledge, or even personality. Quiet, pious, dull, and utterly patronizing towards women- the very backbone of Victorian society.

**Mary:** I liked my mother. I didn't see her much before she shipped me off. Guess I wasn't profitable, either.

**Adelaide:** She didn't recognize your true worth, that's all.

**Mary:** Maybe.

**Adelaide:** You're almost stopped feeling, but you're not dead yet- not if you can feel sorry for a weasel like George. You've got to see- it's men who bleed you, men who take that's delicate and gentle in you and turn it into jagged edges and brick walls! Look at their machines! Steel and iron forgive nothing!

**Mary:** Do you?

**Adelaide:** Alright, yes, maybe I've got a brick or two in place as well- we all have to survive (*refers to M's flask*). But I want you to be better than me.

**Mary:** That seems unlikely. I am what I am and always will be. If I can walk into these dreams once in awhile, I'm doing better than most people I know.

**Adelaide:** You're so strong and self-reliant, you talk about your "liberty", and yet you settle for dreaming about what you could have if you reached for it!

**Mary:** That's not true. You don't know my dreams. I don't dream about things I want, like a new frock.

**Adelaide:** Dreams. Of things you could make real. You, of all people! Dreams are illusions. If you live for them you're not alive.

**Mary:** My dreams are so real, I'm important in them!

**Adelaide:** Mary, come away with me. We'll be like sisters! No men will ever touch us- and we'll do just what we like whenever we feel like it!

**Mary:** Would it be so different anywhere else?

**Adelaide:** It's a brutal world in every corner. But wouldn't you like a fresh start?

**Mary:** I expect so...

**Adelaide:** Listen to me. You must leave while you have the chance! I didn't. One day a man came home to my adopted family. A brother I'd never met. It was agreed upon that we would marry. A nice, dull, even tempered, frugal English man, who tended to his grocery stores and brought me tutors so I could impress his grocer friends with my learning! Edwin! You mustn't give your precious years to Edwin, Mary!

**Mary:** I'd be lucky to get the chance.

*Adelaide slaps her a ladylike blow on the cheek.*

**Mary:** What'd you do that for?

**Adelaide:** Because, you need to wake up. Wake up from these extravagant dreams- you can't afford them! And wake up and look in the mirror. You're not ugly, or stupid. You don't deserve what you get unless that's all you're willing to fight for!

**Mary:** (*dreamily*) I rather like the Wales...they're friendly there...

**Adelaide:** Yes. They're friendly, until you're older and not so pretty and the gin has rotted you from the inside out. When the pretty outer shell begins to crumble they'll leave you to the wolves, to that axe-killer and his solution. Come away with me now!

**Mary:** But I've got to work tonight...

**Adelaide:** Rubbish! You don't have to work there, ever again!

**Mary:** But all my things are there.

**Adelaide:** I'll buy you clothes! There's no reason to go back!

**Mary:** But that's where I see it!

**Adelaide:** Who?

**Mary:** The feeling. My dream. That's where I see it! It's waiting!

**Adelaide:** Look at me! I saw an image like that, once. Terrifying, and seductive. I warn you, Mary; if you enter that world you must leave everything in this one behind- all the good things, too. And you accept everything in that world- the solitude, the agony of action without control.

**Mary:** Action? Then you think it's more than just a dream!

**Adelaide:** It's only a dream until you live it. Then it's a nightmare.

**Mary:** I'm going for a walk.

**Adelaide:** Now? Don't be foolish. You'll come home with me.

**Mary:** Really, Adelaide, I'd rather not.

**Adelaide:** I won't let you return to that sewer!

**Mary:** I'm expected.

**Adelaide:** Alright. But promise me you'll be packed and ready to go at the closing bell. I'll have you away before George can drop his jaw.

**Mary:** Thank you for chatting...

*Mary begins to drift off in the direction of Jack.*

**Adelaide:** Mary! Tomorrow?

**Mary:** I hope so. Goodbye...

*She drifts off. Adelaide is left on the bench.*

**Adelaide:** She doesn't know. It's keeping me from her.  
"Who is God that He should hear us,

While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?  
When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us  
Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word.  
And we hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)  
Strangers speaking at the door:  
Is it likely God, with angels singing round Him,  
Hears our weeping any more?"

*Fadeout.*

#### **Scene 4**

*Fade up on Jack's world, continuous as per prior scene.*

**Jack:** Janus I call you  
I went to find God  
and found you  
two heads no answers  
for every good an evil  
for every reward  
a monstrous injustice  
the world bleeds  
and only the wise are christened  
us louts are left to loiter  
on the brink  
of disaster or consummation  
no answers  
no balance  
no relief will it ever end

*The light on **Mary** fades out. We become aware of another light, on the opposite walkway from **Jack**.*

#### **Scene 5**

***Mary** finds a nook, sits down to steady herself. She dozes all through the ensuing sequence.*

***Jack's** world. A "set up" murder. First we hear steps along the scaffolding, then a fragment of some popular doggerel song. In the dim light we see the figure of a woman. Her manner marks her as working to lower class.*

*We hear a low whistle. She stops. She peers through the gloom. She appears to see nothing. She shrugs and continues walking. Another low whistle is heard. Behind her the figure of a man appears. She stops and peers ahead.*

*"I shall walk the streets up and I'll walk the streets down.  
I shall see the landlady dressed in a silk gown*

*With my elbows all out and my breeches without knees  
You are the biggest vagabond that e'er I did see."*

**Woman:** Who is it? What do you want?

*Her voice is nervous but not fearful. The man whistles again.*

**Woman:** Where are ya?

*She turns and sees the man. He's not far from her but is hard to see.*

**Woman:** Whatcha want?

*The man crooks his finger at her.*

**Woman:** Sorry. I'm done for the night. Come back tomorrow. Or head back up Brady. There's lots there.

*The man tosses her a coin*

**Woman:** Look, I told you, I'm done. I'm tired. I got a man home waitin' who gets very mean if I'm late.

**Jack:** Five guineas.

**Woman:** Pull the other one.

*She turns to go*

**Jack:** In gold.

*He produces them from his pocket and jingles them. One falls.*

**Woman:** Five guineas...it is late tho'...

**Jack:** Ten.

**Woman:** You ain't got ten.

*Jack throws a third coin.*

**Woman:** How much more you got in there?

*She stoops, picks up coin, bites it.*

**Woman:** Huh. 's'real alright. But listen, what you after wasting ten guineas on a tart? Not that you're wastin' it.

*The man jingles the coins in his pocket.*

**Woman:** Come on. I got a room nearby.

**Jack:** In the street. Now.

**Woman:** You're a loony. Still, for ten guineas, you can afford to be. Now, what'll it be?

**Jack:** Bite it off.

**Woman:** Oh, you'll feel it, alright. 'Cept my choppers ain't what they were.

**Jack:** Use your knife. *(He places a long bladed knife in her hand as she kneels before him)* Take it off.

**Woman:** You don't want that. Let me harden you up a little, then you'll be glad you kept it on.

**Jack:** CUT IT OFF!

*The woman gets up.*

**Woman:** I'm a whore, not a butcher. I'll keep the guineas for time wasted.

**Jack:** Ten guineas

*She gets up and begins to move away.*

**Woman:** Buy yourself a cleaver.

**Jack:** Wait! You have something of mine.

**Woman:** Keep your distance.

*He springs at her, a hook extending from his hand. He drags her back into the enclave. A moment later he emerges, wiping it.*

**Jack:** It's not her. IT'S NOT HER.

*Police whistles, barking dogs. Jack disappears into the night.*

**Scene 6**

*The Prince of Wales. Arthur looks terrible, but he is smiling. He has a newspaper spread out on the piano. George sits at a table.*

**Arthur:**       *(reading)* “The Juwes”- that’s J-U-W-E-S, can you believe it- “the Juwes are the men that will not be blamed for nothing”. Now what the hell does that mean?

**George:**       The Jews did it.

**Arthur:**       C’mon George. Here it says he also wrote, “I am down on whores and I shan’t quit ripping them till I do get buckled”.

**George:**       A moralist.

**Arthur:**       That’s very good George. A moral killer, just what we need to solve our woes. Sort of a Robin Hood, except he don’t give you money if you’re poor, he kills you.  
In London’s Whitechapel  
Where thieves and whores grapple  
I first met a girl name of Mary Kelly...  
Midst shit snot and piss  
The Ripper’s sharp kiss  
She sang “Cheap gin-George waters  
To singe your belly...”

*Audience interaction scene-George.  
(Flower sequence, including goodbye.)*

In the Prince of Wales Tavern...*(pause)*  
It’s worse than a cavern  
In the Prince of Wales Alehouse...*(pause)*  
A lot like a jailhouse  
In the Prince of Wales gin-mill  
Where whores and their kin swill

*George explodes from across the room towards Arthur, rousting him from his seat and holding him up by the lapels.*

**George:**       You! All you play is shit!

**Arthur:**       *(slightly upset)* C’mon Georgie, the place is closed!

**George:**       You want to amuse? I show you a dance!

He drags **Arthur** roughly into the middle of the room. **Arthur** has no will to protest or even to care. **George** stands behind him and kicks out **Arthur**'s legs with his own, a grotesque parody of a can-can. Finally **George** kicks away at both of **Arthur**'s legs at once. **Arthur** falls heavily all in a heap. He shows no inclination to get up.

**George:** Is big fun, yes? Very amusing?

**Arthur:** You hurt my foot. I'd be mad except I know you didn't mean it.

**George:** Yes. Now I mean it.

He steps on **Arthur**'s foot. **Arthur** screams in pain.

**George:** You want something to kill the pain? Just to "pick you up" eh? Kill all the pain?

**Arthur:** Christ, George!

**George:** Yes, George! No "Georgie"! Remember who you need!?

**Mary** enters. She is in no hurry, even though she's very late to work. **George**'s attention immediately turns to her.

**George:** Ah, so you decide to come! You miss your friends?

**Mary:** I'll tell you when I see any.

**George:** You cannot speak to me so.

**Mary:** Don't listen, then. I'm going away with Adelaide. I need a few things.

She heads toward her room. **George** puts a hand on her shoulder.

**George:** You have work to do.

**Arthur:** You could say "hello"...

She's gone into the back, heedless of **George**'s hand.

**George:** This is Adelaide's work. Mary!

**Mary:** (from her room) What is it, George?

**Arthur** has risen. He collects his carafe and heads into the "back".

**Arthur:** I'm goin' to bed. I feel like shit. It's all shit anyway.

**George:**       *(To Mary)* We must talk!

**Mary:**        There's nothing to talk about.

*She returns to the main room with a small valise.*

**George:**       How can you do this? Have I treat you bad?

**Mary:**        If you're going to insist on talking, can I have a cognac? I'm all played out.

**George:**       Of course. *(Mary moves for cognac, George intercepts)* Not as good sleep at Miss Adelaide's house?

**Mary:**        What?

**George:**       I am not stupid. You sleep ay witch's house last night, yes?

*George brings her the cognac, which he has suffused with a liquid poured from a small vial, different from that used earlier.*

**George:**       *(away from her)* Mary, you must promise you will stay.

**Mary:**        What about hitting me?

**George:**       Because I care.

**Mary:**        *(sipping)* Well, you can care for someone else. I'm leaving.

**George:**       With Miss Adelaide? She want you for her own. Not for you.

**Mary:**        I'll take my chances.

*Desperately he jerks her around to face him, grabbing tight hold on her arm. For a moment neither moves. Mary stares evenly at his hand.*

**Mary:**        George, you're hurting me.

*George releases her arm.*

**George:**       Mary, you must see, you just begin to bloom. You must not leave!

**Mary:**        Adelaide's going to take me to France.

**George:** I not so much older. Two wives, yes. But young they die! Still, I get better, I find hope- in you! I need a wife! We work together, live in one house- it would be so simple! I would protect you!

**Mary:** If you mean from Adelaide, neither of you own me.

**George:** I know your dreams! I would make you smart!

*Mary laughs unexpectedly. She is being held by **George**, but is curiously elastic in his hands.*

**George:** DON'T LAUGH!

**Mary:** I feel a bit giddy...I'm sorry George, but it's such a funny idea- stuffing someone full of goodies like a big cake. Makes me think of Adelaide's husband.

**George:** Marry me.

**Mary:** Adelaide should be here...I'm going to lie down for a bit.

**George:** *(quietly)* You will not marry me?

**Mary:** No. I don't know what I'm doing half the time, but that's a safe bet. Wake me when Adelaide comes, will you, George?

**George:** I must talk with this Adelaide.

**Mary:** Fine, wake me up after, tho'.

*She wanders off into the "back".*

**George:** At least stay 'til I find someone to replace! Is not fair.

*Mary turns at the entrance to the "back".*

**Mary:** Ever since those awful murders started, there's been no trade. You never need me anyway.

**George:** Oh yes I do Mary. Yes! And murders will stop. Customers return. At least 'til I find new girl!

**Mary:** I'm too fashed to think about it. Have it out with Adelaide.

*She goes off into the "back".*

**George:** She will stay. Not for long. Branches grow, reach. Soon will do.

*George goes to the bar and pours himself a glass of beer. He sips it and discards it as rubbish. He pours himself some liquor instead. He settles comfortably to wait. In the background we hear distant whistles and barking. It fades away. Several seconds later Adelaide Bartlett rushes in. All her plans have gone awry, and it shows on her, hat askew, purse trailing, dissipated focus.*

**Adelaide:** Oh Jesus Christ! *(looking around)* Where's Mary?

**George:** *(cool)* Something wrong, Miss Adelaide?

**Adelaide:** No, George, just a woman ripped apart like a steer. God, I think I'm going to be sick. Don't play games with me. Where have you hidden her?

**George:** Mary?

**Adelaide:** Yes, obviously she made the mistake of telling you, or you caught her sneaking out. Where is she?

**George:** She is sleeping, in her room, like always after closing.

**Adelaide:** I would've been here an hour ago but the hansom couldn't make it through the crowd. And the driver insisted on stopping for a look! Animals!

**George:** Is the devil himself, I say.

**Adelaide:** For once you may be right. I'm going to take Mary.

**George:** She will not go.

**Adelaide:** Why not? Don't try to tell me you talked her out of it!

**George:** No. She will leave soon. But is fair to stay until I find new girl, yes? She agree.

**Adelaide:** I don't believe you. *(She strides into the "back", climbs to Mary's room, and tries to rouse her.)* Mary! Mary, come on, it's time to go!

**Mary:** Too sleepy...

**Adelaide:** Don't you want to go?

**Mary:** ...Soon...not tonight. Too tired

**Adelaide:** Very well...

*She returns to the main room. **George** fiddles at the piano.*

**George:** She is coming?

**Adelaide:** No. Though there's a funny stench to it. How long will it take to get a new girl?

**George:** Two weeks.

**Adelaide:** That's outrageous! Even tonight you could reach out your door and knock over a hundred girls looking for work!

**George:** I am very particular. I will send you telegram if it less. In time between, please, you are not welcome here.

**Adelaide:** I see. If you harm her you'll bleed for it.

**George:** Miss Adelaide, I harm no one. I am not Whitechapel killer. Please. You offend me. No more welcome.

**Adelaide:** *(exiting)* I'll be back, *(turning back)* in two days.

**George:** Good-bye.

*He ushers her to the door.*

**Adelaide:** I'll pray he visits you. Beasts always attack the lower orders.

*With a cry of "Hansom!", she is off into the night.*

## **Scene 7**

*The Prince of Wales Tavern, dark and deserted. **George** enters with a taper. He goes to the bar and pours himself a drink. From, **Jack**'s world, **Jack** watches him silently.*

***George** is uneasy. He talks aloud, speaking his thoughts.*

**George:** Two weeks. She wants to keep her. Mary is my flower- for two weeks only. Not slow, artistic to watch fade...so graceful, unseen. The witch will see. She will know. She must die also. *(**Jack** makes a motion)* She would die anyway, sometime. Is not like killing, like murder. *(In a fever)* They should not laugh. Women are so hard. To make soft, they must wilt. To be noble, the courage, strength to protect- these are not joke. To be a man. Not for laughter. Ah, Mary. I pull you from the gutter. Give food, cloth, bed- we work together. Why you reject me? I am good for you. Before me, nothing. After, nothing. I make you fade, still beautiful. Is better.

*(Jack moves. George responds unconsciously)* The witch will come back. I will be ready.

*Jack moves away. George accidentally smashes glass. George totters off to bed, muttering.*

**Jack:** The imbalance of the world has forced it off its axis, it crushes me beneath its weight. Justice illuminates injustice. A good heart cannot match a strong one, the mind wearies of the strain, frays and snaps. Within is all darkness. If you scream within there is no one to hear, but the echo. The sound vanishes; an instant, the deed is done. The echo comes back, louder, ringing. And you wait for the deed that will stop it all.

*Jack remains in his place. Perhaps his light dims a little.*

## Scene 8

*Jack's world. We see a woman silhouetted against the fog, looking this way and that. She has just stumbled out of a tavern or a hotel. She weaves a bit and her body movements are aggressive and heedless.*

**Woman 1:** KATY!! KATY!! CATHERINE EDDOWES, YA STUPID COW, WHERE'VE YOU DROPPED YOUR GROTTY BODY, WITCH!?! *(She begins to clump along awkwardly in high heels)* Chris', ys might as well be blind. Ow, shit. Fuckin' things.

*She takes off her shoes and walks barefoot. At the opposite side of Jack's world, a second woman appears.*

**Woman 2:** *(yelling)* 's' not because I'm drunk, ya sod. 's' cause yer as ugly as a mirror in the mornin'. Even whores got standards, y'know. Now get off! *(She adjusts her clothes and flounces off in a ridiculous manner.)* Shit. Bed, or beer? That's three times tonight if I spend it again. Oh well, thrice lucky, they say. LIZZIE! Let's have a drink!

**Woman 1:** Chris', 'd'I say the Britannia or the Wales? Wouldnta mattered if she'da waited, the cow. Picked up an extra trick to pay for a pint I bet. Well, it's the Britannia for me, damn her bones. I hate goin' alone, but I hate not goin' worse.

**Woman 2:** Try the Wales. 's' all the same. Same grog, same piss for beer. If she's there for company, so much the better. I told her I feel creepy when it's like this, with what's been goin' on...never listen. Cow.

*They are now walking in one direction, so that in effect they never get nearer to each other, but instead approach each other's former place.*

**Woman 1:** Chris', I'll kill her.

**Woman 2:** Stupid bitch.

*Woman 1 steps on a stone, mutters an exclamation. She bends to put her shoes back on. While she does so a figure jumps up behind her and grabs her by the hair. Her scream is stifled by his hand. He draws something across her throat. We see the shape of a hook as she sags in his arms. Looking around, he lets her down and draws the hook up her body from vagina to throat.*

**Woman 2:** Oh Jesus. What was that? Liz? You're not scarin' me for fun, are ya's?  
*(She looks around, trying to decide where the sound might have come from. She turns quickly and wobbles uncertainly.)* Oh shit. I'm drunk.

*Jack begins to drag the body of Woman 1 through a doorway. Woman 2 comes into view soon enough to see the last part of the body disappearing. She stops short with an exclamation she doesn't want to utter. Jack, hearing this, reappears in the doorway. They stare at each other.*

**Woman 2:** Who are you?

**Jack:** *(straightening up)* I am...Mr. Lusk. I've formed a vigilance committee. Perhaps you've heard about it.

**Woman 2:** Maybe. What are you doing here?

**Jack:** I'm afraid there's been a murder. This woman is quite...mutilated.

**Woman 2:** The Ripper?

**Jack:** I'm afraid so.

**Woman 2:** Oh, save us. Is it Katy?

**Jack:** Would you like to check?

*He pulls the body out so the feet are visible.*

**Woman 2:** How long's she been there?

**Jack:** Not long. It's very fresh.

**Woman 2:** Chris', he could be right 'round the corner.

**Jack:** Not likely, is it?

**Woman 2:** Oh, Jesus. Maybe I'll jus' check in the morning.

**Jack:** As you like.

*We hear the sound of police whistles and barking dogs. **Woman 2**, who has been edging closer to the corpse (and **Jack**), hoping perhaps to see a glimpse of the face, freezes in her tracks. **Jack** stiffens.*

**Woman 2:** Wait a minute. How'd you get here so-

***Jack** has sprung at her, blade extended. He cuts her throat neatly in one motion, facing her. He props her up with one hand and slices down her torso with the other. He lets her fall, face first, jumping out of the way. He leaps over her body and flees. Police whistles and barking nearer, but no sign of the police. As always, they are moments too late. In a different corner, **Jack** reappears, breathing heavily. HE stands alone in a pool of light, perhaps rubbing his hands in a washing motion.*

**Jack:** From Hell. To Mr. Lusk, Head of the Vigilance Committee, Whitechapel. I write you a letter in black ink, as I have no more of the right stuff. I think you are all asleep in Scotland Yard with your bloodhounds. You seem rare frightened. Guess I'd like to give you fits, but can't stop time enough to let your box of toys play copper games with me. Hope to see you when I don't hurry too much. Good-bye, Boss.

***Mary** appears in light. He is not addressing her, but is aware of her "tuning in": it does not alter his focus, but adds to ours.*

the worm    the worm  
I thought it was gone  
it's bigger now    its maw consumes me  
lost    in the glade of civilization  
cut ones way to freedom  
with a deed    a thought  
the fire would pass  
the writhing would wither  
within would reach without gain  
but    I am cold    so cold    my fingers  
like tearing cloth on a seam  
and beneath it    nothing  
a spirit fled    I didn't catch it  
I want it    always gets away  
I will try harder  
or I am eaten    she is not closer.

***Jack's** light fades to darkness.*

## Scene 9

*The Prince of Wales. Arthur, drink untouched on the piano, plays. George works at the bar. Mary is nowhere to be seen.*

**Arthur:** Tonight's the night, isn't it, George?

*George flips a sheet of paper at Arthur. His disgust with it is evident, but it's also plain that he is now past his initial reaction to it.*

**George:** Telegram, dated this morning, arrive this afternoon. Sign, Miss Adelaide. "Dropping by fir Mary's odds and sods this eve. Wanted to include you in the odds, but concluded you're more of a sod. Will have interesting news. Please have wine ready.

**Arthur:** She's a strange one. It's not my business.  
*(sings)* Mary, Mary, what are you going to do  
You're Whitechapel, France has no use for you  
While you're getting wise and learned  
Old George is getting burn-ed  
And Jack will cry  
As you walk by  
'Cause you're leaving us three- boo hoo.  
Or maybe "toodle-oo". Genius is such a burden.

**George:** I am not mad.

**Arthur:** I noticed that. Storm warning. Still air.

**George:** What?

**Arthur:** Nothing. When all the sponges leave this place it gets kind of ominous.

**George:** No worry for you. Drink your drug, everything rosy. Kiss world good-bye.

**Arthur:** I don't need it.

*George laughs to himself. Mary appears from the "back", with her small valise. She looks drawn and haggard, like she has a continual headache.*

**Arthur:** That's a mighty small case for the time you spent packing it.

**Mary:** Is Adelaide here yet?

**George:** No.

**Arthur:** Well, I think the occasion calls for a song. All rise.  
(Sings) God save our gracious Mary,  
Long live our noble Mary,  
She is not hairy!-  
Sent her-

**Mary:** Please, Arthur, I'd rather not. I just want to get out of here.

**Arthur:** You look a bit bleak. Must be the air here. Too much farting. Hey, I been reading the penny rags about our man Jack again. Wanna hear?

**George:** Police do nothing. Drive away my business.

**Arthur:** Don't kid yourself, George. Anyway, he got two more last night. It's fascinating, really. Makes you wonder if he's a Jekyll and Hyde, don't you think? Like the book?

**Mary:** Can I have a last drink, George?

**George:** Of course. Allow me.

*He goes and pours the drink, adding a dose from the original vial.*

**Arthur:** Listen you untutored churls. He slices one- her head was nearly off, apparently- fillets her, leaves her to the flies, walks a block or two with the bobbies on his tail, lays out number two, and stops to wash his hands.

**Mary:** Poor, toothless old things. They deserve better than that.

**George:** Better is only for the select.

**Arthur:** You think maybe Jack's a vampire? There's a big vampire fad going on. Maybe he read Dr. Polidori's novel.

*Adelaide enters in a rush, covered in a shawl. She immediately goes to Mary and embraces her.*

**Adelaide:** Hello, dear. How I've missed you!

**Mary:** Let's go.

**Adelaide:** Aren't you feeling well?

**Mary:** It's just a cold. I've got this headache all the time.

**Adelaide:** Well, we'll have you better as soon as you're out of here. Come on.

**George:** Excuse me. You will not go yet.

**Adelaide:** There are police everywhere, looking for that maniac. Shall I scream?

**Arthur:** Oh good, more fun.

**George:** No. No fun. I just offer what you ask for, Miss Adelaide.

**Adelaide:** What was that?

**Mary:** Can we get out of here, please?

**George:** Your wine. Telegram? A toast. For farewell. Is custom in my land.

**Adelaide:** Why, George, how sweet. I'm almost touched. I think we should go, however.

*George almost leaps forward with a glass of wine for Adelaide.*

**George:** So simple! All have glass. To flowers!

**Arthur:** I think you lost something in translation, George. However...

*They all drink, Mary last and most reluctantly, finishing her cognac.*

**George:** Miss Adelaide, you not drink?

**Adelaide:** You've had your toast. I want to give one!

**Mary:** Adelaide, I just want to go. And my glass is empty.

**George:** Of course! Have toast, yes? *(He quickly refills Mary's glass.)* Is friendly, your toast?

**Adelaide:** It's a special toast. A real man's toast, George. Being such a perfect example of the breed, I'm sure you'll approve.

*George bows. Adelaide sweeps past him to the bar, picking his glass out of his hand as she goes by. He straightens in surprise: she is refilling it. HE turns to Arthur and shrugs, smiling. Returning, Adelaide gives George her glass and keeps his for her own. Then she brings Mary's glass over to Arthur. She refills Arthur's glass from his carafe, and brings it to Mary. Arthur and George are bemused.*

**Arthur:** This looks a little complicated.

**Adelaide:** Not really. It's like all men's rituals: mysterious from the outside, and a bit silly when you actually get to it. (*George stiffens.*) The taste of victory is truly sweet. Cheers!

**Mary:** Adelaide...

**Adelaide:** Just a moment longer, Mary. Down the hatch, George, yes?

**Arthur:** Cheers!

**George:** Prosit!

*All except Mary drain their glasses.*

**Adelaide:** There we are!

**George:** Very nice, Miss Adelaide. But we did not switch glasses! IS special, for young flowers only?

**Adelaide:** I switched glasses at the bar, George. We're all friends now, yes? Like big strong Men? My husband used to do it with his grocer friends after football games. I always thought it was silly and juvenile, but I'm beginning to understand the value of symbols.

*George has gone unaccountably silent. He's not sure whether Adelaide made the switch or not; or, if she did, what she knows and whether she's tricking him or not. If she has, he's a dead man. Arthur rises.*

**Arthur:** Cognac on top of laudanum. Time for beddy-byes. (*He goes over to Mary who is sitting dazedly on the floor near the door, and kisses her on the forehead.*) I'll miss you, anyway.

**George:** You did not. (*Almost a juvenile giggle*)

**Adelaide:** I'm sorry, George, I'm not following you.

*Jack has appeared in his world. Though she cannot see him, Mary feels the call. She crawls quietly out of the Prince of Wales and begins to head toward Jack.*

**George:** You don't know! You know nothing! You could not know to make switch!

**Adelaide:** I don't know what on earth you're talking about. I've won though. Admit it.

**George:** What you win! You suck blood! You no like flowers! You suck all at once!

**Adelaide:** You're a madman. Come on, Mar- Mary!?

**George:** It could not be! No switch! You will die!

**Adelaide:** ARTHUR! ARTHUR! MARY'S GONE!

**George:** I read about you. Arthur think I cannot. "Chloroform killer", yes? Pour the acid down husband's throat? Now you kill me?

**Adelaide:** ARTHUR! COME ON!

*Arthur straggles out of the "back". She grabs his arm and drags him toward the door. George stands, stupefied.*

**George:** NO ACCIDENT! NOT POSSIBLE!

*Arthur and Adelaide take off in pursuit of Mary. George stands in the centre of the room. Fadeout.*

## **Scene 10**

*Jack's world. Jack stands immobile. Mary moves steadily towards him, while Arthur and Adelaide run in circles, passing right by both Mary and Jack.*

**Jack:** She comes. A killing to end all. So undeserved as to be beyond justification. You are my end. Pure, unscarred, unlike the others. Even the worms will pale, die.

**Mary:** A large black dot, getting bigger. My dream.

**Jack:** We will resolve each other.

**Mary:** I'm so faint, I don't know where I am. Can you help me?

**Jack:** Their world sears us, you and I, with its random justice.

**Mary:** I'm lost. Home...big, with fires...I'm real sick.

**Jack:** It will end.

*She moves to join him. He extends his hand to her. Adelaide comes into view. Jack and Mary move off into the dark and fog. Adelaide remains looking for them, unseeing. After a few moments, Arthur approaches, first warily, and then more quickly, upon recognizing her.*

**Arthur:** I can't find her anywhere. And all these dogs and whistles, they're driving me insane!

**Adelaide:** Come on, let's go back to the tavern.

**Arthur:** What? Go back?

**Adelaide:** She might come back. It's our only chance. We won't find her out here.

*She gets up and begins to move back to the tavern, in the opposite direction from that in which **Jack** and **Mary** moved off. **Arthur**, bewildered, tired, follows after her. In another corner of **Jack**'s world, **Jack** stands with his blade pressed against the throats of **Mary**, who kneels in front of him, facing out in the same direction, so that her back is against his legs.*

**Jack:** The worm dies  
when the flesh is gone  
nothing to eat  
the flash dies  
when the soul departs  
nowhere to live  
the dream dies  
in the waking moment  
to sleep  
to sleep  
to sleep

*Fadeout on **Jack**, holding **Mary** something like a cello with a bow about to be pulled across the strings. She stares out straight ahead, a gleam of anticipation the only ripple washing across her face. Darkness.*

## Scene 11

*Prince of Wales, swathed in light from outside its windows. The light does not appreciably increase throughout the scene: **Arthur** moves primarily in the shadows, and **Adelaide** stands from time to time in the clear shards of light. We hear them approaching the doorway. **Arthur** enters first.*

**Arthur:** It's getting awful, out there. I mean, more than usual. I can take shit being dumped on my head, or my pocket picked, or vagrants urinating on the streets; and people die all the time around here. Domestic arguments, drunken squabbles, resisting thieves. But this is all out of hand. Taking people apart like at the butcher's. I've got to perk myself up a bit.

***Arthur** heads for the carafe on the piano. It is empty. He sees **George** slumped over on the keyboard. He starts. **Adelaide** notices and sees **George**.*

It's George.

**Adelaide:** Is he dead?

**Arthur:** Oh God, I hope so.

*He goes to the keyboard and inspects **George**.*

**Adelaide:** What'll you do without him?

**Arthur:** I'll start by finding one of those little vials of his.

**Adelaide:** It seems George had a lot of those little vials.

***Arthur** is not looking. He has embarked on a search for laudanum. Not a careful search: first he roughly goes over the bar, finding only an empty vial and lots of bottles. Then he thoroughly searches **George**, bonking his head on the keyboard, which makes discordant sounds.*

**Arthur:** Sorry, Georgie, I know you'd understand.

**Adelaide:** He wasn't just jabbering, then.

***Arthur** has found something on **George**'s person.*

**Arthur:** AH HA! BEAT YOU, YOU BUZZARD! Red one, must be the potent stuff...

*Quickly he dumps the vial into his glass and retrieves some cognac from the bar to top it up. He swallows it in one throw.*

**Adelaide:** "Still but a child, I admired the intractable convict on whom the prison doors are always closing; I sought out the inns and rooming houses he would have consecrated by his passing. He had more strength than a saint. On high roads on winter nights, without roof, without clothes, without bread, a voice gripped my frozen heart: 'weakness or strength: there you are, it's strength. You do not know where you are going, not why you are going; enter anywhere, reply to anything. They will no more kill you than if you were a corpse.'"

***Arthur** plays (poorly) at the piano, perhaps two bars of a song about whores. He stops suddenly.*

**Arthur:** It must be awful, wanting to be better than you are. *(He plays a bad chord)*

*Jack* appears, glimmering from his world. *Arthur* seizes up.

Oh no...*(laughs)* George, you bastard.

*He sinks down on the keyboard; Adelaide* remains in the centre.

**Adelaide:** One world. No dreams...

*Fadeout. Jack* covers his face in anguish. *Fadeout on his world.*