

ACT ONE
PROLOGUE

*Oscar and Lucinda make their stand. He holds a stone. She holds a teardrop of glass.
Behind them, the chorus, poised, suspended.*

Oscar & Lucinda

Believe

Chorus

chance by chance

Choice by choice

Oscar & Lucinda

Pick a story and believe

Chorus

Place your bets:

(S Br1) always meant to be

(Br2 B) just how the world works

All

This is how it goes:

Oscar

There will be a system

Lucinda

I will have a purpose

Oscar

There shall be the will of God

Lucinda

There shall be nothing but chance

Oscar

I submit to Providence

Lucinda

I dance with coincidence

Oscar

I seize this stone

Lucinda

I cradle this glass

Oscar & Lucinda

I remake the world.

Chorus

This is how it starts:
Hopscotch

Oscar

A structure to divine the will of God.
Each square, a meaning.

Lucinda

A mirror.

Chorus

A future for Oscar.

Chorus (S Br1 B)

Triangle:

Theophilus

Theophilus. Father. Naturalist. Purist. Evangelist.

Chorus (S Br1 Br2)

Alpha:

Stratton

Anglican. Reverend Stratton. Disappointed. Gardener.

Theophilus

Heretic!

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Omega:

Chorus (Br1)

The end of all things.

Chorus (S)

Revelation.

Lucinda

A single piece of glass
Like a teardrop, like a seed
Strike it with a hammer, any strength
Smash it with all your force
You will not break the glass

Oscar

You must not break the design

Chorus [Elizabeth]

You cannot break Lucinda.

Lucinda

Unless you find the point.

Oscar

Show me a sign that Thou talkest to me

Lucinda

Show me a firework of glass

Oscar

Show me a sign

Lucinda

An explosion of dewdrops

Oscar & Lucinda

Show me! Show me!

Oscar throws the stone. Lucinda releases the Prince Rupert's Drop.

The chorus seize the stone in midair and strike it against the tail of the glass teardrop.

It breaks into a million pieces.

Chorus

shatter shatter ~

splinter teardrop dewdrop ~

Lucinda

seedling

Chorus

glass break glass heart break glass ~

Revelation:

The chorus place the stone down. Oscar is appalled.

Chorus

alpha alpha alpha

Stratton

Anglican

Theophilus

My only wish is to hold you, child.
All I want is to lie and embrace my son

Oscar

Father

Theophilus

Your form is so frail, like a bird
Make my body a cage to keep you from harm.

Oscar

I ...

Theophilus

What pride!
What arrogance!

Oscar

... am called

Theophilus

You are already given to God.

Oscar

I am called away

Theophilus

Pagan signs and witches' marks.
Apostasy!

Stratton

You, boy, run home to your father.
Get off my lettuces.

Oscar

I am called, Reverend, called

Lucinda

I am called to the glass

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

drop / tear / drop / teardrop / tear / tear / me ~

Lucinda

Saint Rupert's Drop
Little shard, little seed
touch it right and splinter and fury

Elizabeth

Fury and soot

Lucinda

Future and light

Elizabeth

I have made
in my daughter
a proud square peg
in a colony which is
ocean to ocean
old round holes.

Chorus (TBrB)

round old round old round stone

Lucinda

Shatter the glass

Elizabeth

We are meant to build, my peg,
so we free ourselves,
every one of our selves:
Industry, hope of womankind!
Factories like shining wheel-hubs
Radiating spokes of care.
We will raise up smokestacks
In this nation yet to be born.

Lucinda

Power and shine

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

like / a / tear / drop ~

Lucinda

In a fragment of glass
I see it rise...

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

like / a / seed ~

Lucinda

I will have it.
I am called.

Oscar

I am called.

Chorus

(B) I am stone.

(S Br1) I am glass.

(Br2) I am God.

(S Br1 B) I am chance.

(Br2 B) I am shattered.

(S Br1 Br2) I am gambled.

Oscar & Lucinda

I will bet everything.

Everything. Everything.

Scene One - Parents

*Oscar watches Theophilus collecting specimens in the ocean;
Elizabeth and Lucinda together.*

Chorus (Br1) [Child]

Hosanna!

Oscar

Lord, if it be your will

Chorus [Child]

Hosanna in the highest!

Oscar

Show me a sign

Theophilus

Hosanna in the highest!

Chorus (Br1 B)

Hosanna in the highest!

Elizabeth

Witch!

wicked loveless witch!

God save me.

Dead, you are dead, you silly man,

You have widowed me.

I am free...

(no I cannot talk I cannot think of that)

O / a / a (*she cries*)

Lucinda

Mama?

Elizabeth

My palm, Lucinda

Feel that rough.

Calloused by this country.

Stupid farmhouse romance.

o / a / a (*yelp of pain*)

Now I can go...

o / a (*pain*)

Lucinda

Blood, mother,

Blood on your lips

Elizabeth

I have bitten my tongue
I have bitten my cheek
I have tried to wound myself silent
Your father's horse took fright
Scared of a prayer, the fool.

Chorus [Child]

Hosanna in the highest!

Elizabeth

His head is broken.

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

Glass / bone / splinter and fury
Omega

Lucinda

Chance.
What a chance.

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

Triangle

Oscar

My father
Witness to life
in the freezing sea
The awful water
Vast expanse of terror

Theophilus

You want to see God?
Look at His wonders,
Look in the sea:
Anemone, anthea, red-bannered dulse
sleek green prawn or fragile blossom.
A flower
A proof of God.

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

Revelation

Oscar

Lord, if you wish me to go
Smite him.

Theophilus is wounded. Blood comes from his side.

Theophilus

Hosanna!

Oscar

Dear God,

Theophilus

Blessed is he that cometh...

Oscar

see what I have begun...

Theophilus

...in the name of the Lord.

Elizabeth

Chimney and flame:

Those are my names,

Elizabeth & Lucinda

Chimney and flame.

Elizabeth

We have no steel,

no mill,

no spinning or grinding or making or

Elizabeth & Lucinda

flash

Lucinda

flicker of light...

We have the remains:

My dead father's farm

and my dead father's clothes.

Elizabeth

Work the land.

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

Call

Oscar

I am called

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

Burn

Elizabeth

Burn the rest.

Oscar

I am called by the stone

Stratton

Mind the lettuces, boy, mind the rake

Oscar

Reverend Stratton, priest of God

Stratton

Mind the ditch and the cesspit

Oscar

This is the man...

Chorus [Child]

... that cometh in the name of the Lord

Stratton

Mind the mould and the rust and broken thatch.

There are days when a patch of damp
is enough to make a grown man a child.

Oscar

This is my future...

Stratton

Think of your father.
Surely he loves you?

Oscar

Loves me...

Theophilus

Look at His wonders...

Oscar

Oh, he loves me
Dreadfully.

Theophilus

Look at my Oscar...

Stratton

Surely you love him?

Oscar

Not– I could not–
I could–
I could not fail to love him.
I think not of this earth.
He is not saved.

Theophilus

Look at my boy...

Elizabeth

Look at my child.
She is happy
because I have made her blind.
Kept her far from the city
Silenced any truth
I built a fairy land
for her to live in.
I could not have done anything else.

They hate women like us.
They hate my little square peg.

Scene Two - Beliefs

Chorus (tutti)

Believe

Lucinda

Tell me truth

Chorus

Believe

Oscar

What shall I believe?

Elizabeth

I– [she chokes]

*Stratton and Theophilus vie for Oscar's allegiance;
Lucinda watches Elizabeth die and cannot help her.*

Theophilus & Stratton

I believe I see God

Theophilus

Everywhere

Stratton & Chorus (Br1), joined by Oscar

In the story:

Stratton

loaves and fishes

Theophilus & Chorus (Br1), joined by Oscar

On the land:

Theophilus

hedgerow, moss, and robin

Stratton & Chorus (Br1), joined by Oscar

In the Book:

Stratton

Lazarus risen

Orchestra (whispered)

ss

Elizabeth

I cannot speak

Theophilus & Chorus (Br1), joined by Oscar

Out at sea:

Theophilus

Polycera ocellata

Pretty, green, abundant

Stratton

Burning bush

Elizabeth

I have done something wrong
thirst– my thirst–

Orchestra (whispered)

th-ir-s-t

Theophilus

Eolis coronata

Crowded clusters, crimson, blue

Stratton

Rod into serpent

Theophilus

Crown of membrane, tentacles adrift

Stratton

Plague of boils

Theophilus

Life is such a lovely little thing.

Stratton

River turned to blood.

Elizabeth

I have made a mistake.
the word in my throat
is covered in sand.

Orchestra (whispered)

s-a-n-d

Elizabeth dies.

Oscar

I believe so many stories now.

Lucinda alone, in mourning.

Lucinda

My parents' lives are turned to paper
Stolen money from stolen land
on this wide and stolen country.
I should throw it all away
I should hold it tight as life.

I know
I cannot bear this place where I am known
They smirk and call me 'heiress'
Every one with an opinion on my life.

I know I will not wear a bustle in the city
I will wear bloomers like my mother
I will be loud to match her silence.

I am—
I am curdled love
and rage, rage at death
if you could feel my heart beat
you would burn
White-hot
Like sand into glass

Lucinda travelling, with the Boatman.

Boatman

Oil on water
Boats choke the harbour
Rust drinks up the light

Lucinda

This will be my path into the city...

Boatman

This way's blocked, miss.

Chorus (S Br1 Br2)

What a chance

Boatman

Take you past the glassworks.

Chorus (S Br1 Br2)

(Like a teardrop)

Lucinda

Chimney and flame...
What is it named?

Boatman

Named for some Prince Rupert.

Lucinda

Prince Rupert's Glassworks...

Chorus (S Br1 Br2)

(Like a seed)

Lucinda

I am called.

Lucinda and Oscar separately, each alone with their thoughts.

I expect nothing small from my life.
I will have it.
My glass

Oscar

My God,
How do I know thee?

Oscar & Lucinda

You are invisible,
You are solid,
Joyous paradox,
You are here,

Oscar

enough

Lucinda

enough to build

Oscar

enough to build a life

Lucinda

enough to build a life on.

Scene Three - Doubt

Stratton and Mrs Stratton instruct Oscar in Anglican theology.

Oscar

I am called to Holy Orders.

Stratton

Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith.

Mrs Stratton

You must get to know the land
around the subject.

Mr Stratton

Betty Stratton
Daughter of an Oxford don
Never found a side she couldn't take

Oscar & Stratton

Article One: On Faith.
There is but one living and true God everlasting,
without body, parts or passions.

Mrs Stratton

Take a question:
What is grace?
Set it up
Knock it down
Trot around it on your steed
Down the ditch
Up the valley
Set a fire to your question
Watch it burn.

Oscar & Stratton

Article Nine: On Sin.
The flesh always lusteth against the spirit.

Mrs Stratton

What is doubt?

Oscar

I am not made for debate

Mrs Stratton

Doubt is sin

Oscar

I wish...

Mrs Stratton

Doubt is the highest state of man.

Oscar

I only wish to believe.

Stratton & Mrs Stratton

This will be your path into the city.

Oscar

Article Twenty-three:

It is not lawful for any man to take upon him

The office of public preaching

before he be lawfully called...

Theophilus alone; Oscar hears him and is troubled.

Theophilus

I pray for you, little Oscar.

Do you pray for me?

Scene Four - Some Surprising Properties

Hasset alone, preparing to receive a visitor. The Chorus echoes his thoughts.

Hasset

Some surprising properties of glass:

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Sodium silicate

Hasset

Melts away in water

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Melbourne green glass

Hasset

Oxide in the sand

Chorus (S Br2 B)

White grain of Botany

Hasset

Made pure by centuries of rain

Chorus (S Br2) & Hasset

Place a piece of glass
to refract the morning sun
(just so)

Chorus

(Br2 B) Strike your handsome jawline with light

(S Br2 B) Now you are prepared

Hasset

Monsieur Leplastrier!

Hasset turns to see Lucinda, who has just entered.

Lucinda

Good morning...

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Reverend Dennis Hasset
Scientist. Amateur.

Hasset

I...

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Expected a Frenchman.

Lucinda

I read your lecture

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Some Surprising Properties of Glass

Lucinda

I have ten thousand pounds
to buy a glass factory.

Hasset

I thought
A dilettante
come to talk theories

Lucinda

I thought
A man of commerce
to assist me with my purchase

Hasset

I fear I am not practical
But the object is so lovely.
We should celebrate the object...

Lucinda flinches. Hasset realises he has been misunderstood and produces a piece of glass.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Prince Rupert's Drop

Hasset

Like a seed...

Hasset prepares to break the glass, but is forestalled by Lucinda.

Lucinda

No— please—
Once you break it
in that firework
you can't look forward to it any more.

I am jealous
The drop is yours, not mine
you can walk straight
through the factory door

Men's eyes
Men in their certainty
make me the creature they imagine.
I can feel it; I grow lesser

Hasset

Then I will be your proxy.

Lucinda

You have an affection for the object,
for the glass

Hasset

Not enough.
I am cold;
I will warm myself
on the fire of your passion
I am jealous of your flame.

Lucinda

A dangerous thing
Shall we shake hands?

Hasset

Like men...

They shake hands and look one another in the eye.

Hasset

Look at the eye.
O Creation,
In your endless intricacies
You present me this marvel,
So tiny and so complex.
It says: Look!
I make no entreaty.
I am only an eye.

Scene Five - Two Gamblers

Wardley-Fish, disoriented and somewhat the worse for wear.

Chorus [Mr & Mrs Stratton]

Oriel College
Through the echoing gatehouse
Rain-bright grass on the quadrangle lawn

Wardley-Fish

Damn!

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Wardley-Fish
Undergraduate at Oxford
Declines to go to class

Wardley-Fish

Forgot to go to class...

Chorus (S Br2 B)

On his fourth or fifth beer

Wardley-Fish

There are better uses for my time.
Draining tankards,
hound's-tooth jackets
To hell with it.
The race is on at Epsom.
Servant!
Which room is my friend Bishop's?

Chorus (S) [Servant]

Left, sir.

Wardley-Fish

Right!

Chorus (S Br2 B)

What a chance

Wardley-Fish

Mr. Bishop?

Wardley-Fish goes right, instead of left, and discovers Oscar.

Oscar

I am no bishop yet.
Is that my path?

Wardley-Fish

Wrong room...

Oscar invites him in.

Oscar

Water in my bed

Rats in my room

I do not fit

They call me

Wardley-Fish

Odd Bod! Do you like a flutter?

Oscar

Flutter? Like a bird?

Wardley-Fish

A wager.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Chance by chance / choice by choice

Oscar

I know little of the world.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

always meant to be

Wardley-Fish

Money on the horses!

Oscar and Wardley-Fish are transported to the race-track.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

gallop gallop even odd ~

Lucinda alone, elsewhere.

Lucinda

The world has shrunk

to a size I can bear

Glass and books and

one thing more...

Lucinda at the card-table.

From this point until the end of the scene, the focus alternates between

a) Oscar and Wardley-Fish at the track, with the Chorus as fellow racegoers and touts; and

b) Lucinda at cards, with the Chorus as other card players.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Pick a card!

Ace / Six / Spade / Diamond / Deuce / Seven / Nine / Knave ~

Oscar & Lucinda

Bless me!

Hear that fluttering call...

Lucinda

I am transformed

Oscar

I see God's method
to pay my way

Wardley-Fish at the race-track.

Wardley-Fish

Blast! He is mad.
Shall we go?

Lucinda at cards.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

cut / shuffle / deal /
crib / cut / starter /
Jack / heels / play ~

Lucinda

I am no longer dull or angry
I can laugh
I am drunk on the game

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Joined in our circle ~

Lucinda

I am alone.

Oscar and Wardley-Fish at the race-track.

Chorus

(S) Madding Girl! Favourite horse! ~

(Br2) Perce Gully! Odds are evens! ~

(B) Sure Blaze! Nine to one! ~

Wardley-Fish

Keep to the system
 Never back the favourite
 Never bet odds-on
 Information wins.

Oscar

the system
 favourite
 Never bet odds-on
 Information wins.

Lucinda at cards.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Hand / play / show

Lucinda

I am beaten
 but not defeated.
 One more hand?

Chorus (Br2 B)

Like a duck to water

Oscar and Wardley-Fish at the race-track.

Chorus (S)

Madding Girl for favourite!

Wardley-Fish

Good information!

Oscar

God will be my tipster.

Lucinda at cards.

Lucinda

My deal.
 I control the cards
 with my strength of will.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Ace / Six / Spade / Diamond / Deuce / Seven / Nine / Knave ~

Lucinda

Five
 Five of Clubs
 Run of Hearts

Five of Clubs

discard

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Five / Five / Five ~

Nine / Hearts / Ten / Hearts / Jack / Hearts

Five / Clubs

Queen / Hearts

Lucinda

Give me eight

Oscar at the race-track.

Oscar

Give me knowledge
There will be a system

Lucinda at cards.

Lucinda

Win or lose,
tomorrow
I will be alone again.
Win or lose,
I can be happy now;
Not then, never then.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

King needs eight.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

Seven / Seven / Seven
cut / shuffle / deal /
crib / cut / starter /
Jack / heels / play ~

Chorus (S Br2 B) & Wardley-Fish

Place your bets

Lucinda

To want more is greed
To lose is terror
Money is my armour
against the world of men

The two scenes briefly overlap...

Oscar

I was taught: thou shalt not covet

Lucinda

This is sinful

Wardley-Fish & Lucinda

I am damned

Oscar and Wardley-Fish at the race-track.

Wardley-Fish

But according to the scholars
It cannot be eternal.

Oscar

As the Lord spake unto Moses
of the tribes of Israel
Unto these shall the land be divided.

According to lot
shall the possession thereof be divided
between the many and the few

Sure Blaze, nine to one.

The two scenes overlap and fuse.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

even / odd ~

Book of Numbers
Chapter Twenty-six
even / odd ~

Cast your lot

Wardley-Fish

Madding Girl!

Madding Girl for favourite!

Oscar

I will bet everything.
Everything.
I cannot lose.

Chorus (B) & Oscar & Wardley-Fish

Sure Blaze takes the lead!

Sure Blaze takes the crown!

Oscar and Lucinda are showered in riches.

Chorus (S Br2 B)

gallop / gallop ~
Perce Gully ~

Ace of Spades ~

Madding Girl ~

Jack of Diamonds ~

gallop / gallop ~

Sure Blaze ~

Lucinda

charcoal black

carmine red

This is my challenge:
Take my purse
Raise the stakes.

I will bet everything.
Everything.
I cannot lose.

Chorus (S Br2) & Lucinda

Diamond trumps the Ace!

Dealer wins!

Scene Six - A Horse Named Desire

Oscar alone.

Oscar

I have a system
to work the will of God
I submit to Providence
I will gamble everything!

My horse is named Desire...
Odds thirty-three to one: impossible!
Sixteen clothbound journals
Columns and divisions
My mind is a tyrant in white cuffs
Recording every fact.
Five hundred twenty-five horse:
position, weight, class, distance,
condition of the track

My hand is a grub
leaving smudges of sweat
on perfect black ink.
My hand shakes.
God's hand is everywhere:
Favourite boxed in, cut off,
holds his breath
top of the straight
My communion with God

Orchestra (whispered)

gallop gallop ~

COME ON, DESIRE!
My monster must be fed.
Thirty-three to one.
Impossible!

Lucinda with Hasset. She is relaxed; he is uneasy.

Hasset

She is impossible

Lucinda

Morning, evening
I've made myself at home
I might have moved your bookmark

Hasset

Unsuitable

Stratton and Mrs Stratton appear confront Oscar.

Oscar

Did you get my gift, sir?

Stratton

You have paid your college bill...

Mrs Stratton

...and some for us left over.

Oscar

God provides.

Stratton

I have lost my sleep
I have lost my health
to pay your way

Mrs Stratton

We expect no reward
on this earth

Mr Stratton

...and you were a wealthy man?

Oscar

You do not have to worry.
I love you both.

Hasset and Lucinda.

Hasset

I feel – something – about her
I wrote it down
tore it up
threw it in the fire
Is that love?

Stratton and Mrs Stratton with Oscar.

Mrs Stratton

Do not be so simple.

Oscar

Perhaps I am simple.
I know so little of the world.

Mr Stratton

I feel ripe for heresy.
If my Oscar prove a liar,
Lord God of Hosts
is a vain and boastful demiurge.

Hasset confronts Lucinda.

Hasset

People talk:
A woman in a factory
A woman playing cards!
I have lost friends...

Stratton and Mrs Stratton with Oscar.

Mrs Stratton

Tell me

Stratton

God help us.

Stratton & Mrs Stratton

We will not beg.

Oscar

It will torture my papa

Stratton

You have our word he will not know.

Hasset and Lucinda.

Lucinda

I should be sorry for your loss
I do not know why people hate me.
Mama knew.

Stratton and Mrs Stratton with Oscar.

Stratton

Is it the horses?

Oscar

Cold fireplace
Tattered shoes
I gain nothing for me
Only to pay my debt to you

The two scenes begin to overlap.

Stratton

Tell me

Oscar

Too late ...

I am unchristian

I should give it all away

I am all cunning excuses

Lie after lie...

I want

to bet

to bet again

Stratton & Mrs Stratton

Swear before God!

Oscar

I swear I cannot tell you.

Lucinda

Little square peg

Hasset

Tell me it is not true.

Lucinda

I want to play

(no I cannot think I cannot talk of that)

We should celebrate our factory

glittering glass

sharp and clear

– like the edge of a playing card

I cannot bear his disappointment

...like a house of cards

I want

to bet

to bet again

Hasset

Swear before God!

Lucinda

You gamble with rascals

and take tea with me

You are ice and steam

impossible!

Lucinda

I am not welcome here.

I will go to London

Perhaps one there will find me

suitable.

*Lucinda abandon Hasset;
Stratton and Mrs Stratton abandon Oscar.*

Oscar alone.

Oscar

I swear I swear I swear I cannot stop I cannot stop this
I am corrupted
See what I have become
I must go...
I am called
To bring the word of Christ to New South Wales.

Wardley-Fish enters.

Are you saved, Mr Wardley-Fish?

Wardley-Fish

everyone I know
Is a soft round comfort
You are itchy, angular,
full of belief
I don't like anyone I know.
I like you. You do not fit.
You are wonderful.

And you are terrified of water.
Call it a message from God:
You must not cross the ocean.

Oscar

Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death...
Flip a coin?

Wardley-Fish tosses a coin.

Wardley-Fish

Call.

Oscar

I am frightened...

Wardley-Fish

Then stay, dear Odd Bod, stay with...

Oscar

Heads!

Chorus (S Br2 B)

heads heads heads

Oscar

My choice is not my own.

Scene Seven - Leviathan / Babylon

*On the wharf, where the ship Leviathan is preparing for departure;
all the characters in the same space.*

Lucinda alone; Stratton and Mrs Stratton confront Theophilus; Oscar with Wardley-Fish.

Lucinda

London

this great sooty machine

Mr Stratton

I believe nothing of your cause
except Oscar;
I believe in Oscar.
He is leaving.

Lucinda

This cold, dead city
is not my home

Theophilus

Their faith is in error
and yet they are kind.
I must not be full of pride.

Lucinda

There were meant to be proposals

Theophilus

God, prevent me falling into sin.

Lucinda

Men after wealth

Mrs Stratton

Money, always money,
drags us down

Lucinda

I was meant to be a lady:
stay down,
hide the power in your eye.
I cannot.

Mrs Stratton

I have been engaged to write a novel.
You have sold books of nature.

Lucinda

I cannot –

Mrs Stratton

Does it pay?

Theophilus

Satan speaks through novels.

Lucinda

Descend to the wharf.
Steam, oil,
anthracite:
The smell of my factory
Take me home.

Wardley-Fish & Oscar & Lucinda

Leviathan!

Oscar

690 foot long

Lucinda

83 foot wide

Wardley-Fish

58 foot deep

Theophilus & Stratton & Mrs Stratton

Noah's Ark:

Mrs Stratton

512 foot long

Theophilus

85 foot wide

Stratton

51 foot deep

Wardley-Fish

Close enough.

Oscar

Providence

Lucinda

Coincidence.

Each character alone with his/her thoughts.

All

Leviathan!

Wardley-Fish [layered]

A great mechanical beast

Leviathan!

Lucinda [layered]

will take me home.

An empire

Leviathan!

Mr Stratton [layered]

Lofty, ornate

with smokestacks

Smell the oil, feel the engine

Carving, scrollwork, plush

Leviathan!

Mrs Stratton [layered]

Controversial

Industry, hope

Leviathan!

of womankind!

Oscar [layered]

Unsinkable

Arabesque panels

Twin hulls (in case of icebergs)

Crises in the Tyneside shipyards

Never find a porthole

Portières of carmine silk

(please God)

Leviathan!

Theophilus [layered]

Whom God sent against Job

The largest ship ever built

Black effluent

Out of his mouth

a porthole

pouring forth

go burning lamps

Empty

with a view of the sea

Shiny icing of luxury

She will be bankrupt

and sparks of fire leap.

Empty

Of the sea

two years from now

into the chamber of the sky

luxury

Leviathan!

Oscar & Theophilus

Who can open the doors of his face?

Oscar

I tremble before Leviathan

*Oscar is overcome with fear and unable to board the ship;
Stratton, Mrs Stratton and Wardley-Fish try to assist him.*

Stratton

Oscar, surely you can walk?

Mrs Stratton

Come aboard!

Wardley-Fish

Close your eyes...

He needs blindfold, stretcher, cage.

In a trice, my friend.

In a trice.

*Oscar is loaded into a cage and lifted onto the ship.
Lucinda and Theophilus watch him.*

Lucinda

Clergyman lifted like cattle

We are ill together

I am sick for a hand of cards.

Theophilus

Everything is distant, trembling, fragile

My son is beautiful

My heart sings the Song of Solomon

Oscar

I am frightened

of my father's heart.

Theophilus

I can see nothing

of this floating Babylon

I wish only to remember

the face of my son.

Stratton & Mrs Stratton & Wardley-Fish

The scales of the giant
are fitted close together;
Oscar cannot hear.

Oscar

I will never again
see his wise old face.

Theophilus

Oh Lord, my God.
What can we do?

Scene Eight - Confessions

Oscar and Lucinda together, on board the Leviathan.

Lucinda

You are a priest?

Oscar

Reverend Oscar Hopkins.

Oscar.

Lucinda

Lucinda.

May I make my confession?

Oscar

I can see her eye:
curious and bright

Lucinda

I can see his wrist:
long white bridge

Oscar

Hear her voice
made of silver

Lucinda

Hear his shoe
tapping
Is he nervous?
I confess:
I did not see you on the deck
We went to see a glow in the water

Oscar

I confess:

Lucinda

Phosphorescence

Oscar

I am afraid
of the ocean.

Odd Bod. Mantis. Gawk.
I am so far away from life...

Lucinda

I confess:

I have gone to rooms in Drury Lane
for the purposes of playing fan-tan
(though I fled when they stared at me.)

I confess:

I have boarded a train to the races,
not to see the horses,
to play dice on the train
(though they asked me to leave.)

I have tried to bet on a cock-fight
(though nobody would take me.)

I confess:

I am aboard this Leviathan
And I only want to play cards.

Oscar

The dice game -
Dutch Hazards?

Lucinda

We played...

Oscar

Old British?

Lucinda

We call it

Oscar + Lucinda

Seventh Man.

Lucinda

heat and blood
inside me

Oscar

electric cloud
inside me

Lucinda

You know these games?

Oscar

As well as you.

Lucinda

You have not absolved me.

Oscar

Where is the sin?
 Faith is a gamble.
 Bet there is a God.
 Stake your life.
 What odds
 we will find paradise?

Place your bet.
 Feel the terror:
 Before dawn, in winter's dark,
 on your knees, God sees us.
 He sees us suffer.

How can a God
 Who asks us to bet everything,

 everything,
 condemn us?

Grasping at a hope
 Grasping at a prayer
 We must bet everything

 every instant

That laugh...
 we will never hear that laugh again:
 That moment is gone.

I confess:

 I am a creature in a fairytale

 exiled from light

 I must gamble

 every instant

 every fluttering moment

Lucinda

With this wild-haired angel...

I confess:

The way he moves his hands

I like the way he moves his hands,
 Grasping at a butterfly

Grasping at a prayer

everything
 every instant
 ha ha ha ha! (*laughing*)

I confess:

what a rare and wonderful man

my soul is light.

See his belief

gleaming
 A crystal palace

He is mirror to my heart

He is window into his
 We must not risk the soul with fancy.

Oscar

Not a fancy.
I bet my soul on a trembling hope
Every coin toss is almost divine!

Lucinda

I have cards...

Oscar

Shall we play?

Lucinda deals. They play poker; cards and money fly forth.

Lucinda

He is still.
Odysseus lashed to the mast.

Oscar

She has lost.
She is airy,
a dragonfly wing.

Lucinda

I am everywhere
Leashed
Not here.
Not at cards,
Not with him.

A storm gradually builds.

Chorus (Br 1 Br 2 B)

One a.m.

Lucinda

You play exquisite poker.

Chorus (Br 1 Br 2 B)

The sea rises.

Oscar

She is giddy.

Lucinda

He is tremble and sweat.

From this point, Oscar becomes increasingly distracted by the storm, although Lucinda's attention remains on the game.

Oscar

Feel that...

Lucinda

Feel my riches empty
light and lovely
just a shell

Chorus (Br 1 Br 2 B)

Half past two:
Wind, wind,
long deep swell

Oscar

The sea
such a large thing.

Isaiah, chapter forty, verse twelve:

Lucinda

Raise.

Oscar

Who hath measured the waters
In the palm of his hand?

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

Three twenty-three:

Lucinda

I confess:
I am happy!

Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)

First wave slam deck

Oscar abandons the game in terror; Lucinda does not understand.

Oscar

I confess...
The wave...

Chorus (all)

Whitehead
Towering ghost
in the night

Oscar

ah – ah – ah – ah – ah

Lucinda

Oscar, are you ill?

Chorus

Leviathan
Rise / crash
great metal
tempest-tossed

Oscar

I have led you astray.

Lucinda

We have done no wrong.

Chorus

Ten men steer
the great beast

Oscar & Chorus

Leviathan!

Oscar

Sin. Rage.
The game,
now the storm...

Lucinda

This means nothing!

Oscar

Wave crash Providence
calls me

Chorus

Leviathan
climbs the cliff face of storm

Oscar

Forgive me!

Lucinda

There is nothing to forgive.

Oscar struggles to open the porthole.

Oscar

The porthole...
Vast expanse of terror...

Dark pit of sea,
take the cards!

*Oscar seizes the cards and throws them out of the porthole, a few at a time;
Lucinda tries desperately to prevent him.*

Lucinda

Everything is broken
my Two of Diamonds
Five of Clubs
gone
porthole
glass
shattered
heart
Oscar...

Oscar

I confess
I have always thought
confession
is an act of love.

*Oscar faints.
Lucinda holds him.
The storm overwhelms them.*

END ACT ONE