

It starts with one dead rat; it ends with an entire city engulfed by catastrophe.

*The Plague* is Albert Camus' electrifying story of living through a time of crisis and fighting back against despair. First published in 1947, the novel was an immediate best-seller, striking a powerful chord with readers who were struggling to understand the fascist 'plague' that had just overwhelmed Europe.

Seventy years later, author and director Neil Bartlett has adapted Camus' classic for our own dangerous times. Using just five actors, his frank and gripping new stage version uses Camus' original words to put chaos under the microscope and to find hope in the power of our common humanity.

Neil Bartlett's plays, and his adaptations of Dickens, Wilde, Racine, Molière and Marivaux, have been performed in the Lyric Hammersmith, the Glasgow Citizens, the Bristol Old Vic, the Manchester Royal Exchange and the National Theatre, as well as in schools and colleges across the world. This stage version of *The Plague* had its world premiere at Arcola Theatre in London in 2017. In a production directed by the author.

'Neil Bartlett reminds us that anything is possible in the theatre.' Michael Billington, *The Guardian*



arcola  
theatre



OBERON MODERN PLAYS

# The Plague

after *La Peste* by Albert Camus  
adapted for the stage by Neil Bartlett



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THE PLAGUE after *La Peste* ALBERT CAMUS adapted by NEIL BARTLETT

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The first production of this script was at The Arcola Theatre in London, opening on 5 April 2017. The production was created by the following company;

MR COTTARD  
MR GRAND  
RAYMOND RAMBERT  
DR RIEUX  
JEAN TARROU

Joe Alessi  
Burt Caesar  
Billy Postlethwaite  
Sara Powell  
Martin Turner

*Direction and Design*  
*Lighting*  
*Sound*  
*Production Management*  
*Stage and Company Management*  
*Costume Supervisor*  
*Casting*

Neil Bartlett  
Jack Weir  
Dinah Mullen  
Ben Karakashian  
Sarah Julie Pujol  
Gillian Allright  
Siobhan Bracke

## PROLOGUE: AN INQUIRY OPENS

*A table, five chairs, possibly microphones, definitely papers; the paraphernalia of an official enquiry.*

*Five witnesses. They speak as if they are answering questions.*

*This sequence in punctuated by silences – these represent the unheard questions that the witnesses are being asked. The proceedings are otherwise more or less realistic.*

RAMBERT: I would describe what happened as odd.

GRAND: Out of place.

TARROU: Out of the ordinary.

GRAND: The city itself? Ordinary.

TARROU: Everyone agreed that what happened, shouldn't have happened there,

GRAND: Or even at all.

COTTARD: The city itself? Oh, ugly.

RIEUX: I think the most useful way of getting to know a town is by asking yourself how people there work, how they love and how they die.

*A longer silence.*

RAMBERT: I would say life there managed to be both frenetic and vacant at the same time. I mean people were bored, so; they made everything a routine. They worked hard, but only at getting richer – you heard it all the time, it was their favourite phrase; let's get down to business. Pleasure is for weekends. Now obviously you might say there's nothing much distinctive about that, all of us live like that these days – work all day, waste the rest – but actually, you know, there are some places, some places in some countries where people do at least occasionally entertain the suspicion that there might be more to life than all that...

COTTARD: Not that they ever do anything about it.

RAMBERT:

This place didn't even – doesn't – doesn't even have suspicions. A truly modern city.

GRAND:

Well one thing that definitely *was* unusual about it was that it was a difficult place to die in. Maybe *uncomfortable* would be a better word. Being sick is never pleasant, is it, but there are some cities where being sick is acceptable, where it's allowed. Where it's part of your journey. There, everything assumed you were healthy. A sick person could find themselves very isolated.

RAMBERT:

He means; Imagine somebody who's just about to die, and at the exact same moment, right on the other side of the wall by their bed, imagine an entire population, on the phone, talking exclusively about discounts. Business. Deals. That's what he means.

Death is bound to be disconcerting when it interrupts a life that... cut and dried. That material.

GRAND:

I would also like to say just how like everywhere else it is was a city. We didn't have trouble. Tourists always said how open-minded and friendly and busy we were.

GRAND, RAMBERT:

No. No.

TARROU:

No; nothing could have lead our fellow citizens to expect the events of that spring. Or to have understood what they would later turn out to be the first signs of...

RAMBERT:

Look, facts... Facts are bound to seem reasonable to some people and improbable to others – and I don't think reporters have to justify that contradiction. My job is just to say this is what happened – so long as I know it really did happen – and that it affected the whole of society. Then people must make up their own minds.

*The preliminaries are evidently over; the main witness is invited to begin taking us through the story.*

RIEUX:

*(Speaking from a prepared statement.)*

Thank you. As you know, circumstances put me right in the middle of all this. Everything I shall be talking about is therefore either something I was directly involved in, or of which I was given first-hand accounts by those who were. I shall be relying on notes I made at the time, on eyewitness testimonies passed on to me in confidence at the time, and then finally on some written documentary sources that have since come into my possession. I shall only refer to any personal feelings or opinions as and when I think they might be relevant to the larger project of helping other people understand what happened, or to –

*RIEUX stops.*

Yes of course. Enough caveats. Time for the story itself.

**SCENE ONE; APRIL 16<sup>TH</sup> – 29<sup>TH</sup>**

Forgive me if I lay out the timeline of the first few days in some detail; and if I address all of you directly.

RIEUX:

*Reading from notes.*

On the morning of April 16 a Dr B. Rieux – Dr Rieux worked from home – discovered a dead rat in the middle of the landing. At the time the doctor paid the rat no attention, pushing it aside and continuing down the stairs. On reaching the street however the thought occurred that this rat had no right to be there, and so the doctor returned to the building in order to inform the caretaker. The caretaker – a Mr Michel – stated quite categorically

that there were no rats in the building to his knowledge, and that persons unknown must have brought the corpse in from the outside as some kind of prank.

On the evening of the same day – this is still on the 16<sup>th</sup> – Dr Rieux returned home, and was looking for the keys to the apartment upstairs when a second rat loomed up out of the darkness onto the landing. It was walking erratically, and the fir looked damp. The rat stopped, tried to regain its balance, and moved towards the doctor. Then it stopped again and spun round on the spot while making a faint noise before finally falling over with blood pouring out of its mouth. The jaws were half open. They were half Gaping. The blood –

*RIEUX pauses.*

The doctor looked at it for a moment and then continued up the stairs. At eight o'clock the next morning – the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup>

*It is not clear whether the next exchange is public, or is only going on in DR RIEUX'S head. These memories are extremely private.*

*TARROU is very gentle.*

TARROU: Doctor –

RIEUX: Yes.

TARROU: Forgive me. On the evening of the 16<sup>th</sup>, when you saw the blood – the blood coming out of that rat, what did it make you think about?

RIEUX: It made me think about my wife.

TARROU: Your wife. Where was she, while you were looking for your keys?

RIEUX: Upstairs in our bedroom, lying down.

TARROU: And why had you told her to do that?

RIEUX: Because she was leaving next day for the clinic. She had been ill for nearly a year at this point,

and needed to prepare herself for the stress of the journey.

I see.

TARROU:

RIEUX: When I got upstairs, she smiled. She told me she was feeling alright, and I told her to sleep if she could as the nurse was coming at eleven and I had to get them both to the station by noon. Then I kissed her. Her forehead was slightly damp, but she kept smiling right up until the point when I left the room.

TARROU: Thank you Doctor. You did say you would refer to personal feelings if they were relevant to the larger project of helping people understand what happened.

RIEUX: I did.

TARROU: You were telling us about the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> of April.

RIEUX: Yes.

*(RIEUX chooses to continue in the first person; still reading from prepared notes.)*

At eight o'clock on the morning of the 17<sup>th</sup> Mr Michel stopped me on the way out and said that some jokers – his word – had dumped three more dead rats in the corridor. They must have been trapped by an amateur he said because they were covered in blood, and he was determined to catch whoever was responsible. I decided to make my first round that morning in one of the outer suburbs – where my lowest income patients are – because the refuse collection there is later. Driving into the neighbourhood I spotted at least a dozen rats that had been dumped in with the vegetable peelings and used clothes and so on. The first patient that day mentioned a neighbour also finding three of them. Said all the bins had them. Quote; “They’re coming

out with hunger." Rounds complete and back home for eleven. Asked whether he had seen any more, Mr Michel said he had been keeping a look-out and whoever the bastards were they hadn't dared.

GRAND: And your wife, doctor?

RIEUX: My wife was up and dressed and wearing make-up. We had a conversation about whether we could afford a sleeping car for the journey and I said of course we could, it was a necessary expense under the circumstances... She asked me what this business was with the rats, and I'd said I didn't know, it was odd, but bound to blow over. Then I asked her to forgive me. Said I should have been looking after her, not neglecting her as much as I had been lately.

I promised that when she came back from the clinic everything would be different, we'd start all over again. She said yes we would - And then.

*Although we do not know it yet, RIEUX is in fact describing their very last minutes together.*

At the station, I told her not to cry. She said... Go now, and told me everything would be fine. I told her to look after herself - and then the train left. I'm sorry, I have no exact recollection of that moment. I do remember a guard walking past, he was carrying a box full of dead rats.

On the afternoon of the 17<sup>th</sup>, I had a visit in my home surgery from a young man who'd also called earlier that morning, while I was out.

*(A buzzer.)*

Yes send him in. Mr Rambert?

## SCENE TWO: DR RIEUX'S SURGERY

*This scene is played in two different tenses, present and past.*

RAMBERT: Raymond... thank you for seeing me. Look I'll come straight to the point. I'm a journalist, and one of the big nationals has commissioned me to research an article on living conditions amongst the Arab population here. I need some health statistics.

RIEUX: I imagine I told you they weren't good.

RAMBERT: Right.

RIEUX: And then before we went any further, I would have asked you if were being commissioned to write the truth.

RAMBERT: Sure -

RIEUX: So your paper would allow you to file a total condemnation of the current situation?

RAMBERT: Probably not. But a total condemnation wouldn't be justified - would it?

RIEUX: No, it probably wouldn't. But you're either reporting with restrictions or without, and I would need to know which.

RAMBERT: That's very extreme language.

RIEUX: *(Quietly but very definitely.)* It's the language of somebody who has grown just a little bit tired of living where and how they live, but who still respects their neighbours, and has decided that personally they're not going to participate in any further injustice or compromise with regards to those particular neighbours' lives.

RAMBERT: I see - I think.

*RIEUX shakes his hand goodbye.*

RIEUX: Thank you for taking me as you find me.

RAMBERT: Right. Well sorry for disturbing you.

RIEUX:

And then I said; Surely the current big story is somewhere in all these dead rats people are finding.

RAMBERT:

Really? Rats? Tell me about that... (RAMBERT takes a notebook out and begins to scribble away...) I see... yes... (etc.)

*He stores his notebook to the audience;*

Facts are bound to seem reasonable to some people and improbable to others – and I don't think a reporter has to justify that contradiction. Our job is just to say this is what happened. Then people can make up their minds.

Jean?

*TARROU begins his evidence.*

TARROU:

My name is Jean Tarrou. I was resident in one of the big hotels at the time but was quite often in Doctor Rieux's building. I don't know what time this was exactly, let's say five o'clock – and it could have been the 17<sup>th</sup> or the 18<sup>th</sup> – anyway I was coming down the stairs from visiting my Spanish friends on the top floor, the two dancers, and the doctor was on the landing. I said Evening doctor – this is a funny business – because there was one dying right there at our feet.

RIEUX:

Indeed. And one that's becoming increasingly annoying.

TARROU:

Yes – oh (*As if the rat that they are staring at dies.*) – over he goes. Still, I don't know – always interesting to see something you've never seen before. (*As if kicking the dead rat out of the way.*) Ugh! Think I'll leave clearing that up to Mr Michel.

Actually I think it would have been the 17<sup>th</sup> definitely. The 17<sup>th</sup>.

RIEUX:

It was. On April 17<sup>th</sup> Mr Michel reported that the rats were now being found in twos and threes, and I noticed when he was talking to me that he was rubbing his throat. I asked him how he was feeling, and he said he couldn't say exactly. He reckoned it was this rat thing that had upset him and he'd be fine once they'd gone. 18<sup>th</sup>, he looked worse. A dozen rats on the stairs, and our neighbours' dustbins overflowing... I called pest control services (the director actually, Mr Mercier,) and he said they'd received reports of large numbers of rats above ground all over town – fifty dead in his own building. I said there ought to be some kind of intervention... but that would require an order. Did I think it was worth it.

"Things are always worth it." Two hundred rats in the place where his housekeeper's husband worked.

I'd say that it was around this time that people began to be properly unsettled – after the 18<sup>th</sup> the warehouses in particular seemed to be haemorrhaging rats. You saw people standing and staring at them in the gutters. Even the evening papers picked up the story.

*RAMBERT jumps in, quoting from his notes for his article, and newspaper-clippings;*

RAMBERT:

April 18<sup>th</sup>; "Are the authorities going to take action or not, what emergency measures are in place, etc" ...; "this disgusting invasion."

April 19<sup>th</sup>: "Last night's council meeting took the decision that two refuse trucks will be allocated for transport to the municipal incinerator, and twice a day, Mr Mercier stated."

RIEUX:

Thank you. 22<sup>nd</sup>, rats audible at night. Long head-to-tail rows in the gutters, all with the same distinctive bloom of blood on the snout.

Main shopping streets all affected; cafes and school playgrounds. The sensation of a fresh corpse under your foot when walking home in the dark is now quite familiar –

It's important to note this all happened in a very few days. It was as though the source of infection had been there all the time and was now coming up from under our houses and erupting like a sewer. No wonder people were bewildered. It was the bewilderment you see when a perfectly healthy patient tests positive.

(*Covering a silence.*) These figures are from local radio that week; April 25<sup>th</sup> 6,321 rats collected and burnt, April 28<sup>th</sup>, approximately 8,000. I heard people talking about leaving town for the first time at this point. However; 29<sup>th</sup>, apparent complete cessation of the phenomenon – “negligible” number of dead rats collected. “Town breathes sigh of relief”. Doctor?

TARROU, GRAND, COTTARD:

Doctor?

Yes.

April 29<sup>th</sup>; Lunchtime; Found Mr Michel in the street outside the apartment – walk unsteady, limbs unruly. Eyes brighter than normal and breathing difficult – characteristic whistling noise. Said he'd just gone out to get some air, but was now experiencing sharp pains in neck, armpits and groin. Hard wooden swelling at the base of the neck. Said I would drop in later that afternoon.

I received the first report from my wife's clinic.

All proceeding safely.

(*The sound of a telephone.*)

After lunch, a phone call.

I didn't answer it.

Then I did.

### SCENE THREE: COTTARD'S ATTEMPTED SUICIDE

GRAND:

Hello, yes, Grand, Joseph Grand, I used to be a patient of yours – strangulated aorta, works at the town hall – yes Grand, g,r,a,n,d – that's right – but I'm calling on behalf of somebody else now. Could you come quickly, it's one of my neighbours.

GRAND places a table (*to be the bed*) and an overturned chair. He is as meticulous in reconstructing the scene physically as he is in choosing his words.

Sorry – out of breath – stairs –

The chair was on its side, there...

RIEUX joins him.

Doctor – it's alright now, but honestly I thought he'd gone, I...I got him down just in time I think. I was just going out you see, and heard a noise. When I saw the sign on the door I thought it was a joke, I mean 'Come in, I've hanged myself', written in red crayon on the door of the flat, I thought it had to be some kind of joke, but the noise was dreadful. I suppose it must be very painful. He's in there, in the bedroom.

COTTARD gets up onto the table as if it was a bed. RIEUX inspects him and makes a medical report.

RIEUX:

Interrupted breathing still (Note; very odd effect; small rat-sounds audible in the intervals between breaths.) Obviously the drop wasn't high or quick enough – no damage to vertebrae, though some signs of asphyxiation. X-rays required. Administered sedative, and told patient he would be fine in a few days.

GRAND: Thank you doctor.

RIEUX: And have you informed the police?

GRAND: No... I thought the first thing was to –

RIEUX: I'll do it.

COTTARD:

No that won't, that won't, be necessary, I'm fine, I'm fine, now.

RIEUX:

Calm down Mr Cottard...it's just a formality, honestly, but I do have to make a statement.

COTTARD:

Oh.

GRAND:

Now Mr Cottard – (he was my neighbour on the landing – an odd person – officially a sort of a salesman, wines and spirits, but with a private income too I think.) Mr Cottard – Yes that's me

COTTARD:

– they might say the doctor was responsible. If you were to take it into your head to try again...

GRAND:

No absolutely not, it was just a, just a moment of weakness. I would just like to be left alone now. Now.

COTTARD:

RIEUX:

Alright. This is your prescription. We'll leave things as they are, and I'll come back in two or three days. Don't do anything silly.

*As if they were outside on the stairs,*

I shall have to make a report, but I'll ask them not follow up for a couple of days. Somebody should stay with him tonight. Does he have any family?

GRAND:

I can do it. Not that I know him, we only ever speak on the stairs. But people do have to look after each other.

RIEUX:

They do – by the way, have the rats all gone round here as well?

GRAND:

I couldn't say. People talk, but I don't usually listen. I have other things on my mind.

RIEUX:

Yes. Well, I've got a patient waiting.

COTTARD:

Actually I wanted to go home and write to my wife. (*Shouting to no one in particular through his closed bedroom door.*) When a few people die, they say it's the end of the world, but I tell you, we need more than that.

RIEUX:

(*Out of the scene, with a barely kept temper.*) What do we need, Mr Cottard?

COTTARD:

(*"In a voice full of tears and fury"*) An earthquake. A real great big earthquake, kill everybody.

GRAND:

Yes well everyone has their personal sorrows.

#### SCENE FOUR: THE FIRST DEATH

*RIEUX, wanting to get on with the story (and perhaps to get rid of COTTARD), establishes another bed; the doctor then relates to this empty bed as if there was a suffering body – Mr Michel's – on it. Possibly we hear the sounds of the patient.*

RIEUX:

29<sup>th</sup> continued. Mr Michel now in bed.

Convulsive vomiting, with bile extensively present. 39.5 degrees; lymph nodes very pronounced on the neck, limbs swollen, black lesions developing on upper flanks. Severe abdominal pain, described as an intense burning sensation. Prescribed liquids, purgative. Called Dr Richard.

*(RIEUX enlists another witness to read the other side of this conversation from the relevant notes.)*

Hello, Rieux? No... I've not been seeing anything out of the ordinary...

No fevers with localised inflammation for instance?

Ah, yes, that... two cases – both with enlarged lymph glands..

Abnormally enlarged?

Well, normal, you know – tricky word these days...

(*To whoever helped out.*) Thank you.

29<sup>th</sup> evening. Patient delirious, 40 degrees, complaining of rats. Attempted to lance abscesses but process too painful. Lymph nodes wooden to the touch. Wife extremely



distressed. Said I would return the next day and to call if needed.  
30<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup> April. There was a warm breeze, and a blue sky. Report from the clinic, very reassuring. The whole town seemed as if a weight had been lifted, things waking up again. There was a smell of flowers even.

**CHORUS ONE; THE FIRST DEATH**

TARROU: I remember that -  
GRAND: The smell of flowers -  
COTTARD: Drifting in from the suburbs.  
RAMBERT: In April, we had no idea...  
RIEUX: Temperature down to 38 degrees and patient sitting up, but by lunchtime, 40.  
TARROU: Sudden onset of delirium, becoming continuous, and return of vomiting. Lymph glands very painful to the touch.  
GRAND: The patient seeming to want to keep their head as far away from their body as possible -  
RIEUX: Decided on isolation and telephoned for ambulance. Wife accompanied us. Lymph nodes torture, and patient pressing himself into the stretcher as if he wanted it to swallow him.  
TARROU: I remember that too.  
GRAND: The smell of vomit  
RAMBERT: Broken words, drifting.  
COTTARD: In April, they had no idea.  
RIEUX: He died in the ambulance.  
Cause of death, suffocation;  
Last word; rats...

COTTARD: It killed people like a civil servant would. Everything by the book.

TARROU: It had just been hints up until then - but then -

GRAND: Surprise.

RAMBERT: Feelings of surprise, at first.

GRAND: And then, Panic.

RAMBERT: It had never occurred to people that they lived somewhere where rats died in broad daylight, and caretakers perished from unidentified diseases, and still -

GRAND, TARROU:

If it had stopped?

COTTARD, GRAND:

Business as usual. Business. As. Usual.

TARROU: I'm sure we would have all gone back to business as usual.

RAMBERT: The next thing? The next thing was people getting it who weren't caretakers and who didn't live in poor parts of town. That was when the real fear started - and when people are frightened, they start to think.

**SCENE FIVE; APRIL 31<sup>ST</sup> - MAY 6<sup>TH</sup>**

RIEUX: *(Determined to get things back on track.)* Mr Tarrou your notebooks please.

TARROU selects highlights from his notebooks for this period;

TARROU: I was living in a big hotel in the centre of town at this time as I said, so really I used to see everything;

Early May, an overheard conversation.

You knew him didn't you? Tall bloke, black moustache? That's it. Well he's dead. Oh.

When was that then? After that business with the rats. And what d'he die of then? They're not saying. Funny, he seemed just like everyone else.

Observation following discovery of a dead rat on a bus – three women ask for the bus to be stopped for them and get off immediately. That same week;

Observation in the hotel dining room, father talking to a little boy; Now we don't talk about rats at the table, do we Philip.

The hotel manager; It's inconceivable that rats should be discovered in the lift of a first class hotel. It makes us look like everybody else.

Also from the manager, two days later;

Apparently one of the chambermaids has this infection people are worrying about. It can hardly be contagious though, because the authorities would know.

May 5<sup>th</sup> A dozen cases, that I've heard of.

May 6<sup>th</sup> Fortunately this Dr Rieux looks like a person who knows what they're doing.

Thank you. My notes corroborate that figure.

Mine also.

A second telephone conversation with Doctor Richard, Regional Chief Medical Officer.

I quote... Dr Richard; No, there's nothing I can do personally, any measures would to be authorised. Isolation? Well are you actually suggesting that? I don't feel I'm personally qualified to intervene.

9p.m – this is till the 6<sup>th</sup> – One of Michels' neighbours feverish, vomiting, lymph nodes opening up like rotting fruit. Took samples for analysis. Telephoned regional distribution centre for pharmaceutical supplies. Response

negative – that refers to there being no available supplies of serum.

There was also absolutely nothing in the press at this point. No information whatsoever.

Yes well; rats die in the street and people die behind closed doors. Newspapers only care about things you can take pictures of.

9p.m – a phone call – Dr Castel, Head of Public Health this time. Again I quote.

Dr Castel; Look I understand no one wants to say the word – public opinion sacred, avoid panic at all costs and so on. And of course on paper it's impossible – everybody knows that it's been eradicated from our part of the world – years ago.

Myself; What does that word mean exactly, eradicated.

Dr Castel; Quite. Look come on doctor, it may seem incredible, but you know as well as I do what this is. Somebody has to use the word.

So I did. Incredible, but;

Plague.

RAMBERT, TARROU, GRAND, COITTARD, RIEUX:

Plague.

### CHORUS TWO; DR. RIEUX'S REPOSE TO THE WORD PLAGUE, OR, THE IMPOSSIBILITY OF PLAGUE IN THE MIND OF SOMEONE LIVING

RAMBERT, TARROU, GRAND, COITTARD – NOT RIEUX:

*During this, an image of RIEUX working late into the night...  
wrestling...*

It's very difficult...

It's very difficult to believe, when it happens to you.

I mean there have always been plagues and wars in the world –

And people always say, when there's a war, it won't happen - and even if it does, it won't last, that would be stupid  
And they're right, war is stupid  
But that doesn't stop them from happening.  
Nobody was more short-sighted  
More guilty -  
Here than anywhere else;  
They just thought everything was Still Possible - and therefore, Plague, Impossible.  
They didn't stop Going To Work -  
They didn't stop Making Travel Plans -  
They kept on Having Opinions -  
But Plague cancels the future; Plague shuts down travel; Plague makes Opinion redundant.  
They thought they were free; and no one is free when there's Plague.

RAMBERT:

According to Procopius, the Plague of Constantinople in 542 AD claimed ten thousand victims in a single day. Ten thousand bodies is five times the capacity of your average large cinema - so here's what we need to do to get the figures into our heads; get all the people coming out of five cinemas, round them up in one place, kill them and put the corpses on display in heaps. At least that would put some actual faces onto all those anonymous bodies. Except of course we can't do that...and besides, who can imagine ten thousand individual faces. And probably the figure is incorrect anyway. Statistics, they're usually wrong, everybody knows that. Don't they.

TARROU: If you take forty thousand rats, and lay them end to end -  
(Various,) Yes!!!  
Yes, alright  
Yes, the word has been used - once -  
Yes, there are one or two victims who are currently suffering  
But that may quite possibly be the end of it.  
What we should do, is face the facts, sift out the unnecessary anxieties, and then take whatever measures seem necessary.  
And then, it will go away. If it actually existed in the first place.  
Possibly it just existed in people's minds.  
And if it goes away - which it probably will - then fine  
But if  
If the other thing happens...  
At least we'll know the facts  
And what we have to do come to terms with them  
In order to defeat it.  
Eventually.

*RIEUX is working at some papers. Very calmly and with great determination;*

RIEUX: You have to know what a thing is in order to have any chance of eventually defeating it.  
And you have to do your job. That's all there is.

COTTARD, RAMBERT, TARROU, GRAND  
That's all there is.

**SCENE SIX MAY 7TH; GRAND VISITS DR RIEUX,  
WITH COTTARD IN TOW**

GRAND: *(As he brings papers to RIEUX - this is the first time he has performed this office.)*  
May 7<sup>th</sup>; eleven deaths in forty-eight hours. I worked in the statistics office, at the Town Hall - births, marriages, deaths, you know. Doctor?  
RIEUX *looks at these shocking stats, pretty much ignoring the visitors.*  
RIEUX: *(To COTTARD, but reading papers.)* How are you feeling Mr Cottard?  
GRAND: *(Referring to COTTARD.)* He wanted to come and thank you and apologise for the trouble.  
COTTARD: Yes. Doctor -  
RIEUX: *(To self.)* Perhaps it's time to call this by its proper name in public.  
GRAND: We have to call everything by its proper name Doctor. What would that name be?  
RIEUX: I'm afraid I can't tell you.  
GRAND: Words are never easy. I always wish I could learn to express myself better. For instance,  
COTTARD: Actually Doctor I wanted to ask you for some advice -  
RIEUX: *(Focussing on the figures and their seriousness.)* Yes, I should be in your neighbourhood tomorrow afternoon... I'll try and drop by... If you'd excuse me.

*They go. RIEUX is still working.*

I could imagine him in a plague. Grand. He struck me as being one of those tall men who still have the courage of their convictions. And he always tried to use exactly the right word. I think I thought plague couldn't really happen in a town where a man who worked in local government still cared enough about words to want to find the right ones; caring about

words would make no sense in the middle of a plague, you see, so a plague probably had no future in the middle of people like... us.

Yes, that was stupid.

Meanwhile I'd been informed in writing that although there was no serum currently available locally, it could be manufactured to order. In the fullness of time. And then I was called to a meeting.

**SCENE SEVEN; MAY 8<sup>TH</sup>; THE ESTABLISHMENT  
OF THE EMERGENCY HEALTH COMMISSION**

*FOUR WITNESSES become a committee of white-coated doctors - A, B, C, D. DOCTOR A is chairing the meeting; DOCTOR C should be the same Doctor Richard to whom RIEUX talked to earlier.*

*Tables and chairs are re-arranged into a committee room.*

*We are in mid scene, and tempers are running high.*

A: Gentlemen. I think we're all aware of the current situation. The question is; what measures should we be adopting in response.  
B: Surely the question is are we dealing with Plague or not?  
D: What? What?? Plague?  
A: Could somebody check if that door is closed please - thank you. Obviously any official statement made to that particular effect would trigger a series of immediate and I must say draconian actions. Hence our - fully justified, in my opinion - hesitation in jumping any guns. Dr Richard?  
C: In my opinion there is no need to either give way to - or instigate - panic. *(Distributing paper.)* What we are dealing with, is a fever, with lower abdominal region complications; further hypothesisis is hardly helpful.

B: Hear hear.

A: Dr Rieux?

RIEUX: I don't care how things are put. My concern is that we shouldn't be acting as though people aren't at risk, because then they will be. (*Annoyance.*) Oh really.

D, B: Really I think some compromise –

C: Gentlemen! Doctor; do what you have to do, say whatever you have to say, but say it quietly.

A: *The scene suspends.*

RIEUX: And immediately after that meeting, on my way home, on a street that smelt of cooking-fat and urine, a woman, screaming herself to death, blood pouring from her groin, stared me right in the face.

**SCENE EIGHT; MAY 9<sup>TH</sup>-14<sup>TH</sup>; INEXORABLE...**

*The previous scene splits apart, leaving RIEUX once again staring at a table as if it had a body on it.*

RIEUX: May 9<sup>th</sup> to the 14<sup>th</sup>.

RAMBERT: So finally the infection spread to the newspapers...

RIEUX: They announced that yes, there'd been a few cases of an unidentified fever, but really the cases weren't specific enough to amount to anything disturbing. They were sure we would all pull together and co-operate. "Stay optimistic" ...

COTTARD: I heard it was cholera. On the radio.

RAMBERT: And they announced the new measures; additional rodent control; *voluntary* declaration of any new infections; additional spending on two new medical isolation facilities. With forty-eight beds.

Dr Rieux?

RIEUX: I admitted that certain specific modifications of the microbe appeared not to conform to the textbook descriptions, but –

C: Might I suggest then that we at least wait for the full results of the most recent laboratory analysis.

A: Which is in hand?

C: Which is in hand.

RIEUX: I added that when a microbe is capable of quadrupling the size of the spleen in three days and reducing the mesenteric ganglia to the consistency of porridge overnight hesitation is perhaps unwise.

C: Oh now I really don't think we should be painting too black a picture. Has contagion actually been proved?

RIEUX: It's not a question of painting pictures, it's a question of taking concrete precautions!!

A: Perhaps I might attempt to summarise; Dr Rieux has said that in order to stop this disease – if it doesn't just stop itself of course – we might need to put into effect some very serious quarantine measures that the law allows. However, we would need an official admission that this *is* plague; and for that we would need absolute certitude; and to achieve that, we would need a period of reflection and further research. My suggestion therefore would be that even if this isn't the time to publicly use the actual word, some prophylactic measures might still be applied. In other words, we might consider recommending to the authorities that they act *as if* this was a plague situation. Gentlemen?

D: I personally think that way of putting things might be warmly applauded.

COTTARD: An epidemic.  
 RIEUX: These measures were insufficient, and I said so.  
 TARROU: The rush hour was as busy as ever, there was the same litter afterwards, there were queues outside cinemas – actually the cinemas stayed busy all the way through, even when there were no longer any new films to screen. People just...went anyway...  
 GRAND: May 9<sup>th</sup>, sixteen fatalities.  
*This next sequence busy and continuous.*  
 COTTARD: So, Mr Grand went home every evening, to do whatever it was he did...  
 GRAND: I was trying to write something down, actually.  
 TARROU: Cottard went round in circles, as if he was trying to escape from something.  
 COTTARD: You know, I'm not a bad man. Actually.  
 GRAND: A letter.  
 TARROU: He was in a newsagents one evening, –  
 GRAND: A letter to my wife.  
 TARROU: – and somebody mentioned a story that someone had killed an Arab, on a beach somewhere, and the newsagent –  
 COTTARD: That woman's a snake –  
 TARROU: – the newsagent said well if they'd just put all the scum in prison the decent people in this country could rest safe in their beds – and Cottard snapped shut and bolted. As if he'd been accused of something.  
 RAMBERT: Lots of people were going a bit crazy.  
 COTTARD: Yes well the rats must have got to them.  
 GRAND: I think he's a man with something on his conscience.  
 RAMBERT: The radio and newspapers both carried reports claiming it was only cholera.  
 GRAND: May 10<sup>th</sup>, twenty-four dead. Dear Jeanne...

RAMBERT: May 11<sup>th</sup>, "All the proposed measures have now been implemented smoothly."  
 COTTARD: Doctor let me ask you, if somebody was sick, then they couldn't be arrested, could they, no matter what they'd done.  
 RIEUX: What? That would depend on the state of the patient.  
 RAMBERT: None of the funerals however received any coverage.  
 COTTARD: Doctor. Could they?  
 RIEUX: And there were no estimates of the number of people who were too frightened to report their symptoms. (Busy.) Sorry, Mr Cottard – I'm busy.  
 GRAND: May 12<sup>th</sup>, thirty-two. My dear Jeanne...  
 COTTARD: Ask my neighbours – they'll tell you. I'm not a bad person...  
 RIEUX: They announced a nursery school was being converted into an auxiliary hospital. At last.  
 GRAND: So from sixteen to thirty-two in just four days.  
 RIEUX: I was asked for a further report.  
 COTTARD: Honestly a few deaths and people talk as if it's the end of the world.  
 GRAND: Jeanne;  
 COTTARD: Well it takes more than that.  
 RAMBERT: "The latest figures are certainly disturbing, and the following additional measures are therefore announced as of today; obligatory declaration of status; isolation of the sick; infected properties to be vacated and sealed; relatives to be quarantined, all burials to be supervised by the authorities."  
 RIEUX: I said these measures were insufficient also. I was told supplies of serum were to be flown in, but not when. I was told there would be enough for our current cases, but not to cope with any spread

of the epidemic. I was told again there were no emergency supplies. May 13<sup>th</sup>.

GRAND: Thirty-eight deaths today. Thirty-eight, doctor. (*Silence; a crucial piece of paper is in RIEUX's hand.*)

RIEUX: May 14<sup>th</sup>. We finally received it.

RAMBERT: They finally got scared.

RIEUX: The wording of the official *communiqué* was as follows; Declare a state of plague. Close the town.

*A long silence...then;*

RIEUX: I think the most useful way of describing a town is to say how people work there – how people love – and how people die.

*Suddenly;*

#### CHORUS THREE: THE CHORUS OF THE LOCKED GATES

*RIEUX, RAMBERT and GRAND all think of the loved ones from whom they are now separated. COTTARD is apart; he has no loved one.*

TARROU: From that moment on, I would use the word we. Let me explain; up to that point, some very odd things were happening, they were surprising, they were upsetting, but everybody carried on, it was business as usual – once they closed those gates...we were all in the same boat.

GRAND: They actually closed the gates several hours before they went public with the announcement, and there was no right of appeal, so a lot of people were trapped. I thought that was dreadful.

RAMBERT: Mothers and children, lovers, couples who'd kissed each other goodbye for work just the day before – they were so sure they were going to see each other again, using the word was just a formality, it was usual, it was temporary, but then... They

were completely cut off. People have such stupid, human faith in the future! Stupid. Stupid!

GRAND: There were such crowds, that week – at the office – arguing, asking for favours, you couldn't get people to realise the word exception just didn't mean anything any more.

There were new words;

'Hollow.'

RAMBERT: I got through it by going for long walks.

GRAND: 'Unreasonable.'

RAMBERT: By imagining the sound of the doorbell, just at our usual time –

GRAND: 'Endless.'

RAMBERT: (*And RIEUX, under.*) By making the trains run again in my imagination.

TARROU: The gates – people had to come to terms with it.

RAMBERT: By closing my eyes and trying to get back to her that way.

GRAND: 'Prison.'

ALL FOUR: It felt like being an exile in your own country...

TARROU: Actually I think the split-up lovers were the lucky ones. When everybody else started to panic, they were focussed on just the one person they needed to worry about. It kept them calm. And if they did get infected, they were dead before they had time to think about anything or anyone else.

SCENE NINE: MEANWHILE...; MAY 15<sup>TH</sup> - JUNE 22<sup>ND</sup>

- RIEUX: Quite. Meanwhile; May 15<sup>th</sup> onwards.  
(*Using notes again.*) Mail services suspended, petrol rationed, queues at shops. People are finding it hard to come to terms with what is happening to them - yet they continue to put their personal preoccupations first. There is annoyance, frustration - but these are not emotions that equip one to combat a plague. Yes I would include myself in that assessment. What did it feel like? When you looked up, the sky seemed clamped down like the lid on a cooking pot. Does that help?
- COTTARD: Of course people just blamed the authorities. "Dear Sir, may one not imagine some future relaxation of the proposed measures, etc" Blah blah blah...
- GRAND: Week commencing May 17<sup>th</sup>, 302 fatal cases.
- COTTARD: And the authorities' response? Publish some statistics...
- GRAND: They were still weekly totals at this point - 302, 345 -
- RAMBERT: Numbers which made it sound like an incident, not a state of affairs. So no one believed it was actually happening - not to them.
- COTTARD: My greengrocer -
- GRAND: 487. Doctor -
- COTTARD: My greengrocer, he was hoarding, and when they came to take him to the hospital - he was dead already, and under the bed...; jam. Plague doesn't pay, eh? And there was this other man, in the town centre, when he realised he'd got symptoms, he just threw himself on the nearest woman shouting I've got it I've got it. I tell you, the world's gone mad... Doctor?
- GRAND: Doctor?

- RIEUX: (*Busy working.*) Yes
- GRAND: (*Handing over the weekly figures.*) 487.
- RIEUX: Thank you.
- GRAND: *GRAND sees the picture on RIEUX's desk. He needs to talk.*
- GRAND: Can I ask, Doctor, how is your wife?
- RIEUX: She's being treated. Abroad.
- GRAND: Is that her picture?
- RIEUX: Yes.
- GRAND: In a way, I suppose it's good she wasn't here when they closed the town.
- RIEUX: It was. Now we just have to hope they can make her better.
- GRAND: They can cure it, you know, these days.
- RIEUX: Yes.
- GRAND: My wife was called Jeanne. But we both worked so hard that in the end we forgot to love one another. I was never able to exactly express myself you see.
- They look at each other.*
- RIEUX: One has to begin again, I think.
- GRAND: One does.  
(*Reaching into his pocket.*) I've been trying to write her a letter. First sentences are so hard though, I -
- They are interrupted by a knock on the door.*
- RIEUX: Yes?
- GRAND: Again. What a word. Doctor.  
*GRAND leaves.*



## SCENE TEN; RAMBERT'S PLAN

- RAMBERT: Doctor...I came once before. Research into living conditions amongst the Arabs here? Raymond Rambert. The reporter?
- RIEUX: Ah yes. Well now you have plenty to report on. Actually that isn't why I wanted to talk to you. I need a favour.
- RAMBERT: (*Working.*)...carry on.
- RAMBERT: Right. The thing is, before I came here, I'm married - well, she's not actually my wife, but it's pretty much the same thing. I've managed to get a message to her, to say I'm fine - and then one morning last week, I woke up, and I thought, this is just not part of my job description. Being trapped here I mean. So anyway, I got in touch with the town hall, pulled a few strings, said obviously I'd agree to be quarantined after I'd got out, but the answer's come back this morning that they fully understand etc but regret that under the current circumstances... (*Shows RIEUX a paper.*) I mean I am a total stranger here. It's ridiculous.
- RIEUX: It is. We'll just have to hope the situation doesn't last. And surely, meanwhile, you've got yourself a terrific story?
- RAMBERT: This woman and I are meant to be together. Is that too much to ask?
- RIEUX: It's a perfectly reasonable thing to ask.
- RAMBERT: We've only just met you see, and it's going... it's going really well. So I wanted to ask if you could produce some sort of certificate stating that I haven't got the bloody thing. I really think that would swing it.
- RIEUX: You're not thinking straight. Firstly I don't know if you are free of infection, and even if you were, in the time between you leaving

- RAMBERT: this office with a certificate and presenting it to your contacts, you might not be. And thirdly - Yes.
- RIEUX: Even if I did give you some kind of certificate, it would be useless. There are thousands of other people in exactly your situation. It's ridiculous I know but we have to get through this together.
- RAMBERT: But I'm not from here!
- RIEUX: As from now, I'm afraid you are. Everyone is.
- RAMBERT: Do you have any understanding of how being torn apart like this feels for two people who are meant to be together?
- RIEUX: Yes I do. Look I really hope you will be reunited, just as I hope everyone separated from their loved ones will be reunited - but there are rules and regulations, and there is plague, and my job...my job is to do what has to be done.
- RAMBERT: You don't understand. You're talking in the abstract. You're talking as if this was some kind of reasonable situation.
- RIEUX: I'm talking...facts. I agree that they're not always reasonable.
- RAMBERT: I will get out you know.
- RIEUX: I'm sure you will, but that can't be any of my business.
- RAMBERT: Oh no - it already is. I came to you because people are saying you played quite a significant role in getting the town closed, and I thought you might want to undo just one small part of the harm you've done. But evidently you don't care. You don't care about people. You never

even considered the fact that people would be separated, did you?

RIEUX:  
I couldn't.

RAMBERT:  
Don't tell me – it's all a question of the public good. Well, for your information, the public is made up of actual, individual human beings.

RIEUX:  
There are some things a doctor can't do.

RAMBERT:  
I can see I've taken up enough of your time.  
Good morning.

*The sound of a door slamming. When RAMBERT has left the room, Doctor RIEUX speaks;*

**SCENE ELEVEN; SOLILOQUY;  
DR RIEUX SPEAKS OF LONELINESS**

RIEUX:  
I am on call all day every day in a hospital where the plague is now bringing in an average of five hundred victims a week. I also manage two more auxiliary hospital units at the same time. Not to mention the continuing house visits.

Is it abstract, to have to watch people strip – abstract, when a girl's mother says Oh Doctor I do hope it's not this funny fever people are talking about. Abstract, when she sees what's between her daughters' legs, and starts howling, and can't stop. When people struggle, and promise, and beg. When they'll say anything at all. When you have to supervise their being dragged to the ambulance by armed police.

When you see the piles of disinfected clothes.

When the screaming becomes normal.

When don't even know what you're battling, and so you end up calling it just the way the world is.

When you just can't get used to watching people die.

When they won't die.

When you hear a woman shout "Never", just when she –

When all you know is defeat.

Is it? Abstract?

When he left my office he went to visit somebody else, Tarrou I think. I watched him out of my window and noted the way he hurried. Then I started again. Again.

**SCENE TWELVE; LIFE IN A TIME OF PLAGUE;  
JUNE AND JULY**

*A sequence of solos;*

TARROU:

*(Reading from his notebooks.)* June 14<sup>th</sup>. The working-class districts are now noticeably quiet – shut doors everywhere, people no longer come out to watch the ambulances. That sound of horses hooves on an empty street – that's the police. Gunfire, at the gates.

Peppermints disappearing from the shops after there was a rumour that they reduced your chances of infection.

The manager of the hotel saying this Plague is ruining the tourist trade.

A female guest saying well the good thing about people being quarantined is at least then you can tell yourself it's them who are carrying it, not you.

Insane amounts of money being spent in restaurants.

GRAND: Red skies.  
I'd go to the hospital every evening – after work – and work next to the Doctor – at the desk in the corner, statistics for the health teams, the card indexes. And so on. Then...  
I'd go home and work on my letter to Jeanne.  
No wonder I was tired. And goodness that first sentence – sometimes a whole evening on just the one word. *But*, or *and* – for instance. Tricky. *And* or *then*.

*You and.*

*Me and.*

*Afterwards.*

Do you see?

The gunfire, that was people trying to get out past the guards. Insane.

RAMBERT: All I got from the official channels was words. “No exceptions”; “No”; “Unfortunately”  
I used to go and sit in the waiting-room at the station and read the timetables. And drink.

*He is joined by COTTARD. The next sequence fast-forwards through the story of RAMBERT's attempts to get out.*

COTTARD: Still no way out then?

RAMBERT: No.

COTTARD: You never get anywhere with officials. They're trained not to help...

RAMBERT: Quite.

COTTARD: Look, I have some friends – you know – cafe friends – who work for an organisation specialising in your sort of case. They do cigarettes and alcohol mostly, coming in, but they do do people going out as well. Occasionally.

RAMBERT: How does one join?

COTTARD: It costs about nine or ten thousand.

RAMBERT: What?  
COTTARD: For an introduction.  
RAMBERT: Alright.  
COTTARD: I'll see what I can do.

*They go, and are replaced by:*

TARROU: The only moment of relief comes at 4 a.m.. In between the deaths of the night that's finishing and the agonies of the day that hasn't yet started it feels as though the plague stops and catches its breath for a moment. The shops are all still shuttered and the newsgents are still all asleep. Soon they will be spreading their headlines again though; Will the plague still be here in the autumn? – the experts say no...  
They publish daily totals now, not weekly – scoring a point off Death by making the numbers smaller.

Conversation with Dr Rieux about the lack of sufficient trained staff on the health teams; I said what about volunteers, I have friends. Rieux said any volunteers would only have a one in three chance of surviving and I said; Of course. Doctor; What makes you want to get involved in all this?

Me: I don't know. Morality?

Doctor; Whose morality would that be?

Me; Mine.

Tuesday (Day 95 of the plague.); begin organisation of voluntary health support teams. First team assembled in 24 hours.

*He is replaced by –*

GRAND: People say the volunteers risked their lives and were heroes, but for me it was just a case of two and two equals four. I mean they either

do equal four or they don't, either we had an obligation to battle or we didn't.  
No one gives schoolteachers medals.  
No one gives schoolteachers medals for saying two and two makes four, do they?  
Some people said nothing was any use, and we should just get down on our knees.

*He holds up some files and reads out their titles.*

Disinfection squads; victim transport;  
Ambulance drivers; Hearses – no that was later. All volunteers.

*He is replaced by COTTARD and RAMBERT. COTTARD is in his element; RAMBERT is raging with frustration.*

COTTARD: Meanwhile... I was making a fortune. I explained to my contacts, said this young man has a lady-friend, you see, outside... so – no, I'm sure he won't talk, I said – and I had it all set for the very next night, honestly – but unfortunately...

RAMBERT: What do you mean we have to wait?

COTTARD: The two guards who'll be looking after you won't be on duty until *Friday*.

RAMBERT: Alright, two more days – only two.

*They are interrupted by RIEUX from outside the scene;*

RIEUX: Mr Rambert.

RAMBERT: Yes?

RIEUX: I'm afraid you need to hurry up and get out. There's still no supply of serum, all the teams are short of volunteers, and the figures are rising. Look. No one is safe.

RAMBERT: I'm not leaving because I'm a coward, Doctor. You know that.

I just can't bear the thought. Of never...

RIEUX: I know.

COTTARD: *(Interrupting; jump cut.)* Well good news! They think they can get you out next week.

RAMBERT: Next week?

TARROU: *(Joining them; jump cut.)* So you're off then.

RAMBERT: Yes. Midnight tomorrow.

TARROU: I'm pleased for you.

RAMBERT: Really?

TARROU: Really. At this point in our lives surely lying's far too much of an effort. Sincerity is the only viable option.

RAMBERT: Thank you.

TARROU: Shame though.

RAMBERT: Why?

TARROU: You could have been useful in one of the health teams.

*A silence.*

TARROU: *(To COTTARD.)* And why don't you join us, Mr Cottard?

COTTARD: I'm actually quite happy with the way things are.

TARROU: I see.

COTTARD: Fighting things isn't really my *metier*. Try not to hold it against me.

TARROU: Just try not spread the virus deliberately, alright?

COTTARD: It's not my fault there's a plague. And anyway, all these efforts of yours, I don't see them making a *vast* difference.

*A silence. Another jump cut.*

COTTARD: Now, Mr Rambert; my friends think they can arrange a rendezvous with a possible new contact tomorrow.

RAMBERT: Are you saying we have to start all over again?

COTTARD: Oh it's all about starting again Mr Rambert.

RAMBERT: What if they don't show up again? Do you even have any way of contacting them?

TARROU, RIEUX: (*Outside the scene.*) Quite..

COTTARD: Well...

RAMBERT: (*Losing it.*) Ah! I'd forgotten her!! I was looking for a way through the wall, and then, when there was suddenly no way, no gap, anywhere, there she was, right in the middle of everything, right there with me like some wound, some pain, some pain so terrible I actually started...running...

RIEUX: July 30<sup>th</sup>; he came to me in great distress. He said that the only thing that interested him was living or dying for the thing he loved. I said, You're right. He said;

RAMBERT: Yes but it's easier for you. You have nobody to lose.

*A beat.*

TARROU: You don't know, do you?

RAMBERT: What?

TARROU: That the Doctor has a wife. In a clinic, hundreds of miles away. She was transferred there three weeks before this all started. She's dying. T.B.

*Beat. A phone rings.*

RIEUX: (*Woken up by a phone call in the early hours.*) July 31<sup>st</sup>, 4 a.m.. Hello, Doctor Rieux speaking.

RAMBERT: Doctor. Sorry. Look.

RIEUX: What is it?

RAMBERT: I'd like to volunteer to work for one of your teams. Until I find a way of getting out. Yes? Will you let me? Doctor?

RIEUX: If that's what you want. Thank you. Goodnight.

*The phone line goes dead. RAMBERT alone.*

RAMBERT: August.

EVERYONE ELSE: August.

## CHORUS FOUR: AUGUST

### VERSE 1

It made us prisoners.

It moved into the "better" parts of town - right into the centre, you know;

They tried quarantining those districts off, essential workers only, that kind of thing - but it didn't work. Still, in a time of crisis, everybody likes to feel that at least somebody's more of a prisoner than they are. Then the looting started...

You know how it is, nobody plans to behave like that, but you see an opportunity, other people follow suit, none of the bystanders try to stop you....

Darkness.

Fires.

Madness.

It made us violent.

### VERSE 2

It made us see things we never wanted to see.

We're sorry - we're sorry we have to talk about this - but we did witness these things.

You could try not looking, try saying this can't be happening, but what's right in front of your face does have a way of asserting itself.

There's not much use avoiding the subject of what really happens to a corpse when one day soon the corpse will belong to somebody you love.

At first, just simple changes; no church; no family; all burial transport routed to avoid the busy parts of town.  
Then; no coffins; no shrouds; just quicklime. Everything after dark.  
Finally; no records, no names, just ... pits; and then - in desperation - the ovens.  
There was a statement signed by doctors saying the smoke presented no danger to anybody's health, you'd see it stuck up on the walls...  
It made us...forget

### VERSE 3

It made us forget what we knew.  
You see at the beginning of a plague you can remember very clearly what you've lost, and you regret it.  
Then, after a while - this is the second stage - you lose your memory. You remember the face, but the bones have lost their flesh.  
That's how a plague works;  
Everyone says Isn't it time this was all over - not angrily or bitterly, like they did in the beginning.  
Hopelessly.  
It's not so much a question of giving up  
As of giving way;  
Accepting.  
*In rousing desperate unison;*  
Well at least the situation was clear!  
We were all the same.

In the midst of all the guns, and the fires, and the numbers;  
Amidst all the fear, and the lists, and the losses  
We were all the same.  
Love must have been in there somewhere still  
It must have been  
But Love was useless  
It was unfit for purpose  
Too heavy to carry any more.  
It was stillborn.  
It was hanging on, without hope;  
Loitering, with no intent.

### Coda;

If you want to know what it was like  
Imagine a long and golden evening.  
There's no traffic - just the sound of people walking.  
A thousand tramping shoes; a thousand muffled voices;  
An endless trudging that spoke sadly and honestly of the blind will to survive -  
A will which had  
At that time  
Completely replaced Love in our hearts.

*Lights up slowly; they look at each other.*

**SCENE THIRTEEN; SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER...**

*Isolation; everyone is preoccupied with their own paperwork. Everyone is exhausted.*

TARROU: In September and October...; the town was really under the cosh. Nothing happened, but time.

RAMBERT: *(As if he had been accused of dereliction.)* I worked every single hour

TARROU: With your eyes shut.

RAMBERT: So I got drunk occasionally –

RIEUX: You'd better get a move on if you want to get out.

RAMBERT: And why don't you stop me?

RIEUX: No one should be ashamed of choosing happiness.

RAMBERT: And what about the shame of wanting happiness just for yourself?

RIEUX: That I can't help you with Mr Rambert.

RAMBERT: No you can't.

*A beat.*

GRAND: I asked the doctor how things were going, with the treatment – the wife's – and apparently it's not going well at all. I said my wife, Jeanne, when she's reading about us in the papers, does she think of me? Does she look for my name? The Doctor made no reply.

*RIEUX makes no reply.*

If I could only find the right words...

TARROU: Cottard seemed the only person in the town who wasn't exhausted...

COTTARD: At least everybody's up the same creek. *(With great contempt.)* Look at them.

TARROU: Plague suited him.

COTTARD: Nothing like a crisis for bringing people together, is there...

RAMBERT: Shame. That's why I decided to stay – *(Savagely.)* Now they know how I feel;

COTTARD: Shame. *(Suddenly; a jump cut.)*

**SCENE FOURTEEN: "THE FIRST BATCH OF SERUM IS READY"**

RAMBERT: *(To TARROU, holding an obviously important piece of paper.)* I need to see Doctor Rieux. I need to see the Doctor!

TARROU: Doing a ward round...down the corridor and second left. Use a mask!

RIEUX: *(After he's gone.)* They're useless, but they inspire confidence in others...

RAMBERT: Why aren't you at your quarantine unit?

*(Handing over the paper.)* The first batch of serum is ready.

*A beat.*

RIEUX: Then we need to organise a trial.

COTTARD: Now they know how it feels to be terrified all the time.

**CHORUS FIVE; SOLILOQUY; IN RESPONSE TO THE NEWS OF THE SERUM, DOCTOR RIEUX NEARLY LOSES CONTROL**

RIEUX: Most of the time, I was fine. But sometimes...because I was no longer actually a doctor you see, not at this point; identify, diagnose, condemn, and file – that was all I could do. And I tell you, working on four hours sleep for weeks on end can really make you lose your bedside manner... People look at you with undisguised hatred. They think you have no heart. Well I had enough heart to watch people die, twenty hours a day;

I had enough heart to begin again, on the stroke of the twenty-fourth – but I did not have enough heart to work miracles. Yes, I was fighting, but I had no idea why.

**SCENE FOURTEEN  
CONTINUES FROM EXACTLY WHERE IT STOPPED**

**RIEUX:** Then we need to organise a trial.  
*(Turning back to the notes for this episode.)*  
Trial of the new serum. This was... *(Discovering the notes have no exact date.)* sorry, it would have been towards the end of October. To all intents and purposes, the new serum was our last hope; if it didn't work either the epidemic would go on, for months – or it would work itself out. Either way the situation would be entirely beyond our control.  
As my colleagues have said, I am sorry to have to describe this.

*(Reading notes.)*

Mr Othon (a judge.) and his family; the son is eight years old. They had called me as soon as they saw the signs; the little boy was already exhausted, and put up no struggle during the examination. The parents already knew. I advised them that they needed to pack to go into quarantine, then made the mistake of asking the father if there was anything I could do. Yes he said, save my child. Mother silent. Mother sent to the hotel Rambert is now running. Father to quarantine camp in the football stadium.  
Child brought here to the auxiliary hospital in the school.

Infection rampant, case clearly terminal. Therefore decided to experiment with the new serum.

**TARROU:** Let me help.

*They set up a table to represent the bed on which the child is lying; this then becomes the focus of the scene.*

**RIEUX:** 8 p.m. on first evening, single injection, maximum dose. Always unpleasant, but he kept quite still.

**GRAND:** *(Arriving breathless.)* Sorry, out of breath. Only stay a moment. Any news yet?

**TARROU:** *(Shaking his head.)* No.

**GRAND:** I see.

**RIEUX:** No movement except for the characteristic tossing of the head – left right left.

**RAMBERT arrives, takes out a packet of cigarettes, and puts it away again.**

*The child begins to cry rhythmically. The audience may hear this, or they may not.*

2 a.m., full flexion of the limbs, involuntary spinal spasms. Rictus. Crucifixion.  
7 a.m.

*The child screams; the screaming becomes rhythmic.*

**TARROU:** It wasn't as if we hadn't seen a child die before, but we just hadn't ever watched it like this.

So there was no morning remission –

**RIEUX:** No, but he is holding on for a longer period than usual.

**TARROU:** So if he dies he will have suffered more.

**COTTARD:** Exactly!

**RIEUX:** 8 a.m. Shaking escalating into convulsions. Continual monitoring of the pulse, so I could at least feel I was doing something. I tried so hard to get his pulse in synch with mine, to help him, but he kept on getting away –



GRAND: Sorry. I have to get to work. I'll try and come back.

RIEUX: Foetal position. Plucking at the blankets. The head-shaking again, left right left.

*A dreadful scream.*

*TARROU turns away.*

RAMBERT: *(To no one.)* My god stop this. Stop it. My god.

RIEUX: I have to go. I have to go.

*RIEUX leaves, and paces outside the room.*

*The scream breaks up, and stops.*

TARROU: Time of death eleven, eleven thirty, that evening... Sorry, I didn't write it down.

*TARROU goes out to RIEUX.*

RIEUX: *(Turning on him for lack of another target.)* Ah! That one. That one was innocent. You know that. God. God.

TARROU: Doctor you're not the only one who found that unbearable.

RIEUX: Sorry. *(To the audience.)* Sorry. Exhaustion makes one irrational. But there are times when the only thing I can still feel. Is complete refusal. Complete revulsion.

What I hate, you see, is Death, and Disease. Death and Evil. I hate. Them. I hate them. *(TARROU goes to speak.)* I don't want to discuss this; we are working, and that's all that counts. We are working, and enduring, and fighting. I do apologise. That outburst will not be repeated.

#### CHORUS SIX: HAVING WATCHED A CHILD DIE

TARROU GRAND RAMBERT RIEUX:

I think seeing that changed us all.  
You either believe everything, or you deny everything. You either believe

everything, or, you deny everything. You either believe everything, or, you deny everything. I think seeing that changed us all.

*TARROU and RIEUX*

RIEUX: Mr Tarrou, how do you find peace?

How do you find peace...

TARROU: How do you find peace? You forget the plague - forget all about it, just for one night. You think about bathing in the sea - thick as velvet, supple and smooth as a wild animal. You think about swimming naked, and at night, with the stars, and a friend. Swim till you're far from the world, and breathing together in the same rhythm, and free of absolutely everything. Think about that, before you start again.

RIEUX: Thank you Mr Tarrou. Thank you for everything.

#### SCENE FIFTEEN: OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER

RAMBERT, TARROU:

October; November;

The newspapers are still talking about calm and courage... but there are demonstrations everywhere. Over food, prices, all the black market speculation. And in the camps - the quarantine camps which had been set up to handle the overflow - you know I can hardly believe this now, looking back *(Looks at his notes but cannot bring himself to quote from their horrors.)* Everybody knew. Everybody knew what life was like in those camps, and everybody agreed to forget about them. And see this is the trouble with waiting; the longer you wait, the better you

get at waiting, and you end up abolishing any idea you might once have had of the future.  
December - mid-December - there was more fighting at the gates. The serum had some successes, but there were also new forms of infection.

(*COITARD begins to sing "Silent Night", while ostentatiously counting money.*)

Late December.

Christmas.

Well that Christmas was the Christmas from hell. Empty shops with empty boxes in empty windows - and no children. No celebrations - except the private, disgusting - yes the disgusting celebrations of the rich.

December 24<sup>th</sup>, Mr Grand had failed to turn up for work;

RIEUX: (*Worried.*) Well where is he then?

RAMBERT: (*Ditto - hurriedly wrapping up in a coat.*) I'll go out and look.

TARROU: Mr Grand, how are you?

GRAND: Oh, you know... In the end you just get tired! You get tired of prisons, and work, and being brave. You want to see another human face. You want

RAMBERT: (*Finding him and seeing that something is very wrong.*) Mr Grand?

GRAND: You want your heart to leap up like it used to, when you saw them. You want....

RAMBERT: Doctor Rieux, you should come - he's standing in front of a shop window in the freezing cold.

RIEUX: (*Also putting a coat on.*) Doing what?

RAMBERT: Staring at absolutely nothing with tears pouring down his face. Is he remembering somebody?  
Mr Grand?

GRAND: Oh doctor. Doctor.

RIEUX: How can I help Mr Grand?

GRAND: I have been so good, for so long...but underneath...underneath, here

*GRAND smites his breast - then staggers with pain; RIEUX and RAMBERT steady him.*

*COITARD stops singing.*

RIEUX: You're burning. You're burning up.

RAMBERT: Oh no. No.

RIEUX: We need to get you indoors. Take his other arm.

#### SCENE SIXTEEN; THE AGONY OF MR GRAND

*Everyone except COITARD helps to put GRAND to bed.*

GRAND: Doctor, there's a letter... in the drawer there... Could you? I just want Jeanne to know, you see - want her to know how I feel, now, so that she can be happy. So that she has no regrets.

RAMBERT: (*A sheaf of papers...*) There's only one sentence...

GRAND: That's right. Read it please. Oh!

RAMBERT: My beautiful Jeanne, it is nearly Christmas, and.

GRAND: I know - I know - Beautiful isn't the right word. One should always call things by their right name. And now I don't have time. Burn it. Burn it. Oh! Burn it, doctor. Oh! Not the right word. Not.

*The letter is burnt.*

GRAND: Thank you. Thank you Doctor.

*A dark scene; a vigil. GRAND in agony on the bed. Hushed voices.*

RIEUX: I've given him the serum, but he won't survive the night.

TARROU: I'll sit up. You go, I'll see you in the morning.

RIEUX: Thank you.

GRAND: Aaaaaah

*GRAND becomes still, and RIEUX, RAMBERT and TARROU all stop in their tracks. This volte-face in the story is done very quietly.*

RIEUX, RAMBERT, TARROU:

But then...

GRAND: *(In an exhausted voice.)* Doctor. Doctor?

*Disbelieving, RIEUX re-enters the sick room*

TARROU: 7 a.m. Monday. Monday the 25<sup>th</sup>.

GRAND: Good morning. Listen, I was wrong. I'm going to start again – there's more paper in the drawer.

RIEUX: Your temperature's completely normal.

GRAND: In the drawer.

RIEUX: Your temperature's completely normal. I don't understand.

*They begin to realise what has happened.*

I didn't understand. And that lunchtime, the same thing happened for a second time – a young woman who was also on the new serum, in isolation at the school; her temperature came down overnight. The morning remission lasted.

RAMBERT: And?

GRAND: Jeanne, today is Christmas.

*Pause.*

RIEUX: And then on the Tuesday Tarrou came running in and said

TARROU: Doctor – doctor they're coming out again.

RIEUX: Who's coming out?

TARROU: The rats.

RAMBERT: Nobody'd seen a dead rat since April.

TARROU: No, these are alive – my neighbour's just seen two of them, in his house. Is it all going to start again? I said is it all going to start again? Doctor?

GRAND:

*(Getting up and completely recovered; time jump.)*  
No no. Here are this week's figures, Doctor, like you asked for. They're going down.

#### CHORUS SEVEN; THE CHORUS OF HOPE

*This chorus is slow, scattered and shocked – the voices are disbelieving and even afraid.*

GRAND: Hope. Very deep inside.

RIEUX: No one said anything in public, but in private, people began talking about

RIEUX, TARROU, RAMBERT:  
Hope.

COTTARD: *(With vehement derision.)* Hope!!

RAMBERT: It's not going to happen overnight.

TARROU: It's always easier for things to fall apart than for them to get put back together.

GRAND: Things won't go back to how they were immediately.

COTTARD: No!

TARROU: No. Not immediately.

RAMBERT: Obviously.

GRAND, TARROU, RAMBERT:  
But;

COTTARD: No.

TARROU: The sky had never been so blue. There were more cases on the Monday, but then none at all on Wednesday. Really; almost none at all.

RIEUX: Nothing else had changed – the streets were still silent, we were still under curfew – but as soon as it became possible to hope –

GRAND, RAMBERT:

The reign of the plague was over.

TARROU: Over.

COTTARD: Over?

RAMBERT: (*Reading a clipping.*) "The situation can now be considered officially under control. After due consultation with the medical commission the prophylactic measures will be kept in place for another four calendar weeks. And then, the gates will be opened..."

TARROU: Hope...hope is something you have to keep in the bank. It's something you have to keep in reserve until you're really sure you can let it out.

RIEUX, RAMBERT: Hope is so cruel.

ALL: That night / we went walking / all five of us / in the crowds / and we felt like we were walking on air / just like everybody else was / Even when you left the main streets / you could hear the crowds / but of course you could also see / the houses that had dark windows / and we were so tired / you didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

COTTARD: You didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

RIEUX: So long as the next news from the clinic is good. That was what I was thinking. So long as the next news from the clinic is good.

RAMBERT: What was I thinking? That I wasn't the same person as I used to be.

RIEUX: So long as it's good, I shall be able to start again.

RAMBERT: When I see her again. When I see her again.

SCENE SEVENTEEN: "JUST LIKE THAT" (THE DEATH OF MR TARROU)

COTTARD: So Doctor let me ask you this; you really think it can stop, just like that - full stop. No warning. No reason.

RIEUX: It's possible.

COTTARD: In other words it might all start again tomorrow. That's what you're saying.

RIEUX: Or the decrease in cases could accelerate tomorrow. That's also possible.

COTTARD: (*From one of RAMBERT's newspaper clippings.*) "In the event of unforeseen circumstances? There are always unforeseen circumstances.

TARROU: They're not opening the gates for another two weeks - and meanwhile -

COTTARD: What? We should all get back to normal life? What's that when it's at home?

TARROU: Being able to go and see a brand-new movie? Look, everybody would just like things to go back to how they were before. You can understand that. Surely -

COTTARD: I tell you what, let's start all over again with *nothing* - no past - no past, no records. A new life. And then... if they come for me... I just won't be there.

TARROU: Good luck, Mr Cottard.

COTTARD: Do you really mean that?

TARROU: Oh... as I said, at this stage in our lives, sincerity is really the only option.

COTTARD leaves.

TARROU turns to the last page of his notebook:

January 25<sup>th</sup>; the gates are finally opened, and now I am back in my room. A momentous day - and night, and now I am back in my room. Am I ready to begin again? I can only say that there is always a moment in the night or day

when you realise you are a coward, and that moment is the only thing I am really afraid of. I am suddenly very tired.  
And that... is the last entry in my notebook. January the 26<sup>th</sup>. Shall we get it over with? Doctor?

*The table which serves as the bed on which people die is set up again.*  
TARROU installs himself.

I was tired, and I forgot to inject myself. That's all. That's all.

RAMBERT: Perhaps it's nothing serious.

GRAND: No - not now, surely?

TARROU: I had the temperature - and a headache

RIEUX: Those are symptoms of lots of things

GRAND: We'll look after you....

TARROU: And oh yes, I fought. I fought hard. But I lost. Lymph nodes, fever - all the usual. I remember there was rain outside, for a while... I slept, and felt better. But then it came back with a vengeance and I started spitting blood. (*To RIEUX, shaking his hand.*) Goodbye, and thank you.

RIEUX: I didn't see the exact moment when he died, because I was crying. I have no idea whether he found peace at the last or not.

TARROU: You must have been very tired as well.

RIEUX: Actually I was very calm.

*A silence.*

TARROU: Even when you got the news about your wife?

RIEUX: Even when I got the news about my wife.

TARROU: When did it happen?

RIEUX: The morning you died. January 27<sup>th</sup>.

TARROU: I meant when did she die.

RIEUX:

On the 19<sup>th</sup> - communications were terrible that week. I'd been expecting it... but days don't matter. Not to Pain. I was really there already.

*RIEUX is left alone with the empty table.*

I wasn't able to take much part in the celebrations and reunions that followed the opening of the gates. As I'm sure you understand.

**CHORUS EIGHT; THE CHORUS OF THE OPENING OF THE GATES**  
("WE MUST SPEAK OF EVERYONE")

*RAMBERT, GRAND, TARROU, COTTARD; each speaking from their own very different perspectives. Complete emotional recall of the moment. The sounds of celebration.*

RAMBERT, GRAND, TARROU, COTTARD: Ah!

RAMBERT:

- when it ended, it ended in a second. I was on the station platform, waiting - and she came running towards me, smashing into my chest before I'd even seen her. And I knew, in that moment, that she was an absolute stranger... But in a time of plague we must speak of everyone.

TARROU:

For the people who had lost everything, the real loneliness was only just beginning. No one was thinking about them. And yet, in a time of plague we must speak of everyone.

COTTARD:

Complete denial; everyone forgot. Forgot the ovens, forgot the smoke, forgot the smell, forgot the fear. Everyone!

GRAND:

In a time of plague we must speak of everyone. There was dancing, there were bells - there was a gold and blue sky. It was the day of Survival - tomorrow, everybody would have to go back to real life, to all the rules and compromises, but today...

**you saw people who would never normally have spoken to each other, together. Really together. Joy does that; and Death doesn't.**

#### SCENE EIGHTEEN; THE LAST DAYS

*(Reading a prepared statement.)* Forgive me if I read from some prepared notes again now. January 27<sup>th</sup>. The last days.

I believe witnesses have a duty to be on the side of the victims – that is, to put to themselves in their fellow-citizens' place on the basis of the only things that we all share, namely love, suffering and estrangement – and to give those fellow-citizens' feelings voice as exactly as possible. To speak for everybody, in other words. However, there was one resident on whose behalf I do not feel I can speak. This is the man of whom Mr Tarrou said *(RIEUX takes Tarrou's notebook.)* "In my opinion, his only real crime was to have approved in his heart of something that causes the death of men women and children. The rest I understand, but that I shall have to forgive."

I think this is the right thing to end my evidence with. Some hearts are ignorant.

By which I mean... solitary.

*RIEUX and GRAND fully act out this scene – covering – shouting – as does COTTARD. It is like a moment on the television news, but distorted.*

GRAND: I was there too.

RIEUX: There was a line of policemen across the street – I produced my identity card, but was told /

TARROU: *(Voicing a policeman.)* Sorry Doctor, there's somebody taking pot-shots at people. Stick around, I think we might need you later...

GRAND: There were policemen with guns in all the doorways. I said But that's Cottard's window – They were firing to keep him occupied.

*Gunsibots; a sniper.*

GRAND: *(Angry.)* Why is he shooting at people? Why is he shooting at people?

TARROU: People were shouting there's a maniac – *(A bystander.)* What?

TARROU: – a maniac!!

GRAND: He shot the dog!! There was a dog, in the street, and he shot it. It sat down on its behind to hunt for a flea, and then it decided to cross the road, and he shot it

RIEUX: *(Pulling GRAND back to safety.)* No Mister Grand!

GRAND: The blood made a puddle...a black puddle. He's gone mad.

*Submachine gunfire, followed by two muffled explosions.*

RIEUX: They brought him out.

*COTTARD is in handcuffs.*

COTTARD: Now you know how it feels.

GRAND: And everybody came out to watch.

COTTARD: Now you know how it feels.

*COTTARD continues to shout – doing it as if he was being wrestled to the ground and then beaten up. No one is touching him; he creates the scene alone.*

RIEUX: He was raving.

GRAND: A policeman went up to him and hit him – very deliberately. Hard – in the stomach. Twice.

RIEUX: He fell over, and then the policeman kicked him.

GRAND: He really let fly.

COTTARD: Now you know how it feels.

RIEUX: He got him down, and then you could hear the fists going into his face.  
COTTARD: Now, you know how it feels.  
GRAND: This group of people came towards us – they could see we were watching what was happening – and the policeman said  
TARROU: You, keep moving. There's nothing to see...  
GRAND AND RIEUX: ...so we looked away.

*The tableau of COTTARD being assaulted by the crowd continues, then ends.*

GRAND: It got dark. It got quiet – then it got noisy again.  
The Doctor and I said goodbye. I said; I've finished my letter. To call things by their proper names, Doctor, you just have to cut out all the adjectives. I'm going to work.  
RIEUX: There were fireworks. Fireworks.  
*Sounds of celebration.*

CHORUS NINE; THE CHORUS OF THE LAST NIGHT  
(WHAT DOES IT MEAN, "PLAGUE")

GRAND, TARROU, RAMBERT:  
That last night, people said; What does it mean, "A Plague"?  
It's life, that's all – people said – Life's a plague.  
Don't you worry about me, people said, there's plenty of life left in me –  
And what do you expect – people said – a monument? "To the victims of the plague."  
A plague? Speeches about their heroic example?  
COTTARD: People are always the same.

GRAND, TARROU, RAMBERT, COTTARD:

People are always the same.  
People are always the same.  
People are always the same – they want rockets, noise, to forget –  
To see stars  
Flames, splashed across the sky  
To watch that,  
Together.

RIEUX:

It was then, with all that noise rising up around me, as I was watching rocket after rocket splash its colour across the sky, that I decided to write everything down. I decided to not be one of the people who keep silent, but to speak up and bear witness; to make sure that there is at least some memory of the injustices and violences that are done to people, and to put on record as simply as I can what it is that you learn when you live through a time of plague, namely that there is more to admire about people than to despise or despair of.

*Again;*

That's what I wrote. "There is more to admire about one's fellow-citizens than to despise or despair of."

*Silence. The sound of a huge, final fireworks.*

*Silence.*

*Their job done, the witnesses reassemble.*

RAMBERT: Of course it wasn't a victory. The doctor's not saying this is some kind of record of victory

GRAND: It is what it is; an account of some things that had to be done, and which I'm sure

will all have to be done again at some point.

TARROU:

Nobody's trying to be a saint. They're just refusing to submit.

COTTARD:

Do you know how that feels?

RIEUX:

As I listened to the celebrations, I thought; Joy is always under threat. I thought about what the crowds were choosing to ignore - and it's something anyone can look up, if they want to - which is that the plague bacillus never actually dies. It never disappears - not entirely. It can lie dormant for generations in somebody's furnishings or bedsheets; can bide its time in living-rooms, in basements, in suitcases... in bank statements ...until one day - for the misfortune of mankind, or for its instruction perhaps, it once more rouses its rats and sends them forth to die in some unsuspecting city. Thank you.

*The five witnesses have returned to their witness-table - they are just as we first saw them.*

*The show suddenly starts again;*

RIEUX:

Well I think the best way of getting to know a town is to say how people work there, how they love each other, and how they die.

*A sudden and complete black-out.*

*Fin.*