

Scene Six

LIGHTS UP. THE STREET. THE STAGE IS LIT BY A HUGE MOON ON THE BACK WALL OF THE STAGE. RICHARD SITS CENTRE STAGE LOOKING UP AT THE TOWER BLOCK (SCAFFOLDING STAGE LEFT). A LIGHT COMES ON IN A WINDOW ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE TOWER BLOCK. MARIA COMES OUT ON TO A BALCONY.

MARIA: Oh Why are you Richard? I wish you could stop belonging to the Westside Crew. Or if you won't, just say you love me and I'll stop belonging to the Eastside Crew. It's only your name that's my enemy. You're still what you are, Westside Crew or no Westside Crew.

RICHARD: Just call me 'Love' and that will be my new name. From now on I'm no longer Richard.

MARIA: Who's there.

RICHARD: I'm afraid to tell you my name. I hate my name because you hate it.

MARIA: Is that you Richard? This place is dangerous, considering who you are. If any of my family finds you here...

RICHARD: Love can't be stopped, so how could your family stop me?

MARIA: If they see you they'll kill you!

RICHARD: Your eyes are more powerful than twenty of their knives. Just give me a loving look and I'll be invincible.

MARIA: I don't want them to see you here.

RICHARD: It's alright, it's dark. Anyway, if you don't love me I'd rather be caught by them than live without your love.

MARIA: It's a good thing it's dark or you would see me blushing because of what you overheard. I would love to be able to deny that I said those things, but I'm not going to pretend. Do you love me?

RICHARD: I love you...

MARIA: I'll take your word for it. Oh Richard, if you do love me, please tell me honestly.

RICHARD: I love you...

MARIA: Or if you think I'm too fast tell me and I'll put on an act and be all coy and play hard to get, I'm so much in love with you, that's why I'm being so forward. But I promise you, I'll be more loving and faithful than those who are reserved. I should have been all shy, I know, and would have if

you hadn't overheard my real feelings. So forgive me. And don't think I'm taking it lightly.

RICHARD: I swear by the moon.

MARIA: Oh don't swear by the moon! The moon's too changeable.

RICHARD: What shall I swear by?

MARIA: Don't swear at all. But if you must, swear by yourself. You're the God I worship. Swear by yourself and I'll believe you. No, don't swear.

RICHARD: O.K...

MARIA: Although I love you I don't like this, making commitments like this. It's too sudden, too fast. It's not a good idea. It's like lightning, gone too quickly. This bud of love may grow into a lovely flower by the time we meet again.

RICHARD: Just like that? Are you just going to leave it like that?

MARIA: What more could we do tonight?

RICHARD: Make faithful vows of love.

MARIA: I gave you mine, before you asked for them. And I wish I could take them back.

RICHARD: You want to take them back? Why?

MARIA: To be honest, so that I can give them to you again. But I have so much love for you, the more I give the more I have. It's like a sea without end.

RICHARD: A sea without end...

MARIA: If you really mean it, and you want to marry me, send a message tomorrow.

RICHARD: O.K...

MARIA: I'll send someone to you. Let me know where and for what time you've arranged a wedding and I'll come to you. Then we'll be together forever. But if you don't mean it. If you're messing with me please leave me alone.

RICHARD GOES TO EXIT STAGE RIGHT.

MARIA (CONT) Richard. What time shall I send someone?

RICHARD: At nine.

MARIA: It'll feel like twenty years till then. I've forgotten why I called you back.

RICHARD: That's alright. I'll just stand here until you remember it.

MARIA: Then I'll never remember it, so that you'll stand there forever.

RICHARD: And I'll keep standing here, hoping you'll keep forgetting. And I'll forget that I've got any other home but this.

MARIA: It's almost morning, I want you to go, but I don't want to let go of you. You must leave now. It's so hard to say goodbye. I'd like to keep saying goodnight until it becomes tomorrow.

BLACK OUT.

Scene Seven.

LIGHTS UP. CHURCH INTERIOR. PRIEST IS GETTING READY FOR EARLY MORNING MASS CENTRE STAGE. RICHARD ENTERS STAGE RIGHT.

RICHARD: Morning, Father.

PRIEST: Who's this then, visiting me so early in the morning? Is there something wrong?

RICHARD: No...

PRIEST: You must be worried about something or you'd be in bed, fast asleep.

RICHARD: Just the opposite...

PRIEST: We old men know what it's like to lie awake all night, worrying, but you youngsters can sleep soundly at any time. So to see you here so early makes me think you've got something on your mind. In any case, I can tell that you've not even been to bed .

RICHARD: You're right there.

PRIEST: God forgive you. Have you been with Amanda?

RICHARD: No. I've forgotten that girl and everything about her.

PRIEST: That's my boy. But where have you been then?

RICHARD: To put it plainly, I've fallen in love with the daughter, of the leader, of the Eastside Crew, and she with me. To cut a long story short, you must marry us, and you must agree to marry us today.

PRIEST: What?! 'Holy St. Francis'. What a turnabout. Have you forgotten Amanda? Am I to understand that young men love with their eyes and not their hearts? Jesus Maria you cried buckets for Amanda.

RICHARD: I know but...

PRIEST: The sound of your groans is still ringing in my ears. Look. Here on your cheek, there's the stain of a tear. It was Amanda this, and Amanda that yesterday, and now it's all changed.

RICHARD: You told me off all the time for loving Amanda.

PRIEST: For being infatuated, not loving.

RICHARD: And told me to bury love.

PRIEST: Not to dig another one up.

RICHARD: Please. Don't reprimand me.

PRIEST: O.K. then this is one thing I can help you with. This could be the answer, the thing to turn the Eastside Crews and the Westside Crews, hatred of each other into love.

BLACK OUT.

Scene Eight.

LIGHTS UP. THE STREET. A HOT DAY. SIMON & BEN SIT CENTRE STAGE.

BEN: Where the devil could Richard be?

SIMON: Didn't he come home last night?

BEN: Not to his Father's. The dull cold Amanda has the power to drive him crazy.

RICHARD ENTERS STAGE RIGHT TOP.

BEN: Hey.

SIMON: Look at him. What a lad. The most beautiful women are dogs compared with his Amanda.

RICHARD: Hi.

SIMON: You gave us the slip last night.

RICHARD: Oh I'm sorry. I had important business.

SIS ENTERS STAGE LEFT.

SIS: Can any of you tell me where I can find Richard.

RICHARD: I'm Richard. Go away you guys.

BEN & SIMON EXIT STAGE RIGHT.

RICHARD (CONT) You have come from Maria.

SIS: Yes.

RICHARD: Tell her to find some way of going to the church, this afternoon and there she'll be married.

SIS: This afternoon? She'll be there.

SIS EXITS STAGE LEFT.

RICHARD: Give Maria my love.

SIS: I will.

BLACKOUT.

Scene Nine.

LIGHTS UP. CHURCH INTERIOR. THE PRIEST & RICHARD STAND CENTRE STAGE.

PRIEST: May heaven bless this holy ceremony so that we won't regret it later!

RICHARD: Yes, yes. But whatever may come, it couldn't cancel the joy I get from seeing her even for a moment. You just join our hands with holy words, and after that it doesn't matter what happens, it's enough that she'll be my wife.

PRIEST: Such extreme emotions often end in disaster, they explode like gunpowder. Be careful, my boy.

RICHARD: I will...

PRIEST: Even honey becomes sickly precisely because it's so sweet, and eventually you can't face it. So don't go overboard on this loving of yours.

RICHARD: No...

PRIEST: It will last longer if you take it easy. If you go too fast you'll fall.

MARIA ENTERS STAGE LEFT AND WALKS INTO RICHARD'S ARMS.

RICHARD: Maria. Oh If you are happy as I am and can express it better, then tell me how much happiness you imagine we have, when we add it all up.

MARIA: As usual, you say ridiculous things. You speak extravagantly. Don't talk about imagined love. Our love is real. And people who can count their wealth are poor, my true love has grown so huge that I couldn't measure half of it.

PRIEST: Come on, come on. Enough of this nonsense. Let's get on with it. Follow me.

THE PRIEST, RICHARD & MARIA EXIT STAGE LEFT.

BLACK OUT

Scene Ten.

LIGHTS UP. EASTSIDE TERRITORY. BEN & SIMON ENTER STAGE LEFT.

BEN: Come on now, Simon. Let's go. It's very hot and we're in Eastside's territory, if we should bump into any of them, there's bound to be trouble.

SIMON: Look who's talking. You're the biggest troublemaker of all.

BEN: Who, me?

SIMON: Come on now, what's this innocent act? If there were two like you, there would soon be none, you'd kill each other.

TONY ENTERS STAGE LEFT WITH HIS CREW (EASTSIDE FOOT SOLDIERS FOLLOW).

BEN: Be careful. Here comes the Eastside Crew.

SIMON: So what?

TONY: I'd like a word with one of you.

SIMON: Is that all. Just one word with one of us? Let's have a bit more than one word.

TONY: You'll find me ready for that, if you give me reason.

SIMON: Couldn't you find some reason of your own?

TONY: Where's Richard? He's been seen knocking around with my cousin, Maria.

BEN: So...

TONY: If he's touched her, I'll kill him!

RICHARD ENTERS STAGE RIGHT.

RICHARD: Ben, Simon.

TONY: Well. Here comes the man himself. There's only one thing I have to say to you. You are a loser!

RICHARD TURNS TO GO.

SIMON: How can you let him push you around like that?

TONY PRODUCES A KNIFE AND LUNGES AT SIMON.

RICHARD: No.

TONY WITH HIS CREW EXITS STAGE LEFT.

SIMON: I'm hurt. *(SIMON COLLAPSES)*

BEN HOLDS SIMON, RICHARD STANDS CENTRE STAGE.

BEN: Richard. Simon is dead.

RICHARD: There's going to be more of this. I can feel it. This is only the beginning.

TONY ENTERS STAGE LEFT AND PRODUCES A KNIFE.

BEN: Look out here's Tony.

RICHARD PRODUCES A KNIFE.

RICHARD: Tony! Simon is dead and one of us is going with him.

TONY: You'll be the one to go with him.

RICHARD & TONY FIGHT. RICHARD STABS TONY THROUGH THE HEART. RICHARD PULLS HIS KNIFE OUT OF TONY, AS TONY FALLS TO THE GROUND.

BEN: Run, Richard! Don't stand staring. It's death if they catch you. Run! Run!

RICHARD EXITS STAGE RIGHT.

MARTIN AND WIFE ENTER STAGE RIGHT. CHRIS ENTERS STAGE LEFT. PAUL ENTERS UP STAGE CENTRE.

PAUL: Where are those who started this fight.

BEN: I can tell you everything.

WIFE: *(WIFE FALLS DOWN AND KISSES TONY'S FACE)* Oh my brother's child. Oh Paul, the blood of my nephew has been spilt. I want revenge. I want the Westside's blood

PAUL: Who started this?

BEN: Richard didn't want to fight Tony. So Tony turned on Simon. Richard tried to stop them. Tony killed Simon. It was only then that Richard attacked Tony.

WIFE: He's a Westside. Naturally he's biased. And he's lying. It wasn't just the two of them fighting. I want justice and you must give it to me, Paul. Richard murdered Tony. Richard must die.

PAUL: Richard killed Tony and Tony killed Simon. Who should pay the price for Simon's death?

MARTIN: Not Richard. Not Richard Paul. He was Simon's friend.

PAUL: And for that, I exile Richard.

BLACKOUT.

Scene Eleven.

LIGHTS UP. THE STREET. MARIA IS OUTSIDE HER MOTHER'S FLAT WAITING. SIS ENTERS STAGE RIGHT.

MARIA: What's wrong?

SIS: Oh no, he's dead. May God help us, he's gone.

MARIA: Can life be so cruel?

SIS: No. But Richard can. Who would have thought it?

MARIA: Why are you saying such things? Torturing me like this? Has Richard killed himself?

SIS: I saw the wound with my own eyes. A blood drenched body. He was

pale, and all covered in blood. Oh dear Tony! I never thought I'd live to see you dead.

MARIA: Is Richard and Tony dead? My cousin and my husband?

SIS: Tony is dead, and Richard banished. Richard killed Tony, now he's banished.

MARIA: Oh God! Did Richard kill Tony?

SIS: He did, oh God help us.

MARIA: I can't believe it!

SIS: If he hadn't killed Tony, Tony would have killed him.

MARIA: Why am I crying? My husband is alive. It's all good news. So why am I crying? There is something you said, that's worse than Tony's death. I wish I could forget it, but it's haunting me. Tony is dead, and Richard banished.

SIS: Yes banished...

MARIA: That one word 'banished' is like the death of ten thousand Tonys. Tony's death would have been bad enough if it had ended there. But Richard's world's been destroyed. (*PAUSE*) Where are my parents?

SIS: They're crying over Tony's body. Do you want to go to them?

MARIA: Are they washing his wounds with tears? I've got more tears for Richard's banishment than they'll ever have for Tony's death. I'm going to bed. And I'll die there.

SIS: I'll try and find Richard. I think I know where he is. Listen, Richard will be here tonight. I'll make sure of that. I'll go to him, he's hiding in the church.

MARIA: Oh find him. Give him this ring and tell him to come to me.

BLACK OUT.

Scene Twelve.

LIGHTS UP. CHURCH INTERIOR. CENTRE STAGE IS AN ALTER. THE PRIEST ENTERS CENTRE TOP.

PRIEST: Richard! Come out of there. Come out.

RICHARD EMERGES FROM BENEATH THE ALTER.

PRIEST (CONT) You poor fellow, so overwhelmed by unhappiness.

RICHARD: Father, have you any news? What is Paul's sentence? What's going to happen to me?

PRIEST: It's not so bad.

RICHARD: What could be 'not so bad' about a death sentence.

PRIEST: A less harsh sentence, not death but banishment.

RICHARD: Banishment? Oh Father. Say 'death'. exile is far more terrifying to me than death.

PRIEST: You've been banished from here. That's all. Be grateful. The world's a big place.

RICHARD: There's nothing else but here. Banished means banished from the world I have always known and that means death.

PRIEST: You ungrateful boy. You don't know how lucky you are. Paul has taken your side, he's converted your sentence to banishment. He's being merciful and you can't see it.

RICHARD: Haven't you got some poison or any way of sudden death? It would be better than banishment. How can you have the heart, a priest, one who calls himself my friend, to hit me with the word 'banished'?

PRIEST: You crazy, foolish young man, listen to me.

RICHARD: Oh! You're going to talk about banishment again.

PRIEST: Be philosophical. Banishment is not so bad.

RICHARD: There you are. Still going on about banishment. To hell with philosophy. Unless philosophy can make Maria, move town, change Paul's mind, it's useless.

PRIEST: Oh, you won't listen. I see that madmen have no ears.

RICHARD: How could they when wise men have no eyes?

PRIEST: Quick. Hide! I hear someone coming!

RICHARD: No. I don't care what happens to me, I'm not hiding.

PRIEST: Richard, they'll catch you! Run to my study...

SIS ENTERS STAGE RIGHT.

RICHARD: How is Maria? What does she say about the end of our love?

SIS: She doesn't say anything. She cries and cries, just throwing herself on her bed, then getting up again, calling "Tony", then "Richard", then falling on her bed again.

RICHARD PRODUCES A KNIFE AND TRIES TO STAB HIMSELF. PRIEST STRUGGLES TO TAKE THE KNIFE OFF RICHARD.

PRIEST: What are you doing? What kind of man are you? You look like a man but your tears are a woman's and your wild acts an animal's.

RICHARD: But...

PRIEST: I'm surprised at you. I really thought you more grown up. Perhaps you've killed Tony, but are you going to kill yourself too?

RICHARD: Yes...

PRIEST: Think about it. It's all positive. Maria is alive, the one you want to die for. That's a plus. Tony wanted to kill you, but you killed him instead. That's a plus. Paul could have condemned you to death, became your friend and turned it to exile. Another plus. You see? It's all pluses.

RICHARD: All pluses?

PRIEST: Happiness follows you, and what do you do? You behave like an ungrateful, spoilt child. Go to Maria, and comfort her.

RICHARD: I will...

PRIEST: Make sure you don't stay too long. Then go to Manchester. That's where you're going to live, until we get the chance to announce your marriage. We'll beg Paul's pardon, and you'll be able to come back. Go on Sis. Run ahead tell her, Richard is on his way.

SIS STARTS TO EXIT.

BLACK OUT.