

BLOOD AND FIRE

A Victorian Melodrama for the 21st Century

Book and Lyrics by Jeffrey Couchman

Music by Lisa Heffter

© Jeffrey Couchman & Lisa Heffter

Contact: Ms. Barbara Hogenson
Barbara Hogenson Agency
165 West End Avenue
Suite 19-C
New York, NY 10023
(212) 874-8084

CHARACTERS

MICHAEL REMSEN (late 20s to 30s). A first-rate doctor. He is a born skeptic with a sharp sense of irony, yet he is generous and compassionate, willing to sacrifice to help others.

AMELIA WALTERS (late 20s to 30s). A woman of strong faith, an officer in the Salvation Army. At once idealistic and down-to-earth, she exudes serene confidence.

GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH (around 60). Founder of the Salvation Army, he is imposing, self-assured, a charismatic leader.

HARLAN GREY (around 30). Sober, he's friendly and warm-hearted; drunk, he can be trouble.

BEN GREY (11). Harlan's son. Resourceful and quick-witted, a child of the streets.

LYLE STEVENS (30s). Selfish, vindictive. A study in depravity, the anti-Booth.

CLARA STEVENS (17). Bright and energetic. She has a softness balanced by fierce determination.

DANNY O'MALLEY (19). Funny, feisty and deeply loyal to those he loves. He is Booth's self-appointed bodyguard.

DR. REMSEN (50s). Every inch a Victorian gentleman, with an abiding faith in his country and his class.

MRS. REMSEN (50s). Devoted to her family, cheerful and kind.

FLORA REMSEN (late teens, early 20s). Full of life, naïvely optimistic.

CARLTON PRICE (late 20s to 30s). Worldly, opinionated. Profits to him are more important than people.

NICK MARLIN (30s). He'll do what he has to do, legal or not, to make ends meet.

VARIOUS SCALAWAGS, PROSTITUTES, AND OTHER HARD-WORKING PEOPLE TO BE DOUBLED.

SETTING

London, 1890s.

Settings are intended to be suggested, not presented in realistic detail. Locations change swiftly and fluidly (a parlor in the West End of London gives way to a street in the East End; an old warehouse becomes a doctor's office). At times, we are in two or three locations simultaneously: a pub, a brothel, a street corner.

NOTE

Blood and Fire is a through-composed musical. Most of the dialogue is sung.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT 1

1. A GOOD TIME TO BE ALIVE IN LONDON	1-4
2. ALWAYS BEGGARS ON THE BRIDGE	5-8
3. SOMETHING MUST BE DONE	8-9
4. A USEFUL TRADE	10-15
5. FOLLOW YOUR HEART	15-17
6. THE RULES OF THE STREET	18-19
7. BOOTH IS COMING	20-29
8. WHY SHOULD THE DEVIL HAVE ALL THE GOOD TUNES?	29-31
9. BOOTH BE DAMNED	31-35
10. WE'RE SAFE HERE	36-39
11. SINGING OF FAITH	39-43
12. AN OFFICE FOR THAT SORT	44-48
13. FREEDOM!	49
14. MICHAEL, DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU ARE DOING?	50-53
15. A PUB FOR GENERAL BOOTH	53-61
16. BLOOD AND FIRE	61-67

ACT 2

17. CHRISTMAS IN LONDON	68-72
18. BRICK BY BRICK	73-74
19. THE WORD IS LOVE	75-77
20. KEEP IT UP!	78-80
21. ONLY ONE ROAD	81-83
22. THE TWO DR. REMSENS	84-86
23. THE PRISON BRIGADE	87-90
24. PRISON BARS DO NOT A PRISON MAKE	91
25. SUCH A SHAME/DON'T TALK TO ME OF GOD	92-97
26. THE ROAD AHEAD	97-100
27. SCHEMING	101-102
28. SHOUTING AT THE WIND	103-104
29. PRAISE HIM	105-109
30. WE LIVE TO GIVE THE SAINTS THE DEVIL	110-113
31. WE HOPE IN THEE/WALK THROUGH THE FIRE	114-121
32. LOVE IN THE EYES OF GOD	122-127

ACT I

SCENE 1

“Good Time To Be Alive in London”

The curtain rises on a cheerful, upper-middle class drawing room, where four people stand frozen in the midst of a cocktail party, as though on display in a well-lighted museum case. They are DR. and MRS. REMSEN; their cultivated daughter FLORA; and an eligible bachelor, CARLTON PRICE. A beat, and the figures come to life--laughing and garrulous.

DR. REMSEN

“Leave England?” I said to him--

FLORA

(to Carlton)

More champagne?

CARLTON

Thank you.

(CARLTON gratefully extends his glass.)

MRS. REMSEN

Save some for Michael.

CARLTON

Shouldn't he be back?

FLORA

Old man Brady's gout takes time.

(DR. REMSEN, not happy at being interrupted, continues.)

DR. REMSEN

So I said to Mr. Walker: “Leave England? Sir,” I said--

MRS. REMSEN

Oh, Paris may be fine in its way . . .

CARLTON

In its way . . .

FLORA

When will I see Paris? . . .

CARLTON

Nothing much to see.

MRS. REMSEN

The trouble with France is this . . .

DR. REMSEN

(exasperated)

May I? . . .

CARLTON

May I say, Mrs. Remsen, there's nothing wrong with France your English beef couldn't cure?

DR. REMSEN

If I may . . .

MRS. REMSEN

(determined to make her joke)

The trouble with France is this: one must listen to people speak French.

DR. REMSEN

That's why I said--

CARLTON

It's not as bad as German.

MRS. REMSEN

The Germans have a way with words.

CARLTON

And, oh, the way is long!

FLORA

Michael says if God existed, he'd have given us all one tongue.

DR. REMSEN

May we please for one night leave your brother's blasphemy alone . . . so I can tell my story?

MRS. REMSEN

Yes, dear, we're dying to hear your story. Just what did you say to Walker?

CARLTON

(aside to Flora)

A shilling he says what he always says.

DR. REMSEN

Well, you know what I always say.

ALL

We know!

DR. REMSEN

Like good wine, a good idea never grows old. I said to Walker what I always say . . .

ALL

It's a good time to be alive in London!

DR. REMSEN

Well, damme, it's true . . .
I have seen the Colosseum--what a frightful mausoleum.
I prefer the modest monuments of home.
That old city called eternal is to me a bore infernal,
But if ruins are your taste, go live in Rome.

CARLTON

The French may have a passion
For the latest word in fashion;
They love to wear their pride upon their sleeve.

MRS. REMSEN

But the gowns I've seen are gaudy,
With necklines downright bawdy:
Quite enough to make an English mother grieve.

ALL

It's a good time to be alive in London,
The modern center of the modern world.
It's here you find civility, decorum and nobility.
There's no place else on earth I'd rather be.
It's a good time to be alive in London!

CARLTON

I was told the nights in Rio were full of fun and brio,
So I went down to see that charming spot.
But for no apparent reason, you can only find one season.
You may call it what you like--I call it hot.

FLORA

I have heard about the Nile.

CARLTON

It's too long by a mile.

FLORA

And what about that city called New York?

DR. REMSEN

The people are barbarians.

MRS. REMSEN

At table, they're vulgarians.
For every course, they use a single fork.

DR. REMSEN

Thank God we're alive in London!

ALL

The modern center of the modern world.

FLORA

Have you ever seen the Taj Mahal?

CARLTON

In the moonlight, it looks rather small.

FLORA

I'd like to see the orient.

CARLTON

It left me un-euphoriant.

MRS. REMSEN

Remember when we went to Spain?

DR. REMSEN

Those castanets drove me insane!

FLORA

And what about--

CARLTON

Don't ask!

DR./MRS. REMSEN

It's all the same.

ALL

It's a good time to be alive in London,
The modern center of the modern world. . . .

(Unnoticed by the boisterous group, MICHAEL REMSEN, carrying a doctor's bag, appears in the doorway. He is in his 20s and has a face of keen intelligence. He gazes at his family and friends with a grim smile--bitterly amused at some private irony.)

ALL

It's here you find civility, decorum and nobility.
There's no place else on earth I'd rather be.
It's a good time to be alive in London!

(MICHAEL cuts through the cheer.)

MICHAEL

On the last day of the world, we'll be carousing.

(The group is startled by the voice behind them. They cry out with pleasure at the sight of the man.)

FLORA

Michael, you're so late.

MRS. REMSEN.

We have champagne . . .

MICHAEL

I noticed.

MRS. REMSEN

Canapés . . .

MICHAEL

I have no appetite.

FLORA

Is old man--

(catching herself)

Mr. Brady . . . is he . . .

(with eager horror)

Dead?

MICHAEL

Apart from being too fat and too rich, Mr. Brady is fine.

MRS. REMSEN

(seeing how distracted Michael is)

Are you ill?

FLORA

Overworking again.

MICHAEL

Not working hard enough . . .

CARLTON

It's this early winter frost. It gets one down. Have a drink to warm you.

(MICHAEL stares across the room, as though seeing a vision. He speaks as though to himself.)

MICHAEL

I saw a beggar on the bridge tonight.

DR. REMSEN

There are always beggars on the bridge.

FLORA

I close my eyes when I ride by.

MICHAEL

There was a boy . . . a boy with starving eyes . . .

DR. REMSEN

They all know how to act the part.

MICHAEL

You can't fake misery like that!

DR. REMSEN

Here we go again. It's that book you've been reading, that thing by General Booth.

MRS. REMSEN

That man!

DR. REMSEN

What gloomy title does he use--Our Dark England?

MICHAEL

In Darkest England.

FLORA

Either way, it's very dark.

MICHAEL

I'm sure General Booth regrets offending you.

DR. REMSEN

I've glanced at his book. He advocates free legal counsel for the poor.

MICHAEL

Shocking to think a poor man might get justice.

DR. REMSEN

Why fill up on his socialist ideas?

MICHAEL

(snatching up a wine glass)

You're right. A toast:

To decent people who ride by while decent people cry.
To me, the truly wretched, for I let the wretched die.

(MICHAEL tosses back his wine.)

MRS. REMSEN

Time to go into the parlor.

(sweetly)

I can serve the arsenic in there.

DR. REMSEN

Flora, will you play the harpsichord for us?

FLORA

You just want to catch up on your sleep.

(MRS. REMSEN and FLORA go off to the parlor.
MICHAEL lingers behind.)

DR. REMSEN

(to Michael)

Your sister's been rehearsing a new piece.

(more of a command than a question)

You're coming in?

MICHAEL

Give me a minute, father.

(DR. REMSEN reluctantly agrees.)

DR. REMSEN

Don't disappoint us.

(DR. REMSEN goes into the parlor.)

CARLTON puts a hand on MICHAEL's shoulder.)

CARLTON

I'd like to help you, my friend.

MICHAEL

Thank you, Carlton. There's nothing you can do.

CARLTON

Actually, I think there is. You know I own a pub.

MICHAEL

Among other things, yes.

CARLTON

I'm putting it up for sale. I need capital at the moment. I have bigger plans.

MICHAEL

You always do, Carlton.

CARLTON

Here's my proposition: you buy it.

MICHAEL

What use could I possibly have for a pub?

CARLTON

You want to help the lower classes. Give them drink to drown their sorrows.

MICHAEL

Thanks, but I'll stick to my trade. I have plans of my own.

CARLTON

No need to be hasty. Think about it, old man.

(CARLTON follows the others into the parlor.)

"Something Must be Done"

MICHAEL goes to the window and gazes out. In the room behind him, the family gathers around a harpsichord. FLORA plays a baroque invention--elegant and serene. Over this, MICHAEL sings his own reflective melody.)

MICHAEL

Inside, so warm,
Fine life by the fire.
Outside, so cold,
I hear the wind howl.
One tells oneself, "Oh the poor,
They're a breed quite unlike you and me."
A soothing lie we all need
To get through our unfeeling lives.

Oh, something must be done.
See those men in rags,
Freezing by fires in the alleyway.
Oh, something must be done.
Hear the children cry.
Look on our shame in their eyes.
Something must be done! . . .
Something must be done!

So warm, in here.
Shelter, feather beds.
So cold, out there.
So few will survive.
Within these walls we can hide.
We ignore pleading hands at the door.
Within our hearts we can build
More walls to keep feelings outside.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

Oh, something must be done.
See those men in rags,
Freezing by fires in the alleyway.
Oh, something must be done.
Hear the children cry.
Hunger eats holes in their eyes.
Something must be done! . . .
Something must be done.

(Behind MICHAEL, FLORA finishes off her piano piece to admiring applause.)

The drawing room and the parlor--everything that represents the West End--FADES TO BLACK.)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT I

SCENE 2

A dismal street in the East End of London. The dissolute LYLE STEVENS hustles his daughter CLARA along the street. Thin and young as she is, she tugs hard against her father's firm grip.

CLARA

I can walk on my own!

LYLE

Be good! Straighten your dress. You want to look nice for Amelia.

CLARA

Who is this woman?

LYLE

She'll teach you a trade, a useful trade. Think of her as your Aunt Amelia.

(CLARA tries to pull a bow out of her hair.
LYLE slaps her hand down.)

LYLE

Leave that alone!

(LYLE stops at an alley that leads to a shabby building.)

LYLE

I think this is the place . . .

(LYLE pulls out a piece of paper and checks the address.)

CLARA

God, no!
Papa, don't put me to work in a sweatshop.
Please, anything but a sweatshop.
Papa, I'm just seventeen.
Papa, don't put me to work in a sweatshop.
Please, anything but a sweatshop.
How could you do this to me?

LYLE

You think I'm a fool? There's no money in that kind of work.
(tugging on Clara)
Down the alley. Get inside . . .

(LYLE shoves CLARA through the doorway of the shabby building. She squeals at the sight of something. LYLE kicks at an unseen rodent.)

LYLE

Fuckin' rat!

(LYLE and CLARA disappear inside as LIGHTS COME UP on a bedroom in the shabby building. A knocking rattles the door.

AMELIA WALTERS, the tough madam of a brothel, throws the door open. LYLE pulls CLARA into the room.)

AMELIA

Hello, Lyle.

(CLARA lets out a cry at the sight of AMELIA.)

CLARA

Ohhh, I know what you are!

(A stocky young man named BARTON enters from a back room.)

BARTON

Keep it down, keep it down. You're disturbing the ladies.

(AMELIA does not look happy to see BARTON. She waves him off.)

AMELIA

I'll call if I need you . . .

BARTON

(thrusting his hand toward Lyle)

Name's Barton. You're right on time.

(LYLE ignores BARTON's hand. He pats his daughter's arm, straightens the bow in her hair.)

LYLE

Yes, she's prompt, always prompt. She could hardly wait to get here.

BARTON

Good. We like 'em eager.

(to Amelia)

Don't we?

AMELIA

Yes . . . Barton.

(She motions with her head for BARTON to leave. He, however, has noticed Clara. He likes what he sees.)

BARTON

Clara . . . am I right?

(Revolted, CLARA backs toward the door. LYLE holds one arm. AMELIA takes hold of her other arm.)

AMELIA

It's all right, dearie. Call me Aunt Amelia . . .

LYLE

See? She'll be like a second mother.

AMELIA

I'll make certain nothing happens to you.

BARTON

That's where I come in.

(BARTON flexes his muscles. He is clearly showing off for CLARA.)

LYLE

Just make certain I get paid every week.

AMELIA

You'll be paid. The bargain that we made is on the bed.

(LYLE snatches up bills lying on the bed and counts them.)

CLARA

Bastard! Selling your own daughter!

LYLE

I can't afford you, my dove.

(AMELIA hovers close to CLARA.)

AMELIA

Let him go. You don't need him anymore.

LYLE

What I'm doing is for your own good. It's so cozy here inside. Not like some factory. And think of all the gentlemen you'll meet. I hear the finer sort come to visit Aunt Amelia.

AMELIA

Yes, I only allow men of quality to stay.
(throwing open the door)
Goodbye.

LYLE

What you lack in manners, you'll make up for in cash. I'll see you at the end of the week.
(to Clara)
Work hard. And behave. Don't disappoint your father.

(LYLE tries to kiss her, and CLARA spits in his face.)

CLARA

I have no father.

LYLE

(to Amelia)
You see how I'm treated. She's too much for me. Her mother's wild blood runs in her veins.

BARTON

We know how to tame her.

(CLARA looks at BARTON with mingled rage and fear.)

LYLE

I leave her to your care. Good day . . .
(pointedly)
. . . madam.

(LYLE slips out the door, being careful not to let CLARA make a run for it.)

AMELIA smiles at CLARA.)

AMELIA

Don't be afraid.

CLARA

(smiling back sweetly)
I'm not afraid.

(CLARA dives for an open window and is halfway out before AMELIA and BARTON can reach her. AMELIA grabs Clara's leg.)

CLARA

Let go, you slut!

(BARTON and AMELIA wrestle CLARA into a chair.)

BARTON

We're not who you think we are!

AMELIA

We're with the Salvation Army!

(BARTON whips a Salvation Army cap out of a coat pocket and slaps it on his head. He stands proudly before CLARA, waiting for her thanks.)

CLARA

How sweet. Captain of Pimps.

(BARTON looks hurt.)

AMELIA

Clara . . . A friend of mine who's no friend of your father's told me of his nasty scheme.

BARTON

We put on this show to save you!

AMELIA

I told you stay in the back, Danny.

CLARA

I thought your name was Barton.

DANNY

No. Danny O'Malley. I made Barton up. I also thought about Wiley or Roscoe. Which do you like? . . .

CLARA

I hate 'em all.

AMELIA

(a sudden thought)

Oh, Lyle's getting away with our money!

DANNY

Right. Wasting time!

(DANNY grabs a Salvation Army jacket from a closet and heads for the door.)

DANNY

I'll find him.

(pauses to look back at Clara)

I hope you're still here when I get back, miss.

AMELIA

Don't let him spot you now that he's seen your face . . . Barton.

DANNY

Got that covered!

(DANNY pulls his cap down to hide his face. He's out the door.)

CLARA

(quietly to Amelia)

So I'm not your prisoner?

AMELIA

You're free.

CLARA

I'll go then.

(But CLARA does not move.)

AMELIA

Good luck to you. I'm sure you have a lot of family and friends to take care of you.

CLARA

I take care of myself!

(As she speaks to CLARA, AMELIA opens a closet, takes out a Salvation Army jacket and puts it on.)

AMELIA)

Do you know where you'll sleep tonight?

CLARA

Not yet.

AMELIA

I could find you a place. Do you have money for food?

CLARA

Not right at the moment.

AMELIA

We could feed you.

CLARA

And what would I have to do?

AMELIA

Stay out of trouble.

CLARA

You mean I shouldn't go strangle my father?

AMELIA

That would be a good start. Come on, we're holding an outdoor service today.

(preparing to leave with Clara)

Our band is playing. You can meet General Booth and then we'll--

CLARA

I haven't decided to go! I have to think what to do . . .

AMELIA

It's not so hard . . .

“Follow Your Heart”

Follow your heart,
Trust it will guide you,
Maybe to places where your mind can't go.
Follow your heart,
Follow it gladly.
Bright days of happiness are nearer than you know.

You may be lost like a child in the wood,
Shadows may darken your road.
Don't be afraid. You will find, on your own,
There's a way home.

Follow your heart,
See where it leads you.
Clouds of confusion will give way to sun.
Follow your heart,
Follow it freely.
You'll find your peace of mind the day your journey's done.

Listen . . .
Hear it calling,
Calling, "Clara, Clara, Clara . . ."

CLARA

I can hear it calling . . .
Calling, "Clara, Clara, Clara . . ."

Oh, I'll follow my heart,
Trust it will guide me.
Goodbye my misery, farewell my past.
Follow my heart,
Follow it gladly.
Can my true peace of mind be truly here at last?

Sometimes I feel I am still just a child,
I wake up scared of the dark.

AMELIA

Don't be afraid. You're no longer alone,
There's a way home.

AMELIA/CLARA

Follow your heart,
See where it leads you.
Maybe to places where your mind can't go.
Follow your heart,
Follow it freely.
Bright days of happiness are nearer than you know.

(Together, AMELIA and CLARA leave the room.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT I

SCENE 3

Lights up on an East End street, where we see HARLAN GREY and his son BEN. The two make a shabby pair--clothes torn and dirty, a ragged beard on HARLAN. BEN has a cough that erupts from time to time.

HARLAN

Now, Ben, what's the first rule of the street?

BEN

Keep your eyes open and keep your mouth shut.

HARLAN

Good lad.

(LYLE enters, whistling. HARLAN reacts eagerly to the sound.)

HARLAN

And the second rule?

BEN

Didn't know there was one.

HARLAN

Listen and learn. Where you find a man whistling, you find a man with money.

BEN

Is it the Rough and Tumble, then?

HARLAN

No, let's do the Blindman's Buff.

(HARLAN pretends to be a blind man. BEN helps him across the street, straight toward LYLE.)

At that moment, DANNY, wearing his Salvation Army jacket and cap, pops out of an alley. With his head down, apparently not looking where he's going, he collides with LYLE.)

LYLE

Stupid oaf!

DANNY

(to Lyle)

Sorry . . .

(BEN and HARLAN see DANNY pick LYLE's pocket.
LYLE doesn't realize that he's been robbed.)

BEN

(to Harlan)

The bastard's stealin' our take!

HARLAN

(to Ben)

And doin' a smooth job of it.

LYLE

Be more careful!

(LYLE hurries on and disappears around a
corner. DANNY tips his cap to him.)

DANNY

Thank you, friend. Good advice for us all.

HARLAN

(to Ben)

Now, boy, it is the Rough and Tumble. Watch how it's done.

(HARLAN collides with DANNY, slugs him with a
blackjack and grabs the money that DANNY took
from Lyle.)

HARLAN

(raising the money in triumph)

Got it!

(HARLAN and BEN run off.)

DANNY staggers to his feet--in no shape to
give chase.)

DANNY

Skinned at my own trade! That money belongs to General
Booth!

(BLACKOUT)

ACT I

SCENE 4

Lights up on a street in the East End, where we find MICHAEL and LYLE in mid conversation.

LYLE

Booth?

MICHAEL

Yes, I understand he's--

LYLE

You want to meet him?

(LYLE sizes MICHAEL up: sees a gent slumming in the East End.)

MICHAEL

Could be. First, I want to see--

LYLE

I made a good living from opium till that goddamn Booth shut me down. I'd like to shut him down!

(MICHAEL tries to show LYLE a leaflet.)

MICHAEL

Well, they're marching--

LYLE

I had the nicest little den you ever saw.

(LYLE becomes MICHAEL's confidential friend.)

LYLE

It would've suited you. Posh.

MICHAEL

It was high on my list of scenic attractions. Sorry I missed it.

(thrusting the leaflet at Lyle)

Says here Booth is preaching today outside a pub--the Fox and Grape.

LYLE

My home away from home!

MICHAEL

Where do I find this place?

LYLE

Two blocks that way.

MICHAEL

(already on his way)

Thank you.

LYLE

(calling after him)

But with Booth coming, you'd be better off in Bedlam!

MICHAEL

I'll take my chances!

(MICHAEL hurries off down the street.)

LYLE

(to himself)

To hell with Booth! I got a new operation now . . .

(LYLE slips a hand into his pocket and comes up with . . . nothing.)

LYLE

My money!

(Realization dawns on LYLE.)

LYLE

That Salvation Army bastard! That's twice now, Booth!

(BLACKOUT)

ACT I

SCENE 5

“Who is Booth?”

Lights up on AMELIA and CLARA outside the phony brothel where they met. AMELIA responds to something CLARA has just said.

AMELIA

Who is Booth? You live in London, and you don't know his name?

CLARA

There are one or two people I don't know here in town.

AMELIA

No need to know everyone. But you have to meet Booth!

(AMELIA and CLARA hurry off.)

NOTE: Throughout this scene, we move swiftly from setting to setting and are often in more than one place simultaneously.

On another street, OFFICER POOLE and a PROSTITUTE enter.)

OFFICER POOLE

(dismayed)

Booth?

PROSTITUTE

He'll be here at noon.

OFFICER POOLE

And the day was so peaceful. Just a few whores and drunks.

(The PROSTITUTE goes off laughing, and OFFICER POOLE continues his rounds.)

On a corner near a vegetable cart, a BREWER speaks to HARLAN and BEN.)

BREWER

Remember, you're fighting for every brewer in the city. Are you ready for action, lad?

(BEN holds out a handful of vegetables.)

BEN

Fresh from the grocer's cart.

HARLAN

(hefting a tomato)

This will look good on Booth!

(HARLAN and BEN stuff the vegetables into their coat pockets.)

MICHAEL appears on the street outside the pub called the Fox and Grape. He takes up a position to wait for Booth.

At the same time, AMELIA and CLARA come down the street from the opposite direction.)

AMELIA

(to Clara)

General Booth is the man who saved me.

OFFICER POOLE

General Booth is a general nuisance.

AMELIA

He's a living saint. He can change your life.

(AMELIA and CLARA stop outside the pub, close to MICHAEL.)

MICHAEL notices AMELIA and smiles. She remains aloof.)

BREWER

I'll pay double to anyone who can knock down Booth!

(In a whorehouse, the PROSTITUTE has just delivered news to her MADAM.)

MADAM

Booth? He's marching again? We lost Emma on Monday when that bastard came by.

PROSTITUTE

But I hear in those meetings when they roll on the floor, little Emma is right at home.

MADAM

Booth should give me my cut!

(On the street, AMELIA leans over a Tattered Man in a doorway.)

AMELIA

General Booth will be coming soon. Rise and follow. Take heart, my friend.

(The Tattered Man, as though drawn by an irresistible force, gets up and goes with AMELIA.)

MICHAEL, surprised at AMELIA's effect on the Man, follows close behind.

Nearby, LYLE approaches a Drunk in another doorway.)

LYLE

Put up your bottle, friend. Vengeance is on its way. And its name is Booth!

(People in the gathering STREET CROWD spread word of the Salvation Army's imminent arrival.)

VOICES IN THE STREET CROWD

Booth . . . Booth . . . Booth . . . Booth! . . . Booth is coming! . . . Booth is coming! . . .

BEN

The pickings will be good now that Booth is coming.

HARLAN

Thanks be to Booth for all his blessings.

MOTHER

His name is sacred. He brought my boy to Christ.

MADAM

(in the brothel)

Christians think that pain is holy . . .

(picking up a wooden bat)

Let's go help those Christians suffer.

(The MADAM goes out to join the STREET CROWD.)

MOTHER/AMELIA

General Booth is a saint among sinners. He is the man who will bring us joy!

(As people continue to mill about on the street, the interior of the Fox and Grape is revealed. LYLE plops down at the bar in front of the jovial bartender, NICK MARLIN.)

NICK

Why the suffering look, my friend?

LYLE

A couple of beers and I'm sure to tell you. Set me up!

(HARLAN and BEN enter the pub.)

BEN

Set us up, Nick!

HARLAN

We are flush with the coin of the realm. We are lucred in the filthiest way.

(NICK pours out beers, while HARLAN sits down beside LYLE--who, of course, has no idea that HARLAN has his money.)

NICK

(to patrons at the bar)

Make way there for the little one.

(The PATRONS move aside and reveal a step designed especially for young customers. BEN uses the step to reach the bar.)

NICK

(to Harlan)

Did you hear that Booth is coming?

LYLE

(passing the word)

Booth is coming . . .

BREWER

Booth is coming . . .

HARLAN

Let him come, let him preach. He can sing until he's hoarse. I take my salvation by the pint.

(hoisting his beer to Ben)

To you, my lad, my boy of promise.

BEN

And to pigeons everywhere.

LYLE

Booth be damned! His whole army is a pack of thieves. Another beer!

LYLE/PATRONS

And damn all thieves!

(The BREWER enters and calls out to the pub.)

BREWER

Yes, damn General Booth! His name is hateful to me.
(gesturing to Ben and Harlan)
My boys are ready for Booth!

NICK

I give you the brewer of
the beer you're drinking!

STREET CROWD

Booth is coming! Booth is coming!
Booth is coming! Booth is coming!
etc.

HARLAN

(toasting the Brewer)
God walks among us. Up with your glasses!

BREWER

And down with General Booth!

NICK

General Booth is the devil among us. He is the man who will
kill all joy!

MOTHER/AMELIA/CLARA

General Booth is a saint among sinners. He is the man who
will bring us joy!

ALLIES OF BOOTH

Joy! . . .

(On the street, more police OFFICERS gather
beside OFFICER POOLE. Faintly in the
distance, we can hear the beating of a bass
drum.)

HARLAN

(to Ben)
Ready now, lad. The time is coming.

DANNY

Ready for your savior. Hear his drum!

OFFICER POOLE

Hang on to your helmets! Trouble is coming!

NICK

The devil's among us!

PATRONS

Hear his drum!

(The PATRONS of the pub move out to the
street, chanting, "Hear his drum!")

ALLIES OF BOOTH

Joy! . . .

ALL

Booth is coming! Booth is coming! . . . etc.

NICK

Listen!

(The STREET CROWD falls silent, and in the sudden vacuum we hear AN OFFSTAGE BRASS BAND playing a jaunty tune.)

HARLAN

That can't be Booth. I know that tune!

(HARLAN sings to the offstage accompaniment of the Salvation Army band.)

HARLAN

Greta was a girl who had no luck,
She fell down the well when she tried to fuck.
Everybody dance and kick your heels for Greta!

(The SALVATION ARMY BAND marches onstage, brass blaring, bass drum booming, cymbals clashing.)

At the head of the parade is GENERAL WILLIAM BOOTH, an imposing figure in a flowing beard. He looks like a prophet who just stepped out of the Old Testament.

The STREET CROWD picks up HARLAN's song.)

STREET CROWD

Greta was a girl who had no luck,
She fell down the well when she tried to fuck.
Everybody dance and kick your heels for Greta!

(The SALVATIONISTS answer back.)

BOOTH/SALVATIONISTS

Greta was a girl who lived in sin,
But Satan ran out when she let God in.
Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus!

(The rowdy STREET CROWD comes back with a new verse.)

STREET CROWD

Billy was a boy who loved to drum,
He played pit-a-pat on his wife's bare bum.
Everybody dance and clap your hands for Billy!

(AMELIA and CLARA push to the front of the crowd, joining in with the SALVATION ARMY.

MICHAEL follows close behind. He watches the scene--and AMELIA--in amazed delight.)

BOOTH/SALVATIONISTS

Billy was a boy who lost his soul,
He prayed for a day, and it came back whole.
Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus!

(DANNY rounds the corner. AMELIA hurries over to him.

While DANNY and AMELIA speak, the SALVATIONISTS and the STREET CROWD sing the previous verses simultaneously at each other. The background singing is pianissimo, so that the focus can shift to DANNY and AMELIA in the foreground.)

AMELIA

Where've you been? Do you have the money?

DANNY

It's a long, sad story.

(Before DANNY can say more, BOOTH calls out to him.)

BOOTH

Captain O'Malley! Sing!

DANNY

If it's all the same to you, sir . . .

BOOTH

SING!

DANNY

Maisie was a maid who loved a cad,
She taught him to pray, now he's not so bad.
Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus!

(CARLTON emerges from the pub and comes face to face with MICHAEL.

The SALVATIONISTS, repeating Danny's previous verse, sing in the background while the focus shifts to CARLTON and MICHAEL.)

CARLTON

Michael! You've come to see my pub after all. I knew you would.

(gesturing at the crowd)

But it's not the best time . . .

MICHAEL

The Fox and Grape is yours?

CARLTON

For now. It could be yours by tonight.

MICHAEL

I'm still not in the market.

CARLTON

That's a mistake.

MICHAEL

I came down to hear Booth.

CARLTON

That's an even bigger mistake. Well, all right then . . . Pray for me, brother, pray . . .

(CARLTON gives MICHAEL an affectionate pat on the arm and goes off through the crowd.)

The SALVATIONISTS, to the boos and catcalls of the STREET CROWD, bring their song to a rousing finish.)

SALVATIONISTS

. . . Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus!

BOOTH

Thank you, friends . . .

HARLAN

We ain't your friends!

(HARLAN hurls an apple.)

BOOTH snatches the apple out of the air before it can hit him and stands poised, arm upraised, staring the crowd down. The action is so sudden and astonishing that the crowd remains frozen in awe.)

BOOTH

(holding the apple high)

Food for our kitchen tonight. Thank you for your generosity!

BREWER

(to Harlan)

Not yet. Lay low.

BOOTH

Admit that we are all poor sinners . . .

NICK

You bloody hypocrite! You can't use that tune you was playing and call us sinners!

(The STREET CROWD shouts agreement.)

With a twinkle in his eye, BOOTH turns to NICK.)

BOOTH

Ah, music . . . Music belongs to the Lord! Can you hear me?

(SALVATIONISTS shout: "Yes!" "We hear you!" etc.)

BOOTH

We're all singing the same song! Music unites us all! Hear my story . . .

Our neighbors in Yorkshire when I was a lad
Owned a black bull whose manners were bad.
"Keep out of his field," my dear parents said,
But I wandered in where no boy should tread.

It was all for the sake of a poor little dog,
Who ran into the field and got stuck in a bog.
I hauled the scared puppy up out of the mire,
But that only wakened the bull's bullish ire.

He snorted a snort that rang out o'er the hill,
And he lowered his horns to come in for the kill,
When a ditty I'd heard from the men at the mill
Came into my head, so I started to trill:

"Sweet Mary, Sweet Mary, as fresh as the spring,
Come bed with me, Mary, and give me your ring.
Come tumble down, Mary, I'll love you till dawn.
But when you awake, Sweet Mary, I'm gone."

The bull on the instant grew mild and meek.
I witnessed wickedness turning its cheek.
He lifted a hoof . . . wiped a tear from his eye . . .
Then he bid us good day, and he let us go by.

BOOTH (CONT'D)

If music can help me take bulls by the horns,
If music can soften a heart made of thorns,
Then I lay a claim to what anyone croons.
Why should the devil have all the good tunes?

(BOOTH steps into the crowd and picks up the
pace of his song. His energy is electric.)

Why should the devil have all the good tunes?
I will wrestle him any day for a song!
Music is the wind in the sails of the ship of the Lord! etc.

(BOOTH roams the crowd, touching his
listeners, calling to them: "Join the ship of
the Lord . . . Put your faith in the Lord,"
etc.)

SALVATIONISTS/ALLIES OF BOOTH

Sing a song of glory. Let me hear it ring.
Sing a song of glory. Praise our mighty king! . . . etc.

BOOTH

Why should the devil have all the good tunes?
I will wrestle him any day for a song!
Music is the wind in the sails of the ship of the Lord! etc.

(The fervent song ends to cheers from the
SALVATIONISTS, but it has not won over his
hooting, jeering detractors.)

LYLE

Thief! You steal our songs. You steal the bread from our
mouths!

BOOTH

I offer the bread of life to anyone who wants it.

NICK

You want to shut down our pubs!

MADAM

Throw us out of work!

BOOTH

I have nothing against honest labor . . .

LYLE

How 'bout dishonest preachers? . . .

BREWER

(to Ben and Harlan)

Now! Fire away!

(BEN and HARLAN heave their vegetables. The STREET CROWD surges forward.)

The ALLIES Of BOOTH try to push the mob back.

NOTE: In this fight scene, a choreography of controlled mayhem, actions and dialogue below are forefronted.)

BOOTH

(calling to his troop)

Stay in line! Stand tall!

(MICHAEL wades into the mob.)

MICHAEL

Let them be! Let him preach!

(The POLICE OFFICERS give up any attempt to maintain order.)

OFFICER POOLE

(calling to his men)

Save yourselves! Let Booth be damned!

(In front of a vegetable cart, AMELIA and CLARA are separated by the brawling crowd.)

AMELIA

Clara!

CLARA

Amelia!

(MICHAEL runs to AMELIA at the same moment that DANNY rushes over to CLARA. MICHAEL and DANNY stand side by side.)

A THUG attacks MICHAEL. With a boxer's swift reflexes, MICHAEL knocks the man down.)

DANNY

(impressed)

Where'd you learn that?

MICHAEL

Cambridge, '87.

(Another TOUGH lunges at DANNY, who stops the attacker with one blow.)

DANNY
(to Michael)
Mountjoy Prison, '88.

MICHAEL
Stout lad.

(MICHAEL grabs an end of the grocery cart.)

MICHAEL
(to Danny)
Take the other side. We're going through!

(MICHAEL and DANNY raise the heavy cart.
AMELIA and CLARA pitch in.)

BOOTH
Army of the Lord: fall in!

(The SALVATIONISTS regroup behind BOOTH.)

MICHAEL
(calling to Booth)
Follow us, General!

BOOTH
(to his troop)
March on!

(The SALVATION ARMY BAND strikes up the pub
song as MICHAEL, DANNY, AMELIA, and CLARA
push the grocery cart ahead of them. They
plow through the people, forcing the STREET
CROWD to part like the waters of the Red
Sea.)

BOOTH/SALVATIONISTS
Greta was a girl who lived in sin,
But Satan ran out when she let God in.
Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus! . . .

(During this action, LYLE spots CLARA.)

LYLE
My daughter! Get 'em!

DANNY
We've fought the good fight! Run!

MICHAEL
This way!

(MICHAEL, AMELIA, DANNY, and CLARA drop the cart and run off, pursued by LYLE and his gang.)

BOOTH and his ARMY march off to the jeering of the STREET CROWD.)

BOOTH/SALVATIONISTS

Billy was a boy who lost his soul,
He prayed for a day, and it came back whole.
Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus! . . .

(HARLAN and BEN remain behind.)

HARLAN

Look to the fallen, Ben! In good conscience, don't leave them!

(HARLAN and BEN rush to people who have been knocked to the ground and pick their pockets. BEN pulls out a small sack, and HARLAN tosses money in. They're a swift, efficient team.)

HARLAN

Here's dinner!
(tossing a coin into Ben's sack)
Here's lunch!
(tossing in another coin)

(HARLAN holds up a gleaming object.)

HARLAN

Here's a watch!

BEN

That's beer all week!

(Behind HARLAN, OFFICER POOLE sees him steal the watch. He moves swiftly to grab the thief.)

BEN spots POOLE, drops and rolls in front of him. OFFICER POOLE trips over BEN and goes down.)

HARLAN

That's my boy!

(HARLAN and BEN take off running.)

OFFICER POOLE

I'll find you, Harlan! You know I will!

HARLAN

You never have yet!

(HARLAN and BEN go off, singing at the top of their lungs.)

HARLAN/BEN

Everybody sing and put your faith in Jesus! . . .

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT I

SCENE 6

Lights up on MICHAEL, AMELIA, DANNY, and CLARA ducking into an abandoned warehouse.

AMELIA

I think we're all right.

(DANNY surveys the space. He likes what he sees.)

DANNY

Amelia . . . We've found the General's new shelter.

(AMELIA looks around, considering the idea.)

DANNY

He says he wants it spacious.

AMELIA

Yes, but it's not central enough for him.

DANNY

Right. Well, we keep lookin'.

(DANNY sits by CLARA in one corner of the warehouse. MICHAEL and AMELIA settle into another corner.)

MICHAEL

(to Amelia)

We're safe here . . .

DANNY

(to Clara)

We're safe here.

MICHAEL

Let's wait to be sure . . .

DANNY

We should wait to be sure . . . For a minute . . .

(he likes being so close to Clara)

Or two.

MICHAEL

For a minute . . .

(and he likes being close to Amelia)

Or two.

(MICHAEL notices that AMELIA's arm is bleeding through the torn sleeve of her uniform jacket.)

MICHAEL

You're hurt.

AMELIA

Not much. Some of those tomatoes they threw weren't tomatoes. I'll see a doctor when we're out of here.

MICHAEL

You're seeing a doctor now.

(gently takes hold of her arm)

Dr. Michael Remsen.

(AMELIA gazes in astonishment at MICHAEL.)

MICHAEL

You choose your battle partners wisely, Miss . . .

AMELIA

My name is Amelia. And we can safely say someone else did the choosing.

(MICHAEL is amused, but not surprised, at her comment.)

MICHAEL

Of course . . .

(dropping into a professional tone)

Let's have a look.

(conversational again)

There are no accidents in your world.

AMELIA

And you live in some other world?

(MICHAEL pauses to reflect on that.)

MICHAEL

At the moment, I'm not sure . . .

(MICHAEL tends to AMELIA. As he works, DANNY and CLARA speak to each other.)

CLARA

(to Danny)

So this is how you save me? From my father into the fire!

(DANNY is amused by her choice of words.)

DANNY

Into the blood and fire. That's our motto. We should've sung our anthem back there.

(he rapidly sings a snatch of the song)

"We're soldiers of the Lord who wear the armor of belief. Our never-ending battle offers wounded souls relief . . ." Like that.

CLARA

You people get into a lot of fights, then?

DANNY

It ain't always so bad.

CLARA

I didn't say it was bad. I want to join!

DANNY

(with airy pride)

I can recommend you.

(sudden humility)

Of course, it'll be up to the General.

CLARA

Let's go see him!

(to Amelia)

I'm joining the Salvation Army! Danny says I'm in!

DANNY

I didn't . . .

CLARA

(already at the door)

Come on!

(DANNY is torn between following CLARA and staying with AMELIA.)

AMELIA

(to Danny, amused at Clara's enthusiasm)

Congratulations. You have a convert.

CLARA

Do I get a uniform right away? Can I play a tambourine?

DANNY

(rushing after Clara)

There's more to it than uniforms and tambourines!

(DANNY and CLARA run out of the warehouse. AMELIA rises, but MICHAEL gently holds her back.)

MICHAEL

You should rest a little longer.

(AMELIA hesitates, then agrees.)

AMELIA

It might do me good to sit for a minute . . .
(echoing Michael's earlier feelings)
Or two . . .

(AMELIA happily settles in next to MICHAEL.)

MICHAEL

What do you prefer . . . General Amelia? Or--

AMELIA

There's only one general. I'm a captain. But just think of
me as the rank and file.
(indicating the just-departed Clara)
Like our new recruit.

MICHAEL

One of your famous conversions.

AMELIA

The Spirit strikes like lightning. I've felt it.

MICHAEL

No, you were born virtuous.

AMELIA

Let's hope you're a better doctor than you are a judge of
people. I used to be a whore.

MICHAEL

That's blunt . . .

AMELIA

Sin should be called by its name.
By the time I was twenty, I was running a house of human
flesh,
Getting fat on what I earned by selling disease and death.
Two girls died within a year. And I . . . I did not shed a
tear.
Oh yes, I was born virtuous . . .

The years fled by, girls came and girls went.
And I . . . I believed I was content.
And then one day in April--I can smell the lilacs still--
I was standing by the window,
And I heard in the street a band playing out of tune.
And I heard a voice . . . It was General Booth.

AMELIA (CONT'D)

He was singing of faith that heals,
He was singing of faith that gives life meaning,
Singing of faith that leads us to salvation.
He was singing of faith so real,
I felt a strength inside my weakness.
I felt the hand of God,
The God who saved my soul from eternal damnation.

MICHAEL

You managed to escape the devil's cauldron.

AMELIA

I suppose you don't believe in hell.

MICHAEL

Only when I'm listening to my uncle tell his jokes.

AMELIA

Then you don't believe in heaven? You don't believe in God?

MICHAEL

I believe we can make our heaven right here on earth. As for God, I'm inclined to think if He is out there, He's no longer paying attention.

(A noise startles MICHAEL and AMELIA. HARLAN and BEN enter the warehouse. HARLAN snatches up a piece of wood and waves it at MICHAEL.)

HARLAN

What the hell is this! Find your own place!

BEN

We were here first!

(MICHAEL jumps up, as though to protect AMELIA.)

MICHAEL

It's all right. We're going.

(HARLAN lowers his stick, but keeps it handy.

AMELIA brushes by MICHAEL and steps boldly up to HARLAN.)

AMELIA

I've seen you on the street.

HARLAN

(pleased to be recognized)
I'm known about town. Harlan's the name.

AMELIA

Last week I saw you drunk and retching in an alley.

HARLAN

Spyin' on me! You oughta let a man have his dignity when he's gettin' sick.

AMELIA

Do you know where our Salvation Army mission is?

HARLAN

I've passed it a hundred times.

AMELIA

Next time, don't pass by. Next time, come inside.

BEN

Do we get free food?

(HARLAN gives BEN a shove.)

AMELIA

Food of all kinds. And you get to meet God.

HARLAN

I can think of better company. What's God ever done for me?

AMELIA

What have you ever done for God?

MICHAEL

(aside to Ben)

She's good. Has the knack.

(BEN coughs. MICHAEL looks at him intently.)

HARLAN is silent, debating within himself.)

HARLAN

All right, I get it.

(pulls a coin from his pocket)

It's little enough, but there it is. Now get out of here!

(AMELIA touches HARLAN's arm.)

AMELIA

It's not your money we want. Come to the mission. See what we can give you.

(to Ben)

I'll be waiting.

(With a smile, she turns and heads for the door.)

MICHAEL

(to Harlan)

You could do worse than listen to her.

(MICHAEL and AMELIA go off. HARLAN touches his arm.)

HARLAN

(to himself)

My filthy sleeve . . .

BEN

I like her.

HARLAN

Somehow . . . she puts me in mind of your mother.

(pause)

I would've married your mother, you know . . .

BEN

You've told me.

HARLAN

I would've married her . . .

(with a shrug)

if she'd lived.

BEN

So marry that lady.

HARLAN

For a little runt, you've got big ideas.

(BEN wanders over to a corner and lies down.

HARLAN stands at the doorway in a subdued light, looking out in AMELIA's direction.

Outside on the street, MICHAEL and AMELIA stop to speak.)

MICHAEL

(handing her his business card)

Come see me in my office tomorrow. I want to make sure your doctor knows his business.

AMELIA

I'd say he does.

MICHAEL

I'd also like you to bring that boy.

AMELIA

His cough? . . .

MICHAEL

Yes. I know you want to get him to your mission. But let's cure his body first. Then we can work on his soul.

AMELIA

We? Have you joined us, Dr. Remsen?

MICHAEL

I wouldn't measure me for a uniform just yet.

AMELIA

Tomorrow then.

(AMELIA goes up the street, turns a corner and stops in front of a church.

MICHAEL stands alone on the street, absorbed in his thoughts.

In the warehouse, HARLAN is also lost in thought.)

MICHAEL

With just one touch from her, I feel as though I've known her well for years.

HARLAN

With just one touch from her, I feel a way I haven't felt in years.

AMELIA

God, let me touch their hearts. Let them find their peace as I once found my own . . .

AMELIA/MICHAEL/HARLAN

Singing of faith that heals,
Singing of faith that gives life meaning,
Singing of faith that leads us to salvation.
Singing of faith so real,
I felt a strength inside my weakness . . .

(As the music continues, AMELIA, MICHAEL and HARLAN each turn and go their separate ways.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT I

SCENE 7

Lights up on the office of Michael and Dr. Remsen. It's the next day. AMELIA and HARLAN are in the waiting room--a vision of sterility. A well-dressed dowager, MRS. BASCOMB, sits in a chair opposite them. From the handkerchief she holds to her nose, we can assume that HARLAN hasn't washed for this visit. HARLAN paces the room. He's a little wobbly from drink.)

AMELIA

(taking Harlan by the elbow)

You're not too steady on your feet. Why don't you sit down?

HARLAN

Why don't you mind your own business?

AMELIA

You are my business.

HARLAN

I'm not one of your precious see-the-light sinners . . .

(lurching toward the door to the office)

What's takin' 'em so long?

(On the other side of the door, we discover MICHAEL and BEN in the examining room.)

AMELIA

Sit down. We can talk for a while and tell lies about ourselves.

(HARLAN starts to sit beside the horrified MRS. BASCOMB.)

AMELIA

(taking hold of Harlan)

Over here.

(AMELIA guides him to a chair across the room. HARLAN sits, grumbling under his breath.)

At the same time, in the examining room, MICHAEL puts a stethoscope to BEN's chest.)

MICHAEL

Deep breath.

BEN

(shouting into stethoscope)

What'd you say?

MICHAEL

(reacting to the sound in his ears)

I said another stunt like that and you won't get the sweets
I give to all my good patients.

BEN

Let me have them now.

MICHAEL

After you cough. The better the cough, the better the
sweets.

(BEN coughs and lets MICHAEL get on with the
examination.)

In the waiting room, HARLAN fidgets.)

HARLAN

Archie Cox went in to see a doctor--and he came out dead.

AMELIA

Nobody's going to die. Sit still!

HARLAN

Only reason I'm here is 'cause my Ben likes you.

AMELIA

If you love your boy, you'll let Michael do his job.

(MICHAEL delivers his diagnosis to BEN.)

MICHAEL

Good news. It's nothing but a cold.

BEN

So that means I get twice as many sweets?

MICHAEL

(holding out a candy jar)

A born bargainer.

(BEN grabs a handful of candy.)

HARLAN jumps up and heads for the examining
room.)

BEN
(running at Mrs. Bascomb)
Leave him alone!

HARLAN
(to Michael, as he blocks the parasol blows)
What kind of people do you let in here?

AMELIA
(pulling Ben away)
All of you, stop this!

DR. REMSEN
Michael, what are you up to?

(HARLAN grabs BEN and drags him toward the door.)

MICHAEL
We're not through yet! Come back!

DR. REMSEN
(grabbing Michael's arm)
Let them go!

BEN
But father . . . he gave me candy.

(BEN holds up several pieces of candy.
HARLAN knocks them out of his hand, and BEN
cries out in misery.)

HARLAN
We don't need anything they have to offer.

(HARLAN drags BEN out of the office.)

AMELIA
(to Michael)
I'll see if I can stop them.

(AMELIA runs out after Harlan and Ben.)

DR. REMSEN
Don't bring them back here!

MICHAEL
They'll be back! And others like them.

MRS. BASCOMB
I didn't know you were running an office for that sort!

(She turns and stalks out.)

DR. REMSEN

Mrs. Bascomb, please!

(to Michael)

There goes fifty pounds a year. Do you want to ruin our practice?

MICHAEL

I want to treat whoever needs our help. I want to treat that boy.

DR. REMSEN

Let him see his own doctor.

MICHAEL

He doesn't have one.

DR. REMSEN

Then let God look after him.

MICHAEL

Don't burden God with your responsibility.

DR. REMSEN

This is my final word: you will not treat your charity cases here. Not in my office.

MICHAEL

Then it's time I left your office.

(MICHAEL turns and storms across the room.)

DR. REMSEN

Where are you going?

MICHAEL

To darkest England!

DR. REMSEN

You can't walk out!

MICHAEL

It's the one thing I can do!

(MICHAEL pushes through the door of the waiting room.)

(BLACKOUT ON DR. REMSEN)

ACT I

SCENE 8

Lights up on a cramped, shabby office in the East End. MICHAEL pushes through the door and is instantly at home. He readies his office for business--wiping dusty shelves, scrubbing a window, setting up equipment.

MICHAEL

All of my life, I've heard the same words:
"Just do the safe thing, do as your told."
All of my life, thinking of family:
"Don't be too different, don't be too bold."

But now with astonishing ease a new life has begun.
I give up the role of the dutiful son.
I don't have to smile and nod or pretend anymore.
I'm doing what I should have done long before.

I'm like a man off on the Grand Tour:
Everything bracing, everything new.
I am a man waking to action,
Not merely dreaming of what I might do.

Let them all say, "He's a madman, the fool won't survive,"
I'll show them how folly and madness can thrive!
I'll do more than I've ever dared,
Though, hell, I admit I am scared,
But never have I ever felt more alive!

Freedom! No one to hold me back now,
No one to scold me or scorn my passion.
Freedom! Everything's possible here
Now that the road I'm to take is clear.

(MICHAEL puts the finishing touches on his office. It's ready. He stands back to exult in his handiwork.)

MICHAEL

Freedom! Free to believe in myself,
Knowing that I will achieve my purpose.
Freedom! I can do anything here,
I can help anyone, everyone, everywhere . . .
My way is clear!

(MICHAEL's first patient, an Elderly Woman, enters his office.)

NOTE: From here on, scenes move rapidly from place to place. Actions often play out simultaneously in more than setting.

While Michael treats his patient, HARLAN and BEN enter downstage. HARLAN is drunk. BEN walks along dejectedly.)

HARLAN

We ain't goin' back to that warehouse again. Those do-gooders are sure to poke their heads in.

BEN

Where will we sleep?

HARLAN

I know a cellar, very dry and very quiet.

BEN

Full of rats, I bet. Full of spiders.

(HARLAN is about to smack BEN, then thinks better of it.)

HARLAN

Don't talk back to your father. I know what's best. Come on!

(BEN reluctantly trails after HARLAN, and they exit.)

AMELIA, DANNY and CLARA enter.)

AMELIA

I went back to the warehouse where they were living. What little they had is gone. They seem to have vanished.

DANNY

What do they look like?

AMELIA

The man has a scar on his left cheek. The boy is so high. He's thin and pale.

DANNY

That narrows it down to a couple of thousand.

CLARA

We'll find them.

DANNY

(holding out an envelope)

This came for you at the barracks. A letter from your Doctor Michael.

(DANNY and CLARA go off. AMELIA opens the envelope.)

MICHAEL's patient, the Elderly Woman, exits.)

AMELIA

(reading the letter)

"Dear Amelia: I have done it . . ."

(MICHAEL joins AMELIA in singing the letter he wrote.)

MICHAEL

"I have done it! . . ."

AMELIA/MICHAEL

"I have done what I should have done long ago."

MICHAEL

"And it's you who inspired me . . ."

AMELIA

I inspired him . . .

MICHAEL

"I have broken with my father . . ."

AMELIA

I inspired that?

MICHAEL

"For the first time in my life, I am off on my own!"

AMELIA

Does he know what he's doing?

MICHAEL

"Please come and see me. I feel the need to tell you everything."

AMELIA

Does he know what he's doing?

MICHAEL

"I have so much to tell you. Please come and see me!"

AMELIA

Michael, do you know what you are doing?
To break away from family is sure to break your heart.
How can you go on without a hand to guide you?
You can't live a world apart!

(AMELIA exits.)

DR. and MRS. REMSEN enter their West End parlor. MRS. REMSEN waves a piece of paper.)

MRS. REMSEN

A letter from Michael!

DR. REMSEN

His master deigns to write.

MRS. REMSEN

Oh! The return address.

DR. REMSEN

Where is he?

MRS. REMSEN

Whitechapel!

DR. REMSEN

God help us! The worst of the East End.

(MRS. REMSEN opens the letter.

Across the stage, MICHAEL sings the letter along with her.)

MRS. REMSEN/MICHAEL

"Dear Mother and Father: Please understand what I'm trying to do. Father, you've always said that blood will tell."

MRS. REMSEN

You've always said that to him. From the time he was born.

MICHAEL

"I have something in my blood that will not let me stand by and watch others die."

DR. REMSEN

(to Mrs. Remsen)

That's the wild Irish strain on your side.

MRS. REMSEN

Let my ancestors rest in peace.

MICHAEL

"I can't rest until I've finished this job I have to do."

DR. REMSEN

Michael, you can't finish such a job,
Michael, you'll kill yourself trying.
You've gone out there to set the world on fire.
Be careful the flames don't consume you!

MRS. REMSEN

Go see him.

(AMELIA enters MICHAEL's office and speaks to him.)

AMELIA

Go see your father. Try to help him understand.

DR. REMSEN

If he wants to come here,
I will welcome him.
I won't chase him down.
I've said all I can say
To that stubborn boy!

MICHAEL

If he wants to come here,
I will welcome him.
But I won't chase him down.
I've said all I can say
To that stubborn man!

Michael, you can't finish
such a job,
Michael, you'll kill
yourself trying.
You've gone out there to
set the world on fire.
Be careful the flames don't
consume you!

Freedom! No one to hold me back
now,
No one to scold me or scorn my
passion.
Freedom! Everything's possible
here
Now that the road I'm to take is
clear.

(The voices of the REMSENS, AMELIA and
MICHAEL blend together in a quartet.)

AMELIA/MRS. REMSEN

Michael, do you know what
you are doing?
To break away from family
is sure to break your
heart.
How can you go on without a
hand to guide you?
You can't live apart!

DR. REMSEN

Michael, you can't finish
such a job,
Michael, you'll kill
yourself trying.
You've gone out there to
set the world on fire.
Be careful of the flames!

MICHAEL

Freedom! I can do anything now!
No one to scold me or scorn my passion.
Freedom! Everything's possible here.
I can help anyone, everyone, everywhere . . .
My way is clear!

(DR. REMSEN stalks off. MRS. REMSEN follows.
She looks longingly over her shoulder in
MICHAEL's direction.)

MICHAEL

I know exactly what I'm doing, Amelia. I have plans! This
office is only temporary.

(A Pregnant Woman enters MICHAEL's office.)

AMELIA

I'll leave you to your work.

MICHAEL

(pulling out an envelope)

Would you deliver this letter to General Booth? It will make the two of you very happy.

(pause)

I'm buying you a pub.

(MICHAEL turns to attend his new patient.

AMELIA goes off, bewildered.)

Downstage, LYLE pounds on the door of the false brothel where he turned his daughter over to Amelia and Danny.)

LYLE

It's time to pay up! Amelia! I know you can hear me. The first payment's due on my daughter! Where are you? Where are you?

(LYLE kicks furiously at the door, and it crashes open to reveal an empty room. LYLE howls like a wounded animal.)

LYLE

No honor among thieves and whores! Don't think you can hide! I'll find you! And that bitch I brought into the world!

(LYLE runs off as AMELIA and BOOTH enter. AMELIA hands Michael's envelope to BOOTH.)

AMELIA

A letter from a new friend.

(BOOTH opens the envelope and looks at the letter. In his office, MICHAEL reassures the Pregnant Woman.)

MICHAEL

Do as I say, and you'll bring a fine, healthy baby into the world.

(As the Pregnant Woman exits, BOOTH speaks to AMELIA.)

BOOTH

This is what our "new friend" says.

(Upstage, MICHAEL sings the letter along with BOOTH.)

BOOTH/MICHAEL

"God, if He exists, has miserably failed us."

(BOOTH looks skeptically at AMELIA.)

AMELIA

He needs a little work.

BOOTH

He also says . . .

(BOOTH seeks his place in the letter while MICHAEL sings.)

MICHAEL

"I have read your inspiring book--your words written in fire."

MICHAEL/BOOTH

"'Shame! Shame indeed upon England. Our horses are better treated than our labourers.'"

MICHAEL

"You're one of the few men in London doing something to help. And so, I want to help you."

BOOTH

(to Amelia)

He's a gentleman of means.

MICHAEL

"Because I have the means . . . I'm buying you a pub."

BOOTH

A pub?

(BOOTH reads on.)

MICHAEL

"Let it be your premier Salvation Army shelter."

BOOTH

(exploding with rich laughter)

What a marvelous idea!

(CARLTON enters upstage as BOOTH and AMELIA silently converse together.)

MICHAEL steps over to join CARLTON in front of the Fox and Grape, the pub where BOOTH preached to the violent crowd.)

MICHAEL

And I'll have my office upstairs. I can live and work up there.

CARLTON

Why destroy a perfectly good watering hole?

MICHAEL

Booth was attacked on this very spot. It amuses me to turn your Fox and Grape over to him.

BOOTH

(to Amelia)

We'll turn a playground of sin into a cathedral of prayer.

MICHAEL

It's central . . .
Spacious . . .
Perfect for a Salvation
Army shelter!

BOOTH

It's central . . .
Spacious . . .
Perfect for a Salvation
Army shelter!
It'll be the biggest in
London!

MICHAEL

I'll render unto Booth what belonged to the devil.

(MICHAEL produces a check, which CARLTON seizes.)

CARLTON

Fine, it's yours to destroy. Shake hands with the devil, old man.

(CARLTON and MICHAEL shake on their deal.)

CARLTON

I'll put the profit to good use. Have I mentioned I'm starting up a factory?

MICHAEL

Good luck . . . old man!

(MICHAEL exits.)

NICK steps out of the pub and speaks to CARLTON.)

NICK

Ah, sweet Jesus, is it true? You've sold it to the Sal-bloody-vation Army?

CARLTON

General Booth has high-paying friends.

NICK

And what about me? Jobs ain't so easy to come by.

CARLTON

Join the Salvation Army, and serve up soup.

(handing over some bills)

Here's a week's salary--for drinking fewer profits than other barkeeps I've employed.

(CARLTON strolls off. NICK looks at the money in his hand.)

NICK

If this is meant to ease his conscience, his conscience must be very small.

(NICK thumbs his nose at CARLTON and exits.)

BOOTH

(to Amelia)

Michael says the pub will be empty and waiting by tomorrow. We'll have a christening at noon.

AMELIA

This will make for good press.

BOOTH

No, the papers will print lies about us as usual. With Michael's gift, we'll be able to save more souls. But we're bound to make more enemies.

(BOOTH and AMELIA go off in different directions.)

Downstage, NICK stumbles into a cellar tavern. A sign identifies it as "The Skull and Bones.")

NICK

Out of a job. Nowhere to turn. Thank you, Jesus!

(NICK plops down at a table. Down the street, LYLE bangs on a door in a brothel.)

LYLE

Open up, you vicious whores! You're all in on it together, I bet!

(The MADAM opens the door.)

MADAM

Keep it down, and let decent people fuck in peace.

LYLE

Where is she? That slut named Amelia. You know her! Skinny blonde. Mole on her cheek.

(Lights up on AMELIA, entering MICHAEL's office. She quietly urges BEN to sneak up behind MICHAEL.)

BEN

(shouting in Michael's ear)
Mornin', Doctor!

(MICHAEL jumps, startled, then gleefully greets BEN.)

MICHAEL

You found him!

AMELIA

It's not easy to hide from the Salvation Army.

MADAM

(to Lyle)
You fool! The woman you want ain't here.

LYLE

Don't try to hide her!

MADAM

The woman you want, she's with the Salvation Army.

LYLE

The Salvation Army! God damn them, they've kidnapped my child. The bread from my mouth! This is the last time, Booth!

(LYLE stumbles in blind rage out of the brothel. The MADAM slams the door behind him.)

In MICHAEL's office, AMELIA tousles BEN's hair.)

AMELIA

(to Michael)

His father is drunk and sleeping it off in Mug's Alley.

BEN

He ain't so bad when he ain't drinkin'.

MICHAEL

(to Ben)

How's the cough?

BEN

It would be better if I had some candy.

MICHAEL

My diagnosis exactly.

(MICHAEL gives BEN a handful of candy and proceeds to examine him again.)

LYLE runs into the cellar tavern under the sign of the Skull and Bones and throws himself into a chair beside NICK. A few other patrons wander in.)

LYLE

No justice for honest men. All right, maybe I ain't the perfect father. But Clara's my daughter.

NICK

Don't let 'em tell you any different . . .

LYLE

They got no right to take her away.

NICK

No right at all . . .

LYLE

Booth stole my child!

NICK

Booth took my job!

NICK/LYLE

Our livelihood!

NICK

What can we do?

LYLE

Something . . . We'll do something . . .

(In the Salvation Army barracks, BOOTH greets DANNY.)

BOOTH
Captain O'Malley, allow me to present your new recruit . . .

(CLARA steps out from behind a door, wearing a Salvation Army uniform.)

LYLE
I'll get her back . . .

BOOTH
(to Danny)
. . . Sister Clara Stevens.

LYLE
Somehow . . .

(LYLE and NICK go on brooding over their beers. DANNY looks dazzled by CLARA.)

DANNY
The uniform . . . suits you.

(CLARA spins around to show herself off.)

CLARA
I think so!

(She spies a chest of musical instruments and runs over to it.)

DANNY speaks confidentially to BOOTH.)

DANNY
Thank you for accepting her, sir

BOOTH
Had to do it, Danny. Our by-laws are clear: You wouldn't be able to marry her if she weren't in the Salvation Army.

DANNY
I ain't thinking of marrying her!

BOOTH
When you see what I see in your eye, you'll know better.

(DANNY grins sheepishly: Booth is right.)

DANNY
(gazing at Clara)
I just worry she don't have the seriousness.

BOOTH

I wouldn't underestimate her. She has a fervor we need.

(CLARA has found a tambourine. She gives it a shake. With quiet intensity, she sings a cappella the Salvation Army anthem--"Blood and Fire"--that Danny once sang to her.)

CLARA

We're soldiers of the Lord who wear the armor of belief.
Our never-ending battle offers wounded souls relief.
As one, we enter the fray. Go forth in holy array.
With drum and trumpet, we will win the day . . . etc.

(As CLARA continues to sing, SALVATIONISTS gather at the barracks and pick up their instruments. Soft voices join with CLARA to sing an impromptu version of their anthem.)

In his office, MICHAEL hands BEN a medicine bottle. AMELIA stands gazing toward the Salvation Army barracks, humming "Blood and Fire.")

MICHAEL

Remember my instructions.

BEN

I will.

(MICHAEL checks his watch, is startled at the time.)

MICHAEL

We have to go! The Army is christening a new shelter. We're on Booth's time now.

(gesturing to Amelia)

Follow her.

(AMELIA leads MICHAEL and BEN out of the office. Singing the anthem, they head downstage toward the Fox and Grape.)

In the Salvation Army barracks, BOOTH looks over his Army.)

BOOTH

Are we ready? March on!

(BOOTH leads his troops toward the pub.)

SALVATIONISTS

Sound the call! Forward to free the world with blood and fire.

Heed the call! Helping to save the world with blood and fire . . . etc.

(In the tavern, LYLE and NICK nurse their grief. The patrons become aware of the Salvation Army outside.)

NICK

They're at it again!

LYLE

They got an army . . . What we need is an army.

NICK

And a song. They steal our songs . . . We can steal theirs.

(LYLE is struck with a vision. He grins devilishly.)

LYLE

An army . . .

(AMELIA's group and BOOTH's group converge on the Fox and Grape. "Blood and Fire" continues instrumentally.

OFFICER POOLE rounds a corner, walking his beat.

The music awakens HARLAN, who has been sleeping in an alley. He stumbles past the SALVATIONISTS, holding his ears. He sees BEN and grabs him.

OFFICER POOLE spots HARLAN and moves in on him.)

HARLAN

What're you doin', yammerin' with these psalm-singers?

BEN

They want to help us. Amelia says we can stay with the Salvation Army!

HARLAN

You keep away from 'em.

BEN

I want to pay back the money we stole.

HARLAN

We stole it fair and square! If I catch you anywhere near that Salvation Army, I'll smack you so hard you'll taste your own blood.

(HARLAN drags BEN away.)

OFFICER POOLE grabs HARLAN, yanks him from BEN and hauls the man down the street.)

BEN
No! Run, father! . . .

HARLAN
No! My boy . . . I can't
leave my boy!

OFFICER POOLE
You won't be seeing him for a long time, Harlan.

(BEN stands frozen, helplessly watching.)

AMELIA
Officer Poole! Stop!

(OFFICER POOLE calls back to AMELIA.)

OFFICER POOLE
You just stick to disturbing the peace, Ma'am.

(MICHAEL starts to go after OFFICER POOLE.
AMELIA holds him back.)

AMELIA
There's nothing we can do. Not yet.

(OFFICER POOLE drags HARLAN off.)

BEN looks to AMELIA. She reaches out to him.
Ben turns and runs after his father.)

BEN
(as he runs off)
He didn't do nothin'! . . .

SALVATIONISTS
Sound the call! Forward to free the world with blood and
fire.
Heed the call! Helping to save the world with blood and
fire . . . etc.

(The sound of the music draws ALLIES OF BOOTH
to the Fox and Grape.)

In the Skull and Bones tavern, LYLE, inspired
by a demonic vision, rises and addresses the
patrons. To the background music of "Blood

and Fire," LYLE speaks to the gathering like a born preacher.)

LYLE

I see an army . . . An army that can't be stopped! Who among you hates Booth?

(The crowd shouts, "Me . . . I do . . . Right here!" etc.)

LYLE

Who among you hates the Army that hates in the name of love?

(More shouts: "We do! . . . All of us! . . .")

LYLE

Sing out if you hate them!

ENEMIES OF BOOTH

We hate them!

LYLE

Shall we bring them down, my friends?

ENEMIES OF BOOTH

Bring them down!

LYLE

Sing it out!

ENEMIES OF BOOTH

Bring them down! Bring them down!

LYLE

They're soldiers of the Lord who wear the armor of belief. Their never-ending battle brings the rest of us to grief. As one, we enter the fray!

(NICK jumps up and leads the crowd.)

NICK/ENEMIES OF BOOTH

The fray!

LYLE

Beat back their holy array!

NICK/ENEMIES OF BOOTH

Hooray!

LYLE

We bums and strumpets, we will win the day!

LYLE/NICK/ENEMIES OF BOOTH

Sound the call! Forward to free our world with blood and
fire!

Heed the call! Helping to save our world with blood and
fire!

(At the Fox and Grape, BOOTH stands up on a
platform and gestures to MICHAEL.)

BOOTH

Praise the Lord for bringing us our patron . . .

(BOOTH and MICHAEL shake hands. Then MICHAEL
backs away.)

MICHAEL

It's your show, General! All praises to you!

BOOTH

In the name of all that's holy. In the name of Christ our
Lord,
This shelter shall be known as the Cross and Sword.

(ALLIES OF BOOTH echo the chorus and bring
down the sign for the "Fox and Grape." They
raise a sign emblazoned with a cross and a
sword.)

Across the stage, CARLTON and the REMSENS
speak to one another in the REMSEN's West End
living room.)

DR. REMSEN

A shelter?

CARLTON

Or a mission or . . . who knows what they call it. But it's
bought and paid for by Michael Remsen. I guess that makes
the boy at least a private in the Salvation Army.

MRS. REMSEN

It's nothing to joke about.

(she gazes fearfully toward the Army)

He's gone too far. We've lost him to the East End.

(CARLTON shrugs and exits.)

In the Skull and Bones, LYLE jumps onto a
table.)

LYLE

In the name of all that's holy. In the name of all we
love . . .

(The ENEMIES OF BOOTH lift their bottles;
women expose their breasts; men make lewd
gestures.)

LYLE

This bloody band shall be known as the Skeleton Army!

(NICK tosses him one of the skulls that
decorate the room. LYLE holds the skull high
above his head.)

LYLE

Death to the Salvation Army!

ENEMIES OF BOOTH

Death! Death! Death!

(Gathered in noon light under the sign of the
Cross and Sword, the SALVATIONISTS sing. They
are unaware of the ENEMIES OF BOOTH--the
SKELETONS--huddled in their dark quarters,
singing their own version of "Blood and
Fire.")

SALVATIONISTS

We're soldiers of the Lord
who wear the armor of
belief.

Our never-ending battle
offers wounded souls
relief.

As one, we enter the fray.
Go forth in holy array.
With drum and trumpet,
we will win the day.

SKELETONS

They're soldiers of the Lord who
wear the armor of belief.

Their never-ending battle brings
the rest of us to grief.

As one, we enter the fray.
Beat back their holy array.
We bums and strumpets,
we will win the day!

SKELETONS

We will win!

SALVATIONISTS

We will win!

SALVATIONISTS/SKELETONS

We will win the day!

(LYLE waves his grinning skull, which glows
sickly white in the dark tavern.)

BOOTH waves the "Blood and Fire" banner,
which blazes red in the sun.)

SALVATIONISTS

Sound the call! Forward to
free the world with blood
and fire.

Heed the call! Helping to save
the world with blood . . .
and . . . fire!

SKELETONS

Sound the call! Forward to free
our world with blood and fire!

Heed the call! Helping to save
our world with blood . . .
and . . . fire!

(CURTAIN)

(END OF ACT ONE)

ACT II

SCENE 1

Two months have passed. It is now late December.

Twilight in the East End. A lamplighter makes his way up the sidewalk, lighting lamps one by one. Two SALVATIONISTS enter, collecting charity, singing a carol. As they sing, other SALVATIONISTS, including BOOTH and DANNY & CLARA, enter on different streets and join the song.

SALVATIONISTS

Fa-la la la, la la la la! . . . etc.
Ring the bells of Christmas! Let music fill the air.
Sing the joy of Christmas! The world is free of care.
Come hear the joyful story of a wondrous winter morn.
Rejoice with us in glory, for the savior has been born!

(BEN enters. He strides toward BOOTH and a pair of SALVATIONISTS.)

SALVATIONISTS

Rejoice with us in glory! Fa-la la la, la la la la!
Let music fill the air! Merry Christmas!

(BEN drops a coin into the charity bucket.)

BEN

(to himself, with satisfaction)
Another penny. It'll all be paid back soon!

SALVATIONISTS

It's Christmas in London! Merry Christmas!
Fa-la la la, la la la la! . . . etc.

(The SALVATIONISTS exit, their carol fading.)

BOOTH turns down a side street.

LYLE and NICK emerge from a doorway. They swoop down on BOOTH, punching him, snatching his money.)

LYLE

There's your "fa la la!"

NICK
Merry Christmas from the Skeleton Army!

LYLE
The war has just begun!

BOOTH
The devil take you!

BEN
(seeing what Lyle and Nick have done)
My money! Thieves! Stop them!

(BEN chases after LYLE and NICK, who run into a tavern.)

BOOTH stumbles off.

BEN runs into the tavern.)

BEN
I put a copper in there! Give it back!

LYLE
Benjy-boy! Your old man still in prison?

NICK
Poor Harlan. He ain't the thief he used to be.

BEN
He didn't steal nothin'!

LYLE
Course not. Innocent as Christmas.

BEN
I worked for that money--a real job. In a factory!

LYLE
Then you're a fool. And you've just learned what charity gets you.

(Members of the SKELETON ARMY burst into the tavern. They each carry Salvation Army buckets.)

SKELETON #1
Here you are, General!

BEN
General?

SKELETON #1

Twenty pounds at least!

SKELETON #2

I sent two of 'em to hospital!

(As LYLE turns his attention to the SKELETONS, NICK plucks a coin from his bucket and flips it to BEN.)

NICK

For old times. Now get lost.

(BEN gives a grateful wave to NICK, and he's out the door.)

LYLE

A good day's work for the Skeleton Army! It's Christmas in London!

(Lights down on the tavern.)

Crossfade to the new Salvation Army shelter, where DANNY and CLARA put up Christmas decorations.)

DANNY/CLARA

Fa-la la la, la la la la! . . . etc.

(As they sing, MICHAEL enters across the street. Two months have taken their toll: he looks haggard.)

MICHAEL

(muttering to himself)

Mrs. Peale needs a new prescription . . . Go see Rennie, don't forget . . . Now his wife has got a cough, we need to get her out of London . . .

(MICHAEL climbs stairs to his office on the second floor of the Salvation Army shelter.)

MICHAEL

(to himself)

Haven't seen Ben for a month or so . . . Better go check on Eleanor's newborn . . . Seven kids in one small room reeking with infection! . . .

(PATIENTS crowd into MICHAEL's office.)

PATIENTS

Dr. Remsen, help us!

(The PATIENTS continue their pleading chorus while MICHAEL dispenses medicine, offers advice, gives help in every direction.)

MICHAEL

Take two of these three times a day . . . See me next week if you still ache . . . On Monday, I'll look in on you . . . Your baby needs a warmer place to sleep . . . Pneumonia, I'm afraid . . .

(breaks off his work to reflect to himself)

Each day brings new misery and pain! A flood of distress and disease. They plead for a miracle. I feed them mere medicine. But poison keeps running in their blood.

PATIENTS

Help us!

MICHAEL

(resumes tending the Patients)

You have an abscess, I can lance it . . .

(As MICHAEL continues treating the PATIENTS, lights come up on the REMSEN's West End parlor.

DR. REMSEN paces in front of AMELIA. Intently watching them are MRS. REMSEN, FLORA, and CARLTON.)

AMELIA

He wants too much too fast.

MICHAEL

There is fluid in your lungs . . .

DR. REMSEN

What do you expect me to do?

MICHAEL

Apply a poultice every hour . . .

AMELIA

If you love him, bring him home. Make him take a rest.

MICHAEL

It's your heart, you need to rest . . .

DR. REMSEN

I warned him it would be too much.

PATIENTS

Help us!

MRS. REMSEN

This is no time for scolding. Michael needs us.

PATIENTS

Help us!

FLORA

You have to help him, father.

DR. REMSEN

(softening)

I'll see what I can do.

(FLORA and BETH hug their father. AMELIA looks relieved. Lights fade on the REMSENS.)

MICHAEL

(to a gaunt Patient)

I'll do everything I can.

(to himself, pointing to Patients)

He'll be dead in a month . . . She won't last out the week . . . Yet they believe in me . . .

PATIENTS

Help us!

SALVATIONISTS

It's Christmas in London!

(SALVATIONISTS on various corners sound a choir of ringing bells. As they play, LYLE, NICK and the SKELETONS gloat over their money in the tavern; the REMSENS decorate their house for Christmas; DANNY and CLARA decorate the first floor of the Army Shelter. AMELIA enters MICHAEL's office to act as nurse.)

MICHAEL

Each day brings new misery and pain! A flood of distress and disease. They plead for a miracle. I feed them mere medicine. But poison keeps running in their blood.

Too much to be done!

ALL

It's Christmas in London!
etc.

Christmas in London!

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 2

Lights up on BOOTH and AMELIA in MICHAEL's office.

With AMELIA's help, MICHAEL tends to BOOTH's shoulder, which was injured by Lyle and Nick.

BOOTH

(to Michael)

Yes, you want too much too fast.

MICHAEL

Tell that to my dying patients.

BOOTH

Brick by brick, Michael. That's how we build the house of change.

MICHAEL

Meanwhile around us, the house is collapsing.

BOOTH

Then you rebuild!

MICHAEL

(finished tending Booth)

Don't flail too much during your sermons, and you'll be all right.

BOOTH

(to Amelia)

Do I flail?

(AMELIA smiles and remains noncommittal.)

MICHAEL

You need to buy some big metal shields. The "armor of belief" doesn't offer much protection.

AMELIA

(wryly)

How would you know? You've never tried it.

MICHAEL

Given conditions here, the motto of the East End could be "Atheism Made Easy."

BOOTH

Getting the people fed is the main thing for now. Their souls can wait.

MICHAEL

(dropping wearily into a chair)

Amen to that!

BOOTH

I worry about you, Michael. At the rate you're going, you'll end up as one of your own patients.

MICHAEL

Then I'll finally have someone I can overcharge.

BOOTH

If you live that long. You can't keep up this pace alone.

MICHAEL

Amelia's been right here with me. She'll be a doctor herself one day.

BOOTH

She understands what I'm talking about. If I did not hear my Father's voice speaking to me in the watches of the night, bidding me put my hand to this work, I would fall back in dismay. Alone, I would stumble. Alone, I would despair.

(BOOTH discovers that MICHAEL has fallen asleep.)

BOOTH

I see my company is exhilarating.

AMELIA

He hasn't slept in three days.

BOOTH

"Watch ye therefore . . . Lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping."

(preparing to leave)

You speak to him, Amelia. I've noticed that he listens to you.

(BOOTH goes off.)

AMELIA is about to put a blanket over MICHAEL when he wakes with a jolt.)

MICHAEL

(still half asleep)

I'll be right there, don't let him bleed . . .

(realizing where he is)

Oh . . . sorry . . . Have you ever been so tired your body
can't sleep?

AMELIA

You managed to sleep while the General was talking.

MICHAEL

(rising restlessly)

I got the idea. He pities my lack of faith.

(stopping suddenly)

Is that how you feel?

AMELIA

The General and I don't always think alike.

MICHAEL

I'm glad to hear that.

AMELIA

I'm certain, whether you know it or not, you're an
instrument of Heaven.

MICHAEL

It seems Heaven could do better than me.

(wiping his brow)

Is it hot in here to you? Every day these walls close in.

AMELIA

I'll get you a cold cloth.

MICHAEL

No.

(snatching Amelia's coat from a chair)

Let's go out . . .

(throwing the coat over Amelia's shoulders)

. . . on the roof!

(The walls of his office break away, and
MICHAEL and AMELIA step out onto the roof of
the Salvation Army shelter. A clear, bright
night. An infinity of stars.)

MICHAEL

I come up here whenever I need to breathe. I usually like
the solitude. But now . . .

(He helps AMELIA pull her coat on.)

MICHAEL

I like this better . . .

“The Word is Love”

(MICHAEL leaves his hands on AMELIA's shoulders. She doesn't pull away. They seem about to kiss--yet neither makes a move. The moment passes.)

AMELIA

(simply)

How can you not feel the Spirit on a night like this?

MICHAEL

Up here, I find I live again.
I feel a strength from within.
Up here, I know what leads me on:
The word is hope.

AMELIA

Up here, I know that life is good.
I feel a strength from above.
Up here, I know what leads me on:
The word is God.

MICHAEL

Though we say it differently,
I know that what we're feeling is the same.
Whether it's within or up above, I know its name:
The word is love!
Feel it pulsing in your blood,
Stirring you, lifting you.
What is this great happiness?
The word is love.

AMELIA

Something pulsing in my blood,
Stirring me, lifting me.
Something in the living air,
The word is Love.

MICHAEL

Far above the world with you,
My spirit is renewed.

AMELIA

Unexpected happiness
Fills my heart, fills my soul.

MICHAEL

What has cast out loneliness?
The word is love.
Though we say it differently,
I know that what we're feeling is the same.

MICHAEL/AMELIA

Whether it's within or up above, I know its name:
The word is love!
Here below the winter stars,
What bright force keeps me warm?
What's the wonder of this night?
The word is love!

AMELIA

A simple word.

MICHAEL

A common word.

AMELIA

And filled with light.

MICHAEL

And filled with life.

AMELIA

A holy word.

MICHAEL

A joyful word.

MICHAEL/AMELIA

Love! . . .

(They embrace and passionately kiss.)

MICHAEL/AMELIA

The word is love.

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 3

The second floor of a factory. It is the next day--Christmas Eve. WORKERS hunch over machines that clank and hiss with rhythmic monotony. At his machine, BEN is falling asleep. A kind woman, MOLLY, speaks to him.

MOLLY

Ben! Wake up!

BEN

Oh! . . . Thanks, Molly. I was dreaming.

MOLLY

Dreams here will kill you, kid. Watch your hand!

(BEN yanks his hand away from the machine's moving claw.)

MOLLY

I seen a girl get her whole arm tore off . . .

(A FOREMAN bustles over. He carries a wooden clacker, a small, hinged board that makes an awful racket when he shakes it--which he does, right in MOLLY's face.)

FOREMAN

Slowing down here. Keep it up, keep it up!

(The FOREMAN passes by.)

BEN

Next time he does that to you, I'll show him a little something my father taught me.

MOLLY

Don't get yourself in trouble on my account. Old Molly can take care of herself.

FOREMAN

Keep it up! Keep it up!

(The WORKERS continue their labors to the rhythm of the machines as lights come up on a study in the West End townhouse of CARLTON PRICE. LYLE and NICK enter as CARLTON rises from his desk.)

CARLTON

Gentlemen, I'm in a rush.
(handing over a check)
I'm giving you a bit more this month.

(LYLE and NICK eagerly scrutinize the check.
NICK whistles at the amount.)

CARLTON

But I expect a greater return on my investment.

LYLE

You'll see some bloody heads with this.

CARLTON

Buy yourself some real weapons. I'm tired of this Salvation Army.

(Across the stage, the FOREMAN shakes his wooden clacker at the WORKERS.)

FOREMAN

Keep it up! Keep it up!

CARLTON

Booth and his meddlers keep poking round. They butt their noses into conditions at my factory. Their beady eyes pry into places they should never look.

LYLE

We'll break their noses.

NICK

Yeah! We'll black their eyes.

LYLE

Yeah! We'll shut down the Salvation Army!

FOREMAN

Keep it up! Keep it up!

CARLTON

Keep up your good work. You can leave through the servant's hall. Merry Christmas!

(CARLTON exits.)

LYLE

(to Nick)

I hope he chokes on a Christmas plum.

NICK

But not until his check has cleared!

(LYLE and NICK exit.)

FOREMAN

(going off)

Keep it up! Keep it up!

MOLLY

(gesturing obscenely at Foreman)

Merry bloody Christmas!

BEN

(another obscene gesture)

And a bloody happy New Year!

(The rhythmic clank of the machinery dies
away.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 4

The main floor of the Salvation Army shelter. BOOTH and AMELIA finish hanging a sign that reads, "WELCOME TO THE CROSS AND SWORD."

AMELIA

It'll be a close one, but I think we'll be ready by tonight.

BOOTH

Ready or not, we open the doors. The news is out, and this is one Christmas Eve that will be standing room only.

AMELIA

Christmas in London! I always love it.

BOOTH

You have yet to see a Christmas in Nairobi or Tabriz. There's nothing like a carol sung by converts in Chinese. You'll hear one soon, Amelia: I have plans for you. It's time you led a mission in some other corner of the world.

(AMELIA, surprised by the idea, isn't sure she likes it.)

AMELIA

Leave England?

BOOTH

I'm not sure where yet. But wherever it may be, you're the one I trust to carry on the Word.

AMELIA

I don't think I'm ready. Besides, there are so many reasons to stay here in London.

BOOTH

And one of them is named Michael.

AMELIA

Is it so obvious?

BOOTH

(gently)
I'm not blind, Amelia. But you know you can't marry outside the Army.

AMELIA

Surely for love . . .

BOOTH

This is not an arbitrary rule. I know from the life with my own dear, departed Catherine how important it is for two people to share faith. Look at Danny and Clara. See how happy they are.

AMELIA

There are different ways to be happy. In God's eyes, Michael is—

BOOTH

Michael is lost. You must save him . . . or leave him.

The Lord in heaven gave man a perfect garden.
We know what happened when Adam followed Eve.
Because he loved her, he thought she'd never harm him.
He learned a lesson that we are learning still.

You may think you have found love.
But what path will "love" lead you down?
Is this a love in the eyes of God?

There is one road leading to Paradise.
Only one road. No other way.
All other roads lead you to misery, wretchedness,
Far from the comfort of grace.

Remember Liza, who thought she loved that gambler.
She let him lead her to drink and early death.
She learned a lesson, and as she died, she whispered,
"Beware the passion that masquerades as love."

You may think you are secure,
Far from temptation and sin.
Are you so pure in the eyes of God?

There is one road leading to Paradise.
Only one road. No other way.
All other roads lead you to misery, wretchedness . . .

In this world of ours, nothing's what it seems.
Men are treacherous. Snares and traps abound.
That's why we must be keepers of the Truth.
Never stray from us, and you will find grace.

(BOOTH's words seem to have an effect on
AMELIA.)

AMELIA

I promise you . . . I'll do what's right.

(BOOTH is pleased. They resume readying the shelter. AMELIA pauses in her work and gazes thoughtfully into space.

Lights up on the second floor of the shelter, as if to reveal what AMELIA is thinking about. MICHAEL comes into view.

Lights go down on BOOTH and AMELIA as she stands gazing toward MICHAEL.)

(END OF SCENE)

ACT II

SCENE 5

MICHAEL walks down a hall on the second floor of the Salvation Army shelter, lost in thought, while DR. REMSEN approaches Michael's office door.

MICHAEL

(muttering to himself)

What else could I have done? . . . Another gone, another lost . . .

DR. REMSEN

(reading a note pinned to the door)

"Called away on emergency. Back soon."

MICHAEL

Can't look behind, just look ahead . . . But what's ahead?
. . . Another day, another gone, it never ends . . .

(stopping short in surprise)

Father!

(DR. REMSEN is taken aback by his son's appearance, but he bravely extends his hand.)

DR. REMSEN

Good to see you, Michael.

(They shake hands. MICHAEL suddenly embraces his father--clutching him with an air of desperation. DR. REMSEN is embarrassed yet pleased.)

MICHAEL

You're looking well.

DR. REMSEN

You're not.

MICHAEL

And a merry Christmas to you . . .

DR. REMSEN

Michael, your mother has been worried. Now I can see--

MICHAEL

(struck by a sudden thought)

Oh, sorry . . .

(pushing into his office)

Need to write a note . . . ask Amelia about Mr. Blaine.

(DR. REMSEN trails after MICHAEL when a HUSBAND and his sickly WIFE enter the waiting area.)

HUSBAND

(speaking to Michael's father)

Dr. Remsen? She's getting weaker every hour. You've got to help her!

DR. REMSEN

You have the wrong doctor.

(pointing toward the office)

In there . . .

HUSBAND

No. We asked around, and we was told: "Go see Dr. Remsen. Dr. Remsen saved my baby, Dr. Remsen has the touch. He's the only one to save you. He ain't a doctor, he's a saint."

DR. REMSEN

(astonished and impressed)

They say that?

HUSBAND

Doctor, help us!

WIFE

He don't want us here, Davy.

(The WIFE turns to go--but starts to collapse. DR. REMSEN and the HUSBAND keep her from falling.)

MICHAEL

(calling from his office)

Bring her in here!

(The men carry her into MICHAEL's office.)

DR. REMSEN

I'd say she has rickets . . . but one doesn't see that very often.

MICHAEL

I see it every day.

(DR. REMSEN strips off his overcoat and prepares for work.)

DR. REMSEN

Where are your smelling salts?

(MICHAEL points to the counter as he eases the WIFE onto an examining table. DR. REMSEN grabs a bottle. Father and son work side by side, bringing the WIFE around.)

DR. REMSEN

Lie still, you'll be all right . . .

MICHAEL

(to his father)

You're doing very well. We could use a man like you in this office.

(DR. REMSEN smiles in spite of himself, though he can't resist offering judgment.)

DR. REMSEN

Seems to me . . . less an office than a prison.

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 6

Lights up on the yard of a prison.
HARLAN digs a ditch.

A new prisoner--Petey, a PICKPOCKET
we've seen before--takes up a
position alongside HARLAN.

HARLAN

'Lo, Petey. Welcome to hell.

PICKPOCKET

It's better in here than it is out there.

HARLAN

At least you can get a drink out there. I'm thirstier than
I've ever been. Have you seen my boy?

PICKPOCKET

Yeah. He don't look too good. Workin' in a sweatshop.

HARLAN

(horrified)

A sweatshop?

PICKPOCKET

Day and night. He don't look too good.

HARLAN

(ignoring the man's concern)

My own kid, takin' a job! I'll smack him when I get out!

(HARLAN sullenly continues his work.)

Music from a SALVATION ARMY BAND is heard
offstage, then CLARA, DANNY and other
SALVATIONISTS enter and march up to the gates
of the prison.

Both the inside and the outside of the prison
remain visible to the audience.)

SALVATIONISTS

We're soldiers of the Lord who wear the armor of belief.
Our never-ending battle offers wounded souls relief . . .
etc.

(In the prison yard, PRISONERS ABOUT TO BE
RELEASED shuffle in a line toward the gate.)

The PRISON WORKERS are herded toward the rear of the yard, where they place their shovels in a box.

At the same time, LYLE, NICK and members of the SKELETON ARMY appear in the shadows near the prison gates.)

LYLE

(to a couple of Skeletons)

Take care of Danny. He's the little mick next to Clara.

(to Nick)

You and me will grab the bitch.

NICK

Can I grab her anywhere I like?

LYLE

(slugging him)

Watch your mouth! That's my daughter.

(GUARDS open the gates, and RELEASED PRISONERS file out.)

RELEASED PRISONER

Thanks for the hospitality, Guv'nor.

GUARD

The door is always open--for the likes of you.

(The RELEASED PRISONERS are greeted by the SALVATIONISTS, who offer them food.)

CLARA

Have a bite? Free this morning . . .

DANNY

Need a job? Help this morning . . .

(The PRISONERS gratefully accept the bounty.)

CLARA

Come with us . . .

DANNY

We'll find you work . . .

(In the prison yard, the GUARDS start to close the gates.

HARLAN hesitates before placing his shovel in the box.)

GUARD

Put it down, Harlan. Get inside.

LYLE

Now!

(The SKELETONS attack. Two of them jump DANNY and bring him down. LYLE and NICK grab CLARA, who shouts and kicks ferociously.)

The released PRISONERS scatter.

HARLAN slams his shovel into a GUARD, dashes through the gate, and runs off.

CLARA chomps down on LYLE's arm. She breaks free.)

LYLE

My own daughter bit me!

CLARA

If you had a heart, I'd tear it out!

(GUARDS emerge from the prison, running after HARLAN.)

LYLE and his gang think the GUARDS are coming for them.)

LYLE

Guards!

NICK

We paid 'em off!

NICK

Doublecrossed!

(The SKELETONS knock the GUARDS down and run off.)

LYLE

(calling back to Clara)

Next time, I'll kill you!

(DANNY and CLARA embrace and look to the other SALVATIONISTS.)

CLARA

Everyone all right?

DANNY

A few bruises, no converts, and we helped a felon escape.
Not bad for a day's work.

(CLARA shakes her tambourine and raps it
once, weakly.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 7

“Prison Bars”

Lights up on HARLAN in a distant street. He bumps into a pedestrian and walks on, revealing the wallet he lifted.

HARLAN

I've still got the touch!
(jubilantly)
Throw a good man into jail, and justice will prevail,
For prison bars do not a prison make.
Set your conscience to the side, and the good Lord will
provide
You'll find that all you need is there to take.

(HARLAN steals a bottle of liquor from a
delivery cart.)

HARLAN

Got my bottle . . .
(grabs another)
Make it two! Here is proof the saying's true:
The best things in this life are always free.
I can't help my little quirk. I've never liked to work.
The simple life o' thievery's for me.
But now the boy I trusted has gone out to earn his keep.
Ain't it enough to make a father want to weep?
When a man takes on a job, he turns into a snob.
He'll condemn a thief before too long.
I won't hear any quarrel, for the truth is very clear:
A son will soon go moral if a father isn't near.
It takes some dedication, but if you persevere,
He'll learn right is wrong!

(HARLAN goes off, guzzling his liquor.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 8

In the factory, BEN, MOLLY and the WORKERS slave at their monotonous tasks.

MOLLY

One more minute . . .

BEN

One more minute is all I can take.

(A whistle screams.)

MOLLY

Christmas can begin! No work tomorrow.

(The WORKERS get up from their machines.

Suddenly, a terrible CRACKING SOUND!

Bedlam breaks out as people race for the exit: "Run!" "The floor!" "It's caving in!"

MOLLY and BEN run--but the floor beneath them CRACKS.)

MOLLY

We're goners, Ben!

(BLACKOUT.

In the darkness, SCREAMS and the thunderous CRASHING OF MACHINERY.)

ACT II

SCENE 9

Lights up on MICHAEL's office. A Patient is just leaving. MICHAEL and DR. REMSEN both look exhausted.

DR. REMSEN

That's the last. How many hours have we been at this?

MICHAEL

I never keep track.

(AMELIA bursts in.)

AMELIA

Michael, come quick! There's been an accident!

(MICHAEL snatches up his bag and starts for the door.)

DR. REMSEN

I'm coming with you!

(Crossfade to the street outside the factory.

MICHAEL, DR. REMSEN, and AMELIA push through a crowd of BYSTANDERS.)

BYSTANDERS

Such a shame! Such a shame!

(The factory is now a mangle of machinery and groaning VICTIMS. MEDICS from a hospital carry the injured to an ambulance. BOOTH and a few SALVATIONISTS place other victims on makeshift stretchers.)

BOOTH

They can only take the worst cases to hospital. We'll bring the others to the shelter. Beds are waiting.

BYSTANDERS

Such a shame! Such a shame!

(Lights up on the study of CARLTON PRICE, who crumples a piece of paper in anger.)

CARLTON

Hell and damnation! I should've paid to have the place inspected. Now it'll cost me even more.

(CARLTON storms out the door.)

BYSTANDERS

Such a shame! Such a shame!

(In the factory, MICHAEL helps pull MOLLY out from under a piece of machinery.)

MOLLY

A hell of a way to end.

MICHAEL

I won't let you die. I promise.

(MICHAEL kneels beside his father at MOLLY's side.)

Nearby, AMELIA helps BOOTH place a victim on a stretcher.)

BOOTH

(to Amelia)

You'll be in charge at the shelter.

AMELIA

I'll be right with you.

BOOTH

Don't delay.

(BOOTH helps carry the victim off.)

AMELIA steps over to help MICHAEL and DR. REMSEN.

MICHAEL sees MOLLY slipping away, and he works frantically to revive her.)

MICHAEL

Breathe! . . .

(anguished)

Please! . . .

DR. REMSEN

(quietly)

She's gone.

(MICHAEL groans in pain.)

MICHAEL

Can't keep my promises!

DR. REMSEN

Don't do this to yourself . . .

AMELIA

He's right, Michael.

(AMELIA gently touches MICHAEL, and he clutches her in a desperate embrace.)

DR. REMSEN steps away from them to help place Molly's body on a stretcher.)

MICHAEL

I couldn't save her . . .

AMELIA

You can't save the world. Leave that job to another.

(MICHAEL pulls away from AMELIA.)

MICHAEL

Don't talk to me of God. Not now!

AMELIA

This is the very time. Pray with me, Michael.

MICHAEL

You know who I am. I thought *you* understood me.

AMELIA

Please, Michael . . . You can't do this alone. I want to help you.

MICHAEL

You want to notch another convert on your belt!

AMELIA

My religion's not a contest! I thought *you* understood me.

MICHAEL

We live in two different worlds.

AMELIA

How can you be sure?

MICHAEL

I need air. This place stinks of death.

AMELIA

Aren't you smelling your own failure? Isn't that what you're afraid of?

MICHAEL

Is that my sin: failing to set right all God did wrong?

AMELIA

There is no sin in failure. Only sin in giving way to despair.

MICHAEL

Sounds like something Booth would say.

AMELIA

I think for myself!

MICHAEL

Then think about this world!

AMELIA

That's all I do! I know the worst of this world. I've been the worst of this world! And God is not the one to blame.

MICHAEL

Typhoid and cholera, consumption and fever, sickness at home, and death on the job. And for all these blessings, you want me to praise God?

AMELIA

You need to find a faith that will help you to live.

MICHAEL

I have no faith in a god who is deaf, dumb and blind!

AMELIA

You're describing yourself!

(BOOTH reappears in the factory.)

BOOTH

Amelia! . . .

MICHAEL

Your commander is calling.

(to Dr. Remsen)

Father, I'm going back with you.

(DR. REMSEN steps over to MICHAEL and AMELIA.)

AMELIA

You're running out?

DR. REMSEN

(to Amelia)

It's what you wanted. "Bring him home," you said.

AMELIA

For a rest. Not to retreat.

MICHAEL

Call it what you like. I'm leaving.

BOOTH

Amelia!

MICHAEL

Go to your General. Be happy with your God. It's time for me to go home.

AMELIA

There's no going back.

BOOTH

Are you ready?

AMELIA

I'm with you.

(AMELIA turns away from MICHAEL and follows BOOTH off.)

MICHAEL

Let's get out of here, father. I can't do this anymore!

(As MICHAEL and DR. REMSEN start to leave, CARLTON enters, speaking to a JOURNALIST.)

CARLTON

I had the floor inspected. I trusted the report. You may quote me if you like: "It is tragically clear that the inspector was careless."

MICHAEL

Carlton?

CARLTON

My two favorite Remsens.

MICHAEL

You own this factory?

CARLTON

(nodding)

What's left of it.

(to Journalist)

Such a shame what one person's negligence can do.

MICHAEL

Bastard!

(MICHAEL takes a swing at CARLTON, who blocks the punch and knocks MICHAEL to his knees. DR. REMSEN rushes to his son.)

CARLTON

(to Journalist)

That was off the record.

DR. REMSEN

I'll have you arrested for assault!

MICHAEL

No, for running a factory of death!

CARLTON

Accidents happen, Michael.

MICHAEL

A factory of slaves!

CARLTON

Then you've helped enslave them. You financed this factory when you bought my pub.

(MICHAEL is stunned--as though he's been punched again.)

MICHAEL

My money? . . .

DR. REMSEN

(to Carlton)

He was trying to do some good!

MICHAEL

(quietly)

"Hell is paved with good intentions . . ."

CARLTON

Don't blame yourself, Michael. You're like me: a businessman trying to get by.

MICHAEL

I am not like you! I care about these people!

CARLTON

Care less and live longer.

(to Dr. Remsen)

Take him home, my good doctor. He doesn't belong in the East End.

DR. REMSEN

And you, sir, are no longer welcome in our home.

(With a contemptuous shrug, CARLTON turns back to the JOURNALIST and speaks to him as he moves away from MICHAEL.)

CARLTON

(to Journalist)

This will cost me a lot to rebuild. But I never give in to defeat . . .

(CARLTON and the JOURNALIST go off. MICHAEL has overheard CARLTON's last words. They affect him deeply.)

Lights fade on the factory as MICHAEL and DR. REMSEN step outside. It is night. The street is empty.)

DR. REMSEN

Wait here. I'll find a carriage and get you home.

(A strange calm has come over MICHAEL. His fury spent, he looks at his father with regretful eyes.)

MICHAEL

No, father. No . . .

DR. REMSEN

What's wrong? Are you all right?

MICHAEL

Thank Carlton for knocking sense into me.

DR. REMSEN

Michael, the accident here was not your fault.

MICHAEL

I know that.

(pause)

But I can't go with you.

DR. REMSEN

Please . . . We can talk about the future. Just come home. Your sister is making cherry plum pie. Your mother is waiting . . .

MICHAEL

Give them my love.

How can I walk away?

Who will help those I leave?

Though I've known defeat,

Tasted bitter despair,

Grief and doubt have not yet crushed hope.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

The road ahead is long and steep.
I see no end, but I must keep on!

Grief is like a fog that burns away
And leaves you seeing clearly.
Doubt is some old nagging voice
That soon grows weak when you grow stronger.
All my weary bones cry, "Leave here!"
Still, my heart won't let me go,
It's beating here and tells me this is where I belong!

(DR. REMSEN nods and puts his hand on
MICHAEL's shoulder.)

MICHAEL
The road ahead is long and
steep.
I see no end, but I must
keep on!
This is where I do belong!

DR. REMSEN
The road ahead is long and steep.
I see no end, but you must keep
on!
This is where you do belong!

(MICHAEL gratefully touches his father's
hand.)

MICHAEL
I'll find a carriage and get you home.

(DR. REMSEN picks up Michael's medical bag
from the pavement and starts off. MICHAEL,
bewildered by the action, doesn't move.)

DR. REMSEN turns and gives MICHAEL a what-
are-you-waiting-for look.)

DR. REMSEN
They'll need help at the hospital.

(MICHAEL hurries to his father's side, and
they go off together.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 10

LYLE and NICK enter the Skeleton Army's tavern.

LYLE

We'll get her another time. She'll make money for me yet.

(LYLE spots a DRUNK in a Salvation Army uniform.)

LYLE (CONT'D)

What's this Bible croaker doing here?

DRUNK

Booth caught me takin' a little nip. You can't take a little nip in General Booth's army. You live like he says, you breathe when he says, or yer out on yer bloomin' arse.

LYLE

You can breathe all you like in this army. Just don't do it near an open flame.

DRUNK

I kept me a souvenir.

(He raises a trumpet, blows a drunken bugle call.)

DRUNK (CONT'D)

They'll be one horn short at their big opening tonight.

LYLE

Tonight?

DRUNK

At the stroke of twelve.

(He waves a flyer, which LYLE snatches and reads avidly.)

LYLE

"Grand Opening. New Shelter."

DRUNK

Be Saved and Be Bored.

LYLE

(to one of his Skeletons)

Call out the troops. Get them here by ten o'clock.

(to Nick)

You and me will pay a little call before then.

(to the tavern at large)

Tonight is the final campaign! Tonight is the end of the
Salvation Army!

(The SKELETONS cheer. The DRUNK blows his
horn.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 11

Lights up on two PROSTITUTES in a dreary street. Snow is falling.

HARLAN enters at a distance, eyeing the PROSTITUTES. He's holding a bottle.

PROSTITUTE #1

Look who's coming. Our old friend Harlan.

PROSTITUTE #2

Poor bastard. You heard about that sweatshop?

PROSTITUTE #1

Forty people dead.

PROSTITUTE #2

I heard it was more. Harlan's son was one of 'em.

PROSTITUTE #1

Little Ben? Such a shame.

(calling to Harlan)

Hello, love! Need a bit of a lift?

(HARLAN approaches.)

PROSTITUTE #2

Ain't it just like a man to go looking for a fuck in his grief?

PROSTITUTE #1

If he pays, he can cry all he likes.

(to Harlan)

Haven't seen you for a while.

HARLAN

I've been away, had my troubles.

PROSTITUTE #1

So I hear. Such a shame. Well, I'm the one to help you. I was fond of Ben.

HARLAN

(grinning)

He'll have to be a little older before you can show him how fond you are.

PROSTITUTE #2

Older? . . .

(to her companion)

Oh, Lord help us, he don't know!

HARLAN

Know what?

(The PROSTITUTES exchange anxious looks.)

HARLAN

Tell me, goddamn it!

PROSTITUTE #1

An accident . . . The sweatshop on Castle Road. Your son
. . . is dead.

(HARLAN stands frozen with sudden grief.)

HARLAN

Ben . . .

PROSTITUTE #2

It just happened this afternoon.

HARLAN

While your father was drinking his life away!

(HARLAN pushes the PROSTITUTES aside.)

PROSTITUTE #1

Poor bastard.

PROSTITUTE #2

And on Christmas Eve. Such a shame.

(The PROSTITUTES hurry off.)

HARLAN stares into space, clutching his
bottle.)

HARLAN

Ben . . . You're gone forever, Ben . . . Did you cry out for
my help? And I wasn't there for you? . . .

(smashes his bottle on the pavement)

God! God of misery and pain. How could you be so cruel? Are
you listening? Are you out there? Might as well be shouting
at the wind!

(HARLAN staggers off through the snow.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 12

Lights up on the Salvation Army shelter. DANNY and CLARA set out Bibles for the Christmas Eve service.

AMELIA enters.

AMELIA
Praise God! Everything's ready.

DANNY
In twenty minutes, we open the doors.

CLARA
Are the patients all right?

AMELIA
(nodding)
Sleeping now.

DANNY
How's Michael? We heard about a fight he got into with some bloke . . .

AMELIA
(alarmed)
Fight?

DANNY
In the factory.

(AMELIA is instantly on the move. She throws a coat over her shoulders.)

AMELIA
I'll be back in time for the service.

(AMELIA runs out.)

Crossfade to a back room of the shelter, where Salvation Army instruments are stored.

LYLE and NICK, carrying duffel bags, climb into the dark room through a window.)

NICK
(surveys the room with satisfaction)
Everything ripe for the picking!

LYLE

We'll put a dent in their goddamned service.

(LYLE and NICK move stealthily through the room, stuffing instruments into their bags.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 13

Lights up on HARLAN, entering the ruined factory. He surveys the scene of disaster, then picks up a piece of metal and smashes it against the wall.

AMELIA steps into the factory.

AMELIA

Michael?

(In the shadows, HARLAN whirls, startled.)

AMELIA is relieved, still thinking this is Michael.)

AMELIA

You're all right! Please come back. I'm so sorry that
I . . .

(Another step, and she recognizes the man in front of her.)

AMELIA

Harlan!

HARLAN

Leave me alone. You following me? Going to send me back?

AMELIA

No. I was looking for somebody else. But it's right that I've found you.

HARLAN

So you can tell me, "See how you're punished?" Oh, Ben! . . .

AMELIA

You seem to be punishing yourself. There's no need.

HARLAN

Why didn't you salvation peddlers look out for the kid? Big talkers!

AMELIA

We all should have looked out for "the kid."

(AMELIA touches HARLAN's sleeve. At her touch, HARLAN softens. His anger vanishes.)

AMELIA

Come with me.

(Mystified, but compliant, HARLAN lets AMELIA lead him.)

In a transformation that is magical in its swiftness, the factory gives way to the Salvation Army shelter.

AMELIA and HARLAN step from the ruins of the factory and climb steps to a makeshift hospital ward on the second floor of the shelter.

There on a cot lies BEN. He stirs in his sleep.)

HARLAN

He's alive!

AMELIA

He's alive.

(HARLAN drops to his knees.)

HARLAN

Thank God! After all I've done . . . Thank God . . .

(AMELIA kneels beside HARLAN.)

AMELIA

Praise Him.

You have been touched by the hand of God.

He will forgive you all your sins.

He sees into your soul, and He knows your goodness.

If He has faith in you, have faith in Him.

Don't be afraid. He is your friend.

He has always been there at your side.

He watched you lose your way, and He has waited patiently.

Now you must go to Him.

(stands and holds out imploring hands)

You have been touched by the hand of God . . .

(There is a new light in HARLAN's face.)

HARLAN

I have been touched.

AMELIA

He will forgive you all your sins.

HARLAN

Forgive my sins.

AMELIA

Raise your voice in prayer, and God will hear you.
Rise up with your faith, and go to Him.

(Slowly, HARLAN rises.)

AMELIA

Lord, accept this soul.
Help him see the light.

HARLAN

God, accept my soul!
God, I see the light!

AMELIA

Lord, take his weakness and turn it into strength
With the power of your hand and the grace of your love.
(speaking gently)

Ben . . .

HARLAN

No, don't wake him. Where can I get cleaned up?

AMELIA

I'll show you.

HARLAN

When he wakes I want him to see me . . .
(searching for the words)
. . . a proper father.

(HARLAN gazes at his sleeping son and brushes
back his hair. Then he and AMELIA go off.)

(FADE TO BLACK)

ACT II

SCENE 14

Lights up on the main floor of the Salvation Army shelter. DANNY and CLARA rush up to BOOTH.

DANNY

Bad news! . . .

CLARA

The instruments! . . .

DANNY

They've been stolen!

CLARA

I could tell you who's behind it, but I can't bear to say his name.

(Lights up on the Skeleton Army Tavern. LYLE bursts in laughing, waving instruments from the Salvation Army. NICK follows, lugging bulging duffel bags.)

BOOTH

Call him the devil and be done with it! But he won't stop us from holding our service.

(DANNY, CLARA, and BOOTH go off together.)

In the tavern, the SKELETONS rush over to LYLE and NICK, who tootle madly on the Salvation Army instruments.)

LYLE

Gather 'round, sinners! Grab a flute, bang a drum. A gift from the Salvation Army!

(The SKELETONS happily take up the instruments and blow a chorus of pure cacophony. The BARTENDER storms over.)

BARTENDER

I said you could have your headquarters here. I didn't say you could make us all deaf.

LYLE

Ah, Miles, you always did have a tin ear.

BARTENDER

What good's stealing their instruments anyhow? Better to tear something off Booth himself.

LYLE

Oh, that's coming . . . Very soon.
Tonight when the moon is behind a cloud,
And they're on the march, so pure and proud,
We'll join them in battle and make their teeth rattle.
We'll bring them all down to their doom! . . .

(The SKELETONS chant the last word in unison
as they stamp the floor and bang mugs and
bottles on the tables.)

SKELETONS

Doom, doom, doom, doom, doom, doom, doom, doom!

LYLE

What fun it will be when we hear them squeal.

NICK

They'll beg and they'll plead, but we're hard as steel.

LYLE

Some we will throttle.

NICK

And bean with a bottle.

LYLE

The rest we blow up with a boom! . . .

SKELETONS

Boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom, boom!
Oh, we live to give the saints the devil.
Teach them well the fury of hell!
Beware the prayer that calls you evil.
Come and play the Skeleton way!

LYLE

Be generous, men, for it's plain, you know . . .

NICK

To heaven the holy ones all want to go.

LYLE

So hasten their glory. Just make their end gory.
Their happiness lies in the tomb! . . .

SKELETONS

Tomb, tomb, tomb, tomb, tomb, tomb, tomb!
Oh, we live to give the saints the devil.
Teach them well the fury of hell!
Beware the prayer that calls you evil.
Come and pray the Skeleton way!

NICK

Their preaching don't make us afraid.

SKELETONS

Ha-ha!

LYLE

We'll hit them when they're on parade.

SKELETONS

Ho-ho!

NICK

With a jeer.

SKELETONS

Ha-ha!

LYLE

And a cheer.

SKELETONS

Ho-ho!

LYLE/NICK

We laugh at their fire and gloom!

SKELETONS

Oh, their happiness lies in the . . .
Bring them all down to their . . .
Blow them all up with a . . .
Boom, boom, boom, boom, BOOM!

(The SKELETONS dissolve into raucous
laughter.)

Then, from a nearby street, strange sounds
can be heard--a great banging and clanging
and offkey tootling.)

LYLE

What the hell's that?

(Through the offstage cacophony, the "Blood
and Fire" anthem is vaguely recognizable.)

The SALVATION ARMY BAND enters. BOOTH bangs on a metal tub. DANNY clangs pot lids. CLARA shakes curtain rings on a rod. Others blow through metal pipes and across the necks of bottles. The BAND marches defiantly past the Skeleton's tavern.

Deflated, NICK plops into a chair and lights a cigarette.)

NICK

You got to admit: they don't give up easy.

LYLE

Neither do I.

(LYLE plucks the cigarette from NICK's hand and gazes at its glowing end.)

NICK

What do you have in mind?

LYLE

Something warm for a cold night.

(LYLE blows lightly on the end of the cigarette. Lights fade, leaving only the bright glow of the cigarette at the center of the darkness.)

(BLACKOUT)

ACT II

SCENE 15

Lights up on a hospital ward, where MICHAEL and DR. REMSEN have just finished their rounds. They both look exhausted.

DR. REMSEN

That's that. Let's go home, Michael.

MICHAEL

I'm sorry, father . . .

DR. REMSEN

Seems I'm destined never to bring you home.

MICHAEL

I have to speak to someone.

DR. REMSEN

There's still a Christmas feast waiting.

MICHAEL

No. I'll be eating humble pie.

(In an anteroom of the Salvation Army shelter, AMELIA is revealed in dim light, standing at a window, gazing out at the stars.)

DR. REMSEN

I'm too tired to ask what you're talking about. But wherever you're going, do be careful.

MICHAEL

Always.

DR. REMSEN

It's been a privilege working with you.
(extending his hand to Michael)
Merry Christmas, Dr. Remsen.

MICHAEL

(clasping his hand gratefully)
And to you, Dr. Remsen.

(MICHAEL and his father walk off in opposite directions.)

Lights up full on AMELIA in the Salvation Army shelter.

Just beyond a door next to her, we hear BOOTH and the SALVATIONISTS. The Christmas Eve service is underway.)

BOOTH/SALVATIONISTS (OFFSTAGE)

In the name of all that's holy,
In the name of Christ our Lord,
We're gathered here for worship in the Cross and Sword!

(During this, HARLAN comes up behind AMELIA. He's wearing a Salvation Army uniform that is a couple of sizes too small.)

HARLAN

It don't fit too good. But I won't keep it for long. I'll have to go back to prison, won't I?

AMELIA

Let tomorrow take care of itself.

HARLAN

Right. Seems to know what He's doing.

SALVATIONISTS (OFFSTAGE)

We hope in thee, Lord of mercy and light.
Thou art a shepherd to all wandering sheep . . .

(AMELIA opens the door. The brightly lit mission room, with its crowd of singing worshippers, is framed in the doorway. BOOTH leads his followers in the hymn.)

AMELIA and HARLAN enter the crowded room.)

SALVATIONISTS

Thou art morning so clear and bright;
Love like water so still and deep.

(AMELIA closes the door behind her.)

Lights fade on the interior of the shelter--
though we continue to hear the hymn.

Beneath the music, a low, ominous chanting begins.

On a street near the shelter, LYLE, NICK and the SKELETON ARMY emerge from the shadows. They carry clubs and bricks.)

SALVATIONISTS (OFFSTAGE)
Abide with me in the dark
of the night.
Protect me, hold me in Thy
heavenly care.
Raise me up with Thy tender
might.
Lord of mercy, please hear
my prayer.

SKELETONS
Bring them all down to
their doom, doom doom,
doom! . . .
Bury them deep in a tomb,
tomb, tomb, tomb! . . .
etc.

(MICHAEL rounds a corner and comes face to
face with LYLE, who is carrying two heavy
sticks.)

LYLE
Friend or foe?

MICHAEL
Give me a club, and I'll show you.

(LYLE tosses a club to MICHAEL and then
raises his own stick.)

LYLE
Which is it?

MICHAEL
I need to find Booth!

LYLE
Friend!

(The SKELETONS cheer and march on to the
shelter, sweeping MICHAEL along with them.)

SKELETONS
Bring them all down to their doom, doom doom, doom! . . .
Bury them deep in a tomb, tomb, tomb, tomb! . . .

LYLE
Let 'em know we're here!

(The SKELETONS pound on the shelter with
their clubs. They heave bricks through the
windows.

From inside, BOOTH's voice calls out
encouragement to his congregation.)

BOOTH (OFFSTAGE)
"Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I
will fear no evil!" Sing out!

SALVATIONISTS (OFFSTAGE)

We're soldiers of the Lord who wear the armor of belief.
Our never-ending battle offers wounded souls relief . . .
etc.

(MICHAEL slips away from the mob and runs to
a side door of the shelter. He disappears
inside.)

Lights up on the second floor of the
building, where the factory victims on their
cots lie awake in fear. HARLAN rushes into
the room. AMELIA follows.)

BEN

(sitting up in astonishment)

Father!

(HARLAN and BEN hug each other--and don't let
go.)

BEN

(frightened by the pounding below)

What's going to happen?

HARLAN

Nothing. It's just noise.

AMELIA

(to the patients)

They want to frighten us, that's all.

PATIENT

They're doing a good job of it. Where's Dr. Remsen?

AMELIA

He's gone back home . . .

(MICHAEL strides into the room.)

MICHAEL

Someone told me there's no going back . . .

(He is at AMELIA's side.)

MICHAEL

She was right.

PATIENT

Don't leave us, Dr. Remsen.

(MICHAEL responds to the PATIENT while
looking at AMELIA.)

MICHAEL

I'm here to stay.

(MICHAEL and AMELIA embrace.)

Out on the street, NICK is having a good time.)

NICK

Let's go in and chase 'em out! Give 'em a run for their money!

LYLE

No. Let's burn them out! If they like blood and fire, we'll give them blood and fire!

(LYLE strikes a match and sets a stick on fire.)

At the same time, MICHAEL reassures the PATIENTS.)

MICHAEL

They're probably just drunk. It'll end soon.

LYLE

This is the night it all ends!

(Horrified, NICK throws down the stick and stamps it out.)

NICK

Your daughter's in there!

LYLE

Let her burn! Let 'em all burn!

(LYLE tries to light another match. NICK lunges at him. LYLE pulls a knife.)

SKELETON #1

Stop them!

SKELETON #2

Let 'em be!

(LYLE and NICK struggle.)

LYLE stabs NICK, who drops to his knees, bleeding.

LYLE lights the stick and hurls it at the shelter. The torch smolders--seems to go out.

NICK staggers forward, grabs the knife and stabs LYLE through the heart.

They fall together.)

SKELETONS

(ad lib)

Oh, Jesus! . . . They're dead! . . . I'm getting out of here! . . .

(The SKELETONS scramble away in every direction.)

Lights fade on the street. From inside the shelter, we hear the last chords of the song.)

SALVATIONISTS (OFFSTAGE)

A-men!

(On the second floor of the shelter, AMELIA speaks.)

AMELIA

They've gone. We're safe.

(And then . . . SCREAMS from below.)

Lights up on the mission to reveal that one side of the room is a wall of flames!)

SALVATIONISTS

Fire! . . . Fire! . . .

BOOTH

Stay calm! Don't panic!

(The fear spreads to the PATIENTS on the second floor, who join the cries of the SALVATIONISTS. MICHAEL runs to the doorway.)

MICHAEL

The stairs are on fire! . . .

AMELIA

The window!

MICHAEL

It's the only way!

BOOTH

There's only one way out! God will protect you!

(His authority calms the SALVATIONISTS. As a group, they march through the smoky mission to the front door.)

Above, on the second floor, MICHAEL, HARLAN, and AMELIA help PATIENTS to the window. The PATIENTS cry, "Fire! Fire!")

SALVATIONISTS

God will protect you as you walk through the fire!
Keep your eyes on Heaven as you walk through the fire!

(BOOTH kicks open the door and steps back to let his congregation pass.

DANNY and CLARA enter from a back room, carrying a ladder.

BOOTH, DANNY, and CLARA emerge to safety on the street.)

SALVATIONISTS

Praise be to God! . . . Praise be to God! . . .

(DANNY and CLARA set the ladder against the building.

MICHAEL and AMELIA climb out onto a ledge. HARLAN remains inside, and the three of them help the injured PATIENTS out the window.

DANNY, CLARA, and other SALVATIONISTS bring the PATIENTS down the ladder to safety.

As the SALVATIONISTS continue singing their "Praise" chorus, HARLAN lifts BEN out the window.)

HARLAN

(to Amelia)

Take him! The floor's giving way!

(BEN reaches for his father.)

BEN

Come with me!

HARLAN

I'll be right behind you!

(HARLAN hands BEN out to AMELIA and MICHAEL. BEN is helped down the ladder to the street.)

SALVATIONISTS

Praise be to God! . . . Praise be to God! . . .

(HARLAN is about to climb out the window--but the floor beneath him gives way. He claws at the window ledge.

AMELIA and MICHAEL lunge toward him.)

AMELIA

Harlan!

MICHAEL

(extending his hand)

Grab on!

(HARLAN loses his grip and falls backwards.)

BEN

(shouting from the street)

Father! . . .

(A sudden shift in lighting reveals HARLAN falling to his death into the flames.

AMELIA and MICHAEL turn away in horror and climb down to the street.

AMELIA hugs the sobbing BEN.)

SALVATIONISTS

God will enfold you as you rise from the fire!
Keep your eyes on Heaven as you rise from the fire!
Rise! . . . Rise! . . .

(BLACKOUT.

In an echo of the factory collapse,
the shelter caves in with a
thunderous CRASH.)

ACT II

SCENE 16

It is dawn. The last few police and bystanders drift away, leaving BOOTH and AMELIA in front of smoldering ruins. BOOTH turns away from the sight.

BOOTH

We've all shed enough tears.

AMELIA

Clara even wept for her father.

BOOTH

She has a good heart.

(MICHAEL enters, looking tired.)

MICHAEL

We found beds for the injured.

AMELIA

How's Ben?

MICHAEL

Holding up. Says he's joining the Salvation Army. Wants to go where Amelia goes.

(pause)

Wise beyond his years . . .

BOOTH

There is a plan at work here, Amelia.

AMELIA

(looking at Michael)

I believe there is.

BOOTH

It's time for a change. I want you to lead a mission in Africa. Danny and Clara are prepared to join you.

MICHAEL

(to Amelia, shocked)

Africa? . . . This is what you want?

(Before she can reply, BOOTH speaks.)

BOOTH

(to Michael)

You have your path, and we have ours. Bless you for all you've done.

(AMELIA remains silent. Standing between MICHAEL and BOOTH, she seems frozen by indecision.)

MICHAEL

(to Amelia, simply)

Don't leave.

(MICHAEL touches AMELIA on the shoulder. She clasps his hand.)

BOOTH studies them, then speaks gravely to AMELIA.)

BOOTH

Remember your vows to the Salvation Army.

(BOOTH begins the song that he once before sang to AMELIA.)

BOOTH

There is one road leading to paradise.
Only one road. No other way.
All other roads lead you to misery, wretchedness,
Far from the comfort of grace.

BOOTH

The Lord in heaven gave man
a perfect garden.
We know what happened when
Adam followed Eve.
Because he loved her, he
thought she'd never harm
him.
He learned a lesson that we
are learning still.

You may think you have
found love.
But what path will "love"
lead you down?

BOOTH

Is this a love
in the eyes of
God?

AMELIA

You have been so good to me
. . .
You have been a source of
light for me.
Where would I be without
you?
I have learned from you.
I am learning still.

MICHAEL

Amelia, think of what we
have found.
I can't lose you. Let love
lead your heart.

MICHAEL

This is love.
This is love!

AMELIA

This is love.
Love in the eyes of
God.

(BOOTH's song becomes a drone in the background as AMELIA and MICHAEL sing.)

MICHAEL

Though we say it differently,
I know that what we're feeling is the same.

AMELIA

(to Booth)

He has brought me
happiness.
He has cast out
loneliness.
How can I deny my
heart?
I love him!

MICHAEL

(to Amelia)

You have brought me
happiness.
You have cast out
loneliness.
How can you deny your
heart?
I love you, I need you,
Don't leave me, Amelia!

AMELIA/MICHAEL

You fill my heart.
You fill my soul.
You bring me hope.
You bring me joy,
We've found a love,
a wondrous truth!

BOOTH

In this world of ours,
Nothing's what it seems.
Men are treacherous.
Snares and traps abound.
That's why we must be
keepers of the Truth.

(AMELIA, who has been completely caught up in MICHAEL, suddenly hears BOOTH's voice again.)

BOOTH

Never stray from us, and you will find grace.

MICHAEL

A common word,
A simple word,
And filled with light . . .

(With a mixture of regret and rapture, AMELIA turns from BOOTH to join MICHAEL's song.)

MICHAEL/AMELIA

And filled with life,
A holy word,
A joyful word:
Love! . . .

(AMELIA removes her Salvation Army jacket and solemnly hands it to BOOTH.)

DANNY enters, followed by the SALVATIONISTS.
BEN, one arm in a sling, walks beside CLARA.)

DANNY

All present and accounted for, General.

BOOTH

(gazing at Amelia)

No. We have a new vacancy.

CLARA

(to Amelia, dismayed)

You're leaving? . . .

(BOOTH holds up AMELIA's jacket.)

CLARA (CONT'D)

No! . . .

(CLARA impulsively seizes the jacket and thrusts it at AMELIA.)

AMELIA smiles gently at CLARA.)

AMELIA

I'll be right here in London . . .

(turning to Booth)

. . . doing your work.

DANNY

But without us!

AMELIA

This is God's plan.

(echoing Harlan)

Seems to know what He's doing.

BOOTH

(to Michael)

Can you say the same?

MICHAEL

We know what we're doing. That's enough for me.

BOOTH

(to Amelia)

I won't pretend to approve.

(pause)

But I wish you God's blessings.

MICHAEL

Allow me to wish you the same.

BOOTH

I'm not sure how much weight that carries. But I'll consider it a good start for you. If you ever decide to join us . . . we're not hard to find.

MICHAEL

I'll just look for the nearest riot in the worst part of town.

(BOOTH smiles in acknowledgment.)

BOOTH

Army of the Lord: fall in!

(The SALVATIONISTS group themselves in straight lines. BOOTH gazes at AMELIA, but speaks to his troops.)

BOOTH

There is work to do. March on!

(BOOTH turns with military snap. He and his army march away, singing their anthem.

DANNY and CLARA, sad but understanding, give AMELIA a final salute. Then, with BEN at their side, they catch up to their fellow SALVATIONISTS.)

SALVATIONISTS

. . . Sound the call! Forward to free the world with blood and fire! . . .

(AMELIA and MICHAEL hold hands as they watch the group march off.

BEN keeps looking back, hoping AMELIA will join them.)

BEN

Amelia! . . .

(She waves farewell. We see a final, unhappy look from BEN, and then he disappears with the SALVATIONISTS. The singing fades away.)

SALVATIONISTS (OFFSTAGE)

Heed the call! Help us to save the world with blood . . . and . . . fire! . . .

(Slowly, AMELIA and MICHAEL start to walk off.

BEN bursts into view.)

BEN

Wait!

(BEN bolts straight for AMELIA and MICHAEL.
He throws himself into her grateful arms.)

To the strains of Amelia and Michael's love
duet, the three of them--MICHAEL the skeptic,
AMELIA the believer, BEN the new generation--
turn in the opposite direction from the
Salvation Army and walk into the distance
toward the morning sun.)

(CURTAIN)

(THE END)