THE JUSTIFIED SINNER

a play by
Andrew Hilton & Dominic Power

© 2020

Freely adapted from the novel
The Private Memoirs & Confessions of a Justified Sinner
by James Hogg

3rd Draft @ 1st December 2019

Act One only
James Hogg (1770 – 1835) was a Scottish poet, novelist and essayist who wrote in both Scots and English. As a young man he had been a shepherd and a farmhand, and an auto-didact. In later life he moved in Scotland’s literary circles, becoming friends with many of the great writers of his day.

His most celebrated work, *The Private Memoirs and Confessions of a Justified Sinner*, was first published in 1824. It is told in two voices; the ‘memoir’ itself, which belongs to the years 1704-5, is related by the ‘justified sinner’, Robert Wringhim, while the unnamed ‘Editor’ records the facts of Robert’s life as far as he has been able to gather them over a century later.

We adopt a rather different strategy, and also diverge from the book in many other respects, both in character and in incident.

A.H. & D.P.
CHARACTERS

in order of appearance

ANNIE, an elderly labourer
BALDIE, Annie’s husband
LOCKHART, a researcher
ROBERT – Robert Colwan, supposedly Dalcastle’s younger son
MAIRI, a young woman of Dalcastle village
DALCASTLE – George Colwan the Elder, the Laird of Dalcastle
BLANCHARD, a Church of Scotland Minister
MARGARET Logan, the Laird’s Housekeeper
GEORGE – George Colwan, the Laird’s elder son and heir
RABINA Colwan, the Laird’s estranged wife
WRINGHIM – Robert Wringhim, a Calvinist minister
STEWARD – Will Stewart, a young friend of young George
GIL-MARTIN
PROCURATOR Fiscal
WAINWRIGHT – Mrs Wainwright, cook to Will Stewart’s father
DRUMMOND – Tom Drummond, friend to George
BEL Calvert, a prostitute
MINISTER
2 GRAVEDIGGERS
KEELER – Mrs Keeler, Mairi’s mother
LINKUM, a lawyer

The play may be performed by a company of 11 or more (see overleaf)

The action takes place in Scotland in 1823, and in 1704–1708
A possible doubling scheme:

Men
Baldie with Dalcastle, Drummond & 1st Gravedigger
Blanchard with Procurator, 1st Man, 2nd Gravedigger & Linkum
Dalcastle with Procurator & 1st Gravedigger

Women
Margaret with Woman
Mairi with Wainwright & Keeler
Annie with Bel

Not to be doubled (except as Bystanders on Arthur’s Seat and in Court):
Robert
George
Wringhim
Gil-Martin – an androgynous character of either sex
Rabina

[4 Women & 7 Men, or 5 Women & 6 Men]
Act One

Scene 1

1823. Colwan Cross. It is dusk in a bleak Scottish landscape, a rotting gibbet nearby. An elderly couple, ANNIE & BALDIE, muffled against the cold, are digging. A third person, LOCKHART, well-dressed in a handsome greatcoat and hat, is holding a lantern aloft to illuminate the work. After some moments, ANNIE stops.

Annie  Naebody down there.
Baldie  They’d nae go six feet down, not here.
Lockhart I’ll be the judge of that. Dig deeper.
Annie  As ye wish.

Digging resumes.

Baldie  [To ANNIE] We’re no going home wi’out the guinea he promised.
Annie  Guinea apiece, husband.
Baldie  Aye, guinea apiece –
Annie  One for you and one for me.
Lockhart  You’ll not see a groat, unless you find him. Dig.

Digging continues.

Annie  Medical man, would ye be, sir? Be too rotted to cut up. Rotted intae the soil.
Baldie  The flesh, Annie. Nae the bones. Nor the hair, they say. D’ye mind when they dug up Old Meg Cowan? What, ten year since?
Annie  Ten, maybe more.
Baldie  Grandson come from Glasgie, sir. Wanted a Christian burial for her.
Annie  Meg was never a Christian. Hung up here for poisoning sheep thirty year afore.
Baldie  Buried her shallow – under a dung heap, they said.
Annie  True – they did.
Baldie  When they dug her up she was covered in fur.
Annie  Beard, braw and bushy as any man’s.
Baldie  Nae, nae. Hair all over her, like a wolf. Said it was the devil.
Annie  Red hair it was. A proper Scot, devil or no devil.
Baldie  The men of science said it was the soil made it grow.
Annie  It were the dung made it grow, like corn in a field ...

*BALDIE reaches into the grave and pulls out a rotting canvas bag. ANNIE grabs it from him, and empties it onto the ground. There is a bundle of papers tied with string.*

        Och! Nowt but papers. Papers and words. Nae money in writing.

Baldie  Dry ‘em out, wife, use them for the fire.
Lockhart  Give that to me.
Annie  You can have it. Stinks o’ the pit.

She throws it down at LOCKHART’S feet. He picks it up and shines his lamp on it, trying to read. ANNIE and BALDIE have resumed digging and immediately there is the sound of a spade striking wood.

Baldie  Wheesht!
Annie  What?
Baldie  The coffin.
Annie  They wouldna bury him in a coffin.
Baldie  Listen!

*Baldie plunges the blade into the hole.*

        Wood.

Lockhart  Let me see.

*ANNIE & BALDIE stand back. LOCKHART shines the lamp into the hole.*

        Ay, it’s a box. Break it open.

Annie  Nay, we be done now.
Baldie  Give us our money, and we’ll go.
Annie  A guinea apiece.
Lockhart  Not until you bring him up.
Baldie  D’you think we’s resurrection men?
Annie  We’re honest Godfearing labourers.
Baldie  Paid to dig, nae more.
Lockhart There’s no time for this. Another guinea to bring him up.

Annie Another guinea apiece?

Lockhart What, friends, are you bandits? Take it, damn you!

LOCKHART throws coins on the ground. ANNIE scrambles to retrieve them.

Baldie I don’t like it.

ANNIE pockets the coins and picks up her spade.

Annie Ach, the money’s sound. Nae need to be frit.

She plunges her spade in to break the coffin lid. Then she puts down her spade and peers into the hole.

There’s a rope there.

She lies down, puts her hand into the hole and comes up with a rope-end.

Left it round his neck, looks like.

Lockhart Just get him out of the ground.

Annie Mebbe it’ll still hold …

ANNIE and BALDIE take hold of the rope and begin to pull.

Lockhart Careful – gently –

Baldie He’s coming up!

There is a rending of wood. ANNIE and BALDIE fall over backwards as ROBERT sits bolt upright in the grave, covered in filth, face partially rotted, a noose around his neck. ANNIE screams.

Annie Lord save us all!

ROBERT opens his mouth, emitting a coarse rattling sound. He clambers out of the grave and runs off. LOCKHART draws a pistol from his greatcoat and fires after him.

The lights fade quickly.

In the darkness MAIRI sings a capella:

THE THIRD BROTHER

Two brothers lay upon the strand,
“Oh brother, why look you so pale
and who sits there at your left hand
and stares upon that distant sail?
Oh brother let us kneel and pray
for fear he’ll carry you away.”

**Scene 2**

It is still night. A candle lights a room sparsely furnished with two chairs and a table. On the table is the bundle of papers (still tied), LOCKHART’s pistol, and the lighted candle.

LOCKHART appears out of the darkness, carrying a decanter of wine and a glass. He pours himself wine, sits at the table and unties the bundle. He takes the top sheet and begins to read.

There is a slow knock on the door. LOCKHART reaches for the pistol. Another knocking. He points the gun at the door. Slowly the door opens, and ROBERT lurches into the room. He walks towards LOCKHART, who shrinks back in his chair. Suddenly, ROBERT sits in the chair opposite LOCKHART, puts his hands on the table and stares at him.

Quick fade.

**Scene 3**

Pale daylight on the same room, now revealed as a private room in an inn. LOCKHART and ROBERT sit in the same positions, though the pistol is again on the table, and ROBERT’s hands are by his side.

**Lockhart** They’ll catch you, and hang you. You know that. Silence won’t save you.

**ROBERT opens his mouth, but no sound comes out. LOCKHART pours himself wine.**

It’s said there’s a sort of man, though one may scarcely call such a person a man – a thing that will haunt graveyards at night and seek out the dead. Do you follow me? To lie with them. Why would anybody do such a thing? It beggars belief, but they do it. Their souls are so blotted with evil, they lie with the dead for their own lust and pleasure. Such a creature deserves to be obliterated from the face of the earth. (Sips wine) Tell me, friend, are you such a man as that? Are you such an unnatural fiend?

**ROBERT tries again to speak. All that comes out is a croak.**

You may now feel remorse, but I will have to report you, and you will hang, most assuredly.

**ROBERT finally manages to speak in a series of gasps:**

my salvation would be safe – would be secure while you rot in hell.

**Lockhart**

It can speak. Well, you’re unaccountably assured of your salvation. Let me tell you at once, I am a rational man. I do not believe in evil spirits, and I refuse to be afraid. I take you for an ordinary rather than supernatural sinner. Are you not going to tell me who you are?

**Robert**

I … I am he that you seek.

**Lockhart**

I repeat, I’m a rational man. I’ve come in search of the past. Not the past of pagan superstition, but true events, true history. So that we may reach beyond blind belief to understand the mechanism of our age.

**Robert**

I tell you, I am he.

**Lockhart**

What? Haven’t I told you? Can’t you understand? The man I seek has been dead for over a hundred years. The best I hoped for was a skeleton. Perhaps an artefact or two thrown in the ground after him. A ring? A pocket-knife? [Pointing to the papers] I hadn’t imagined a manuscript.

**Robert**

My true memoir.

*LOCKHART sighs and shakes his head.*

**Lockhart**

You know, sooner or later you will have to give me your name. If ye’d the first idea of the man I enquire about, you’d not be laying claim to his. A thief and a murderer – of the most abominable kind – a fratricide, perhaps. Ay, and an apostate. They say talk of his ghost frightens the children hereabouts even now, so many, many years gone. The last Laird of Dalcastle – Robert Colwan, known to infamy as Robert Wringhim.

*ROBERT shrieks, suddenly, appallingly.*

**Robert**

Hang me … if you would. Flay the skin from my bones. Take out my heart. Hack it into pieces. Feed it to the dogs. I appear as I am by the power of a great emperor. While your perjured soul will writhe with fiends in hell, I will yet glory in Heaven. I tell you, I am Robert Wringhim. There is my history – the journey of my soul. Read it, if you dare. Read of my salvation and your own damnation.

*LOCKHART picks up the papers.*

*[Quietly]* Read it and learn.

*LOCKHART starts to read. ROBERT closes his eyes.*
I have been here before.

The lights fade slowly.

MAIRI sings …

Two brothers walked out in the field,
“Oh there is one would have you damn’d
that walks behind and bids you yield
and bow your head to his command.
Oh brother let us kneel and pray
for fear he’ll spirit you away.”

Scene 4

1704. A room in the Laird of Dalcastle’s country house. One feature is an oil-portrait of the Laird.

The lights fade up to the sound of fiddles, (perhaps a song), playing early 18th century dance music, and the muted sounds of celebration/laughter from the adjoining room.

At either side of a table sit DALCASTLE and BLANCHARD. They are sharing a decanter of wine.

Dalcastle The world will say I’m at fault, he being my own flesh and blood. [An ironic grimace] Well … His mother was always a harsh, unyielding woman. You’d have seen that yourself. She and I put first a few walls, and then a good mile between us, for there was nae other way to live in peace. I’d known her father, ye see, and liked him, no smack of this disease that sours her heart. I thought she could change, that I could bring her round. I was a vain fool. I’m afraid young Robert has drunk of the same poison as she has – aye and from a worser source, his canting, sour-faced guardian. But he will apologise to ye, Blanchard. If he doesn’t, I’ll cut him off without a groat.

Blanchard Nay, that’s not why I’m come. I need no apology. I only thought to warn you of what might be a new affiliation on his part, he being new to the city, but from what you say …

Dalcastle Nothing new under heaven, eh? He’ll find plenty of his mind in Edinburgh?

Blanchard I fear he’s done so already. The Calvinists are strong there, and it’s not just the rabble – there are great families, with money and influence. It’s the misfortune of these unhappy times, that the love of
God, that should unite men and make them brothers, has turned them into enemies.

**Dalcastle**

Well, thank the Lord I have Georgie. He’s bound to Edinburgh too. *Indicating the next room* There’s a fair part of the handsomest youth of Midlothian come to wish him well. *Getting up* Look, you shall meet him. *(Calling)* Mrs Logan! – I will confess he follows his father in that he’s not always to be found at the kirk of a Sunday morning, but he is a good-hearted boy and I’m proud of him. You’ll not hear his voice raised against you, I’ll promise you that.

*Enter MARGARET.*

Mrs Logan, will ye find master George and bring him here?

**Margaret**

He’ll be dancing wi’ the lassies.

**Dalcastle**

Away, woman. We’ll not detain him long.

*MARGARET exits through the door into the next room. The music swells up. The door closes again.*

You shall have your apology, Blanchard. I am ashamed that my aen flesh and blood could do you such discourtesy. Mind, he may not have been entirely to blame. Put up to it, I’ll warrant, by his mother and his guardian.

*Enter young GEORGE COLWAN, followed by MARGARET who exits by the other door.*

Georgie! Come here and kiss your father on your birthday …

**Father and son kiss.**

Now greet the Reverend Blanchard. He was minister here for many a year – in fact I believe he may have baptised you?

**Blanchard**

I did, indeed. And remember it well.

**Dalcastle**

But then – foolish, wayward man – he couldn’t resist the call of the city. He’s minister there at Greyfriars. You’ll not find a better in Edinburgh, or one with a sounder doctrine.

**GEORGE** shakes **BLANCHARD** by the hand.

**George**

Good day to you, sir. I am proud to meet you – again!

**Blanchard**

And you, Mr George. So you’re to come and live in your father’s house in Edinburgh?

**George**

I am, sir, yes. I’m of age at last.
Dalcastle  
Ay, and a credit to the name of Dalcastle.

*MARGARET enters.*

Blanchard  
I wish you blessings and a long life. And that we’ll become better acquainted.

George  
Thank you, sir. I hope we will.

Margaret  
They’re here.

Dalcastle  
What? Oh, then you’d better away back to your friends, Georgie.

George  
May I not stay and greet my mother and my brother?

Dalcastle  
Nay, I’ll no have a shadow cast over your day. Away with you and dance!

George  
But, sir –

Dalcastle  
What? Disobey your father? In with you now. You’ll not keep the fair lassies waiting a minute longer!

*GEORGE exits. A cheer welcomes his return.*

Dalcastle  
[To MARGARET] God save us all. Send them in, Meg.

Margaret  
Ye’ll not be happy – they’ve brought yon empty cassock wi’ ‘em.

Dalcastle  
They’ve brought Wringhim?

Margaret  
Aye, that they have. And, saving your grace, all three wi’ a look that would curdle milk.

Dalcastle  
[Touching MARGARET on the arm] Well, bring them in.

*MARGARET exits. DALCASTLE turns the key in the door to the reception room.*

They’re come to touch me for money. For Robert’s sake, my wife says, they must all three move into the city – I’m told they’ve taken lodgings in the Grassmarket – and that I must support my son there. Well, I’ll do what I must, or they’ll concoct a scandal, I daresay.

Blanchard  
Then I will leave you, George. It’s a private matter, and Mr. Wringhim and I are already acquainted. Unhappily so, I’m afraid. I’ll ride back to the city now while the light lasts.

Dalcastle  
Nay, man. You’re a guest in my house, and while you’re here you’ll receive an apology from Robert. I’ll not let ye leave wi’out it. You gae away home tomorrow as we planned. We’ll have a fine dinner here tonight.
Margaret: [Off, calling] The Laird’s in here, so come in if you’re coming.

MARGARET shows in RABINA Colwan, ROBERT and the Reverend WRINGHIM. RABINA is dressed in an austere grey wool gown, ROBERT and WRINGHIM in the plain, dark Puritan uniform. MARGARET exits.

Dalcastle: Well, Rabina, it’s nae a secret we no see eye to eye, but I bid you welcome. And you, sir, though what your business is here I canna tell. Robert’s I have wind of and –

Rabina: Mr Colwan, I would not put my soul, or Robert’s, in jeopardy by entering your house without our spiritual guide and protector.

Dalcastle: ‘Mr Colwan’. Still cold and unforgiving, Rab?

Rabina: Still true to my God and to his divine revelation.

Dalcastle: Aye, aye, how could I doubt it?

Wringhim: Sir, I am come here somewhat unwillingly, to shield Mrs Colwan and her son from the contamination of this house. We had barely passed through the gates before our ears were assaulted by revelry and devilish music. We could see, sir, through your windows – the shutters lie wide open on your shame – silken women, cavorting lasciviously –

Rabina: The devil’s own sputum shining on their for’eads!

Dalcastle: Ach, be quiet, Rab! And you, sir, I’d be obliged if you’d keep your preaching for the pulpit, and nae slander my guests in my house. Did ye ne’er enjoy dancing yourself? Or were ye afeard your unbending spirit’d make ye look a fool?

Wringhim: If you must deride the Lord’s witnesses, sir, I beg you go in there and observe for yourself. Chief among them you will find your elder son putting his soul in pawn to luxury and vice.

Rabina: He was conceived in drunkenness and shame. Is it any wonder he exults in sin?

Dalcastle: Nay, nay, Rab, are you so unnatural, to damn your own son? – Nay, I’ll not hear any more. You are here because of your other whelp. And it is he brings Reverend Blanchard here too. I am sure you all know why.

Wringhim: I, certainly, do not. I confess, I am astonished to see you here, Mr. Blanchard, on such an immodest occasion. And I know of no possible connection a man of your stamp could have with my ward.
Dalcastle [To ROBERT] Well, come here, sir.

ROBERT moves forward and stands impassively in front of DALCASTLE.

Robert Father. What is your wish?

Dalcastle Ah, so for today you will call me father, will ye? I have heard that you are more like to borrow your mother’s tongue and disown both me and my name.

Robert If you say so, sir.

Dalcastle Well, then, what business had you to interrupt this good man’s service so violently last Sunday? But a week in his parish and ye shout and harangue him? Have ye no respect for Christian ministry?

Robert I have, sir, when that ministry is truly Christian. When I hear false doctrine, I must speak out.

Dalcastle You young devil! Would you put yourself against an ordained minister of the kirk?

Blanchard Come, sir. Don’t let this come between you. Youth is a time of great certainty. We have all been impetuous in our time. I freely forgive you, Robert, and take no offence. Come, be friends with your father.

Rabina How can you say for certain what transpired? Were you there yourself, Mr Colwan?

Dalcastle Happily I was not. But I would not for one second doubt the Reverend Blanchard’s word, and nor should you, Rabina.

Wringhim Mr Colwan, I will not presume to question the fact of the matter, but Robert should not be censured for following his conscience.

Dalcastle Conscience is it? Well, here’s something for his conscience to wrestle with. – Your mother tells me your expenses, now that you live in the city, are greatly increased, and that I must bear the cost.

Robert Is not that a father’s duty, sir?

Dalcastle It is not, sir, for you have never shown me a son’s duty for a moment. Well, you’ll not see a groat more, unless ye apologise to Mr. Blanchard and give me your word that you’ll never trouble him again. On that condition only, I will raise your allowance to five guineas per month. Is that understood?

Robert I will bow to my father’s will.

Dalcastle And – ?
Blanchard  Dalcastle, please. I am quite content. As far as I am concerned, the matter is closed.

Dalcastle  Well, if ye wish it. However, there’ll be one other condition, Robert, and on this there must be no half measure. From tomorrow your brother George will be living in my house in Edinburgh. You must swear to me that you’ll never attempt to twist his honest soul to your own sorry views. In fact you had best not come into his company at all.

Robert  Perhaps, sir, I have more care for George’s soul than you do. For though he is not of the Elect, were I to befriend him, I might at least save him from occasions such as this.

Rabina  Amen! Amen!

Dalcastle  No, sir. You will give me your word on this or you’ll get not a penny. Well?

Robert  I will do as my Father wishes.

Dalcastle  Can I be sure of that? They tell me you were ever a stranger to the truth.

Wringhim  If you will allow me, sir. I have long wrestled through prayer and entreaties to that God who sees and knows all, and today – this auspicious day – Robert is blessed in God’s word that he will dwell for eternity among the chosen.

Rabina  Amen, amen, let God be praised!

Wringhim  You need not doubt him. While others tumble into the everlasting fire, he through the mercy of the true God, will escape certain damnation.

Rabina  Amen.

Wringhim  Amen. Will you accept my undertaking that – more to save the boy from contamination than for your peace of mind – that Robert will never seek the company of your son? You will accede to this condition, Robert?

Robert  I will do as my Father wishes.

Dalcastle  Very well. Reverend Wringhim, I fear that my God is not your’s –

Wringhim  Doubtless, sir, doubtless.

Dalcastle  Nonetheless, for the sake of peace, I accept your assurance. [Calling at the door] Mrs Logan! – So, now our business is settled, I will bid
ye good day. Meg will see you out.

Rabina  ‘Meg’, is it now? Well …

Dalcastle  Hold your tongue, Rab.

Wringhim  Mrs. Colwan, Robert, come –

*MARGARET appears.*

Dalcastle  Our guests are leaving, Mrs Logan. See them out, please.

Robert  I should like to stay, mother. For a short while. An hour, no more.

Dalcastle  Why the devil d’ye ask that?

Rabina  For shame, Mr Colwan! – Nay, come away, Robert. You have no place here. We’ll away home and sit by the fire and study together.

Robert  You need not fear me, mother. This is my father’s house. Am I to be barred from it, cast out like a bastard or a criminal? Well, father?

Dalcastle  Nay … nay, I’ll no deny you. I may not like it, but I’ll not have it said that I turned ye from my door. Ye may stay an hour, if you wish.

Rabina  Robbie –

Wringhim  Mrs Colwan, no, let Robert stay. I am sure he wishes only to better understand the world on which he has so justly and irrevocably turned his back. He is strong in the Lord, ye need not fear him. *[To MARGARET]* We shall see ourselves out, thank you. Come, Mrs. Colwan. We will wait for you, Robert, at Colwan Cross.

*WRINGHIM and RABINA exit, followed by MARGARET.*

Dalcastle  I have your word, Robbie, that ye’ll not seek out your brother. So you must leave him and his friends to their dancing, is that clear? You may wander as you wish through the gardens and the rest of the house. You may find the library of interest now you are grown.

Robert  I will do as –

Dalcastle  *[To BLANCHARD]* Och, will you look at him, man! He’s half starved. *[To ROBERT]* Does not your mother and yon holy man feed you at all? For the love of God, Robbie, go to the kitchen and have them give you a venison pasty and a draught of porter.

Robert  As you wish, sir.

Dalcastle  It’s a bad business, this, a bad business. They tell me ye are my son.
Well, that is a mystery indeed … but I will not disown you. Nay, but I canna bear to look on you and that’s the truth on it. Come, Blanchard, let us breathe some clean air in the orchard.

**DALCASTLE** exits, followed – after a hesitation – by **BLANCHARD**. **ROBERT** goes to the door to the reception room and turns the key. He opens it a crack and peers through. The music and laughter swell. He watches fascinated. Suddenly the door opens wide and **GEORGE** enters from the party. His manner is different, he seems older. He closes the door behind him.

**George**
Robert. I have looked for you.

**Robert**
George? Is it you – are you my brother George?

**George**
More than a brother.

*He holds out his hand.*

Will you not shake my hand, Robbie? You can scarcely be aware – the most holy fellowship binds us.

**Robert**
Indeed I doubt that. My guardian is certain you number among the damned. You, our father, and all that brazen company in that room there.

**George**
Your guardian is mistaken, Robbie. Things are not as they seem. *(Indicating the party)* What I’ve contrived – I knew you would be drawn to it – I have done only that I might meet you. To honour one newly elect of God. Please –

**Robert**
My election is yet to be published.

**George**
Ay, but if one has eyes to see, written in flaming letters, since the beginning of time. Come, will you not take my hand?

**Robert**
Why … yes … I will, gladly.

**George**
Robbie … May I call you that? I so long to become better acquainted. But not here, amid this gaudy frenzy. Let us meet in Edinburgh, on Sunday. Say at noon, on the path across the Meadows? Will you promise me?

**Robert**
Yes, yes, I promise.

**George**
Thank you. We have great matter to speak about.

*He holds ROBERT’s gaze for a moment, but then releases his hand and exits quickly into the party, shutting the door behind him.*

**Robert**
Wait!
ROBERT tries to open the door, but it won’t. Enter MARGARET.

Margaret      Wh’t this? Trying to spy on the lassies, are ye! Get away with ye. You were always sneaking and spying as a bairn. Your good father’s too soft, to leave you here on your ain to sow your mischief. Be off with ye!

Robert       What do you mean by that?
Margaret      What I mean, I’ll not say, but I know it to be true.

Robert      Thou art a worm, Logan. Who made thee to be a judge of the Almighty’s creatures? How can a woman judge between good and evil?

Margaret      I ken I have a mind in my head as sprightly as any man’s. And I said nowt on the subject of evil.

Robert       To set your face against the Lord’s Elect is in itself a great evil.
Margaret      Elect, is it? Sickan sublime and ridiculous sophistry I never heard come out of another mouth but ane. Twas nae only thy mother made thee the dirty bowkail thing that thou be’st!

Robert       Be careful how you slander my mother and my guardian. I am not without friends.

Logan        Friends? Naebody can stand the sight of ye – lest they be whey-faced and pious frauds like ye. Away wi’ ye, afore I take a broom to ye.

ROBERT exits.

I’ll ne’er believe ye have one friend in the world. But if ye have, he can go wi’ ye to perdition for aught I care. [Shivers] Och, but it’s cold in here …

The lights fade.

Music, and then Church bells.

Scene 5

Inside Greyfriars Kirk on a bright morning. Blanchard is in the pulpit. The bells continue underneath.
Blanchard Our text today is from St Paul’s Epistle to the Romans:

“Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him. Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?”

Who are we that we presume to judge one another? Do we not remember the words of our Lord when he urged that the woman taken in adultery be spared: Who are ye that is without sin, for it is ye that should cast the first stone upon her?

We are enjoined to have faith; only so shall we deserve salvation. But faith hath many faces, and takes many paths. Humbly we beg that our own path be a true one, that we shall be saved and that when we pass from this mortal realm we shall be admitted to the Kingdom of Heaven; but let us not glance at the path our neighbour chooses but rest humbly in the hope that we shall meet one another again in Paradise …

His words fade under the sound of the church clock tolling twelve.

Scene 6

The Edinburgh Meadows. As the toll continues, ROBERT enters, looking around eagerly. A young man, STEWART, red-faced, with tousled hair, carelessly, but very expensively dressed saunters by, sees ROBERT and stops.

Stewart Young Robert, Colwan’s brother, ain’t ye?
Robert I am, yes. I do not believe we are acquainted –
Stewart Will Stewart at your service. Very happy to know you, very happy.
Robert You do me too much honour –
Stewart Saw you rip into old Blanchard last week. Splendid!
Robert So you too abhorred the manifest error in his sermon.
Stewart Good Lord, no. Old Blanchard? Sound as a bell on the Bible stuff. But deuced tedious in the pulpit. You certainly livened things up. Don’t know when I’ve ever laughed so much in a kirk.
Robert Then you and I can share no further communion. Do you understand me, sir?

Stewart Not a bit. Know your brother, see. On my way to meet him now. Be a good fellow, come and share a bottle with us. Georgie will be happy to see ye.

Robert You are as mistaken in that as you are in your doctrine. I am to meet my brother here, now.

GIL-MARTIN enters apart and watches. He is richly but soberly dressed in black. He has an unnaturally pale face, and wears a heavy metal ring with a large red stone.

Stewart The devil you say. I don’t believe so. Have an appointment with him – with Tom Drummond and Geordie Munro – the Black Bull in the Grassmarket. Good fellows all of them. Do come along.

Robert I tell you, I have arranged to meet George here, at this hour.

Stewart Mm? Don’t think so. Well, must go. Don’t want to keep the fellows waiting. It’s deuced cold out here. Will Stewart, by the way. Did I say that?

Robert Goodbye, sir.

Stewart Good fellow! Poor old Blanchard. Give your regards to Georgie, shall I? We must crack a bottle soon …

He saunters off unevenly. He passes GIL-MARTIN, who salutes him. STEWART appears not to notice him.

Gil-Martin Robbie – good morning.

Robert I’m sorry –?

Gil-Martin I so rejoiced to meet you at last at Dalcastle. To embrace a brother, though not of the flesh, but in our belief in the same truths, the same mode of redemption, is a true privilege.

Robert Who are you? What d’you want with me?

Gil-Martin Have we not an appointment? Did I not hear the Greyfriars clock tell noon? I feared for a moment you would forsake me for Edinburgh’s gilded youth.

Robert I have an appointment with my brother. My brother George Colwan.

Gil-Martin I can’t believe that, Robbie. George – as your guardian, Mr Wringhim, is rightly certain – numbers among the damned, along
with your father, and all those ... ‘silken women, cavorting in gaudy frenzy’ the other night.

**Robert**
I am at a loss.

**Gil-Martin**
Did you and I not shake hands, and agree to meet here today?

**Robert**
You mean ... you suggest that two days since, at my father’s house, I conversed not with my brother George, but with you?

**Gil-Martin**
Ah, forgive me. I see how it was. You were profoundly curious about your brother, trying, I daresay, to penetrate the very heart of his sinfulness. And in that moment I assumed a striking resemblance to him. It is common enough.

**Robert**
But he ... I ... you alarm me, sir.

**Gil-Martin**
George could never have spoken to you as I did then. You saw just now the sort of people he is familiar with – that young sot, William Stewart, drinking himself to damnation, bent on introducing your brother to every low tavern in Edinburgh. Between them I am afraid they will besmirch the name of Dalcastle.

**Robert**
I confess I was repelled by that man’s conversation.

**Gil-Martin**
Only the justified, the Elect, will extend a hand to you, Robbie, as I did at Dalcastle and do again now. Here ...

*Nervously, ROBERT takes his hand.*

Your state is one to be envied. I envy it, and am come to be your humble disciple; to be initiated into the true way of salvation by conversing with you, learning from you. I am blessed with the means to travel the world for the good of my soul.

**Robert**
Why ... how you seem to know me bewilders me. But it may be you are a friend indeed, and so well met in my present state. These are weeks of great rejoicing in spirit for me. I’m bound to return thanks to the Most High for my election and my redemption from the bonds of sin and misery. If I can be sure of your purpose and that you will join with me heart and hand in thanksgiving, then might we go and worship together?

**Gil-Martin**
Your caution does you credit. Perhaps, if you were to test me on doctrine, I might put your heart at ease?

**Robert**
Thank you, yes, let us sit together, and I will catechise you.

**Gil-Martin**
It will give me the greatest happiness.
They sit.

Robert I have been well instructed by my guardian, the Reverend Robert Wringhim, a gentleman who sees most profoundly into the revelations of the reformed church. If you are to be my disciple, I must be assured that you accept his teaching as wholly and freely as I have done. Above all, you must assure me that you reject the abominable heresy that man may come to God by good works?

Gil-Martin It is a ridiculous and loathsome doctrine that has led men from the true path ever since the divine Nazarene walked on the earth.

Robert Do you believe in the eternal and irrevocable decrees of God, regarding the salvation and condemnation of all mankind?

Gil-Martin It was decreed on the First Day who should be saved and who condemned.

Robert Do you reject the sentimental lie that Christ came down to earth to save all mankind?

Gil-Martin I do.

Robert He came not to save the heathen?

Gil-Martin No.

Robert Nor the many among those who ascribe to his church, but only those few who were predestinied to salvation?

Gil-Martin Only those. To the Devil belong the greater part of mankind. They are his family, his children, and he will glory in them for ever.

Robert Yes. ... I see ... I see you are blessed indeed. I ... Then will you pray with me? What, do you hesitate?

Gil-Martin Your invitation is gracious, but I must decline. We must not beg for ourselves what cannot be granted, nor attempt to intervene on behalf of others. If of the Elect, then our words are superfluous; if of the damned they are futile, we engage only in that sentimental lie you have so eloquently demolished. Our only address to the higher power must be to give thanks for our blessings, and that is done silently in the privacy of our own hearts.

Robert You do not believe in the efficacy of prayer?

Gil-Martin I see you’re shocked. Isn’t prayer posited on the specious belief in the capacity of degenerate man to be saved?

Robert Yes, I suppose it is.
Gil-Martin  Then, according to your own catechism, what is its function, for you know that that is hopeless?

Robert  Yes... Yes, I see that now ...

Pause.

I am eager to question you, my friend. From where you come, and how you seem to know me, for I never saw you before in my life. But first, you will tell me your name?

Gil-Martin  [After hesitating] You may call me ‘Gil’, for the present. You may know me by another name, some time in the future, when more is revealed. But let it be ‘Gil’ for now.

Robert  ‘Gil’? Have you no name but Gil? And which of your names is it – your Christian or your surname?

Gil-Martin  O, a surname, too? Then call me Gil-Martin. It is neither a Christian name, nor a surname, but it will serve your turn.

Robert  Gil-Martin. A name I have never heard before. Are you ashamed of your parents, that you not give your real name?

Gil-Martin  I have no parents. Save one, whom I do not acknowledge. Pray drop the subject. It is disagreeable. I am a being of a peculiar temper, for though I have servants and subjects across the world – and many more than I can number – yet I have travelled a great and particular distance to this city – to seek out you, Robert, and you alone. This – and my true self – are secrets. I pray let them remain so.

Robert  Indeed, as you wish. I begin to see that rather I’m to be a disciple of thine; that I am honoured indeed. Servants and subjects without number! Surely, you are some great potentate, come here in disguise – from Europe, perhaps? Some great country, or city, powerful in the Word, and able to speak in tongues? And seeing by some means my own hunger to avenge the libels and slanders done by the Hittites against our Lord in Heaven – you have selected me to be your help-mate!

Gil-Martin  Do not try to guess too far, Robbie. Say only that we are to be friends, eternally bound together from this moment in our great purpose. There is much to be done. In fire and flame, Robbie. Understand – your mother and guardian tend towards the truth, but they see not as searchingly into things as you do; they are people of words, not action. So it is that their work with you is almost done. You see that, don’t you?

Robert  Yes. Yes. They have raised me well, but I see that I must now go
beyond them. I must follow my own path.

**Gil-Martin**

Good. [Rising] We shall soon become better acquainted, that we may follow that path together, as befits brothers in spirit. May I take your hand once more?

**ROBERT** rises and offers his hand. **GIL-MARTIN** suddenly embraces him, kissing him on the cheek.

Let us meet again tomorrow. May I suggest in the evening, there in Greyfriars kirk?

**Robert**

At Greyfriars! ... Why, yes, I will be there.

**Gil-Martin**

Good. Throughout Europe, Robbie, the righteous are cruelly persecuted. You and I are tasked to strike out against the unbelievers, and make our own kingdom of the Elect, a beacon for the whole of Christendom. And we’ll begin – how fittingly! – in the place you cried out against the anti-Christ. Dovidenja, Robbie.

**GIL-MARTIN** exits. **ROBERT** stares after him, excited.

**Robert**

Gil! ... You are ... You are Czar Peter of Russia, are you not?

**Blackout.**

**Music.** We hear **RABINA & WRINGHIM** singing a psalm.

He that doth in the secret place of the most High reside, under the shade of him that is th' Almighty shall abide.

I of the Lord my God will say He is my refuge still. He is my fortress, and my God, and in him trust I will.

Assuredly he shall thee save, and give deliverance from subtle fowler's snare, and from the noisome pestilence.

**Scene 7**

*The Wringhims’ digs in Edinburgh, the same day.*

**RABINA** is sitting in a chair, embroidering a sampler with a religious text that is in front of her. **WRINGHIM** sits, still and silent, until …
Wringhim  It would be better if he stayed here with us.

Rabina  Robert?

Wringhim  Yes, Robert. He should not wander abroad on the Sabbath.

Rabina  He is naturally curious to see the new city.

Wringhim  The city has its temptations, even for a boy like Robert.

Rabina  Nay, Wringhim, did you not tell him his salvation was assured.

Wringhim  I did.

Rabina  And what better time to go forth than on the Sabbath. Surely no harm can befall him on such a holy day.

Wringhim  You are too innocent. The devil never rests. He sets snares for all of us, even you, Rabina. It is not godly to labour on the Lord’s day.

Rabina  I do but embroider the Lord’s own words, Mr Wringhim: ‘Take not the name of the Lord thy God in vain’. I fear my husband be damned by that sin alone.

Wringhim  It but testifies to the certainty of his damnation; Mr Colwan is not of the Elect.

Rabina  Amen.

WRINGHIM begins to cough. RABINA goes to him.

Wringhim  I was – I was wrong to reproach you, Rabina –

Rabina  Nay, Mr. Wringhim, nay. You must take some physic. I fear it is worse.

Wringhim  It will pass soon enough.

Rabina  It is stuffy in here. The air outside is clear today. A turn or two in the yard will soon mend that cough.

Wringhim  I fear …

Rabina  Fear what, Mr Wringhim –

He shakes his head and exits suddenly.

Rabina  [Calling after him] Wringhim – take your scarf -

Sound of door closing. RABINA returns to her embroidery. She sings:

Assuredly he shall thee save,
   and give deliverance
from subtle fowler's snare, and from
the noisome pestilence.

ROBERT enters. He is in an excitable state, his face flushed and his clothes
disordered. Unseen by her, he watches for a moment.

Robert I see you have idle time enough for your needle, mother.

Rabina [Absorbed] This is not idleness, but work dedicated to the Lord. See.
Surely you understand that? Please pass me that basket of wool.

ROBERT hands her the basket.

Robert But you cannot pretend this will advance His purpose.

Rabina [Taking him in] Robbie? What is wrong? Let me call your guardian -

Robert No, let it just be us two, for a while at least.

He sinks down beside RABINA.

Rabina He has been anxious about you-

Robert You must not be alarmed, Mother. I am exalted, can you not feel it?

Rabina Nay, son, something ails you. You have a fever.

Robert You can feel it – the divine heat that emanates from my very soul.

Rabina No, I am dreadfully cold. Robbie, will you pray with me?

Robert Nay, not now-

Rabina Hand in hand, as we used to, when you were a child?

Robert There is no need for prayer.

Rabina Robbie?

Robert I tell you today I have learned such things. We of the Elect must not
be supplicants, to beg for what cannot be altered. Let the Elect bask
in Heaven’s radiance.

ROBERT lays his head on RABINA’S lap.

Let me warm you, mother. We’ll sit together as we used to, when
you read to me, remember?

Rabina Get up –

Robert Nay, mother –

Rabina Please, I beg you, send for Mr. Wringhim. Please, Robbie!
Robert Very well.

He stands, and RABINA falls to her knees in prayer. ROBERT exits.

[Calling, off] Mr. Wringhim? Mr. Wringhim? … Mr Wringhim, Mrs Colwan wishes to see you.

Rabina [Praying out loud] For now is the axe put unto the root of the trees, so that every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit, is hewn down and cast into the fire. It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God –

Robert [Re-entering] Mother! Stop this, get off your knees -

Rabina [Louder] For upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire, and brimstone, and a horrible tempest - this shall be the portion of their cup. For lo, the Lord is come out of his place, to visit the wickedness of such as dwell upon the earth -

ROBERT tries to pull RABINA to her feet. RABINA resists.

Who may abide the day of his coming? Who shall be able to endure when he appeareth –

Robert Mother – come, this is futile and unseemly –

Rabina His fan is in his hand, and he will purge his floor, and gather his wheat into the barn, but he will burn the chaff with unquenchable fire.

WRINGHIM enters.

Wringhim What’s the matter, Rabina?

Rabina Oh, Mr Wringhim! …

Wringhim Robert?

Robert Sir, I fear my mother is fallen, quite suddenly, into a frenzy.

Rabina Oh, sir, our boy! Our dear boy, Mr Wringhim! Look at him, and speak to him!

Robert You see, she is transported.

Rabina He would not pray with me. I fear he has been tempted by Satan.

ROBERT laughs.

Wringhim God save us, Mrs. Colwan, that is a terrible charge, to lay against your own flesh and blood.
Rabina: Can you not see how he has changed?

Wringhim: Something has indeed befallen you, Robert, either in body or mind. You’re indeed changed, severely so, in your demeanour since this morning.

*He takes ROBERT’s wrist and feels his pulse.*

Have you met with any accident?

Robert: None, whatsoever.

Wringhim: Witnessed anything out of the ordinary course of nature?

Robert: No.

Wringhim: Then, Satan, I fear, has been busy with you, tempting you at this momentous juncture in your life. Tell me, have ye yielded to temptation?

Robert: I have not, Mr. Wringhim. Indeed, if Satan has been busy with me, I knew it not. I have been in sweet conversation this day with one whom I take rather for an angel of light.

Rabina: It is one of the devil’s most profound wiles to appear like one.

Wringhim: Silence, Rabina! This is beyond a woman’s understanding. Tell me, boy: what manner of person was this? And what did he want with you?

Robert: He is a man, I assure you, of great influence and wealth. Come here to further the Lord’s purpose in our reformed church. I am not at liberty to name him – it is necessary he not put himself forward, the better to achieve his aims. Yet he has offered to be my patron and enlist me as a soldier in his great endeavour.

Wringhim: Are you sure of his intentions?

Robert: I am. He offered me true brotherhood. I made so bold as to question him deeply and he adhered to those divine truths in which you have educated me.

Wringhim: Praise be!

Robert: I catechised him with the utmost care, on good works, on the lie that is universal redemption, and on many other points, and found him without error on any. This is no agent of the wicked one, but one with us, determined to expose and denounce the principalities and powers, the might and dominion of the kingdom of darkness.
Mr. Wringhim, his complexion – does this not trouble you?

Wringhim

Robert’s habits have ever been modest. Among our noble families there is a habit of dining on rich food, and harmlessly indulging in wine. This may explain the disorder in his appearance. Is this so, Robert?

Robert

Not in the least. My only intoxication has been fervent conversation on divine matters. It is an exultation of the spirit that makes me strange to you. That should be welcome to you.

Rabina

Yet you would not pray with me. Mr Wringhim, he would not pray with me!

A slight pause.

Wringhim

Well … I am sure, Rabina, that it was out of concern for your distress. Robert, go to your mother, comfort her.

ROBERT offers his hand. She hesitates and then lets him take it.

There, see, your son is restored to you.

Rabina

Is this true, Robbie? Are you still my son?

Robert

I am your true son, mother.

He allows her to embrace him.

Wringhim

Now let us three join in prayer together on this happy day. Come …

Robert

Sir –

WRINGHIM and RABINA both kneel, put their hands together and shut their eyes. Reluctantly, ROBERT also kneels, but his eyes remain open and his hands by his side.

Wringhim

Lord, we beg that you accept our dedication of our son, Robert, to Thee only and forever. We give him unto Thee, soul, body and spirit. Not as one of the wicked of this world, or as a hireling of a church profanely called by Thy name. Accept him, Lord, not as one speaking by rote the lessons taught by the Antichrist, but, as a trumpeter, to herald the revelation of the elect upon earth, and as a mighty voice to denounce all falsehood and error. May he ever be
Thy witness and Thy mouthpiece and may the enemies of Thy church fall back before him in awe and reverence! We beg this of Thee, oh Lord. Thanks be to God.

**Rabina**

We beg this of Thee, oh Lord. Thanks be to God.

**WRINGHIM and RABINA open their eyes and look to ROBERT.**

**Robert**

Thanks. Thanks be to God.

The lights fade.

**MAIRI** sings …

One brother did the other slay  
and took a dagger to his heart.  
The stranger smiled and walked away  
for he had played the devil’s part.  
Yet who slew who no man can say,  
so must we bow our heads and pray.

**Scene 8**

Inside Greyfriars Kirk. It is dusk and lamps are burning. **GIL-MARTIN** sits, reading from a large and singular book. After a few moments **ROBERT** enters.

**Robert**

Sir, I have kept our appointment.

**Gil-Martin**

My dear friend, how could I doubt it? Our lives are written already, hour by hour, moment by moment, in the great book.

**Robert**

Amen to that.

**Gil-Martin**

Why do you stare so?

**Robert**

In the name of Truth, what book is that? Is it a Bible?

**Gil-Martin**

It is my bible.

**Robert**

I see … I see it is printed in columns – and perhaps verses? – but in what language, or alphabet? … But, of course, it is in Russian – cyrillic, I think? It is wonderfully beautiful.

**GIL-MARTIN** merely smiles.

And your ring, sir. That too – it must be of great value.

**Gil-Martin**

It is. Here, look into the stone.

**ROBERT** hesitates as **GIL-MARTIN** proffers him his hand. Then he stares intently at the ring.
What is it you see, Robbie?

Robert Only my own face. But the red shimmers, like flames, most brilliantly.

Gil-Martin What you see is your true self, the hot flame of Heaven burning powerfully in your soul. A soul ready, Robbie, to do God’s work. You’re not only chosen, one of the Elect. I’m here to enlist you in a great and holy cause. Not a mere mouthpiece, Robert. Not a trumpeter. But a sword and a spear to do the will of your true Lord here on earth.

ROBERT seizes GIL-MARTIN’S hand and kisses it fervently.

Robert I am ready, sir. Command me as you will.

Gil-Martin strokes ROBERT’S shoulder.

Gil-Martin Understand this: we cannot blaspheme, we cannot sin. Any such action is become purity the moment it is done. Your salvation cannot be altered. You do believe that?

Robert Yes, yes. I believe it.

Gil-Martin Yet you’re still troubled.

Robert I am ashamed to say that on my return home, my mother recoiled from me. She was afraid.

Gil-Martin To be expected. If her understanding is flawed, she will fear the light of truth.

Robert My mother has ever been a model of goodness and purity.

Gil-Martin She is of the flesh of eve. She, like all women, will always carry the stain of imperfection. And so ever be in awe of you.

Robert I see. Yes.

Gil-Martin stands abruptly.

Gil-Martin Then come.

He walks apart.

What do you think of this house, Robert? Here you challenged that servant of the damned, the Reverend Blanchard, and were beaten for your pains.

Robert I did. When we first arrived in Edinburgh I sought this place out, hoping to find it a true house of God. But I found it like a sewer.
Blanchard spoke brazenly of good works, and of universal forgiveness. I stood up and shouted, denounced his error. I hoped to move his congregation against him, but they bustled me out and beat me to the ground.

Gil-Martin

They would do worse, if they dared. I see into their hearts, Robert. I see the great evil they would do us, how they’d amass the ungodly – here, in this polluted place – to persecute the Elect with fire and flame. Blanchard’s mild manner is a mask, a lie. He and his like have persecuted you, and thousands like you. It is your duty to strike back with all the strength you’ve been given.

Robert

There is danger in such an enterprise.

Gil-Martin

If you are to be a martyr, be a martyr for truth. I know that, in your heart, you are ready. Here, drink this.

He produces a flask and offers it to ROBERT, who hesitates, then drinks.

Gil-Martin takes the flask back.

Gil-Martin

It is the elixir of paradise. Take more.

ROBERT drinks again.

Robert

I was inspired when I stood up here. I beheld Blanchard for what he was. It was for the righteous that I proclaimed against the army of the antichrist.

Gil-Martin

Who wear the masks of saints, but the heart of the evil one?

Robert

Who wear the masks of saints, but the heart of the evil one.

Gil-Martin

I thank my Lord and ruler that you and I are one. For this they call ‘the Church of the God’ is what I am come to your country to help you destroy.

Robert

I praise the Lord for it. But what is to be done?

Gil-Martin

We must burn this and all such manifestations to the ground. What, do you flinch?

Robert

No but … are not your ideas perhaps too sanguinary, too arbitrary for the laws of this country? I dispute not your motive, but have you debated the consequences, and settled the result?

Gil-Martin

I have. I hold my actions amenable to the laws of God. As to the acts of cowardly men, I despise them. Fain would I see the chosen
weapon of the Lord of Hosts begin the work of cleansing that awaits it. Are you not that weapon, Robert?

Robert

What? Yes. Yes, I would be so. Let us do it. But have we the means?

Gil-Martin

There are lamps to provide the flame. In the crypt, under the vestry where the floor is of wood, there are scraps of furniture, cloth, and faggots sufficient to build a holy pyre. Take a lamp, Robert, step below, build it and light it. Let us bring a hot fire from the depths to set this godless realm ablaze. Go now. And be blessed.

Robert

Yes, yes, I will.

ROBERT takes a lamp from a pillar and exits. GIL-MARTIN walks into the shadows behind the pulpit. After a few moments a little smoke invades the church. ROBERT enters from the crypt, looks round for GIL-MARTIN, but cannot see him. He goes to the door, takes the key from the lock and exits. We hear him lock the door from the outside. The fire takes hold, and from behind the pulpit STEWART (pale-faced) appears, admires the fire for a moment, then exits through the door without difficulty. BLANCHARD enters from the vestry.

Blanchard

What?

He goes to the main door. He can’t open it.

Help! Fire! Fire!

After a moment’s hesitation, grabbing something with which to tackle the blaze, he exits into the crypt. The sights and sounds build, and the lights fade.

MAIRI sings …

Three times round the hangman’s tree,
dance at midnight, round and round.
Pray, Master, who is that you see,
that sits atop the burial mound?

Scene 9

The WRINGHIM’s lodgings. RABINA & WRINGHIM sit, reading Bibles by the light of three candles. After a few moments ROBERT enters and sits. RABINA and WRINGHIM kneel together and pray. ROBERT stays seated. RABINA & WRINGHIM stand, glance wonderingly at ROBERT, then exit, each with a candle. ROBERT is unmovable for a moment, then falls to his knees, praying fervently.

Scene 10

Daylight. A Court Room. There are the PROCURATOR, STEWART (hair and clothes
in disarray – he sways in the dock), WAINWRIGHT and onlookers, including GEORGE and Tom DRUMMOND and (separately) ROBERT.

**Procurator** Mr. William Stewart.

*STEWART stares around the court, bemused, smiling.*

You are to answer your name when the court addresses you. Do you understand me, Sir?

**Stewart** Aye, aye. Just so. How do you do, sir.

**Procurator** William Stewart, it is alleged that you deliberately and malevolently set fire to Greyfriars Kirk, causing the death of the good Reverend, Dr. Blanchard, and destroying the building. Now do you understand me, sir –

*STEWART bursts into a madly inappropriate laugh.*

**Procurator** Mr. Stewart –

**Stewart** Burn down a kirk? Me? Not me!

**Procurator** Sir, you are drunk. It is scarcely to be credited, at such a time as this, with such a serious charge against you. Intoxicated!

**Stewart** Am I? I don’t know. I was drunk, with some good fellows. Now my head hurts confoundedly. The fellows I shared a bottle with will vouch for me – look, there’s young Dalcastle – tell them it wasn’t me, Dal!

*GEORGE starts to speak, but is cut off by the PROCURATOR.*

**Procurator** Witnesses will be called in due time. You were clearly seen running from the kirk as smoke began to belch from the tower and the windows shattered. You were observed by one that knows you well. Is that not your witness, Mrs Wainwright?

**Wainwright** It is, sir. Though I would it were not so.

**Procurator** You have known the accused for a number of years, I believe?

**Wainwright** I have, sir. Poor lad. I have served his father as cook in his home at Inverleith for over twenty year.

**Procurator** I see. What was it brought you to Greyfriars Kirk at that time of night?

**Wainwright** My late husband was verger there for many a year, sir. And it fell to
me to wash and iron the cloths and vestments. I do it still, and return them to the kirk every second Tuesday evening. The reverend [breaking down] ... the reverend is always there on that night to receive them.

Procurator  Yes ... So there can be no doubt in your mind that this was the man you saw running from the fire.

Wainwright  He passed me very close – indeed it was clear he recognised me as I recognised him. Then he pulled his coat over his face to hide it from me. He was dressed exactly as you see him now. It was odd that his face was unusually pale – as you can see he has such a bonny colour – but I mind he was in shock at what he had done. I hope indeed he was wishing he had never dreamt of such a terrible, evil thing.

Stewart  Wainey! I was never in Greyfriars kirk but the once this year, when old Blanchard was roasted that time. On Monday night I was with my friends, George Colwan and Adam Gordon at the Black Bull in the Grassmarket. We shared a bottle – more than one –

George  That is true, sir, he was. Gordon and I will vouch for him.

Procurator  You are George Colwan?

George  Yes, sir.

Procurator  He was with you all night, is that? I mean, all evening?

George  Well, yes ... um, at least from about six o’clock until ten.

Procurator  Four hours in a tavern, Mr Colwan? You must have consumed a mighty draught or two. Can you be absolutely sure Mr. Stewart was with you unbrokenly through those hours? Greyfriars is but a step away from the Grassmarket.

George  Well ... yes, I think so ...

Procurator  Mrs Wainwright, had you spent four hours in a tavern that evening?

Wainwright  Indeed not, sir! Liquor has never passed my lips, nor am I familiar with any tavern. I will testify to that on the Bible.

Procurator  And you remain convinced that it was Mr Stewart you saw running from the fire?

Wainwright  I fear I do, sir. Yet I canna believe it. It may be that he’s no right in the head, for he loves his bottle. But he has a good heart.

*As a bewildered STEWART shakes his head, a note is passed to the PROCURATOR.*
Stewart I am sorry that I mocked the old gentleman. Truly –

Procurator Will ye be quiet, please! … A search has been made of your lodgings, Mr Stewart, and books have been found there. I cannot bring myself to name them. Books that are Satanic and licentious, books that praise the devil and talk of conjuring him. This is more than ordinary wickedness.

Stewart No, no. Some books I have that you might say are indecent, but no more. I have always loved the church. I am an Episcopal, sir. Ask my mother, ask old Blanchard – oh …

A silence.

Procurator William Stewart, I find ample cause to commit you to the High Court of Justiciary for trial on the charges of arson, witchcraft and murder. I will hear no request for bail. Take him away, Officer.

Court dismissed.

Stewart [Crying out] Wainy! Ask my mother to forgive me. Please! For the love of God!

The room empties, but for GEORGE and DRUMMOND on one side and ROBERT on the other.

George Poor Stewart! How can this be, Tom? Wainwright seemed sincere enough, but it cannot be true. Stewart was with me and Gordon on Monday. He may be simple, yet he’s a good-hearted man. And he always stood for the rightful church. He’d sooner spit in his own drink than burn down a kirk.

Drummond He’s a fool and a drunkard. The wonder is he had the wit to do it. But look at the evidence, George. I daresay you’d like to swear he never left you awhile on Monday, but at the trial will you truly be able to? The Bull was very full, and we talked to many friends …

George But what can we do for him, Tom?

Drummond Keep him drunk until they hang him. That would be the kindest thing. Who’s that pale-faced fellow over there? He stares at us as if we were guilty too.

George Who are you, sir? Would you anything with us?

Robert I have as much right to stand here as you, I am sure. One day it will be revealed that I have a greater right.

George What the devil d’ye mean by that?

Robert You will see. I have friends.
George  So? What friends? You’re an odd one, to be sure. Come, Tom, this place makes me shiver. Will ye come home wi’ me and share some bread?

Drummond  Willingly. This is an unhappy place indeed.

GEORGE and DRUMMOND exit. ROBERT turns to go the other way and finds he is face to face with GIL-MARTIN.

Robert  Great sovereign!

Gil-Martin  Robbie.

Robert  I am heartily glad to see you. An innocent man is charged with a deed committed by another.

GIL-MARTIN lays a hand on ROBERT’S shoulder.

Gil-Martin  Never grieve over Stewart, Robbie. Books praising the devil! D’you not see the greater purpose at work? Both he and Blanchard are destined to burn. What matters when the fire is lit? And this world is now the purer. You are doubly blessed in this outcome.

Robert  That Stewart will hang for it?

Gil-Martin  Ay, indeed. He’s far worse to come, against which the stretching of his neck will seem the caress of the most voluptuous whore. Forget him … yes? … I see you have at last met your brother George.

Robert  Yes, the first – well, yes, the first time I ever spied him.

Gil-Martin  He’s a fair young man.

Robert  So the world esteems him.

Gil-Martin  He seems to stand in the sun. But you’re not deceived. You see him in his true colours, eager to defend the antichrist.

Robert  My father loves him dearly, which is proof enough. I am ashamed that my mother’s blood should be so contaminated with his. I would I could outface him, show the world how base and blighted he makes the Colwan name.

Gil-Martin  An apt and just wish. Have patience, Robbie. When the sun next breaks through the mist I will see you triumph again.

GIL-MARTIN exits. ROBERT stands thinking as the lights go down.

MAIRI sings …

*Three times round the hangman’s tree,*
dance at midnight, weave a spell.
Pray, Mistress, who is that you see?
Why do you shake? Nay, do not tell.

Scene 11

A misty dawn, high on Arthur’s Seat. Shadowy figures gather, perhaps wrapped up against the dawn chill.

GEORGE and Tom DRUMMOND arrive, slightly apart.

Drummond The day promises well, George. But a heavy dew – we’ll have to mind our footing. I slipped twice on the way up. D’you see across the valley yet?

George Nae, the mist is still thick.

They come together, and GEORGE speaks confidentially.

Tom, I have barely the heart for this today. It grieves me so about poor Will. And those books they say they found!

Drummond Ay, the books will hang him, and there’s an end. Come, George, the mist is thinning, put Stewart out of your mind for an hour and fence.

They put aside the swords and the dirks they wear, and kit-up for the match; subject to further research this may be padded jerkins and masks.


1st Man Good morning, sir. I’ve put a shilling on you to win, so look lively. The first to nine hits, is it?

Drummond The first to nine it is. I’ll do my best, man, but you know Mr Colwan’s a keen blade.

2nd Man Come, Mr Colwan. I’ve put my only guinea on you, sir!

George A guinea! Why friend, Drummond here may make you a poor man before you can blink.

2nd Man Ay, or a rich one. That fool McGilvrey’s given me eleven to one.

Woman Caught him in his cups did you?

Laughter.

Drummond Come, George!

They start to fence. – a few calls of ‘hit’ etc – during which ROBERT appears. The first few hits happen quickly, then become more widely spaced.
2nd Man

A hit! Four two to you now, Mr Colwan! That’s the way, sir. Make it another for me!

Robert

Oh yes, make it another, Mr Colwan! That’s the way, that’s the way!

George

Come again, Tom. Your friend will lose his shilling at this rate.

Robert

His shilling! His shilling! Why, would ye play for money and be damned, George?

George

[Lifting his mask] What? Be damned?

Robert

Ay, be damned in your devilish games.

Woman

Aw, get away with you, man! Take your Calvinish chatter and away hame wi’ ye!

Robert does not move.

Drummond

Ignore him, George. Here, I’m ready!

They play again. Two or three more hits. ROBERT moves closer and closer to the action.

2nd Man

Six four to Mr Colwan!

Robert

Six four! Six four! So my arithmetic tells me that’s ten hits to the devil!

Groans and expostulations. ROBERT moves close behind GEORGE. Again, play is prevented. Both GEORGE and DRUMMOND remove their masks (if they have them). They do not put them back again.

George

Pray, sir, scorn us if you must, but be so good as keep off the field.

Robert

Is there any law or enactment that can compel me to do so?

George

I am sure there is not, sir. I speak for your own safety, and ours.

Robert

You hold the blade, not I. If you would assault me, you shall pay the price.

Drummond

Come, sir, this is foolishness. You spoil our sport, and to what end?

Robert

A greater end than you imagine.

Drummond

Here …

DRUMMOND drops his foil and grabs ROBERT, drags him off the field and throws him to the ground. ROBERT has not resisted and makes no attempt to stand up. The play resumes. After a few passes ROBERT stands and walks right behind GEORGE. There are cries and groans from the small crowd and, turning suddenly to look,
GEORGE catches ROBERT in the jaw with the hilt of his foil. ROBERT falls and bleeds.

George
Does any of you know who this infernal puppy is? That was his own fault.

2nd Man
D'ye not know, sir? That's a strange thing. The gentleman's your ain brother, Mr Robert Colwan.

Robert
Not Colwan, sir. Wringhim. Wringhim! I have renounced the name Colwan.

George
Ay, and well you might. So you are Robert. [To the 2nd Man] Say you true, friend?

2nd Man
Ay, nae doot o' that.

George
Well, I apologise. I did not mean to injure you, or insult you, Robert. You took me by surprise. I pray you, pardon me, and give me your hand.

Still on the ground, ROBERT kicks out at GEORGE'S proffered hand.

Robert
There's what suits such a hand better than my own. [Getting up]
Well, are there to be no more of these damned fine blows, gentlemen? For shame, to give up such an edifying and profitable game! Come play!

GEORGE and DRUMMOND start to play again. ROBERT, making his bloodied face obvious to all, suddenly steps between the players. Protests from the crowd, including:

4th Voice
Kick the fool down, or throw him off the cliff!

George
No, by no means! He wants nothing else. I pray, don’t even touch him. [Quietly to ROBERT] I beg you, Robert, retire to a safe distance. Else we cannot be certain ye’ll not be hurt. And neither I nor Drummond could be answerable, however sore it be.

Robert
I will take my chance of that. Hurt me, any of you, at your peril. It is my pleasure to be here, at this time, and I am sure I have as much right to occupy the common field as any.

Drummond
Then you are no gentleman, sir.

Robert
Are you one, sir?

Drummond
I hope, by God, I am sir!

Robert
Then thanks be to Him whose name you profane, I am none. If one
of this party be a gentleman, I do hope in God I am not! Play on, sirs. What troubles you? Play on!

Drummond    Enough! George, be so good as to manage your basilisk brother. I’ll play no further until you do. There’s tainted blood there, I tell you, Wringhim or Colwan, I care not –

DRUMMOND turns away and throws his foil to the ground. GEORGE turns him round rather roughly with his free hand.

George    You’ll not insult me that way, Drummond. We’ve not finished yet. Eight five to me!

He picks his sword from its sheath on the ground.

Here. Come – first blood takes all!

Drummond    [Taking up his own sword] I’ll not refuse you. A real blade’s always been a happier one for me …

ROBERT moves close behind GEORGE, dogging his footsteps as the fight becomes furious. DRUMMOND lunges dangerously at GEORGE, who parries.

Robert    Why, Mr Drummond, you will lose your friend a shilling!

As DRUMMOND turns furiously to ROBERT, GEORGE makes a sudden thrust at him, gashing his arm from behind, then drops his sword, appalled at what he has done. A groan from the onlookers.

3rd Man    Badly played, sir!

Robert    A damned fine blow, I declare!

DRUMMOND drops his sword, looks at his wound, then begins to run at GEORGE. The 1st MAN holds him back.

1st Man    Nae, sir, stop. It’s over.

George    Forgive me, Tom. I lost my head –

Drummond    Let go of me. I swear you’ll pay for that, Colwan –

1st Man    Come, sir, come, you bleed, ye must look to your wound.

Drummond    Damn you, Colwan. You and your foul, half-breed brother.

1st Man    Mr Colwan, stay here, sir. Leave this to us. Tempers must cool a while.

The 1st MAN gathers up the foils (leaving Drummond’s sword and dirk) and leads DRUMMOND off. The other ONLOOKERS drift away.
Robert  Look how they despise you now, George. I would not have friends such as yours for all the wealth you will inherit.

George  You know full well from whom they flee. You’re like some malevolent spirit, come to spoil our sport.

Robert  Why should I not? I am chosen to make you face your own degeneracy. You are corrupted by sin, bloated by it, for all your blithe looks, your fine clothes and your courtesy.

George  Tell me your true purpose, Robert, else I swear I will throw you from this precipice and damn the consequences.

*ROBERT laughs. GEORGE hits him, Robert falling to the ground.*

Tell me, you devil!

*GEORGE threatens him with his sword. ROBERT screams.*

Robert  Spare me, spare me, brother!

George  Tell me!

Robert  I meant no harm. I meant no harm. I did nothing but for your good. I intended nothing at heart but your unspeakable profit. Your great and endless good.

George  So you came not by chance – you sought me here? You knew where to find me?

Robert  Yes.

George  How? We have never set eyes on each other before today. Who told you I would fence with Drummond here?

Robert  A friend.

George  Who? What friend?

Robert  You do not know him.

George  How then does he know me?

Robert  I cannot tell.

George  Was he here present with you today?

Robert  Yes, he was not far distant. He came to this hill with me.

George  Then where is he now?

Robert  I cannot tell.
George: Why then, confess it was the devil told you how to find me.
Robert: What?
George: The devil.
Robert: [Getting to his feet] Ah, George, how little you understand! Is there none but the Evil One can tell future actions from past ones? It was the Good Lord that led me here. I had no aim in seeking you but your good! I give you my word.
George: Then, Robert, though you … well, I must – I will – believe you. I am disposed to be hasty and passionate, a fault, I know in my nature. But I never meant you evil, or to hurt you. I would as soon stretch out my hand to my own life, or my father’s, as to yours. [Offering his hand] So now, once and for all, may we be reconciled? Part – and remain – friends?
Robert: I … Would that be expedient?
George: What? How ‘expedient’?
Robert: Would the lark shake hands with the adder? Reconciled? To what would I be reconciled?
George: To your brother! Here – your own brother’s hand, Robert.

ROBERT stares at him for a moment, and then looks away.

Well, I’ll swear I cannot fathom thee. But I pity thee, Robert. I do, with all my heart.

GEORGE exits quickly. ROBERT watches him go, then drops to the ground, his head buried in his hands. The lights change. GIL-MARTIN slowly approaches. He kneels beside ROBERT and cradles his head.

Robert: Is it you?
Gil-Martin: Aye, Robbie, it is.
Robert: I can’t see you.
Gil-Martin: I’m here, Robbie. Close your eyes. Can you see me now?
Robert: Yes.
Gil-Martin: I’ll always be with you, Robbie. Is not that a comfort?
Robert: Yes.
Gil-Martin: Then why do you not rejoice?
Robert: My brother. I came to him, as you said. Though not of the Elect, I came to him humbly, in friendship, that he might at least understand his error. He flouted me, hit me with his sword, and made mock of me with his friends.

Gil-Martin: Ay, I watched. My heart swelled with pride. You discomfited them in their heathen sport and called down the wrath of heaven on them.

Robert: He struck me!

Gil-Martin: So? You have so seared his soul that he will never know another night’s rest.

Robert: Forgive me, great sir -

Gil-Martin: What?

Robert: I am ignorant of many things …

Gil-Martin: Speak.

Robert: Why, when you saw my brother strike me, did you not intervene? I know you to be a man of infinite power. Had you wished it, you could have commanded an army to lay him low.

Gil-Martin: Ah, Robbie, d’yo u not divine the reason?

Robert: You must have reason, but what it is, I cannot guess.

Gil-Martin: Deep in your heart you know. How many miles I have travelled to be with you, to enlist you in the great task. Have we not vowed to confound the blasphemers, the heathens who walk among us and pretend they will share with us in everlasting life? There can be no pity for those who mock the true Word.

Robert: I am sensible of the great honour you do me –

Gil-Martin: And you have accepted the bitter hardships you must face, that you’ll be reviled for doing the Lord’s work?

Robert: I will, sir. I will wear the odium of the world as a badge of honour.

*GIL-MARTIN clasps ROBERT in his arms.*

Gil-Martin: That’s bravely spoken, Robbie and I love you for it. Now we’re of one mind, I’ll tell you why I’d not intervene. To give you the honour of doing the world a great service.

Robert: What service, sir?
Gil-Martin: Why, to dash out George Colwan’s brains.

Robert: What? I cannot believe ...

Gil-Martin: Believe what?

Robert: That you would sanction such a wickedness.

Gil-Martin: [Pushing ROBERT to the ground] Come, sir. I’ve travelled too far. What’s this – have ye the heart of a woman?

Robert: You’d have me slaughter my own brother? To become as Cain –

Gil-Martin: This is heresy, Robert. You are no Cain, and your brother’s no Abel. He’s an enemy to divine truth. Yes, he looks fair, with his bottomless purse, his fine clothes, and his bonny smile. See into his mind, Robbie, into that riot of filth. Hear him laugh and blaspheme when he’s in his cups, watch him waste your father’s treasure, see him sit atop his whores in their polluted beds –

Robert: Stop! Stop! God, who sees all, will punish him.

Gil-Martin: In time, yes. But now, Robbie, now. He is an enemy to you, to Christendom itself. He has struck you once. He will do so again. Run you through with no more compunction than he would feel at swatting a fly.

Robert: I know … I know he is wicked –

Gil-Martin: Wicked! The man is party to the vilest plot, a proven enemy to the Word. George Colwan, and his like, is why I have come to this place, Robbie. To counter the dark with the light. Yours is the light, Robbie. You are the light. The soundness of your doctrine’s the beacon that has given me hope.

Robert: Oh, sire, you do me too much honour.

Gil-Martin: But what use is doctrine without action?

Robert: No use, I suppose.

Gil-Martin: I offer you this great task, the privilege of ending your cursed brother’s life. And tonight there can be no fitter moment. Tonight he goes to a bagnio, where he will slake his lust. He will be found naked, in the depths of his sin, and at your mercy.

Robert: To enter such a house of shame would burn my very soul.

Gil-Martin: Nay, Robert. There is a divine mechanism at work. Can you not hear its wheels? They have driven us from the day of creation.
turn your basest action into gold. You cannot sin, Robert. All that you do is divinely ordained.

**Robert**
You saw how he felled me. I have not the strength to take the life of another human being.

**Gil-Martin**
George Colwan must die tonight, whether by your hand or not ... ?

*ROBERT remains silent, perhaps shakes his head.*

Well, I am disappointed in you, Robbie, but so be it. I shall undertake the great task myself.

**Gil-Martin**
picks a sword from the ground.

The sword of Tom Drummond. A timely gift from Heaven.

**Robert**
Forgive me, great lord.

**Gil-Martin**
If I die in the attempt I shall die a martyr. I will dwell in glory.

**Robert**
The world shall know of your sacrifice.

**Gil-Martin**
Will you not accompany me? Will you not grant me that?

**Robert**
I – it shall be as you wish.

**Gil-Martin**
Then I am content.

*GIL-MARTIN pulls ROBERT to his feet. He picks Drummond's dirk from the ground and proffers it to ROBERT.*

Drummond left this for you, look. You must take it for your own protection. There are those there that will defend their own kind, their wealth and their entitlement, to the death. Take it, man!

*ROBERT takes the dirk. GIL-MARTIN claps him in an embrace.*

Come away with me. We have much to do before nightfall.

*GIL-MARTIN and ROBERT walk away as the lights fade and the sounds of revelry from a tavern build.*

**Scene 12**

A bedroom in an Edinburgh tavern. GEORGE's sword lies in its scabbard on the floor at one side of the bed. His dirk lies on top of his pile of clothes on the other side. GEORGE is mumbling in his sleep. BEL CALVERT, a woman in her forties, is sitting beside GEORGE, lacing up her bodice. Distant fiddle music, and the sound of laughter can be heard through the floor. GEORGE'S mumbling increases. BEL turns and shakes him awake. GEORGE sits up with a shout.
Bel What ails you, Mr. Colwan. No a guilty conscience, I hope?
George Bel – is that you?
Bel You dinnae seem religious half an hour past.
George I must have been dreaming.
Bel Awful bad dream, was it?
George I don’t remember.

BEL goes over to a bucket of water, takes a cloth from it, lifts her skirt and starts to wash.

Bel Are you going to the cards?
George I’ll not be welcome there tonight.
Bel Go away with you. Two young bucks with their blood up. It’ll be forgot by tomorrow.
George Perhaps. I own the fault was mine. I don’t care for company while there is bad feeling.

GEORGE lifts the pillow and adjusts it under his head. As he does, he dislodges a rosary from under the pillow.

Bel Well you cannae stay here. I’ve got my living to make.
George [Gesturing with the rosary] Why, Bel, I never knew you were a papist.
Bel Give it to me –
George Nay, Bel – such a pretty trinket. Why would you hide it away?

They tussle on the bed.

Bel Give it back!
George Take it, Bel. I meant no harm. I care not if you are a Papist or a Mahometan.
Bel Well, there are many in this town that do.
George Aye, if those gentlemen prevail, we shall both meet in Hades.
Bel Time you were gone – I’ve customers waiting. You’re not the only young blade with money in his britches.
George Not yet, Bel.
Bel

What, you’re no satisfied yet? Well, ye know my fee.

George

Ay. Take it from my pocket there. I just want to stay a while longer.

The lights dim. BEL shivers as she takes the money. We hear raucous laughter from downstairs.

Bel

It’s freezing in here. Can you no feel it?

George

Come here, Bel. Let me warm you –

BEL begins to unlace herself again. There is a hammering on the door.

Drummond

[Off] George Colwan, damn your soul, will ye hide away with your whore? Come out and fight.

George

What? [Calling] For God’s love, Tom. If I offended you, then I ask your pardon, truly I do –

Drummond

[Off] Pardon? It’s too late for that –

The door bursts open and DRUMMOND enters, his sword drawn. ROBERT can be glimpsed behind him on the landing. GEORGE reaches to the floor for his sword, but DRUMMOND moves it out of reach with his foot.

BEL steps in between them.

Bel

No! No! Help! Murder!

DRUMMOND strikes BEL with the hilt of his sword. He then turns her round and pushes her to the floor. She covers her bloodied face, and hears but does not see.

Drummond

Pox-ridden papist harlot –

GEORGE seizes his dirk and grabs DRUMMOND round the neck from behind.

George

You’ll answer to me for that, Drummond. Strike a woman, would you? Who’s the coward now?

Drummond

Spare me, George, spare me! (Shouting) Friend, will ye not help?

ROBERT enters silently, holding DRUMMOND’s dirk. He stands behind GEORGE.

Ye’ll not let him slaughter me?

George

Who are you talking to?

Turning his head, he sees ROBERT. ROBERT hesitates, then stabs GEORGE.

Robert

Anti-Christ!
George        What … what have I … Brother, have you … oh, God!

GEORGE collapses. ROBERT flees.

DRUMMOND watches GEORGE for a moment, picks up his sword, looks at BEL, with his foot checks that GEORGE is dead.

Bel         Fiend!

DRUMMOND salutes her.

Drummond    I am at your service, madam. You will remember my face another time, I hope?

Bel         I’ll ne’er forget you, Tom Drummond, ‘til I see you hanged.

Drummond    Good wench!

He tries to kiss her, then turns on his heel and exits the room. BEL sinks on to her knees beside the body of GEORGE. The noise of the revellers below grows louder.

End of Act 1