

Every soul

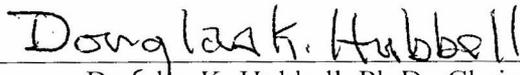
by

Rick Hobbs

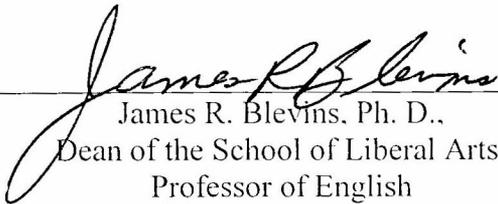
In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
of
Masters of Arts in Liberal Studies

May 4, 1999

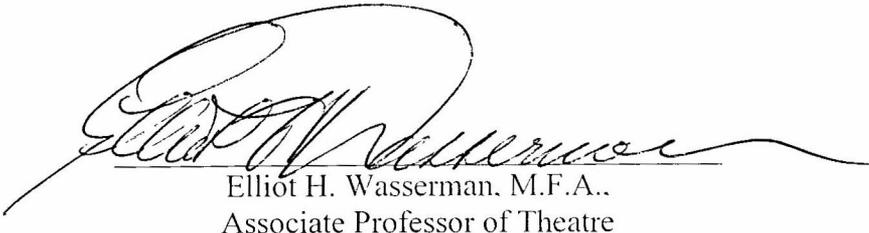
Accepted by the Graduate Faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Arts in Liberal Studies
School of Liberal Arts
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A Preface to *Everyman*

Give audience, and read this matter with reverence I pray . . .

The medieval morality play *Everyman* has endured against time. Today, the script continues to be included in anthologies, taught in theatre and literature courses, and adapted for performance on the amateur and professional levels. Something about the work works.

In the process of adapting *Everyman* for a contemporary audience, I have tried to identify those key elements of the script that help the play work, finding that even those elements often require some adjusting. The allegorical nature of *Everyman* was one such element. While reading *Everyman* for the first time, I could identify with most of the characters which represented concepts related to my life--social relationships, personal attributes, spiritual practices, and concrete objects. I also found this use of allegorical characters potentially useful in clarifying the details of those concepts. However, I had a concern that not all allegorical characters used in *Everyman* were pertinent to the audience I wished to address or the themes on which I wished to focus my adaptation.

I wanted to change the targeted audience and primary themes. Whereas *Everyman* originally played to an essentially homogeneous Catholic community, I envisioned the potential audience for my adaptation to be much broader, essentially encompassing any individual who might accept the assumption that there exists a supreme entity that, in some way, shape, or form, evaluates an individual's behavior and life. From a personal frame of reference, I assume such an evaluation would focus on deliberate personal and communal living—making realistic choices and responding to situations with reverence to communal and personal stewardship while acknowledging the wonder, fragility, wildness, and mystery of life. Whereas *Everyman* could be perceived primarily as a treatise on concepts and practices relating to the Catholic Church, I wished to emphasize the work's theme of death as a motivator toward deliberate living. In essence, this theme would encompass the idea that in order to live life wholly and more fully realize our potential humanity, each of us must consider, choose, and act thoroughly cognizant of the fact that we will die.

To better address the broader audience in terms of my desired themes, "Good Deeds," a concept having to do with Catholic practices in medieval times, was modified to "Charity." "Confession," another religious practice, was transformed in name and concept into a much more secular "Conscience." "Knowledge" was revised to "Discipline," encompassing the idea that humans have the ability to shape and direct their thoughts and desires in the pursuit of "Charity." To further focus the adaptation, what I considered to be extraneous dialogue referring to the roles of priests, penance, and other religious concepts was removed, and less contemporary terminology was expunged and replaced if appropriate.

I doubt very much that in medieval times, relative to today, people needed to be reminded of their mortality. Hospitals, nursing homes, mortuaries, long range weapons, plastic surgery, vaccines, and pain medications have all worked, in some degree, to shield humans from the reality of death. I also doubt that the thoughts of a typical medieval individual dwelt for any length of time on the expression of individualism, or on his own significance apart from his community. His health and welfare was very much tied to his community. Many social analysts and commentators today would argue that the typical American spends too much energy in the pursuit of expressing his individualism and defining his own significance, and not enough energy

on the development of personal communal skills. It is these skills that, if enough people would prioritize in terms of practice, could allow a community to thrive and grow through and in cooperation, understanding, and "Charity." Whereas society's heavy emphasis on individualism appears to be consistently reinforced in many aspects of parenting, education, and the American system of free enterprise, a second theme I wished to develop in my adaptation was that, much like many of our skills and attitudes, "Charity," "Discipline," and "Conscience," are important personal attributes that should be nurtured very deliberately, both by the individual in terms of self-enhancement, and by society in terms of mentorships and other reinforcements.

The opening portion of *Every soul* is fairly obvious in the pursuit of defining the significance of the individual. The magnitude of the numbers is, at least, esthetically correct. If an audience member finds this information (or the math involved) a little intimidating, that is my intent. The second portion of *Every soul* addresses lessons we are taught from birth through adulthood from a variety of sources. My hope is that each audience member might identify with some of the situations, comments, and attitudes.

Glimpses of a circus setting have been written into *Every soul*. This setting can be a rich resource in terms of color, sound, attitudes, and stereotypic characters. Much like the verse form into which the text eventually moves, the circus setting can feed into a surreal sense of situation and action, perhaps rendering to the audience an initial sense of security. After all, the action isn't real. But the setting and verse would hopefully also suggest the altered state of reality that the personal experience of death might yield.

I have considered putting more into *Every soul*, including discussions on the difficulty of defining charity, thoughts on the importance of motive, and more detailed definitions of discipline and conscience. I have resisted further additions, electing to focus more on the target themes of death as a motivator for deliberateness and life as training ground for charity. I also wanted a sense of urgency to prevail without a lot of detours--for the action to move forward rapidly, driving to the conclusion of *Every soul*.

Imagine you are walking in a familiar setting—an office hallway, a field or forest, a sidewalk in your neighborhood, or a shopping center parking lot.

Then imagine you experience a sudden and jolting onset of an altered state of awareness—you've been hit by a car, struck by lightning, or experienced a massive heart attack.

The world seems to be spinning around you. Your brain is trying to make sense of what is happening, but the sensations coming in are jumbled and without context. You are confused. Your brain mixes what information is being received into the framework of the world it has created from your life to that point--desperately attempting to associate this new experience with the past. Possible scenarios pass through your mind. Music, people, voices, conversations pop into your consciousness--but the music is odd, the voices strange, the conversations bizarre, and the people outlandish.

Then a moment of clarity arrives, you realize you are not going to make it back. You are going to have to confront death. You are going to die.

Welcome to *Every soul*.

Rick Hobbs

EVERYSOUL

by Rick Hobbs

The stage and house go suddenly black and silent-no fade, no immediate warning. After a brief period, a pinpoint light, upcenter and focused downstage towards the house, becomes rapidly brighter and broader. After a brief period of almost unbearable intensity, the light goes suddenly black, and, gradually a deep navy, starlit sky emerges with a crib positioned downcenter.

A slap is heard followed immediately by a baby crying-fades

Death: (Off-stage)

A child is born. (light up on crib)

A "new addition".

A son-or a daughter.

A hope,

A worry,

A joy or concern,

Angel or terror,

Heir to . . .what?

An estate, a legacy, a tradition?

A name? . . .

A blood-line?

(**Death** enters-light up on **Death**)

Let's put this in perspective.

(Sign-"Our Perspective")

The child is part of the genus *Homo* of the species *sapiens* that has "dominated" the planet earth for the past 11,000 years.
11,000 years.

The universe has "existed" for roughly 20 billion years.
The earth for roughly one quarter of those 20 billion years, and humans?-for a mere 1/1 hundred billionth of that time-a mere 11,000 years.

By the way, in approximately 5 billion years, the sun will run out of hydrogen, and the earth will fade into a cold oblivion-taking the human race, or what remains thereof, with it.

The earth measures roughly 8000 miles through its diameter

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The universe. . .is infinite. . .and expanding. To put infinite in perspective, the distance from earth to some Cepheid stars has been calculated as a distance of 15,284 light years. A light year being roughly 5 trillion, 8 hundred and 80 million miles- giving us a universe that is at least 90,000 trillion miles across. The earth measures roughly 1/ten billionth the size of that distance-1/ten billionth.

Our infant would be one of approximately 6.1 billion people living at the present time on the planet Earth. She¹ shall be one of maybe 8 billion humans who have lived on the tiny planet earth for some portion of *Homo sapiens'* relatively brief existence-but we've already covered that.

If our baby is lucky enough (or unlucky enough) to be elected President of the United States of America-the most powerful person in the world today-in another 11,000 years her name might . . .might . . . still be noted in a list in some book of trivia. The list might even include her date of birth . . .and death . . .but I doubt it.

If she is fortunate enough to build a monumental structure of wonder and beauty, such as the Great Pyramid of Giza, the Hanging Gardens of Babylon, the Statue of Zeus at Olympia, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus, the Colossus of Rhodes, or the Lighthouse of Alexandria, she should note that only one of these seven wonders has survived to modern times. The rest?-gone to dust, along with their makers.

In all, our child will live, on the average, 75 years, up significantly from the life expectancy of her ancestors a mere 11,000 years before, but still relatively short.

That, on the average, is the situation Every soul is born into- that level of significance. That ability to "dominate".

To wax poetically, if the universe were the size of our solar system ("our" meaning, of course, the solar system of which on one small planet we happen to be relatively stranded), the earth might be the size of a . . . chihuahua . . . and our human-the

¹Every soul may be a he or a she. References must be changed as appropriate. In places, alternative wording is suggested in parenthesis.

size of a microbe riding on the back of a flea infesting that chihuahua. The relative total life expectancy for both the flea and microbe would be the time it takes the dog to feel the itch until the paw frantically scratches that itch.

Poof!-gone to dust.

So

Give your audience, and hear this matter with reverence I pray,
In form-it's a moral play.

The **Consideration of Every soul** it's called.

The story says, from the beginning, consider your ending-don't
ever be too confident-for how transitory are your days.

And sin, in its beginning, seems sweet, but in the end will cause
the soul to weep, when the body lies in clay.

Here you shall see how Friendship and Family, Wit and Goods,
will fade from you as flowers in May.

For you shall hear what God calls Every soul to weigh.

Give audience, and hear, I pray.

(Death blows a whistle. Immediately music starts ("Thunder and Blazes"2). During intro, starlight sky gradually changes to a sunrise, and the characters in the next sequence enter from the house as Death motions for their individual entrances. The characters gradually form an arc around crib)

(music ends-Death motions for the changing of the sign to "On Matters of Life (and Death)" light up on Death)

Death: Time for a riddle? *(smile)*

In the world I move about,

The great and small I do seek out.

Every soul I do besiege,

Regardless of her wealth or need.

I pray it does not cause great pain

To see my work is so plain.

For Every soul will I embrace,

In due time . . . in every case.

Who am I?

(looks to audience for answer-acknowledge incorrect answers. For correct answer, or if no answer, smile and proceed)

Time's awasting.

(Death crosses to within the arc)

2 All music, except for the music of the Epilogue, should be of the circus-circus band or calliope.

These will form the world that Every soul comes to know.
Within her brief stint here, they'll tell her what is so.
They'll forge beliefs, suggest her needs, and life's little
lessons teach,
Moving her so "mature adult", is well within her reach.

Scientist #1: Pardon me, but that statement is simply not
correct.

For rats have surely shown it's genetics that form our net.
Determining traits, you will find, can all be linked to genes.
And . . .

Scientist #2: Important "yes"-determining "no"-you are such a
sleeze.

For it is surly nurture, that shapes the acts we'll see.
The child's told no, the child's told yes, she learns from day to
day.
And . . .

Scientist #1: Nature=yes. Nurture=no . . .she's come already made,
She'll meet the world and run her course-and then be on her way.

Scientist #2: Nurture=yes. Nature=no. The world will teach
her well.
To . . .

Scientist #1: No, not nurture-for it's nature . . .

Scientist #2: No it's nurture.

Scientist #1: It's nature! Nature!

Scientist #2: Nurture!

Scientist #1: No it's nature!

Scientist #2: No it's nurture.

Scientist #1: No it's nature! Nature!

Scientist #2: Nurture!

*(Scientist #1 and #2 move upstage and, eventually, off,
continuing to argue. Others break with **Family and Cousin** moving
to the crib, **Death** remains on stage, all others exit.)*

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Family: (*facing downstage with bottle held to crib-Cousin faces upstage*) Did those people bother you?
This is what we're going to do.
Take the bottle, down it goes,
So you'll grow and grow and so.
Big and beautiful (handsome), bright and smart,
Off to school to get a start.
Then a job and lots of money,
Buy a house and find some honey.

Then like me, what's there to do?
Make wee babies just like you.

Baby: (*belches as Family turns crib upstage, Cousin moves downstage*)

Cousin: (*passing and receiving a basketball with "kid" offstage: becomes more aggressive with same as speech progresses*)

Honey (Son),
You can't let up.
 Keep working to lead,
Sharpen your skills-
 Draw your bead.
Take the advantage,
 Whenever you can
When someone else stumbles,
 Take command.

Now cooperate, be nice,
 Work with them well.
Learn from them, use them,
 Then screw 'em to hell.
Move on with your world,
 Onward and up,
Be hard as nails,
 To . . .

Oops!
(*a particularly vicious pass-a cry of pain is heard offstage*)

(*As crib is brought downstage of Family and Cousin. Family and Cousin will end up standing near the crib-each engaged in a domestic activity*)

Sorry!

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(Sun rises to gradually to full)

Family: She's grows so fast-I can hardly keep track.
Rarely home but to sleep and snack.

Cousin: Thank God she's running with friends that are sound.
Good steady pals are hard to be found.

(Every soul literally breaks out of the crib, leaving the crib in pieces. She should be (at least to some degree) nude or in a flesh tone body suit. Family and Cousin continue tasks.)

(Friendship enters, also appearing somewhat nude)

Friendship: Hi!

Every soul: Hi! . . . want to play?

Friendship: Sure, I'll say!

Discretion: *(entering)* No, no, no.
That won't do at all.

(To audience) I can't believe what I just saw.
We can't run around like naked little apes.
Discretion dictates we wear some kind of drapes.

(Friendship and Every soul look each other over and then at each other)

Friendship and Every soul: Let's do it!

Goods: *(entering)* Get what you want.
Buy it now.
I'll tell you how.
Ready credit.
Why do you wait?
Don't hesitate.
Just for today.
Get it now.
This we vow.
Easy terms.
Why do you wait?
Take our bait.

(Friendship and Every soul look at each other)

Friendship and **Every soul**: Let's do it!

(The following four speeches should overlap with staggered starts. The speeches should conclude at the same time. During these speeches, **Every soul** and **Friendship** should obtain from **Goods** and apply their clown costumes, wigs, and makeup-finishing at the same moment.)

Goods Get what you want.

Buy it now.

I'll tell you how.

Ready credit.

Why do you wait?

Don't hesitate.

Just for today.

Get it now.

This we vow.

Easy terms.

Why do you wait?

Take our bait.

(Repeat as necessary)

Beauty: *(entering)*

What could be more critical in this day,

Then the need to look young and fresh in a way.

Ignite the allure of the animal trait.

Accent the grace of the sophisticate.

Think color and style. Think grace and tone.

We can transform you, right down to the bone. *(Repeat as necessary)*

Wit: *(entering)*

Trouble coping?

Past all hoping?

We have the pill,

To help you deal.

Greatly expand your thoughts and action.

All guaranteed to your satisfaction. *(Repeat as necessary)*

Strength: *(entering)*

Need energy for a hectic life.

Achieve what you need to combat your strife.

Our holistic approach of intense leisure,

bountiful diet, and an exercise feature,

Shapens you to the peak of your form.

Ensuring vitality, power, and charm. *(Repeat as necessary)*

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(All stop speeches. **Every soul** and **Friendship** look each other over.)

Every soul: How do I look?

Friendship: (quick response) Great!
. . . How do I look?

Discretion: Play by the book.

Every soul: Great!

Every soul and **Friendship**: (turning up to **Family** and **Cousin**) What do you think?

Family: Well . . . (to **Cousin**) this young generation seems on the blink.

Cousin: Sh! Now dear, let her express,
Her own degree of specialness,
Regardless of the hair or dress.

Family: You seem . . .

Cousin: different, but if it's what you need,

Family: to follow your . . . a . . . creed,

Cousin: Okay

Every soul and **Friendship**: (turning down) Oooh.

Every soul: Do I look so . . . ?

Friendship: Well, yea.

Every soul: (to audience) Do I . . . am I . . . okay. Do you . . . know?

Goods: Worried?
Get what you want.
Buy it now.
I'll tell you how.
Ready credit.
Why do you wait?
Don't hesitate.
Just for today.
Get it now.

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This we vow.
Easy terms.
Why do you wait?
Take our bait.

Friendship and Every soul: Let's do it!

*(The following four speeches should overlap with staggered starts. The speeches should gradually fade in volume with **Death** speaking over the top.)*

Goods: Worried?
Get what you want.
Buy it now.
I'll tell you how.
Ready credit.
Why do you wait?
Don't hesitate.
Just for today.
Get it now.
This we vow.
Easy terms.
Why do you wait?
Take our bait.
(Repeat as necessary)

Beauty: What could be more critical in this day,
Then the need to look young and fresh in a way.
Worried about wrinkles? Worried about sagging?
Blemishes, dry skin, midriff bagging?
Think color and style. Think grace and tone.
Don't lose sleep, just give us a phone.
(Repeat as necessary)

Wit: Trouble coping?
Past all hoping?
We have the pill,
To help you deal.
Greatly expand your control and reaction.
All guaranteed to your satisfaction. *(Repeat as necessary)*

Strength: Losing the zest for a hectic life.
Achieve what you need to combat your strife.
Our holistic approach of intense leisure,
Bountiful diet, and an exercise feature,
Returns you to the peak of your form.
Ensuring vitality, power, and charm. *(Repeat as necessary)*

Death: All live so, out of their wants and desires, fears and fires.

Drifting in prosperity-
they relish the aura lent by alcohol . . .or drugs . . .or food .
. .or sex, or power, or companionship . . .or the market.
They neglect love, and praise pride and greed.
Schooled in this world, they rarely think on me.
Yet, chasing after such wind, is vanity,
for Every soul will have to face my sanity.
Every soul will die.

Look, how Every soul runs,
With little thought of what is to come.

*(All freeze except **Death** and **Every soul**)*

Every soul: Oh, such a fine day--I am so blest.
Life is good--I have only the best.
Like my friends and my kin, of great comfort and aid,
Yet rarely demanding, meddling, or paid.
And my accounts--good amounts---oh, I could always use more,
And more of my house, for I hope much to store.
My life is laid out as a virtual feast,
Of money, comfort, adventures, you see,
Of good times with friends, and time to get done,
The things I will do to add to my sums.
Oh, Crises will come and make their demands,
But security's mine with all I command.
Yes, life is so good and I am so blessed,
I can take what I want--leave what's left for the rest.

(all resume activity)

Death: A mind set on worldly wants and pleasures,
So blind in spiritual treasures,
And oh, what pain shall it cause Every soul to endure on my
journey.

(Sky move to dusk--sign changed to "The Ending")

Every soul, take heed!
Stop!

*(all freeze except **Every soul** and **Death**: **Death** embraces **Every soul**)*

What have you done?

Every soul: What?

Death: What have you done? . . . accomplished? Achieved with your life? How have you lived?

.....I am sent to you from God.

Every soul: God?

Death: God, Osiris, Thor, Zeus, Buddha, Allah, Yahweh, the Divine, the Maker, the Supreme Force, the Creator. . . God
Though you have neglected God here,
God thinks on you in the heavenly sphere.
And for there, you are now to depart.

Every soul: What?

Death: You've died, checked out, passed on, kicked the bucket, gone to the great beyond.
Dead.

Every soul: Whoa! . . . wait!-what does God want of me?

Death: For you to account for your life.

Every soul: To account for...

(looks to the world)

I hadn't planned on this, nor am I so inclined.

Look . . . Could I get an extension-just a little more time.

Death: No.

This separation must be made,
and your accounting will be weighed.
To God you must answer for the life you've been lent
-showing what you have done, and how your time was spent.
So now, you're to be on your way.
And no attorney can speak for you this day.

Every soul: Right...Look...who are you really?

Death: Death.

Every soul: ...Death...you've come...you've come when I
least...Look...could we...could we talk money--maybe deal with
this another day?

Death: Every soul, it may not be by any way;
For I set not by money or wealth--such riches,
Nor by pope, king, president, or princess,
I can grant you no exchange.

Every soul: But why can't I have just a little more time?
I've had so little warning. I'm in a terrific bind.
To think on you sets my heart pounding--
For totally unready is my accounting.
But give me...twelve years, and I will make it clear,
No such accounting will I fear.

Death: No.
Your departure may not be delayed.

Every soul: But! . . .
Well, once I take this journey,
And my accounting make, may I not awake?...you know, rise from .
. . .

Death:No.

Every soul: No! . . .
Then can't I have some help--someone who could . . .

Death: Make haste and recruit anyone who would come,
to help in this accounting to be done!

But answer this for me--this life, your life--was it yours to
keep???

Every soul: Well . . .what have I done to lose my life?
What have I done to deserve this . . . this strife?
I've made the most of my time.
I've invested . . .

Death: in what?

Every soul: In what the world offered me--
work, education, and family.
I've matured, I've grown, through what I have sown,
And my bountiful profits have not been blown.

I've embraced opportunities--all without fears.
Doubled my worth in a few short years.
And I . . . I've prodded others to do the same. (what they can.)
I'm not a lazy, or worn old . . .

Death: ...No Every soul.
Such freedom gave you an opportunity--a better world to make.
Your choices would have allowed you to work for that sake.

Every soul: But I've done much toward such a future, caring for
my family, enjoying . . .

Death: . . . as does every other living creature.

Where is the humanity in that?

God lent you time and space. Those were borrowed.
Another shall have them as you depart--perhaps in equal sorrow.

Every soul: O death---how can I flee?

I have no one to advise me. (*music fade in "Me and My Shadow"*)

I can't get a hold.
I have so little to show.

What about Friendship--we have been good pals--at sport and at
play.
Friendship would help me through this day.

Friendship: (*comes forward*) Every soul!
Why do you look so sad?
Is something bad?

Every soul: (*pause*) Friendship, I.....

Friendship: What? . . . what?.....I'll help you--whatever your
need.

Every soul: (*pause*) Thank you.

Friendship: What is it?----you look so upset.
Has someone hurt you? Revenge I'll get.

Every soul: (*Pause*) Friendship...

Friendship: *(Interrupting, again)* Nothing is too much.
Tell me what . . .

Every soul: *(interrupting)* If I tell you my heart, and you turn
from me---ten times sorrier will I be!!

Friendship: I will do as I tell---even unto deepest Hell,
I will not leave you, 'til all is well!

Every soul: *(pause)* You are such a good friend.
Okay, this is it.
I'm to take . . . Death's journey.
...I have to give an accounting of my life to God.

Friendship: God?

Every soul: God.

It's only fitting we go together.
After all, we were two birds of a feather.

Friendship: God?

Every soul: Yea, God.
Together we pursued . . .oh . . . all of our wants--
Played off of each other, planned out our stunts.

Friendship: Death's Journey?

Every soul: Yes--Death's Journey.
.....I was so anxious, beyond belief.
But, now, I feel...some relief.

(Friendship exits) (music fade out)
I cannot express to you how happy...well, pleased...thankful I am
that you would accompany me.

Friendship.

Friendship?

Friendship's...gone?

Death: Gone!

It is said--in prosperity, Friendship may one find---
which in adversity, prove fully unkind.

Every soul:...Where do I turn? *(music fade in "Smiles")*

Family.

Blood is thicker than water.

Kin will sneak where they may not go. (*Family and Cousin move down*)

Family: We are here as you request.

Cousin: You don't look at all well.

Family: What is it, don't make us guess.

Cousin: What ails you, please tell.

Family: Every soul, please...

Cousin: ...what is your disease?

Family & Cousin: Now don't hold back, we can make it better, For we, as family, must stick together.

Every soul: Thank you.

...I've been commanded by a messenger of God . . .

Family & Cousin: God?

Every soul: God.

My life here is to end,
I will never be back again,
An accounting, I must give.

Family: What accounting must you give?

Every soul: How I have spent my life.

Death: Yes.

Cousin: Who's that?

Every soul: Death!

Family & Cousin: Oh!

Every soul: I ask you to go with me, and help my case to plea.

(*pause*)

Cousin: Damn . . . I'd rather not.

Every soul: What?

(pause)

Family: Every soul, you are...you were a merry person,
So make no moan.
But as for me,
you'll go alone. *(tries to exit)*

Every soul: *(to Cousin)* Please, won't you go with me?

Cousin: No, my back is acting up!
. . . Look, honestly, don't ask--don't plead,
For I can't meet that need.
You see, for my own life, I would have to account,
So God help you--as I bow out. *(Exits-music fades)*

(Family and Cousin start to exit, are blocked by Death)

Family: We did all we could.
To help her, as we should.

Death: Did you?

Family: Well, yes. I think it would suffice,
to say this situation is rarely at all. . . nice.

Death: Rarely.

Family: Well . . .

Cousin: Look, we did the best we could. What more should...

Death: What do you think?

Cousin: We helped her get on with life.

Family: Showed her to stay away from strife.

Cousin: What other need could we have met?

Family: What do you think we should regret?

Death: I don't know-what?

Cousin: Well, I don't know.

Family: I talked her through about everything, so . . .

Death: Even me?

Cousin: Even . . .No.
I'm not very...

Death: I know.

[Pause]

Cousin: Well, We'll be moving on.

Family: Now that she's gone.

Come on.

Death: See you later.

(Cousin and Family pause-then exit)

Every soul: It has all come to this?

Death: They promise, but little comes of it-your kinsmen-friends.

Every soul: Where should I turn?

Who will help me? *(music fade in "Arkansas Traveler")*

Every soul: Okay now wait-

I have resources-money and art,

Clothes, jewelry, things of that sort.

I have always bought the finest Goods sold.

And I've stashed some things back, for when I got old.

*(Goods should move steadily without taking into consideration
Every soul's requests or questions, without making eye contact)*

Goods: Who calls in such haste?

Every soul? Such an anxious face!

Around I lie--piled so high.

Accounts and things that make your heart sing.

Dollars and credit, all to your merit.

But, I move slow, only so-so.

Every soul: Goods, it's time you paid off.

Goods: Oh!

Money is power--during earthly hours.
I'll help most certainly--in worldly adversity.

Every soul: It is not of this world--I am sent for by God...

Goods: God?

Every soul: God...to give an accounting of my life.
I've saved and amassed my money and reserves.
Nurtured---invested--my wants to serve.
And all my life, I found joy in thee
--so now I want you to come with me.
For it is said, in life, and in song--
"Money makes all right, that which is wrong."

Goods: No, a different verse I sing.
To no soul do I cling.
Your mind I bent and turned--
blinded and unconcerned.
Loving Goods, your accounting looks . . . soiled.
In deepest hell, you'll surely boil.

Every soul: But I have nurtured--and built with great pleasure--
all my life--my money and treasures.

Goods: Tuh! Vanity for sure.
You took my lure.

Every soul:.....Was I led astray--misdirected?

Good: So humans claim.
Always others to blame.

You chose--you take the blows.
You can't take me with you!

Every soul: I had hoped so.

Goods: No!
Awhile was I lent to thee,
A season of prosperity.
My charge--to kill--
Each soul to spill.
A thief, if you will!

When you depart, another heart, will be marked!

Every soul: Damn you Goods, for you have damned me!
. . . You misled me!

You trapped me in your snare.

Goods: You brought yourself into my lair.
As you . . . default, I just don't care!

(Death blocks Goods' exit, and continues to, as Goods moves to avoid Death)

Death: What would you . . .

Goods: More!

Death: How wo . . .

Goods: More!

Death: Why . . .

Goods: More! More! Always More!

(Goods exits, music fades)

Every soul: Friendship, Family, Goods.
I placed my hope in these,
Yet all they do is flee.

Where?

Death: Your Charity?

Every soul: Charity? . . . my Charity?
You mean to buy . . .

Death: I mean she who works to be kind,
Who acts with a merciful mind,
Towards others,
Not just sisters or brothers.

Every soul: Charity . . .
But what business have I had with her.

Death: Yes . . .Exactly.

Yet who else for you will strive?
To your family-you're ancestry-no longer alive.
Your friends move on to other beings.
Your Goods become someone else's things.
Your Charity survives, alone,
Growing in the lives of other souls.

Every soul: But . . .

Death: What other have you?

(pause)

Every soul: My Charity?

Charity: Here I lie cold on the ground...
Your neglect of me has me so bound--

Every soul: Charity? . . .I . . .I beg you . . .

Charity: *(labored)* Every soul, I understand that you are summoned,
an accounting to make.

Every soul: Yes.

Charity: I would-very much-like to be a part of that, for your
sake.

Every soul: I have come to you to ask...to plea,
Please--go with me.

Charity: I can't.

Every soul: Why not?

Charity: Every soul, if love had kept me near as you moved on
earth--
this accounting could be a time of joy-of mirth.
But I don't know the pattern of your steps.
I don't recognize that path on which you crept.
I've seen little of Charity sought,
In your actions, or your thoughts.

Every soul: Oh God---Charity, I pray help me.

Tell me what . . .

Charity: I am sorry, Every soul.

[pause]

Every soul: Charity?

Charity: There are others, who could aid in your Charity . . .
Discipline . . . Conscience . . .
As I am, I cannot. . .

Discipline: Every soul, I can help guide.
For true restraint must come from inside.
I tame your worldly tide-
Your selfish lusts, your wants,
That blind your spiritual hunts.

Death: Embrace this task, Every soul, do not wait.
Your time is now short--the hour late.

Your earthly shell will soon crumble to dust.
Blown away by a gentle gust.

Conscience: Seek within.
For Discipline can give you new sight,
To see those around you in a different light;

Discipline: And Conscience can shape your thought,
And change what would be sought.

Death: With Conscience and Discipline,
Attend to your soul.

Discipline: We can help you fulfill that need,
For a different world can be perceived,
Your worldly passions can be tamed
And your Charity, no longer lamed.

Every soul: But, how do I . . .

Conscience: With forgiveness.
For as you are concerned for, and merciful to others,
So can you be merciful to yourself-
Willing to consider and confront
Your motives, your failures, your "stunts",
And move on.

Every soul: *(after thought)* I have had so many missed chances.
Of worldly pleasures, so often partaken,
love, Charity, kindness---forsaken.
Rarely did I perceive the true needs of my kind,
I wandered through life--blissfully blind.
Though late it be,
Hear my plea.
Through my Conscience and Discipline, give me new light,
My soul, therefore, to receive new sight.

Discipline: Strive in Charity,
Be generous in care,
Loving in consideration,
Meek in assertion and accusation,
Slow to demand and judge,
Never forsake your soul.

Conscience: And look forward, Every soul, forgive.
Dwell not on your past, but how you might live.

*(Charity moves toward **Every soul**)*

Every soul: I welcome my Charity,
And beg your forgiveness for my neglect.

*(sky moves to night as **Death** speaks)*

Death: Every soul, your earthly light does now fade...

Conscience:...yet be watchful for those who would sway.

Discipline: For there is still concern to pay.

This cloth is simple in structure and in name,
yet works wholly your soul to tame.

Every soul: What is it?

Discipline: A garment called humility:
From vanity, it would divide you.

Charity: Every soul, will you wear it?

*(**Every soul** puts on the garment)*

Every soul: *(Obviously tiring)* Now, please, to my grave.

I feel so faint I cannot stand--my limbs under me do fold.
Let me not turn again to the world--not for all of its gold.
Into my grave I would now creep--return to ashes, and to sleep.

Conscience: Every soul?

Every soul: I feel yet an worldly fear....
My soul...is on which side?

Discipline: Every soul, it is to purge those fears.
Within you still are those whom earth holds dear.

Charity: Four, who prove of worldly value and might--
But who hinder kinder thoughts and deeds and slow your final
flight.

Every soul: Who are they?

Discipline: Discretion and Strength still linger within you.

Conscience: Also Beauty and Wit.

Every soul: How shall I....

Death: It's late.

Discipline: Call them forth--confront them.

Every soul: Discretion, Strength, Beauty and Wit--come forth--be
present.

(Music up--"12th Street Rag")

Discretion: Come on people--we mustn't tarry!

Beauty: Oh god--I broke a nail.

Strength: Let me help you.

Beauty: Oh god!

Discretion: Quickly now.

Strength: You okay?

Beauty: You're on my foot!

Strength: Sorry.

Beauty: Oh god--my hair!

Discretion: It's fine--considering....

Wit: I'm suffocating in here.

Strength: Okay, okay----come on.

Discretion: We'll be with you momentarily.

Discipline: Oh?

Beauty: I can't go out like this.

Wit: What's wrong--haven't had our beauty sleep?

Beauty: Listen creep.....

Wit: My!

Strength: Leave her (him) alone or...

Wit:....or what muscleman.

Discretion: People!...we are not making a good impression.

Forgive us--we're all a little stressed.....

Okay.

Can we make this sale,

Even as she fails?

Wit: Ahem.

Discretion felt it more...discrete--if I spoke for the others.

Every soul :And you are?

Wit: Wit--here, to keep you glad company.

Discipline: Company??

Wit: We.....Every soul, if you into the grave now climb--

Discretion....

Discretion:...your company, respectfully declines.

Wit: And Beauty...

Beauty: . . .fears to wilt, and begs--please, leave me behind.

Wit: Strength . . .

Strength: . . . I feel faint and drained, and have no compulsion to go.

Wit:...And as for me...I'll be no use...so on you go.....alone.
We wish you--Good-bye. . .
Let's go!

Strength: Okay, me first!

Wit: Right Bozo.

Beauty: Easy on the nails.

Discretion: Whew...that was close. (*music fades with exit*)

Every soul: I had thought them more steadfast---
when Death did come at last.
Discretion, Beauty, Strength, Wit---all abandon Every soul.
Death: Every soul.....it is time. (Chimes)

Charity: I will, now, be at your side.

Every soul: Thank you--my Charity.
I had loved them, nurtured them more, yet they I cherished fled .
. . Discipline . . .Conscience, will you?

Discipline: Our labors are of earth--for dealing with the world.

Conscience: You will depart from us . . .
But there will be no need.
For here you see in shadows, but then you'll understand.

Every soul: Thank you.

At last, I will be on--

(*Every soul and Charity move meekly upstage, supporting each other as they go. Every soul pauses and looks back to the audience. They start to move upstage again.*)

Every soul: No . . . wait.

(Every soul turns and moves downstage, with great effort, to address audience alone. Charity turns to watch. As the audience is addressed, Charity should grow in radiance and gradually move down to rejoin Every soul. The upstage light from the top of the play should once again grow in intensity and size.)

Every soul: *(addressing audience)* Please, take example, all you that this do hear or see, how they I loved best do abandon me-- except my Charity. Nurtured through my Discipline and Conscience, Charity, with me, will stay. *(Both move upstage towards the light)*

Now gladly, do I come...
As those who love me, my life to defend,
Into your hands, my soul I commend. *(They exit through light. Light becomes brighter as before then fades. Chime ceases with light fade. Once again, a crib is seen.)*

Death: Amen.

(Epilogue music fades in)

(sign placed, "The Epilogue")

(addressing audience) This--moral souls may have in mind:
Forsake pride--deceitful he--at the end of time,
And remember--when Death comes, most all will forsake you--only
Charity does Every soul take.
So beware, if your Charity be small--at the ending, no help at
all.
With Discipline--humbly walk,
And in good Conscience---listen, reflect, talk.
Amen say, for now is all told,
And thus ends this play for Every soul.

FINE