

CORPSE BRIDE

by

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Theaomai Theatre Productions
United World College Changshu China

Cast of Characters

<u>Victor:</u>	A timid, artistic youth.
<u>Mr. William Van Dort:</u>	VICTOR's father, Mrs. Van Dort's husband; A successful owner of a fish business; A soft-spoken and comparatively amiable old gentleman.
<u>Mrs. Nell Van Dort:</u>	VICTOR's mother, Mr. Van Dort's wife; Condescending and snooty, has high expectations for her family.
<u>Victoria:</u>	A shy but rebellious young lady.
<u>Lord Finis Everglot:</u>	VICTORIA's father, Lady EVERGLOT's husband; A grumpy nobleman, whose family has long since fallen from fortune.
<u>Lady Maudeline Everglot:</u>	VICTORIA's mother, LORD EVERGLOT's wife; A haughty and contempt noblewoman, cold and distant who is obsessed with tradition and reputation.
<u>Emily the Corpse Bride:</u>	A beautiful, kind, and gullible young woman; Self-proclaimed bride.
<u>Lord Barkis Bittern:</u>	A greedy, arrogant, manipulative aristocrat; EMILY's ex-fiancé.
THE VILLAGERS	
<u>Pastor Galswells:</u>	An antique pastor.
<u>Town Crier:</u>	A loud newsman.

Mayhew: The Van Dort's employee and coachman;
A big-nosed hunchback;
Constantly coughs because of smoking,
eventually dies from coughing.

Hildegarde: The EVERGLOT's maid.

THE DEAD

Maggot: A sly, morbid, but protective creature;
A good friend to EMILY.

Black Widow: A BLACK WIDOW spider;
A good friend to EMILY.

Bonejangles: The local skeleton entertainer at the Ball and
Socket Pub.

Paul the Head Waiter: The French zombie "head" waiter at the Ball and
Socket Pub.

Elder Gutknecht: An old, wise, grandfatherly skeleton sage.

Skeleton Band: A band of 4 jazz skeletons;
(Skeleton 1, 2, 3, & 4)

Scraps: A cute skeleton puppy.

Skeleton Girl: A lively skeleton girl.

ACT I

1. In the village streets

(It's early in the morning, a cold, wet day in the town. The townspeople are all following their daily routine. VICTOR sits, dressed in suits and ready, beside the window in his room, while MR. VAN DORT and MRS. VAN DORT fixes up their dressing in-front of a mirror)

TOWN CRIER

(walks down the audience aisle)

HEAR YE, HEAR YE, TEN MINUTES TO GO 'TILL VAN DORT'S WEDDING REHEARSAL!

(VICTOR looks out of his window, a book in his lap. MR. and MRS. VANDORT walks out of their house, holding arms)

MRS. VAN DORT

It's a beautiful day

MR. VAN DORT

It's a rather nice day

MRS. VAN DORT

(flips out the fan in her hand and open her arms)

A day for a glorious wedding

MR. VAN DORT

(puts on MRS. VAN DORT's scarf on for her)

A rehearsal, my dear, to be perfectly clear

MRS. VAN DORT

A rehearsal for a glorious wedding

(The two walk, hand in hand, off the staircase at the front door down to the street)

MR. VAN DORT

Assuming nothing happens that we don't really know

(The street is dirty, and MRS. VAN DORT gives a stare at
MAYHEW who immediately takes down his scarf and puts it on the
ground for them to walk on.)

MRS VAN DORT

That nothing unexpected interferes with the show

MR and MRS VAN DORT

*And that's why everything. Every last little thing
Every single, tiny, microscopic, little thing must go*

MRS. VAN DORT

According to plan

MR. VAN DORT

Our son will be married

MRS. VAN DORT

According to plan

MR. VAN DORT

Our family carried

MR. and MRS. VAN DORT

Elevated to the heights of society

MRS. VAN DORT

To the costume balls

MR. VAN DORT

In the hallowed halls

MRS. VAN DORT

Rubbing elbows with the finest

MR. VAN DORT

Having crumpets with Her Highness

(he bows to MRS. VAN DORT)

MR. VAN DORT and MRS. VAN DORT

We've be there. We've be seen

Having tea with the queen

We'll forget everything that we've ever, ever been

(MR. and MRS. VAN DORT enters the carriage)

MRS. VAN DORT

Where's Victor? We might be late.

(Spotlight gives to VICTOR, who reads a book while slowly dressing up at the front door.)

MRS. VAN DORT

Come on, Victor! Hurry up, will ya?

VICTOR

I-I'm coming!

(he closes his book and hurriedly rush out of the house, stumbling on his way. He enters the carriage.)

MR. VAN DORT

You've certainly locked a winner this time, Victor.

MRS. VAN DORT

Now all you have to do is reel her in.

VICTOR

(clutching his poetry collection)

I'm already reeling, Mother. Shouldn't Victoria Everglot be marrying a lord or something?

MRS. VAN DORT

(fanning herself)

Oh, nonsense! We're every bit as good as the Everglots. I always knew I deserved better than a fish merchant's life.

VICTOR

But I've never even spoken to her.

MR. VAN DORT

The boy doesn't speak to anyone anyway.

MRS. VAN DORT

You better leave that "Alan Poe Poetry" nonsense behind when we're at the Everglots. Heaven knows, if you had an ounce of our sense, you'd have accomplished something by now.

(MAYHEW coughs loudly)

Mayhew! Silence that blasted coughing.

(BLACKOUT)

2. In the Everglot Mannor

(LORD and LADY EVERGLOT enter the stage, watching from the distance.)

LADY EVERGLOT

(crossed her arm)

Fish merchants.

(disgusted)

It's a terrible day

LORD EVERGLOT

Now, don't be that way

LADY EVERGLOT

It's a terrible day for a wedding

LORD EVERGLOT

It's a sad, sad state of affairs we're in

LADY EVERGLOT

That has led to this ominous wedding

LORD EVERGLOT

How could our family have come to this?

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT

To marry our daughter to the nouveau riche

LADY EVERGLOT

They're so common

LORD EVERGLOT

So course

LADY EVERGLOT

Oh, it couldn't be worse

LORD EVERGLOT

Couldn't be worse? I'm afraid I disagree

They could be land-rich, bankrupt aristocracy

(he opened a vault, which turns out to be empty)

Without a penny to their name

Just like you and me

LADY EVERGLOT

Oh dear

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT

And that's why everything

Every little thing. every single, tiny, microscopic, little thing must go

LADY EVERGLOT

According to plan

LORD EVERGLOT

Our daughter will wed

LADY EVERGLOT

According to plan

LORD EVERGLOT

Our family led

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT

From the depths of deepest poverty

LADY EVERGLOT

To the noble realm

(she gestures to a painting on the wall)

LORD EVERGLOT

Of our ancestry

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT

And who would have guessed in a million years that our daughter with a face

LORD EVERGLOT

Of an otter in disgrace

LADY EVERGLOT and LORD EVERGLOT

Will provide our tickets to a rightful place

(At the end of the corridor they arrived at the room of VICTORIA, who is preparing for the rehearsal in front of her desk with her maid HILDEGARDE. HILDEGARDE tightens the corset around VICTORIA'S waist.)

VICTORIA

(gasps)

Oh Hildegard, what will become of father and mother's grand expectations if Victor

and I don't...like each other.

(HILDEGARDE tightens the corset around VICTORIA'S waist again.)

LADY EVERGLOT

Ha! As if that has anything to do with marriage. Do you suppose your father and I like each other?

VICTORIA

(turns around to look at her parents)

Surely you must a little?

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT

(look at each other)

Oh, of course not.

VICTORIA

(hopefully)

Well, marriage is –

(pause)

"Our two souls therefore, which are one. Though I must go –"¹

(HILDEGARDE tightens the corset around her again, warning her, and VICTORIA stops abruptly, gasping)

LADY EVERGLOT

What nonsense!

(advances and snatches the book away from VICTORIA's hand)

You would stop reading these – improprieties! Get those corsets laced properly Hildegard, I can hear her speak without gasping.

(LORD and LADY EVERGLOT walk out of the room, and starts going down the grand staircase.)

VICTORIA

¹ John Donne, *A Valediction: Forbidden Mourning* (1611)

(whispering)
The vanity of human wishes.²
(she snatches yet another book under the table)

LADY EVERGLOT
Marriage is a partnership, a little tit for tat
(she pats LORD EVERGLOT on the head)
You'd think a lifetime watching us
Might have taught her that
Might have taught her that

LORD EVERGLOT
Everything must be perfect

(The VAN DORTS enters the stage.)

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT
Everything must be perfect, perfect
That's why everything, every last little thing
Every, single tiny, microscopic, little thing must go
According to plan

(MRS. VAN DORT helps VICTOR to straighten his cloth.
HILDEGARDE opens the door.)

MRS. VAN DORT
Look at the way you're standing, you look like you've got rickets or something.

(HILDEGARDE coughs, the VAN DORTS quickly straightens, and
all turn their attention to the EVERGLOTS inside the house. MRS.
VAN DORT chuckles awkwardly. They all walk inside, looking
around carefully.)

MRS. VAN DORT
Oh, my goodness. Oh, such grandeur! Such impeccable taste! Oh beautiful, 'innit?

² Samuel Johnson, *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749)

(HILDEGARDE closes the door.)

MR. VAN DORT

It's not as big as our place, dear.

(he looks around)

A bit shabby really, ain't it?

MRS. VAN DORT

(pinches him)

Shut up.

EMIL

(holds out his hand in introduction)

Lord and Lady Everglot. Mr. and Mrs. Van Dort.

MR. VAN DORT

(to LADY EVERGLOT)

Why, you must be Miss Victoria.

(takes off his hat)

Yes, I must say, you don't look a day over twenty, no, oh yes.

LADY EVERGLOT

(to LORD EVERGLOT)

Smile, darling, smile.

LORD EVERGLOT

(a very strangled smile)

Well, good day. What a pleasure. Welcome to our home.

MRS. VAN DORT

(chuckles)

Well, thank you.

LADY EVERGLOT

We'll be taking tea in the west drawing room.

(she starts to lead the way)

Oh, do come this way, it's just through there.

MRS. VAN DORT

(points to a painting)

Oh, I love what you've done with the place. Who is your decorator?

(VICTOR follows carefully behind)

MR. VAN DORT

Nice tiles, shame about the drapes.

MRS. VAN DORT

Oh my husband says such foolish things. Ignore him.

MR. VAN DORT

Ah yes, it's usually best.

(VICTOR accidentally brushes the piano keys, producing a soft sound. He flinches, glancing around as the door closes, the heavy door closing with a thud. VICTOR, wary, plays a quick scale. He pauses, sighing, and places his book on the piano. He sits down, and plays another scale carefully. He then looks up and down, and shakes his head, defeated-looking.)

VICTOR

I can't believe I'm getting married tomorrow-I mean-

(pauses, and fishes out a ring from of his pocket)

-married.

(looks at the ring intently)

What is feather-bed without love? That, of itself, alone may chain the mind; Yet has Love's sweetness, the romantic glow, mind....

(He begins to play a melancholy melody. Hearing this, VICTORIA, who had been fixing her hair, pauses. Intrigued, she steps out onto the balcony and quietly watches. She moves behind VICTOR, unnoticed at first. Immersed in the music, VICTOR suddenly realizes her presence and startles. His chair tips over,

nearly knocking over a vase on the piano, which he catches just in time, straightening it as he glances at the flowers.)

VICTOR

Do forgive me.

VICTORIA

You play beautifully.

VICTOR

(stammering)

I-I-I do apologize, Miss Everglot. How rude of me to, well, excuse me...

(kneels down and straightens the piano chair, sighing)

VICTORIA

Mother won't let me near the piano. Music is improper for a young lady. Too passionate, she says.

VICTOR

(in a serious, sarcastic tone)

Well, a little learning is a dangerous thing.³

VICTORIA

An Essay on Criticism? Pope, isn't it? Wonderfully described my parents, "In fearless youth we tempt the heights of Arts."

VICTOR

(standing up)

"While from the bounded level of our mind, short views we take, nor see the lengths behind." Maybe quite improper to put your parents into poetry, but I do believe they fit these lines.

VICTORIA

Quite improper for a young lady to amuse herself with poetry and joke about her Lord and Lady – too passionate.

³ Alexander Pope, *An Essay on Criticism* (1711)

(They chuckle heartily together. After a few moments of staring,
VICTOR suddenly jolts.)

VICTOR

Pardon me, milady, I was imprudent – if I may ask, Miss Everglot, where is your chaperone?

VICTORIA

Perhaps, in-in view of the circumstances – you could call me Victoria.

VICTOR

Yes, of course. Victoria.

VICTORIA

Yes, Victor.

VICTOR

Tomorrow, we are to be m-, mmm...

VICTORIA

Married.

VICTOR

Yes, m-married.

VICTORIA

(sits down on the piano bench)

Since I was a child, I've did dream of this day. Mine own wedding. I at each moment desire to find someone I was deeply in love with.

(let her finger glaze over the keys but not playing)

Someone to spend the rest of my life with. Silly little follies.

(looks up at VICTOR)

VICTOR

Yes, follies – no, no, not at all, no.

(He puts his elbow on the piano and leans, but accidentally hits the vase over again and it falls on the piano. VICTORIA gasps, standing up, and VICTOR quickly straightens the vase.)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

Oh, dear. Pardon me, I'm sorry.

(he turns around to face VICTORIA, rubbing his hand nervously)
(pauses, a moment of silence)

Ah...as we were, um talking about...marriage. We are going to be married.

(They stare into each other. VICTORIA shyly looks away to the book on the piano instead.)

VICTORIA

(peering)

“Poems by Edgar Allan Poe?”

VICTOR

Y-yes. You like him?

VICTORIA

Ah, distinctly I remember it was in the bleak December;⁴

VICTOR

And each separate dying ember wrought its ghost upon the floor. Eagerly I wished the morrow-

VICTORIA

I wished the morrow for our wedding.

(She holds out the flower that was originally in the vase to VICTOR.
He was about to take it when LADY EVERGLOT storms in.)

LADY EVERGLOT

⁴ [Edgar Allan Poe, *The Raven* \(1845\)](#)

What impropriety is this? You shouldn't be alone together. Here it is, one minute before five, and you're not at the rehearsal.

(pause)

Pastor Galswells is waiting. Come at once.

(she leads the two off the stage).

(BLACKOUT)

3. In the Church

(The Church is a dark, gloomy place, only LORD and LADY EVERGLOT, MR. and MRS. VAN DORT sit in the seats. HILDEGARDE stands on the side. Under the giant glass window is the altar, where an old PASTOR sits. VICTOR and VICTORIA stand in front of the altar. Two cups and two candles rest on the altar.)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Master Van Dort, from the beginning, again. With this hand, I will lift your sorrows. Your cup will never empty, for I will be your wine. With this candle, I will light your way in darkness. With this ring, I ask you to be mine.

(he glares down at VICTOR)

Let's try again.

VICTOR

Yes, yes sir.

(he holds out a candle)

With this candle-

(he tries to light the candle, but fails, he sighs gently)

This candle-

(he tries and fails again)

This candle-

(he tries and fails again, and he looks back, scared)

MRS. VAN DORT

(whispers to MR. VAN DORT)

Shall I get up there and do it for him?

MR. VAN DORT

Don't get all aflutter, dear.

(LADY EVERGLOT humphs, and LORD EVERGLOT grunts.
PASTOR GALSWELLS coughs loudly, glaring at VICTOR, who
quickly turns back and finally lights the candle successfully. He
sighs, relieved.)

VICTOR

With this candle-

(He accidentally blows out the candle again, and the people all groan
in frustration and exasperation.)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Continue!

(The doorbell sounds.)

LORD EVERGLOT

Get the door, Hildegarde.

(HILDEGARDE gets the door.)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Let's just pick it up at the candle bit.

(HILDEGARDE walks back with LORD BARKIS, who holds a
name card and gives it to LORD EVERGLOT.)

EMIL

A Lord Barkis, sir.

(walks away to stand on the side again)

LORD BARKIS

(walks to LORD EVERGLOT'S side)

I haven't a head for dates. Apparently, I'm a day early for this ceremony.

(LADY EVERGLOT takes the name card and reads it.)

LORD EVERGLOT

(to LADY EVERGLOT)

Is he from your side of the family?

LADY EVERGLOT

I can't recall. Hildegarde, a seat for Lord Barkis.

(HILDEGARDE takes a seat for LORD BARKIS.)

LORD BARKIS

Do carry on.

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Let's try it again, shall we, Master Van Dort?

(VICTOR and VICTORIA turn their heads back, and VICTORIA
lights her candle.)

VICTOR

Yes. Yes, sir. Certainly.

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Right.

VICTOR

Right-

(nearly drops his candle but manages to catch it in time)

Oh! Right!

(clears his throat)

With this-this-

(holds out his hand)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Hand.

VICTOR

With this hand.

(holds out his hand to VICTORIA, who takes it and the two walk forward together)

I, with-

(bumps on the table. VICTORIA gasps, covering her mouth)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Three steps, three!

(tap his crutch loudly on the ground)

Can you not count? Do you not wish to be married, Master Van Dort?

VICTOR

(panicking, shakes his hand)

No! No.

VICTORIA

(looks at him)

You do not?

VICTOR

(looks at her again and shakes his hand)

No! I meant, no, I do not-not wish to be married.

(pauses, thinking)

That is, I want very much to-

(PASTOR GALSWELLS hits him on the head with the crotch.)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

(clutches his head)

Oww!

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Pay attention! Have you even remembered to bring the ring?

VICTOR

The ring? Yes, of course-

(starts searching his inner pockets and pulls out the ring, but accidentally drops it, and immediately dives for it)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Dropping the ring!

MRS. VAN DORT

Oh no, he's dropped the ring!

PASTOR GALSWELLS

(taps his crotch on the ground)

This boy doesn't want to get married!

LADY EVERGLOT

How disgraceful!

(The ring landed near LADY EVERGLOT's dress, and VICTOR finally grabs it, but drops the candle, which is unnoticed.)

VICTOR

Excuse me. Got it!

(The candle sets LADY EVERGLOT's dress on fire. People all gasps in horror.)

LORD EVERGLOT

Out of the way, you ninny.

(pushes VICTOR out of the way and starts stepping on the fire, hoping to extinguish it)

LADY EVERGLOT

Oh dear! Oh my! Giddy on-

MRS. VAN DORT

There's a lady on fire, help!

MR. VAN DORT

Emergency!

MRS. VAN DORT

(fanning the fire)

Oh, I hope it doesn't stain!

LADY EVERGLOT

Stop fanning it, you fool!

MRS. VAN DORT

Get a bucket, get a bucket.

MR. VAN DORT

I'm on my way, dear. Yes, oh dear!

(MR VAN DORT rushes away, meanwhile LORD BARKIS pours the water from his cup onto the fire, HILDEGARDE just in time to rush in with a plate where LORD BARKIS put the cup back onto. LORD BARKIS fixes his tie gracefully.)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Enough! This wedding cannot take place until he is properly prepared!

(VICTOR backs into the backdoor fearfully.)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Young man. Learn. Your. Vows.

(Everyone is staring at VICTOR, who clumsily escapes through the backdoor.)

LORD BARKIS

Well, he's quite the catch, isn't he?

(BLACKOUT)

4. On the bridge outside

(The bridge is at the edge of town, near the looming forest. Under the moonlight, all looks serene, albeit still gloomy. VICTOR leans on the bridge railing, sad and glum.)

VICTOR

(picks up a flower and sighs)

Oh, Victoria. She must think I'm such a fool. This day couldn't get any worse.

(The TOWN CRIER walks down the audience seats on the aisle, yelling and shaking his bell.)

TOWN CRIER

HEAR YE, HEAR YE! REHEARSAL IN RUINS AS VAN DORT BOY CAUSES
CHAOS! FISHY FIANCE COULD BE CANNED! EVERGLOTS ALL FIRED UP!
VAN DORT DISASTER RUINS REHEARSAL!

(VICTOR sighs, sulking as he leaves the bridge and starts to walk
into the woods, sulked)

How does this end up like this....

VICTOR

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
Alone and palely loitering.....

5. In the woods

(The woods are dense, shadowy forest, twisted branches claw at the sky. Faint whispers ride the wind, fog curling through gnarled roots. Moonlight barely pierces the canopy, casting eerie, shifting shadows on the ground.)

VICTOR

.....The sedge has withered from the lake,
And no birds sing.

O what can ail thee, knight-at-arms,
So haggard and so woe-begone?

(learns on a tree)

‘Tis very much shouldn’t be so beyond difficult. It’s just a few simple vows.

(holds out his hands)

With this hand, I will take your wine.

(sigh)

No.

(continues walking)

With this hand, I will cup your – oh goodness no...

(shakes his head)

With this – with this candle, I will...

(pause)

I will set your mother on fire.

(exasperated, putting his hand over his face. He sits down on a root.)

It’s no use...

(pause, gazing at the flower in his hand. Slowly, he lifts it to his nose and takes in its scent. His posture straightens, and a quiet resolve settles over him. With renewed confidence, he rises to his feet)

With this hand, I will lift your sorrows. Your cup will never empty, for I will be your wine.

(pause)

Sir, or Madam, truly your forgiveness I implore.

(holds a branch)

All my troublesome troubles shall lift, I say, Nevermore!

(he rushed to another tree)

It’s an honor, Lord Everglot, I am Victor of the Van Dort.

(pause)

Call you father? Call you such I shall, with such name as Nevermore!

(breathes deeply, closing his eyes, then restarts solemnly)

With this candle, I will light your way in darkness.

(holds out the ring)

With this ring, I ask you to be mine.

(He slips the ring onto the skeleton’s finger. A tense silence follows before the wind howls, crows caw, and VICTOR tenses. Suddenly, the skeleton grabs him, pulling him to the ground. He struggles and

finally breaks free, stumbling back. Something rises slowly from the earth. VICTOR watches in horror as a tall, slender figure in a white bridal dress appears. She lifts her veil, revealing her skeletal face.)

EMILY

I do.

You may kiss the bride.

(kisses VICTOR)

(BLACKOUT)

6. In the Underworld (pub)

(The underworld is colorful and vibrant, teeming with skeletons and zombies. The bustling "Ball and Socket Pub" is the main hub, filled with eerie laughter, flickering lights, and lively, undead patrons. A crowd crowds around VICTOR, who flutters to consciousness.)

SKELETON 1

A new arrival!

EMILY

He must've fainted. Are you all right?

VICTOR

What? What happened?

SKELETON 2

(gets near to VICTOR's face)

By Jove, man. Looks like we've got ourselves a breather.

SKELETON 1

He's still soft.

(VICTOR, terrified, starts to slowly back up)

SKELETON 3

A toast then!

SKELETON 4

To the newlyweds!

VICTOR

(surprised)

Newlyweds?

EMILY

(approaches VICTOR, who starts to back away again)

In the woods, you said your vows so perfectly.

(she shows her ring to VICTOR)

VICTOR

I did? I did...?

(bangs his head on the table)

Wake up! Wake up! Wake up!

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER

Coming through! Coming through!

(stops in front of VICTOR)

My name is Paul, I am the head waiter. I will be creating your wedding feast.

MAGGOT

(pats EMILY excitedly on the shoulder)

Wedding feast! I'm salivating!

(VICTOR gasps again, and EMILY puts her hand on his mouth to stop him from speaking.)

EMILY

(laughs awkwardly)

It's just Maggot, ignore him!

(VICTOR stumbles backward and falls into the SKELETONS.)

VICTOR

Keep away!

(All the DEAD pause and stare at him. VICTOR glances around, then pulls out a sword from ZOMBIE PATRICK with the skeleton still attached.)

VICTOR (CONT'D)

I've got an a-I've got a dwarf. And I'm not afraid to use him. I want some questions, now!

SKELETON PATRICK

Answers. I think you mean "answers".

VICTOR

Thank you, yes, answers. I need answers. What's going on here? Where am I? Who am I? I mean, who are you?

EMILY

(steps up)

Well, that's kind of a long story.

BONEJANGLES

(dramatic entrance)

A tragic tale of romance, passion, and murder most foul.

SKELETON 1

This is gonna be good.

(VICTOR drops his sword along with ZOMBIE PATRICK.)

BONEJANGLES

Hit it, boys!

(The piano starts playing, and the SKELETON BAND starts dancing.)

BONEJANGLES

*Hey, give me a listen. You corpse of cheer.
At least those of you who still got an ear.
I'll tell you a story. Make a skeleton cry.
Of our own jubiliciously lovely Corpse Bride.*

SKELETON BAND

*Die, die, we all pass away.
But don't wear a frown. Because it's really okay.
You might try to hide, and you might try to pray.
But we all end up the remains of the day.*

(VICTOR tries to slip away but the skeletons pull him back)

BONEJANGLES

*Well, our girl was a beauty know for miles around.
When a mysterious stranger came into town.
He was plenty good-looking but down on his cash.
And our poor little baby. She fell hard and fast.
When her daddy said no, she just couldn't cope. So our lovers came up with a plan to elope.*

ALL SKELETONS

*Die, die, we all pass away.
But don't wear a frown. Because it's really okay.
You might try and hide. And you might try and pray.
But we all end up the remains of the day.
Die, Die, Die, die die.
Die, Die, Die, die die.
Die, Die, Die, die die.
Die, Die, Die, die die.*

BONEJANGLES

*Oh, that's right!
Okay, oh yeah. Come on boys, pick it up.
Yeah, I like it. Okay, Chancy, take it. Yeah!*

(a lot of dancing and movements)

That's nice.

So they conjured up a plan to meet late at night.

They told not a soul. Kept the whole thing tight.

Now, her mother's wedding dress. Fit like a glove.

You don't need much when you're really in love.

Except for a few things. Or so I'm told.

Like the family Jewels and a satchel of gold.

Then next to the graveyard by the old oak tree.

On a dark foggy night at a quarter to 3.

She was ready to go, but where was he?

SKELETON 1

And then?

BONEJANGLES

She waited.

SKELETON 2

And then?

BONEJANGLES

There in the shadows, was it her man?

SKELETON 3

And then?

BONEJANGLES

Her little heart beats so loud.

SKELETON BAND

And then?

BONEJANGLES

And then, baby, everything went black.

Now, when she opened her eyes, she was dead as dust.

Her jewels were missing. And her heart was bust.

*So she made a vow lying under that tree,
that she'd wait for her true love to come set her free.
Always waiting for someone to ask for her hand.*

(EMILY extends her hand to VICTOR, and BAND SKELETON 1
holds VICTOR from behind)

BONEJANGLES

*Then out of the blue, comes this groovy young man.
Who vows forever to be by her side. And that's the story of our Corpse Bride.*

ALL SKELETONS

*But don't wear a frown. Because it's really okay.
You might try and hide, and you might try and pray.
But we all end up the remains of the day.*

BONEJANGLES

YEAH!

(BLACKOUT)

7. In the Everglot Mannor

*(VICTORIA stands on the balcony, looking out. LORD and LADY EVERGLOT, and MR.
and MRS. VAN DORT sits in the hall by the fireplace.)*

TOWN CRIER

(Ringing his bell)

HEAR YE, HEAR YE, VICTOR VAN DORT SEEN THIS NIGHT ON THE BRIDGE
IN THE ARMS OF A MYSTERY WOMAN! THE DARK-HAIRED TEMPTRESS
AND MASTER VAN DORT SLIPPED AWAY INTO THE NIGHT! And now the
weather. Scattered showers –

LADY EVERGLOT

(furious)

Enough! That will be all.

(LORD BARKIS turns the TOWN CRIER around, who exits.)

MRS. VAN DORT

Mystery woman? He doesn't even know any women!

LORD BARKIS

Or so you thought.

(starts to walk away, but stops at the door)

Do call for me if you need my assistance-

(pause)

-In any way.

(slams the door shut)

LADY EVERGLOT

Good, heavens, Finis, what should we do?

LORD EVERGLOT

Fetch me musket.

MRS. VAN DORT

(panicking, she pats MR. VAN DORT on the shoulder)

William, do something!

LORD EVERGLOT

(raise his hand to stop the talking)

We are one groom short for the wedding tomorrow. Not to mention the financial implications.

LADY EVERGLOT

A most scandalous embarrassment for us all.

(throws a disgusted look at the VAN DORTS, and stomps away)

MRS. VAN DORT

(grabs LADY EVERGLOT'S sleeve)

Oh, give us a chance to find him!

(pause)

We beg of you! Just give us until dawn.

LADY EVERGLOT

(turns around)

Very well – till dawn.

(She shakes off MRS. VAN DORT, and stomps out, with LORD EVERGLOT following her. The VAN DORTs look at each other, and a few moments later, they follow. VICTORIA stands there, at a loss for words, then runs after them.)

(BLACKOUT)

8. In Elder Gutknecht's attic

(A dusty old attic filled to the brim with ancient books and cobwebs. The sounds of crows echo outside. EMILY and VICTOR climb the winding stairs that leads up to the attic.)

EMILY

Scraps, ssh, hold on! Elder Gutknecht ... Are you there? Hello, is anyone home?

(VICTOR hit the books tower behind him. The sounds of the crows increased, VICTOR gasped. ELDER GUTKNECHT appears with Coughing)

EMILY

There you are!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Emily my dear, there you are! With...

EMILY

My husband, Victor.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(fumbling his glasses)

What's that? Husband?

VICTOR

Pleasure to meet you sir!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Ok...

EMILY

We need to go upstairs to visit the land of the living!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

The land of the living? Why?

(starts to approach EMILY)

Oh...dear.

EMILY

Please Elder Gutknecht! I am sure you can help!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Now, why go up there, when people are dying to get down here?

VICTOR

Sir, I beg you to help it means so much to me – I mean, us.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

I don't know, it is just not natural, I have never done this before...

EMILY

(holding his hand)

Please Elder Gutknecht! Surely there must be something you can do.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Alright, let me see what I can do.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(looking around)

Now where did I put that book?

(Creepy music plays while he searches about the book. He finally found it between old books covered with dust.)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(fumbling his glasses)

I left it somewhere, oh yes! There's the one!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

There are a lot of hazardous spells here

(turns the pages)

I have it! A Ukrainian haunting spell, just the thing for these quick trips.

EMILY

(whispers to VICTOR)

So glad you thought of this, Victor, thank you!

VICTOR

(nervously)

Yes, of course, me too!

(ELDER GUTKNECHT starts adding the liquids to the glass, then a pinch of salty substance, and finally a feather from his crow. He takes a whiff at it, starts coughing, then gulps it all down.)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Now then, where were we?

EMILY

The Ukrainian haunting spell?

(ELDER GUTKNECHT grabs his crow, starts squeezing it, until the crow lays an egg.)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Here we have it, the question is, Are you ready? Just remember, when you want to come back, say "Hopscotch."

VICTOR

Hop – what...?

EMILY

Hopscotch?!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

That's it!

(He breaks the egg, and yellow smoke erupts, engulfing EMILY and VICTOR.)

(BLACKOUT)

9. In the woods

(VICTOR and EMILY find themselves back in the forest, under the full moon. EMILY stands next to VICTOR, watching the moon.)

EMILY

I spent so much time in the darkness, I've almost forgotten how beautiful the moonlight is! Look at this Victor! A butterfly!

(EMILY dances around VICTOR.)

VICTOR

Emily, wait. I need to tell you something-

(motioning EMILY to sit on a fallen tree trunk)

Hold on. I think I should prepare Mother and Father for the big news, right? Therefore I will go ahead and you...wait, here, safe and sound. What do you think?

EMILY

Yes of course. Perfect!

VICTOR

I shan't take too long! Stay right here, I will be right back. No peeking!

EMILY

Ok, no worries, I will be right here!

VICTOR

No peeking, remember!

(VICTOR leaves.)

MAGGOT

(enters, shouting)

You know he is no-

EMILY

(pushes MAGGOT down)

Go and chew someone else's ear for a while, Victor has gone to see his parents, just like he promised me.

MAGGOT

If I hadn't spent most of my life watching it, I would say that you had officially lost your mind!

EMILY

I am sure he has a perfectly good reason for taking so long!

MAGGOT

Yes, yes, of course, I am sure he does! But why don't you go ask him?

EMILY

Alright, I will! Can you leave me alone now?

MAGGOT

Just saying, he couldn't get far with those cold feet.

(BLACKOUT)

10. On Victoria's balcony & in her room

(Outside the Everglot Mannor, the streets were empty. VICTOR hurries down the streets, quiet and nervous. He stops outside of the front window, pausing to listen to the argument coming from inside.)

LORD EVERGLOT

If ever I see that Van Dort boy, I will strangle him with my bare hands.

LADY EVERGLOT

Your hands are too fat, and his neck is too thin, you will have to use a rope!

VICTOR

(To himself.)

Do I really have a thin neck...? No, Victor, focus! We have to see Victoria.

(VICTOR stands below the balcony, where VICTORIA sits, sewing

mournfully.)

VICTOR

It is my lady...not yet though, but oh it is my love. If only she knew I love her. She seems full of sorrow, and I am the troublesome cause. What does it matter...? Her eye discourses, shall I answer? I am too foolish, 'tis not to me she speaks.

(VICTORIA sighs and lays aside her sewing, and stands beside the balcony railing.)

VICTORIA

O Victoria, Victoria, wherefore art thou Victoria. Deny thy father and refuse thy name, or if thou wilt not, swear your little follies of love, and you will no longer be an Everglot.

VICTOR

'Tis not little follies...

VICTORIA

It is my name that is my enemy. I am myself, if not an Everglot. What's Everglot? It is neither riches, nor courtesies, not a hand or a foot, not a heartbeat or a warm breath. Be some other name, but Everglot is all I am.

VICTOR

(whispering loudly)

But soft, what light through yonder breaks?

(VICTORIA starts, raising her head.

VICTOR

It is the East, and Victoria is the sun.

(VICTORIA hurries over to the balcony railing, she leans down.)

VICTORIA

Victor-

(helps VICTOR up onto the balcony)

Good lord, you're as cold as death herself.

VICTOR

I know not how to tell you, if I have an apology written down on paper, I'd write a thousand words. I am a shame of Van Dort.

VICTORIA

Come on, come by the fire. How did you come hither, tell me, and wherefore? If my parents see you here, they will murder you.

VICTOR

Aye, I heard. My life would be better ended by their hate.

VICTORIA

I would not for the world let them see you. But pray do tell me, what happened? Where have you been?

VICTOR

Oh Victoria, if I told you the truth, you would call me crazy.

VICTORIA

Victor.

VICTOR

If I must confess, Victoria, this morning I was terrified of marriage, but upon meeting you, I finally understood what they are talking about when they talk about love, it's a lightning strike, or a blast of thunder, it all fell upon me – the truth is no simpler than I shall be with you forever, there truer truth than this, which I've sought for the past twenty years, had finally come to me as Victoria.

VICTORIA

I only worry that tomorrow's wedding will not come soon enough.

VICTOR

It's a shame that my face is not masked in darkness, now you've already seen a maiden's blush upon my cheek.

VICTORIA

O, I wish *I* could be more maiden-like right here right now, but oh well, farewell formality. Do you love me? Will you say yes? Will I believe you? Wait, answer not. Or, if you think I've been won over too quickly...But if you don't think I'm too hasty to fall in love, I will not refuse you for the world. But now again I doubt, is love real? Does it exist? Is this some kind of illusion I conjured up from books and tales, some little folly?

VICTOR

'Tis not some little folly, Victoria. It is the truest of all truths. But Victoria, I beseech you, have patience, for this blessed night I fear-

VICTORIA

(touches VICTOR's lips)

There's nothing to fear, Victor.

(VICTOR slowly leans in to kiss VICTORIA, but then he pulls back.)

VICTOR:

Wait, no, Victoria, I am so sorry, there's...something else happened, I am so sorry-

(Suddenly, thunder strikes outside, green light flashes. EMILY enters the room through the balcony, pushing back her veil to reveal her face.)

EMILY

Darling, I just wanted to meet –

(stares. Approaches VICTOR and holds his arm)

Darling? Who is this?

VICTORIA

Victor, who is this?

EMILY

I am his wife!

(shows the ring)

VICTORIA

Your wife? Victor!

VICTOR

Please let me elaborate, Victoria, you don't understand. Look, I am living, but she is dead.

(waves EMILY's skeletal arm)

(Thunder and lightning strikes with green mist.)

EMILY

Hopscotch!

(pulls VICTOR into the dark)

(BLACKOUT)

11. In Elder Gutknecht's attic

(Back to the ancient and messy attic. ELDER GUTKNECHT sits on his chair with the same book opened on his table. EMILY and VICTOR stumble in amidst green mist and the cries of crows.)

EMILY

You lied to me!

(pushes him away)

Just to get back to that other woman!

(crosses her arm)

VICTOR

Don't you understand? You are the other woman! **My heart is to someone else!**

EMILY

No! You are married to me! She is the other woman!

(cries)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(leans forward)

She's got a point after all.

EMILY

And I thought-

(chokes, trembling)

I thought this was all going so well.

(wipes her tears with the scarf)

(EMILY drops one of her eyes while crying)

VICTOR

(blinks and grabs the eye from the floor, examining it)

Listen, I am sorry...I did not mean to hurt your feelings or make you feel unloved,

But-

(pauses)

This just cannot work.

(gives her the eye back)

EMILY

Why not?!

(takes the eye, her voice rising)

It is my eye, is it not? Or is it because YOU LOVE HER INSTEAD?

VICTOR

No! Your eye is— lovely, and listen, under different circumstances, well, who knows?

But we are just too different---I mean---you are dead.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Well, you are also dead technically because you are here.

EMILY

You think I chose to be dead, to be here? You think I chose this? You married me, you made a vow!

(clenches her fist)

You should have thought about that before you asked me to marry you!

VICTOR

Why on earth can't you understand? It was a mistake. I would never marry you!

(EMILY blinks, then sighs, and walks downstairs. VICTOR is a bit taken aback)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

You could have told her in a kinder way.

VICTOR

There is no 'a kinder way'!

(sighs)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Then find your own 'kinder way'.

(BLACKOUT)

12. In the pub

Blue and gray lights focused on her red sofa, MAGGOT and BLACKWIDOW hide behind the sofa.

EMILY

(enters, throws her scarf and keeps holding roses)

Roses for eternal love, Lilies for sweetness.

(sits and throws them around one by one)

Million stars.

(throw away the whole bouquet)

Oh, how cold a heart can be, how I'm on a cold hill side!

How much have my heart carried...

BLACK WIDOW

(appearing)

Why so blue?

EMILY

Maybe he's right. Maybe we are too different.

MAGGOT

(enters)

Maybe he should have his head examined! I mean, I could do it!

EMILY

Or perhaps he does belong with her Little Miss Living! With her rosy cheeks and beating heart.

(rest her check on her hand)

BLACK WIDOW

Oh, those girls are ten a penny. You have got so much more. You've got-You've got
You've got a wonderful personality!

MAGGOT

What does that wispy little brat have that you don't have double?

BLACK WIDOW

She can't hold a candle to the beauty of your smile

EMILY

How about a pulse?

MAGGOT

OVERRATED BY A MILE

BLACK WIDOW

Overvalued

MAGGOT

Overblown

MAGGOT & BLACK WIDOW

If he only knew the you that we know

BLACK WIDOW

And that silly little creature is not wearing his ring

MAGGOT

And she doesn't play piano or dance, or sing!

MAGGOT & BLACK WIDOW

No, she doesn't compare

EMILY

But she still breathes air!

MAGGOT & BLACK WIDOW

Who cares!

MAGGOT

Unimportant!

BLACK WIDOW

OVERRATED!

MAGGOT

Overblown!

MAGGOT & BLACKWIDOW

If he only could see how special you can be!

If he only knew the you that we know!

EMILY

I haven't seen the seasons change for more than seven years

Buried six feet under, it's all the same.

And I know her heart is beating

And I know that I am dead

Yet the pain now that I feel

Try and tell me it's not real

And it seems that I still have a tear to shed

MAGGOT

The sole redeeming feature from that little creature

Is that she's alive!

BLACK WIDOW

OVERRATED!

MAGGOT

Overblown!

BLACK WIDOW

Everybody knows that's just a temporary state

Which is cured very quickly when we meet our fate

MAGGOT

Who cares?!

BLACK WIDOW

Unimportant

MAGGOT

OVERRATED!

BLACK WIDOW

Overblown!

MAGGOT & BLACK WIDOW

If he only he could see how special you can be

If he only knew the you that we know

EMILY

If I touch a burning candle I can feel no pain

If you cut me with a knife it's still the same

Yet I feel my heart is aching

Though it doesn't beat, it's breaking.

And the pain here that I feel

Try and tell me it's not real.

I know that I am dead

Yet it seems that I still have some tears to shed.

(MAGGOT sighs. EMILY lies down on the sofa, and falls asleep,
shedding tears.)

(BLACKOUT)

13. In Everglot Mannor

(Rain pounds heavily outside the window. In the living room, VICTORIA tells her parents her encounter with VICTOR.)

VICTORIA

It's true, mother! Victor is married to a dead woman. I saw her, a corpse! Standing right here with Victor.

LADY EVERGLOT

Wait? What did you say? Victor was in your room?

VICTORIA

Mother! I have to help him.

LADY EVERGLOT

The scandal!

HILDEGARDE

Come sit in your chair, dearie, you're shaking like a leaf. Let Hilde fetch you a blanket-

LADY EVERGLOT

Fetch her a straitjacket! She's completely mad! Come, Hildegarde.

VICTORIA

Mother, no, what are you doing? I need to save Victor! He needs help!

LADY EVERGLOT

Seal the door! And bar the window, she is trying to embarrass the whole family by her careless behaviors! See to it that she doesn't escape again.

(to LORD EVERGLOT)

Will the mortification never cease? It will be years before we can show ourselves in public again. What shall we do?!

LORD EVERGLOT

We shall continue as planned with or without Vincent.

LADY EVERGLOT

You mean Victor.

LORD EVERGLOT

Whatever, it doesn't matter.

LORD BARKIS

(enters from the same side where VICTORIA was taken)

For that boy to toss aside a young woman like Victoria. It's positively criminal! Why? Doesn't she deserve a better partner? To sacrifice for her for the rest of his life? Provide her safety and unlimited love. Ah, If I had a woman like your daughter on my arm...I would lavish her with riches befitting royalty!

LADY EVERGLOT

Your Lady wife is a most fortunate woman.

BARKIS

Alas, I am not married. I was betrothed some years ago, it still feels like yesterday though. Tragedy snatched my young bride away. When one lives alone, wealth counts for naught.

LORD EVERGLOT

You went through a lot, Barkis, you should move on by now.

BARKIS

Of course, that is why I am here.

(BLACKOUT)

15. In Victoria's bedroom

(VICTORIA tries to use a pointed iron bar to unlock the wooden door)

VICTORIA

(hits the knob with iron)

I won't wait for them to believe me! My time has begun, and I will find a way out! Oh they're coming-

(hides the iron bar behind her)

(LORD and LADY EVERGLOT enters the room.)

LORD EVERGLOT

Marvelous news, Victoria, there'll be a wedding after all.

VICTORIA

Really? You found him! Where?

LADY EVERGLOT

Make haste, my dear, our relatives will arrive at any moment. We must have you looking presentable for Lord Barkis.

VICTORIA

(gasps, dropping the iron)

Lord Barkis...?

LADY EVERGLOT

He will be a fine husband.

LORD EVERGLOT

Aye. A fortuitous turn of events indeed.

LADY EVERGLOT

A far better prospect this time.

VICTORIA

Mother, Father, he may be a great man in your eyes, but that doesn't mean he'll make a great husband. And I feel absolutely nothing for him. You can't make me do this.

LORD EVERGLOT

We must. It is already decided.

VICTORIA

Please, I beg of you. There must be another way!

LORD EVERGLOT

Without your marriage to Lord Barkis, we shall be forced, penniless, into the street. We are destitute!

VICTORIA

But what about Victor?

LADY EVERGLOT

Victor Van Dort has gone, child, forget about him.

LORD EVERGLOT

You shall marry Lord Barkis tomorrow, be prepared by then.

LADY EVERGLOT & LORD EVERGLOT

According to plan!!

(They leave and shut the door. LORD BARKIS, hidden, waits for them to pass. He moves to the other side, laughing as he examines the family tree paintings, stopping at VICTORIA's portrait.)

LORD BARKIS

Oh, my dear, don't look at me that way. This union, tiresome as it may seem, is only yours to bear 'til death do us apart—and perhaps that end will come sooner than you expect. Until then, endure it with grace, and remember well: love is but a fleeting folly, 'tis the much *finer* things in life that secure one's place...that tend to outlive.

(BLACKOUT)

ACT II

1. On the village streets

(MR. and MRS. VAN DORT walks through the audience aisle, holding posters that reads "Have you seen me?", showing VICTOR's face, name, and qualities, and also his mother's contact information.)

MRS. VAN DORT

Oh, but it's almost dawn! Where could Victor be?

MR. VAN DORT

Oh, I have no idea. Blimey, it's like he vanished off the face of the earth!

MRS. VAN DORT

We continue to look for him, or we'll look like absolute fools before those Everglot people and the entire town.

(asking an audience member)

Have you seen him? Victor, a skinny, childish boy, about knee-high, as pale as chalk, looks like we hadn't been feeding him! We are feeding him alright, aren't we?

MR. VAN DORT

(asking an audience member)

Have you seen this boy?

(They questions the audience until they've reached the stage, where they scramble into their carriage, pulled by MAYHEW. Suddenly, the TOWN CRIER appears among the audience, shouting and ringing his bell.)

TOWN CRIER

(shouting and ringing the bell)

VICTOR VAN DORT ELOPES WITH A CORPSE! HEARTBROKEN EVERGLOT BRIDE IS TO WED WEALTHY NEWCOMER!

MRS. VAN DORT:

Wealthy newcomer? It cannot be!

MR. VAN DORT

Did he say corpse?

MRS. VAN DORT

Oh, don't be ridiculous. What corpse would marry our Victor?

(MAYHEW coughs violently)

MRS. VAN DORT

Oh Mayhew! Silence that blasted coughing!

(MAYHEW coughs violently, collapsing from the carriage,
motionless. The carriage rolls downhill uncontrollably.)

MRS. VAN DORT:

Come on! Mayhew are you trying to kill us? I think he is trying to kill us-ahhhhhhhh!

(BLACKOUT)

2. In the pub

(Back at the "Ball and Socket Pub" in the underworld, empty cups and glasses clutter the tables. Eerie insect sounds fill the now-quiet space as green and yellow lights flicker. VICTOR picks up the bouquet EMILY had thrown on the floor. Hearing the faint piano music from upstairs, he follows the sound and approaches her. EMILY plays the piano, her gaze fixed on her hands as they move across the keys.)

VICTOR

(approaching)

I think-I think you dropped this...

(EMILY turns her face away from VICTOR. He gently places the roses on the piano, and she resumes playing.)

VICTOR

Listen, I'm sorry. I'm sorry I lied to you about wanting to see my parents, about being a bit rude-

EMILY

A lot!

VICTOR

Yes a lot , it's just this whole day hasn't gone quite, well.

(He sighs and sits next to her at the piano. She plays a melancholy tune, and they begin a back-and-forth duet. They finish the piece together, smiling. At the end, she accidentally drops a few of her hand bones, stopping the music. VICTOR gently helps her gather them.)

EMILY

(chuckles)

Pardon my enthusiasm.

VICTOR

(holding her hand)

No worries, I like your enthusiasm.

(Suddenly, a bell rings loudly downstairs. They jump, startled.)

ZOMBIES & SKELETONS

(ringing the bell and making siren noises)

New arrival! New arrival!

BONEJANGLES

(emerging from under the bar counter)

Lights up!

SKELETON 1

Come on, hurry up!

(A queue of 3 skeletons enters and sits on the tables. PAUL THE HEAD WAITER rushes in with the sound of insects crawling.)

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER

(holding a tray of cups and a glass of beer)

Wilkommen, Bienvenue, Welcome~ to the Ball and Sockets Pub! Another pint, sir?

SKELETON 1

Four pints, c'mon yeah!

BONEJANGLES

(pushing people aside to get through to MAYHEW)

Welcoming committee, coming through! Coming through!

(holds MAYHEW's hand.)

My name's Bonejangles.

(winks)

(VICTOR notice his face and recognized him he stands away from piano and head towards him)

VICTOR

Mayhew? Mayhew my friend, is that you? How nice to see you-

(MAYHEW turns around to VICTOR, his face purple and congested.)

VICTOR

(gasps)

I am so sorry.

MAYHEW

Oh, yeah. Actually, though, I feel great!

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER

Mon Dieu, this gentleman must be parched!

(hands out a cup to MAYHEW)

MAYHEW

(takes a sip)

Cheers, mate.

VICTOR

Mayhew, listen, please. I have to go back home, they must be worried sick. How is everyone? My parents, Vic-*Miss* Victoria?

MAYHEW

Well, they are still wondering where you slipped off to. Oh, and Miss Everglot-

VICTOR:

Yes, yes! How is she?

MAYHEW

Well, this evening, she will be getting married.

VICTOR

What? But she knows that I am here, in the world of the dead, I-I cannot marry her.

MAYHEW

I am sorry for you, young master Van Dort, she will be marring another bloke tonight.

VICTOR

What do you mean, Mayhew? Married to whom?

MAYHEW

A newcomer in town, a Lord somebody-or-other, I do not know.

VICTOR

But that's.....she did not make this decision, did she?

MAYHEW

Well, um, with you up and gone and all that, I guess they didn't want to waste the cake.

(laughs awkwardly)

VICTOR

It's all my fault. How could she-

(BONEJANGLES comes up behind VICTOR and puts his arm around VICTOR.)

BONEJANGLES

(drunkenly)

Women. You can't live with them, you can't live without-

(falls over and scatters most of his bones)

MAYHEW

Time to pick up the pieces and.....you know, move on, I suppose.

BONEJANGLES

Oi, Speaking of picking up the pieces, any help?

(VICTOR leaves the table, passing EMILY, who is sitting next to the piano, listening to their conversation.)

EMILY

Victor? Where are you going?

(sighing, she sits at one of the tables, staring off to the door where VICTOR sadly exited a moment before, talking to BONEJANGLES.)

(Outside, on the stairs of the pub, VICTOR sits, holding the dried flowers he had saved from the vase on VICTORIA's piano. He ponders quietly, and sighs. At this moment, ELDER GUTKNECHT walks into the pub.)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(stepping through the door)

My dear, we have to talk.

MAGGOT

Let me tell her! please, Let me tell her!

EMILY

What's the matter?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

There is a complication with your marriage.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

The vows are binding only until death do you part.

EMILY

What are you saying?

ELDER GUTKNECHT

I mean, death has already parted you.

EMILY

(gasps)

If he finds out, he'll leave. There must be something you can do!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(opens a book)

Well, there is one way.

MAGGOT

Please, please let me tell her.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

It requires the greatest sacrifice.

MAGGOT

Go on, get to the good part!

EMILY

What is it?

MAGGOT

We have to kill him!

EMILY

What?

VICTOR

(silently gasps)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Victor would have to give up the life he had forever. He would need to repeat his vows in the land of the living, and drink from the wine of ages.....

EMILY

(gasps)

Poison.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

This would stop his heart forever.

(ELDER approaches her)

Only then would he be free to give it to you.

EMILY

(distressed, she kneels)

I could never ask him.

We meet not as we parted.

We feel more than all may see.

VICTOR

Only this and nothing more.

EMILY

My bosom is heavy-hearted.

And thine full of doubt for me:

VICTOR

Nameless here for evermore.

EMILY

*Sweet lips, could my heart truly have hidden
That its life was crushed by you?
I used to make it forbidden, now let it all take flight
The death which a heart so true.*

EMILY

You can build me up

VICTOR

You can take me down

EMILY & VICTOR

In the end our lives were never durable.

EMILY

I've done my best

VICTOR

And I've stood my test

EMILY & VICTOR

In the end our ends are inevitable.

EMILY

When my candle's burnt

VICTOR

When my love has blown

EMILY

When the blood has dried, you'll just find bones.

EMILY & VICTOR

Remains of bones.

VICTORIA

(parallel scene, IN THE CHURCH)

*You say we're perfect
A perfect folly
You hold us close, the world is not meant to see
And when I say you're the only one I've ever loved
I mean those words truthfully*

EMILY

*But I know,
Alive or not, your love has never been there.
I know it isn't fair, but I don't care,
'Cause my love will still be here.*

EMILY & VICTOR & VICTORIA

*You can build me up, you can tear me down
In the end our lives were never durable
I have done my best, I have stood the test
In the end our ends are inevitable*

VICTOR

When my candle's burnt

VICTORIA

When my oath has sworn

EMILY

When all had died, you'll still find stone

EMILY & VICTOR & VICTORIA

My heart of stone

VICTORIA

Soon I'll have to go

VICTOR

I'll never see her, no

EMILY

But I hope someday he'll know

EMILY & VICTOR & VICTORIA

She'll/He'll never be alone.

EMILY

'Cause Like lightning that flashed and died.

Like snowflakes in the rye

A sunbeam upon the tide

Which the dark shadows hide

VICTOR

(stepping out)

I'll do it, Emily.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

My boy, if you choose this path.....you may never return to the world of living,
always in darkness, nevermore. Do you understand?

VICTOR

(holds EMILY's hand)

I do.

(BLACKOUT)

3. In the Church

(A gloomy corner in the Church with only two candles alight. Not far from this corner, the wedding guests await. VICTORIA leans against a pillar while HILDEGARDE holds a mirror for her and fixes her veil. They talk quietly.)

HILDEGARDE

Miss Victoria, we must go now, your wedding is waiting.

VICTORIA

Yesterday, I had this foolishly ideal concept that my wedding would be happy for me. Now I feel I'm caught in the tide, pulled out to the sea, floating to who-knows-where.

HILDEGARDE

The sea leads to many places, dearie.

VICTORIA

Oh, I know that, Hildegard, but the point is I'm in the aftermath of a shipwreck. I can't swim, I can't breathe, I'm just letting the tides carry me to...wasteland. No man's land. Lonely island.

HILDEGARDE

(raise VICTORIA's chin softly)

Maybe you will land somewhere better.

(HILDEGARDE gently ushers VICTORIA to the hall, and leaves to join at the back. VICTORIA walks towards the altar, where LORD BARKIS and PASTOR GALSWELLS await.)

LORD BARKIS

You look lovely tonight, dear Victoria.

(raises the candle)

With this candle, I will light your way in darkness.

(raises the ring)

With this ring I ask you to be mine.

(takes VICTORIA's hand and slips the ring on)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

I now pronounce you man and wife.

(BLACKOUT)

4. In the streets of the Underworld

(VICTOR and EMILY stand on top of a statue in the center of the streets, whilst the DEAD quickly gather around the couple below.)

VICTOR

(beckoning in a loud voice)

Gather around! Gather around, everybody!

(pause)

We decided to do this thing properly. So, grab what you can and follow us! We're moving this wedding party upstairs.

ZOMBIE LADY

(whispering)

Upstairs? I didn't know we have an upstairs.

SKELETON CHILD

Sounds creepy! Let's go!

CHORUS

A wedding, a wedding, we're going to have a wedding! A wedding!

SKELETON BAND

-Oh there she is! -There she comes!

(EMILY walks down the stairs with a bouquet in her hand, lovely and elegant, smiling.)

CHORUS

Oh, oh, the bride is here

She's waited for this day for many a year

For this day, for this day, our hopes and our pride

The bride is here

Here comes the bride

FEMALE CHORUS

(At "bride")

Ah~

(The bridal veil lands on EMILY's head and she twirls around)

CHORUS

*Here comes the bride
Here comes the bride
Here comes the bride*

FEMALE CHORUS

*Ah~
Ah~
Ah~*

FEMALE CHORUS

*For this day, for this day, will last forever
And all of her friends will work together
To make it the perfect day she's always dreamed
Our hopes and our pride
Our bride, our lovely bride*

(The ZOMBIE COOKS prepare the wedding cake, and the
SKELETON BAND packs their instruments)

CHORUS

*We're going to have a party like no one's ever seen
The living in the land above will not know where they've been
The land above (the land above!)
The party of (the party of!)
The bride*

(The wedding party parades the street, heading for the Living World)

CHORUS

*Here comes the bride
On this glorious day of days
Up to the land of the living
To celebrate!*

5. In the Everglot Mannor

(The living room is grand and gloomy, a giant fireplace in the back, and a long table in white tablecloth is in the center. The EVERGLOTS' relatives sit dimly along the table, and VICTORIA and LORD BARKIS sits at the head of the table. Some relatives are asleep in the chair, while some poking dumbly at the cold chicken. HILDERGARDE enters the living room holding a small cake on a tray, wheezing from the effort, and sets

the cake on the head table.)

LORD BARKIS

(standing up and tinkling his goblet)

Quiet down now, everyone.

(Pause for reaction.)

Uh huh, thank you.

(with arrogance)

Elegant, cultured, radiant – Victoria has found a husband with all these qualities and more. Serendipity brought us together, and no force on earth could tear us apart.

(Suddenly, the room goes dark, and the fireplace erupts into giant, green flames. The DEAD advances towards the family. One of the skeleton's eyeball drops into LORD EVERGLOT's soup.)

LORD EVERGLOT

(scooping up the eyeball calmly)

There's an eye in me soup.

(A lady screams. **Utter chaos. Chaos, chaos, chaos.** LORD BARKIS pushes VICTORIA aside and hides under the table.)

LORD EVERGLOT

(amidst the chaos)

Fetch me musket!

(**More chaos. Chaos, chaos, chaos.**)

PAUL THE HEAD WAITER

Coming through! Coming through!

MAGGOT

(beside an old gentleman)

Excuse me, you don't know me, but I used to live – in your dead mother.

BONEJANGLES

(sudden jazz music in the background)

Hey, hold on there! I love a woman with meat on her bones.

LADY EVERGLOT

(standing on the stairs besides her husband)

Finis, who invited these people?

They must be from your side of the family.

LORD EVERGLOT

Certainly not! Why, if my Grandfather Everglot could see this, he'd be turning in his grave.

GRANDFATHER EVERGLOT

(in a hollow, booming voice)

FINIS!

(calmly asks)

Where do you keep the spirits?

(The EVERGLOTS run away screaming. The DEAD burst out of the EVERGLOT's Mannor and charge into the streets.)

*(The DEAD floods the streets. People are screaming and running.
Utter chaos.)*

TOWN CRIER

Another news?

THE DEAD WALKS THE EARTH!

6. In the Everglot Mannor

(Amidst the ruins of the living room, LORD BARKIS climbs out of the table, and gets on his feet, and starts to pace around a paralyzed VICTORIA.)

LORD BARKIS

Wait, that's it. I'm going to take whatever money I can and get out of here.

VICTORIA

Money? What money?

LORD BARKIS

Your dowry. It's my right!

VICTORIA

But my parents don't have any money. It's only through this marriage to you that they'll be spared the indignity of the poorhouse. Quite the noble rescue, wouldn't you say?

LORD BARKIS

The-the poorhouse?!

(snatching up VICTORIA by the neck)

You're lying. It isn't true. Tell me that you're lying!

VICTORIA

Did things not go according to your plan, Lord Barkis?

(breaks free of his grasp forcefully)

Well, perhaps in disappointment we are perfectly matched.

(leaves the room.)

7. In the Church

(Both the DEAD and the VILLAGERS crowds the Church, where PASTOR GALSWELLS angrily defends his stance at the door.)

PASTOR GALSWELLS

(holding his staff)

Be gone, ye demons from hell! Back to the void from whence you came! You shall not pass!

RANDOM ZOMBIE

Keep it down, we're in a Church.

PASTOR GALSWELLS

Thee heathens! Thee filth! Thee, thy, thou—

(PASTOR GALSWELLS angrily storms off.)

(The guests take their seats in the Church. ELDER GUTKNECHT

sits behind the altar, and VICTOR stands in the front. The ‘Wedding March’ starts to play as EMILY slowly walks down the aisle.)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Dearly beloved and departed, we are gathered here today to join this man and this corpse in marriage.

(VICTORIA sneaks up the stage, and hides behind the pillar, shocked.)

VICTORIA

(gasping)

Victor?

RANDOM SKELETON

(turning back to shush her.)

Shh!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Living first.

VICTOR

(turning to EMILY, raising his right hand)

With this hand, I will lift your sorrows.

(taking the cup with his right hand)

Your cup will never empty, for I will be your wine.

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(gesturing to EMILY)

Now you.

EMILY

With this hand, I will lift your sorrows.

(taking the poison bottle with her left hand and pouring the poison into VICTOR’s cup.)

Your cup will never empty, for I will be...

(abruptly stops)

For I will be...

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Go on, my dear.

EMILY

Your cup will never empty. For I will be...

VICTOR

I will be your wine.

(He starts to drink, but is stopped by EMILY.)

EMILY

I can't. I can't.

VICTOR

What's wrong?

(He tries to look back, but EMILY cups his face to make him look at her.)

EMILY

This is wrong.

(pause)

I was a bride. My dreams were taken from me. The moonshine, the snow, the love and the passion, all stolen away on a night all those years ago, under that old oak tree. Well now, now I've stolen them from someone else. I love you, Victor. But I am not your wine.

(She lets down her hand and gestures to VICTORIA, who slowly walks out from the dark and to the altar, and stands beside VICTOR. EMILY takes VICTORIA's hand. They share a moment of silence.)

(LORD BARKIS enters the Church.)

LORD BARKIS

Oh, how touching indeed.

(sniffles)

Excuse me, I always cry at weddings.

(walks towards the altar.)

Our young lovers together at last, overcoming life and death, through fire through fate, surely they would live happily ever after? But you forget –

(seizes VICTORIA)

She's still my wife! I will not leave here empty-handed!

EMILY

You?

LORD BARKIS

Emily?

EMILY

You!

LORD BARKIS

But-but-I left you.

EMILY

For dead.

(The guests bursts into shocked whispers.)

LORD BARKIS

This woman is obviously delusional! We see that death had obviously knocked no sense into that blue little skull of hers.

(He takes ZOMBIE PATRICK's sword and puts it on VICTORIA's neck.)

Sorry to cut things short, but we must be on our way.

VICTOR

(advancing)

Take your hands off her.

LORD BARKIS

What a Romeo, do I have to poison you now? AH-

(He shrieks in pain as SCRAPS bites his leg.)

BONEJANGLES

Victor! Catch!

(She throws VICTOR a big, silver fork. VICTOR catches it, looking confused.)

Sorry.

(**Epic stage fight.** Ends with VICTOR beaten on the ground, LORD BARKIS ready to deal his final strike. At that moment, EMILY ducks in front of VICTOR, and the sword enters her empty rip cage. She calmly extracts the sword from her chest, and points it toward LORD BARKIS.)

LORD BARKIS

Touche, my dear.

EMILY

Get. Out.

LORD BARKIS

Oh, I'm leaving.

(paces to the altar, laughing sinisterly. He raises a cup.)

But first a toast. To Emily. Always the bridesmaid, never the bride. Tell me, my dear, can a heart break once it's stopped beating, hm?

EMILY

You assume too much, Barkis Bittern, and know too little.

LORD BARKIS

Why then, my darling, are your face so blue? Did things went down for you? Dear Emily, not even a bride, just left with corpse.

MAGGOT

(squirming)

Let me at him! Let me at him!

(blocked by ELDER GUTKNECHT)

No, don't hold me back!

ELDER GUTKNECHT

(stopping MAGGOT)

Wait. We must abide by their rules. We are amongst the living, after all.

LORD BARKIS

Well said, old papa.

(He beckons his cup, then gulps down the entire cup. He throws it away on the ground carelessly after he's done, smacking his lips. He strides to the backdoor of the Church. Suddenly, he clenches his chest, then falls down.)

MAGGOT

Not anymore.

(LORD BARKIS turns around, his face is blue. He is a dead zombie now.)

ELDER GUTKNECHT

Yep, you're right. He's all yours.

(The Dead crowds LORD BARKIS, and carries him off stage.)

BONEJANGLES

(sinisterly, before he exits)

New arrival~

VICTORIA

(hugging VICTOR)

Oh Victor, I never thought I'd see you again.

(EMILY walks pass the couple and towards the front door.)

VICTOR

(turning around and reaching out to EMILY)

Wait! I made a promise...

EMILY

(turning around)

You kept your promise. I am set free.

(she takes off the ring and hands it to VICTOR.)

Now I give freedom to you too.

(She walks towards the wide open doors of the Church, wind flowing through her steps, her dress and veil billowing, blue bouquet in hand. She stops when she reaches the door, turning back, she looks at the couple, then throws her bouquet to VICTORIA, who catches it. She smiles, walking out of the Church, she throws away her veil, letting it be gone with the wind. She walks until she's out of sight.)

(BLACKOUT)

(END OF PLAY)