

# THE FROZEN DEEP

## *In Three Acts*

The Scene of the First Act, an old Country House in Devonshire (Telbin)

The Scene of the Second Act, a Hut in the Arctic Regions (Stanfield)

The Scene of the Third Act, a Cavern on the coast of Newfoundland (Stanfield)

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Period, The Present Time

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Time occupied in representation—Two hours and a half.

The Prompt-Book

## Prologue

*(Curtain rises. Mists and darkness. Soft music throughout.)*

One savage footprint on the lonely shore,  
Where one man listen'd to the surge's roar;  
Not all the winds that stir the mighty sea  
Can ever ruffle in the memory.  
If such its interest and thrall, O then  
Pause on the footprints of heroic men,  
Making a garden of the desert wide  
Where PARRY conquer'd and FRANKLIN died.

To that white region where the Lost lie low,  
Wrapp'd in their mantles of eternal snow;  
Unvisited by change, nothing to mock  
Those statues sculptured in the icy rock,  
We pray your company; that hearts as true  
(Though nothings of the air) may live for you;  
Nor only yet that on our little glass  
A faint reflection of those wilds may pass,  
But, that the secrets of the vast Profound  
Within us, an exploring hand may sound,  
Testing the region of the ice-bound soul,  
Seeking the passage at its northern pole,  
Soft'ning the horrors of its wintry sleep,  
Melting the surface of that 'Frozen Deep.'

Vanish, ye mists! But ere this gloom departs,  
 And to the union of three sister arts  
 We give a winter evening, good to know  
 That in the charms of such another show,  
 That in the fiction of a friendly play,  
 The Arctic sailors, too, put gloom away,  
 Forgot their long night, saw no starry dome,  
 Hail'd the warm sun, and were again at Home.

Vanish ye mists! Not yet do we repair  
 To the still country of the piercing air;  
 But seek, before we cross the troubled Seas,  
 An English hearth and Devon's waving trees.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> The Prologue, written by Dickens, was spoken by John Forster during the Tavistock House performances and by Dickens during the Gallery of Illustration and Manchester performances. It is not included in the M.A. 81 collection. The version printed here is taken from *The Letters of Charles Dickens*, ed. Georgina Hogarth and Mamie Dickens (New York, n.d.), pp. 522-523.

## THE FROZEN DEEP

### *Act the First*

## Act I\*

(Scene 1. A pleasant room in a country-house with an old fashioned bay window in the flat, looking out over autumn corn fields on a village church embosomed in woods. This prospect is supposed to be seen shortly before sunset. The room very comfortably and prettily furnished. Flowers about. A few flower pots on a Stand. A tea-table with tea things on it. Two little Work Tables with baskets of work on them, etc., etc. A bird in a cage. Mrs. Steventon and Rose discovered. Maid enters with newspaper from the post. Is going to give it to Rose. Mrs. Steventon beckons for it and it is given to her.)

ROSE: Any news, Caroline?

MRS. STEVENTON: (*Reading*) "Arrived, the Fortune from Valparaiso. The Ariel from Jamaica. (*Spoken*) The Sisters from Liverpool for California, eight days out. Reported drifting among ice at Sea, waterlogged and abandoned, the Hope—." (*Hurriedly and repressing a shudder*) No, Rose—no news to interest us.

ROSE: Shall I give you some more tea? (*Mrs. S. declines.*) Where are Clara and Lucy?

\* (*Before ringing up, see the Furniture Properties correct by the list. See the colored lights ready at the back. See the working sky ready. See that Lucy Crayford has a book. See that Clara Burnham has dried flowers in an envelope. See that Maid has folded Newspaper ready. See that basket, scissors and watering pot are ready. A. P. S.*)



MRS. STEVENTON: Upstairs. I think Clara is asleep. (*Enter Maid with watering-pot, scissors, and basket. Mrs. S. and she water and arrange flowers as the Dialogue proceeds.*) Rose, I have been doubting lately whether it was wise for us four to shut ourselves up in this lonely old house while our natural protectors are away from us in the expedition to the Arctic Seas.

ROSE: What could we do better than wait here together till they come back? Have we any friends to go to whom we should honestly like to live with? Would it have been pleasant for you to go home after your husband had sailed with the expedition?

MRS. STEVENTON: Home! Where they have turned their backs on me for marrying a poor man! I go home and hear my husband despised?

ROSE: And I with no mother alive; with my father like your husband, away with the Arctic ships—where could I have been happier than here with my dearest and oldest friend, Lucy Crayford?

MRS. STEVENTON: And Lucy certainly had no home to go to. Her only near relation in the world is her brother, who is serving in the expedition.

ROSE: Well; you see there are three of us at any rate who could have done no better than come here and make one household of it. As for the fourth, as for Clara—

MRS. STEVENTON: Clara's situation is different in one respect. It is not her father, or her brother, or her husband, who is away, but her husband that is to be. Then again, Clara has a mother alive—

ROSE: A mother who has gone abroad, and married again—a mother, who has never forgiven Clara for objecting to a foreign Stepfather! (*Exit Maid with watering-pot, etc.*)

MRS. STEVENTON: I dare say you may be right, my dear, (*comes down, takes her work from her work table, and returns*

*with it to tea-table*) but I cannot help doubting still whether all we women do not make each other unduly anxious by being constantly together here, and living in perfect solitude. As long as we had News from the Expedition it was very well to have no society but our own—but now, when more than a year has passed, and no tidings from those fatal regions have reached us, I think we ought to see other sights from day to day, besides the sight of our own sad faces.

ROSE: (*Covering the bird*) I can't say that seeing company would be any relief to my mind. I have no heart for paying visits and making new acquaintances, while my father is risking his life, commanding the Expedition in the Polar Seas. (*Re-enter Maid and exit with the bird.*) I shrink from going into the world and seeing girls of my own age, with Parents living always near them, in the safety and quietness of Home. I should envy their lot, I should repine at my own—I who have not had my father's arms round me for three long years! I am fond of gaieties, Caroline; I like being nicely dressed, I like being admired, I like Music and Dancing; but I must have my father near me, or I can never enjoy myself as I ought. Once let me get him back, and O what dresses I'll have, what dances I'll go to, what a charming life of gaiety mine shall be from morning to night!

MRS. STEVENTON: Yours is an enviable disposition, Rose. If I had your courage and your hopefulness—

ROSE: Determine, as I do, and as Lucy does, not to despair. Shall I ring and have these things taken away? (*Rises and rings the bell; then takes her work at her table.*) I wish I could communicate a little of the hopefulness that you envy so, to Clara.

MRS. STEVENTON: I believe nobody has any real influence over Clara, except that strange old Scotch Nurse of hers, whom she is so unaccountably fond of.

ROSE: Yes, Lucy has influence over her; but I must say, I wish her faithful Highland Nurse—

MRS. STEVENTON: Not Highland, Rose.

(*Scotch Music, "Wandering Willie" once.*)

ROSE: Highland by descent and birth, I think, though Lowland by usage and education—it doesn't matter—Scotch in any case. I was going to say, I wish her faithful Scotch Nurse was safely back among her own people. Clara is naturally excitable and nervous; and that unfortunate old woman with her perpetual prophesying and her barbarous nonsense about the Second Sight, does her young mistress all the harm in the world. Lucy thinks so, and Lucy is always right.

MRS. STEVENTON: I am afraid Nurse is likely to do the Servants harm too. Only last week, she frightened them all by seeming to be in a kind of fit at dinner. I was sent for, and she stared at me as if I had been a stranger, and shuddered all over, and said the Power of the Sight was on her—meaning, I suppose, the Second Sight that one reads about, in books on the Highlands.

ROSE: I hope she is not in another fit now. Nobody seems inclined to answer the bell. (*Scotch Music, "Wandering Willie." Enter Nurse Esther.*)

NURSE ESTHER: Wha' rings?

MRS. STEVENTON: No, no, Nurse, we don't want you. Send the Maid to take away the tray.

NURSE ESTHER: No' want me? The day may come, Mistress, when ye'll just be doon on your knees, begging me to speak! Where's your husband? (*To Rose*) Where's your father? Where's Lucy Crayford's brother? Where's my nurse-child Clara's plighted lover? Lost a' lost, i' the lands o' Ice and Snow! Wha' sees them and follows them in the spirit? Wha' can give ye news of them when a' earthly tidings fail? Southern leddy,

when ye want next to hear o' yer husband, ye'll want me.

ROSE: (*Coaxingly*) Yes, yes, Nurse Esther; but you know, being Southern ladies, we don't believe in the Second Sight.

NURSE ESTHER: Don't believe in the Second Sight? Look at me! No believe my deary, when I stand here afore you wi' the power o' th' Sight coming strong on me the noo'—coming aye stronger and aye stronger sin' the purple morn, but no' at its height yet! Can you look me in the face with they bright black een o' yours and no feel a shuddering at the roots o' your hair, no feel a creeping ower your dainty flesh? No, no, no; ye know me too weel, Missy. (*Quickly changing two knives which Mrs. S. has put across*) Air ye for bluid that ye put twa' blades crosswise! (*Becoming dreamy*) It's aye cooming on me, it's aye cooming! I ha' warned ye I shall speak o' the lost men who are wandering ower the Icy North.

MRS. STEVENTON: (*To Rose*) Can't you persuade her to be quiet? (*Coming to work-table.*)

ROSE: I don't like to risk offending her.

NURSE ESTHER: I warn ye baith that afore the neecht's ower I shall speak. When the Moon is rising, and the warning chimes are ringing out fra' yon auld Kirk, bide in this room and hear me. Mark my words, dearies! When the chimes are ringing. Mark my words. (*Exit.*)

(*Scotch Music repeated—"Wandering Willie." Maid enters, clears the tea-things, puts away tea-table and two chairs. Then exit Maid, and Music dies away. Mrs. S. and Rose wind off a skein of silk, during the remainder of their dialogue at Rose's work-table.*)

MRS. STEVENTON: I wonder Clara in all these years since her childhood has not civilized Nurse Esther a little—Ah, dear Lucy! Like a rainbow after the clouds!

(*Enter Lucy.*)

ROSE: (*To her*) Darling, have you seen Clara since dinner time?

LUCY: I sat and read to her 'till she fell asleep. Let me say to you two, my dears, that I am getting so uneasy about her, that I sometimes think of sending to London for the best Doctor.

ROSE: But the Doctor here—

LUCY: My dear, the Doctor here is a very estimable, industrious man; but he does not understand diseases of the mind. From month to month, I have seen, as I now see, Clara still wasting, still growing paler and paler, still dreaming by night and talking by day, in a manner that shocks and alarms me.

MRS. STEVENTON: You ought to remember that she was always nervous and fanciful from a child. And you ought to make allowances for the influence of that superstitious old Nurse over her.

LUCY: (*Thoughtfully*) Yes.

ROSE: Recollect too, the loss of all news of the Expedition in which she has as dear an interest as any of us.

LUCY: Dearer.

MRS. STEVENTON: (*Warmly*) Dearer than mine? Can a girl like Clara be fonder of her Lover than I am of my Husband?

LUCY: We will not discuss the question. (*Sits at Mrs. S.'s work-table.*) I make full allowance for Clara's excessive sensitiveness, for the bad influence of her Nurse, and for the effect on her of the suspense under which we are all suffering; but still I cannot account to myself for the state of nervous depression and irritation into which she has fallen. I suspected she had some secret sorrow or anxiety when she first came here; and I feel sure that I was right.

MRS. STEVENTON: Perhaps she has said something to you?

LUCY: Not a word.

ROSE: And yet you are her favorite. She will do things for

you, that she will do for neither of us. If she really ever had a secret sorrow, she would have confided it to you, long ago.

LUCY: All dispositions, my dear, are not so open as yours. But we had better change the subject.

MRS. STEVENTON: Why?

LUCY: Because Clara is coming down stairs. (*Goes near the door*) I hear her footstep.

(*Enter Clara Burnham, hurried and agitated.*)

CLARA: Where are you all? (*Sits.*) Why did you leave me, Lucy? I hate and dread being alone—and you all forsake me. You care for nobody—you forget everything.

MRS. STEVENTON: We thought you were asleep in your own room.

CLARA: Was I to sleep there for ever?

ROSE: If you had only rung when you woke—

CLARA: Nurse Esther would have answered the bell, I suppose. And what then?

LUCY: (*Aside to Mrs. S. and Rose*) She has awakened in one of her nervous fits. If you will leave her to me, I think I can soothe her.\*

MRS. STEVENTON: You were right, about sending to London for some one. Let us go into the Music Room, Rose. She always gets better when she is like this, if she hears music. Clara dear, don't send for Nurse Esther any more tonight. Send for me. (*Exeunt Mrs. S. and Rose.*)

(*Lucy, after looking at Clara for a moment, takes a chair and seats herself by Clara's side.*)

CLARA: Don't mind me. I'm used to being left alone. Nurse will come to me, I dare say. Go to the piano with the other two.

LUCY: Hush! Hush! Don't talk any more 'till you feel easier

\* (*Setting sun ready to work. Gas ready to turn down. Red lights ready. Piano Music ready.*)

and quieter.\* (*Setting sun appears in view, and the notes of the piano are heard softly from the adjoining room.*) O look at this, my love, look at this with me! O dear Heaven, how tenderly the last red glow lingers on the corn fields, and how softly the shadows are stealing over the distant woods! What a gentleness in that farewell glory of the day that is leaving us! What a harmony of Earthly sounds answers that great silent harmony of colors in the Palace of the western clouds! Think how many aching hearts the sight of that mighty calmness, that Divine glory, shall soothe to repose this night! Think and look! Look reverently and thankfully, while that great tranquillity which breathes so mercifully over the Earth, breathes also over you!

CLARA: I must be happier before I can feel it, Lucy. Your eyes look only at the brightness and the beauty. Mine see the fading daylight, and the gathering gloom.

LUCY: The Daylight renews itself, and the gloom vanishes with the morning. (*Takes chair.*) I wish, my love, I knew how to make you look and speak a little more cheerfully!

CLARA: We have no cause for cheerfulness.

LUCY: We have no cause for despair.

CLARA: Do you still say, Not yet?

LUCY: I still say, Not yet. The same uncertainty which hangs over the fate of your promised husband, hangs also over the fate of my only brother. And still I say, Not even yet.

CLARA: Three years have passed, Lucy, since they left us. If a fourth goes by, and we hear nothing of them, will you still speak as you have spoken now?<sup>3</sup>

\* (*Lower gas. Setting Sun worked. Red light. Music, Piano in next room. Heard at intervals until "my sorrow looks so base and mean."*)

<sup>3</sup> This and Lucy's speech which follows were added on the back of a leaf, revised by Dickens, and then deleted. The deletion appears to have been made by Collins when he was making the 1866 alterations, but cannot be dated with certainty.

LUCY: No, my love. I shall perhaps surprise you by giving bolder advice. If another year passes without tidings of the Expedition, new ships will be fitted out, and a rescuing party will be sent to search for the lost men. Should the day for that sad necessity arrive, then, Clara, I shall be the first to own that we have waited here in solitude and resignation long enough. I shall then say to you and to Caroline and to Rose;—the time for patience is past. Let us follow the rescuing party along the shores of America as far as women may go, and let us be the first to meet the ships of the Seekers when they come out from the Arctic Seas. In the meantime, I repeat, let us still be patient, let us still hope! (*Clara to go back.*)

CLARA: (*Abruptly*) Lucy, have you ever known a great sorrow?

LUCY: Examine your own heart, my dear, and you will hardly need to ask me that question.

CLARA: How?

LUCY: You have not known me longer than you have known Caroline and Rose, and yet you say, and I believe you, that you love me like a sister, while you only love them like friends. I am no kinder to you than they are. Why should you have preferred me from the first?

CLARA: Because—

LUCY: Let me answer for you. Because you felt that some great sorrow had set its mark on me. You were drawn towards me by true instinct, and the secret of that instinct is, that you yourself—

CLARA: No! no!

LUCY: That you yourself have a great sorrow. (*Clara hides her face.*) A sorrow which you have confessed to no one—a sorrow that guided you to me, as to another woman who had suffered also. There has been sympathy between us because



there has been secret trouble on either side. I do not ask you for your confidence, my dear. I only ask, if this is the truth? (*Music stops.*)

CLARA: Oh, Lucy, you know it is the truth.

LUCY: (*Music re-commences.*) Perhaps my own experience might one day help me in guiding you. I can tell you what it has been in very few words. You have once or twice wondered why I was still a single woman. My dear, I shall always remain what I am now, because the man I loved with all my heart and soul, the man to whom I was once engaged to be married is—

CLARA: Dead?

LUCY: To me. Married. Don't be angry with him, Clara,—he was not to blame. He had not met her when he engaged himself to me. I don't think he knew his own mind then. I don't think he ever suspected how dearly I loved him. 'Twas I that broke it all off—he was honourable and would have redeemed his promise—'twas my fault—perhaps I was hasty and jealous—but all that is over now. My thoughts and ways of life have altered since then. I think I have learnt to be more patient and more regardful of others than I was. You must not suppose mine to be a romantic story that is to have a fine, romantic end. This (*touching her heart*) is the commonplace end, my dear.

CLARA: O! Lucy. My poor selfish sorrow looks so base and mean beside your better one. (*Music stops.*)

LUCY: Base and mean, my pet? (*Puts Clara back from her, and looks her steadily in the face.*) I see no baseness or meanness here! Clara! Have you not given all your heart to Frank Aldersley? Do you not love him as every woman loves her promised husband?

CLARA: Love him! (*Takes a letter from her bosom.*) Look where I keep his last letter to me. (*Opens the envelope.*) Look in there!

LUCY: Withered flowers!

CLARA: \* All that is left of the nosegay he gave me, the last time we met. Love him! (*Takes Lucy's hand and places it on her heart.*) Let it answer for itself!

LUCY: Then why talk of baseness and meanness?

CLARA: Let me rest my head on your shoulder. I can speak to you better so.

LUCY: Ah! rest your head, my love. Think my shoulder is only the back of a chair. (*The melody from the adjoining room, which has hitherto been heard indistinctly below the voices of the speakers, stops for a moment, then changes to "Those Evening Bells." A pause in the dialogue until the Second Verse has been sung.*) † Clara, are you crying? Don't speak now, if it distresses you. (*Music stops.*)

CLARA: No. I am going to tell you. I am going to tell you about the time when my father was alive, and I was a little girl. We lived in a pretty country house in Kent, near a great park. Our nearest neighbor was a gentleman named Wardour, who owned the park. He was one of my father's old friends, and his only son, Richard, ‡ was some years older than I.<sup>4</sup>

LUCY: He was still your playmate, I suppose? And you liked him?

\* (*Symphony of.*) This has been written over a deleted prompt note: (*Music "Oft in the still night," ready*). It seems to refer to the "Symphony of 'Those Evening Bells'" that was to be used in a few seconds.

† (*Sun sinks. Gas lower. Red lights gradually withdrawn. Piano Music, "River, River" ready.*)

‡ (*Turn gas still lower. Piano Music, "River, River."*)

<sup>4</sup> This last phrase and the next three speeches were heavily deleted and revised by Collins to remove the suggestions of childhood fondness and to suggest an ambiguous, adult passion. Again, these appear to have been part of his 1866 alterations, but they cannot be dated with certainty. The original prompt-book reading is given here.

CLARA: As a playmate, yes. He was—oh so terribly head-strong and passionate!—but a generous, affectionate boy in spite of his faults of temper. I ought to know that better than any one—he was so fond of me.

LUCY: Fond of you when you were a child?

CLARA: Fond of me when I was more than a child. He never spoke of the fondness, but I could not help seeing it. I did all I could to show that I was willing to be like a sister to him, and that I could be nothing else. (*Music stops.*) He did not understand me, or he would not—I can't say which. There was a strange, rough bashfulness about him. What could I do? He never spoke out—he seemed to treat me as if our future lives had been provided for while we were children. My situation was a very trying one, was it not, Lucy?

LUCY: \*Did you never ask your father to end the difficulty for you?

CLARA: He was suffering, at that time, under the illness which afterwards caused his death, and was very unfit to agitate himself by breaking off the intercourse between his daughter and his old friend's only son. Knowing this, I hesitated—unfortunately until it was too late.

LUCY: How too late?

CLARA: Richard, I should have told you, was, like Frank, in the navy. One Spring day he came to our house to take leave of us before he joined his ship. I thought he was gone, and went into the conservatory—when he suddenly returned and said in his rough quick way—"Clara, I am going to the African coast. If I live, I shall come back promoted, and we both know what will happen then!" He kissed me. I was half frightened, half angry—

\* (*Piano Music heard softly, at intervals, until "It was Richard Wardour."*)

and, before I could compose myself to say a word, he was gone. I ought to have spoken—I ought not to have let him go as I did. It was not honourable, not kind towards him. I reproached myself bitterly at the time for my want of courage and frankness—I reproach myself still—I always shall reproach myself to my dying day!

LUCY: Could you not write to him?

CLARA: I did write—but his after conduct showed that he never received the letter. He was away more than two years. In that time, Frank Aldersley and I met—and—and—you know what happened,—you know that we were engaged. I was so happy! Months and months passed, and not a thought of Richard Wardour ever entered my head, till, one winter morning, I heard that he had come back. (*Music "River, River" again.*) And, Lucy, two days afterwards, his own lips told me that he had come back to make me his wife! Think of my terror and confusion, and remorse. I shrank away from him, and stammered out a few words—very few, but they were enough to tell him what had happened. Lucy! (*Music "River, River" again.*) I tremble when I think of his face. It comes across me in my dreams and makes me as frightened in the darkness as a child.\* How dark it is now!

LUCY: Not darker than usual, my child.

CLARA: His awful, awful look of fury and despair—his deep heavy breaths that came from him in the silence, as he crushed down the passion within him—the parting words he spoke, the last I ever heard from his lips. (*Music stops.*) "The time may come when I shall forgive you," he said,† "but the man who has robbed me of you shall rue the day when you and he first met."

\* (*The stage gets darker. Turn gas lower still.*)

† (*Moonrise and moonlight ready.*)

(*Music re-commences.*) He stood looking at me for a minute—then turned away suddenly and went out. From that time to this I have never seen him again.

LUCY: And never heard of him?

CLARA: The worst, the worst is to come. I heard of him but once, and that was on the night of my parting with Frank. I was asking Frank about the two ships of the Expedition and who was to sail in them. He told me about the officers of his own ship, the "Sea Mew"—and then he spoke of having visited the other ship, the "Wanderer," and of making acquaintance with some of the officers on board. He said they were all pleasant men, with the exception of one moody silent stranger, who had only that day joined as a volunteer. "Did you find out who he was?", I asked carelessly. "I only found out his name," said Frank. "It was Richard Wardour"! \*

LUCY: My love! How you are trembling! Shall I ring for lights?

CLARA: No, no—only put your arm round me—let me feel you near me. Oh, Lucy! They have sailed away together—away to the eternal ice and snow—the man who is to marry me and the man whose heart I have broken!

LUCY: In separate ships—you said yourself they were in separate ships.

CLARA: But in the same Expedition—to share the same perils—to be united in one ship, if an accident happens to the other—to be at deadly enmity together if my name is ever mentioned between them.

LUCY: No, no—let us hope, let us pray, not. Did you mention Frank's name at your last interview with Richard Wardour?

\* (*The stage gets quite dark. The music in the next room stops. Moon begins to rise. Moonlight gradually shewn. Music "Those Evening Bells" ready.*)

CLARA: He gave me no time to mention it, even if I had had the courage to do so.

LUCY: Was your engagement with Frank generally known?

CLARA: It was kept a secret because we were uncertain when he would rise sufficiently high in his profession to marry. Except my mother and my uncle, no one knew of our engagement at the time when the Expedition sailed.

(*Enter Esther at the back of the sofa. Music "Wandering Willie" changing at "D'ye hear! D'ye hear!" into "Those Evening Bells."*)

LUCY: Thank God for that! When Frank told you about his joining the ship, did you say anything?

CLARA: I had not the courage to say a word. But Lucy! one chance syllable between them might discover everything! Oh, for any tidings, any tidings!

NURSE ESTHER: (*From the back of the stage*) Tidings! I' this hoose, ye'll get na' tidings mair.

LUCY: Who's that!

NURSE ESTHER: The men are lost, a' lost; i' the land o' ice and snow. On the land o' ice and snow they shall never be found again!

CLARA: Nurse, nurse! What have you seen? How do you know it? Let me go, Lucy—I want to ask *her* something.\*

LUCY: No! Stop with me. Nurse! If you have any regard for your child, be silent. You agitate, you destroy her by talking in that way. Lights. Lights!—pull down the blind. Keep out that cold spectral moonlight.

NURSE ESTHER: (*Gets on the sofa, as if to pull down the blind.*) If I do your bidding, it's for her sake, not for yours. Southern leddy, the Second Sight is a truth. The power of it was on me the morn, and is on me the noo'. Said I not I would speak

\* (*Chimes ready.*)

wi' the gloaming, when the moon was rising, and the bells were ringing from yon auld Kirk? D'ye hear! D'ye hear!

*(The moonlight falls on her face. The Chimes ring in the distance the air of "Those Evening Bells." The piano in the next room takes up the tune, and the voices of Rose and Mrs. Steven-ton are heard softly, singing the words of the melody. This effect of music lasts till the fall of the curtain.)*

CLARA: Nurse Esther! Speak to me, nurse! Does the Sight show you Frank?

LUCY: Clara! Clara!

NURSE ESTHER: Doos the Sight show me Frank? Aye! and anither beside Frank. I see the lamb i' the grasp o' the lion. I see your bonnie bird alone wi' the hawk. I see you and all around you crying bluid! The stain is on you! Oh my bairn, my bairn, the stain o' that bluid is on *you*!

*(Clara drops on Lucy's bosom with a faint cry. The Curtain falls.)*

END OF THE FIRST ACT

## THE FROZEN DEEP

### *Act the Second*



## Act II\*

(Scene: A Hut in the Arctic Regions. Door in flat, opening on the bleak polar prospect, where the snow is seen to fall incessantly, as often as the door is opened. Through an aperture in the roof, the snow falls drearily, at intervals, on the floor, throughout the act. On one side of the hut, 2 sleeping berths and a rude fire. On the other side, a doorway, with a piece of an old sail hanging across it, communicating with an inner hut. Hanging from the roof, a hammock. Icicles have formed in the interstices of the walls. On the stage, an old cask to serve for a table, with a pestle and mortar on it. Also a chest or two. Bateson discovered dozing at the fire. As Act Drop rises, Music "Berger." Enter Lieutenant Crayford from the inner hut.)

CRAYFORD: Jump up, Bateson! It's your turn to be relieved. Darker! (A sailor enters from the inner hut.) It's your watch. Look lively, my man, look lively. Anything to report, Bateson? (Walks about.)

BATESON: †Nothing, your honour, except that it's pinching cold. (Exit into inner hut.)

\* (Before ringing up, see Properties correct, according to list. See the People of the Sea Mew ready in the 1st Entrance. O. P. See Snow ready—at the back, and at the Roof, 2 places. See that Crayford has a paper message for Steventon, a paper and instructions for Captain Holding, and a paper of lots. See that John Want has a watch. See sledge, knapsacks, and wrappers of travelling party ready at back.)

† (Snow ready.)

CRAYFORD: And that's no news in the Arctic Regions, with the thermometer below zero indoors. My poor dear sister, Lucy, what would she say, with her horror of cold, if she knew what our temperature was here! (*Snow behind window.*) Look out, Darker, and report what weather we have this morning.

(*Darker opens the door. The snow is seen falling heavily.*)

DARKER: The usual weather, Sir. (*Shuts the door, sighs, and exit.*)

CRAYFORD: (*Sighing too*) Ah! the usual weather! No change in these dreary regions! Well, well—duty, duty! Let me see, what have I to do? (*Looks round and sees the pestle and mortar.*) Oh, here are these wretched bones to be pounded for soup. I must rouse the cook. (*Calling*) John Want! That fellow little thinks how useful he is in keeping up my spirits. No matter how the cold pinches, he always amuses me. John Want!—the most inveterate croaker and grumbler in the world; and yet, according to his own account, the only cheerful man in the whole ship's company. John Want! John Want!

JOHN WANT: (*Speaking from the hammock*) Give me some more sleep!

CRAYFORD: Not a wink, you mutinous rascal! Rouse up!

JOHN WANT: (*Peeping out*) Lord, Lord! here's all my breath on my blanket. Icicles if you please, Sir, all round my mouth and all over my blanket. Every time I've snored I've frozen something. (*Gets out and goes to the fire.*) When a man gets the cold into him to that extent that he ices his own bed, it can't last much longer. I don't grumble.

CRAYFORD: Come here, Sir, and set to work on this mortar. What are you doing there?

JOHN WANT: (*Holding his chin over the fire*) Thawing my beard, Sir.

CRAYFORD: Come here, I say! What the devil are you about now?

JOHN WANT: (*At the fire with a watch in his hand*) Thawing my watch, Sir. It's been under my pillow all night, and the cold has stopped it. Cheerful, wholesome, bracing sort of climate to live in, isn't it, Sir? But I don't grumble.

CRAYFORD: No, we all know that. You are the only cheerful man of the ship's company. Look here. Are these bones pounded small enough?

JOHN WANT: (*Taking the pestle and mortar*) You'll excuse me, Sir, but how very hollow your voice sounds this morning!

CRAYFORD: Keep your remarks about my voice to yourself, and answer my question about the bones.

JOHN WANT: Well, Sir, they'll take a trifle more pounding. I'll do my best with them today, Sir, for your sake.

CRAYFORD: What do you mean?

JOHN WANT: I don't think I shall have the honour of making much more bone soup for you, Sir. Do you think yourself you'll last long, Sir? I don't, saving your presence. I think about another week or ten days will do for us all. (*Bateson approaches from the inner hut.*) This man looks bad, too, don't he, Sir? He was half an hour cutting one log of wood yesterday. His legs are swelling—and he loses his temper at trifles. I give *him* another day or two. (*Snow from Roof.*) I give the best of us a week. (*Looks up.*)

CRAYFORD: (*To Bateson*) Now then, my man, what is it?

BATESON: A message from Capt. Ebsworth, Sir.

CRAYFORD: Well?

BATESON: Captain Ebsworth is worse than ever with his freezing pains, Sir, this morning. He wants to see you, and give you some important directions, immediately.

CRAYFORD: I will go at once. Rouse the doctor. We shall want all the help he can give us. (*Exit, followed by Bateson.*)

JOHN WANT: (*Pounding the bones*) Rouse the doctor? Suppose the doctor should be frozen? He hadn't a ha'porth of warmth in him last night, and his voice sounded like a whisper in a speaking trumpet. (*Pours the bones into a saucepan.*) In with you, and flavour the hot water, if you can! When I remember that I was once an apprentice at a pastry cook's; when I think of the gallons of turtle soup that this hand has stirred up in a jolly hot kitchen; and when I find myself now mixing bones and hot water for soup, and turning into ice as fast as I can, if I wasn't of a cheerful disposition, I should feel inclined to grumble. John Want! John Want! Whatever had you done with your natural senses when you made up your mind to go to sea?

ALDERSLEY: (*Speaking from his bed place*) Who's that croaking over the fire?

JOHN WANT: Croaking? You don't find your own voice at all altered for the worse, do you, Mr. Frank? (*Aside*) I don't give him more than another six hours. He's one of your grumblers.

ALDERSLEY: What are you doing there?

JOHN WANT: Making bone soup, Sir, and wondering why I ever went to sea.

ALDERSLEY: Oh, it's John Want,—well, and why did you go to sea?

JOHN WANT: I'm not certain, Sir, sometimes I think it was a natural perversity. Sometimes I think it was false pride at getting over sea-sickness. Sometimes I think it was reading Robinson Crusoe, and books warning of me not to go to sea.

ALDERSLEY: (*Composing himself to sleep again*) Everybody gets over sea-sickness.

JOHN WANT: (*Stirring up the soup*) Not as I did, Sir. I got over sea-sickness by dint of hard eating. I was a passenger on

board a packet boat, Sir, when first I saw blue water. A nasty lopp of a sea come on just at dinner time, and I began to feel queer the moment the soup was put on the table. "Sick?" says the Captain. "Rather, Sir," says I. "Will you try my cure?" says the Captain. "Certainly, Sir," says I. "Is your heart in your mouth yet?" says the Captain. "Not quite, Sir," says I. "Mock turtle soup!" says the Captain—and helps me. I swallow a couple of spoonfuls, and turn as white as a sheet. The Captain cocks his eye at me. "Go on deck, Sir," says he, "get rid of the soup, and then come back to the cabin"—I got rid of the soup, and came back to the cabin. "Cod's head and shoulder," says the Captain—and helps me. "I can't stand it, Sir," says I. "You must," says the Captain, "because it's the cure." I crammed down a mouthful, and turned paler than ever. "Go on deck," says the Captain, "get rid of the cod's head,—come back to the cabin." Off I go, and \* back I come. "Boiled leg of mutton and trimmings," says the Captain, and helps me. "No fat, Sir," says I. "Fat's the cure," says the Captain and makes me eat it. "Lean's the cure," says the Captain and makes me eat it. "Steady?" says the Captain. "Sick," says I. "Go on deck," says the Captain. "Get rid of the boiled leg of mutton and trimmings, and come back to the cabin." Off I go, staggering—back I come more dead than alive. "Devilled kidneys," says the Captain. I shut my eyes, and got 'em down. "Cure's beginning," says the Captain. "Mutton chop and pickles." I shut my eyes and got *them* down. "Boiled Ham and Cayenne Pepper," says the Captain. "Glass of Stout and cranberry tart. Want to go on deck again?"—"No, Sir," says I. "Cure's done," says the Captain. "Never you give in to your stomach and your stomach will end in giving in to you." (*Music, "Begone Dull Care"—once only. Exit into inner hut with the soup. Enter Crayford.*)

\* (*Music "Begone Dull Care," ready.*)

CRAYFORD: Steventon! \*

STEVENTON: (*Rising from his bed place*) Here. Anything wanted?

CRAYFORD: The Captain is too ill to get up. He has been giving me some very important and very unexpected directions. There is to be a change at last in our wretched lives here.

STEVENTON: A change! What change?

CRAYFORD: The crew of the "Sea Mew" here, and the crew of the "Wanderer" on the other side of the hillock yonder (*snow*) are to be united today in this hut. Send a man with that message from our Captain to Captain Holding of the "Wanderer." (*Gives a paper to Steventon, who retires to the back of the hut, rouses a sailor and equips him for going out.*) Frank! Frank Aldersley!

ALDERSLEY: (*Rising from his bed place*) Yes.

CRAYFORD: One of the officer's chests had a backgammon board and dice in it, just before we abandoned the "Sea Mew"?

ALDERSLEY: It was my chest. I have got them still in my berth here. Shall I get them?

CRAYFORD: I only want the dice and the box for casting lots.

(*Frank gets the dice, and Steventon, having dismissed the messenger, returns to the front.*)

STEVENTON: (*Observing the dice-box as Frank gives it to Crayford*) Dice! Are we going to gamble at the North Pole?

CRAYFORD: No, no. (*To Frank*) I am afraid, Frank, you are hardly strong enough, after your illness, to make one of an exploring party.

ALDERSLEY: I am ready to venture. Any risk is better than pining and perishing here. (*Draws a stool to the fire, and sits down before it. Gradually falls asleep. Crayford seats himself at the opposite side of the stage from Frank.*)

\* (*Snow ready.*)

STEVENTON: (*Pointing at Frank and seating himself by Crayford*) He doesn't think of danger—he thinks of nothing but getting back to his sweetheart. By the way, who does poor Dennam's duty now in the "Wanderer's" hut?

CRAYFORD: One of the best officers and one of the hardest men in the Queen's Navy—Richard Wardour.

STEVENTON: \*Your liking for that man amazes me, Crayford.

CRAYFORD: Remember that I have had peculiar opportunities of knowing him. I sailed from England with him, in the "Wanderer," and was only transferred to the "Sea Mew" long after we were locked up in the Ice. I was Richard Wardour's companion on board ship for months, and I learnt there to do him justice.

STEVENTON: You can't deny the violence of his temper?

CRAYFORD: I don't deny it.

STEVENTON: Or the sullenness of his disposition?

CRAYFORD: Yes, I deny that. He is not naturally a sullen man. Under all his outward defects there beats a great and generous heart. You are prejudiced against Richard Wardour from not knowing enough of him.

STEVENTON: Then Frank there, is prejudiced too—for he agrees with me.†

CRAYFORD: ‡And what opportunities has Frank had of judging? I have never seen him in Wardour's society for five minutes together. (*Lowering his voice.*)

STEVENTON: (*Looking at Frank*) You needn't lower your voice. He's asleep and dreaming, I dare say.

CRAYFORD: He dreams a great deal, does he not?

\* (*Music "When thou sittest gazing," ready. Vision ready. See Clara Burnham at the fire.*)

† (*Music, "When thou sittest gazing on the red fire blazing," until "and making others hope, God bless her!"—then changing into "River, River," until Crayford speaks to Captain Holding.*)

‡ (*Snow ready.*)

† (*Snow ready.*)



STEVENTON: Yes, and always of the poor girl he is engaged to be married to. I dare say he is dreaming of her now. (*The figure of Clara Burnham appears in the fire, watching Frank as he sleeps.*) They must be very fond of each other. I heard him murmuring her name last night in his sleep. He set me thinking of my own poor wife. What are they doing now, Crayford, in the old house in Devonshire?

CRAYFORD: (*Snow*) Not despairing yet, if my sister Lucy is still among them. She has the gift of hoping and making others hope, God Bless her!

(*A hail outside—"Sea Mew" ahoy.* Frank wakes up, and the vision vanishes. Crayford and Steventon rise. The door is opened, and the men and officers of the "Wanderer" enter, headed by Capt. Holding and Richard Wardour. Richard Wardour has a gun with him. These two come down to the front and greet the officers of the "Sea Mew," Capt. Holding shaking hands cordially, Wardour nodding gruffly to Steventon and Frank, and only shaking hands with Crayford. The remainder of the "Wanderer's" men group themselves at the back.)

CRAYFORD: (*Shaking hands with Capt. Holding*) Captain Holding, I am heartily glad to see you. Now my men, the cask in the middle, here. (*Goes up with the Captain.*)

WARDOUR: (*Standing between Steventon and Frank*) What are we wanted here for?

STEVENTON: To consult, I suspect, on the best means of escaping from this horrible place.

WARDOUR: You may think it horrible—I like it.

ALDERSLEY: Like it! Good Heavens! Why?

WARDOUR: (*Seating himself in a corner*) Because there are no women here.

(*Snow ceases gradually.*)

ALDERSLEY: (*Seating himself on a bench with Steventon*) Just as great a bear as ever!

CRAYFORD: (*Placing himself at the cask, with Captain Holding by his side and the dice-box before him*) Brother officers and men of the "Wanderer" and "Sea Mew"!—The Commander of this Expedition, Capt. Ebsworth, is, I grieve to say, too ill to rise from his bed and address you himself. He has therefore given me his directions, as his second in command, and I now have the honour of speaking to you in his place. Without recalling all the hardships we have suffered for the last three years—the loss first of one of our ships, then of the other, the deaths of some of our bravest and best companions, the vain battles we have been fighting with the ice and snow and boundless desolation of these inhospitable regions—without dwelling on these things, it is my duty to remind you that this, the last place in which we have taken refuge, is far beyond the track of any previous expedition, and that consequently our chance of being discovered by any rescuing parties that may be sent to look for us is, to say the least of it, a chance of the most uncertain kind. You all agree with me, Gentlemen, so far?

THE OFFICERS: (*With the exception of Wardour who remains silent throughout the scene*) Yes! Yes!

CRAYFORD: It is therefore urgently necessary that we should make another, and probably a last, effort to extricate ourselves. The winter is coming on, game is getting scarcer and scarcer, our stock of provisions is running low, and the sick—especially, I am sorry to hear, the sick in the "Wanderer's" hut—are increasing in number, day by day. We must look to our own lives, and to the lives of those who are dependent on us—and we have no time to lose.

THE OFFICERS: Right! Right!—no time to lose.

CRAYFORD: The plan proposed is that a detachment of the ablebodied officers and men among us should set forth this very day, and make another effort to reach the nearest fur settlements, from which help and provisions may be dispatched to those who remain here. The new direction to be taken and the various precautions to be adopted, are all drawn out ready, the only question now before us, is who is to stop here, and who is to undertake the journey?

THE OFFICERS: Volunteers!

THE MEN: Aye, Aye, volunteers.

CAPTAIN HELDING: (*At the same time*) Not volunteers. No, No.

CRAYFORD: Wardour, do you say nothing?

WARDOUR: Nothing. Go, or stay—it's all one to me.

CRAYFORD: I am sorry to hear it. (*To the rest*) Well, suppose we say volunteers—who volunteers—to stay?

(*Dead silence. The officers and men look at each other confusedly.*)

CRAYFORD: You see we can't settle it by volunteering. You all want to go. Every man among us, who has the use of his limbs, naturally wants to go. But what is to become of those who have not got the use of their limbs. Some of us must stay and take care of the sick.

THE OFFICERS: True! True!

CRAYFORD: So we get back again to the old question, who among the ablebodied is to go, and who is to stay? Capt. Ebsworth says, and I say, let chance decide it!

OFFICERS AND MEN: Hear! Hear! Hear! Hurrah!

CRAYFORD: Here are dice. The numbers run as high as twelve—double sixes. All who throw under six, stay, all who throw over six, go. Is that agreed?

THE OFFICERS: Agreed! Agreed!

CRAYFORD: The people shall decide by throwing lots into a hat, if they prefer it. Here (*taking a packet from his pocket*) are a certain number of folded pieces of paper. Half have "Stay" written inside, and half, "Go." Men of the "Wanderer" and "Sea Mew" both, which will you have the hat or the dice?

THE MEN: The Hat!

CRAYFORD: Very well. A hat there!

JOHN WANT: (*Comes forward from among the men with a saucepan*) What do you say to this, Sir?

CRAYFORD: Not a hat among us without a hole in it, I suppose. Well! We must put up with the saucepan, and the Cook shall hand it round. (*Turns papers into saucepan.*) Shake it well!

JOHN WANT: May I draw first, Sir?

CRAYFORD: The Cook ought to stay by the kitchen.

JOHN WANT: Not when he has nothing to put in his saucepan but paper, Sir. (*General laugh.*)

CRAYFORD: Well, well. I admit the plea. Draw, my men. The officers, in order of seniority, throw meanwhile. The Captain of the "Wanderer" throws first. Under six—"Stay." Over six—"Go." There is the box, Captain Holding. (*Hands the box to the Captain—speaks to one of the officers.*) Take the slate, and mark down those who go, and those who stay.

(*Men draw lots. Officers cast dice. Exclaim at intervals "Go!" and "Stay!"*)

CAPTAIN HELDING: (*Casting*) Seven!

CRAYFORD: "Go!" I congratulate you, Sir. Now for my own chance. (*Casts*) Three!—Stay!—Ah, well, well if I can do my duty and be of use to others what does it matter whether I go or stay? Wardour, you are next in the absence of your first lieutenant. (*Wardour prepares to cast without shaking the box.*) Shake the box, man! Give yourself a chance of luck!

WARDOUR: (*Letting the dice fall out carelessly*) Not I! I've done with luck. (*Goes back to his place without looking at the dice.*)

CRAYFORD: Six! There you have a second chance in spite of yourself. You are neither under nor over—you throw again.\*

WARDOUR: Bah! It's not worth the trouble of getting up for. Somebody else throw for me. (*Looking at Frank*) You! You have got what the women call a lucky face.

ALDERSLEY: (*To Crayford*) Shall I?

CRAYFORD: Yes, if he wishes it.

ALDERSLEY: (*Casting*) Two!—He stays! Wardour, I am sorry I have thrown against you.

WARDOUR: I tell you again—go or stay, it's all one to me. You will be luckier when you cast for yourself.

CRAYFORD: It is his turn to throw for himself now.

ALDERSLEY: (*Casting*) Eight!—Hurrah! I go.

WARDOUR: What did I tell you? The chance was yours—you have thriven on my ill luck.

CRAYFORD: Steventon! It's your turn.

STEVENTON: (*Casting*) Five!

CRAYFORD: Stay! We must comfort each other. Men who stay, file into the Inner Hut.

(*They do so. Snow heavily. Music, "Spoilt Child" until Captain Holding goes out after his men.*)<sup>5</sup>

\* (*Snow ready.*)

<sup>5</sup> This part of the MS has been revised and Dickens' prompt note is not clear. It reads (*Gives box to Charles Collins. Charles Collins, Marcus Stone and William Webster throw on the chest. Charles Collins throws to Go. Marcus Stone throws to Stay and W. Webster throws to Go. Among the men directly afterwards, Young Mark Lemon throws to Go and M. Luard throws to Go; also George Evans throws to Go.*). C. Collins was given Darker's role at Manchester. He, Stone, and Webster apparently played as unnamed officers in the earlier performances. Dickens changed the action and dialogue so the "men" could draw lots while the

CAPTAIN HOLDING: Men who go, the Rendezvous is at this hut as soon as we can be ready for the journey. A couple of hands here, Lieutenant Crayford, to shovel away the drift—it chokes the door.

STEVENTON: (*Calling*) A couple of hands there with shovels to clear the snow from the door.

CRAYFORD: Here are the directions for the journey. (*Gives paper.*)

(*Exit Captain Holding accompanied by his officers. Bateson and Darker shut the door.*)<sup>6</sup>

ALDERSLEY: (*Going to his berth*) I shall pack at once. It won't take me two minutes. (*Rolls up his blankets, etc.*)

CRAYFORD: (*To Wardour who is about to go*) Wardour, you are one of those who stay. You will not be wanted yet at the Hut. Wait here a little. I wish to speak to you.

WARDOUR: Are you going to give me any more good advice?

CRAYFORD: Don't look at me in that sour way. I am only going to ask you a question.

ALDERSLEY: (*Rolling up bundle, etc.*) There! I am all ready officers threw dice, and thus shortened this action. He did not change the note, however. Presumably, Steventon gave the dice to C. Collins, but this is not clear.

<sup>6</sup> In a prompt note Dickens listed two divisions for the cast: Stay and Go; Sea Mew and Wanderer. In both lists, some names were deleted and others added, probably at Manchester as all the "Evans" were deleted. In the following, the deleted name has been put in parentheses. First list—Stay: Crayford, Wardour, Steventon, M. Stone, Bateson, John Want, John; Go: Capt. Holding, Frank, Charles Collins, (W. Webster), Langford, M. Lemon Jr., Luard, (George Evans), Wood, Darker. Second list—Sea Mew: Crayford, Aldersley, Steventon, Bateson, Darker, John Want, (George Evans), Wood, John, Johnson; Wanderer: Holding, Wardour, (Charles Collins), Wilson, Marcus Stone, (Tom Evans), Nathan, (James Berger), Mark Lemon Jr., Luard, (Buller), (William Webster), Langford.

for the March. Stop! I have forgotten my Snow-Shoes. (*Going out.*)

CRAYFORD: \*Frank, have you taken everything that belongs to you out of your berth?

ALDERSLEY: Yes.

CRAYFORD: We are almost as short of fuel as we are of provisions. Your berth, having no one to shelter now, will make good firing. If you see Bateson in the Storehouse, send him here with his axe.

ALDERSLEY: Very well. (*Exit by the door in flat.*)

CRAYFORD: Wardour, we are alone at last.

WARDOUR: Well!

CRAYFORD: You have both disappointed and surprised me today. Why did you say that it was all one to you whether you went or stayed? Why are you the only man among us, who seems indifferent whether we are rescued or not?

WARDOUR: Can a man always give a reason for what seems strange in his manner or his words?

CRAYFORD: He can try—when his friend asks him.

WARDOUR: That's true. Do you remember the first night at Sea, when we sailed from England in the Wanderer?

CRAYFORD: As well as if it was yesterday.

WARDOUR: A calm, still night. No clouds, no stars. Nothing in the sky but the broad Moon, and hardly a ripple to break the path of light she made in the quiet water. Mine was the Middle Watch that night. You came on deck, and found me alone.

CRAYFORD: And in tears.

WARDOUR: The last I shall ever shed.

CRAYFORD: Don't say that. There are times when a man is to be pitied indeed, if he can shed no tears.

WARDOUR: I should have quarreled with any other man who

\* (*Clear the set for the berths, and see wood is ready for Wardour. See John Thompson standing by.*)

had surprised me at that moment. There was something, I suppose, in your voice when you asked my pardon for disturbing me, that softened my heart. I told you I had met with a disappointment which had broken me for life. There was no need to explain further. The only hopeless wretchedness in this world, is the wretchedness that women cause.

CRAYFORD: And the only unalloyed happiness, the happiness they bring.

WARDOUR: That may be your experience of them. Mine is different. All the devotion, the patience, the humility, the worship, that there is in Man, I laid at the feet of a Woman. She accepted the offering as Women do—accepted it easily, gracefully, unfeelingly—accepted it as a matter of course. I left England to win a high place in my profession, before I dared to win her. I braved danger and faced death. I staked my life in the Fever-Swamps of Africa, to gain the promotion that I only desired for her sake—and gained it. I came back, to give her all, and to ask nothing in return but to rest my weary heart in the sunshine of her smile. I came back, to win the woman whom I had wrought for, all my life—wrought for, longer than Jacob wrought for Rachel. And her own lips—the lips I had kissed at parting—told me that another man had robbed me of her. I spoke but few words when we parted that last time, and parted for ever. "The time may come," I told her, "when I shall forgive *you*, but the man who has robbed me of you shall rue the day when you and he first met."

CRAYFORD: Wardour! Wardour! I would rather see you in tears again, than hear you say that.

WARDOUR: The treachery had been kept secret. Nobody could tell me where to find him; nobody could tell me who he was. What did it matter? When I had lived out the first agony, I could rely on myself—I could be patient, and bide my time.

CRAYFORD: Your time! What time?



WARDOUR: The time when I and that man shall meet, face to face. I knew it then—I know it now—it was written on my heart then, it is written on my heart now, that we two shall meet, and know each other. With that conviction strong within me, I accepted this service, as I would have accepted anything that set work and hardship and danger, like Ramparts, between my misery and me. With that conviction strong within me still, I tell you it is no matter whether I stay here with the sick, or go hence with the strong—I shall live 'till I have met that man. There is a day of Reckoning appointed between us. Here, in the freezing cold, or away in the deadly heat—in battle or in shipwreck—in the face of starvation or under the shadow of Pestilence—though hundreds are falling around me, I shall live! Live, for the coming of one day—live for the meeting with one man!

CRAYFORD: Wardour!

WARDOUR: (*Interrupting*) Look at me! Look how I have lived and thriven, with the heart-ache gnawing at me at home, with the winds of the Icy North whistling round me here! I am the strongest man among you. Why? I have fought through hardships that have laid the best-seasoned men of all our party on their backs. Why? What have I done that my life should throb as bravely through every vein of my body at this minute, and in this deadly place, as ever it did in the wholesome breezes of Home? What am I preserved for? I tell you again, for the coming of one day—for the meeting with one man.

CRAYFORD: Wardour, since we first met, I have believed in your better nature against all outward appearance. I have believed in you, firmly, truly, as your brother might. You are putting that belief to a hard test. If your enemy had told me that you had ever talked as you talk now—that you had ever looked as you look now—I would have turned my back on him as the utterer of a vile calumny against a just, a brave, and upright,

Man. O my friend, my friend, if ever I have deserved well of you, put away those thoughts from your heart! Face me again, with the stainless look of a man who has trampled under his feet the bloody superstitions of revenge, and knows them no more! Never, never, let the time come when I cannot offer you my hand, as I offer it now, to the man I can still admire—to the brother I can still love!

WARDOUR: (*Aside*) Why did I speak? Why did I distress him? (*To Crayford*) You are kinder to me than I deserve. Be kinder still, and forget what I have said. No, no, no more talk about me; I am not worth it. We'll change the subject, and never go back to it again. Let's do something. Is there no work in hand? No game to shoot, nothing to cut, nothing to carry? Hard work, Crayford, that's the true Elixir of *our* life! Hard work that stretches the muscles and sets the blood a-glowing, that tires the body and rests the mind! (*Enter Bateson with an axe.*) Here's a man with an axe. I'll do his work for him, whatever it is. (*Snatches the axe from Bateson, and gives him the gun.*)

BATESON: (*To Crayford*) Captain Ebsworth wishes to see you, Sir.

CRAYFORD: (*Looking at Wardour*) Wardour, you won't leave the Hut till I come back?

WARDOUR: No! no!

(*Exit Crayford.*)

BATESON: (*Holding out his hand for the axe, and offering the gun*) I beg your pardon, Sir—

WARDOUR: Nonsense! Why should you beg my pardon? Give me your work to do. My arm is stiff, and my hands are cold. Go you and look for the Bear I have failed to find. Some other man always finds what I miss—What was this axe wanted for?

BATESON: (*Pointing*) To cut up Lieutenant Aldersley's Berth there, into firewood, Sir.

WARDOUR: I'll do it. I'll have it down in no time.

BATESON: (*Aside*) He looks as if he'd have the whole hut down in no time, if he only got the chance of chopping at it. (*Exit.*)

WARDOUR: \*If I could only cut my thoughts out of me, as I am going to cut the billets out of this wood! (*Striking at the Berth*) Down it comes! A good axe! O me, if I had been born a Carpenter instead of a Gentleman!—Crash you go! Something like a grip on this handle!—Poor Crayford! His words stick in my throat—Crash again!—A fine fellow, a noble fellow!—Good again!—No use thinking, no use regretting,—What is said, is said.—Another plank out! It does not take much, Young Aldersley, to demolish *your* nest! Have at the back now. One, two, and down it comes. (*Tears out a long strip of wood.*) This must be cut in half.—Stop! What's here! A name carved in the wood! C.L.A.—Clara. (*Throwing down the wood*) Damn the fellow and his sweetheart too, why must she have that name, of all the names in the world!—The axe—where the Devil is the axe!—Work, work, work; nothing for it but work! (*Cuts out another plank.*) More carving! That's the way these young Idlers employ their long hours—F.A. These are his initials. Frank Aldersley—and under them here?—C.B.! His Sweetheart's Initials. Why, *her* cipher is C.B.—C.B.! Clara Burnham!—Nonsense!—Why Burnham, because the letter is B.? Hundreds of names—thousands—begin with B.—Where's the axe?—Crayford, come here, and let's go hunting. I don't like my own thoughts—I am cold, cold, all over. (*Goes to the fire and holds his hands over it.*) How they tremble! Steady, steady, steady! (*A pause. His voice drops to a whisper, and he looks all round him suspiciously.*) Has the day come, and the man? Here, at the end of the world? Here, at the last fight of all of us against starvation and death.†

\* (*Carpenter to stand with pieces of wood behind Aldersley's berth.*)

† (*Snow ready.*)

(*Enter Crayford.*)

CRAYFORD: Did I hear you call me?—Good Heaven, Wardour, how pale you are? Has anything happened?

WARDOUR: (*Hastily folding a handkerchief round his left hand*) I hurt myself with the axe—it's nothing—never mind. Pain has always a curious effect on me. I tell you it's nothing—don't notice. Where's Aldersley? \* He's a good fellow, isn't he? You know him well—the sort of fellow the women take to—likely to get on with them? God save you man, how you stare at me! Where's Aldersley?

ALDERSLEY: (*Entering*) Here! Who wants him? I wish he was in better marching order.

WARDOUR: (*Taking him abruptly by the arm*) Not strong, eh? You don't look it. I didn't speak civilly to you when you were casting the dice. I apologize. Shake hands. Come on! Not strong, eh? The dice had better have sent me away, and kept you here. I never felt in better condition in my life. We men of Kent are made of tough material.

ALDERSLEY: You come from Kent?

WARDOUR: From East Kent. Do you know that part of the country?

ALDERSLEY: (*Aside*) I ought to know something about East Kent, for some dear friends of mine once lived there.

WARDOUR: Ah? One of the County Families, I suppose? (*Suddenly to Crayford*) Why do you still stare at me so?

CRAYFORD: Why are you still looking unlike yourself?

WARDOUR: (*To Frank*) One of the County Families, of course. The Witherbys of Yew Grange, I dare say?

ALDERSLEY: No; but friends of the Witherbys, very likely—the Burnhams.

WARDOUR: (*Turning aside suddenly, lets the handkerchief*

\* (*Snow for Frank's entrance.*)

drop from his hand, which he presses convulsively over his heart.) Quiet! Quiet!

CRAYFORD: (*Picking up the handkerchief, and offering it significantly to Wardour*) You have dropped your bandage. Strange—

WARDOUR: (*Fiercely*) What's strange?

CRAYFORD: That there should be no blood on it.

WARDOUR: (*Snatching it away*) Next time you see it, there may be a stain or two. (*To Frank*) So you know the Burnhams? What became of Clara when her Mother married again?

ALDERSLEY: (*Haughtily*) Clara! What authorizes you to speak of the young lady in that familiar way?

WARDOUR: What right have you to ask me?

ALDERSLEY: (*Aside*) Why should I mind mentioning it? (*To Wardour*) Right?

WARDOUR: Yes. Right?

ALDERSLEY: The right of being engaged to marry her.\*

(*Wardour turning away again, his left hand slips down to a knife which he wears round his waist.*)

CRAYFORD: (*Standing on that side observes it*) You forget (*seizing his hand*) that your hand is hurt.

WARDOUR: (*To Frank, with over-strained politeness*) Impossible to dispute such a right as yours. Perhaps you will excuse me, when you know that I am one of Miss Burnham's oldest friends. My father and her father were neighbors. We always met like brother and sister.

ALDERSLEY: (*Warmly*) Say no more. I was in the wrong. Pray forgive me!

WARDOUR: Is she very fond of you?

ALDERSLEY: What a question! Make one at my wedding when we get back to England, and judge for yourself.†

\* (*Snow ready.*)

† (*Snow heavily until end of Act.*)

WARDOUR: (*Aside*) Make one at your wedding? (*Knock at the door in flat. It opens and Captain Holding enters.*) Yes—if you can walk to it out of your grave!

(*Men of the exploring party appear outside. Music, "River, River" until Act Drop.*)

CAPTAIN HOLDING: We are ready.

ALDERSLEY: And I am ready. I go! (*Throwing his snow-shoes over his shoulder.*)

WARDOUR: (*Aside*) And I stay? Stay when the day of Reckoning is come? Stay, when I have him at last?

CAPTAIN HOLDING: (*To Crayford*) I have a casualty to report, which diminishes our numbers by one. (*Wardour starts, and listens anxiously.*) My second Lieutenant, who was to have joined the Exploring Party, has had a fall on the Ice, and, I fear, has broken his leg.

WARDOUR: I will supply his place.

CRAYFORD: (*Looking alternately at Wardour and Frank*) No! Not you.

WARDOUR: Why not?

CAPTAIN HOLDING: Why not, indeed? Wardour is the very man to be useful on a long march. I was thinking of him myself. He is the healthiest of the party.\*

CRAYFORD: He has no right to volunteer. We settled that chance should decide who was to go, and who was to stay.

WARDOUR: And chance *has* decided it. Do you think we are going to cast the Dice again, and give an Officer of the Sea Mew a chance of replacing an officer of the Wanderer? There is a vacancy in our party, not in yours. And we claim the right of filling it as we please. I volunteer and my Captain backs me. Whose authority is to keep me here, after that? (*Calling*) Give me my gun there!—Where is that man?—Give me my gun!

CAPTAIN HOLDING: He is right, Crayford. The missing man

\* (*Stand by Everybody. Snow very hard.*)

belongs to my Hut, and in common justice, one of my officers ought to supply his place.

(Captain Holding takes leave of the officers. Exits to his men. John Want gives Go party bottles, etc. out of the box. The two parties of men take leave of each other. The Stay party gives three cheers. The Go party respond. Two men at the sledge.)

CRAYFORD: No hope that way. (Turns to Frank) Frank, Frank!

ALDERSLEY: Yes. What is it?

CRAYFORD: Take the advice of an old friend who wishes you well.

WARDOUR: Let him alone! Let him alone!

CRAYFORD: Frank, don't risk hardships you are unfit to bear.

WARDOUR: Let him alone!

CRAYFORD: (With great earnestness) Frank, you feel, yourself, how weak illness has left you, and how unfit you are to brave the exposure to cold, and long marches over the snow.

WARDOUR: (Suddenly taking Crayford by the throat) What do you mean! Leave him to his choice.

(Crayford catches Wardour's hand quietly in both of his. Frank interposes between them from behind. Crayford releasing one of his hands, puts Frank away with the other; all the time looking steadily in Wardour's face.)

CRAYFORD: I said to you, Wardour, a little while ago, there are times when a man is to be pitied. I pity you, now. Take your hand away.

WARDOUR: (Releasing him) I beg your pardon.\*

ALDERSLEY: Like a brave man! Come along!

WARDOUR: Bring me my gun there! (Bateson brings it.) Come then! Come over the Snow and the Ice! Come over the road that no human footsteps have ever trodden, and where no

\* (Act Drop ready.)

human trace is ever left! (Loads his gun, and rams the charge home.)

ALDERSLEY: (At the door) God bless you, Crayford!

(The men outside move off, leaving Frank alone in the snow.)

CRAYFORD: (Going to him, and seizing his hand) Heaven preserve you, Frank! (They shake hands, and Frank begins climbing the Drift.) I would give all I have in the world to be with you. While you can stand, keep with the Main Body, Frank!

WARDOUR: While he can stand, he keeps with Me!

(Exeunt Wardour and Frank. Crayford left alone in the Hut watching them over the snow.)

CURTAIN

END OF THE SECOND ACT

THE FROZEN DEEP

*Act the Third*



### Act III \*

*(Rises, Music, "Farewell to Lochabar" once. Scene: A Cavern on the Coast of Newfoundland, opening at the side, on another Cavern. In flat, opening on a bright view of Sea-Beach and Sea. On one side, John Want discovered, cording a box. On the other side, Nurse Esther, sitting on a fragment of rock, with her face hidden in her hands.)*

JOHN WANT: *(Looking round at Nurse)* There's a nice kind of fellow-servant for a cheerful man like me to keep company with! That woman is one great heap of grumbling from head to foot. If I had known before I was rescued, that I was to have much of her society, I think I should have preferred staying at the North Pole. I was very happy, keeping up every body's spirits at the North Pole. I had a good deal of sleep at the North Pole. Taking one thing with another, I think I must have been very comfortable at the North Pole, if I had only known it. Another man in my place might be inclined to say that this Newfoundland Cavern was rather a sloppy, slimy, drafty, seaweedy sort of a habitation to stop in. Another man might object to perpetual Newfoundland fogs, perpetual Newfoundland Cod Fish, and perpetual Newfoundland dogs. We had some very nice Bears at the North Pole. But never mind; it's all one to me; I don't grumble.

\* *(Before ringing up, see Properties ready according to List. See that John Want has pipe and fire-box.)*

NURSE ESTHER: (*Looking up, irritably*) Man, man, ye do nought else.

JOHN WANT: Nothing else but grumble? Is this unjoyful old woman joking? I grumble! Whoever heard a word of complaint issue from my lips? Whoever saw a sour look on my face?

NURSE ESTHER: Face! D'ye ca' yon stickit thing o' th' top o' your shoulders, a face, (*aside*) but why do I waste words on him? He's just a *puir* weak creature!

JOHN WANT: (*Aside*) She's only a cracked old woman. Always a going on about her Second Sight! I don't believe her First Sight is much to boast of, far less mentioning a second one. Second Sight! (*With great contempt*) No woman but a Scotch woman would set any vally by a second hand eye. And, like other second hand articles, it's mostly made up of bits that she picked up here, and bits that she picked up there; and then she goes and pieces them together, sometimes right and oftener wrong, and then forgets she did it, being a Muddle-headed female, and sets up for a prophet. Besides, she's a going fast. She won't last out the voyage back to England. How many of us will? (*Nurse rises and goes to back.*) It's very damp here. I have heard a great deal of coughing about me, and some of the men look dreadful delicate. I shall be agreeably surprised if we all get back alive to England, I shall indeed.

(*Music, "Spoilt Child" once. Enter Bateson by opening in flat. Nurse Esther goes to the back of the Stage, and looks out on the sea view.*)

BATESON: Look sharp with your work there, John Want. The ladies will be coming in here, directly.

JOHN WANT: If they have any regard for their constitutions in general, and their lungs in particular, they will keep out.

BATESON: Will they? It's my opinion, they will do nothing of the sort. Mrs. Steventon and Miss Ebsworth are within two

minutes walk of the Cave, and Miss Crayford and Miss Burnham are not far behind them.

JOHN WANT: Bateson, I consider you to be as sharp a man as myself—though not so cheerful. I want to know something about these ladies. As yet I can't for the life of me make out how they have got here on the coast of Newfoundland, can you?

BATESON: As I happen to have the use of my eyes and ears, I should say I could. What is it you want to make out? You know, as well as I do, that we were saved from starving and freezing to death by a searching expedition from England, which discovered us in that Arctic hut of ours. Well, the ladies are here—as I have heard them say a dozen times already—because they followed that expedition, to meet it on its return from the miserable North Pole.

JOHN WANT: Don't grumble. I won't hear any grumbling. Miserable North Pole, indeed! What do you call this place? But never mind—

BATESON: Well, and the ship in which the ladies took passage encountered the ship in which we sailed out of the Arctic Seas, abreast of this coast of Newfoundland. And, as far as I can understand it, we have all come ashore here for a day or two, for the sake of the health of these same ladies, after the confinement which they have undergone on board their vessel. That's all I know about it, and that's all I mean to say; for (*looks off*) here come two of the ladies, and Captain Ebsworth with them.

(*Enter Lieutenant Steventon, Mrs. Steventon, Captain Ebsworth, and Rose. Bateson touches his hat, and goes out. Nurse Esther comes down to front. John Want continues cording the box.*)

STEVENTON: (*To Captain Ebsworth*) There is some of the baggage still to be stowed away in the boat, Captain Ebsworth. Shall I go and give the men their orders?

CAPTAIN EBSWORTH: There is no need. I have a report to receive from one of the midshipmen, who is now awaiting me on the Beach; and I will give him the necessary directions. (*To his daughter*) Rose my love, wait here. I will come back for you.

ROSE: Don't be long, father. I have not seen half enough of you yet.

(*Captain Ebsworth takes leave of her, and exit.*)

MRS. STEVENTON: (*Pointing to Nurse*) Here is the poor old Nurse, just as gloomy as ever. Let us try, Rose, if we can't cheer her a little. (*Goes with Rose and talks with Esther.*)

STEVENTON: (*To John Want*) Have you done cording that box?

JOHN WANT: I have done it as well as I can, Sir, but the damp of this place is beginning to tell upon our very ropes—I say nothing about our lungs—I only say, our ropes.

STEVENTON: Pooh! To look at your wry face and hear your croaking voice, one would think that our rescue from the Arctic Regions, was a downright misfortune. You deserve to be sent back.

JOHN WANT: I could be just as cheerful as ever, Sir, if I was. I hope I am thankful, but I don't like to hear the North Pole run down, in such a sloppy place as this. It was very clean and snowy at the North Pole, and it's very damp and sandy here. Do you never miss your bone soup now, Sir? I do. It mightn't have been strong, but it was very hot, and the cold seemed to give it a kind of Meaty flavor as it went down. (*Steventon coughs.*) Was it you that was a coughing so long last night, Sir? I don't presume to say anything against the air of this place, but I should be glad to know it wasn't you that was a coughing so hollow. Would you be so obliging as just to feel the state of these ropes with the ends of your fingers, Sir? You can dry them afterwards on the back of my jacket.

STEVENTON: You ought to have a stick laid across the back of your jacket. Take that box down to the boat directly. A croaking vagabond! He would have grumbled in the Garden of Eden.

JOHN WANT: I could be cheerful anywhere, Sir—but there must have been a great deal of troublesome work with the Flower-Beds, in the Garden of Eden! (*Exit with the box.*)

NURSE ESTHER: (*To Mrs. Steventon and Rose*) Where's the use o' telling me to be comforted, when ye keep me and my Nurse-child, Clara, apart?

ROSE: Surely not apart, when you and Clara are both here with the rest of us, on the coast of Newfoundland.

NURSE ESTHER: I sailed fra' England i' the same ship wi' Clara, but was I in Clara's cabin? I am here i' th' same wild land wi' Clara, but do I sleep at her feet? Do I go out wi' Clara to the yellow sands? Am I bye when she looks ower sea yon, for the ship that shall never come? For the ship that shall ne'er bring back the plighted lover, lost beyond the Frozen Deep?

STEVENTON: Why do you separate them?

MRS. STEVENTON: Because Esther is superstitious herself, and makes her young mistress superstitious too. Now, when we know the dreadful truth that Frank Aldersley is among the missing men, hardly a word passes Nurse Esther's lips which it is not ruin to Clara to hear.

NURSE ESTHER: Said I a' false when I said they were lost? Came not the time when ye a' left the auld house—when ye could bide no longer—when ye took ship yer ain sel, and sailed awa' here to the strange land, to meet the Seekers on their return? To get for yer ain sel, the tidings ye had no patience to let others get for ye? I mind it weel. The ship was abreast o' this barren land when ye heard the cry o' "Sail!" Ye crowded on the deck, and me amang ye. The mist was flying off before the sun and the morning breeze; and a' along the path o' light, and ower



the leaping waves, the Ships o' the Seekers came booming down on us. The voices cheered fra' the decks. The bright flag flew up, like a Lark, into the morning sky. And ye a' fell on your knees and lookit up into the sunny Heavens, and wept.

(*Exeunt Mr. and Mrs. Steventon.*)

ROSE: O Nurse, Nurse, think of Clara! Think of Frank Aldersley! And say no more!

NURSE ESTHER: I said, lang syne, in England, that they were lost. Said I a' false? The Seekers gave you back your father, gave Lucy Crayford back her brother, gave back her husband to the young wife that was wi' you, the noo,—but did they give back Frank Aldersley to my Nurse-child? Where there no lost men left, that no Seekers could find? And was Frank no among them?

(*Mrs. Steventon looks in at the entrance of the Cave.*)

MRS. STEVENTON: (*Whispering*) Rose, Rose!

ROSE: (*Running to her*) Yes.

MRS. STEVENTON: Get Nurse Esther out of the way. (*Music, "Farewell to Lochabar," once, changing into "Has sorrow thy young days shaded,"—twice.*) Clara is coming. (*Exit.*)

ROSE: Here! Nurse, Nurse! Come in here. (*Pointing to the side Cavern*) I want to speak to you.

NURSE ESTHER: What for in there? Is Clara there?

ROSE: Yes, yes. Come, come Nurse, come with me.

(*Exit, leading Esther with her into side cavern. Enter Clara by the opening in flat, with Lieutenant Crayford and Lucy, on either side, leading her.*)

LUCY: You feel stronger and better, Love, after your little walk in the fresh air?

CLARA: I am stronger, Lucy, than you think. The sunshine strengthens me. My heart feels warmer in it. You have not seen any tears in my eyes—have you?—since the morning? I think I could answer for myself all day, but for the sailing of the ship, so

soon, which is to take us back to England. Our approaching departure weighs heavily and more heavily on my spirits. Our going away from this place seems like giving up the last hope of Frank.

LUCY: (*Turning aside*) O how she wrings my heart!

CLARA: (*To Crayford*) I must hope still. You don't think him lost past all hope, I am sure?

CRAYFORD: (*Uneasily*) My dear young lady, my own position was once so hopeless that I ought to be the last man in the world to admit a thought of despair.

CLARA: (*Thoughtfully*) I see so much of the Mercy and Goodness of the Great Creator all around me—such brightness and beauty to delight us in the Earth and Heaven—such a blessed ending to all the past anxiety and sorrow of Lucy, and Caroline, and Rose, that I cannot lose hope. The very waves looked joyful as we walked along the shore just now. The poor stunted bushes on the cliff rustled as happily in the sweet air as the tall Elm Trees in our English home. When I heard them, I thought of the Trees that Frank and I used to walk under. Shall I see those Trees again, when we get back to England—and not see Frank! Shall I never, never shew him the withered leaves of his Nosegay, which I have kept here so long, for his sake! O! I must hope, and you must help me by hoping too!

CRAYFORD: (*Turning away his head*) What can I say to her!

LUCY: You know, Love, that I have but one hope now. The hope that I shall yet see you happy.

CLARA: (*To Crayford*) Don't look distressed. (*Takes his hand.*) I seem to have known you all my life. I can't help treating you, almost as familiarly as Lucy does. She tells me you were always fond of Frank. You must often have taken his hand in kindness. It is such a real comfort to me now, to take yours. (*Kisses his hand.*)

CRAYFORD: My dear, dear child! Don't talk so. (*Dashes his*

*hand across his eyes.*) What has come to me? Am I going to set two women an example of crying?

CLARA: Yes, yes; let us talk of Frank. I like to hear how brave he was when he left the Hut, and went out with the best of them to battle his way through the Snow. Lucy, he was the youngest of all, but he was as steady and brave as the best Seaman of the crew. He slung his snow-shoes over his shoulder with a smile. There was not a trembling tone in his voice, when he said Good Bye for the last time. *(To Crayford)* You said that Nelson himself never faced danger more bravely than my Frank?

CRAYFORD: Never.

CLARA: And how gentle he always was, with me! *(Lays her head on Lucy's shoulder.)*

LUCY: My love, you are beginning to look pale again. You want rest. Come inside. You can rest nicely, inside.

CRAYFORD: *(Crossing to Lucy behind Clara, and whispering)* Are any of our Officers in there?

LUCY: How can any of our Officers be there? Did we not see them all employed on the Beach? Come, Clara; come in, and rest!

CLARA: Let me go alone, Lucy. I have kept you too much apart from your brother, already. Pray give me my way in this; pray let me go alone!

LUCY: You must promise then to call, the moment you want me.

CLARA: *(Kissing her)* Always thinking of others; never of yourself! *(To Crayford)* We hope for Frank. Remember, we all three still hope for Frank! *(Exit into the Inner Cavern.)*

CRAYFORD: Every look, every word, that escapes her, goes to my soul. Hope! If she knew the whole truth, she would never hope again.

LUCY: William, you seem strangely anxious to keep Clara and your brother Officers as much apart as possible. Where would be the harm, if she did happen to meet with any of them while we are here?

CRAYFORD: She might talk to them—

LUCY: Well?

CRAYFORD: And might hear—

LUCY: Well?

CRAYFORD: What might kill her on the spot.

LUCY: In Heaven's name, why do you say that?

CRAYFORD: Is she out of hearing?

LUCY: Far, far! Have you been deceiving her—have you been deceiving me? What is the truth? Frank is one of the missing men, who formed the Exploring Party. And Wardour is one of the men who remained in the Hut. He must have died there, before you were found and rescued, or you would have brought him back. I gathered that, from what you said.

CRAYFORD: Lucy, I have still to tell you the worst. I said, before Clara, remembering how you cautioned me privately, this morning, to be careful in what I said to her, that there was division in the councils of the Exploring Party after they had been three days out. I told you that one portion of the men returned to the Hut, and that the other portion pushed forward with Frank.

LUCY: You mentioned the names of the men who went on with Frank.

CRAYFORD: I was obliged to mention names, or Clara might have suspected something.

LUCY: But what names?

CRAYFORD: God forgive me the falsehood! I used the names of the Dead. Nor did I tell you—how could I, before Clara!—that Richard Wardour contrived to be one of the Exploring Party. Of

all who served in our Ships, Frank Aldersley and Richard Wardour are the only missing men. (*Lucy clasps her hands in despair.*) It is hard, it is shameful, to say the thing that is false, but who could kill that sweet gentle creature with the dreadful truth? I trembled like a child in the darkness when the exploring party came back exhausted to the hut, and I heard who the two men were who had gone on without them. Of all the Forlorn Hope, poor Frank alone supported Wardour's fierce resolution to press on. The noble fellow believed that every forward footstep he took brought him nearer to his promised wife. The snow was falling fast, the view was narrowed over the icy wilderness, and Frank Aldersley and Richard Wardour were seen no more.

(*Clara appears at the inner cavern.*)

CLARA: (*Calling*) Lucy!

(*Crayford and Lucy both start.*)

LUCY: She hasn't heard you, William—she hasn't heard. (*To Clara*) Coming, my love. (*Exit.*)

CRAYFORD: (*Walking backward and forward in agitation*) If we were only in England, if we were only back at home, we might hope to keep the secret from her for the rest of her life. But here, surrounded by those who know the truth, there is a risk of her discovering the worst every hour in the day. (*Enter Bateson and Darker, bringing a small table and arranging meat, bread, etc. upon it.*) What is it? What do you want here?

BATESON: Dinner time, Sir. The officers and the ladies are just coming in from the beach. (*Assists Darker to spread the table.*)

(*Enter Lieut. Steventon, Mrs. Steventon, Capt. Ebsworth, Rose, and rescued officers, by opening in Flat.*)

STEVENTON: (*To Crayford*) We have finished with the water casks and the fish. It is within half an hour of flood tide and

when the ship is ready to sail, she will fire a gun, hoist a flag and send a boat ashore.<sup>7</sup>

CRAYFORD: (*In a low tone*) I can trust myself before Clara now. (*Exit into inner cavern.*)

STEVENTON: Well, ladies and gentlemen, (*exit Darker*) this is our last dinner on the coast of Newfoundland. Give me leave to propose a toast at the first round of the bottle. To our first dinner on the shores of old England! (*Mrs. Steventon and Rose look towards opening in Flat, and set their glasses down with a cry of alarm.*) What's the matter?

(*Music, "River, River" once. All rise. Wardour appears at opening in Flat, looking in at the party. He is clothed in rags; his hair is tangled and grey; his looks and gestures are those of a man whose reason is shaken, and whose bodily powers are sinking from fatigue.*)

STEVENTON: What a strange figure! Who are you?

WARDOUR: A starving man.

ROSE: Pray give him some food!

WARDOUR: Throw me some bones from the table. Give me my share along with the dogs. (*Advances a few steps.*)

STEVENTON: Bateson, give him some bread and meat. (*Bateson obeys.*) Where do you come from?

WARDOUR: (*Pointing to the distant view*) From the sea.

STEVENTON: Shipwrecked, I suppose? I heard something of a strange boat having been thrown on the beach thirty or forty miles higher up the coast. When were you wrecked, my man?

<sup>7</sup> This dialogue was added after the fair copy was made. It suggests that at Manchester Dickens may have had to dispense with the back cloth for Act III, on which the "Queen's ship" was rather small, or have had to call attention to it by having a small flag raised. No reviewer or observer of the Tavistock House or the Gallery of Illustration performances mentioned a flag being hoisted or a boat coming ashore.

WARDOUR: When? (*Pauses and makes gestures indicating an effort to collect his ideas.*) When? (*Shakes his head.*) I can't get the wash of the sea out of my ears. I can't get the shining stars all night, and the burning sun all day out of my brain. When was I wrecked? When was I first adrift in the boat? When did I get the tiller in my hand, and fight against hunger and sleep? When did the gnawing here (*touching his breast*) and the burning here (*touching his head*) first begin? I can't tell ye'. I have lost all reckoning of it. I can't eat, I can't sleep, I can't get the wash of the sea out of my ears. What are you baiting me with questions for? Let me eat.

STEVENTON: (*To Captain Ebsworth*) The poor wretch is out of his mind. Bateson, make a little weak grog in one of those empty bottles and give it to him.

MRS. STEVENTON: See! he is eating no more. What is he going to do with his bread and meat?

(*Wardour looks fixedly at the food in his hand—glances round, smiles, and puts the bread and meat in an old bag slung over his shoulder. Bateson gives him the rum and water.*)

WARDOUR: (*Drinking from the bottle and then holding it up to the light*) May I keep what's left?

STEVENTON: To be sure you may!

WARDOUR: (*Again looks round—then puts the bottle in the bag*) Women among ye? Are they English? Are they young? Let me look closer at them. (*Mrs. Steventon and Rose shrink back.*) No! That's not *her* face! No! Not found yet!

MRS. STEVENTON: Do pray ask him something about the woman he is looking for.

STEVENTON: Who is it you want to find? Your wife? (*Wardour shakes his head.*) Who then? What is she like?

WARDOUR: (*Sorrowfully and gently*) Young, with a fair sad face, with kind tender eyes, with a soft clear voice. Young and

loving and merciful. I keep her face in my mind, though I can keep nothing else. I must wander, wander, wander—restless, sleepless, homeless—till I find her! Over the ice and over the snow—tossing on the sea, tramping over the land—awake all night, awake all day—wander, wander, wander, till I find *her*!

(*Enter Crayford from the inner cavern.*)

CRAYFORD: Who is that?

STEVENTON: A poor mad—

CRAYFORD: Mad? (*Looks steadily at Wardour.*) Mad? (*Recoils.*) Steventon! Ebsworth! Am I in my right senses? My God! it is!—(*seizing him*) Richard Wardour! (*Music, "River, River" until Wardour gives Frank to Clara.*) Alive! Alive to answer for Frank!

(*All start. Faint cry from Clara in inner cavern.*)

WARDOUR: Let me go!

CRAYFORD: Why are you here alone? Where is Frank, you villain! Where is Frank?

WARDOUR: Villain? And where is Frank? Ah! I think I know your meaning. I think I dimly understand.

CRAYFORD: (*To them all*) Look at this conscience-stricken wretch! Confess, unhappy ruin of a man! Tell us how it was done.

CLARA: (*Appears at side entrance, restrained by Lucy.*) I will see for myself! I heard Richard's name—I heard Frank's name. (*Breaks away. Lucy hides her face in her hands. Crayford tries to restrain Clara.*) Let me by! let me by! (*Faces Wardour standing alone, and stops petrified at the sight.*)

WARDOUR: (*With a low cry of recognition*) Found! (*Turns instantly, and breaks his way out of the cavern. Lucy hurries to Clara's side.*)

CRAYFORD: Follow him! On your lives follow him! (*Exeunt several.*)



CLARA: Frank, Frank, Frank!

(Murmur without. Wardour rushes in, breathless and staggering, bearing Frank in his arms. Cheering from the men outside. Great sensation.)

WARDOUR: (To Clara) Saved, saved for you! (Releases Frank. Clara falls on Frank's bosom. Wardour looks at them, and speaks again after a moment in a faint, altered voice.) He's footsore and weary, Clara. But I have saved him—I have saved him for you! I may rest now—I may sleep at last—the task is done, the struggle is over.

CLARA: (Referring to Frank) His poor feet! This way! here, here!

(Leads Frank, with the assistance of the rest, except Crayford, to a chest at the back of the cave, where all close round them.)

ALDERSLEY: (Making an opening) Where is Wardour? Help him! Never mind me! Help Wardour.

CRAYFORD: (Supporting him) Wardour! dear Wardour! Old friend whom I have wronged, remember and forgive me!

WARDOUR: (Regardless of him) I have made her happy. I may lay down my weary head now on the mother earth that hushes all her children to rest at last! Sink, heart! Sink, sink to rest! Look at them! They have forgotten me already.

CRAYFORD: Wardour, look at me! Look at your old friend!

WARDOUR: (Vacantly) My friend? Yes, yes, yes—he looks kindly at me—he looks like a friend. My eyes are dim, friend—my mind is dull—I have lost all memories but the memory of her. Dead thoughts—all dead thoughts but that one! And yet, he looks kindly? Why has his face gone down with the wreck of all the rest?—Hark ye, friend? Never let Frank know it! There was a time when the fiend within me hungered for his life.

CRAYFORD: Hush! hush!

WARDOUR: I took him away alone—away with me over the

waste of snow—he on one side, and the tempter on the other, and I between them, marching, marching, till the night fell and the camp-fire was all aflame. If you can't kill him, leave him when he sleeps—the tempter whispered me—leave him when he sleeps! I set him his place to sleep in apart; but he crept between the Devil and me, and nestled his head on my breast, and slept here. Leave him! Leave him!—the voice whispered—Lay him down in the snow and leave him! Love him—the lad's voice answered, moaning and murmuring here, in his sleep—Love him, Clara, for helping me! love him for my sake!—I heard the night-wind come up in the silence from the great Deep. It bore past me the groaning of the ice-bergs at sea, floating, floating past!—and the wicked voice floated away with it—away, away, away for ever! Love him, love him, Clara, for helping me! No wind could float that away! Love him, Clara,—(His voice dies away and his head sinks.)

ALDERSLEY: Help me up! I must go to him! Clara, come with me. (Advances between Clara and Steventon.) Wardour! Oh help Wardour! Clara, speak to him!

CLARA: Richard! (No answer.)

ALDERSLEY: Richard!

WARDOUR: Ah, poor Frank! I didn't forget you, Frank, when I came here to beg. I remembered you, lying down outside in the shadow of the rocks. I saved you your share of food and drink. Too weak to get at it now! A little rest, Frank! I shall soon be strong enough to carry you down to the ship!

ALDERSLEY: Get something to strengthen him, for God's sake! Oh, men! men! I should never have been here but for him! He has given all his strength to my weakness; and now, see how strong I am, and how weak he is! Clara! I held by his arm all over the ice and snow. His hand dragged me from the drowning men when we were wrecked. He kept watch when I was sense-

less in the open boat. Speak to him, Clara,—speak to him again!

CLARA: Richard, dear Richard, look at your old playmate! Have you forgotten me?

(Music "River, River," merging at "kiss me before I die!" into "Those Evening Bells" which lasts until the Curtain has fallen.)

WARDOUR: Forgotten you? (Lays his hand on Frank's head.) —Should I have been strong enough to save him, if I could have forgotten you? Stay! Some one was here and spoke to me just now. Ah! Crayford! I recollect now. (Embracing him) Dear Crayford! Come nearer! My mind clears, but my eyes grow dim. You will remember me kindly for Frank's sake? Poor Frank! Why does he hide his face? Is he crying? Nearer, Clara—I want to look my last at you. My sister, Clara!—Kiss me, sister, kiss me before I die!

(Gun is fired from ship and boat is drawn to shore.)<sup>8</sup>

<sup>8</sup> This is an addition to the fair copy. The boat is not mentioned in the reviews of the Tavistock House or Gallery of Illustration performances. It was probably added to the spectacle at Manchester.

#### CURTAIN

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