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**Silas Marner**

by

*George Eliot*

adapted for the stage by

Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy

© Mary Elizabeth Burke-Kennedy,  
Carrigahorig,  
Nenagh,  
Co. Tipperary.

The play is in two acts. There is a cast of seven requiring doubling indicated below:

Silas

Squire:	Ben Winthrop:	Minister	
Godfrey Cass:	Mr. Macey:	William Dane	
Dunstan Cass:	Jem Rodney.		
Nancy Lammeter:	Sarah		
Dolly Winthrop:	Priscilla Lammeter		
Eppie Marner:	Mr. Tookey:	Molly Farren:	Miss Gunn

The choric/storytelling roles are carried out by the cast – the children of Raveloe, the members of Lantern Yard Chapel, the members of Batherly Hunt, the spirits who tempt Dunstan etc. The narration is delivered in the character of the moment.

The locations of the play are:

- a) Silas's House
- b) The Rainbow Tavern
- c) Out door location – the Stone pits/field bedside Stone pits
- d) Squire Cass's House

Subsidiary locations are Lantern Yard and the alien city to which Silas and Eppie return.

**SILAS MARNER** WAS FIRST PRODUCED BY STORYTELLERS THEATRE COMPANY WITH THE FOLLOWING CAST.

Michael James Ford

Ali White

Karen Ardiff

Melody McNamara

Gerry Byrne

Brendan Conroy as Silas.

THE PRODUCTION WAS DIRECTED BY BAIRBRE NI CHAOIMH.

## ACT ONE

### Prologue.

*(Silas works at his loom. Strenuous, repetitive work. The rhythm is slow allowing the chorus time to deliver their lines. Silas works in character. The rest of the cast deliver the opening lines as storytellers, grabbing the attention of the audience. In this case the use of names (Squire, Dunstan, Nancy etc) is simply a way to allocate lines to the actors, not a direction to play these lines in the mode of these characters).*

- SQUIRE: In the days when the spinning-wheels hummed busily in the farmhouses – and even great ladies, clothed in silk and thread-lace had their toy spinning-wheels of polished oak, there might be seen in districts far away among the lanes, or deep in the bosom of the hills, certain pallid undersized men who, by the side of the brawny country folk, looked like the remnants of a disinherited race.
- NANCY: The shepherd's dog barked fiercely when one of these alien-looking men appeared on the upland – dark against the early winter sunset, for what dog likes a figure bent under a heavy bag...
- EPPIE: ... and these pale men rarely stirred abroad without that mysterious burden.
- DUNSTAN: The shepherd himself, though he had good reason to believe that the bag held nothing but flaxen thread, or else the long rolls of strong linen spun from that thread, was not quite sure that this trade of weaving, indispensable though it was, could be carried on entirely without the help of the Evil One.
- SQUIRE: No-one knew where wandering men had their homes or their origin - and how was a man to be explained unless you at least knew somebody who knew his father and mother?
- GODFREY: To the peasants of old times, the world outside their own direct experience was a region of vagueness and mystery - to their untravelled thought, a state of wandering was a conception as dim as the winter life of the swallows that came back with the spring.
- DUNSTAN: All cleverness, whether in the rapid use of that difficult instrument the tongue – or in some other art unfamiliar to villagers, was in itself suspicious.
- DOLLY: In this way it came to pass that those scattered linen weavers – emigrants from the town into the country – were to the last regarded as aliens by their rustic neighbours, and usually contracted the eccentric habits, which belong to a state of loneliness.
- NANCY: In the early years of this century, such a linen weaver, named Silas Marner, worked at his vocation in a stone cottage that stood among the hedgerows near the village of Raveloe, and not far from the edge of a deserted stone pit.
- EPPIE: The strange sound of Silas's loom, so unlike the natural cheerful trotting of the winnowing machine, or the simpler rhythm of the flail, had a fearful fascination for the Raveloe children...
- GODFREY: They would often leave off gathering nuts or birds' nesting to peep in at the window of the stone cottage.

**Act One****Scene One:** *(The Raveloe children spy on Silas)*

NANCY: What can you see?

EPPIE: Just him and his loom thing.

SQUIRE: What else?

DUNSTAN: There's a fire and a stool.

DOLLY: Has he no bed?

NANCY: He never goes to bed.

GODFREY: He stays up all night talking to the devil.

EPPIE: There's a big shadow beside him.

DUNSTAN: Bending over him. Whispering in his ear.

SQUIRE: Has it got horns and a tail?

*(Silas stops working abruptly and listens)*

EPPIE: He's turning around. He's looking at me.

SQUIRE: Don't look into his eyes.

DUNSTAN: The shadow's moving.

*(They all scream and run, shouting their lines)*

SILAS: What's that? Who's out there?

DOLLY: The devil's coming for us.

SQUIRE: Run!

NANCY: Don't let him catch your eye.

EPPIE: He saw me. I can't move.

*(Dunstan and Godfrey grab her, one by each arm)*

GODFREY: Come on!

DUNSTAN: Run from the devil! Run!

SILAS: *(Shouting after them)* Pests. Tormentors. What's there to stare at? Leave me alone I say!

*(He returns to his loom and begins to work angrily)*

What do you know of the devil? I've seen his face - the face of William Dane. Peering at me through my loom. Pulling at his fleshy cheek. Tapping his nose. The voice of Satan. Guilty! Guilty! (He works more frantically) Get away! Devil. Liar. Leave me alone!

*(A chorus of voices proclaiming "Guilty" rises to a crescendo. The cast enters as the congregation of Lantern Yard)*

**Act One**  
**Scene Two:**

*(The Lantern Yard Community)*

- MINISTER: In his youth, Silas Marner had been a young man of exemplary life and ardent faith.
- EPPIE: A devoted son and doting brother to his ailing little sister.
- DOLLY: He was known around the town for carrying the child on his back, when they went of a Sunday to the outlying fields where his mother gathered herbs.
- DUNSTAN: When he lost his little sister to the fever, and some time later his mother died, he was easily persuaded by the other apprentices to join their congregation in Lantern Yard.
- MINISTER: Here was a new family for him. Close in faith and close in friendship.
- GODFREY: His particular friend was William Dane – older than Silas, wise beyond the others, secure in the fact that he was saved.
- SILAS: In time Silas made another attachment to Sarah, a maidservant, who was also a member of the Chapel and before long they were engaged.
- SARAH: They would walk out together on a Sunday and if William Dane came along, Sarah did not object.

*(They sit in a grassy place)*

- SILAS: Valerian is what my mother called this. It grows in the town too, on the tops of the garden walls.
- SARAH: What do you do with it?
- SILAS: She would boil up the root and strain it, and give it to people to help them sleep.
- SARAH: Did it work?
- SILAS: It did.
- SARAH: Could she get rid of freckles?
- SILAS: If you mean your own freckles Sarah, I don't think they need getting rid of.
- WILLIAM: There's nowt about herbs in the Bible - just the miracles of the Saviour. Faith is the only cure.
- SILAS: Folks would swear by my mother's cures.
- WILLIAM: Superstition. You should leave that behind, Silas – now that you are with the chosen. You don't need such contraptions.
- SILAS: They never did any harm. Only good.
- WILLIAM: You won't find salvation in the hedgerows – only in the reading of the Good Book.
- SARAH: William speaks as well as our minister any day of the week. Doesn't he, Silas?
- SILAS: He's a good speaker.

- WILLIAM: It's knowing as how I'm saved helps me to speak out.
- SILAS: I hope I shall be saved. It is my dearest wish. But I cannot know that I am for sure.
- WILLIAM: You need only say it.
- SILAS: That's not so, William. You had a dream. Tell Sarah your dream.
- WILLIAM: I dreamed I was reading the Good Book, and suddenly the pages went black but for the words "election sure" and they stood out and when I read them, I knew that I was chosen to be among the Saved.
- SARAH: Have you never had a dream, Silas?
- SILAS: No such dream, Sarah.
- DOLLY: And then, one evening out of nowhere, in the middle of a prayer meeting...
- GODFREY: ... the congregation observed that Silas Marner had gone into a trance.
- DUNSTAN: A fit.
- EPPIE: A spell.
- SARAH: He appeared to be insensible, as though he were turning to stone.
- MINISTER: Or had a visitation from above.
- DOLLY: It wasn't an epileptic fit, for folks had seen that.
- EPPIE: He wasn't pretending. That was for sure.
- MINISTER: Silas!
- SARAH: Do you think he's dead?
- WILLIAM: Nearest thing to death, that I've ever seen.
- (Silas recovers suddenly from the trance, frightening everybody. The Minister steps forward to reassure them)*
- SARAH: Did you dream, Silas? What did you see?
- SILAS: Nothing.
- MINISTER: The minister believed that Brother Marner's trance was a sign from the Lord that he was specially favoured. And he exhorted them to give thanks and praise.
- WILLIAM: William however, felt himself obliged in all honesty to advise Sarah to consider carefully her engagement to this man – being not at all sure that Marner's fits indicated spiritual visitations. And even if they were, they might well be of the unholy kind, for all they knew. She should not take such risks when she could find security elsewhere.
- SARAH: Sarah was troubled. She agreed with William. But what would the community say if she broke with Silas? They had sanctioned the engagement. They might rebuke her.
- DUNSTAN: When blow fell on Silas, not even Sarah took his part.

- MINISTER: The death occurred of the Senior Deacon at Lantern Yard. The Deacon had charge of the community funds. He kept them in a desk in his room. After his death it was discovered they were missing.
- WILLIAM: An investigation took place. A culprit was found. Silas Marner.
- MINISTER: I can't believe it.
- DUNSTAN: A trial was held.
- (Silas goes to stand in the pulpit – the witness box. The others arrange themselves as the jury behind the minister who stands to cross-examine Silas)*
- SILAS: Me? You are accusing me? I wouldn't do such a thing. Steal from my own brethren? No! Never!
- MINISTER: You were the last person to watch by our brother on the night of his death.
- SILAS: Yes. William was meant to come and relieve me but he did not come – so I stayed.
- WILLIAM: I was taken ill – I had a fever. I couldn't leave my bed. I could not go out.
- MINISTER: You must not rebuke yourself, brother. You are not to blame.
- SILAS: I must have fallen asleep. And then I woke and found our brother deacon was dead.
- MINISTER: And when the sisters arrived to lay him out, you left.
- SILAS: I went to work.
- MINISTER: And when the sisters looked for the purse to go to the undertaker, it was gone too, and in its place a pocket knife. *(He shows it around)* Do you know this pocket knife, Brother Marner?
- SILAS: It is mine. But I don't know how it got there. I never put it there.
- MINISTER: And do you know this, Brother Marner?
- (He displays a purse or money bag)*
- SILAS: It is our purse, yes – from the church.
- (The Minister shows it to the other members of the community)*
- MINISTER: Our purse, yes, and empty. It was found in your lodgings, Brother Marner.
- SARAH: Oh William, do you hear?
- WILLIAM: I feared something like this might happen.
- MINISTER: The purse was found in your room.
- SILAS: That cannot be.
- MINISTER: I found it there myself, Brother.
- SILAS: I must have had one of my visitations – you know, and while I slept, the thief broke through and took the money.

MINISTER: But the knife, Brother. And the purse in your very room.

WILLIAM: (Jumping up) Confess, Silas! If you had a visitation it was from the Devil. He made you steal the purse. Tell the truth and shame him.

MINISTER: Brother Dane is right. Confess and tell us where the money is hid. Rid your heart of the lust for gold. Admit and be saved.

SILAS: I did not steal it, that I do swear. William, you know me these nine years. Speak up for me.

WILLIAM: I know too the power of the evil-one. I beg you to renounce him.

SILAS: I didn't do it.

MINISTER: Then we must have recourse to the Lord for a judgement in this matter. We shall pray first. Then Sister Sarah will put in the box twelve counters – six for "guilty" and six for "not guilty", and then we shall draw lots and the Lord will guide our hands.

WILLIAM: Amen.

SILAS: Wait. I remember. I did not have my knife. I took it out to use some days ago at work and left it... there. Do you not remember, William?

WILLIAM: I remember no such thing. Renounce Satan, Silas.

SILAS: I can say nothing. Draw the lots. God will clear me.

WILLIAM: Guilty.

DOLLY: Guilty.

EPPIE: Guilty.

SARAH: Guilty.

DUNSTAN: Guilty.

MINISTER: Guilty.

SILAS: No! No, it's wrong!

MINISTER: The Lord has judged. You are blaspheming.

SILAS: It's wrong.

WILLIAM: Repent, Silas.

SILAS: Repent. You say that, the one that I lent my knife to last Thursday. You took the money, you left the knife in the drawer. You left the purse in my room. I didn't see you do it because I was...

WILLIAM: Supping with the Devil.

SILAS: You've woven a plot to lay sin at my door.

WILLIAM: I leave our brethren to judge whether this is the voice of Satan or not!



- MINISTER: Compose yourself, Marnar. Only when you ask forgiveness from the Lord can you be welcomed back to the fellowship of Lantern Yard... can you be saved.
- SILAS: No. No. No.
- EPPIE: Silas Marnar never did go back.
- DUNSTAN: Never did repent. Just hid himself away.
- DOLLY: Worked day and night at his loom.
- WILLIAM: How could he be trusted? A man who stopped living every so often.  
(Silas goes back to his room and resumes working)
- SILAS: That's what he said to my Sarah. It was he who changed her.
- SARAH: Not a man a girl would want to marry. Not really.
- WILLIAM: You must finish with him, Sarah.
- SILAS: I know the truth of it. *(During the following, Silas's working of the loom becomes angry. He beats out his distress on it)*  
We were sat beside our looms, William Dane and me. And he asked me for my knife and I gave it him. And I went back to work and forgot about it. And I went some time later to sit with the Deacon. I sat all night and one time I looked to him and he was breathing. The next time I looked he was cold. I had lost myself during that time. And the thief come and saw I was lost, and he took money and left my knife, and he went to my lodgings where he knew I was not and he put the purse there. And that man was William Dane. My friend. Saved by my lord. The lord I put my trust in. And my Lord has cast me out. There is no god that governs righteously, but a god of lies that bears witness against the innocent.
- DOLLY: Silas left the city and set out.
- EPPIE: He sought a place where nothing could remind him of his past.
- NANCY: No tone of voice, no turn of phrase, no song or hymn.
- DUNSTAN: He sought a landscape with no chimney stacks, no streets, no factories.
- GODFREY: He brought no memories of family or friendship, of love or faith. Just his craft. His loom. He kept that.
- SILAS: And found himself in Raveloe.

**Act One****Scene Three:** (*The Rainbow*)

- WINTHROP: The menfolk of Raveloe were accustomed to meet of an evening at the Rainbow Tavern, to pronounce on the events of the day and on the life of the parish in general. Ben Winthrop was the main convenor of this parliament for he liked his quart of ale.
- TOOKEY: And he liked the sound of his own voice.
- RODNEY: A regular was Jem Rodney for he always needed a mulled ale, when he got back from setting his traps.
- TOOKEY: And he'd slip Mr. Macey a rabbit if he had one, and Mr. Macey would take it, for all he that was a churchwarden and the rabbit was stolen.
- MACEY: The elder statesman was Mr. Macey, the parish clerk. He had recorded the births and the marriages of everyone in Raveloe.
- TOOKEY: And he would record their deaths too, by the look of it, for it seemed that he would never retire and give his deputy, Mr. Tookey, a chance.
- WINTHROP: Drink your ale and settle down, Mr. Tookey. You're all het up this evening.
- TOOKEY: I am not at all heated, Mr. Winthrop.
- MACEY: Hark at that! Them that has been to school at Tarley don't get "het up". They get "heated". They've learnt pronouncing – that's come up since my day.
- TOOKEY: As the psalm says – "I know what's right, nor only so. But also practice what I know!"
- WINTHROP: Well then, I wish when you're singing in the choir, you'd keep hold o' the time, when it's set for you. If you're practicing, I wish you'd practice that.
- TOOKEY: If you bring me any proof as I'm in the wrong, Mr Winthrop, I'm not the man to say I won't alter. But there's people set up their own ears as a standard and expect the whole choir to follow 'em. There may be two opinions, I hope.
- MACEY: You're right there. There's the 'pinion a man has of himself and the 'pinion other folk have of him. There'd be two 'pinions about a cracked bell if the bell could hear itself.
- TOOKEY: It will soon be part of my duties to sing in the choir. The parish clerk always has.
- MACEY: (*Furious*) This parish clerk is still singing. You're not burying me yet!
- WINTHROP: Mr Macey has a natural gift for singing. Like my son Aaron. He can sing like a throstle.
- RODNEY: As for you, Mr Tookey, you'd best stick to the Amens.
- TOOKEY: There's a conspiracy to turn me out o' the choir, as I shouldn't share the Christmas money. I shall speak to the vicar.
- MACEY: We'd pay you you're share to keep you out of it. There's things folks 'd pay to be rid of, besides vermin.

- WINTHROP: Now now! Harmony, gentlemen please! It behoves us to have harmony, for we live in a most harmonious place. There be harmony in nature and there should be harmony among us.
- RODNEY: I'm not sure about harmony in nature, Mr Winthrop. I've been at the slaughtering of a two-headed calf came out of Squire Cass's byres... And I've seen fields of barley flattened by hailstones in the month of July.
- TOOKEY: (*In horror*) A two-headed calf!
- WINTHROP: Freaks them things, freaks.
- TOOKEY: Supernatural, them things.
- RODNEY: There are freaks in human kind as well. Take Master Marnar up at Stone Pits – he's one knows no harmony.
- MACEY: He's never set foot amongst our company since the day he appeared here.
- TOOKEY: Fifteen years ago, this very autumn.
- WINTHROP: Never crossed the threshold of the Rainbow, that's odd I have to admit.
- MACEY: Never crossed the threshold of the church neither. A pagan.
- TOOKEY: Supernatural. That's what I've heard.
- RODNEY: Was I not the one who met him once, propped up against the ditch, his eyes staring out of his head, his mouth clamped shut and not a breath stirring in his body?
- MACEY: I mind you told us that, Mr Rodney.
- TOOKEY: And you shook him, and he never spoke to you.
- RODNEY: I shook him and he suddenly came to, bobbed his head at me and walked away.
- TOOKEY: I've heard tell a man's soul can be loosed from the body like a bird that can go in and out of its rest. And when the soul is out, it can learn strange things.
- RODNEY: And sometimes when I pass his cottage in the late evening, I hear him mumbling to himself – long speeches.
- TOOKEY: Making spells.
- RODNEY: I hurry past, I can tell you.

**Act One**  
**Scene Four:**

*(Silas at his loom)*

SILAS: Now Mistress Osgood. That's your tablecloth complete and not a blemish on it. You can add it to your pile of tablecloths – one for every day of the week. I should wonder how anyone does that much eating. But that's not for me to say. You shall give me three bright new guineas for this fine linen that you may spill gravy on. My guineas will not be stained though. They keep their bright faces. *(He laughs)* Come let me look at you. I'd rather look at you than eat. I took the flax and spun it into gold. That's what I made of the ghost in my loom.

*(He pulls his bag of gold from its hiding place)*

Gold, pure gold. Rays coming off them like the sun and the silver ones like the moon.

*(He picks up a coin)*

The king's head. *(The coin shines)* Yes, Your majesty. We've become right friendly since you came to live at my hearth.

*(He twists the coin between his finger and thumb)*

His lips are moving. "Well done, Master Marner," says he. "You have woven well. You're worth your weight in gold." I did it for you, Sire. So you would lodge with me here, under my hearthstone, hard and fast. You'll stay with me my lovelies, and there will be more to join you. More and more and more. You'll never leave me. I'll protect you and you'll stay with me.

**Scene Five:** *The Rainbow:*

TOOKEY: Spells.

RODNEY: Nonsense, Tookey. He can weave fair enough, old Marner.

WINTHROP: Weaves from first streak of daylight till the sun goes down.

MACEY: No wonder he's half blind. Has to stick his face right up into yours to see who you are.

RODNEY: Must have saved a fortune. For he never spends a penny.

WINTHROP: He's paid handsomely by the ladies.

TOOKEY: He could buy up Squire Cass, that's for sure. Those two sons of his are running through his fortune in jig time.

WINTHROP: Squire has only himself to blame. He's let them and The Red House run to seed since his wife died.

RODNEY: Those boys are wild, all right. Dunstan is ever on the windy side of the law. And Godfrey's not far behind.

**Act One**  
**Scene Six:**

*(The Red House)*

*(Dunstan enters, stuffing himself with food, with his fingers and drinking. Godfrey follows him)*

- DUNSTAN: What a breakfast. Stale beer and cold meat. Home sweet home.
- GODFREY: Where were you all night?
- DUNSTAN: Spent the night in Batherly.
- GODFREY: And? The cock fight? Did you win?
- DUNSTAN: I always win. Nothing left of Bryce's rooster but some feathers and guts. And do you know – my fella ate most of him.
- GODFREY: How much did you win?
- DUNSTAN: I declare, noble brother, you are becoming avaricious in your old age.
- GODFREY: You must pay me back what I lent you.
- DUNSTAN: I've told you the good news. Now comes the bad. I met a lady friend of yours at the fight. Very thirsty, very jittery, if you get my meaning.
- GODFREY: And you gave her my money.
- DUNSTAN: She was getting loud. Shouting your name. Had to shut her up.
- GODFREY: God's curse on it.
- DUNSTAN: You'd have had to pass the cash on to her anyway. I just saved you the bother.
- GODFREY: I don't know whether to believe you.
- DUNSTAN: She was threatening to come out here to Raveloe, with the child. She might too. She's crazy half the time with laudanum.
- GODFREY: I've got to keep her away.
- DUNSTAN: I know, brother. Now aren't you going to thank me?
- (The Squire barges in)*
- SQUIRE: Breakfast at this time of day? Does nobody work around here?
- GODFREY: I've been out already, Sir. Went with Cox over to Lammeter Farm. Agreed with their steward about the new fencing.
- SQUIRE: The Fowler's rent. Did you collect it?
- GODFREY: No, Sir. They... haven't got it yet.
- SQUIRE: Go back to Cox. Tell him to evict them.
- DUNSTAN: Proper order.
- GODFREY: But you've let them run up arrears before.

SQUIRE: Just because they're on an out-lying farm, they think I've forgotten them.

DUNSTAN: Parasites.

GODFREY: They will pay. They always do.

SQUIRE: Friends of yours, are they? Making up with the tenants behind my back? I shall have to remove you from your duties if that's what you're up to.

GODFREY: You misunderstand me, Sir...

SQUIRE: You needn't plan your take-over yet. I'm a long way from being stuck in the chimney corner.

DUNSTAN: That you are.

SQUIRE: And you can hold your tongue too. I saw you slinking in just now from whatever den you spent the night in. Horse leeches, the pair of you. Draining me dry. I'll turn you both out and not a man in the parish but would say I did well.

GODFREY: I beg you to listen, Father. About the Fowlers...

SQUIRE: Go to Cox, I say. He's to start eviction proceedings at once. *(Exit)*

GODFREY: We must do something, Dunstan.

DUNSTAN: Whatever for?

GODFREY: Just shake yourself sober and listen to me. That money that I gave you last month... it was Fowler's rent money.

DUNSTAN: You're a hopeless case, Godfrey. You always get caught.

GODFREY: We can't let these people be turned out.

DUNSTAN: You should have thought of that first.

GODFREY: I'll have to tell him.

DUNSTAN: *(Exultant)* What will you tell him?

GODFREY: That we've spent his money.

DUNSTAN: You spent it. You bought my silence. Silence can be costly.

GODFREY: *(Looking around him)* Shut up!

DUNSTAN: I could fetch your precious wife and child here and introduce them to Father. Shall I?

GODFREY: I'll tell him about them myself first. At least then I'd be rid of you and your blackmail.

DUNSTAN: Strange that you hate me so much when I'm so fond of you.

GODFREY: What are you up to now?

DUNSTAN: An easy way out of this uncomfortable situation.

GODFREY: What way out?

- DUNSTAN: You've embezzled – yes, you - one hundred pounds of the Squire's rent. Now I can help you to pay it back.
- GODFREY: How?
- DUNSTAN: Wildfire. Give her to me. I'll sell her for you at the hunt tomorrow.
- GODFREY: That horse is all I've got left.
- DUNSTAN: You cut a good figure on her, no doubt. You impress Miss Lammeter when you ride Wildfire – ha! Ha!
- GODFREY: Don't mention her.
- DUNSTAN: You canter around on Wildfire to catch Nancy Lammeter's eye. “Oh, Father, I've been over to the Lammeter farm to talk about the fencing.” Riding around like a schoolboy trying to catch a glimpse of a skirt. But you've cantered a bit too far for her, haven't you, brother dear?
- GODFREY: I've warned you before, Dunstan. Leave Nancy out of this.
- DUNSTAN: She's a pretty woman, Nancy. A bit too nice for you though, Godfrey. She'd faint clean away if she knew what you'd been up to.
- GODFREY: I said hold your tongue.
- DUNSTAN: But that's precisely what I am doing, brother. But sometimes the strain your secret family imposes on me is so great that I have to let off steam – and you must pay for that.
- GODFREY: And when I have nothing left?
- DUNSTAN: We'll cross that bridge when we come to it. In the meantime, let me sell Wildfire. I'll get a better price than you would. I won't look so handsome in the saddle, but I'll do the business.
- GODFREY: No nonsense now! You'll sell her fair and square, and hand over the money. If you don't, I'll have to confess everything to Father. You'll have less pleasure pulling the house around my ears when your damn skull's to be broken too – and break it I will.
- DUNSTAN: What would Nancy make of such violent language. I declare it would bring a blush to her face.
- GODFREY: On your way.
- DUNSTAN: Have you seen her blush, Godfrey?
- GODFREY: I said get out.
- DUNSTAN: Does she blush, I wonder – ever?
- GODFREY: By God, I'll throttle you.
- DUNSTAN: (*Constraining Godfrey with his whip*) Your other lady has a high colour though. Always looks quite exercised.
- GODFREY: You're the very Devil, Dunstan.
- DUNSTAN: And your brat is a rosy little thing too.

GODFREY: You're the Devil incarnate. (*Godfrey breaks away from him and exits*)



**Act One****Scene Seven:**

*(Eppie, Dolly, Squire and Godfrey enter as the "hunt". They assume a riding position, legs apart, holding their hands as though holding reins and whips. Dunstan adopts the same position)*

GODFREY: Dunstan Cass set off for the hunt the following day, riding his brother's fine mare Wildfire and relishing the challenge of the bargaining that lay ahead.

SQUIRE: His route took him out of Raveloe and up beyond the disused quarry called the Stone Pit, where Silas Marner had lived his solitary life for the last fifteen years.

EPPIE: Dunstan never thought about the weaver.

DOLLY: The ordinary villagers held no interest for him except for Jem Rodney who would take him poaching.

DUNSTAN: Nothing Dunsey liked than to poach his own father's game.

*(All laugh)*

He rode on to the meet in high good humour. In this mood Dunstan knew he could drive a hard bargain and no-one could stand up to him.

GODFREY: He ran rings around his friend Bryce who wanted Wildfire badly.

SQUIRE: Until finally Bryce offered him more than the horse was worth.

GODFREY: One hundred and twenty pounds, and my waistcoat.

DUNSTAN: Done! But we'll clinch the deal after the hunt. I'll get one last gallop out of Wildfire first.

*(The halloo is sounded. The chase begins. At the conclusion of his speech, Dunstan is thrown violently from his horse)*

It did seem to Dunsey that it would be wiser to give up the day's hunting. But doing the wiser thing was always boring, so he fortified himself with brandy from his flask and tallyhoed. He took Wildfire over the ditches to catch up with the hunt, conscious that he would make a spectacular entrance. But he took Wildfire over one fence too many, and the mare was impaled with a five-foot stake in her gut. And she died, poor thing! Fortunately, she'd thrown him clear, so he was not crushed – except in spirit and in pocket.

**Act One**  
**Scene Eight:**

*(Eppie, Nancy, Dolly and Godfrey take up their positions on the raised levels of the Stone Pit. They are narrators telling the story of Dunstan's temptation and distraction. They are devils)*

- DOLLY: Dunstan's first thought was to go to where the hunt would end, hire a horse and ride home.
- EPPIE: Too much sense in that for Dunstan.
- SQUIRE: Besides, losing Wildfire! Humiliation! Best go home the back ways.
- GODFREY: So he set off on foot, with only his whip for protection.
- EPPIE: The evening turned foul. The mist descended so he could hardly see, but felt his way along with the aid of Godfrey's hunting crop.
- NANCY: He kept his spirits up as long as he could by frequent recourse to his brandy flask.
- GODFREY: But soon that was empty and in his dry mouth his own curses turned very sour indeed.
- DOLLY: And the night came down and he was floundering in mud. Slipping. Slipping down.
- SQUIRE: The by-lanes that he chose to walk to avoid his predicament being remarked, were paved with sharp, uneven stones that cut into the soles of his soft hunting boots.
- DUNSTAN: Then Dunstan realised he was nearing the Stone Pit. He fell to thinking about Silas Marner... and his treasure.
- EPPIE: The miser's hoard that people said he had.
- GODFREY: People were right when they said he had a fortune.
- DUNSTAN: Dunstan's own shirts and those of his brother and his father were woven by this man.
- DOLLY: And Squire Caass was always complaining at the amount of money he had to pay for those fineries.
- DUNSTAN: It occurred to Dunstan that Master Marner should be persuaded to return some of that money – as a loan, perhaps – to the Squire's son with the Squire's estate as security. Yes.
- EPPIE: He was about to act on his idea, but...
- DUNSTAN: He couldn't stand the smell in the workers' cottages, and this fellow was probably worse than most since he didn't have a woman. Best let Godfrey deal with him.
- SQUIRE: But then again, Dunstan couldn't return to the Red House empty-handed.
- DUNSTAN: Must give Godfrey his wretched hundred pounds to shut him up.
- GODFREY: He could hang on to whatever was left.
- DUNSTAN: And there would be plenty left.
- DOLLY: He must devise the lie to tell the old fool.

EPPIE: Something like... Invest with us, Master Marner, and we'll return your money with interest.

SQUIRE: But Dunsey wasn't too well up on interest.

DUNSTAN: To hell with it. I'll throw a fright into him. That's what I'll do.

DUNSTAN: Then Dunstan saw the light from Master Marner's cottage.

SQUIRE: Pointing straight out of the darkness like an arrow to his feet.

GODFREY: And as he walked towards it's source, the light seemed to shorten.

EPPIE: So that there was no light behind him, only in front of him, calling him on.

*(Dunstan enters Silas's house. The moneybags are there, beside his chair. Dunstan searches the house, haunted by the spirits crouched outside in the Stone Pit)*

EPPIE: Is he here, the miser?

DOLLY: What is he like?

DUNSTAN: Foul smelling. I can smell him.

SQUIRE: A mad man with fangs. He'll bite you.

DUNSTAN: He's not here. Gone out. Left his door open. His dinner cooking. Gone for fuel. He'll be back.

GODFREY: You've got Godfrey's fine hunting crop. With a heavy gold handle. Stun a man with that.

EPPIE: Where's the money?

SQUIRE: *(With a chuckle)* Perhaps he took it with him.

DOLLY: Couldn't carry it. Not strong enough.

EPPIE: Not strong at all. He'll die soon. Whose money will it be then?

GODFREY: Find it! Quickly!

DOLLY: Where do misers keep their money?

SQUIRE: In their beds.

EPPIE: In the thatch.

DOLLY: Under the floorboards.

DUNSTAN: In front of his bloody fire. That's where he'll keep his money. So he can sit warm and count it.

*(The company withdraws leaving Dunstan alone to find the money. They resume their positions on the Stone Pit. Dunstan picks up the bags of gold. He opens them and dips his hand in)*

Count the cold coins. Cold as death. Wildfire a thousand times over would never have fetched this. (*He whoops*) Sitting under a stone, in a cottage, in the middle of nowhere, no-one can see you! What a waste. What a shame.

(Dunstan continues to burrow in the bags, running his fingers through the coins, smelling them, etc.)

- SQUIRE: Release the treasure.
- GODFREY: Take it where it belongs. To London! To rooms with green baize tables.
- EPPIE: To a jeweller's, where you can buy a necklace for a pretty lady – and then buy her.
- DUNSTAN: To a stables. To hell with Wildfire. (Holding the moneybags) To hell with everything. Except this. This will be mine. No-one will know about it.
- GODFREY: But if the miser should return?
- EPPIE: And discover you stealing his money?
- DOLLY: And tell you to put it down?
- SQUIRE: Only one thing to do then.
- DUNSTAN: Only one thing to do then – with the heavy gold head of my riding crop.
- GODFREY: Messy.
- DUNSTAN: Must get out of here. Must get out of here.

**Act One**  
**Scene Nine:**

SILAS: Silas had travelled the four miles to the village and back in the dark to buy some cord that he needed for the warp of his loom the following day. The days were short and he must be ready for the first streak of daylight to commence work – not waste the precious light by travelling to the village. He gave no thought to exhaustion or dampness or cold or hunger. When his stomach rattled he ate as he would eat tonight – Miss Lammeter's fine gift of pork, suspended by his door key to cook in front of his fire. Nor would he eat alone, for he would enjoy the company of his friends. Pile them up on the table before him. Bathe his hands in them. *(He goes to the hiding place, gropes around, discovers the gold's not there)*

*(The company observes his panicked search. Narrators)*

EPPIE: Where? Where is the gold?

SILAS: *(Frantic, whispering)* It must be here. Must be!

GODFREY: He thought he might have put the bags somewhere else.

SQUIRE: During one of his turns... he put them somewhere.

EPPIE: In his bed.

NANCY: Beside the loom.

GODFREY: Under the loom.

DOLLY: Dig and scrape. Search! In the fire.

SILAS: *(Crying out)* Nowhere. Nothing. It's impossible.

EPPIE: No-one ever came there.

NANCY: And on such a night as this.

GODFREY: No person had done this.

EPPIE: Some cruel power no hands could reach.

DOLLY: Some cruel power – a second time – had delighted to make him desolate.

*(They exit)*

SILAS: Cruel. Cruel. It's come after me from Lantern Yard. It has followed me here. *(Waits)* No. No. A thief. They must find the thief. They must get him to deliver up the gold. They must lay hold of him, and bring it back to me. My gold, my money. I must have it back.

**Act One**

**Scene Ten:** *(The Ghost Story. Lights down on Silas, up on the Rainbow. The company drinking and with long-stemmed pipes. There is a general hub-bub of disbelief)*

- WINTHROP: No.
- RODNEY: I don't believe it.
- TOOKEY: *(Protesting)* I saw it with my own eyes, I swear I did.
- MACEY: And how many quarts of ale had you had?
- WINTHROP: Mr. Tookey don't drink ale by the quart.
- RODNEY: On my way back from the churchyard, I was, after Mr. Osgood's funeral on a winter afternoon.
- MACEY: And where was I?
- TOOKEY: Run off with the relatives of the deceased you were, to have sherry. You left me to lock up the vestry.
- MACEY: Well, that's your job, isn't it?
- TOOKEY: Right. And I were doing my job when I saw the spectre. I weren't drinking like Mr. Winthrop said.
- WINTHROP: Take it easy, Mr. Tookey.
- MACEY: It weren't in the church grounds, this spectre?
- TOOKEY: No. Galloping along the top of the wall that runs around the greave-yard, that's where it were, and there were fire streaming from the horse's mane, and a smell of scorching off it, like in Mr. Dowlas' backyard, when he's roasting a pig.
- RODNEY: Nowt wrong with that smell – no-one complains about that.
- WINTHROP: That's what you did smell, Tookey. Dowlas roasting a pig.
- TOOKEY: *(Very agitated)* And what did I see? What was the white horse? And the fire? And the sound of the hoof beats? Explain all that!
- RODNEY: You have us there.
- WINTHROP: A horse is a rare spectre all right. Usually it's a lady in a white gown, or a man with his head under his arm and such!
- MACEY: You've said it, Mr. Winthrop. And that is why I think we should believe Mr. Tookey. The other reason being that he doesn't know the history of these parts.
- WINTHROP: Explain yourself!
- MACEY: The old stables on Mr. Lammeter's land, is long known to be a haunted place. But Tookey don't know the story of that haunting – so how would he think up a story of a ghostly horse? That's your proof.
- WINTHROP: That's the queerest logic I've ever heard.
- MACEY: Have you ever gone to the stables, Ben, of a winter night?

- WINTHROP: Why should I? I'll believe in no ghost unless he walks into my kitchen and comes up and shakes me by the hand.
- (Silas places his hand on Winthrop's shoulder. Winthrop wheels around and lets out a shout of alarm as do the others. Silas recoils in fear)*
- Aaah!
- MACEY: Don't stand there shivering, man. Seat yourself!
- SILAS: *(Seizing Rodney by the lapels)* It was you...
- RODNEY: What's he saying?
- SILAS: You did it.
- RODNEY: Did what?
- SILAS: Came to my house. Stole from me.
- RODNEY: The man's raving.
- SILAS: *(Grabbing Rodney's bag)* Search him. Search his bag.
- RODNEY: There's nothing in my bag.
- SILAS: There is.
- WINTHROP: What was stolen from you, Master Marner?
- SILAS: My gold. My gold. *(He breaks down)*
- RODNEY: I never touched it.
- WINTHROP: Of course you didn't.
- MACEY: Jem Rodney's been sitting here, Master Marner, drinking his jar.
- SILAS: Open your bag.
- RODNEY: *(Opening his bag and producing a small bird or a rabbit)* There's your gold.
- (He throws it at Silas)*
- WINTHROP: Take it easy, Jem. Calm yourselves, both of you. We'll get to the bottom of this.
- RODNEY: I'm an honest, god-fearing poacher.
- SILAS: He's been to my house when he's had no call to come.
- RODNEY: *(Defending himself)* Passing the door late at night, hoping for a sup of something warm – not that I ever got it.
- SILAS: Spying – and now I know why.
- RODNEY: By God, I won't have this.
- TOOKEY: Step in, Mr Winthrop, or they'll do each other mischief.
- MACEY: Leave God out of it, Jem. We'll set this right ourselves.

WINTHROP: We know our man here, Master Marner. He's been by this fire all evening. He's not guilty.

SILAS: (*Weakening*) Not guilty.

MACEY: You wouldn't want to harm an innocent person.

SILAS: That I would not.

RODNEY: Take back what you said.

(*Silas puts his head in his hands*)

MACEY: He does. Don't you, Marner?

SILAS: Aye. I take it back.

RODNEY: He can drop dead before I darken his door again.

SILAS: It's wrong to call a man guilty when he is not.

MACEY: He'll get over it – I've seen worse disputes than this blow over. That's why God made time.

WINTHROP: And it would take time to solve this mystery. It were not a local person. That went without saying. No local person would stoop to it. Had to be a foreigner.

TOOKEY: Or a ghost.

WINTHROP: A peddler. An Italian or a Spaniard.

SILAS: I have seen such a man.

MACEY: Dark, with an earring?

WINTHROP: A red kerchief round his head?

TOOKEY: A black beard and an eye-patch?

SILAS: I can't recall.

TOOKEY: Did he have a wooden leg?

MACEY: No. No wooden leg. Else he never would have made it away from Master Marner's house with his heavy load.

MACEY: No, this peddler had two strong legs and two strong arms.

WINTHROP: And two earrings.

TOOKEY: And he vanished into thin air.

MACEY: The weaver would have to be helped.

WINTHROP: He weren't a case for charity, for he could still do his job.

MACEY: But he needed minding for a bit, and talking to. And advising and such.

WINTHROP: So Ben Winthrop volunteered his wife, Dolly, to take on the job of reclaiming Master Marner.



**Act One****Scene Eleven:**

*(Lights up on Silas at his loom. Silas beats out the rhythm and every now and then groans as the thought of the loss of his money strikes him afresh)*

DOLLY: *(Whispering)* Dolly Winthrop had delivered every child born in Raveloe in the last ten years and she had attended the death bed of those folks who had made their departure and she was no stranger to the sounds of human pain and anguish. But when one wintry Sunday afternoon, soon after the robbery, she visited Master Marner's cottage, she heard a sound that stopped her in her tracks.

*(Silas moans)*

She was mindful of the opinion of her husband – and his companions in the Rainbow – that Marner had lost his wits. She remembered all the old stories from years ago.

*(From the Rainbow the others prompt her)*

TOOKEY: Stood stock still like a statue he were, and not a breath in his body.

MACEY: Gone out of his body his spirit was, like a bird that has gone out of his nest.

TOOKEY: Gone, his spirit was, to the Evil One.

MACEY: "For what purpose?" Who knows?

TOOKEY: Spells.

*(Silas moans again.)*

DOLLY: Master Marner.

SILAS: Who's out there? Who's that? *(He shuffles to the door)*

DOLLY: It's Dolly Winthrop, Master Marner – and I've come to give you a cake.

SILAS: A cake?

DOLLY: A plain sweet cake. Nothing fancy, for I don't hold with that. But a sweet taste once a week does a man's stomach good and us as lives with a man has to humour them.

*(Dolly laughs. Silas peers at her, baffled)*

SILAS: You brought a cake for me, mistress?

DOLLY: Aye, sir. We were all vexed to hear of your bad fortune, in the village. We were all sorry.

SILAS: Come in, mistress.

DOLLY: *(Looking around)* You've a right place here.

SILAS: It serves for me and my loom.

DOLLY: Your loom, yes. We know the sound of it, we do. From walking past.

SILAS: I've not woven aught for you, mistress.

DOLLY: My husband's mother had an oak chest full of linen and she left it me. I've no call for more. Will you take the cake?

(She hands it to Silas and he accepts)

SILAS: There's writing on it.

DOLLY: Letters. Yes. They're on a stamp. That comes from Ben's mother too.

SILAS: I.H.S.

DOLLY: How well you can read them.

SILAS: They have no meaning.

DOLLY: They have a holy significance for I've seen them in the church.

SILAS: Ah!

DOLLY: You're not a religious man, sir, for I don't recall you've ever been in our church.

SILAS: No.

DOLLY: You weren't brought up religious. Is that it?

SILAS: I went to Chapel... long ago.

DOLLY: Chapel!

SILAS: Long ago.

DOLLY: You must miss it, your chapel.

SILAS: No.

DOLLY: I'd miss churchgoing. I feel set up of a Sunday – when I've said my prayers and listened to Mr Chrackenthorp reading the Good Words. And our choir sings to raise any man's spirits.

SILAS: Singing, yes.

DOLLY: It would lift your heart, Master Marner, to come of a Sunday. And you'd meet your neighbours and have a hot meal with them. Come next Sunday to our house and our son Aaron will sing for you, for he's practicing to go out with the Christmas Rhymers.

SILAS: One day is like another to me.

DOLLY: You know it's Sunday when you hear the bells.

SILAS: No.

DOLLY: That's because you're always at your loom.

SILAS: Yes.

DOLLY: You should rest of a Sunday.

SILAS: Rest?

- DOLLY: Take your mind off work.
- SILAS: No.
- DOLLY: You'll make up your money soon enough. Sunday is the Lord's day – money made on that day will very soon...
- SILAS: Yes?
- DOLLY: ... fly away.
- SILAS: Is that what you think, mistress? That I deserved to have my money stolen? That I deserve this injustice?
- DOLLY: I think that you're most unfortunate, Master Marner, and lonely if you don't mind me speaking out, and I'd urge you to come to Raveloe of a Sunday and go to church and hear the music. Eat your dinner with your neighbours and leave your money making to the days set down for such things, for goodness knows there are enough of them.
- SILAS: (Standing up) Thank you for the cake, mistress.
- DOLLY: (Taking the hint) Yes, I must be leaving. Don't mind my speaking out, Master Marner. It's just my way. My Ben, he says I'm bossy. I like to do right by folks and you can't do that if you don't say what's on your mind.
- SILAS: Thank you kindly, Ma'am.
- DOLLY: I'll come again. (To audience) And so she did. Many times. And urged him to come, if not on Sunday, at least on Christmas Day to hear the singing in the church.
- WINTHROP: But notwithstanding her honest persuasion, Silas spent his Christmas Day in loneliness, eating his meat in sadness of heart. Though the meat had come to him as a neighbour's present.
- DOLLY: Towards evening the snow began to fall, shutting him up with his narrow grief.
- EPPIE: And he sat in his robbed house not caring to close his shutters or lock his door, pressing his head between his hands and moaning.
- DOLLY: And from that time, his loom clattered on, day in – day out.
- EPPIE: The peddler was hunted for in neighbouring parishes.
- GODFREY: But they could trace no history of him, no more than if he had never existed.
- WINTHROP: So a new topic of disputation had to be found and a new focus of attention.
- DOLLY: And this time it was the dissipation of the Squire Cass family.

**Act One**  
**Scene Twelve:**

- SQUIRE: For that god-damned, no good, blackguarding scoundrel of a son of mine, Dunstan, has taken himself off without so much as a by-your-leave, and disappeared from sight.
- (Godfrey follows and the Squire rounds on him)*
- Do you know where he is, sir?
- GODFREY: Not I.
- SQUIRE: You're a bit quick with your "not I". Where'd you see him last?
- GODFREY: He took Wildfire to Batherley Hunt. Staked her, sir. Killed her.
- SQUIRE: And ran away? He's stood his ground after worse crimes than that.
- GODFREY: I've not heard a word. Not from anyone.
- SQUIRE: What d'ye think? You must have given him some thought.
- GODFREY: He might have lost a wager. He might be hiding from a creditor.
- SQUIRE: He'd crawl back to me to bail him out. Always does.
- GODFREY: He might have joined the Army.
- SQUIRE: With a war on? Not Dunsey. You're avoiding it, aren't you?
- GODFREY: What?
- SQUIRE: The one thing that's keeping him away. A woman!
- GODFREY: A woman?
- SQUIRE: Of course, he's got some woman into trouble and he's run off. That's my Dunsey.
- GODFREY: I don't think so.
- SQUIRE: You don't think so because you never think of women, or if you ever have, you don't know what to do about 'em. Eh?
- GODFREY: I... don't know what you mean.
- SQUIRE: I've watched your pussyfooting after Nancy Lammeter for two years now, and I have to say it's an embarrassment to me. You're a shilly-shally fellow. You take after your poor mother. She never had a will of her own – a woman has no call for one if she's got a proper man for her husband. But your wife needs must have one, for you hardly know your own mind enough to make both your legs walk one way. What do you think of the wench anyhow?
- GODFREY: Miss Lammeter is a fine girl, sir, and from an excellent family.
- SQUIRE: I don't need her pedigree, fool, and I can see how fine she is. What I don't see is why you haven't done anything about her. You're not compromised elsewhere, are you?
- GODFREY: You mean...

- SQUIRE: No, I suppose not. Put your cards on the table, dammit. Court Nancy Lammeter. Marry her.
- GODFREY: I wanted to, sir.
- SQUIRE: What's keeping you? If you don't make a move, someone else will.
- GODFREY: I fear Miss Lammeter has disapproved of my ways in the past – I've been known to gamble a bit – drink too much. I want her to see I've changed before I presume to pay court to her.
- SQUIRE: You've sown your wild oats. No woman minds that. Dammit man, they like it. Get in there and stake your claim or by George, I'll do it for you.
- GODFREY: No, sir!
- SQUIRE: I won't see you lose her. The Lammeter land should be joined to ours. It's common sense. We should be taking down fences, not putting them up. But you've no interest in the business of land, have you?
- GODFREY: Every time I try to help in the running of the estate, you cut across me.
- SQUIRE: I'll have to cut across your courtship too.
- GODFREY: I beg you not to interfere, sir.
- SQUIRE: I've a right parcel of sons. One who'd ruin every woman in the neighbourhood and one who's afraid of a petticoat.
- GODFREY: (*Angry*) You misread me, sir.
- SQUIRE: All right! I wouldn't have you do what I think your brother has done. He'll never darken my door again, if my guess is right. But you're a deal too timid and you need a leg up – and you'll get it whether you like it or not. (*Squire exits*)

**SCENE THIRTEEN:** (*Molly haunts Godfrey*)

MOLLY:            Need a leg up. That's never how it seemed to me.

GODFREY:         Molly!

MOLLY:            Afraid of a petticoat, Eh? Not you. You couldn't wait to get inside mine.

GODFREY:         But then a working girl's petticoats aren't so intimidating.

DOLLY:            Not so many of them.

NANCY:            And they're not so starchy.

MOLLY:            Less trouble to undo.

DOLLY:            Not such fine stuff.

NANCY:            So if they get a bit... soiled....you can just throw them out.

MOLLY:            Throw 'em in a doss house. Keep 'em out of sight.

GODFREY:         But you'll come back, won't you? You'll come back and destroy me.

MOLLY:            What else is a body to do, starve?

GODFREY:         You're not starving. I've given you every penny I've got.

MOLLY:            That's not enough.

NANCY:            That's not what she wants.

MOLLY:            That's not what I need.

GODFREY:         I haven't anything else to give you.

DOLLY:            Saving it all for Miss Fancy Pants.

MOLLY:            She'll never look at you again once she hears about us. Never!

NANCY:            Never.

DOLLY:            Never.

GODFREY:         Leave me alone.

MOLLY:            I can't.

NANCY:            She can't.

DOLLY:            She can't.

GODFREY:         You've come for my soul. I won't give it to you.

MOLLY:            I'm no devil, Godfrey. It was never your soul I was after.

GODFREY:         What then?

MOLLY:            I want to be your wife and live with you... with our child, like I've a right to.

GODFREY: Get away from me.

MOLLY: I'll never go away.

3 WOMEN: (Sing) Says she, oh me darlin', I cannot you deny  
For you've surely won me heart with the rovin' of your eye  
Says he, I love you only and I'll marry you I swear  
If you'll let me clasp me hands upon your cuckoo's nest.

GODFREY: I will never own you as my wife.

## ACT TWO

- Scene One:** *(The Squire enters clapping his hands, urging gaiety, setting the scene for his party)*
- SQUIRE: Squire Cass set about organising his New Year revels which were the most important social event of the year in Raveloe – or anywhere else for that matter, and carriages arrived from within a good twenty mile radius.
- GODFREY: The party at the Red House lasted three days and three nights and there was a power of eating and drinking and dancing to be done.
- SQUIRE: *(Aside to Godfrey)* You'll have to lift your head, my boy, and cut out this moping.
- GODFREY: Godfrey did lift his head, for Nancy would be there and he would steal some time with her – perish the consequences.
- (He lifts Miss Gunn down from the coach and passes her onto his father)*
- MISS GUNN: There was style to be seen at the Red House too, much to the fascination of the town ladies, who found to their surprise, that their rustic neighbours could be quite natty – especially Miss Lammeter.
- GODFREY: *(Presenting her to the Squire)* Miss Gunn, Father.
- SQUIRE: I know you well my dear. Your father has been my wine-merchant for twenty years. You're the very image of him.
- MISS GUNN: *(Less than pleased)* Thank you.
- (Godfrey helps Priscilla down)*
- PRISCILLA: This was annually Nancy's occasion, for she always stole the show, much to the delight of her sister Priscilla, who to Nancy's silk was a bit of cheese-cloth... and she looked a bit yella as well.
- (Godfrey lifts her down and deposits her in front of the Squire)*
- GODFREY: Miss Priscilla Lammeter.
- SQUIRE: Priscilla. Good to see you. Looking a treat too, with your lovely complexion. Best farm manager I know.
- PRISCILLA: Flattery will get you nowhere, Squire – especially not into our four-acre field – for I mean to keep it for early sowing. So you can forget your proposal to buy it.
- SQUIRE: We'll talk about it again.
- PRISCILLA: Talk till you're blue in the face, sir, but that property's not for sale.
- GODFREY: *(Holding up his arms to help Nancy down)* Miss Nancy, aren't you going to descend?
- NANCY: I'd just as soon climb down myself.
- PRISCILLA: Come along, Nancy. We've a deal of powdering to do before dinner.
- NANCY: *(Holding out her arms to put on Godfrey's shoulders)* Very well, Priscilla.



GODFREY: (*Swinging her down*) You needn't resort to powder. It would be a shame to lose the colour in you cheek.

NANCY: Present me to your father, sir, so I can thank him for his hospitality.

GODFREY: Miss Lammeter, Father.

SQUIRE: Who else? Miss Lammeter is a non pareil. There's not her match in these parts.

NANCY: If you gentlemen will excuse me.

PRISCILLA: My sister and I will withdraw upstairs.

*(The three women move stage left, the two men stage right)*

GODFREY: That was rather an extravagant compliment, sir. I think you embarrassed the lady.

SQUIRE: Nonsense. Prissy has a hide on her like one of her prize pigs – she'll feel nothing.

NANCY: Pay no attention to the Squire, Prissy. He's in his cups already.

PRISCILLA: Couldn't agree with him more, Nance. You are the prettiest girl in these parts.

GODFREY: It's not Priscilla I'm concerned about – it's Nancy.

SQUIRE: I flattered her.

GODFREY: Exactly. She hates flattery.

NANCY: I can't stand flattery.

PRISCILLA: That was not flattery – just the truth.

NANCY: Godfrey put him up to it.

GODFREY: She'll think I put you up to it.

NANCY: Clown.

GODFREY: It makes me look like a fool.

PRISCILLA: (*To Miss Gunn*) It is a simple fact, isn't it. Nancy is a beauty. The likes of you and I just don't hold a candle to her.

MISS GUNN: I have to agree. You'd never think you were sisters.

SQUIRE: The girl would be a fool not to know her own worth. You underestimate her.

NANCY: He underestimates me.

GODFREY: Don't interfere again, Father, or you'll turn her against me.

SQUIRE: Well do something then.

*(Dance. All exit except for Nancy and Godfrey.)*

NANCY: What are you doing?

GODFREY: Taking you over here, where we can talk.

NANCY: You'll spoil the dance for the others. You've broken the pattern.

GODFREY: I couldn't care less about the others.

NANCY: You're very reckless, Mr Cass.

GODFREY: Tonight, yes I am.

NANCY: On many a night, from what I've heard tell.

GODFREY: What have you heard?

NANCY: I can't remember.

GODFREY: I've been a bit... indiscreet. But that's all over now.

NANCY: Your father must be much relieved.

GODFREY: And you?

NANCY: I have no feelings whatsoever on the matter.

GODFREY: No feelings is right.

NANCY: What is that supposed to mean?

GODFREY: You've tried to freeze me away from you in the last six months.

NANCY: On the few occasions that we've met, I've treated you with perfect civility.

GODFREY: Coldly, yes.

NANCY: It seemed to me that you were already over-heated from your sojourns in the taverns of Batherly and from cockfights.

GODFREY: So you have a catalogue of my misdemeanours after all.

NANCY: I assume you are as unimaginative as the other young bucks of your ilk, and pursue the same worthless pastimes.

GODFREY: Oh ho! Not so cool now, Nancy. Warming.

*(Enter the Squire. He bustles towards them)*

SQUIRE: Good, good, good. This is what I like to see. But the beef is getting cold. You must sit on either side of me and you can resume your intimacies after dinner. *(He sweeps Nancy off)* May I, Miss Priscilla? You'll come with me.

GODFREY: Father! You'll be the death of me!

**Act Two**  
**Scene Two:**

MOLLY: There was to be a death that New Year's Eve. But it was not the Squire who would meet his maker. Rather it was someone who Godfrey wished off the face of the earth.

*(The dancers on their lines break out of their formation and take up a position down right of Silas's cottage. They huddle together to take the shape of a snowdrift into which Molly falls and is smothered)*

SQUIRE: While the gentry of Raveloe kicked up their heels and crammed themselves with food and drink, a figure approached the village from across the moor, staggering, bent against the cold.

DOLLY: A woman. A woman carrying a child in her arms.

NANCY: Hardly fit to walk another step, but making herself go on.

GODFREY: Determined to find the man who was the father of this child. The man who was her husband.

MOLLY: *(Sinking to her knees, dragging herself up, sinking again, drugged)* The man who loved her – then stopped. The man who wanted her – then didn't anymore. The man who wouldn't see her, wouldn't listen to her, wouldn't anything. Pay a bit of money now and then, yes. Not enough. Never enough money to stop the pain.

*(She reels back against the snowdrift, which receives her – cushions her. She takes her bottle of laudanum and sucks on it)*

NANCY: Never enough laudanum to stop the pain.

GODFREY: She was going to find him. Expose him to every one of his well-to-do family. Force him to admit her existence. Force him to take her in.

*(Molly retches and throws away the bottle)*

MOLLY: *(To the baby)* No more, I promise Pet, no more. This is the last drop.

NANCY: He'd lay them down in a soft feather bed with fine woven sheets smelling of lavender.

SQUIRE: And a hot drink to warm them through.

*(Molly sinks back against the snowdrift)*

DOLLY: The softest, softest feather bed.

MOLLY: Rest. Rest my love.

*(The snowdrift engulfs her with their arms. Silas stands by his doorway)*

DOLLY: As this wretched woman sank back into the snow, Silas Marnier in his cottage thought he heard a cry.

NANCY: He opened his door onto the bitter night and stood listening.

SILAS: What could the sound be? Someone coming across the snow, coming to his house to bring him back his gold.

SQUIRE: He stood by his door and waited.

GODFREY: The light from his fireside flooded out over the frozen moorland making a pathway to his door.

DOLLY: The body of the woman hardened in the snow.

GODFREY: But Silas did not see her for he had gone into a trance and was dead to the world.

## Act Two

## Scene Three:

*(In the ensuing transition, Silas takes the bundle to make the baby and arrives at the party. The other players resume their characters of the party group. Squire, Godfrey, Nancy, Priscilla, Miss Gunn. The sheet/snowdrift is left on stage)*

SQUIRE: The Soldiers' Joy. That's the tune we want to hear (*Music strikes up*) Now I ask you all, isn't this the life? Dancing, drinking, and more dancing. Isn't this the life?

MISS GUNN: And the ladies waxed philosophical on the foibles of their men folk.

PRISCILLA: As I say, Mr. Have-you-own-way is the best husband and the only one I promise to obey. I know it isn't pleasant when you've been used to living in a big way, and managing hogs heads and all that, to go and put your nose in by somebody else's fireside. But thank God, my father's a sober man and likely to live, and if you've got a man by the chimney corner, it doesn't matter if he's childish, the business needn't be broken up.

GODFREY: You sister does not hold with marriage.

NANCY: She has her own views.

GODFREY: I hope you do not share them.

NANCY: You believe in the sacredness of the institution?

GODFREY: Well yes and no. I mean of course I do, naturally.

SQUIRE: And after the discussing came the pudding.

PRISCILLA: And after pudding, blancmanges.

NANCY: And after blancmanges, biscuits.

SQUIRE: And port. Port for everyone.

NANCY: And then out of the night he appeared in their midst...

*(Silas appears among them, carrying the baby Eppie in a bundle)*

GODFREY: God in heaven, what apparition is this?

SQUIRE: It's the old madman. How did he get in?

PRISCILLA: What's he carrying?

NANCY: It's a child! Oh, my heavens!

GODFREY: Speak up, man.

SILAS: I found a child come out of the snow, do you see?  
*(He draws the covering down from the child's face. Godfrey goes to look, followed by the others)*

MISS GUNN: What a beauty.

PRISCILLA: She's that indeed.

SQUIRE: Good breeding there.

GODFREY:           *(Peering intently at the child)* But where is the mother?

SILAS:               She is at my house.

GODFREY:           At your house?

SILAS:               In the snow, sir. I'm come for the doctor. I think she's dead.

NANCY:              Whose child is it? Do you know?

GODFREY:           No. How could I?

*(Godfrey stares a moment at Silas. The others cluster around to look at the baby)*

NANCY:              We must find the father.

SQUIRE:            Like as not there isn't one. Brat's dressed in rags.

SILAS:               I'm the father.

*(Everyone laughs)*

SQUIRE:            Like I said, mad!

NANCY:              Let him speak!

SILAS:               I were standing at my door you see, looking out, and it were snowing, swirling, snowdrifting.

SQUIRE:            We all know what snow does. Get on with it, man.

SILAS:               I grew cold. I was waiting, you see, so I turned back to my hearth and I saw it... my gold.

SQUIRE:            Snow! Gold! What is the man blathering about?

PRISCILLA:          Will you be quiet.

SQUIRE:            Well excuse me, Ma'am. It is, after all, my house.

GODFREY  
PRISCILLA  
MISS GUNN  
NANCY:              Shhhh!

SILAS:               My gold, I thought it was, shining in the firelight. And I reached out and touched it. I thought it would be hard – I know the feel of gold – hard and flat and round. But this were soft – soft as the falling snow – but warm and golden. It were the hair, the curls of this little child. Can you see how beautiful her hair is? Spun gold.

NANCY:              A miracle.

SILAS:               I thought it were my little sister, come back to me from the grave. But it were a new person come to me. Come to my hearth.

SQUIRE:            We'll arrange to have it adopted.

SILAS:               She's mine, I say. No-one will take her from me.

- NANCY: We must find her mother, see if she's dead.
- GODFREY: Let everyone stay here. I'll return with Master Marner and see to the creature.
- PRISCILLA: Good idea. Call to Dolly Winthrop. She'll do the laying out, and her big lump of a husband can carry the corpse. That's if he's not too drunk already.
- GODFREY: I'll manage by myself. Show the way, Marner.
- NANCY: Be careful, Godfrey.
- GODFREY: Godfrey sets off with Nancy's words to warm him, but in the dreadful knowledge that soon he would look upon his wife's face. Was she alive or dead? He prayed that she might be dead, although he knew that was a blasphemy, knew the horror that would evoke in Nancy's breast. But the knowledge of his wife would provoke horror too.
- SQUIRE: He stood outside while the body of the woman was brought to Marner's cottage.  
*(The others cover her with the sheets)*
- NANCY: She was beyond recovery.
- PRISCILLA: Stiff and cold and stark.
- SILAS: Thou art a lone creature now, little child. But I'll be thy father, and thy mother too.
- GODFREY: She was buried in a pauper's grave – no headstone, no name. So be it.

**Act Two  
Scene Four:**

- WINTHROP: How would the foundling child grow up? That was the topic that exercised the minds of the parliament of Raveloe when they met in the Rainbow.
- SILAS: Silas thought about it too. He had cut away his past. Easy enough. Working day to day was good enough for him. Now he looked at the child. She would want a future. He was terrified.
- MACEY: Some folk wondered if it were appropriate at all for the weird old miser to be let mind the child. But I said and I want 't set down – there's a place for everything in nature. Even toads.
- SNELL: Very wise, Mr. Macey.
- MACEY: Just think of the toads.
- WINTHROP: So they put him on probation so to speak. And Ben Winthrop volunteered his wife Dolly again for the job of keeping an eye on Marner, to see how he got along with the child rearing.
- (Dolly brings a cradle for the baby)*
- DOLLY: No job could be nearer to Dolly's heart. First things first, she insisted the child must be christened and given a name.
- SILAS: Christened?
- DOLLY: Baptised.
- SILAS: Aah.
- DOLLY: Have you been baptised?
- SILAS: Yes.
- DOLLY: Are you sure?
- SILAS: Yes.
- DOLLY: You could get yourself done at the same time to be on the safe side. You must fix a name on her.
- SILAS: Hepzibah – my sister's name.
- DOLLY: Hard to get your tongue around that.
- SILAS: Eppie, that's what you'll be. Eppie.
- (Silas puts the bundle/baby into the cradle)*
- DOLLY: Having assured the future of Eppie's soul, Dolly introduced Silas to the mysteries and perils of bringing up a child.
- (Silas spreads a rug on the ground for them to sit on. Eppie enters with a bundle of leaves and a bonnet. She sits on the rug)*
- SILAS: *(Sits beside her and gives her the brown pot)* For the first time in as long as he could remember, Silas welcomed visitors.



DOLLY: Like as not they could be found in the big field behind the Stone Pits where Eppie liked to play. You'll not get your work done, Master, sitting out here.

SILAS: The evenings are long. I'll work when she's asleep.

DOLLY: She's as healthy as a trout.

SILAS: Yesterday she had a red rash on her neck.

DOLLY: Very red?

SILAS: Somewhat red.

DOLLY: It might be the measles. Was she hot?

SILAS: A bit hot.

DOLLY: It could be scarlet fever. Did she eat?

SILAS: A little bit.

DOLLY: And drink?

SILAS: Yes.

DOLLY: She'll be all right if you keep her drinking. It's probably nothing, just the heat from the sun. They're always getting little things; rashes, little things.

SILAS: How will I know if it's little or not?

DOLLY: You'll get used to her. You'll know her little ways.

SILAS: I fear I won't be able for it, mistress. I fear to take my eyes off her – even for a minute.

DOLLY: They have a way of surviving, children. They're not so fragile as they look.

SILAS: You think I'll do right by her?

DOLLY: There's many a man as handy as any woman with a child, if only they'd turn to it.

SILAS: I'll do it, mistress – as you tell me.

DOLLY: For the first while it's all a question of washing them. Keeping them clean. You know – there's a lot of washing. I can help you there.

SILAS: Then what happens?

DOLLY: Then they get into mischief. Pull everything down on their heads. Eat things their not supposed to. Wander off.

EPPIE: (*Handing Silas a leaf*) Look, Dada. Flower.

DOLLY: That's only a weed, child. Throw it away.

SILAS: No, mistress. It's garlic. (*He breaks the leaf*) Smell it.

DOLLY: (*Sniffing*) My, it's strong. Goes right through you.

SILAS: Good for the blood.

EPPIE: My flower, my flower. (*She grabs it back from Dolly*) Listen, Dada. Bird.

SILAS: What bird, Eppie?

DOLLY: She could never tell.

EPPIE: Blackbird.

SILAS: There you are! She knows the birds. She's sharp, she is.

DOLLY: You'll lose your custom, Master Marnar, if you spend your time in the fields.

SILAS: Eppie loves it out here. Don't you , pet?

DOLLY: You must be careful she doesn't run out on her own. The Stone Pit is dangerous. She could drown.

SILAS: Don't say such things, mistress. I'll make tether for her. Like a little goat. I'll tie her to my loom.

DOLLY: Good idea. You must be firm. Let her know who's boss.

SILAS: (*Kissing Eppie*) I'm the boss, Eppie.  
  
(*Eppie gazes up at him and roars laughing*)

DOLLY: Silas could no more stop himself from being over-fond, than he could stop the seasons from changing and the years from passing.

**Act Two**  
**Scene Five:**

*(The company sets up a sofa and pillows for Nancy – The Red House. Nancy's convalescence)*

GODFREY: And pass they did. With the death of Molly there was no impediment to Godfrey marrying Nancy.

DUNSTAN: *(Popping up)* There had been sightings of Dunstan in the West Indies, in South America and in Ireland, according to Bryce and the hunting crowd. What if he came back?

GODFREY: So what if he did. What could he say? Who would believe him?

NANCY: Nancy and Godfrey were married, in spite of Priscilla's misgivings.

*(Nancy kisses Godfrey)*

GODFREY: For the first time, Godfrey allowed himself to know happiness. From his contentment grew industry. After his father's death, he took over the estate. Set about running the property.

DOLLY: *(Helping Nancy to lie down on a chaise longue)* But while the weaver's child grew hale and hearty, Mistress Cass was brought to bed with a sickly child. Dolly was at the birth and while she helped Miss Nancy, neither she nor Dr Kimble could save the little un. The doctor said that there should be no more and for a long time after, Miss Nancy was laid up.

NANCY: Tomorrow, Godfrey, I shall be up and about.

GODFREY: You'll be no such thing. You won't set your foot on the floor 'till Kimble says.

NANCY: I feel so useless.

GODFREY: Everything runs like clockwork here now. You've seen to that. And Prissy charges in every day and terrifies the maids, what more could you want.

NANCY: She means well.

GODFREY: She never looks at me. I think she blames me for what happened to you.

NANCY: Nonsense.

GODFREY: I'm sorry, my darling.

NANCY: I'm sorry. I think you wanted a child more than I did.

GODFREY: It's not the end of the world.

NANCY: You wanted an heir, didn't you?

GODFREY: I can still have an heir. There are ways around these...deprivations.

NANCY: You mean adoption! But Godfrey... I don't know...

GODFREY: This is not the time to talk about it.

NANCY: I'm not at all sure that it's the right thing. It seems I am not destined to have a child. We shouldn't fly in the face of Providence.

GODFREY: We'll discuss it later, when you're well.

**Act Two**  
**Scene Six:**

*(Silas's hearth: he works at his loom. Dolly plaits Eppie's hair)*

DOLLY: That's the worst about having sons. They won't let you brush their hair.

EPPIE: Tie it back really tight.

DOLLY: If I had hair like yours I'd wear it down over my shoulders.

EPPIE: It's too hot. I'd cut it, only Father won't let me.

DOLLY: Getting stern, is he?

SILAS: I'm right, aren't I, mistress. That hair's too beautiful to cut.

EPPIE: It gets in the way.

SILAS: That's because you're a tomboy. Running around in the fields, like my little sister. I used to carry her when we went out with my mother, looking for herbs.

DOLLY: Tell us about your family, Master Marner.

EPPIE: Yes do, Father. Tell me about Aunt Eppie.

SILAS: Nothing to tell. She died. Same year as my mother. Caught a fever.

DOLLY: And left you all alone.

SILAS: I had the chapel then. I weren't so much alone. I had a friend.

DOLLY: Tell us, master.

SILAS: I don't like to remember.

EPPIE: Was he a kind man, Father?

SILAS: He was at first, I suppose – kind. But then he turned against me.

EPPIE: What did he do?

DOLLY: Tell us, Master Marner.

**Act Two**  
**Scene Seven:**

*(Red House – There is a new shirt on Godfrey)*

NANCY: Now that's what I call a handsome man!

GODFREY: Clothes make the man, eh?

NANCY: Stop fishing for compliments.

GODFREY: If I'd thought that being a Justice of the Peace meant new shirts and lots of compliments, I'd have taken the job earlier.

NANCY: He's a master craftsman, our weaver. This shirt will last forever.

GODFREY: You can bury me in it. Worms will have a good time.

NANCY: That's horrible.

GODFREY: I saw the girl when she brought the shirt. The weaver's girl. Very striking.

NANCY: She's a credit to him. A lovely child.

GODFREY: Something refined about her, don't you think? You could make something of her.

NANCY: Could I?

GODFREY: One could.

NANCY: Take the shirt off now. I'll put it away for the assizes.

GODFREY: I only meant...

NANCY: I know what you meant. You're still thinking of adoption. You think of it all the time.

GODFREY: We're still young. Now's the time to do it.

NANCY: Can't you understand? I don't think it should be done at all. One shouldn't take one's destiny in one's hands like that.

GODFREY: Why not?

NANCY: Providence has spoken. We were not given a child. These are the circumstances in which we are meant to live. Don't you see? We must make the best of them.

**Act Two**  
**Scene Eight:**

*(Christmas Eve Night. The cast all congregates and sings Hark the Herald Angels – in harmony. They disperse and go to their hearths)*

EPPIE: You sit down. I'll heat up some broth.

SILAS: If I eat this time of night, I won't sleep.

EPPIE: You won't be eating – you'll be drinking.

SILAS: It's not natural to eat in the middle of the night.

EPPIE: You'd never eat at all, if I didn't make you.

SILAS: I don't need much food. I'm a thin person.

EPPIE: Years of neglect of yourself. That's what has you thin. That's what Mrs Winthrop says.

SILAS: I won't eat before going to bed.

EPPIE: We're going to sit up a while and talk. It's Christmas.

*(Dolly and Ben's hearth – they have tankards of ale)*

WINTHROP: A prettier girl never stepped into Raveloe Church than that Eppie Marner.

DOLLY: She's a darling.

WINTHROP: Strange the ways of the world. She might have died in a ditch like her mother, but for the old crackpot.

DOLLY: That's an unkind word to use of a good man on Christmas Morning.

WINTHROP: Don't be so starchy, Doll. The man's as odd as two lefts, as well you know.

DOLLY: He has his own way of thinking. But I can't say as I blame him.

WINTHROP: He comes to Church with Eppie, and he stands and sits and kneels as Mr Crackenthorp instructs, but he never opens his mouth. Neither to pray not to sing.

DOLLY: You're not doing much praying neither, if you spend so much time watching Silas Marner's lips.

WINTHROP: Hark at 'er. Rushing to defend her precious little weaver. I wonder what goes on with you two up there at the Stone Pit.

DOLLY: *(Reaching to cuff him)* You're a scandal, Ben Winthrop, the things you come up with.

WINTHROP: *(Grabbing her and pulling her onto his lap)* Should I be jealous of the weaver? Should I? *(He tickles her)*

DOLLY: You'll wake the children.

*(Nancy and Godfrey's hearth)*

NANCY: It's so quiet. Not even a dog barking.

GODFREY: Feels like snow. The ground is very hard.

NANCY: Let's go for a walk in the morning. Before the guests arrive for lunch.

GODFREY: Will you not need to be in the kitchen, to over-see?

NANCY: Priscilla wants to do that, so I'll let her. I'll decorate the table. I'll pick some fresh holly on our walk, and some laurel.

GODFREY: We should go to bed then, if you're going to do all that.

NANCY: No. Let's sit up. We have the night all to ourselves.

GODFREY: Very well.

*(Silas and Eppie's hearth – they eat their soup)*

EPIE: Admit it now, that was nice.

SILAS: Very tasty.

EPIE: Mrs Winthrop learned me to put the herbs in it, 'cept for the garlic. She doesn't like garlic.

SILAS: My mother was a great one for herbs - for curing people.

EPIE: Can you remember what she did?

SILAS: I'd remember if I had them in my hand - if I smelt them.

EPIE: We'll gather them then, when the spring comes.

SILAS: It takes a lot of walking and searching in the fields, and stooping.

EPIE: I'll do the stooping. Or better still, I'll get Aaron Winthrop to bring us some cuttings from Mrs Cass's garden.

SILAS: Master Godfrey and his wife have been so generous to us through the year, I don't like asking for anything.

EPIE: Nonsense, Father. Aaron is their gardener and he wouldn't take anything the garden couldn't spare. In fact...

SILAS: What is it now? You've got a bee in your bonnet, I can see that.

EPIE: We should have a garden of our own. It's the only thing we lack.

*(Ben and Dolly's hearth – Ben is still holding Dolly)*

DOLLY: He told me about this past life once. It seems there was a robbery and he was blamed for the stealing.

WINTHROP: Did he do it?

DOLLY: No. This friend of his did it and caused him to be blamed. And this church he was part of – or Chapel, as he called it – the folk there put the judgement of him to the drawing of lots. And they said God would guide their hands.

WINTHROP: Should a taken him to justice.

DOLLY: Anyway, he came out guilty. So he says God didn't guide their hands. And that's why he gave up on God and people and everything.

- WINTHROP: This is some Christmas Eve when a man's wife sits on his lap and talks of nowt but an oddity.
- DOLLY: You brought him up.
- WINTHROP: More's the pity. Come to bed, woman.
- DOLLY: I'll tidy up these pots first. I'll follow you.
- NANCY: When Prissy and I were little girls, this was the one night of the year that we were allowed sit up really late. We'd come home from the midnight services and we'd drink hot, spiced milk, and then our mother would tell us stories.
- GODFREY: About what?
- NANCY: About the good shepherds and the Star of Bethlehem. And then she'd tell us stories about when she was a little girl.
- GODFREY: I see.
- NANCY: She always said that Christmas was a time to remember the past, and to pass the memories on.
- GODFREY: Yes. (*Godfrey stands up and walks about*)
- NANCY: She agreed to tell stories until the fire died down. So as soon as Church was over, Prissy would dash home and pile the fire with logs.
- GODFREY: I'm thinking that in the spring, I'll buy a dairy herd – go into pasture. Drain the big fields beyond the Stone Pits.
- NANCY: Don't think of work now. Tell me a story.
- GODFREY: You know all my stories, Nancy.
- NANCY: There must be something you haven't told me.
- GODFREY: I can't think of anything. I should like to get some rest. We have a big day ahead of us.
- NANCY: Very well. We'll retire.
- GODFREY: Stay awhile, if you like – until the fire dies down. (*He exits*)
- (Silas and Eppie's hearth)*
- SILAS: Wallflowers and tiger-lilies and hollyhocks and levataria – the house will be full of bees.
- EPPIE: (*Delighted*) That's it! Honey! We'll have a hive.
- SILAS: It's Christmas Day, Eppie. You can do nowt about the garden till spring comes.
- EPPIE: We can clear the plot at the side of the house. We can move some boulders from the Stone Pit for a rockery.
- SILAS: Move boulders? Eppie, talk sense.
- EPPIE: I don't expect you to do it, but I know who will.



SILAS: Aaron Winthrop!

EPPIE: He's obliging.

SILAS: Aye.

EPPIE: Don't you like him?

SILAS: Aye. He's a good lad.

*(Silence)*

SILAS: Thank you for the soup, daughter. Can I go to bed now?

*(The three women are left at their hearths)*

EPPIE: I shall have to tell him about Aaron. That I know he is going to propose to me.

DOLLY: He thinks God didn't guide their hands. But what if He did? What if it were meant to happen that way? That's how I look at it.

EPPIE: When Aaron asks me I shall tell him yes. But only if he comes to live here with me and father. I won't be parted from him. I won't leave him on his own.

NANCY: No heir. That's all he broods about. I couldn't do it. It wasn't right. We must accept what the Lord lays down for us. Not try to turn it around.

DOLLY: He shouldn't have turned his back. He should have trusted. I must say that to him.

EPPIE: I must tell him about Aaron.

NANCY: He won't speak to me about it. I must hold my tongue.

**Act Two**  
**Scene Nine:**

*(Silas, Godfrey and Ben join Eppie, Nancy and Dolly for the discovery of Dunstan's corpse. They climb up on the elevated areas to gaze down into the Stone Pit)*

- WINTHROP: One summer afternoon at tea-time, some labourers were returning from work where they had been draining Godfrey Cass's outlying fields.
- DOLLY: Their journey took them past the Stone Pit. Usually waterlogged, this place, but bone-dry now, what with the summer sun and Mr Cass's draining.
- WINTHROP: They gazed into the old quarry. A new landscape now that it was dried out.
- DOLLY: And there, wedged between the rocks, they saw it.
- WINTHROP: A human skeleton.  
*(Godfrey and Ben jump down into the pit to examine what is there)*
- GODFREY: From the jewellery and the hunting crop lying beside him, it did not take long to identify Dunstan Cass.
- WINTHROP: And it did not take long either to identify the gold and silver scattered around his broken bones.
- GODFREY: It was retrieved and brought to Marner's cottage.
- WINTHROP: The bones of Dunstan Cass were brought to the Rainbow. He'd be more at home there than anywhere else. It were thought to be a good idea to give the folks at the Red House a chance to get over the shock.
- NANCY: *(Quietly)* The shock experienced at the Red House was indeed profound.
- GODFREY: It was not enough to tell Nancy the fact of the discovery of Dunstan's corpse – the fact of the discovery of Dunstan's crime.  
*(A pause)*
- GODFREY: Everything comes to light, Nancy, sooner or later. When God almighty wills it, our secrets are found out. I've lived with a secret on my mind, but I'll keep in from you no longer. I wouldn't have you know it by somebody else than by me. I wouldn't have you find it out after I'm dead. It's been "I will" and "I won't" with me all my life. I'll make sure of myself now!
- NANCY: Don't be frightened, Godfrey. Tell me what it is you've been keeping from me.
- GODFREY: You may turn away from me. Despise me.
- NANCY: You have no choice bit to continue .
- GODFREY: That women that Marner found dead in the snow – Eppie's mother – that wretched woman was my wife... Eppie is my child. Now you know.
- NANCY: Your wife? Your child? And you said nothing.
- GODFREY: No.
- NANCY: And you felt nothing? Not for her? Not for the child?
- GODFREY: My feelings were concentrated elsewhere.

NANCY:           You mean on me?

GODFREY:        Of course.

NANCY:           Then it was my fault too.

GODFREY:        How?

NANCY:           You thought of nothing but me, because I made you. I thought of nothing but you.

GODFREY:        It's all my doing. You can't take the blame.

NANCY:           If I had known the child was your daughter, I would not have resisted your plan to adopt her.

GODFREY:        You say that now. How do you know what you would have done then?

NANCY:           We are who we are now. And our duty now is perfectly clear.

GODFREY:        That's how I see it too – there's no other way. I must talk to her and Marner.

NANCY:           Yes. We have a duty to them both.

## Act Two

## Scene Ten:

*(Silas Marner's cottage – Eppie stands beside Silas who is seated. Godfrey stands. Nancy is seated a little distance away from him. There is a silence)*

- NANCY: We've come to see you, because my husband...
- GODFREY: I want to tell you how pleased I am that you have your money back, Marner. And to say to you that it grieves me sore that my blackguard of a brother was the source of your deprivation.
- SILAS: He suffered more than me, when all is said and done.
- GODFREY: It's very good of you to take it like that Marner, but I cannot and will not. You must let me make amends.
- SILAS: It was none of your doing. You owe me nothing.
- GODFREY: *(Looking at the pile of coins on Marner's table)* Is this the money, Marner? The sum total of it? This is what my brother traded his life for?
- SILAS: It may not seem so great to you sir, but it's enough to keep us comfortable, Eppie and me.
- GODFREY: I want to talk to you about that.
- NANCY: Easy Godfrey.
- GODFREY: What age are you, Marner? Fifty, fifty-five?
- SILAS: Fifty-five as near as I can tell, sir.
- GODFREY: Getting on a bit for all that close work, are you not? Bent over, cramped day and night?
- SILAS: I'm fit enough.
- GODFREY: But for how long, I say. And then your little fortune will soon evaporate. It wouldn't keep one of you – much less two.
- SILAS: We want for nothing.
- EPPIE: *(Lightly)* But for a garden.
- NANCY: You love a garden, do you my dear? Like myself. I give a deal of time to my garden.
- GODFREY: But to get to the point, Marner.
- NANCY: Perhaps another time, Godfrey. Master Marner is tired. He's had an upsetting day.
- GODFREY: We're here now – and I'll go on. You're used to scrimping and lean living, Marner, and could put up with it for yourself. But think of Eppie.
- SILAS: I do think of her.
- EPPIE: All the time.
- GODFREY: You've looked after her very well, we can see that, *(to Nancy)* can't we dear?
- NANCY: Of course. Eppie is a credit to you, Master Marner.

GODFREY: She's a fine girl and would sit well in a gentleman's house, her own mistress with a household at her disposal.

EPPIE: I don't understand.

GODFREY: What I say is, she's not common. She's not cut out for the life of a working woman – such as she'll have with you when you retire and your – fortune – runs out.

SILAS: I don't take your meaning, sir.

NANCY: Gently, Godfrey.

GODFREY: I put it to you that Mrs Cass and I have no children – but we have a good house and living – more than we can consume ourselves. We would like to put Eppie in the place of our daughter to us. We would be happy to provide for her. You would be happy to see her future secure, would you not? And Eppie would be happy and could visit you – very often – very often indeed. I should make it my sworn duty to see to your comforts for the rest of your life. That's my proposal. What have you to say?

*(Silence)*

GODFREY: Well speak up. It's a handsome offer and I mean every word of it.

NANCY: You're rushing them, Godfrey. They need time... we should go...

EPPIE: No, no. Father, speak!

SILAS: You must say what you want, Eppie. I won't stand in your way.

NANCY: Perhaps Eppie doesn't know what she wants yet.

EPPIE: Begging your pardon, Ma'am, but I do. I want to be with my father. I can't leave him for the folk I've grown up with. I'm no lady, Ma'am, nor do I want to be.

GODFREY: But you are a lady, child. Whether you like it or not.

NANCY: Godfrey – not now. Not like this.

EPPIE: I don't understand, sir. I don't understand any of this.

NANCY: Please, Godfrey. Let us go home.

GODFREY: It has to be said, and now's the time. You, Eppie, are my daughter. The woman who brought you here and left you to wander into Master Marner's cottage was my wife. So you see, I have a claim on you, Eppie, and I mean to stand by it.

EPPIE: My mother? My mother? You knew her?

GODFREY: As I said, I'm your father.

EPPIE: What was her name?

GODFREY: Mary Ellen Cass. We called her Molly. You look rather like her.

SILAS: *(Jumping to his feet)* Why didn't you claim her sixteen years ago, sir? Why didn't you claim her before I came to love her? You come to take her now – you might as well take the heart out of my body. You turned your back on her and I was

given her. I have loved her and reared her. I'm her father. When a man turns a blessing from his door, it falls to them as take it in.

- GODFREY: I know my behaviour was wrong, Marner. And I have repented of my conduct. There's no more to be said on that.
- SILAS: Repent! I'm glad to hear it. But your repentance changes nothing here. It doesn't stop us feeling what we feel now, and what we've felt for sixteen years.
- GODFREY: I can't see why you're in such a passion.
- NANCY: Godfrey, please.
- GODFREY: It's not as though we were going to take her to the moon. We live in Raveloe. You could see her every week if you want.
- SILAS: Every week? In the in-between time she thinks of different things and eats different food and meets different people – you'd cut us in two, you would.
- GODFREY: I hadn't thought to hear you speak so selfishly, Master Marner. Don't you know that she will leave you anyhow, when her time comes to wed? Now if she lived with us the difference is that she would wed well, not some village lout who'd have her scrubbing floors for the rest of her days – it's her welfare I'm talking about. You mustn't stand in the way of that.
- NANCY: Mr Cass speaks for the best. He wants only to do his duty – which he has neglected. You mustn't stand in the way of that either, Master Marner.
- SILAS: Speak, Eppie. It's up to you.
- EPPIE: What would take me to a strange house to live with strangers? Our landlord and his wife, that's who you are. (*Holding Silas*) Here is my father, here is my home.
- NANCY: You must think of your future, child.
- EPPIE: My future is seen already. I am getting married to a man who has promised to come here and live here with us so that I'll never be separated from my father. I'm getting married to a workingman – but he's no lout. He's as fine a man as ever I've met.
- NANCY: We've upset you, my dear, and I'm sorry for that. But Mr Cass is your lawful father, and you have a duty to him too.
- EPPIE: I have only one father, and that is my father Silas Marner.
- GODFREY: There's no talking to them, Nancy. We'd best be off.
- NANCY: Yes.
- (*Godfrey exits*)
- NANCY: Try to see us as your benefactors, my dear. And please excuse my husband. His manner... he... he... permit us to call again.
- (*Nancy exits*)

**Act Two**  
**Scene Eleven:**

GODFREY:           *(With his head in his hands)* They didn't understand at all.

NANCY:             No.

GODFREY:           Did I not make myself clear?

NANCY:             Perfectly clear.

GODFREY:           They were angry. Did you see?

NANCY:             I saw.

GODFREY:           *(Genuinely perplexed)* I handled it badly. I don't know how to speak to people like that. It's not like talking to your equals.

NANCY:             They'll realise in time that you meant well. They're generous people. Generous in spirit, I mean.

GODFREY:           I let you down.

NANCY:             Me? No.

GODFREY:           You might have had a daughter. She'd have been a companion for you. A help.

NANCY:             I wasn't meant to have a child.

GODFREY:           But I was. I had one and I turned my back on her.

NANCY:             That was... a mistake.

GODFREY:           I feared to lose you, Nancy. You'd never have accepted it.

NANCY:             Perhaps I would have admired you for doing your duty.

GODFREY:           Don't say that. You'll break my heart.

NANCY:             *(Kneeling down beside him)* Are you grieving for my sake, or for your own?

GODFREY:           For us both.

NANCY:             We have each other.

GODFREY:           You won't leave me?

NANCY:             I'd never do that. But Godfrey, for Father's sake and Prissy's, let this go no farther.

*(She stands up and cradles his head against her stomach)*

GODFREY:           I'll tell no one, but with your permission, I'll see the girl provided for in my will.

NANCY:             Naturally.

GODFREY:           I won't go back to Marner.

NANCY:             No – it's for the best. *(Both exit)*

**Act Two**

**Scene Twelve:** *(Dolly, Silas, Eppie and Ben enter. They create a coach with a driver in front and a postilliam at the back. The passengers are in the middle)*

- EPPIE: Silas and Eppie were left in peace to adjust to their new -found fortune.
- SILAS: The gold and silver pieces were cleaned off. But they didn't shine so brightly as before. Dead things.
- AARON: Aaron Winthrop was resentful of the money. Thought it put Eppie above him. But she told him not to worry, she'd soon spend it.
- DOLLY: The weaver seemed to have a stronger spirit since that night his gold came back.
- WINTHROP: Looked a man in the eye, laughed at a joke.
- DOLLY: But something rankled in Silas's mind. And for the first time in his life he felt ready to do something about it. Dolly encouraged him.
- (Aaron kisses Eppie. The coach sets off)*
- SILAS: Eppie came with him back to the northern town he'd lived in before coming to Raveloe, back to Lantern Yard. He would see if it had ever come to light that he was innocent. He would ask the parson to justify the drawing of the lots!
- EPPIE: The journey was long and it was late when they got to the town.
- SILAS: Everything had changed. Shops had gone. Factories had broken windows, dark. Landmarks all disappeared.
- EPPIE: The cobblestones glistened in the torch light as the coach turned into Lantern Yard.
- (Ben helps Eppie down, then Silas. They walk away onto the empty stage)*
- NANCY: There were no chapel. No meetinghouse. No minister. Nothing.
- WILLIAM: An innkeeper remembered a man called William Dane. A wealthy man, owned a mill, liked his wine.
- MINISTER: A bullying man.
- DOLLY: But he was dead and nobody missed him.
- EPPIE: Not a trace. All gone. *(To Silas)* Do you want to search more, Father, for the people who accused you?
- SILAS: No. They don't exist anymore.
- EPPIE: You must give up thinking about this old business.
- SILAS: Aye.
- EPPIE: It were a bad thing that happened to you. That man Dane tricked everyone. He knew it and he's gone. Nothing more to be said.
- SILAS: But the others prayed for guidance, Eppie. That's what troubles me. They were guided against me.



EPPIE: Who's to say you weren't guided to Raveloe? Who's to say you weren't guided to me?

SILAS: Aye. I must trust to that. As your mother says, trust in the ways of the Lord.

EPPIE: We'll go home.

*(They move back towards the coach)*

**Act Two****Scene Thirteen:** *(The coach sets off and lights come up on the wedding bells)*

- AARON: Not long after, the bells of Raveloe Church rang out for the wedding of Eppie Marner and Aaron Winthrop.
- NANCY: You won't go to the Rainbow for the wedding breakfast?
- GODFREY: No. I have to go to town today. You understand. Tell the girl I wish her well. Tell her that from me.
- NANCY: *(To audience)* I tell her. *(To Eppie)* Eppie, will you take this? I made it this morning from wild flowers and flowers from the garden mixed together.
- EPPIE: It's lovely. Thank you.
- NANCY: You have our best wishes. From both of us. Good luck.
- DOLLY: It was the happiest day of Dolly's life since her own wedding... and ... well... since the birth of her children... and... come to think of it, she'd had many happy days, but this was...
- AARON: Yes mother. We know.
- SILAS: Is everything ready at the Rainbow for the feast?
- DOLLY: It's all set out but for the cake and Ben will bring that from our kitchen when the time comes, for I want it to be a surprise.
- AARON: Everyone's seen it already, Mother. You've been baking it for weeks.
- SILAS: Never mind. We will all be surprised, I promise you. Mr Macey's waiting in the church with the choir. They're all ready. We shouldn't keep them waiting.
- EPPIE: This is your last chance now to run away. I shall never let go of you from now on.
- AARON: I'll never want to go from you, Eppie. You can be sure of that.
- DOLLY: They were made for one another, Aaron and Eppie.
- SILAS: Everyone said, as Eppie set off to the church on her father's arm, that this was a marriage made in heaven. And Silas believed that too.
- GODFREY: God bless the bride.

*(All dance. Lights down. End)*