

## **ACT TWO**

### **Prologue: Know**

*Tableau. Oscar and Lucinda as at the end of Act One.*

*Around them the Chorus, in poses typical of characters they will take on later in the act: Miriam, Hasset, Percy, Jeffris.*

#### **All**

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

#### **[Jeffris] (layered)**

Club:

whip / punish / cut / tree / river / skin ~

#### **[Percy] (layered)**

Knave:

forgive me / not strong enough ~

#### **[Miriam] (layered)**

Queen:

wrapped in black / wrapped in black / wrapped in ~

#### **[Hasset] (layered)**

Diamond:

glass / attached / too attached to things ~

#### **Oscar (layered)**

Heart:

happy / we could be happy / ecstasy / madness

I know

#### **Lucinda (layered)**

Two:

happy / could we be happy / madness / ecstasy

I know

*Oscar and Lucinda move apart, embarrassed, avoiding eye contact.*

*The other singers, regrouped as the Chorus, comment on their actions and thoughts, speaking for them as they remain silent.*

**Chorus**

Know:

heart by heart / storm by storm

Lucinda knows this will pass:

sea will calm,

he will rise.

Oscar knows this is certain:

gambling has displeased his God.

Day by day / mile by mile ~

follow the current

follow the map

He is sick

He is a sickness

Purge ~

Flee the face...

*Lucinda almost speaks...*

his face...

Awake

in the centre of the ship

Every line crossed

pattern perfect

on his lips

Escape

the tyrant,

*...Does she see him?*

his smile.

**Lucinda**

There is work to do.

## **Scene One: Ruins**

*Hasset and Phelps, at the glassworks.*

### **Hasset**

Some surprising properties of glass...  
The object is so lovely  
The process is so thick – clotted –

### **Chorus (S B)**

Prince Rupert's Glassworks  
One year gone in the care of Dennis Hasset.

### **Hasset**

no place for me.

### **Arthur Phelps**

Owning a business  
is like having chooks:

### **Chorus**

In the care of Dennis Hasset, and  
Arthur Phelps: working-man, glass-blower

### **Phelps**

better wring their necks and eat 'em  
than leave 'em wild for a year

### **Chorus**

Mouth made for smoke  
Hands made for dirt.

### **Hasset**

Where is our production?

### **Phelps**

Flawed...  
Seeds in the glass  
Fire in the lungs  
One of the lads breathed in –  
such a simple thing –  
in when he should have breathed out.  
A boy is burned inside.  
For what? For production?

Shut it down.  
Let the furnace rest.  
I will find a smaller job  
and be happy.

*Exit Phelps; Lucinda enters the glassworks.*

**Lucinda**

My fire is dead.

**Chorus & Lucinda**

forge / grey / metal / set / hard

**Lucinda**

One thing lives:

**Chorus & Lucinda**

kitten / stray / trapped / sick

**Chorus**

glass / break / shard / cut

**Lucinda**

Do I have the strength for mercy?

*Appalled, Lucinda kills the kitten.*

*She becomes aware of Hasset.*

**Lucinda**

We are in ruins.

**Hasset**

We grow too attached to things...

I am dispatched  
to a town called  
Boat Harbour.

**Lucinda**

Is it far?

(I want to cry like a child:  
Not fair! Not fair!)

**Hasset**

Far enough.

**Lucinda**

Is it me?

(I do not give a damn:  
Weak fool!  
He should have fought... He should have fought...  
Kept my flame alight.)

**Hasset**

I go where I am sent  
by God.

**Lucinda**

By the Bishop.  
By Man.

**Hasset**

You are impertinent.

**Lucinda**

Yes!  
I am unsuitable,  
loud,  
silent,  
stupid,  
blunt.  
I hurt too much...

What will become of you?  
Is there even a church?

**Hasset**

There is no church in Boat Harbour.

**Lucinda**

Stay.  
I have a passion.  
You said it mattered.

**Hasset**

I think so still.

**Lucinda**

We could share it;  
we would be the most splendid  
makers of glass...

**Hasset**

We would not be lonely...

*A moment between them.*

I...  
do not feel my faith

**Lucinda**

You *want* to go?

**Hasset**

I need a  
simple rough life  
like Christ...

**Lucinda**

And the object?  
Who will celebrate the object?

**Hasset**

Glass is lovely;  
the glassworks are not.

*Exit Hasset.*

**Lucinda**

There is no-one  
left in Sydney  
for me.

All that remains:  
I will cover this city in glass.

## **Scene Two: Boat Harbour**

*Boat Harbour: Miriam, alone.*

### **Miriam**

black on black on black on black on...

Grandfather dies in spring;  
one year in mourning black.

Father dies in winter –  
hear him choke;  
black another year.

Mother says,  
“Cross the sea,  
Leave the mourning, leave the dark.”

I wear peach like a tropical flower.

Bellingham Heads – shipwreck on the sandbar –  
Mother drowns.  
Not me.  
Lucky...

Bright dress,  
fallen bloom  
into ebony ink.

I am dyed through with dark.

A young man – Johnny –  
reads to me  
(Walter Scott).

I marry in white.

Ants hatch, swarm, die;  
men are the same.  
(black black black black)

I could haunt this place forever,  
A governess  
For children who hate books...

...or marry again  
and escape back to white.

*Hasset arrives; Miriam watches with interest.*

**Chorus (Br2 B)**

Dennis Hasset  
floats out of Lucinda's life  
into another.

Pick your story and believe:  
Orphan, unlucky,  
Just chance.

**Miriam**

Looking for my chance.

**Chorus (Br2 B)**

Doomed,  
destroyed and destroyer.

**Miriam**

Just hoping for a chance.  
A man, with a book, on a barge:

**Hasset**

Reverend Hasset.  
Your new priest.

**Miriam**

Miriam Chadwick.  
Welcome to Boat Harbour,  
our little hell on earth.



### **Scene Three: Damage**

*Oscar and Lucinda, separately, adrift in Sydney;  
they are alternately oppressed and beguiled by the Chorus.*

#### **Chorus**

Sydney  
hard with eucalyptus  
no place for the lonely

#### **Lucinda**

Separate, not lonely.  
No time...  
I have plans, dreams of glass  
shapes at the edge of my vision...  
I am a dancer racing a burning fuse

#### **Chorus**

city made of sandstone,  
face fractured

#### **Oscar**

...like convict-broken rock.  
City bright enough to blind

#### **Chorus**

Then shut your eyes and listen.

#### **Oscar**

Why? Why did God send me to preach  
by a racecourse??

#### **Chorus**

**(B)** Volunteer! ~  
**(Br2)** Rioter! ~  
**(S)** Atlanta! ~

#### **Oscar**

God, spare me the hellfire.  
O God, let me win!  
Come on, Falcon!

#### **Chorus (S Br2 B)**

Atlanta takes first place!

**Oscar**

holes in my hands...

Dear Papa, I am sorry.

I confess...

I walk these hard new streets  
in terror for my soul.

I wish you would write  
of the little lanes

where we were once happy.

I am sick for hedge and birdsong.

This colony –

**Oscar & Chorus**

no place for the weak.

**Lucinda**

So many things I must not think of...

My mind rushes along corridors;

I keep just ahead, slamming doors.

**Chorus**

madwoman ~

**Lucinda**

I grow – disconnected, unlaced.

**Chorus**

madwoman!

**Lucinda**

I do not give a damn what you think...

Give me choice, chance...

**Chorus**

Step inside:

backroom parlour

Chinese lottery

Try your luck!

**Oscar**

Providence!

**Chorus**

Come and see:

fan-tan

dark corner bright coins

**Lucinda**

Ecstasy electric!  
I will not be loved,  
not be wife,  
not be mother.  
I do not care.

**Chorus**

coin / brass / number  
Choose, Lucinda!

*Lucinda takes part in a game of fan-tan.*

**Lucinda echoed by Chorus**

Four / three / three / four / one / four

*Oscar suddenly appears and places a bet.  
Lucinda is taken by surprise.*

**Oscar**

Two

**Lucinda**

Two  
My flame-headed angel.  
Reverend –

**Oscar**

Hopkins. Oscar.

**Lucinda**

I have not forgotten...

**Chorus**

the cards – the game – shall we ... ?

**Oscar**

Not for pleasure –  
I fear it –

**Lucinda**

I do not understand him,  
that smile

*Unable to help themselves, Oscar and Lucinda begin to play cards.*

**Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)**

cut / shuffle / deal / play ~

**Oscar**

This is nice.

**Lucinda**

This is vulgar,  
but the cards...

**Oscar**

I am homesick,  
but the cards...

**Lucinda**

Nothing in common  
except our weakness

**Oscar**

If someone sees us...

**Lucinda**

Angle of his elbow  
The way he rolls his socks

I could not marry him.

*The game is interrupted by the sudden appearance of Mr and Mrs Judd.*

**Chorus (Br1 S) [Mr & Mrs Judd]**

Sin! Sin! Sin! A scandal!  
Our priest, our English priest of Randwick!  
**(Br1)** Doesn't wear his vestments  
**(S)** dresses like a crow  
**(both)** Cards! Cards and women at his table!

**Oscar**

She is my *friend* -

**Chorus [Mr & Mrs Judd]**

sin...

**Lucinda**

You call yourselves civilised.

**Chorus [Mr & Mrs Judd]**

scandal...

**Lucinda**

Savages in top hats and tails!

**Chorus [Mr & Mrs Judd]**

cards, women, women, cards...

**Lucinda**

Gambling is nothing  
before your rudeness  
to this man. To me.

*Mr and Mrs Judd retreat.*

**Lucinda**

How angry I must be,  
at this frightful city...

**Oscar**

I am done for.

*The Chorus advance threateningly towards Oscar and Lucinda.*

**Lucinda**

Now,  
Now I feel it -

**Oscar & Lucinda**

Damage.

**Chorus [Mr & Mrs Judd]**

Scandal scandal scandal!

**Chorus (all)**

Scandal scandal scandal! Cast them out! ~  
Unsuitable.  
No place left for you.

**Lucinda**

I have ruined *two* clergymen.

**Chorus (variously)**

No place for the weak / lonely

*Lucinda escapes, offering Oscar a refuge.*

**Lucinda**

Come.  
I leave Scandal behind me,  
I drive Scandal before me.  
We will make a home.

## **Scene Four - Happiness**

*Lucinda and Oscar together, at Lucinda's house.*

### **Oscar**

Silver skin  
of Sydney Harbour

breaks the surface

There is work to do.

shard

break

This is how a life is built:  
from little pieces on the floor.

Work is simple.

Sleeves rolled

Nothing happens,  
nothing said.

Hell-fear  
We do not speak  
one syllable –  
horse, game, card –  
We will lose ourselves  
to the madness.

### **Lucinda**

Silver skin  
of Sydney Harbour

Cormorant  
breaks the surface  
between dream and life.

This is life:  
Kitchen table,  
broken teacups,  
dropped glass.

There is work to do.

shatter

glass

This is how a life is built:  
from little pieces on the floor.

Work is simple.  
Shoes kicked

Nothing happens,  
nothing said.

He thinks I have him trapped  
for a husband...  
A story will put him at ease:  
My heart is gone  
with dearest Dennis Hasset.  
All I want from you is company.

**Oscar**

See:

through a hole in her stocking  
bare toes

See – can she see –

my unholy thoughts,

of her strength,

her dainty cast-off shoes?

We gamble nothing  
but our lives.

Letters

she tries to hide

to Reverend Hasset, to her love...

I can only show her  
the surface  
of my dream.

One bites the other;  
Prayer, just prayer.

hoo hoo hoo hoo

hoo hoo

hoo hoo (*noises of pain*)

for this nectar drop of time  
we are happy.

**Lucinda**

See:

stirring tea with a knife  
birdlike fingers

See – can he see –

my heart

inside this clanking suit of armour?

We gamble nothing  
but our lives.

Sketches

I could show him:

spun glass, spider-web, steel-laced  
a palace of crystal

He could fumble it to pieces

He could wrest it from my hands

I can only show him  
the surface  
of my dream.

Oscar, your hands...

Flowers of flesh

like the banksia

I torture you with iodine  
and yet

for this nectar drop of time  
we are happy.

## **Scene Five - Made of Glass**

*Phelps welcomes Lucinda and Oscar to the glassworks.*

### **Phelps**

Mistress –

### **Chorus (Br1 B)**

Arthur Phelps:  
hands made for dirt, for glass

### **Phelps**

Now you have a master,  
the factory can live  
under his steady hand.

*Phelps leads a trio of workers in a tribute.  
Oscar is delighted; Lucinda feels belittled.*

### **Phelps & Chorus (Br1 B) [Workers]**

Factory field of flowers  
Daisies from the roof-beams;  
Daffodils in green-glass jars  
Furnaces of jonquils.

### **Oscar**

All this love for a stranger!

### **Lucinda**

all this for *him*??

*Phelps and the Workers demonstrate glass-making for Oscar.*

### **Phelps & Chorus [Workers]**

All is white: heat / crucible / molten  
All is red: heat / orb / elastic  
Lift it high!

### **All**

white / red  
protean / liquid

### **Lucinda**

Bearer of light

### **Oscar**

Is it a question?



**Phelps**

A handle, sir.

**Oscar**

I never knew  
work  
could be so beautiful.

**Lucinda**

I never knew  
you could walk straight  
through the factory door.

*Although he does not understand it, Oscar senses Lucinda's unhappiness,  
and attempts to comfort her.*

**Oscar**

You have found  
the state of matter  
Most like the angels.

You have given  
a piece of earth  
beauty and joy  
enough for heaven.

You have planted  
a seed:  
cruel, silvery,  
dancing with light...

**Lucinda**

Oscar –

**Oscar**

Knife! cut me open.  
It is Christian to sacrifice.  
Dennis Hasset,  
The object of your letters:

**Lucinda**

You think I care for Hasset...

**Oscar**

He should have a church –  
made of glass!

**Lucinda**

What would be the meaning?

**Oscar**

Let me help you  
assemble this prism,  
a prayer to God  
built from glass.

**Oscar**

Let us make this prayer together...  
  
(and then  
you might love me  
for my sacrifice.)

Can you imagine?  
A glass cathedral!

steeple, dome, flying buttress  
  
shaft of light.

Ecstasy!

My spirit skips,  
a stone dancing across a river

Eternity awaits.

**Lucinda**

Will you assist me?

**Oscar**

I will deliver the church.

**Lucinda**

The place is called Boat Harbour.  
You are terrified of water.

**Oscar**

I will go by land.  
It is against the odds.

**Lucinda**

I like you too much to see you hurt.

**Oscar**

I must.

**Lucinda**

Let us make this prayer together...  
together...

Can you imagine?

I can see it:  
steeple, dome, flying buttress,  
mote of dust,

Madness!

I  
cannot separate  
love from glass.

Eternity awaits.

**Lucinda**

For me?

**Oscar**

All for you...

I bet you I can do it.

**Lucinda**

What is the wager?

**Oscar**

Ten guineas?

**Lucinda**

Not enough.

I will bet everything.

**Oscar**

I have almost nothing.

**Lucinda**

No matter.

I bet my inheritance:

the glassworks,

Every piece of armour.

Everything I own.

**Oscar**

I am in awe...

I am in love.

I will make it to safe harbour.

I will win.

I will come back to you

I am mad

and happy!

I will lose everything

with you

**Lucinda**

I am in love.

You will make it to safe harbour.

You will win.

You will come back to me

so I can give you all

that kept me safe.

I am happy

and mad!

I will lose everything

with you

and still be captain of my soul.

## **Scene Six - The Great Wager**

### **Chorus**

Pack a church in crates  
Prefabricated, in pieces  
Transport it by cart  
Assemble it across the mountains

### **Jeffris**

Map the land  
Know the earth

### **Chorus**

Mr Jeffris  
Precise. Competent. Clerk.  
Conquers the outback...

### **Jeffris**

My blade sweeps aside  
bush and native alike

### **Chorus**

...in his dreams.

### **Lucinda**

You know the way?

### **Jeffris**

(I have read every book  
I have never left home)  
I have always known the way  
through country where no glass has ever been

### **Lucinda**

You are too much  
in love with danger.  
But so am I.  
I have wagered my life.

### **Jeffris**

And your man?

### **Lucinda**

You fight land.  
He fights demons.

**Chorus**

Percy Smith

**Percy**

Collector of fauna  
Decent. Mild.

**Chorus**

Oscar's protector.

**Jeffris**

If Oscar is harmed  
Lucinda will not pay  
Guard him  
as a brother's keeper.

**Percy**

Why do men  
with loud voices  
seek for me?  
Why do I nod  
and say yes?

**Chorus**

A jigsaw puzzle  
Hessian-wrapped columns on the starboard  
Boxes, balanced in weight, on the port

*Oscar finds Lucinda in the dark.*

The soul is a peach  
easy to pluck -

*They kiss.  
They separate.*

lips – bruise – blue

*They kiss again, harder. Passion.*

Here:  
bite / face / ache / slam  
Love.

*They part.*

**Oscar**

Marry me.

**Lucinda**

*[a vibrant, thrilled pause, the beginning of a yes, the gathering of breath - ]*

**Oscar**

To save your reputation.

**Lucinda**

*[the opposite kind of pause.]*

You are too kind.

*She leaves him.*

**Chorus**

Thirty hundredweight of cast-iron rods  
Five hundred and sixty-two glass sheets  
Twenty gross of nuts and bolts  
Five gallons of linseed oil

**[Mrs Stratton]**

One hundred and twenty one pounds sixteen shillings

**Chorus (Br1 Br2)**

Back in England  
Reverend Stratton  
Bets the last of his money

**[Mrs Stratton]**

Always in a hurry.  
rope tight wrap neck –

**Oscar**

Murdered by my system.  
Let my road be hard  
Let there be pain.

**Jeffris**

You use soft words: brook, lane, copse.  
This place is saw-toothed and savage.

**Percy**

There will be pain.

**Chorus**

A lead-heavy folly  
Nothing like the crystal-pure,  
bat-winged structure of her dreams

**Lucinda**

Terror comes under a clear blue sky.  
Your neck – so soft  
I imagine a knife.

**Oscar**

They have put me at the front.  
I must go.

**Lucinda**

The money for Jeffris –

**Oscar**

A letter for you –  
*They exchange envelopes. They kiss one last time. They part. Separate, now:*

**Oscar & Lucinda**

My chest is empty  
where you lay your hand.  
Let me hold your echo  
one last time.

*She opens the letter and reads Oscar's words.*

**Oscar**

I dare not hope  
and yet I must  
That through this deed  
I gain your trust.

**Lucinda**

Oh, my holy fool,  
My darling.  
You had my trust  
Always. Always.

I never cared for the church.  
Did you not see?

All this  
the great wager  
was to strip away my money  
(stolen from stolen land)  
my armour  
to stand naked  
my face pressed  
to that soft secret place  
at the base of your neck.

## Scene Seven - Glass Cuts

**Jeffris**

Cut  
path

cut

skin

flay

the skin of the world  
pull back flesh  
reveal my map  
savage country  
I will name it.

river / mountain  
forest / cut

Mr Smith.  
Hold him down.

**Jeffris & Chorus**

slice  
cross  
glass

**Jeffris**

Forward!

cut tree  
tree  
kangaroo  
slaughter

cut road

**Chorus (S Br1)**

Cut

**[Miriam]**

black wrapped in

wrapped in black

**Chorus (S Br1)**

slice

earth

flay

river / mountain  
forest / cut

**Percy Smith**

Yes.

Please. Lie back.

Laudanum

for qu / i / i /

i / e / et

nail cut

**Chorus**

all

like

this

**Oscar**

Cut

glass like a seed

You knew my heart

like a firework

my body

We were wrong  
We were so wrong.

*godmygodmygodmygod*  
no strength for mercy

Is life all like this?

Saint Ignatius  
was eaten by lions.

beast

gut river



**Jeffris**

Are your orders  
acceptable,  
Mr Smith?

**Percy**

my soul shrivels  
like a leech in salt

You had a fit.

I am not strong enough  
to defy him.

**Percy & Chorus**

Laudanum

*[Percy doses Oscar.]*

**Oscar**

Why  
do you hurt me?

no – no more –  
the dreams –

**Percy**

cross

cut

whip

punish

red

punish

**Chorus**

all this

life

*godmy  
god  
mygod  
my*

Saint Agatha tortured  
with fire and glass.

I will take your hand  
for laziness  
I will scourge your back  
if you disobey

**Percy & Chorus**

qui / i / i / i / i / i / et  
pulse – pulse –  
pulse – pulse –

artery

Rifles up.

**Chorus (S)**

pale pink  
lilac green

I see:  
Pluck Sydney  
from the earth  
this river  
will follow  
I see:  
sea shells  
on the beach  
I see my father  
Kill a moth

**Percy & Chorus**

pin  
through  
the  
eye

If a native says  
we cannot pass  
shoot him in the eye.

I see  
a glasshouse  
like a teardrop  
suspended  
above the awful sea

**Jeffris**

This  
is  
like  
fire  
ground  
sky

Mr Smith  
Tie him up.

Churches are not carried  
By choirboys.  
The Empire  
was not built by angels.

Cut down the tribe.  
*[He fires on the natives.]*

Mr Smith  
Your duty.

**Percy**

life  
all  
glass  
cut  
crack

**Percy**

keep  
you  
safe  
*[He restrains Oscar.]*

**Percy**

Oscar –  
not this –  
glass is not for this.

**Chorus**

This life  
is all  
like glass  
fire / cut  
ground / crack  
sky

**Oscar**

Saint Sebastian  
pierced by arrows.

men  
women  
children

I forgive you.

*godmygod  
mygodno*

*godnogodnogodnogodno*

I am sorry.  
We should not have come.  
We should not have hurt you.

We came for –  
– this –  
– this is glass.

Glass cuts.  
you see?

cut chest  
cut arm  
cut  
*[Oscar cuts himself.]*

Saint Cassian  
cut with penknives.

**Chorus (Br1)**

is

life

**Percy**

all

like

life

**Chorus (S)**

like

all

like

life

*Percy, alone, sharpens an axe.*

**Percy**

Axe sharp  
I am tender  
with every soul  
in my care.

Sharp  
I wish no one would suffer.

I know:  
kindness  
is the shadow  
of my cowardice.

**Jeffris**

I have made  
A great exploration.

What do you say  
to this country of ours?

It is not our country.

I see  
In every shadow  
victory

I see  
In every shadow  
crumpled body

I see  
In every shadow

frail envelope of soul.

Drink  
to our triumph!

How thin it is,  
this wrist God made me.  
Yet I could kill you  
and fall into hell;  
I am saved  
for want of a weapon.

**Jeffris**

That is my money -  
reward for your safety -

Gamble with my pay?  
I forbid it!

*[He beats Oscar.]*

cur / crab / cut  
life / death / savage  
cur / crab / cur / crab / cut  
my / land  
my / map  
my / land  
cut

life is all like this

**Percy**

I  
have  
drunk  
  
from  
the well  
of  
evil.  
  
cut  
sharp

*Percy hands Oscar the axe.*

life is all like this

**Oscar**

See my hand:  
shining white flower  
five petals open  
a hand of cards.  
We will gamble.

I will take your money.  
I will win.

You will give a gift  
to God's work.  
Murderer!

O God,  
Give me the means  
to smite Thy enemy!

life is all like this

Saint James the Great  
killed by beheading.

*Oscar strikes Jeffris dead.  
Blackout.*

*Later. Percy, cheerful, is making preparations; Oscar sits motionless nearby.*

**Percy**

Fifty feet long, twenty-five wide  
Twelve ton displacement:  
two hundred and forty cubic feet  
Two barges full.

**Chorus (S Br1)**

cool  
blue  
  
river

**Oscar**

Did we not murder?  
We have broken a commandment.

**Percy**

God is not a railway clerk.  
He does not keep tally.  
We killed an evil man.  
It has done me good.

wash away  
wash away  
wash away blood

**Oscar**

My church...

**Percy**

We'll build it on barges,  
float it up-river.  
We shall arrive in glory;  
can you see it?  
a crystal vision...

**Oscar**

I am tired of visions.

**Percy**

Let me help.  
I am –  
practical.

## **Scene Eight - Into Light**

*The glass church appears, floating up the Bellinger River on a barge poled by Percy.  
Oscar sits in the middle of the church, terrified.*

### **Chorus (S Br1 B)**

Tall elegant panes  
cast-iron barley-sugar scrolls  
float up-river  
between shrieking walls of jungle.  
Oscar hides in the heart  
under a glass canopy

### **Oscar**

O Lord,  
I am alive in Thy dreadful river.  
All thy glory surrounds me;  
I am afraid.

### **Chorus**

Country thick with stories  
more ancient than his Bible;  
he sees nothing.  
He feels heat  
Fire dances around his head.

### **Percy**

Barges slip -

### **Chorus (S Br1)**

Glass twists -

### **Oscar**

three roof panes

### **Oscar & Chorus**

crack,

### **Chorus**

hang like knives.

### **Oscar**

Upon me  
jigsaw edges  
refract every colour.

*Miriam and Hasset catch sight of the church from the riverbank.*

**Chorus (B)**

Miriam Chadwick sees

**Miriam**

A church made of glass!  
walls of ice

**Chorus (B)**

Dennis Hasset sees

**Hasset**

A church made of glass!  
Miracle, spider-web

**Oscar**

My church made of glass!  
Prism shining

**Hasset**

Broken tragedy

**Miriam**

Walls of light

**Oscar**

Walls of hell –  
it is so hot –

**Miriam & Hasset**

Perfect cube

**Oscar**

Perfect cage.

**Miriam**

Gleaming white

**Hasset**

Like a dream –  
Lucinda –

**Percy**

Turn about.

**Oscar**

Three more panes craze, jagged.

**Miriam**

See! See! A clergyman;  
he moves his hands  
in mysterious arcs.

**Oscar**

Get away! Get away!  
Jewel-blue dragon-flies  
in a furnace of crystal.

**Hasset**

Lucinda...  
You are mad...

**Miriam, Hasset, Percy, Chorus (B)**

A crystal vision,

A visitation:

prism, cube, steeple

Though it cracks  
it does not fall;  
where it splinters  
it makes rainbows. ~

impossible!

*The church arrives.*

**Percy**

Boat Harbour!  
Oscar, we are here.  
You have won the bet:  
her fortune, all yours.

**Hasset**

Lucinda, are you here?

*Oscar steps ashore.*

**Oscar**

I am burnt, red-eyed,  
alien, hard;  
these bones my suit of armour.

Reverend Hasset?

**Oscar**

If only the soul  
could be like glass!  
I am all dust  
and mere material:  
it is...

It is clear.  
Though it cracks  
it does not fall;  
where it splinters  
it makes rainbows.

I wish I could be so



**Hasset**

Where is Lucinda?

**Oscar**

I bring you a gift  
from that most wonderful woman!  
I confess,  
I envy you her love.  
How can you stand there?

**Hasset**

When will my follies stop tormenting me?  
Who is here?

**Miriam**

What a chance.

**Hasset**

Mrs Chadwick, help us.  
He is wounded...

**Miriam**

Finally, my chance.  
I begin my ministrations.

*Miriam takes charge.*

Iodine, mercurochrome, emollient, cream,  
healing ointment,  
yellow, sting

You can shed your heavy armour...

easy... gentle...

**Chorus (Br1 B)**

just / a / touch

*Miriam seduces Oscar.*

**Oscar**

O,  
All this time  
I have heard the song  
of the devil.  
He lies:

**Miriam**

m  
o  
l / l / l / l  
a

**Chorus (Br1 B)**

It is holy to bet.  
Abandon your father.  
Pull Stratton down.  
Murder is justice.  
Take the church.  
Then you will stand  
as bridegroom to Lucinda  
in the sight of God.

**Miriam**

e  
or / a  
l / l / n / n  
a  
ur  
u / u  
u / u / u / u  
a / a / a / a / a / a / a / a

**Oscar**

My faith is a silkstrand brushed aside.  
With one hand laid upon me  
I fall.

I cannot even say I did it for love;  
the world knows...  
I love Lucinda.

Miss –

**Miriam**

Mrs Miriam Chadwick.

**Oscar**

We should be married  
to save your reputation.

**Miriam**

I shall wear white again.

## **Epilogue - No Stories**

**Lucinda** (*alone*)

He is lost!  
All for nothing.  
I have lost,  
lost every piece of my fortune,  
everything I own.  
You knew my heart;  
How were we so wrong?

**Miriam** (*alone, elsewhere*)

We update our wills.  
What is hers is now his;  
What is his is now mine.  
I will repay the world for slighting me.

The church – mine.  
The factory – mine.

I have won without making a bet.

*Oscar, alone, returns to the glass church.*

**Oscar**

I walk  
away from Miriam  
down the wharf  
and I am not afraid  
of water.

*The three characters in different places, their thoughts cross-cut and overlapping.  
Oscar prays in the church; Lucinda and Miriam communicate by letter.*

**Miriam**

I

wear black  
wrapped in violent colour

The name is  
Mrs Oscar Hopkins.

You call my husband  
by his Christian name?

I wear  
deep crimson  
royal purple  
blazing yellow

Miss Leplastrier,  
I have spent half my youth  
in mourning rags,  
my life ruled by  
ill-fortune.  
I know your situation.

**Oscar**

I walk  
over splintered glass

I walk  
upon dragonfly corpses

This church is not  
a holy thing.

I walk amid  
black bone  
shattered panel  
trailing weed

God

forgive me my vanity:  
The massacre of the natives.

Forgive

me my avarice:  
the suicide of Stratton.

**Lucinda**

I write with red eyes  
and scalded arms  
from my work  
at a pickle factory

Miss Chadwick,

I  
made a bet  
to keep Oscar safe.

I know you are in mourning...

I beg you,  
one woman to another,  
do not do this to me.  
Let our fears not  
make us greedy.

I cannot bear to have nothing  
on the streets of Sydney.

Please,  
if you have any Christian charity,  
let me keep some  
of my inheritance.

**Miriam**

When I was poor,  
I worked.  
I did not read poetry;  
I milked cows.  
You may do the same.

I am not cruel;  
I enclose a cheque  
to assist you.

Tomorrow  
I will wear bright red.  
To hell with mourning;  
I will do what I like.

Destroyed.

Destroyer.

**Oscar**

Forgive me my wrath:  
the murder of Jeffris.

Forgive

me my lust:  
the seduction of Miriam.

I beg you forgive me

my pride, my ignorance.  
I know I am beyond  
redemption.

I beg you – not for me –

destroy this church of glass,  
this folly.

**Lucinda**

Dear Mrs Chadwick,  
You are a thief.  
But you are made a thief  
by fear and weakness.  
I know your terror  
when you imagine  
a woman's life alone  
in this hard place.  
I forgive you.

I return your ten guineas.

**Chorus (Br1 Br2 B)**

Tomorrow all this pain and panic  
will be but a moment  
in Lucinda's long journey,

the last moment

before her real life can begin

**Lucinda**

Today  
I am passion  
and fragile.  
I long for my beloved,  
my Oscar.

I have lost my purpose.

*The church begins to sink, with Oscar inside.*

**Chorus**

**(S Br1)** This is how it ends:

**(all)** Barge takes on water.

**(S Br2 B)** break glass

break

**(S Br1 B)** The water rises.

**(Br1 Br2 B)** Providence!

**(S Br1 Br2)** The church sinks.

**Oscar**

I pray to you, O Lord;  
I dig holes in my hands,  
in my...

break open

Come to meet me,  
ancient enemy.

I am panic  
in the face of eternity  
Door jammed!

*Oscar tries to escape. He can't.*

**(S Br2)** Flying foxes overhead.

I see angels –

**(S Br1 B)** Believe!

a sign from God.

Shining fragments

fall like rain. ~

**(S Br2 B)** drop

tear

White water on my lips...  
I welcome the nightmare  
with a scream...

**(all)**

stone

glass

broken

gambled

cut

ruined

believe

I am stone

I am broken

I am cut

I believe I was happy

I know I am...

*Oscar drowns.*

**Lucinda**

Chance! What a chance!

My  
heart

break heart

break

Break to be alive

on the brink of eternity.

Seedling

Shatter  
tear  
me

I am glass

I am gambled

I am ruined

I believe I was happy

I know I was

loved.

*THE END*