

THE HAPPY PRINCE

by

Rupert Everett

1 INT. NURSERY. LONDON 1890.

1

An extravagantly dressed MAN reads to TWO BOYS in a bed.

MAN

'Dear little swallow' said the Prince. You tell me of marvellous things, but more marvellous than this is the suffering of men and women. There is no mystery so great as suffering. Fly over my city, little swallow, and tell me what you see there.'

2 EXT. PARIS 1900. NIGHT.

2

Heavy rain. Blurred dreamlike images appear through it. A group laughing round a table. Feet dashing across wet cobbles. A drenched Child begging by a Morris Column. The black silhouette of a carriage and horses splashing past him. A street materialises - seen through a sheet of rain pouring down the awning of a cafe. People are huddled comfortably inside watching the down pour.

MAN V.O.

So the swallow flew over the great city, and saw the rich making merry in their beautiful houses, while in the dark lanes, the white faces of starving children looked out listlessly at the black streets. At a table sat a broken man, an empty tumbler by his side with a bunch of withered violets. He was a writer but he was too cold to finish his play.

3 EXT. CAFE DE LA PAIX. BOULEVARD ST GERMAIN. NIGHT.

3

A blotchy elephantine vagrant sits alone in a ring of empty tables staring into his glass. He wears a frayed coat and has thin long badly dyed hair. He looks up. Straight at us. Dead watery eyes. It is OSCAR WILDE

OSCAR

It's a dream!

He drains the glass, rummages for money, rises with difficulty, and shambles off down the crowded street

4 EXT. BOULEVARD ST GERMAIN. PARIS. NIGHT.

4

The CITY OF LIGHT in all its glory. Cafes overflow onto the street.

Men and women in evening dress take the air, the 'monde' and the 'demi monde', urchins selling violets, the whole melting pot are out on this wet October night under the gas light, the plane trees and the swirling Van Gogh stars.

The rain stops. OSCAR weaves through the crowds with his head down.

A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN flanked by TWO MEN in SHINY TOP HATS comes onto the street from a restaurant. They are talking loudly in English.

Collision. The WOMAN and OSCAR briefly lock eyes, but he moves quickly on.

The TRIO continue, arm in arm. The two MEN chat amiably as the WOMAN looks puzzled. Suddenly she stops.

TOP HAT ONE
What is it, my dear?

WOMAN
I think I left my fan.

Before TOP HAT can object she has turned around just in time to see OSCAR disappear in the crowd.

She follows, swimming against the pedestrian tide. She's lost him.

5 EXT. SIDE STREET. PARIS. NIGHT.

5

In sharp contrast to the brightly lit Boulevard this narrow alley is dark and empty. OSCAR is a lumbering silhouette at the far end.

The WOMAN appears at the corner.

WOMAN
Mr. Wilde!

OSCAR stops.

With her heart in her mouth the WOMAN moves into the shadows. He turns.

WILDE
Madam?

WOMAN
Surely you remember me? I am Mrs.
Arbuthnott. I came to all your
first nights!

6 FLASHBACK. INT. LONDON THEATRE. NIGHT. 1893.

6

A standing ovation. No sound

MRS. ARBUTHNOTT applauds enthusiastically. She is laughing.

7 EXT. SIDE STREET. PARIS. NIGHT.

7

OSCAR

Of course, Madam. One never
forgets such a face. How kind of
you to speak to me. You are well,
I see.

MRS. ARBUTHNOTT

(moved)

I am well, sir, but how are you?

The TWO MEN appear at the end of the alley.

MAN

Lydia. Come here immediately!

MRS ARBUTHNOTT

I shall have to go.

OSCAR

You couldn't lend me five pounds,
could you? Things are a little
tight at present. I feel ghastly
asking like this, but...

MRS ARBUTHNOTT rummages in her purse. Thrusts all her money
into his hand. She is crying.

MAN

Lydia!

MRS ARBUTHNOTT

I'm coming! Goodbye Mr. Wilde. I
wish...

OSCAR

Never wish, Madam. It might come
true! But adieu, and thank you
for a moments harmony in a
discordant fugue.

She turns and goes back to the TWO MEN.

MAN

Never speak to my wife again or I
shall kill you, do you hear?

8 FLASHBACK. INT. LONDON THEATRE NIGHT. 1893.

8

The TWO MEN laugh and applaud. No sound.

9 EXT./INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. PARIS. NIGHT.

9

OSCAR enters the hotel d'Alsace. He climbs the stairs of this dark and dingy HOTEL.

Sounds of a squabble as a door opens and shuts.

He drags himself up by the banister. He stops to catch his breath. He holds his ear as if there is a deafening noise.

M. DUPOIRIER, the HOTEL manager is coming down the stairs with a TRAY.

DUPOIRIER

(in french)

Any news of your bank draft,
today, M. Melmoth?

OSCAR

(also in French)

Alas no, M. Dupoirier, but fear
not, M. Ross is arriving tomorrow
with royalties, contracts and cash.

DUPOIRIER

Excellent news, Monsieur!

10 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

10

Lit by a flickering gas jet. OSCAR'S room is small with a linoleum floor and dark wallpaper featuring tightly packed flowers and leaves. A small window looks out onto a courtyard.

OSCAR regards himself in a MIRROR. His ear is bleeding. He touches it carefully with a finger, then smears the mirror with blood.

OSCAR

See! See where Christ's blood
streams through the firmament!

His reflection shimmers and the room suddenly lurches behind him.

OSCAR blinks and clutches the table.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What is happening to me?

The strange spasm passes and he applies rouge and foundation. Greases his hair with an evil looking tincture, sprays some perfume in his mouth and leaves.

11 OMITTED

11

12 INT. BAR CALISAYA. NIGHT.

12

A YOUNG MAN and a BOY sit at a back table - JEAN a handsome twenty year old who sells violets, and his consumptive brother LEON, a matchstick boy. Although they are rough, LEON is weeping. JEAN sees OSCAR and gestures.

OSCAR

(french)

What is the matter with our little sparkler. Dear Leon weep no more. I beg!

JEAN

The sisters from the Orphanage came for him, and all his matches got nicked.

LEON

(bursting into fresh tears)

Don't let them take me back there Jo. I'll be more careful, I promise.

JEAN

All I'm saying is it could be better for everyone. You'll be safe and I wont always be worrying. It's getting too fucking dangerous around here.

LEON

But we're brothers. We should be together.

LEON puts his head in his hands and cries. JEAN sighs and looks at OSCAR for help.

OSCAR

Well, this is too frightful! But I too have news. A sudden windfall enables me to offer you both at least absinthe and cocaine on the eve of departure and a purple moment for me, if, Leon, you will lend me your relation for the usual consideration?

He produces a coin. LEON looks up. Takes the coin.

LEON
(sniffing)
Well... twenty minutes. And you
have to finish that story.

13 INT. SQUALID HOTEL BEDROOM. NIGHT.

13

OSCAR lies on a filthy bed in a squalid room. Noises of bonking and bedsprings through the ceiling. JEAN, a lithe panther with his trousers down, sprinkles powder into cotton wool balls, puts one in the side of his mouth and gives another to OSCAR.

OSCAR
You know I don't think I've ever
been happier in my life. In this
room. At this moment. The light
from the street.

JEAN
What light?

OSCAR
It carves you in marble, dear
boy! We are lost in our own
world. Shrouded in a symphony of
adjacent copulation. It's really
quite good!

He counts out notes on the bed. JEAN looks at him with obvious affection.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I know you love me, Johnny, even
though our purple hours are
sullied by green notes. But what
can one do?

OSCAR lurches from the bed, doing up his flies, tucking in his shirt, to the door. He opens it. LEON falls in.

LEON
(unapologetic)
That was nearly an hour. Story
time.

OSCAR
Where was I?

LEON
Under the bridge.

OSCAR
Oh, yes. Under the bridge.

They all pile onto the bed. LEON coughs.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Under the bridge two little boys
were lying in one another's arms
to try and keep themselves warm.
How hungry we are they said. You
must not lie here shouted the
watchman and they wandered out
into the rain.

14

EXT. PARIS STREET. NIGHT.

14

The incongruous TRIO walk down a rainy street.

OSCAR V.O.

The swallow flew back and told
the prince what he had seen. I am
covered with fine gold said the
prince. You must take it off leaf
by leaf and give it to the poor;
the living always think that gold
can make them happy.

15

INT. CAFE CONCERT. NIGHT.

15

Chaos. MEN in TALL HATS, TARTS and PIMPS. Banquettes overflow. WAITERS weave through the tables with loaded trays.

A stringy WOMAN sings on a stage at one end of the hall. She is dressed for a beggars ball and harshly lit by footlights.

OSCAR and THE BROTHERS arrive. OSCAR surges towards the stage, interrupting the performance.

OSCAR

Dear Lottie, sing to me sweet
nightingale and crack my
calcified heart with your
warbles. Garcon!

They settle at a table. A WAITER appears

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Absinthe.

A YOUNG MAN in uniform, MAURICE GILBERT is talking with another man in the shadows

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Ahh, mon legionnaire! Maurice,
come here immediately and ravish
me!

MAURICE prowls across the room towards OSCAR who watches him transfixed.

LEON and JEAN giggle helplessly.

MAURICE salutes and OSCAR pulls him on to his knee.

A MAN with a TART watches them in disgust.

MAN

Revolting pig! Returning to your vomit!

MAURICE grabs the man by his lapel, still sitting on OSCAR'S knee. The TART shrieks.

MAURICE

You insult my friend, Monsieur.
Apologize now or I will kill you.

MAN

Get your hands off me, filth.

MAURICE leaps up sending the table flying. Glasses smash. Wine is spilt. THE TART screams again.

OSCAR

(oblivious)

How could I resist. Look! The profile of Napoleon...

MAURICE shakes the MAN like a rat. A chair breaks. They fall to the floor.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

without any of the more disappointing features!

MAURICE

You don't speak to my friend like that, understand. Cunt!

Standstill. Music stops. WAITERS surge forward led by THE MANAGER, a stocky woman in black.

MANAGER

Him, out! Take your tart with you! You, soldier. Sit down

OSCAR

Ahh, Madame, a few ruffled plumes, no more

MANAGER

You! Shut your fucking face. Look at the damage! Who's paying?

OSCAR
I am. I shall sing for you.

JEAN
Shut up, Oscar. Sit down.

OSCAR
(wide eyed)
May I?

THE MANAGER turns to the room.

MANAGER
What do you say? Sing or pay?

THE CROWD
SING!

LOTTIE the stringy singer shields her eyes and squints through the footlights.

LOTTIE
What the fuck's going on?

THE BOYS pick up the table and haul OSCAR onto it. A shaky follow spot crosses the hall, picking out sweaty faces, glassy eyes and open mouths till it circles OSCAR, panting and livid.

MAURICE starts a round of applause. Whistles and cheers.

THE BAND plays an introduction.

OSCAR
The boy I love is up in the gallery.
The boy I love is looking down at me.
There he is! Can't you see?
Waving his handkerchief.
As merry as a cricket that sings on the lee

THE CROWD enjoy the show and sing along with the chorus, to the delight of OSCAR and his friends.

Tremendous applause as the song ends.

OSCAR is bleeding from the ear. His eyes bulge and he is sweating. Hair dye and powder trickle down his ecstatic face. He swoops down into an elaborate bow and crashes unconscious to the floor.

A huge burst of applause.

16

FLASHBACK. INT. LONDON THEATRE. NIGHT. 1893.

16

OSCAR (back to us) straightens from a deep bow. He is before a glittering first night audience. The theatre is packed.

OSCAR

The actors have given us a charming rendering of a delightful play.

More applause. CONSTANCE, OSCAR'S wife watches nervously. A GROUP OF YOUNG MEN, ROBBIE ROSS, REGGIE TURNER, and others wear green carnations.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

And your appreciation has been most intelligent.

Faces explode with mirth. Details of glistening teeth. Ferocious eyes. Manic applause. Whispering in ears.

MRS ARBUTHNOTT sits between the TWO MEN laughing.

OSCAR looks like a toad in the footlights and throws a huge shadow against the red velvet curtain behind him. He has a metallic blue carnation in his buttonhole and a gold tipped cigarette smoking in his hand.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I congratulate you on the success of your performance...

Hysterical laughter.

which persuades me that you think almost as highly of the play as I do myself.

OSCAR waits for the next laugh, but there is none, only an uncomfortable silence with a few coughs.

CONSTANCE covers her face with her hands.

17

FLASHBACK. INT. THE OLD BAILEY. DAY 1895.

17

Another audience, grim and menacing.

Another stage. The dock.

A HAMMER knocks three times.

JUDGE

Oscar Wilde the crime of which you have been convicted is so bad...

OSCAR watches horrified.

THE MARQUIS OF QUEENSBURY stares at him intently from the front row of the court.

JUDGE V.O.

that one has to put a stern restraint upon oneself from describing the sentiments which must rise to the breast of every man of honour who has heard the details of these two terrible trials.

ROBBIE ROSS bows deeply as OSCAR is hustled through the crowd.

*
*

PROSTITUTES dance on the street.

*

NEWS VENDORS shout.

*

JUDGE V.O. (CONT'D)

It is no use to address you.

THE MARQUESS OF QUEENSBURY is mobbed on the steps of the court.

*
*

JUDGE V.O. (CONT'D)

People who can do these things must be dead to all sense of shame.
I shall under such circumstances be expected to pass the severest sentence that the law allows.

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*
*
*

18 OMITTED

18 *

19 OMITTED

19 *

20 FLASHBACK. INT. READING GAOL. DAY

20

OSCAR'S head is shaved.

JUDGE V.O.

It is, in my opinion, totally inadequate for such a case as this.

A naked OSCAR is plunged into a brackish bath.

JUDGE V.O. (CONT'D)

The sentence of the court is that you be imprisoned and kept to hard labour for two years.

21

FLASHBACK. INT. PRISON CELL. READING.

21

To the sound of mayhem in court, OSCAR, in prison uniform, is thrown into a cell. As the door slams and locks the roar cuts out.

An eye looks through a tiny spy hole in the door.

Through the hole OSCAR sits on a board in the small brick room with his head in his hands.

M. DUPOIRIER V.O.

Monsieur Melmoth. Monsieur
Melmoth. Your friend is here.

OSCAR looks up at the door. The eye disappears.

22

INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. OSCAR'S BEDROOM. DAY. 1900

22

OSCAR opens his eyes. He is in bed. He sighs with relief. It was a dream. His ear is bandaged. M DUPOIRIER is standing over him. DR. TUCKER, from the British Embassy, prepares an injection

From OSCAR'S point of view M. DUPOIRIER flares and sparkles. The wallpaper pulses with OSCAR'S heartbeat.

ROBBIE ROSS leans over the bed. He wears a travelling coat. OSCAR is hallucinating.

OSCAR

(weakly)

Robbie! My lonely rider of the apocalypse. You took me into exile, dear boy. Where will you take me now. What ship? Ireland, you say?

ROBBIE sits on the edge of the bed and takes OSCAR'S hand.

ROBBIE

No ships, Oscar. I am here in Paris. I have your allowance.

OSCAR

Ah, good. Good. I have been dinnerless.

OSCAR stares at the wall. The flowers shimmer and jump. He groans.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I am in mortal combat with this wallpaper, Robbie. One of us has to go!

ROBBIE

Maurice says you made quite a scene last night.

OSCAR

It is more or less impossible to make good scenes in such reduced circumstances as mine, but I believe I did my best. Last night I dreamt I was supping with the dead.

ROBBIE

You must have been the life and soul of the party, Oscar.

DR. TUCKER rolls up OSCAR'S sleeve.

OSCAR

Morphia is mere seltzer to me now, but good Dr. Tucker will only give me ether or chloral on holidays of obligation. I am much distracted dear boy. I have had a very bad time lately, and for two days not a penny in my pocket, so had to wander about, filled with wild longings, trapped in the circle of the boulevards, one of the worst in the inferno.

The needle goes in. OSCAR visibly relaxes.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I shall never forget your kindness, dear boy, when I was released from prison. What high hopes we had that day! But I was doomed from the start. Why does one run towards ruin? Why does it hold such a fascination?

23

EXT. HARBOUR OF DIEPPE. DAWN. MAY 1897

23

A green misty sky merges with the sea.

ROBBIE ROSS stands on the quay looking out to sea.

The noise of a horn bounces across the sleepy port and out the mist the NEWHAVEN PACKET SHIP materializes. Smoke from the funnel curves across the sky.

ROBBIE catches sight of the boat and runs down the jetty.

On board the ship a lone OSCAR watches the harbour approach.

When he sees his friend he throws back his head and laughs.
 The ship docks. OSCAR lumbers down the gangplank.
 The men embrace warmly.

ROBBIE
 Oscar, How are you?

OSCAR
 Where is Reggie?

ROBBIE
 He's waiting for us at the Hotel.
 He wanted to make sure there were
 no...

OSCAR
 What?

ROBBIE
 Difficulties. Have you got
 everything?

OSCAR
 No. I left Oscar Wilde at
 Newhaven.

He gives ROBBIE a folder that he has clasped to his chest.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 And this is the last thing she
 wrote. The great letter I told
 you about. Make three copies.
 Send one to Bosie Douglas. One to
 me, and keep the original under
 lock and key.

OSCAR relaxes, as though a heavy weight is lifted from his shoulders. The TWO MEN climb onto the carriage.

24 OMITTED

24

25 EXT. HOTEL SANDWICH. DIEPPE. DAY.

25

OSCAR and ROBBIE drive through the town towards the hotel and climb down from the carriage.

26 INT. HOTEL SANDWICH HALL. DAY.

26

OSCAR and ROBBIE enter.

ROBBIE

(suddenly tense)

If anyone asks you for documents
or papers, just say they are in
your cabin trunk.

Before OSCAR has time to reply

REGGIE

Well, well, well! If it isn't
Sebastian Melmoth. Dear boy, what
an absolute joy.

REGGIE TURNER, a portly Brigadier with a handsome moustache leaps from a chair. He hugs OSCAR and then takes him by the arm, leading him towards the reception counter.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Is this your first time in
Dieppe, Sebastian? What fun! Let
me introduce you immediately to
our dear friend the Manager.

Ring, ring, ring bangs REGGIE on the desk.

THE HOTEL MANAGER arrives with a servile smile.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

Melmoth, this is M Duroc. Look
after Mr. Melmoth, would you? The
best room, and all that. I'll
leave you to it, Are you lunching?

Before OSCAR can answer REGGIE leaves.

THE MANAGER proffers the registration book for OSCAR to sign.

MANAGER

Shall we take your valuables,
your papers, Sir, and keep them
in our safe?

OSCAR

They are in my cabin trunk.

OSCAR signs with a flourish and a sideways glance. A moment as the MANAGER scrutinizes the signature and beams.

MANAGER (CONT'D)

Monsieur Melmoth. Bienvenue en
France

In the sitting room are flowers, books, a smart set of new luggage monogrammed with S.M.

A dressing case filled with glass vials. There are new clothes and a pile of letters. OSCAR gasps with pleasure.

ROBBIE

The cases are from Reggie. And here is eight hundred pounds we raised while you were in prison. It will keep you going until you begin to work again.

REGGIE comes into the room. The three men explode with laughter and hug.

REGGIE

Darling Oscar! How do you like your new name?

OSCAR

As much as I loathe the old one.
Ah, letters!

REGGIE produces a framed picture of QUEEN VICTORIA from the new dressing case while OSCAR leafs through his mail.

REGGIE

And look! No exiled fairy's toilet is complete without a signed portrait of the great Widow herself. You must dance naked before it during the jubilee next month.

OSCAR

(suddenly tense)
... It's from him!

ROBBIE

Oscar...

OSCAR

I may as well tell you both now that I fully intend to affect a reconciliation with my wife - if she will have me. And rest assured that I shall never see Lord Alfred Douglas again. That part of my life is behind me.

REGGIE

Well, he's in Paris, and determined to see you.

OSCAR

As I am determined NOT to see him.

OSCAR tears up a letter ostentatiously and throws it in the hearth.

28 INT. HOTEL SANDWICH. CORRIDOR. DAY. 28

WAITERS push a fleet of trolleys.

A burst of laughter from inside OSCAR'S rooms.

29 INT. HOTEL SANDWICH. OSCAR'S SUITE. DAY. 29

THE THREE MEN are sitting around a table in a haze of cigarette smoke. WAITERS clear plates and pour coffee.

REGGIE

From what you say, Oscar, it would seem that Reading Gaol is an enchanted castle with the Governor as its presiding elf.

OSCAR

Robbie! I met Christ in prison.

REGGIE

What was she in for?

OSCAR

Don't joke Reggie. In the cell there is only God and Man. After three days in hell Jesus rose from the dead. Discarded his cerements, broke open the tomb and took his place forever in the heart of man. After seven hundred days of hard labour my tomb has opened, I have tiptoed to the boat train and I am born again. Through him with him and in France.

ROBBIE

(laughing)

Very good Oscar. We'll make a Catholic of you yet!

REGGIE

Only unlike dear Jesus you have luggage and eight hundred pounds to spend before your ascension into heaven.

ROBBIE

Or purgatory. I'm afraid a delegation of fifteen young poets is arriving from Paris at the weekend to welcome you into exile. They are bringing a cheque.

OSCAR

Oh Good. All I am saying, dear Reggie, is that I lived in the grip of vice and pleasure. It was wrong and I have paid. Perhaps the slate is wiped clean. Perhaps it is not. We shall see. At any rate I am ready to return to life.

30

INT. HOTEL SANDWICH. OSCAR'S SUITE. DAY.

30

Alone, OSCAR unpacks. Framed pictures of CONSTANCE and HIS CHILDREN are extracted from an open cabin trunk. He retrieves BOSIE'S shredded letter from the fireplace, sits at the desk and tries to reassemble it.

BOSIE

(screaming)

I hear from your so called friends that you no longer wish to see me! Can it be that you have forgotten all you said before you went to prison? Nothing but my love sustained you then, your soul clung to my soul. Now you no longer wish to know me. God knows I have suffered too during these two years. There is prison without prison, but I will tell you this. Never, for one moment has the intensity of my love for you faltered. I feel as I felt the day I met you. I have waited for this day for two years. I am now half crazed with grief. When this letter reaches you I might be dead!

OSCAR laughs bitterly and sweeps the torn pages off the desk and starts a letter of his own.

Seagulls fade into the noise of children playing.

31

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE HEIDELBERG. DAY.

31

A THIN HUNCHEDE WOMAN in a neck brace opens a letter. It is CONSTANCE, OSCAR'S wife. Outside in the garden TWO CHILDREN play.

OSCAR V.O.

Constance my dear good beautiful wife, there is nothing I can ever say that will undo the great hurt that I have caused you. We both know that.

(MORE)

OSCAR V.O. (CONT'D)
 Two years have I lain on hard
 boards, knelt on cold stone,
 dined on shame and thought of
 little else.

OSCAR V.O. (CONT'D)
 You and my sons are the only things
 that tie me to life. Were it not
 for the hope that one day I would
 meet you all again, I don't think I
 could go on.

CONSTANCE looks sadly at her children playing in the garden.

32 INT. HOTEL SANDWICH DINING ROOM. DAY.

32

OSCAR, REGGIE, ROBBIE are served a sumptuous lunch.

A PRETTY WAITER bends over the table. OSCAR'S eyes briefly alight on his apron wrapped posterior. After the boy has gone everybody laughs. OSCAR is slightly indignant.

OSCAR V.O.
 My desire to live, dearest
 Constance, is as intense as ever,
 and though my heart is broken,
 hearts are made to be broken.

OSCAR gestures grandly for more champagne.

33 INT. HOTEL SANDWICH DINING ROOM. NIGHT.

33

With OSCAR'S gesture the room changes to night. Candles flicker on tables. Guests in evening dress. The champagne arrives at another meal. This time a dinner with FIFTEEN YOUNG POETS and STUDENTS who have come from Paris to welcome OSCAR into exile. They are eccentrically dressed and extremely rowdy.

OSCAR captivates the table with tales of prison. Other guests watch sternly. The party bays for a speech from OSCAR, banging the table.

OSCAR V.O.
 That is why God sends sorrow to
 the world. Write to me as soon as
 you can and tell me that I am
 still your Oscar.

OSCAR stands to make a toast.

OSCAR

That the delicate buds of French
art should find their way to this
desert outpost in order to
welcome and raise this bruised
and trodden lily from the slough
of despond fills it with the
tremulous hope that it could
still live and bloom again on the
double peak of Parnassus...

The WAITER brings the bill.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Oh, did I ask for that?

34 EXT HOTEL SANDWICH BEACH. DAY.

34

OSCAR - a tiny dot - leaves the Hotel and walks across a huge stretch of empty beach to a solitary chair. A GROUP OF ENGLISH STUDENTS play makeshift cricket far off. He sits and watches. A ball lands nearby and a lithe boy in a bathing suit runs up to fetch it. Looks at OSCAR.

BOY

Bonjour.

OSCAR

Bonjour.

THE BOY runs back to the group. He tells them something. They look round towards OSCAR and laugh.

35 EXT. PORT. DIEPPE. DAY.

35

OSCAR nibbles a croissant alone at a table, enjoying the bustle on the quay.

The rowdy group of CRICKETERS amble along the street and install themselves at the next table.

OSCAR appraises them covertly.

They see OSCAR and begin to whisper and giggle.

OSCAR stiffens.

ENGLISH ONE

Not wearing your lovely silk
stockings today Oscar?

The CRICKETERS explode with mirth.

OSCAR stares resolutely ahead.

ENGLISH ONE (CONT'D)
Darling boy?

ENGLISH TWO
Yes, my hyacinth?

ENGLISH ONE
Remind me to change the sheets
today darling boy. Your slim gilt
cheeks have left a shit stain
all the way down your side of the
bed!

Hysteria. OSCAR stands.

OSCAR
You go too far, Sir!

ENGLISH ONE stands.

ENGLISH ONE
No! You went too far. Madam.

HE beckons to a WAITER

ENGLISH ONE (CONT'D)
Garcon, there's a lump of shit on
the pavement. Get rid of it!

A dangerous moment. REGGIE and ROBBIE appear a little way off, take one look and storm across the street towards the cafe.

REGGIE
Ah there you are, Oscar. We're
late. They're waiting for us.

He takes a frozen OSCAR by the arm and leads him away before the situation has time to escalate. ROBBIE follows.

36

EXT. SIDE STREET. DIEPPE. DAY.

36

The THREE MEN walk fast

REGGIE
Are you alright, Oscar?

OSCAR
(weakly)
No, not really.

REGGIE
Lets go back to the Hotel

THE ENGLISH MEN appear around the corner whooping and laughing.

ROBBIE

Christ! They're following us!

ENGLISH ONE

Wait for me! I want to cover you
in honey and lick it off again.

REGGIE

This is intolerable

OSCAR, REGGIE and ROBBIE quicken their pace. The chase is on.

They duck down an alleyway.

THE UNDERGRADUATES stampede round the corner, baying and yelping like hounds. They are intensely amused. One has picked up a branch and is banging it against dust bins and doorways.

OSCAR ROBBIE and REGGIE are running now. Across a graveyard. Through a gate.

THE UNDERGRADUATES are getting closer. Jumping over the graveyard wall, laughing and shrieking.

OSCAR, REGGIE and ROBBIE turn into a lane. It is a dead end. Sweating and panting, they are literally up against the wall.

THE UNDERGRADUATES surge around the corner. There is no escape.

37 FLASHBACK. CLAPHAM JUNCTION STATION PLATFORM. DAY 1895. 37

A CROWD OF ANGRY TRAVELLERS shout and jeer. A BURLY MAN jabs his finger at the camera.

38 EXT. SIDE STREET. DIEPPE. DAY. 1897. 38

Something clicks inside OSCAR'S head and with a roar he lunges at the first man, throwing him to the ground with his enormous weight. He bounces up, rage and adrenalin pounding through his veins, and hurls a second against the wall, his huge hands around the MANS throat.

OSCAR

(shouting)

What more do you want?

THE UNDERGRADUATES are stunned. OSCAR throws the second MAN aside like a twig. He is hysterical now, a stampeding elephant.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

You have taken everything, you little shits. Everything! My family. My home. My work. My freedom. Everything. There is nothing else to take.

OSCAR shoves a RUDDY CHEEKED BOOR in the chest. He backs off

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What are you going to do? Kill me? I'm already dead, you cunt. Now piss off all of you. The natural habitat of the hypocrite is England. Get back there! Leave me in peace. GO.

THE YOUNG MEN stand uncertainly for a moment then turn around and shuffle off. By the time they get to the corner they have recovered their swaggers and slap one another on the back as they run off. Their whoops of victory sound like mad bird cries echoing through the village.

It begins to rain. The THREE FRIENDS look at one another for a long moment.

REGGIE

I didn't know you had it in you.

OSCAR

I don't. I have nothing in me, not even fear.

39

FLASHBACK. EXT. CLAPHAM JUNCTION PLATFORM. DAY. 1895

39

A TRAIN noisily speeds through the station revealing OSCAR, with a shaved head, sitting on a bench. He is manacled to a PRISON WARDEN.

OSCAR V.O.

With no warning, I was transferred one afternoon from Wandsworth to Reading Gaol. In broad daylight, by train, shackled to a warder like a performing bear, that journey was the most exquisite of the tortures Her Majesty contrived for me.

40

INT. HOTEL SANDWICH. OSCAR'S SUITE. NIGHT. 1897

40

OSCAR is in bed. REGGIE and ROBBIE sit either side.

OSCAR

At Clapham Junction we had to wait

for a connection.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 Half and hour, my dears, on
 platform three. Sadly my public had
 not forgotten me.

41

FLASHBACK. EXT. CLAPHAM JUNCTION. DAY. 1895

41

A small crowd begins to gather. A BURLY TROUBLEMAKER begins to lecture the crowd.

OSCAR V.O.

At first they simply giggled and pointed, but then a man began to shout. He paced up and down, wagging his finger, as he catalogued my crimes to his growing and spellbound audience.

Now the crowd is huge. The platform is packed. Several hundred people pressing against the bench where OSCAR sits. THE BURLY MAN is purple now. In slow motion he inhales and spits a huge gob which lands on OSCAR'S face. The CROWD applauds.

42

INT. HOTEL SANDWICH. OSCAR'S SUITE. NIGHT. 1897.

42

OSCAR

At each new twist the crowd moaned and swayed as one, spitting and screaming, howling for my blood.

43

FLASHBACK. EXT. CLAPHAM JUNCTION STATION PLATFORM. DAY 1895.3

THE WARDEN reads the evening paper with rapt attention as OSCAR is rained with spittle

OSCAR V.O.

While I? I saw the future. It was the end of all peace.

44

INT. HOTEL SANDWICH. OSCAR'S SUITE. NIGHT. 1897.

44

OSCAR

(simply)

I shall see it on my death bed.

45

INT. HOTEL SANDWICH HALL. NIGHT.

45

ROBBIE and REGGIE are in the hall. THE MANAGER stiffly gives them a letter.

MANAGER

Please give this to M WILDE.

REGGIE

Oh dear! Its from the Chief of Police. You read it.

ROBBIE opens it.

ROBBIE

It seems he is to be deported if his behavior does not improve. Our celebration of young french poets didn't go down very well in the voisnage.

REGGIE

Well, don't show him now, for God's sake! In his current mood he could set fire to the Hotel! Thank Christ I'm leaving tomorrow.

The go upstairs, arm in arm.

REGGIE (CONT'D)

You be careful, Robbie. He'll eat you.

46 EXT. HOTEL SANDWICH. DAY.

46

OSCAR and ROBBIE leave the hotel. Their luggage follows, carried by BELLBOYS.

47 EXT. HOTEL DE LA PLAGE APPROACH BERNEVAL. DAY

47

The HOTEL stands above the dunes. The beach stretches away in both directions. The sea crashes and a flock of seagulls wheel over the water diving for fish.

48 EXT. HOTEL DE LA PLAGE. BERNEVAL. DAY

48

ROBBIE and OSCAR climb from a carriage and go inside.

48A INT. HOTEL DE LA PLAGE. BERNEVAL. DAY

48A

The manager leads Oscar and Robbie to their room.

49 INT. HOTEL DE LA PLAGE BEDROOM. BERNEVAL. NIGHT.

49

OSCAR and ROBBIE at a table in front of a large window overlooking the sea. They are finishing a meal. There is a full moon.

ROBBIE

I read your letter from prison. It is really rather marvellous. You should call it De Profundis.

OSCAR

Well it was written from the depths!

ROBBIE

Bosie will probably try to kill you when he reads it.

OSCAR

I wrote some harsh letters to you Robbie. I am sorry.

ROBBIE

You wrote harsh letters to us all. We were trying our best.

OSCAR

I know. Its hard to describe the feeling of utter impotence and desperation in there. One becomes a fury. One never speaks. One simply weeps and has diarrhea. Result: lunacy. Do you forgive me?

OSCAR takes ROBBIE'S hand.

ROBBIE

Who would have thought, that afternoon we met, fifteen years ago, that here we'd be. Lepers dining under a full moon in a foreign hotel. It's quite romantic in a way.

OSCAR

Except that you, dear boy, are not a leper. Tomorrow you will blow away on the sea breeze - destination Dover - like a dandelion seed. As to who would have thought? We met in a public lavatory, Bobbie dear, and we ended up here. You wouldn't have to be the Sybil of Mortimer Street to join the dots!

ROBBIE

I was going to a matinee!

OSCAR

And I was going to my club. A different corner, a minute later, another play, and maybe I should be the poet laureate, but I doubt it. Intimacy in the sewers followed by fantasy in the Gods! The rest is silence.

50 FLASHBACK. INT. PUBLIC LAVATORY. LONDON. AFTERNOON. 1886. 50

A quiet afternoon in the echoing underworld. Cisterns drip. ROBBIE (younger) stands at a long line of urinals.

OSCAR breezes in, takes a place further along the line.

ROBBIE moves next to OSCAR.

Surprised, OSCAR looks up. Eyes meet.

ROBBIE leaves the urinal, and casually goes into a cubicle.

OSCAR buttons up and nervously follows.

THE QUEENY LOO ATTENDANT raises a pair of plucked eyebrows, and continues to read his paper.

Inside the cubicle a trembling OSCAR fills the whole space. ROBBIE is squashed against the toilet. Neither one can undo their trousers. From a hole in the wooden partition a tongue waggles. OSCAR suppresses a little shriek.

ROBBIE smiles and puts his finger to his lips as he tries to undo OSCAR'S flies.

ROBBIE
(whispering)
Got a place?

OSCAR looks puzzled.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
Meet you outside.

He leaves.

OSCAR, alone, is undecided. THE TONGUE waggles and speaks.

TONGUE
Go on dear, risk it for a biscuit.

OSCAR ostentatiously flushes the loo, and leaves.

51 FLASHBACK. EXT. PUBLIC LAVATORY AND STREET. AFTERNOON. 51
 ROBBIE waits under a street light in the smoggy dusk.
 OSCAR lumbers up the steps from the underworld and joins him, and they walk off into the fog together.

52 FLASHBACK. INT. SMALL LONDON HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT. 1886 52
 A transfigured OSCAR holds a sleeping ROBBIE in his arms.

53 INT. HOTEL DE LA PLAGE BEDROOM. BERNEVAL. NIGHT. 1897 53
 A distracted OSCAR smokes in bed while ROBBIE sleeps beside him.

54 INT. BEDROOM. HOTEL D'ALSACE. NIGHT. 1900 54
 ROBBIE sleeps in a chair. OSCAR, clearly ill, watches him from the bed by the light of a low fire.

OSCAR
 Bobbie! Bobbie.

ROBBIE wakes suddenly.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 Dear boy, help me to the commode,
 would you?

ROBBIE hauls OSCAR from his bed and heaves him onto the commode. The two men look at one another. OSCAR is now stripped of all dignity

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 I have observed a very curious thing. Just when one thinks there is no further to go, there is ... further to go. Have I let you down, terribly, darling Bobbie?

ROBBIE
 (moved)
 Of course not Oscar.

OSCAR
 You had such plans for me.

ROBBIE
 I wanted you to be happy. That's all.

OSCAR
 Happiness is cheap perfume that even I couldn't afford.

ROBBIE

I just.. wanted you to write. You
made the world happy with your
writing.

OSCAR

Some of it. But you never
understood. There was nothing
left. Just one spark, then black.

55 EXT. DUNES BERNEVAL. DAY. 1897.

55

OSCAR walks across the dunes towards a small BATHING HUT on
the sand.

He unlocks the door and goes in.

A minute later he comes out in a bathing costume and
marches into the sea, finally crashing in like a porpoise.
He swims back and forth without his hair getting wet.
Waves splash in his face.

OSCAR V.O.

He did not wear his scarlet coat,
For blood and wine are red,
And blood and wine were on his
hands
When they found him with the
dead,

56 INT. HOTEL DE LA PLAGE BEDROOM. NIGHT.

56

OSCAR sits back from his desk smiling.

OSCAR

The poor dead woman whom he
loved, and murdered in her bed!
Superb.

He continues writing.

57 INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE HEIDELBERG. DAY.

57

TWO GRAVE VICTORIAN MEN sit with CONSTANCE. Through an open
window THE CHILDREN can be seen playing.

MR. HOWARD

As the boys guardian I cannot
impress upon you too strongly my
alarm at your being in contact
with your husband at all! Be
extremely cautious, Madam, when
you reply to his letter.

He passes her some papers to sign.

MR. HOWARD (CONT'D)
Mrs. Holland.

CONSTANCE
Mrs. Wilde!

MR HOWARD
Constance. We have been friends
for many years. I am the executor
of your grandfathers estate. You
must trust us. Please sign.

The children are fighting in the garden. She gets up. She
can hardly walk, practically bent double on two sticks.

CONSTANCE
Cyril! Vivian! Stop fighting!

She shuts the window. Sudden silence. The children fight on
behind her in a dumb show.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)
My trouble is that once I have
made up my mind to love someone,
I can never change.

58 EXT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE HEIDELBERG. DAY

58

CYRIL and VIVIAN listen by the door to the conversation
inside.

CONSTANCE V.O.
I feel sure that if I saw him
once, I should forgive him
everything.

MR. HOWARD V.O.
Precisely, my dear, and then you
would be stuck here in Heidelberg
forever. Heidelberg!

CONSTANCE V.O.
We like it.

MR HOWARD V.O.
You must wait! Think of your
children. He must prove to you
that he will change. That he can.
You have time. Don't hurry.

CONSTANCE V.O.
Very well I will do as you both
suggest. I will harden my heart
for the sake of the boys.

59 INT. CONSTANCE'S SITTING ROOM. DAY. 59

CONSTANCE sits down and begins to write a letter. She looks out of the window.

THE CHILDREN are now sitting quietly under a tree.

60 OMITTED 60

61 EXT. DUNES, BERNEVAL. DAY. 61

ROBBIE and OSCAR walk on the sand.

OSCAR

Since you left I have been completely alone.

ROBBIE

Oscar, that's simply not true!

OSCAR

My wife has written me a revolting letter in which she tells me that PERHAPS she will see me at some later date, but not in the foreseeable future, and the boys probably never!

ROBBIE

But Oscar I am amazed that you should imagine that Constance would want to see you at all! You write her one letter full of your usual perfumed shit and you suppose that everything you've put her through for the last few years can simply be forgotten!

OSCAR

Robbie, if you have come here to upset me, I suggest you return to Dieppe immediately where you will find a train that leaves at three minutes past the hour. Every hour!

ROBBIE

I am not here to upset you Oscar! I just want you to be reasonable.

OSCAR

Bosie, whom you all deplore, at least offers to help me.

ROBBIE

Oh really? How, Oscar? How is
Bosie going to help you?

OSCAR

Bosie loves me Robbie. In a way
that you could never understand.
In any case he's is coming here
next week.

ROBBIE

Then you will never see Constance
again. You seem to forget that
despite everything you have put
her through she still allows you
four pounds a week. That four
pounds, Oscar, is dependant upon
Bosie's absence from your life.
But doubtless he will settle some
money upon you when he gets here.
If his mother has given him any!

OSCAR

(screaming)

I am all alone. I don't have
anyone. Why are you being so
harsh

ROBBIE

You have me, Oscar! I am here!

No reaction.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

But it's not enough, is it? Why
is it not enough, Oscar?

OSCAR

Well frankly my dear you're not
really grand enough and you're
certainly not rough enough. Lets
get a drink for Gods sake.

OSCAR takes ROBBIE'S arm and they walk back towards the
HOTEL in the distance.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Don't be cross, Bobbie! You weren't
built for rage. I went on the most
marvellous pilgrimage yesterday to
Notre Dame de Liesse. Did you know
that liesse is the medieval word
for happiness? I go there every
day.

62 EXT/INT. COUNTRYSIDE AND NOTRE DAME DE LIESSE. DAY. 62

OSCAR walks through some fields towards a small chapel on a hill. He is slightly breathless.

OSCAR V.O.

It takes all of three minutes to get to it and just as many to get back. The Priest, who is charming, has become a great friend.

Yesterday he showed me all his vestments. He looked particularly captivating in his martyr's garb - rose doree streaked with blood.

OSCAR goes in and sits alone in the chapel.

AN OLD BENT PRIEST comes in and shuffles towards the alter, drops with difficulty to his knees, grasps the foot of a particularly gruesome crucifix and kisses the feet of Jesus.

OSCAR is transported and for a moment CHRIST seems alive. He gazes at OSCAR with great compassion.

OSCAR V.O. (CONT'D)

You see Robbie, suffering is nothing when there is love! Love is everything.

63 INT. TRAIN TO ROUEN. DAY 63

OSCAR lost in thought.

Grubby windows streaked with rain. Low clouds. Thunder.

The rhythmic clanking of the train.

64 FLASHBACK. INT. READING GAOL, TREADMILL. DAY 1895. 64

A breathless OSCAR climbs on the vast clanking machine

OSCAR V.O.

Dear Bosie, After long and fruitless waiting I have determined to write to you myself, as much for your sake as for mine, as I would not like to think that I had passed through two long years of imprisonment without ever having received a single line from you, or any news or message even, except such as gave me pain.

65 FLASHBACK. INT. CELL, READING GAOL. NIGHT 1896 65

OSCAR reads through a stack of papers.

OSCAR

Our ill fated and most lamentable friendship has ended in ruin and public infamy for me, yet the memory of our ancient affection is often with me, and the thought that loathing, bitterness and contempt should forever take that place in my heart once held by love is very sad to me.

66 INT. TRAIN TO ROUEN. DAY. 1897. 66

OSCAR V.O.

You came to me to learn the pleasure of life and the pleasure of art. Perhaps I am chosen to teach you something much more wonderful, the meaning of sorrow and its beauty.

The sun comes through the clouds. The train arrives in ROUEN.

67 EXT. ROUEN STATION PLATFORM. DAY. 67

THE TRAIN pulls away from the station.

Through the clouds of smoke OSCAR is revealed standing on the platform.

In the distance BOSIE is still a golden youth in a dusty travelling coat. He slowly walks towards a frozen OSCAR.

Finally, the two men face each other. Close up BOSIE is ravaged and pinched. OSCAR begins to cry. Tries to speak but can't.

BOSIE

Oh come on Oscar! It's not like you to have nothing to say.

OSCAR heaves.

BOSIE (CONT'D)

Oscar!

BOSIE takes OSCAR in his arms and hugs him.

They go to a bench. Sit side by side. OSCAR is still prostrate. BOSIE holds his hand.

PASSERBY
Is he alright.

BOSIE
He's had some bad news!

OSCAR looks up. Smiles. The two men begin to laugh and cry.

A Train passes.

From the other side of the platform.

Now they are really laughing. Talking. Gesticulating
Another train. Through the stream of passengers OSCAR and BOSIE are silent, sitting side by side.

The platform is deserted again. A guard lights gas lamps as the day fades.

OSCAR
Bosie, about that letter I sent
you from prison...

BOSIE
I never got it! What did it say?

OSCAR
Nothing important now. It was
just my testament. De Profundus.

BOSIE
Oh Oscar, you silly old fairy,
come here!

BOSIE takes OSCAR in his arms and hugs him.

OSCAR
I am my own Judas. I need a
drink.

68 OMITTED

68

69 INT. ROUEN STATION HOTEL DINING ROOM. NIGHT. 69

A few people dine.

OSCAR and BOSIE sit at a table drinking.

TRAVELLERS come and go.

BOSIE
What are your plans?

OSCAR

What plans can I have? The doom of
Melmoth is to wander the earth
seeking shelter where he can. I may
go south.

BOSIE

Naples. See it and die!

OSCAR

If only it were that simple!

A GOODS TRAIN clanks through the station.

BOSIE

Have you written anything?

OSCAR

A ballad about prison. Its almost
finished. Rather good. I don't know
if I can write anymore.

BOSIE

Why? Now more than ever you must
write.

OSCAR

I wrote when I knew nothing of
life. Now that I do know it there
is nothing left to write.

BOSIE

Oscar, lets run away! Somewhere no
one could find us. Naples in fact.

OSCAR

Dear boy, you don't know what you
are saying. I'm starving. Do
let's order.

Times passes. Later...

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Why do we huddle without the city
walls at a Station Hotel?

A MAN walks through the dining room announcing a night
train to Belgium.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Because I am a ruined man. If you
came with me to Naples the world
would become a picture you could
look at but never touch. Do you
love me that much, Bosie? And
anyway, we have no money!

BOSIE

Oh, money! Oscar, for Christ's sake. My mother has got masses. What are you laughing at?

OSCAR

Nothing. Something Robbie said.

BOSIE

Robbie has been against me ever since we met. He is riddled with jealousy.

OSCAR

He loves me, Bosie, in a way that you could never understand. Shall we take a room?

Sudden tension.

70

INT. ROUEN STATION HOTEL BEDROOM. NIGHT.

70

OSCAR sits on the bed.

BOSIE stands before him in his shirt. He begins to remove it. OSCAR turns out the light. In the darkness lights flash across the wall as a train thunders through the station. The bloodcurdling scream of its whistle accompanies OSCAR and BOSIE as they embrace.

71

INT. TRAIN TO NAPLES. DAY.

71

Another Train with OSCAR and BOSIE aboard speeds through a long tunnel. The scream continues. Their faces are barely visible in the darkness.

72

EXT. TRAIN TO NAPLES. DAY.

72

The train thunders through the tunnel towards a dot of light. The scream intensifies.

73

INT. ROBBIE ROSS' HOUSE LONDON. DAY.

73

ROBBIE reads a letter. The noise of the train and its scream continues.

ROBBIE

My going back to Bosie was psychologically inevitable. I cannot live without the atmosphere of love; I must love and be loved, whatever price I pay for it

ROBBIE puts down the letter and cries.

74 INT/EXT. TUNNEL . DAY

74

The train explodes from the tunnel into the light.

75 EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. NAPLES. DAY

75

The bay of Naples is covered in an early morning mist. The scene is ravishing.

OSCAR stands on the terrace of his new home Villa Guidice in Posillipo.

OSCAR V.O.

I dare say what I have done is
fatal. I love him as I always did.
With a sense of tragedy and ruin..

The trains whistle turns into a high pitched human shriek.

76 INT. VILLA GUIDICE BEDROOM. DAY.

76

BOSIE stands on a chair in his underwear screaming as a huge rat darts back and forth across the room. THREE seedy Neapolitan servants are trying to kill it with brooms and bats - CARMINE, a fat bearded lady cook, her husband PEPPINO and their son MICHELE. MICHELE finally skewers it with a rake. It writhes about while the PEPPINO clubs it to death and its brains splash across the floor. OSCAR rushes in. Everyone is shouting. BOSIE is hysterical.

BOSIE

Oscar! Another rat. There are
fucking rats everywhere!

MICHELE picks the animal up by the tail and waves it victoriously. This is the last straw for BOSIE who leaves the room cursing.

CARMINE

We need La Corridone.

OSCAR

Who's she?

CARMINE

The witch. Rats very afraid of her.

77 INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE. HEIDELBERG. DAY

77

Another scream. This one is strangled from CONSTANCE.

CONSTANCE

I forbid it! I forbid him to live
with that infernal man.

ROBBIE

There was nothing anyone could
do.

CONSTANCE

I shall not pay him his
allowance. You may tell him as
much when you see him.

ROBBIE

That is unlikely Madam. I have
resigned as his literary
executor.

CONSTANCE regards ROBBIE.

CONSTANCE

He doesn't know you are here, I
presume?

ROBBIE

No, Madam he does not.

CONSTANCE

Why do you mind so much.

ROBBIE doesn't reply.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

They all tell me to be wary of
you, Mr Ross. They say you can't
be trusted. But we are the same,
you and I. He has hurt you as
well, hasn't he?

ROBBIE cannot answer.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Oscar destroyed himself and
everyone around him. Look at me,
Mr Ross. Just look at me!

She looks deranged for a second.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

He has killed me. And yet, I
still love him. Strange, isn't
it?

She shivers.

CONSTANCE (CONT'D)

Someone must be walking on my
grave.

78

INT/EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

78

AN ANCIENT GYPSY WOMAN walks slowly around the house singing and waving burning twigs. THE STAFF are terrified and hold rosaries. OSCAR watches from the terrace.

THE WITCH comes into the garden and sees OSCAR.

OSCAR offers her cash.

There is a deep rumbling noise. They look up. A cloud rises from MOUNT VESUVIUS.

THE WITCH looks at him for a long moment and shakes her head, refusing his money.

She turns away. Walks through the house and out the front door.

79

EXT. RESTAURANT. VOLCANIC LAKE NEAR NAPLES. DAY.

79

The remains of a long and alcoholic dinner are strewn across the table in front of them. Bottles of liqueurs. A band plays and a lady sings.

AN EXTREMELY ATTRACTIVE WAITER serves a spellbound BOSIE. HIS MOTHER, the proprietor of the restaurant observes happily.

OSCAR

The good news is there are no more rats. The bad news is that my allowance has been cut off.

BOSIE

Do you always have to talk about money during dinner?

OSCAR

Obviously I should much prefer to discuss serving techniques with our waiter but we must make some sort of plan, Bosie. I came here at your invitation. You said you had funds. You do not. I accept that. But the fact remains we now have, what, six pounds.

BOSIE

Five. I had to pay last weeks renter.

BOSIE winks at the WAITER as he passes.

OSCAR

Careful! His mother is watching.

BOSIE

Yes, and she's thrilled! Don't be
a bore Oscar! What has happened
to you?

OSCAR doesn't rise. BOSIE watches the WAITER intently.

BOSIE (CONT'D)

We have six pounds a week from my
mother. We still have a hundred
pounds for the libretto you will
never write. We still have studs
and cufflinks, friends and
relations. And above all we
still have each other. One of us
could eat the other and make a
tent out of the hide. For Gods
sake stop worrying.

OSCAR remains silent.

BOSIE beckons to the WAITER, who rushes over to the table
with a bottle of wine which he uncorks.

BOSIE (CONT'D)

(Italian)
What is your name?

YOUNG MAN

Felice.

BOSIE

This is Signor Melmoth. I am
Alfred. I have seen you at the
beach. You have a strong chest
and shoulders.

FELICE

(laughing)

Si.

He fills their glasses.

OSCAR

You always talk to boys as though
they were bloodstock, Bosie. You
should ask them to lift their
hoofs and show their mouths..

BOSIE

And then thrash'em. I need to
make sure they don't fall at the
first fence.

THE WAITER leaves. BOSIE follows him. OSCAR is left alone.

80

INT. VILLA GUIDICE. NIGHT

80

Through a crack in a door CARMINE and PEPPINO watch entranced and horrified as OSCAR, holding a whip and dressed as Phedra recites Racine. FELICE stands uncertainly in the middle of the room while BOSIE is bound and gagged, tied naked to a chair.

The crack of a riding crop against naked flesh. PEPPINO winces.

OSCAR V.O.

Come on, dear, Fuck him!

81

INT. VILLA GUIDICE. BEDROOM. DAWN

81

A mattress on the floor under a ripped mosquito net. The debri of last nights party on the floor. BOSIE and FELICE sleep tangled up in the dirty sheets. OSCAR watches from a chair. Noise of sea crashing and seagulls screaming. He gets up and quietly leaves the room.

82

EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

82

A huge red sun rises over the bay. A pink cloud sits on top of Vesuvius. A fishing boat moves slowly towards Capri. Fishermen dive from its prow. Their voices come and go on the breeze. OSCAR watches.

BOSIE appears wrapped in a sheet. Sits on the wall. Lights a cigarette, hands it to OSCAR. They smoke in silence.

OSCAR

(finally)

Its very beautiful.

BOSIE

You see?

OSCAR

What?

BOSIE

I can make you happy!

OSCAR

Yes. You can. No more anxiety, no more ambition. No time. Just now. Boys diving for pearls, an old sheep with his butcher, a bobbing boat on a silver sea, and scandal, just a small black dot against the edge of dawn.

83 EXT COUNTRY HOUSE ENGLAND. DAY. 83

ROBBIE walks to the front door.

84 INT. DRAWING ROOM COUNTRY HOUSE. DAY. 84

LADY QUEENSBURY sits erect in widows black in a large beautiful room. A BUTLER enters, followed by ROBBIE.

BUTLER
Mr Ross, m'lady.

LADY QUEENSBURY
Thank you Paine. How do you do,
Mr. Ross? Sit down won't you?

ROBBIE
Thank you, Lady Queensbury.

LADY QUEENSBURY
I will come straight to the point. I gather my son is living with your friend in Naples. I'm reliably informed that you may be able to help me. I must rescue Lord Alfred from the clutches of Mr Wilde.

ROBBIE
Or Mr Wilde from the influence of your son, Lady Queensbury. I was under the impression that you and Mr Wilde were friends.

LADY QUEENSBURY
Indeed? Hardly. I was revolted by him on sight. An oily indolent toad dazzled by society. I said nothing of course - a mother knows when to keep quiet - although my flesh crawled when he entered a room. The connection with my son made him giddy. Drunk. Lord Alfred was only twenty.

ROBBIE
Are you familiar with the circumstances of their early friendship? The reason Lord Alfred approached Mr Wilde in the first place.

LADY QUEENSBURY
Not exactly, no.

ROBBIE

Then I shall tell you. Your son was being blackmailed by a young man at Oxford. Bosie asked Mr Wilde to help him. Oscar did. A Lawyer was found. Money was paid - by Wilde - never repaid. The problem was resolved and put on a ship bound for Australia. Later on, it was your son who introduced Oscar to the alleys and lanes of Whitechapel, and the nighttime markets of living flesh. Just as it was your son who was guilty of all but one of the crimes for which Mr Wilde was later convicted. Nevertheless, Lady Queensbury we should stand united. Together we may be able to separate them.

85

INT. VILLA GUIDICE. BEDROOM. NIGHT

85

CARMINE, PEPPINO and their SON pilfer silently across the room, moving through moonbeams while BOSIE and OSCAR snore in bed.

85A

INT. KITCHEN VILLA GUIDICE. DAY

85A

OSCAR has been cooking. BOSIE is dangerously drunk.

BOSIE

Do you have any idea what a cunt you look in that apron. Suddenly I'm fucking your mother.

OSCAR

Sit. Are you fucking me?

BOSIE

No.

OSCAR

Yes you are. I can hear you.

BOSIE

(imitating OSCAR)

All middle aged poofs end up like their mothers. That is their tragedy.

OSCAR

Look, Bosie. It is not my fault we have been pillaged by our own servants. Try to be civil, or at any rate misquote me accurately.

BOSIE

What is this anyway?

OSCAR

Pomodoro e aglio al forno. It is all Mother Hubbard has left in her cupboard. The postal order from your brother Percy has still not arrived. I have been down to the post office three times already this morning.

BOSIE

God, I'm sick of all this. Always waiting around for a hand out.

They eat in silence.

BOSIE (CONT'D)

Have you ever noticed how people look around before they can even see us. At first I couldn't understand why. And then one day I saw a man sniffing as he turned. They can smell you coming my dear. Its quite a feat. The stench of raw scandal is quite overpowering.

OSCAR is stunned.

OSCAR

What are you trying to say?

BOSIE

I'm not trying to say anything. I'm just sick of it, that's all.

OSCAR

Well maybe you should just pack up and get out. Go back to your mother.

BOSIE

How could I? They would say that I'd abandoned you. Again. Robbie, Reggie, the whole Greek chorus.

OSCAR

Well, maybe I could help you out. I was thinking of going to the beach this afternoon but, on reflection perhaps it would be more convenient if I simply adjourned to some overflowing Neapolitan latrine and blew my brains out!

BOSIE
Possible!

OSCAR
You would learn of the tragedy at tea time on the beach from one of your favourite sailors, and by supper time you would be in deep mourning on all fours and the day would be yours. With him till the end. Thick and thin. Sickness and health you semi literate jumped up little shit.

BOSIE throws the contents of his plate at OSCAR. A tomato lands on his face.

A moments stunned silence.

BOSIE laughs.

There is a knock on the front door.

MANS VOICE
Hello! Is there anyone at home.

OSCAR and BOSIE look at one another in disbelief.

BOSIE
Oh, a visitor. Is someone finally leaving a card. Lay the tray for Tea, Oscar, there's a pet!

86 EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

86

BOSIE sits with a rather stiff English Diplomat, BEAUCHAMP DENIS BROWN.

BOSIE
What brings you to Naples,
Beauchamp.

BEAUCHAMP
Various things. I don't know whether you are au courant but the Prime Minister is building a house nearby. The Ambassador wanted me to take a look. Make sure everything is ship shape. Had a few days to myself and thought I'd look you up.

BOSIE
How kind. I would offer you some tea but unfortunately the servants seem to have fled during the night.

BEAUCHAMP

It couldn't matter less old boy.
Aren't they absolutely hopeless
here? How is your dear Ma?

BOSIE

She is on splendid form. We spent
a month together in Baden Baden.
Now she is back in England.

87 INT./EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

87

OSCAR listens from the shadows.

BEAUCHAMP V.O.

Bosie, I wanted to have a quiet
word, if I may?

BOSIE V.O.

By all means.

BEAUCHAMP V.O.

The Ambassador feels that your
living here in broad daylight
with er ...

BOSIE V.O.

Oscar.

BEAUCHAMP V.O.

Yes, precisely. Living here with
Mr Wilde is very, shall we say,
awkward. Mal vu, you understand.
Sir John has such fond memories
of your long sojourn at the
Embassy and wants very much to
avoid any ... how shall I put
it....embarrassment, particularly
with the PM in such close
quarters.

88 EXT. VILA GUIDICE. DAY.

88

OSCAR comes into the garden with a tea tray still wearing
his apron. BEAUCHAMP looks horrified.

BOSIE

Ah, Oscar. Do you know Beauchamp
Brown. We were at school
together.

BEAUCHAMP stands. Refuses OSCAR'S hand.

BEAUCHAMP

How do you do.

BOSIE

Beauchamp says that our living
here together is a scandal.

OSCAR.

My whole existence is a scandal.
Tea, Mr. Brown?

BEAUCHAMP

Thank you, no. Well I must be
pressing on. Do think about our
little chat, won't you Bosie and
come and see us in Rome when you
are passing through.

BOSIE takes him into the house.

OSCAR stares out to sea. The front door slams.

BOSIE walks slowly towards OSCAR. Puts his arms around him
and leans his head on OSCAR'S shoulder. Closes his eyes.

They are silent for a moment. Noise of sea etc.

OSCAR

You're right. It is a bore.

89

EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

89

OSCAR is writing at a table under a tree. BOSIE is
composing a sonnet. Crickets buzz. Boiling noon.

FELICE, half naked, is raking the gravel.

OSCAR puts down his pen. Gathers up the papers. Looks out
to sea.

OSCAR

It is finished!

90

EXT. VESUVIUS. DAY

90

A horse pulls a cart up the steep volcano. BOSIE and OSCAR
climb down and continue on foot. They are bickering.

OSCAR V/O

All men kill the thing they love.
By all let this be heard.
Some do it with a bitter look.
Some with a flattering word.

91

INT. CIMETARIO DELLA FONTANELLA

91

OSCAR and BOSIE are shown round this vast mausoleum carved into the rocks by a GUIDE with a flaming torch. PEOPLE pray in front of alters made entirely of skulls.

OSCAR.V/O

The coward does it with a kiss
The brave man with a sword.

92

EXT. NAPLES STREETS. DAY.

92

OSCAR and BOSIE walk down into the city, through thin dark streets festooned with washing. They are not talking.

OSCAR

They hanged him as a beast is
hanged.
They did not even toll a requiem
that might have brought rest to his
startled soul

93

EXT. BEACH RESTAURANT NAPLES. DAY.

93

OSCAR and BOSIE deep in conversation. A YOUNG MAN passes. They both look up.

OSCAR V.O.

But hurriedly they took him out,
And hid him in a hole.
The Chaplain would not kneel to
pray

94

EXT. BEACH RESTAURANT NAPLES. NIGHT.

94

Another table. BOSIE and OSCAR, dressed in warm clothes are laughing. It is Christmas time. TWO YOUNG MEN pass. One, good looking, turns back.

OSCAR V.O.

By his dishonored grave;
Nor mark it with that blessed
cross,
That Christ for sinners gave,
Because the man was one of those
Whom Christ came down to save.

Later. THE TWO YOUNG MEN sit with BOSIE and OSCAR. BOSIE is deep in conversation with the good looking one. OSCAR makes valiant headway with the UGLY FRIEND.

95

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

95

CYRIL, VIVIAN and CONSTANCE are looking at their Christmas tree.

CYRIL

Is father all alone in the hospital?

CONSTANCE

Of course not, darling. At Christmas all the patients have a party.

96

INT. VILLA GUIDICE. NIGHT.

96

And what a party. BOSIE and the usual FISHERMEN and SAILORS are playing strip musical chairs in front of a large tree lit by candles. OSCAR plays a piano. They wear paper hats and little else.

The music stops and everyone runs for a chair.

97

INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

97

CONSTANCE and her children hold hands and sing a carol

98

INT. VILLA GUIDICE. NIGHT.

98

Mayhem. A candle falls off the Christmas tree.

The music starts again. The group run around the chairs wide eyed and sweaty. A branch catches fire. The music stops and a fight breaks out between TWO FISHERMEN.

OSCAR comes in to break it up.

Suddenly the whole Christmas tree is engulfed by flames.

99

INT CONSTANCE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

99

The noise of flames becomes the rustling of paper. CYRIL unwraps a present from OSCAR, a ship in a bottle. VIVIAN hides behind a curtain.

CYRIL

But this is an Italian ship.

VIVIAN runs to his mother. CYRIL rolls his eyes.

100 INT. VILLA GUIDICE. NIGHT.

100

Smoke. Screams. A bucket of water is thrown. Most of it lands on OSCAR

A LOCAL WOMAN bursts through the door. She is accompanied by a shy GIRL of 18 clutching a wailing baby in her arms.

WOMAN

Where is my son?

FELICE

What are you doing here?

THE LOCAL WOMAN lunges at FELICE. Slaps him hard. THE YOUNG WIFE watches in horror. The BABY screams.

WOMAN

Shame on you. Look at her! Your wife! How can you insult us like this. I know what you are doing here.

BOSIE

And what might that be, Madam?

WOMAN

Where are the harlots, the loose women who are leading my son to hell? Show them to me. I will drag them onto the street by the hair. Afterwards my husband will castrate you S. Melmoth.

OSCAR

But, Signora. There are no women here.

BOSIE

This is a gentlemen's party.

WOMAN

Liar!

THE WOMEN stalks around the room, oblivious to the fact that almost everyone is half naked. She opens doors. Everyone waits in silence. The YOUNG WIFE watches anxiously. The BABY whimpers. Finally the WOMAN comes back into the room, laughs, goes over to her son and kisses him on the head

WOMAN (CONT'D)

Oh bimbo, scusa me! Signor Melmoth, I am sorry. I thought there were women here. But I see I was wrong. Bless you Signor. We will leave you.

She slaps her son hard over the head, takes the YOUNG WIFE by the arm.

WOMAN (CONT'D)
Don't make a noise when you come in, cicio.

She leaves. The company burst out laughing, and the party dances around the burnt Christmas tree.

101 INT. CONSTANCE'S HOUSE. NIGHT.

101

CYRIL is trying to remove the ship from the bottle he has been given.

CONSTANCE
Vivian. This one is from Papa.

CYRIL
Vivian doesn't know who Papa is.

VIVIAN
Yes I do.

CYRIL looks at his present for a moment, and then smashes it on the floor.

102 INT. VILLA GUIDICE. NIGHT

102

BOSIE, deeply drunk, in his underwear has been cornered by FELICE who is holding a broken bottle to his throat.

OSCAR
What on earth is going on?

BOSIE
One can run up a bill for everything in this swamp except sex it seems.

OSCAR
There is never credit where love is concerned, Bosie. You should know that. Felice, Caro, believe me he isn't worth it. Shall I take that?

OSCAR takes the bottle from FELICE'S hand, and leads him away. BOSIE starts to speak.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Be silent! Now, what does he owe you?

FELICE
My honour, signor.

BOSIE
What bollocks!

OSCAR
I said be quiet. We are rather strapped for cash at present but this should see you through until tomorrow.

OSCAR gives FELICE a silver framed photograph of CONSTANCE and the TWO BOYS

FELICE
Thank you, Signor Melmoth. You gentleman, but this! This is pig.

OSCAR
Well spotted. So clever of you to notice!

FELICE
He does not know the value of anything.

OSCAR
Nor the price, unfortunately. Now lets find your coat. Your wife will be getting worried.

OSCAR ushers him out of the room. BOSIE, pulling up his trousers, loses his balance and crashes to the floor.

BOSIE
What the hell did you give him that for?

OSCAR comes back into the room.

OSCAR
A foolish question, I know, but why didn't you just pay him?

BOSIE
With what?

OSCAR
With money.

Silence. BOSIE staggers to his feet.

BOSIE
I haven't got any.

OSCAR
What do you mean, you haven't got any?

Silence.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Well?

BOSIE

My mother has stopped my allowance.

OSCAR

What? When did this happen? Oh Christ!

BOSIE

I was waiting for the right moment to tell you.

OSCAR

But in the mean time you imagined that wretched boy would fuck you for fun.

BOSIE

And why not?

OSCAR

Your vanity is extraordinary. The only person who ever fucked you for fun was me! And look where it got me. The dock! So that's it then. We appear to have come to the end of the road. We're penniless.

BOSIE

Well, not exactly.

OSCAR

Oh?

BOSIE

You could have two hundred pounds and I could keep my allowance.

OSCAR

If?

BOSIE

Well, what Mama and the family really can't stomach is the fact that we live together. She says that if we agree to separate she will reinstate my allowance and, very generously, I think, give you this substantial....

OSCAR

Tip! For services rendered. To the Family. Would I get a good reference? Can I keep my cottage?

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

God, you all make me sick. Your sanctimonious mother thinks that I can be brought off for two hundred pounds. Your family has destroyed me, stripped me of everything, not least my genius. And all for two hundred pounds!

BOSIE

Genius! You destroyed yourself, Oscar, because underneath the pose there was NO SUBSTANCE. One good comedy, three pot boiling melodramas and those ridiculous fairy stories. That's all you find if you scrape away the powder and the pancake. Your success was interesting. Your hunger for it perversely fascinating. But you, my dear, never were!

OSCAR

You found me interesting enough when you were faced with blackmail.

BOSIE

You were in your element. You saw the green baize door swing open and you scuttled through it.

OSCAR

You are talking driveling. My father...

BOSIE

Was a drunken groper with dirty fingernails just like his son.

OSCAR

Whereas YOUR father is an assassin at large!

BOSIE

Oh, come on, Oscar, you're still alive.

OSCAR

Barely.

OSCAR collapses to a chair gasping for breath and clutching his heart.

BOSIE

For God's sake, stop acting.

OSCAR looks up at BOSIE

OSCAR

It's strange. I've never really looked at you before. I gave you my whole life and now I see it before me daubed in shit.

103 INT. STATION NAPLES. NIGHT.

103

A PORTER loads BOSIE'S luggage on to the train. BOSIE leans out of the window. OSCAR stands gloomily on the platform.

BOSIE

I'll write to you when I get to Rome. Where will you be?

OSCAR

I've really no idea. I suppose I may as well stay here until the lease runs out. Then I shall probably go to Paris. Who knows? At any rate we'll be in touch. Dear boy, do you mind awfully if I don't wait? I'm not really made for waving pocket handkerchiefs at parting trains.

He turns and lumbers away down the platform waving as he goes.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I'm too big!

BOSIE watches OSCAR disappear into the crowd.

104 INT. VILLA GUIDICE. NIGHT.

104

OSCAR wakes. The furniture is rattling and the room is bathed in a weird glow. Through the window Vesuvius is erupting. Lava spews from the crater. OSCAR watches entranced.

The door opens and CONSTANCE appears.

CONSTANCE

Hello Oscar.

OSCAR

Constance? Is it...

CONSTANCE

Where is Lord Alfred? Has he left? Are you quite alone now?

OSCAR

Where are the boys?

CONSTANCE

I must get on. Such a long way to go.

She rises, bent double and walks towards the wall.

OSCAR

Constance, we never meant to ...

CONSTANCE

I loved you so much. Always. Odd, isn't it...

CONSTANCE disappears.

A disembodied GIRLS VOICE sings.

GIRL

The boy I love is up in the gallery
The boy I love is looking down at me
There he is, can't you see, waving his handkerchief...

VIOLENT KNOCKING.

105 INT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

105

OSCAR wakes and stumbles to the front door.

An URCHIN hands OSCAR a telegram.

INSERT TELEGRAM: Regret to inform you Constance dead.
Genoa. Internment private. Robbie.

106 EXT. VILLA GUIDICE. DAY

106

A handcart is being loaded with OSCAR'S battered luggage.

107 EXT. TERRACE VILLA GUIDICE. DAY.

107

OSCAR looks out to sea. He turns around and walks through the bedroom. He takes the photograph of QUEEN VICTORIA from the bedside table. He walks through the house with it, dropping the keys on the floor as he goes through the front door.

Without looking back he follows the handcart.

108 INT. TRAIN TO PARIS. NIGHT. 108

OSCAR sits vacantly looking through the window of a third class carriage ploughing through the night.

CONSTANCE V.O.

Will you be coming home soon? The boys miss you terribly.

109 FLASHBACK. INT. SAVOY HOTEL. DAY. 109

CONSTANCE stands in the long hotel corridor. She has a pile of letters. OSCAR stands inside the door. He is not letting her in. Behind him a grandiose room can be seen.

OSCAR

If only I could remember the address!

BOSIE appears in a djellabha.

BOSIE

What address? Are you leaving me Oscar? How are you Constance?

CONSTANCE

Thank you, Bosie. Quite well. Oscar, We shall be at home this afternoon. Do try!

BOSIE

Oh, nursery tea! What fun. We'll both come, won't we Oscar.

OSCAR shuts the door. That was a narrow escape. A STOCKY youth stretches in the bed.

110 FLASHBACK. INT. NURSERY. DAY. 110

CONSTANCE presides at the table. OSCAR and BOSIE either side smoking and laughing at a private joke. The TWO LITTLE BOYS watch silently.

111 INT. TRAIN TO PARIS. NIGHT. 111

OSCAR

I am nothing.

112 INT. CAFE DE LA PAIX. PARIS. DAY. 112

Snowflakes flutter from a heavy white sky past the large windows of a cafe.

OSCAR sits at a table in a shabby overcoat, lost in thought.

A YOUNG MAN, (JEAN) comes into the bar with a wicker basket half full of bunches of snowdrops. He is ragged and frozen.

JEAN

A bunch of flowers sir. Two for a centime.

OSCAR wakes from his reverie and gazes at the YOUNG MAN.

OSCAR

Ah! Snowdrops. The frozen tears of God. I'll have them all. What is your name, dear boy?

JEAN

Jean, sir

OSCAR

Jean, sit with me. Have a drink to warm you up.

JEAN

(looking around)

Not here, Sir. But you can buy me one later at the Calisaya if you fancy.

OSCAR

I certainly do.

113 INT. BAR CALISAYA. NIGHT

113

OSCAR and JEAN are drinking absinthe.

OSCAR

I used to be quite famous, you know.

JEAN rolls his eyes.

JEAN

Oh, yes! When was that?

OSCAR

You don't believe me but it's true.

OSCAR momentarily loses his train of thought.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I was so famous that once I was even lowered down a mine in a bucket.

JEAN

What for?

OSCAR

The dear miners had invited me to dinner.

JEAN is uneasy. OSCAR laughs. Two more glasses arrive on the table. OSCAR puts one arm around JEAN. With the other he pours water onto sugar cubes in the two glasses of Absinthe. He is a deft seducer.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Yes, indeed. I traveled the length and breadth of the Americas. My own train. The interior, upholstered in green morocco. Your very good health!

They clink glasses and drink. OSCAR'S fleshy bejeweled hand begins to crawl along JEAN'S leg. His face moves in close, his voice is melodious and intimate. JEAN is mesmerized.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I civilised America. It took quite a long time, but I think it was worth it. In the rocky mountains is a town called Leadville. I spoke to the young miners of Leadville on the need for beauty.

OSCAR'S hand has arrived at JEAN'S crotch and squeezes. His eyes widen.

JEAN

You're mad!

OSCAR

Yes, I am. Quite mad. Now, on a more serious subject where did you steal those two jewels.

JEAN

What jewels?

OSCAR

Your eyes!

Black screen. A CHILDS VOICE counts.

OSCAR wakes on a mattress that is more like a dog basket in a hut with a mud floor.

A THIRTEEN YEAR OLD BOY (LEON) is counting matches into match boxes in the corner of this shanty dwelling. OSCAR doesn't know where he is. Groans.

THE BOY jumps up

LEON
(screaming)
He's awake.

JEAN, the YOUNG MAN from last night, appears.

OSCAR
Where am I? And who are you?

JEAN
Clignacourt. I'm Jean. And this
is Leon.

JEAN nudges LEON towards OSCAR. The boy holds out his hand gingerly. OSCAR shakes it.

OSCAR
Extremely glad to know you,
Monsieur

LEON
Give me some money.

JEAN slaps LEON over the head.

JEAN
Oi! Behave.

LEON
And I'll cook him an egg!

OSCAR
How kind. Now where is my pocket
book?

To his surprise, he finds it in his breast pocket. Gives a note to LEON who dashes from the house.

JEAN watches as OSCAR rises with difficulty from the bed.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
I'm afraid last night is rather a
blur. I like your brother.

JEAN starts to make up a fire in a makeshift grate.

JEAN
He shouldn't be here. Haven't
seen him in five years. Then one
day he just turns up. All the way
from Lille.

OSCAR looks around. Rough plank walls. Tarpaulin roof. Dirt floor. A photograph is pinned to the wall of a woman.

OSCAR
Ah! Family. So important. Is that
your mother.

JEAN
Was.

JEAN goes outside.

OSCAR
(looking at the picture)
I have two sons.

JEAN comes back in with wood.

JEAN
What?

OSCAR
Nothing. I've got quite a head.

Later, LEON cooks eggs in a saucepan over a small fire at the side of the room.

The BROTHERS eat, ravenously. OSCAR watches.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
(deeply touched)
Shall I tell you a story? I am
rather good at stories.

JEAN
(mouth full)
Another time, Monsieur. We have to
work. Come on.

115 EXT. SHANTY. DAY.

115

OSCAR and the TWO BOYS walk through the snowy lanes of the Parisian favela.

116 EXT. CAFE DE LA PAIX. NIGHT

116

Snow turns to rain. A summer downpour. The street glitters and steams. The terrace is packed. OSCAR, penniless, sits at a table and nurses the remains of a drink.

Later, he is talking to an ENGLISH VICAR and HIS FRIEND, holding forth, as the bill arrives. OSCAR beams as they pay and leave.

Later he is alone looking at the rain. WAITERS watch him from inside the bar.

Suddenly the awning in front of the bar is cranked back, A huge deluge of water falls on OSCAR. The WAITERS laugh.

A very drunk OSCAR sits in the pouring rain. His hat is drenched. People stare as they go past and he waves pathetically.

ROBBIE ROSS walks by. OSCAR sees him

OSCAR
Robbie! Stop a moment. Please!

ROBBIE turns back. He is under an umbrella.

ROBBIE
Oscar! Why are you sitting in the
rain?

OSCAR
I have spent all my ready cash on
youth and beauty, and I cannot
pay. Do help me Robbie. Please

ROBBIE is shocked by OSCAR'S state

ROBBIE
Lets go inside.

117 INT. CAFE DE LA PAIX. NIGHT

117

ROBBIE and OSCAR sit. OSCAR, exceedingly drunk, calls the WAITER.

OSCAR
Like dear St. Francis, I am
wedded to poverty. Only in my
case, the marriage is not a
success. Robbie, you are naughty.
How long have you been here?
(to waiter)
How much do we owe you?

WAITER
Twelve francs.

ROBBIE
(rolling his eyes)
Twelve francs? God, Oscar!

OSCAR
Its been a long day. Do you have
twelve francs or not, dear?

ROBBIE
Of course
(to the waiter)
Thank you.

OSCAR

Once again I am in your debt.
 (to waiter)
 Absinthe. Two.
 Bobbie I have missed you so much.
 Months of punitive silence.
 Naples was, as you so accurately
 predicted, a disaster.

ROBBIE smiles despite himself.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

It seems as though I am always
 asking for it, but do I have your
 forgiveness?

ROBBIE

Forgiveness is for amateurs, and
 you, dear Oscar, are a
 professional masochist. Come on,
 I'll take you home

OSCAR

Oh, dear boy so cruel!

ROBBIE

Anyway, to be pardoned would mean
 nothing to you. You always want
 to serve the full sentence. Can
 you forgive yourself?

OSCAR

Oh, Robbie, what an
 uncompromising curtain raiser.
 The ruined woman hardly knows how
 to react. Should I leave the
 room, or should I fall again into
 your arms? Of course Bobbie, you
 silly little thing I shall never
 forgive myself for being born!

118 EXT. STREETS AND HOTEL D'ALSACE. NIGHT.

118

OSCAR and ROBBIE walk back to the Hotel. ROBBIE has to
 support OSCAR who stumbles and weaves.

OSCAR

To think that I have wasted so
 much time, sacrificed everything,
 for a person who was quite simply
 not my style. However. Now I have
 a young panther who quite twists
 my lips with kisses...

ROBBIE

Spare me the details!

OSCAR

With a little brother of thirteen
who enjoys my stories. They live
together at Clignacourt. The
little one has the consumption
and sells matches. You shall meet
them. They are quite charming.

ROBBIE

Indeed. But the poets. The
artists. Your old friends. What
of them?

OSCAR

Lost in the mist, dear boy.
I am a vampire. I lurk in the
noon shadows, blanched by
sunlight, but at dusk I bloom, a
deadly nightshade that kills with
a kiss. Sometimes they see me.
The old friends. Leaving a cafe.
Under a lamp. Getting off the
omnibus, and I see them, their
faces twisted with terror and
disgust, as though the gates of
hell suddenly gaped before them.
It's really quite amusing.

ROBBIE

But you have not lost everything,
Oscar. Reading Gaol is the most
successful poem ever written

OSCAR

Most successful. Most brilliant.
Most promising. Most ambitious.
Most cruel. Most sorrowful. Most
dangerous. Most disgusting.
Words! Words! Words are
irrelevant. Do you think I'm
going mad?

ROBBIE

No, Oscar, but I don't believe a
'word' you say.

OSCAR

No. I am going mad. I shall never
write again, Bobbie. I don't need
to. A life of squalor has been
revealed to me. I embrace it.

ROBBIE

Oscar. You do not live in
squalor. There is light and
water...

OSCAR

And linoleum and indescribable wallpaper. But let us not squabble like two disgruntled housemaids. Let us rather black our grates with a light heart and chatter about our betters. Bosie, we hear, has come into twenty thousand pounds. He arrives next week. I thought I might touch him for a tiny pour boire when I dine with him. What do you say?

ROBBIE

Well, he has brought a stud outside Paris.

OSCAR

Typical. He knows absolutely nothing about horses and yet he always manages to back the loser.

(suddenly coy)

Will you come up, Robbie?

ROBBIE

No, Oscar. Lets forget all that.

Pause.

OSCAR

Did I hurt you terribly?

THE TWO MEN look at each other. Finally.

ROBBIE

I think you hurt yourself more.
Good night, Oscar.

OSCAR

Then until tomorrow. We shall have moules. Good night dear boy.

OSCAR goes into the Hotel.

119

INT. CAFE DE LA PAIX. NIGHT

119

An ill assorted group. ROBBIE, OSCAR, BOSIE and his latest conquest. OSCAR is blotchy and covered with grease.

BOSIE

How long are you here, Robbie?

ROBBIE

I am joining my mother in Menton on Tuesday.

BOSIE

More paraffin injections? How lovely. You should take Oscar. He looks like a rotten egg in aspic. What happened?

OSCAR

I was poisoned by a moule last week when Robbie arrived. I have had mysterious skin ever since.

BOSIE

Oh, leprosy I expect.

OSCAR

Thank you, my dear. But let us talk of more cheerful things! Your fathers death, for example. How did it go?

BOSIE

Without a hitch for the most part. In and out of consciousness.

OSCAR

As in life!

BOSIE

My brother Percy went to see him just before the end. Father opened his eyes and spat at him.

ROBBIE

Queensbury rules until the end!

OSCAR

Well I, at least, have outlived my nemesis, although I am more or less starving at the moment.

BOSIE

Shovelling down Lobster Newberg!

OSCAR

A magnificent treat. And at the moment, sadly all too rare. Bosie dear, this brings me rather neatly to an awkward point...

BOSIE

Oscar! Do not ask me for money! I have absolutely none to spare.

OSCAR

But dear boy, you have just
inherited twenty thousand pounds,
have you not? Surely you do not
wish to see me on the street?

BOSIE

As you are behaving like an old
prostitute, Oscar, perhaps the
street is where you belong.

OSCAR shrugs his shoulders and keeps eating.

ROBBIE

For Gods sake, Bosie...

BOSIE

This has nothing to do with you,
Robbie. Keep out of it! Garcon!

ROBBIE

Unfortunately it has. Since Oscar
threw in his lot with you at
Naples, he been cut adrift by
everyone. Constance has died. His
sons have been taken away from
him. His so called friends have
deserted him. And now you, who
owe him everything, turn your
back.

BOSIE

(screaming)

I am sick and tired of being
blamed for the self inflicted
wounds of a gluttonous snob. I am
not my lovers keeper. If he wants
to eat he should work! Oscar what
have you written recently?

A WAITER wheels a trolley towards the table.

OSCAR

Ah. The Pudding trolley.

(to the YOUNG MAN)

I see your little eyes light up.
What shall we have? Robbie, dear,
you'll burst a hemorrhoid. It was
only a passing thought...

BOSIE

Like all your work.

ROBBIE

You disgust me, Bosie.

BOSIE

Do you suppose I care. I asked you a question Oscar. Does the flame still burn? No, it doesn't, does it. So I am supposed to keep you in luxury while you stumble about the boulevard begging for drinks. Christ! Some of us have to work.

BOSIE throws cash on to the table and storms out dragging the BOY with him. With difficulty ROBBIE helps OSCAR get up from the table.

120 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. BEDROOM. DAY.

120

In the same movement, ROBBIE is now helping OSCAR into bed as the image of the restaurant recedes around them.

DR. TUCKER, a SURGEON and A NURSE materialise. They are preparing for an operation. OSCAR is agitated.

OSCAR

Have you told Bosie?

ROBBIE

I haven't seen him since the terrible lunch.

OSCAR

You must. If anything happens...

ROBBIE

It wont.

The NURSE begins to cover OSCAR in linen so that only his face and ear are visible.

DR. TUCKER gives OSCAR an injection.

OSCAR

Is it really necessary, Dr. Tucker? I feel perfectly well, you know.

DR. TUCKER

We shall be as quick as we can.

121 INT. STAIRS HOTEL D'ALSACE. DAY.

121

M. DUPOIRIER comes up the stairs with towels and a jug of water.

A muffled scream from inside the room.

122 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. BEDROOM. DAY.

122

A medieval scene. THE SURGEON is cutting inside OSCAR'S ear. There is blood everywhere.

OSCAR has come round and has crammed his clenched fists in his mouth to stop himself from crying out.

THE NURSE smothers his face with a towel drenched in chloral.

OSCAR'S eyes bulge and then close.

123 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. BEDROOM. DUSK.

123

OSCAR, trussed up in bandages, sleeps. ROBBIE, MAURICE, DR TUCKER watch and whisper. He wakes. The room seems tiny. Just faces pressing in. OSCAR tries to focus.

OSCAR

Is that you Maurice? Come here immediately and ravish me!

DR. TUCKER

(stiffly)

No, it is I. Dr Tucker. How are you feeling?

OSCAR

Medium, dear, rather medium.

DR TUCKER puts a thermometer in OSCAR'S mouth.

The door opens and REGGIE comes in wearing an overcoat, carrying a travelling bag.

REGGIE

Nurse Turner reporting for duty.

Everyone is momentarily lifted. ROBBIE and REGGIE hug. DR. TUCKER claps REGGIE on the back, and OSCAR'S eyes bulge with pleasure.

ROBBIE

Thank God you're here.

REGGIE

How is the patient?

DR. TUCKER

If he would only refrain from drinking...

He removes the thermometer from OSCAR'S mouth. Looks at it. Says nothing

REGGIE
Darling Oscar.

DR. TUCKER
We should have him up and about in a couple of days. Do try to knock some sense in to him, Mr Turner, while you are here. Neither Mr Ross nor I seem to have any influence.

OSCAR
(to ROBBIE)
When are you leaving?

ROBBIE
My train is at half past nine.

REGGIE
Are you meeting your mother at the station?

ROBBIE
No, she's already in Menton.

OSCAR
Reggie. Dr. Tucker. Would you excuse us for a moment.

EVERYONE is surprised. ROBBIE and REGGIE exchange looks.

REGGIE
But Oscar, I've just arrived.

OSCAR
Reggie, please!

DR. TUCKER
Of course.

They leave.

ROBBIE
What is it Oscar?

OSCAR tries to speak but can't. Finally he bursts into tears.

OSCAR
Oh, Robbie. I shall never see you again.

ROBBIE
Of course we shall see each other again Oscar. What are you talking about?

OSCAR

Robbie, don't go. Stay a little longer. Surely your mother can spare you...

ROBBIE

Oscar, you know she can't. I'm already a week late.

OSCAR continues to cry like a baby.

OSCAR

I shall never see you again. I know it. Hold me dearest boy. Just for a minute. I'm so afraid.

Renewed sobs. ROBBIE sits on the bed and puts his arms around OSCAR.

ROBBIE

Don't cry or I'll cry too.

ROBBIE rocks OSCAR back and forth.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

I shall settle my mother and I be back.

OSCAR

Really?

ROBBIE untangles himself from OSCAR who sits in his bed looking down and crying quietly.

ROBBIE opens the door. REGGIE and DR. TUCKER come in.

ROBBIE

Goodbye, Reggie dear. Thank you so much. Let me know how it all goes, won't you.

They embrace. ROBBIE and DR. TUCKER shake hands.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

Look after him, Doctor, and Oscar.
No drinking!

OSCAR

(blowing his nose)

No drinking.

ROBBIE kisses OSCAR on the lips, holds his hands. Goes to the door.

OSCAR looks like an abandoned dog, but tries to put on a brave face.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Robbie darling, try to find a
little cup in the hills above Nice
where I might go to recuperate and
be near you.

ROBBIE

I'll try.

ROBBIE turns at the doorway, and bows slightly.

124 OMITTED

124 *

125 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

125

REGGIE comes into the room and stands at the door watching OSCAR. His eyes are closed but big tears roll from under the lids.

REGGIE

Oscar, you old fraud. You look
perfectly well.

OSCAR

I know. Can you believe it? One
poisonous moule four months ago and
I've been in and out of bed ever
since. Dear boy, behind the commode
you will find a bottle of
champagne. Open it, and lets drink
to your arrival.

REGGIE

We shouldn't really.

OSCAR

Of course we shouldn't. You have
crossed the water for a treasured
friend. There are glasses under the
bed.

REGGIE opens the champagne. OSCAR clutches at his stomach and groans as he tries to sit up.

REGGIE

Poor darling! But I hear you are
doing a new play.

OSCAR

(uneasy)

Yes, in a way. Robbie has left me
some divine note books in which to
scribble beautiful thoughts, but
unfortunately I haven't had any
this year.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I will tell you a terrible secret -
don't tell Robbie, please Reggie,
there's a dear.

REGGIE pours champagne. OSCAR leans towards him and whispers.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

I have sold the play to three
different individuals, and I
haven't written a single word.
Rather clever, don't you think?
There is nothing like an Irish
beggar, once he gets into his
stride.

REGGIE

But what will you do when the time
comes to deliver it?

OSCAR

Die! I am paralysed by dark
thoughts. Sometimes I wonder. Is it
a moule? It could be something
else. Oh God!

REGGIE

What?

OSCAR is overwhelmed, and puts his hand on his ear.

OSCAR

Why did Constance die? Why have I
become so mad? Reggie, my brain has
crashed and shattered. Is this...

OSCAR is trembling. REGGIE takes his hand.

REGGIE

What, Oscar?

From OSCAR'S point of view the room is suddenly enormous.
CONSTANCE appears in the distance. She walks towards the bed
singing. She is young and beautiful and regards OSCAR
lovingly.

CONSTANCE

(whisper)

Syphilis.

She disappears and the room contracts. OSCAR is rigid with
fear. REGGIE watches, concerned.

OSCAR

Do you see the hell in which I
live? Robbie wants me to write a
play and I am wrestling with my
soul, Reggie. I cannot write a
play.

REGGIE

(kind but firm)

Of course you can. You must! Now come on, Oscar. Pull yourself together. The doctor says in a few days we may take you out for a drive. You see? We're going to have a lovely time.

126 OMITTED.

126

127 EXT. BOIS DE BOULOGNE. DUSK.

127

OSCAR, REGGIE and MAURICE drive through the park. Autumn leaves fall. The sky is white and blustery.

OSCAR

What does it profit a man to gain the whole world and lose his own soul?

REGGIE

What? Why do you ask?

OSCAR

I was driving through the park, one Sunday, years ago, and close by Marble Arch there stood a little crowd of shabby looking people listening to some vulgar street preacher. As I passed by, I heard the man yelling out that question to his audience. It struck me as being rather dramatic. A wet Sunday, an uncouth Christian in a macintosh, a ring of sickly white faces under a broken roof of dripping umbrellas, and a wonderful phrase flung into the air by shrill hysterical lips. It was really very good in its way.

The THREE MEN laugh. OSCAR is proud of his memory.

REGGIE

That's marvellous Oscar. Do you remember everything you've written?

OSCAR

Isn't it extraordinary. I can't think what happened last week. One's whole life is a blur. All that remains, clear, black and white, carved in stone, are the words.

(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 Words written on pages under long
 forgotten moons. Shall we stop off
 for a drink on the way back?

REGGIE
 You know what Dr. Tucker said.

OSCAR
 Dr. Tucker is a quack! That is the
 secret of his success. Come on,
 Reggie. I'm feeling so much better.
 Just not being cooped up in that
 terrible room is an elixir!

REGGIE
 I couldn't agree with you more. But
 just one.

128 INT. BAR CALISAYA. DUSK.

128

REGGIE and MAURICE help OSCAR into the bar.

A WAITER comes to the table.

WAITER
 Ahh, M Melmoth! We've been worried
 about you

OSCAR
 Absinthe, Henri. Three.

REGGIE
 Oscar!

OSCAR
 Fuck off, Reggie. One last drink
 before I die!

A COUPLE raise their glasses to OSCAR. This is his local and everyone is happy to see him back.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 (to the WAITER)
 Have you seen the boys?

WAITER
 They were here yesterday.

REGGIE
 You are not dying, Oscar.

OSCAR
 Oh yes I am dear boy. It is
 November. I shall not outlive the
 century. The English would never
 permit it.

THE COUPLE have appeared and sit down. OSCAR makes introductions as drinks arrive and more are ordered. A MAN enters the bar and greets OSCAR loudly. OSCAR waves grandly back.

CUT TO

Later, through the window of the bar, the last impromptu party is getting out of control. OSCAR is surrounded, holding forth for the last time. More drinks arrive. REGGIE, deep in conversation with MAURICE, is unconcerned.

129 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. BEDROOM. NIGHT.

129

REGGIE and MAURICE undress a drunken OSCAR. A good deal of laughter. Finally OSCAR is tucked up in bed and sneezes loudly followed by a fart. More hilarity. REGGIE and MAURICE tidy up and flirt.

There is a knock on the door.

REGGIE
Who could it be at this hour?

MAURICE opens the door. JEAN and LEON come into the room. They each have a bunch of flowers.

REGGIE (CONT'D)
(to himself)
Christ! Are we to be spared nothing?

OSCAR
Boys! What a marvellous surprise.
Sit down and have a glass of champagne.

OSCAR pats the side of his bed, and the TWO BROTHERS gingerly sit down. Introductions are made.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
And how is life on the boulevard?
All well in the underworld?

JEAN
We heard that you're sick.

LEON
Are you dying?

JEAN
Shut up!

LEON
Because if you are, you have to finish the story. You still owe us ten francs, you know!

OSCAR

You see, Reggie, more creditors to add to our list. I am dying beyond my means! Dear boys, you shall have the story, we shall have champagne, cocaine, and perhaps one last mauve moment for me....

Everyone groans.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

It was a joke! Now sit down everyone and we'll begin. Where was I?

LEON

The two emeralds.

OSCAR

The two emeralds. Let me see.
 'It is winter' said the swallow.
 'In Egypt the sun is warm. My
 companions are building a nest in
 the Temple of Baalbec and pink and
 white doves are watching them and
 cooing softly to each other. Dear
 Prince, I must leave you, but I
 will never forget you and next
 spring I shall bring you back two
 beautiful jewels in place of those
 you have given away. Turn down the
 gaslight would you Reggie?

In the light from the fire the group settles down. REGGIE sits on a small sofa next to MAURICE, and the TWO BROTHERS at the end of the bed.

LEON begins to cough. There is blood. REGGIE, horrified, covers his mouth with a handkerchief.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

'In the square below,' said the Happy Prince,' there stands a little match boy. His matches have fallen in the gutter, and they are all spoiled. His sisters will beat him if he does not bring home some money, and he is crying. He has no shoes or stockings and his little head is bare. Pluck out my emerald eyes and give them to him, and his sisters will not beat him.

Everyone listens. Eyes glitter in the firelight. REGGIE'S hand is stroking MAURICE'S leg

Later REGGIE is asleep, his head on MAURICE'S shoulder. The others are nodding off. Only LEON listens intently.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Then the swallow came back to the Prince. 'You are blind now,' he said, ' so I will stay with you always.' Then the snow came, and after the snow came the frost. At last the swallow knew that he was going to die.

130 FLASHBACK. INT. NURSERY. NIGHT. 1889

130

A different bed and different people. OSCAR'S TWO CHILDREN listen enraptured as a younger OSCAR reads.

OSCAR

He had just enough strength to fly up to the Prince's shoulder once more. 'Goodbye dear Prince!' He murmured. 'I am glad you are going to Egypt little swallow.' Said the Prince.

131 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. NIGHT. 1900.

131

OSCAR gasps, lost suddenly in memory.

OSCAR

It is not to Egypt I am going. It is to the house of death. Death is the brother of sleep, is he not?' And he kissed the Happy Prince on the lips and fell down dead at his feet.

Silence. OSCAR looks around.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

The disciples sleep. The end is nigh.

OSCAR sneezes extravagantly.

The sound of distant applause. He smiles.

132 INT. LONDON THEATRE. NIGHT. 1895.

132

OSCAR and his TWO SONS watch a performance of 'The Importance Of Being Earnest' from a box.

DR CHASUBLE

Was the cause of death mentioned?

JACK

A severe chill, it seems.

MISS PRISM
As a man sows, so shall he reap.

DR CHASUBLE
Charity, dear Miss Prism, charity!
None of us is perfect. I myself am
particularly susceptible to
draughts. Will the internment take
place here?

JACK
No. He seems to have expressed a
desire to be buried in Paris.

DR CHASUBLE
In Paris! I fear that hardly points
to any very serious state of mind
at the end.

THE AUDIENCE explode with laughter.

THE BOYS look at their father with pride.

CYRIL
(leaning over and
whispering)
Come home soon father.

OSCAR
Tommorrow. I promise.

133 OMITTED.

133

134 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. DAY. 1900.

134

OSCAR waves goodbye. The TWO BOYS shimmer in the distance.
REGGIE watches concerned.

OSCAR
And tomorrow and tomorrow!

OSCAR eyes fill with tears.

REGGIE
Oscar?

OSCAR
Reggie. The boys!

REGGIE
Which ones? Maurice? Bosie?

OSCAR
I'm sorry. Awfully sorry. So many
broken hearts.
(MORE)

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 They will have to live with it. For
 ever. World without end.

THE BOYS fade away. The room contracts. OSCAR has a massive stroke. He looks wildly at REGGIE, mistakes him for a waiter, and gestures feebly.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
 Garcon, encore du champagne!

135 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE. CORRIDOR. NIGHT.

135

ROBBIE and REGGIE are outside OSCAR'S room.

REGGIE
 Thank God you've come back.
 Yesterday she decided I was a
 waiter.

ROBBIE
 And today?

REGGIE
 God knows. He hasn't spoken. And
 now the Doctor says he can't last
 more than forty eight hours.

ROBBIE
 Have you called a Priest?

REGGIE
 Oh! Should I have?

ROBBIE
 Well, I will then. We must.

They go in to OSCAR'S room.

136 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. NIGHT.

136

ROBBIE
 Oscar? Oscar!

No response. ROBBIE takes OSCAR'S hand.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
 Can you hear me?

A small squeeze.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
 Oscar, would you like me to fetch a
 Priest?

OSCAR looks into ROBBIE'S eyes. A faint smile. He nods his head and squeezes ROBBIE'S hand.

ROBBIE gets up to leave but OSCAR holds on to him, looking intently into his eyes. ROBBIE looks around helplessly. REGGIE shrugs, but M. DUPOIRIER produces a rosary from his waistcoat and offers it to ROBBIE, who presses it into OSCAR'S hands. OSCAR'S eyes close.

DUPOIRIER

You could try the Passionist fathers on the Rue du Bac.

137

INT. CARRIAGE. PARIS. NIGHT.

137

ROBBIE and a small Irish Priest, FR. DUNNE are jolting back towards the Hotel d'Alsace.

ROBBIE

I must tell you, father, the dying man has been quite a well known literary figure.

FR. DUNNE

It's all one and the same thing to Our Lord. He has no time to read, Mr. Ross, with all of us sinners clogging up the road to hell. But who might your friend be who has come home so late and yet so thirsty for the sacred blood of Christ?

A moments silence. ROBBIE takes a deep breath.

ROBBIE

Oscar Wilde.

FR. DUNNE'S eyeballs nearly pop out.

FR. DUNNE

Jesus Christ!
(flustered)
Has Mr Wilde expressed a desire for extreme unction?

ROBBIE

Most certainly. While he could still speak.

FR. DUNNE

Has he been received? Is he not a protestant?

ROBBIE

He was meant to be a Catholic.

ROBBIE breaks down.

FR. DUNNE

Oh, my son, don't worry. I'm sure we can sort something out. I have everything we might need with me, unless of course exorcism is called for.

FR. DUNNE laughs. ROBBIE dries his eyes.

FR. DUNNE (CONT'D)

Just my little joke. I must say I am quite excited. I once sat, in the gallery of course, through a performance of *The Ideal Husband*. Now there's a play, although I gather Mr Wilde was not much of one himself. Still, God moves in mysterious ways, his wonders to perform.

138 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. NIGHT.

138

OSCAR lies still clutching the rosary with half opened eyes.

REGGIE sits by the bed. DUPOIRIER opens the door.

DR TUCKER listens to OSCAR'S pulse.

FR. DUNNE

Ah! We're in time. Good evening M Dupoirier. We missed you on Sunday.

ROBBIE goes straight to the bed.

ROBBIE

Oscar, can you hear me! This is Fr. Dunne. Reggie move!

REGGIE moves into the shadows. ROBBIE sits by the bed and takes OSCAR'S hands.

ROBBIE (CONT'D)

(almost shouting)

Oscar. Fr. Dunne is willing to receive you into the church and give you absolution but you need to sit up and pay attention....

FR. DUNNE

Now, now Mr. Ross, between the stirrup and the ground there is always time for an act of contrition. There's no need to hurry. Good evening Mr. Wilde. I am Father Cuthbert Dunne. Now.

(MORE)

FR. DUNNE (CONT'D)

I am going to say some very simple things to you but I need to know that you have understood. A small sign is all that I shall need.

OSCAR raises his hand slightly.

FR. DUNNE (CONT'D)

That's right. Let us all kneel.

ROBBIE, DR. TUCKER, FR. DUNNE and DUPOIRIER kneel by the bed and cross themselves. REGGIE uncertainly follows suit.

OSCAR regards the faces around the bed and begins to panic. He is somewhere else.

FR DUNNE

In the name of the father and the son and the holy ghost. Amen.
Father, look with pity on your servant Oscar. Absolve him of all his sins. Mr Wilde. Examine your conscience.

Close on OSCAR.

FR DUNNE (CONT'D)

There are no secrets between man and God. Talk to him. Where did you lose sight of our Blessed Lord?

OSCAR

(barely a whisper)
Clapham Junction.

139

FLASHBACK. EXT. CLAPHAM JUNCTION PLATFORM. DAY. 1895.

139

OSCAR in prison uniform, handcuffed to a guard sits on a bench waiting for a train.

He is surrounded by a jeering crowd.

FR. DUNNE V.O.

Jesus Christ was nailed to the cross at Golgotha so that your sins may be forgiven. On the third day he rose again.

140

INT. HOTEL ROOM. NIGHT. 1900.

140

OSCAR convulses. ROBBIE and REGGIE hold him down.

FR DUNNE

I baptise you, in the name of the father and of the son and of the holy ghost. Amen.

He raises his arm to sprinkle holy water on OSCAR.

141 EXT. CLAPHAM JUNCTION PLATFORM. DAY.

141

A BURLY MAN spits on OSCAR'S face in slow motion. The CROWD laugh and others follow suit.

142 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. NIGHT.

142

FR DUNNE stands up and anoints OSCAR.

OSCAR'S face is covered in tears.

FR DUNNE

Though I walk in the valley of death, I raise mine eyes to the hills whence cometh my delight.

OSCAR looks up into FR DUNNE'S eyes.

OSCAR'S VISION OF JESUS.

JESUS, bleeding, crowned with thorns, surrounded by radiance, takes OSCAR'S face in his hands and kisses his forehead, then both his wrists.

OSCAR reaches out towards him but he's gone.

In his place FR DUNNE makes a final sign of the cross.

The extreme unction is completed. OSCAR is more or less brain dead. Everyone stands.

FR. DUNNE

There now. Wasn't that beautiful.
I'll be away now. If you should need me again, our friend Monsieur Dupoirier knows where to find me.

ROBBIE

We're so grateful...

FR. DUNNE

No, no, it's been a privilege to meet such a distinguished author.
I'll find my own way down.

FR DUNNE leaves. DUPOIRIER follows.

REGGIE opens the curtains. It is dawn outside. A cold clear light.

REGGIE

It's going to be a beautiful day.

ROBBIE sits down beside the bed, and puts his head in his hands.

In the silence a deep uneven rattle, like the clanking of a treadmill, comes from OSCAR'S open mouth. The TWO MEN look up.

The deathbed vigil begins.

ROBBIE and REGGIE sit by the bed patiently watching. The only sound is OSCAR'S rattling breath.

143 FLASHBACK. INT READING GAOL. TREADMILL. DAY. 143

OSCAR clambers on the big wheel.

144 1NT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. MORNING. 144

ROBBIE is still by the bed. REGGIE is at the window. DUPOIRIER brings a tray of food.

LATER. The death rattle continues. The food is untouched but the wine has been opened. REGGIE is holding a glass.

REGGIE

Oh, God, how much longer?

145 FLASHBACK. INT READING GAOL. TREADMILL. DAY. 145

OSCAR slips off the treadmill and bounces towards the ground but pulls himself back up and continues.

146 INT. HOTEL D'ALSACE BEDROOM. DAY. 146

MAURICE GILBERT is sitting by OSCAR holding his hand. DR. TUCKER stands at the end of the bed. REGGIE and ROBBIE are sitting by the window smoking and looking down into the street where life goes on in silence.

Suddenly the death rattle stops. They stand and move towards the bed.

OSCAR'S head lolls to one side. His eyes open suddenly fixating for ever on the framed photograph of QUEEN VICTORIA, which has followed him through exile.

OSCAR'S VISION OF PARADISE.

QUEEN VICTORIA, THE PRINCE OF WALES. PRINCESS ALEXANDRA, all THE PRINCESSES, THEIR HUSBANDS, THE COUSINS, THE GRANDCHILDREN, and THE COURT are sitting in OSCAR'S room listening enraptured.

OSCAR

So they pulled down the statue of the Happy Prince. 'As he is no longer beautiful he is no longer useful' said the art professor at the university. Then they melted the statue in a furnace.

We float from the bed, through QUEEN VICTORIA, and the rows of STIFF COURTIERS, through a door and outside into daylight.

OSCAR V.O.

What a strange thing' said the overseer of the workmen at the foundry. 'This broken lead heart will not melt. We must throw it away. So they threw it on a dust heap where the dead swallow was also lying.

147 EXT. PARIS CEMETERY. DAY.

147

A Coffin slides out of a hearse. It is carried through a shabby Cemetery and placed in an open grave.

ROBBIE and BOSIE, REGGIE, JEAN, LEON, MAURICE and Mr DUPOIRIER stand by the grave.

FR DUNNE incants the committal litany.

BOSIE is sobbing hysterically.

ROBBIE

For Christ's sake, Bosie, shut up.

BOSIE

You can't understand, Robbie. But how could you?

ROBBIE

Understand what?

BOSIE

The sort of love that Oscar and I shared.

ROBBIE

You've never shared anything with anybody. You're too fucking selfish.

(MORE)

ROBBIE (CONT'D)
 Your so called love killed him.
 Where were you when he was dying?

REGGIE
 Bobbie!

BOSIE
 Here we go. You have never faced
 the fact that Oscar loved me and
 not you. Because he didn't. Did
 he? However hard you tried. And
 how you tried!

ROBBIE loses control and smacks BOSIE hard across the face,
 nearly knocking him over.

ROBBIE turns and walks away. REGGIE and MAURICE manage to
 stop BOSIE from falling into the grave.

ROBBIE leaves the cemetery.

In the background BOSIE screams.

BOSIE (CONT'D)
 You second rate dwarf. Do you
 know what Oscar thought about
 you?

REGGIE
 Stop it, Bosie!

BOSIE
 He thought you were a useful bore.
 When history looks back, it won't
 be at you. It will be at him and
 ME. You'll just be a footnote you
 dreary little cunt.

Close on ROBBIE. Noise of a foghorn.

148 EXT. PACKET BOAT. DIEPPE. DAWN. 1900.

148

ROBBIE is on board looking back towards France as the boat
 pulls out of the fog bound harbour and disappears into the
 green haze.

OSCAR V.O.
 'Bring me the two most precious
 things in the city' said God to
 one of his angels and the angel
 brought him the leaden heart and
 the dead bird.' You have rightly
 chosen' said God ' for in my
 garden of paradise this little
 bird shall sing for ever more and
 in my city of gold the Happy
 Prince shall praise me.

149 INT. NURSERY. NIGHT. 1889

149

A MAN blows out a candle by the bed of TWO SLEEPING CHILDREN. He regards them lovingly, then quietly leaves the room, closing the door behind him.

THE END