



Clarges

opera buffa in six acts
by
Joe St.Johanser

libretto by Joe St.Johanser after the novel
by Jack Vance

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2013

Libretto

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Dramatis Personae

The Jacynth Martin - soprano
(*Amaranth*) - Young and beautiful in body - less so in mind

Gavin Waylock aka The Grayven Warlock - baritone
(*Amaranth* posing as *Glark* relict) - ruthless and effective

Basil Thinkoup - tenor
(*Wedge*) - friend of Waylock - A successful psychiatrist gambler

Renata Biebursson - mezzo
(*Verge*) - space captain and artist in aquefacts

The Albert Pondicherry - tenor (*Amaranth*)

The Denis Lestrangle - bass (*Amaranth*)

Gold Fortam (*Wedge*) - widow recently bereaved),

Vincent Rodenave - tenor (*Verge*) - the Actuarial Clerk

Actuarial Girl Assistant/Mind Read Preceptress - soprano (unstated Phyles)

Sara Caddigan - soprano (*Brood*) - conventional and unsuccessful psychiatrist)

The Roland Zygmont - bass (*Amaranth*) - President of the Society)

The Olaf Maybrow - tenor (*Amaranth*) - Chairman of the Pro-Arts Union

The Anastasia Fancourt - soprano (*Amaranth* - famous and beautiful performer - friend of The Jacynth)

The Abel Mandeville - baritone (*Amaranth*) - arrogant and vindictive publisher

Inquisitor (unstated Phyle) - bass

Tribune One (unstated Phyle) - baritone

Tribune Two (unstated Phyle) - tenor

Maximilian Hertzog - all-in wrestler - catto

Chorus and Dancers

Citizens of Clarges [Opera Singers (*all phyles*) and Ballet Dancers, (*glarks*)]

ACT 1

Scene 1 - The spaceport

Night - The darkened landing field at the spaceport. Gantry lights and shadows. Set to one side is an entry platform to a spaceship with steps leading down.

As tabs open Renata Biebursson is revealed on the platform. She descends steps from spaceship and walks into a spot.

Music No. 1 Prologue

RENATA BIEBURSSON

I am an old woman who has experienced... who has experienced...
well I shall tell you the tale of Clarges and the man who changed it:
Gavin Waylock.

In my world four hundred years ago they conquered disease...
then we needed to limit population ...
there were many draconian solutions...

Then they conquered age ... found the technique for eternal life...
Then the riots began...a century of Malthusian Chaos and the Big Starve...
Then they managed to rebuild our civilization...then they instituted the Fair-Play Act.

Each person made their own choice
- to live a natural span or to sign a contract which offered years of additional life
- awarded by merit
- in return for accepting a visit from the black clad assassins
when the Actuarian computer decided
the population needed adjusting.

Almost the entire population participated...those who did not were known as 'glarks' and commanded small social status. After three hundred years the constant striving after merit had projected Clarges into a Golden Age.

My life in Clarges was joyous.
I had joined in with the system, signing a contract and registering in the lowest phyle,
known as 'Brood', at sixteen.
I successfully strove upslope as a spaceship officer
to the 'Wedge' phyle, thereby gaining an extra ten years of life.

I was fortunate.
Others were less so.
Anxiety and disappointment were obvious partners to the long climb through phyle;
the mental hospitals, the 'palliatories',
were crowded with those who had chosen unreality rather than continued struggle.
The medical staff strove to care for these poor mentally ill people
- the 'cattos' as they were called.

Seeking respite from the strain
people would flock to the pleasure grounds of Carnevalle,
which provided a relief from the strain of the constant striving.

Carnevalle, set apart, was a treasure of colour,
Of pageantry, of spectacular devices
For diversion and thrill and catharsis.
The pavilions gave off prismatic reflections,
The pagodas dripped molten liquid.
Every evening Carnevalle came to life,
Preening and shuddering like a new butterfly.
All came to spend their money and more precious -
They spent the moments of their lives

Even the Amaranth came to Carnevalle
- the Amaranth - the top phyle
- those few who had been awarded immortality.
On reaching the top phyle the new Amaranth would go into seclusion
for seven years
- until their several clones had developed into true surrogates.

Then they would abandon their old bodies
- worn out by striving and age
- assume one of the new young bodies
and go out into the world eager for diversion.

Lights change, fade on RB, the steps are struck. Spot lights up on the beautiful figure of The Jacynth Martin as she enters

To Carnevalle came The Jacynth Martin.
She had broken through to Amaranth at the age of one hundred and four,
after repeated setbacks.
Now only two weeks out of seclusion
- metamorphosed into the body and mind of a girl of nineteen.

RB exits, tabs open upstage to reveal brilliantly lit Carnevalle set thronging with revellers as JM walks through into the scene. Gavin Waylock is barking to a crowd in front of the House of Life booth.

Scene 2 - The House of Life at Carnevalle

Flamboyant pleasure ground; preening and shuddering like a new butterfly. The pavilions giving off prismatic reflections; the pagodas dripping molten liquid; a myriad lumes floting like a haze of fireflies.

No. 2a Upslope solo and chorus

A crowd of flamboyantly dressed revellers is enjoying the fun and excitement of Carnevalle; a few dancing. The Jacynth Martin wanders idly past the booths

CHORUS

Carnevalle, Carnevalle,
We all come to Carnevalle.
Life is hard we strive for life.
Up slope! Up slope!

Brood to Wedge and Wedge to Third;
Third to Verge and Verge to Amaranth.

Amaranth!

Up slope! Up slope!
Will endless years be ours?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Friends, whatever your phyle attend me!
Do you value your life a florin's worth?
Will endless years be yours?
Come into the House of Life
- Learn the methods, the techniques!
Friends what of your slope?
A florin I say a florin!
Come into the House of Life!
Learn the methods, the techniques!
Face the future with hope.
Up up with your slope!

Many of the crowd have entered the booth. Others have drifted away - a few are left.

You! You Third there! When do you make Verge?

PUNTER ONE

Not me. I'm Brood, draygrosser by trade.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You've got the look of Third. That's where you belong!
Try Didactor Moncure's regimen.
In ten weeks bid your assassins goodbye.

The crowd find this amusing

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You good lady! What of your children?.

PUNTER TWO

Young hounds are ahead of me already!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Here's your chance to outdistance them.
No less than forty-two of today's Amaranth owe their places to Didactor Moncure!
You - the beautiful young lady! Don't you want to be Amaranth?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Laughing

I am not concerned.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

No - and why not?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Perhaps because I'm glark.

The booth is now full and the show starts inside. The crowd disperses. Gavin Waylock is free for the evening. He jumps down and falls into step with The Jacynth Martin.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Is your boss faring so poorly that his tout must chase prospects through the crowd?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

At this moment I am my own man and will be so until tomorrow sunset.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

But you hobnob with Verge and Amaranth. What is your interest with a glark girl?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

The usual. You're a beautiful sight; do you realise it?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Why else would I wear such a revealing costume?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I'll accompany you if I may.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I might lead you into mischief...

GAVIN WAYLOCK

A risk I won't mind taking... here we are at the crossroads. How will you choose?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I have no choice. I came to walk, look and feel

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Then I must choose. That's the House of Dreams, there the Hall of Revelation, The House of Far Worlds... see those people... they leave the House of the Unknown Thrill. The thrill is hardly unknown it is the threat of... transition... they pay to be threatened with molten metal, with guillotines, with lurking assassins... in short the threat of ... going off.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I'm far too restless for dreaming... and I have no fear of such threats.

they arrive at a stimmo booth

GAVIN WAYLOCK

No? Are you so very young then? What colour?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Red.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Red makes me daring.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Suppose I'm already daring..

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Then red makes you reckless

they both partake of a red stimmo

Now the night begins. Carnevalle!

they wander off

No. 2b Upslope chorus

The crowd enjoy the sights and are entertained by dancers

CHORUS

Our brains clogged by work
We come to find release;
Mingle and melt,
Drift on the current;
Merge with the welter of Carnevalle.

The dancers and crowd are drunk and highly stimulated

Mouths like pink or purple lilies
Open to laugh or deride,
Erotic sidling and swaying;
The faint odour of perspiration.

We pay to know fear.
We pay to kill frogs.
Carnevalle!

Scene 3 A bar at Carnevalle

Quiet backwater with bar table.

Gavin Waylock and The Jacynth Martin rener entwined together...evidently also highly stumulated

No. 2c Duet

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Drift on the current
Mingle and melt
Merge with the welter of Carnevalle
Mouths like pink or purple lilies

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You are a miracle.
A fabulous flower, a legend of beauty
Pink or purple lilies

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Gavin take off your mask - let me see your face!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

At Carnevalle faces are best concealed.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

That is hardly fair Gavin.
The silver conceals nothing of me.
Did you hope to embrace me wearing your mask?

Would you have me think you ugly?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

No of course not... You are a miracle.

A fabulous flower, a legend of beauty

he embraces her - she submits and removes his mask - he goes to kiss her but she draws back

Why do you stare at me?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

A face I recognise. A voice in my mind speaks a name. The Grayven Warlock! But this dread Monster was tried, adjudged and delivered to the assassins seven years ago. He fled the assassins and disappeared. Who then are you?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You have deceived me! You can not be glark because seven years ago you would have been too young to be concerned with scandal. You must be much older - even Amaranth - rarely do unmodified genes produce such perfection. May I ask your name?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I am The Jacynth Martin.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I am correct in my deductions - you are partly right in yours. My face is indeed that of the Grayven Warlock. We are identities; I am his clone.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

A clone? Clone of The Grayven...seven years ago...You seem very sophisticated for a clone of so few years

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I'm highly adaptable.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I remember now - The Grayven's striving was journalism. The Abel Mandeville was his rival.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

His enemy too. They met one night, high in the Porphyry Tower. There were words, accusations. The Abel struck the Grayven. The Grayven struck back and the Abel fell a thousand feet into Charterhouse Square.

Among the Amaranth violence is not unknown. If transistion does occur, it is nothing final. As Amaranth you are of course aware of this.

At most there's the inconvenience of a few weeks until the next surrogate is bought forth.

But the Grayven was given to the assassins, although he'd just become Amaranth and had as yet no viable surrogates with his personality. Only I - as a clone relict - not the personality.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

The Grayven Warlock shouldn't have left seclusion until his clones had become surrogates. It was a chance he took.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

The Grayven was impulsive, impatient; he couldn't isolate himself so long. He hadn't counted on the vindictiveness of his enemies.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

These are the laws of Clarges. Anyone who performs an obscene act of violence deserves nothing more than oblivion.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

What will you do now?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I'm not happy in the possession of this knowledge. My instincts are to expose the Monster.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

There's no Monster to be exposed. The Grayven is seven years forgotten.

he resumes his mask

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Yes of course.

Basil Thinkoup enters - somewhat the worse for wear

BASIL THINKOUP

Here's good old Gavin - good old Gavin Waylock.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You'll excuse us Basil - we were on the point of leaving.

BASIL THINKOUP

Not so soon! Never so I see you except in front of your House. This man Gavin here is my oldest friend

he draws them to a table in a quiet backwater and they sit - Carnevalle goes on around them

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Indeed? How long have you known him?

BASIL THINKOUP

Seven years ago we pulled Gavin Waylock out of the water. It was on the barge Amprodex. The captain went catto on the home trip. Remember that Gavin - what a vicious sight!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I remember very well. Come let's...

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I'm interested in your friend Basil.. So you pulled Gavin Waylock from the water?

BASIL THINKOUP

He fell asleep in his aircar.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

And seven years ago this occurred?

BASIL THINKOUP

Seven years more or less. Gavin will tell you to the very hour. He has an exact mind.

No. 3a Bar table quintet

She stares at Gavin, who has become frozen

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Gavin tells me very little about himself.

BASIL THINKOUP

Look at him now - like a statue behind his mask.
Excuse me - I have an errand of the flesh;
pray don't leave.

he exits - JM stares at GW

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Seven years ago The Grayven Warlock flees the assassins.
Seven years ago Gavin Warlock is pulled from the sea.
After seven years The Grayven will be presumed dead....

Two Amaranth arrive

THE ALBERT PONDICHERRY

The Jacynth! A delightful surprise!

THE DENIS LESTRANGE

Delightful!

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Albert! Denis! The Albert Pondicherry. The Denis Lestrangle: this is Gavin Waylock

Basil reenters

and this Basil Thinkoup.
Truly Albert and Denis, only at Carnevalle does one meet interesting people!

THE ALBERT PONDICHERRY

Indeed!

THE DENIS LESTRANGE

Indeed! Pray what is your striving?

BASIL THINKOUP

I strive as psychopathist at the palliatory,
hoping to cure the mentally ill..

THE DENIS LESTRANGE

Indeed!

We must share a number of mutual acquaintances!

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

And Gavin Waylock? You'll never guess.

The Amaranth languidly eye Waylock.

THE ALBERT PONDICHERRY

I'll never attempt it.

THE DENIS LESTRANGE

Oh, I'll try.

From that fine physique a professional acrobat.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

No. Try again.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Excuse me.

Gavin Waylock gets up from the table - he goes to a com booth at the side and calls a number, whispering into it

THE ALBERT PONDICHERRY

I doubt if Waylock enjoys our speculations.

BASIL THINKOUP

I've been urging Gavin to change his bootless occupation,
to sign the contract, join Brood and begin the climb upslope
to gain further years and perhaps eternal life.

I'm not without influence.

I could start him off well in the palliatory.
Each personality is a circle, rich and ripe as a plum...
There are many points on a circle...I have a new idea!

THE GROUP

rich and ripe as a plum..there are many points on a circle

music over as Gavin hisses his instructions

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Your business must wait... Very well two thousand. But make haste.. do it now!

Gavin Waylock returns to the table

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

And now what, Gavin Waylock.

BASIL THINKOUP

Anyone for a go at some boiled crab?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I'll wait here.

These gentlemen will see me safe to my villa.
I might explain to them the Gavin Waylock mystery.

Ouch!

A black clad figure shoots a dart from a blowpipe - unseen - a faint puff. The Jacynth puts her hand to her neck where she has felt a slight sting - she slowly gently puts her head down on her arms; the pale hair spread loosely over the table

BASIL THINKOUP

You lucky Amaranth, not to worry about tomorrow.

THE ALBERT PONDICHERRY

She seems indisposed. Too much excitement.

THE DENIS LESTRANGE

Too much stimulant!

She'll be all right.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Are you sure she's well?

THE ALBERT PONDICHERRY

We'll take care of her.

Don't let us keep you from your meal.

Gavin and Basil exit. The Albert and the Denis regard the unmoving girl with growing alarm. Lights dim and fade to black as tabs close.

music no 3b - Entracte

ACT 2

Scene I

Morning - Esterhazy Square. Tables in front of Cafe Dalmatia, Cage of Shame at rear in which an old woman crouches. Set to one side is the building housing the Actuarian Computer, within which a counter where Vincent Rodenave and girl assistant attend machines. The public queue outside to check their slope on the wall screens.

music no 4 - Cafe Dalmatia and Actuarian

a middle-aged woman, who has been sitting at a table gets up , crosses the square, bypasses the queue outside, enters the Actuarian and approaches the counter. Her face is lined with worry.

VINCENT RODENAVE

How may I help you Madam?

GOLD FORTAM

I... I...It's about my husband.

His name is Egan Fortam.

I've been away three days at a seminar.

Today when I came home he was gone.

I thought maybe someone here could help me.

VINCENT RODENAVE

Your name Madam?

the clerk is sympathetic - fills in ticket

GOLD FORTAM

Gold Fortam.

VINCENT RODENAVE

Your phyle?

GOLD FORTAM

I'm Wedge. I'm a schoolteacher.

VINCENT RODENAVE

Your husband's phyle?

GOLD FORTAM

He is Brood.

VINCENT RODENAVE

His basic code?

GOLD FORTAM

IXD-995-AAC.

VINCENT RODENAVE

Just a moment Mrs. Fortam.

he drops the card into a slot - waits until it pops up again and inspects it gravely

Mrs Fortam. Your husband Egon Fortam,
was visited by his assassin at 8:39 pm Monday last.

all stare at her - she slowly absorbs this sad information, whispers and turns away

GOLD FORTAM

Thank you.

GF exits. GW enters and boldly marches up to the Actuarian counter

VINCENT RODENAVE

Yes Sir?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I wish to register in Brood

VINCENT RODENAVE

Very good Sir.

Please press your right thumb here.

A sharp buzz rings out. The girl assistant clerk looks towards the sound in disbelief, then sharply at Waylock, reading the message

GIRL ASSISTANT

Duplication!

VINCENT RODENAVE

Duplication!

Identical to print of The Grayven Warlock,
destemporized by assassins.

Seven years ago.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I am his clone.

VINCENT RODENAVE

Oh.... I see.. I see..

Everything is in order then, inasmuch as the prints are not those of a living man.

We seldom see clones...

My assistant will record your alpha brain waves for the televector flake production.

GIRL ASSISTANT

Please sit here. Put this on.

VINCENT RODENAVE

You understand the televector flake can be used to locate you,
but it's use is very strictly limited and controlled.

GIRL ASSISTANT

We have to anaesthetize you so your brain radiations are nice and clear.

This won't hurt.

A metal cap is placed over his head. The switch is pressed. Waylock's consciousness departs for a moment. A 'televector flake' is produced and Rodenave collects it.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Is that all?

GIRL ASSISTANT

That's all.

You are now in Brood.

I see you have a very high aptitude.

Good luck with your striving.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Thank you - I shall consider at which profession to strive.

I have an idea for a book that should be published.

I have been offered a contract already.

lights fade - time passes

Scene Two - Later that evening

Cafe Dalmatia and Actuarian- cafe tables in front of cafe, cage of shame in square outside - an old woman is crouching in the cage.

music number 5a 'cage of shame'

CUSTOMER ONE

Quite a sight isn't it? The old crow must have tried to trick the Actuarian.

CUSTOMER TWO

They come more often nowadays. When I was young the Cage was used no more than once per year. The world's changing. What with all these Weirds and Witherers and the new styles.

JM enters and sits

CUSTOMER ONE

The Weirds will be out tonight.

CUSTOMER TWO

Before there would never be such a display. The midnight walk is supposed to be a retreat from shame. Now with the Weirds it's disgusting. Monsters they make of themselves

CUSTOMER ONE

Stealing our lives that what she's doing.

GW enters. She rises and greets him. He is taken aback, hesitates then kisses her warmly - she extricates herself

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I've been waiting for you.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You are extraordinary. If you would register in Brood you would win to Amaranth on the strength of your beauty alone.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Let me disabuse you. Whatever your relationship to the previous Jacynth it does not extend to me. I am the new Jacynth!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Jacynth? But your name is not Jacynth!

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I am the best judge of that.

she moves a step further back, looks him over from head to toe

You are- Gavin Waylock?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Of course

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

You greatly resemble another - a man called The Grayven Warlock.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

The Grayven Warlock is no longer alive. I am his relict.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Indeed? I am The Jacynth Martin. A month ago my previous version was destemporized at Carneville. It seems that you escorted me during a certain part of the evening. We arived at the Pamphylia Bar together and were joined by Basil Thinkoup and then by The Albert Pondiferry and The Dennis Lestrangle. Immediately prior to my passing you and Basil Thinkoup departed. Is this all correct?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I must arrange my thoughts... Evidently your name is not Mira Martin and you are not glark.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I am The Jacynth Martin.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

And you were fatally taken?.. we saw you relax on the table. Apparently you were overcome by intoxicants. The Albert and the Dennis were attending you. We departed... sit down - let me serve you wine.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

No - I came here tonight only for information. Someone evil robbed me of my life. I would know his name and bring his depravity home to him.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Depravity is hardly the word. You stand before me - your blood flows - you radiate life and beauty.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

That is how a Monster must justify his crime. I must know how I was transited. I must know and I will know! Tell me!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

There is little to tell.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

You and I met - how did we meet? Did you not work at Carneville?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I see you have had a good gossip with Basil Thinkoup

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Yes. One month ago you strove at Carnevalle. Suddenly you gave over this occupation of seven years, you registered in Brood, you changed your life. Why?

You will not answer my questions?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

No - not under the pressure of your assumptions.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Then you will answer against your will. Mind search is the means to truth. I shall sign a warrant of complaint and the Inquisitor will conduct a mind search. You will have the usual two Tribunes to guard against irrelevant probing. If you are innocent I shall be liable for damages. If not then the world will know no more of Gavin Waylock.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Your questions are impertinent.

GW puts his hands on her shoulders

music number 5b 'So how simple it was'

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

So. How simple it was to find you.
How clear the guilt upon your face.
I won't have your hands upon me!

[she thrusts him off]

I too once registered in Brood.
Three times I drove upslope from Brood at the bottom.
Three times my lifeline sagged and sprawled
To the flat line of failure.

I broadened my field to study barbarian societies.
Many aspects of their culture I found repugnant,
The unconcern towards human suffering,
- I am an exquisitely sensitive woman -
I fought chronic nausea and extreme revulsion,
But I achieved Verge at the age of ninety two
And Amaranth at the age of one hundred and four....

During my long climb up-phyle
My sexual experience was curtailed and desultory.
When I emerged like a butterfly
As a beautiful girl of nineteen
I arrayed myself in skin tight silver
And went to Carnevalle:
Prompted from the urge and pride and the
Psychic thrust of my healthy body .

I must know how I was transited.
I must know and I will know.

she exits - GW remains seated in the shadows, then exits - fade to night lights - midnight - voices in the cafe hush - the old woman is released from the cage - a stone is thrown from the shadows, then a hail of them, she falls and scuttles off

music no 5c 'cage of shame' chorus

CHORUS

The Cage of Shame,
For those who aim
To steal our lives.
The midnight walk,
If they seek to trick

The Actuarian.

The Weirds will be out tonight.

CUSTOMER ONE

Mmm... she escaped.

CUSTOMER TWO

You regret it - you're as bad as the Weirds...
did you notice the number of stones
- they're increasing these Weirds.

CUSTOMER ONE

I don't know, I don't know...

fade to black - half stage tabs in

music no 5d Entracte

Scene 3

The next day - inside Cafe Dalmatia- cafe tables in front of cafe are busy. Waiters clear up last night's mess. Basil Thinkoup is sitting at a table and phoning GW

BASIL THINKOUP

I'm sorry Gavin, this is what he said... the publisher said - I'll quote it... 'It seems I acted precipitously in offering you a contract - apparently we are not in a position to publish a work of this nature after all'. I know ... I asked him what had gone wrong and he said 'certain matters have arisen and my superiors have vetoed this particular undertaking'... Then the clerk at the other company was most apologetic but definite - I'll quote again, 'I'm sorry but it seems I was mistaken - the place I mentioned is not open after all - my supervisor felt you were not suitable'.

It seems to me that some of those in high places are determined to frustrate you...

Why don't you try the palliatory? Yes the palliatory. There's lots of slope all the way up to Amaranth there for those who can improve the cure rate of the cattos. I have a new idea - if it works it will strike directly at the cause of the trouble!

I can help you get started. You'll have to start as an orderly working for my assistant Sara Caddigan. Not easy but you'll soon make slope and be promoted I'm sure.

lights fade - tabs in

ACT 3

Scene One - The Balliasse Palliatory

The Balliasse Palliatory - a long row of silent unmoving 'cattos' in hospital beds - swathed in white bandages and restraints- and Caddigan's office labelled 'Sara Caddigan - Psychotherapist'. Sara Caddigan has a visitor.

Music no 6a - Balliasse Palliatory

SARA CADDIGAN

Perhaps I can help you.
Are you seeking admittance to the palliatory.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Do I look crazy?
No I wish to see Didactor Benberry.
I am The Roland Zygmont, current chairman of the Amaranth Society.
The ever increasing number of mental cases is a blot on our society
and needs to be addressed.

SARA CADDIGAN

Indeed! Didactor Benberry is away today
- perhaps you would like to see Assistant Superintendant Basil Thinkoup?

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Thank you.

SARA CADDIGAN

You are perhaps aware - most informed persons are
- that psychology has not advanced as swiftly as other sciences.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Indeed. I suppose it attracts few first rate persons.

SARA CADDIGAN

a sound penetrates - a terrible screaming

Good old manic-catatonic.
Makes our living for us. (*weakly*) Haha.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Indeed.

SARA CADDIGAN

In all candour its not nice work. (draws back tabs to reveal cattos).
Let me show you our little empire.

shows the visitor around

Nice and tidy and quiet. These are all strong cattsos; they hardly ever stir, but every once in a while click. Something pops into their brain. You'll notice restless motions. Their mouths work, they convulse. That's the wingding stage.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Then they're violent?

SARA CADDIGAN

It depends on the individual. Sometimes they just lie there and writhe. Others leap to their feet and stride down the corridors like gods - destroying whatever they touch - or rather they would if it were not for the restraints. Notice these holes. The restraints spring up as soon as weight leaves the bed. The patient is unable to escape and can only tear up the sheets. After considerable experimentation we have developed sheets which tear with optimum sound and vibration. The patient works off much of his fury and presently we enter with a swaddle and bear him back to his bed.

terrible screaming

Up there is the shrieker ward - very hard on the orderlies. I have often thought that if one had an enemy, a sane and sensitive enemy, how exquisite a torture to confine him in the shrieker ward, where he could hear and not escape. He would join the shrieking in six hours.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Don't you use sedatives?

SARA CADDIGAN

We operate by the theory - whim if you will- of the psychiatrist in charge. In this ward it is Basil Thinkoup. His ideas are unconventional. He espouses the remarkable principle that whatever is established practice is incorrect. Basil is an experimenter. He tries anything, without qualm or moderation.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

With what results?

SARA CADDIGAN

The patients are none the worse.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Good heavens ... those faces..are they conscious? Do they think? Do they feel?

SARA CADDIGAN

They are alive. At some level their mind is functioning... ahh here is Basil Thinkoup

Thinkoup enters

Here is The Roland Zygmont, the chairman of the Amaranth Society... to enquire of our progress in curing the cattsos. I am sure Basil Thinkoup will be able to enlighten you.

Caddigan sniffs with disdain and exits

BASIL THINKOUP

Professional jealousy at work. Did you notice? They know I'm progressing and it irks them

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

I imagine it would.

BASIL THINKOUP

Sara Caddigan no doubt has been condemning my practices right?

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Not exactly. She says you are unconventional; and it disturbs her.

BASIL THINKOUP

I have no misgivings. Our society is the most stable structure in human history, and shows no tendency to change. This being the case we can expect our typical ailment, the catatonic-manic syndrome, to continue its advance. We must attack it vigorously, with the gloves off. They say I use the patients as guineapigs. Not so. I do try various systems of therapy as they occur to me.

fade to black brief music interlude as time passes - then lights up as GW enters - SC is at her desk

Scene Two - Later

Music no 6b

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I'd like to see Mr Basil Thinkoup please.
I wish to apply to strive at the palliatory

SARA CADDIGAN

Basil's in conference.
Take a seat, he'll be out in a few minutes.
Fill in this form.
It's an application for the position of orderly...
Just fill it out there's a good chap....
its not nice work I'm afraid ...
you will be required to wash, air, force feed
and attend to the bodily functions of the patients...
at any time one may be suddenly keyed into a violent wingding....
hmm your life seems to be one long question mark.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Were you an orderly?

SARA CADDIGAN

No I'm a graduate of the college of psychiatrics,
therefore I was able to bypass the menial jobs

BT enters

BASIL THINKOUP

Gavin Ah Gavin.

Welcome to the palliatory. Don't let Sara put you off with her mockery. She's really a smart enough girl.

SARA CADDIGAN

I think I'll be seeing to my lunch.

exits

BASIL THINKOUP

Come along. I'll show you the cafeteria; we'll have a good meal and see what's to be done. Today it will be lettuce, pickled shad and crackers for me, a nice light lunch.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

But what about the patients?

BASIL THINKOUP

What about them indeed? Where can they go? What harm can befall them? While catto they recline as if frozen; if they go wingding - what then? The bars hold them; then they tear up the sheets, they spend themselves and sleep once more.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I suppose that's the practical attitude.

BASIL THINKOUP

And eminently sensible.

they exit fade to black - brief music interlude - a sudden storm has blown in from the mountains; ragged clouds fly through the sky; black rain-brooms sweep the river; trees in the park jerk to sudden gusts of wind-then lights up as BT and SC enter

Scene Three - Some days later

Music no 6c

BASIL THINKOUP

Sara - it's a hard thing to say - but you're the only person in the palliatory I have faith in. (laughs)
Everyone else considers me a lunatic. I'm on my own.

SARA CADDIGAN

Today everyone is on their own.

BASIL THINKOUP

You are right

Well - what do you say?

SARA CADDIGAN

I'll be glad for the opportunity to help you.

BASIL THINKOUP

Good! I want to try a new therapy.
On Maximilian Hertzog here, one of our choicest specimens.

They swing out the bed of Maximilian Hertzog and connect him to a drip with indicator meters for heart rate and drip rate

As a catto he's immobile,
when he goes wingding, he's awesome.
This time I've got the answer
- a specific cure for the psychosis.

Basil Thinkoup fits up a bottle filled with orange liquid to the drip

BASIL THINKOUP

Here it is - anti-heptant.
It acts like an eraser cancelling whatever memory circuits are active.

A memory eraser.

We stimulate him to go wingding with nothing in his mind
except his obstacle and his troubles.

We administer anti-heptant.

Whisk.

The heptant of the malevolent thought processes is completely extirpated;
the man is sane!

SARA CADDIGAN

As simple as that.

BASIL THINKOUP

Simple and elegant.

Now Sara you handle the swaddle and meter the anti-heptant.

Injects a hypo

Maximilian Hertzog you are a failure.
A failure.

the heart rate indicator shows fluctuating - then climbing numbers

SARA CADDIGAN

His heart rate is approaching normal.

If we're not careful he..

BASIL THINKOUP

- anti-heptant Sara!

You've made mistakes!

You've thrown your life a way!

You studied the wrong techniques! - antiheptant!
and you have nothing before you except the ride in the black car.

Wake up!

SARA CADDIGAN

Careful - he's ready to go wingding.

More?

BASIL THINKOUP

No we don't want to blot out too much.

MAXIMILLAN HERTZOG

(calmly sits up) Blot out too much what?

What is all this?

Maximilian Herzog grabs his attachments, catheter drips etc

BASIL THINKOUP

Please don't touch them . They are a necessary part of the treatment

MAXIMILLAN HERTZOG

Treatment for what? I feel fine. Just what's wrong with me? My name is.....

BASIL THINKOUP

Your name is Maximilian Hertzog.

MAXIMILLAN HERTZOG

Ah yes it is. Where am I?

BASIL THINKOUP

You are in the palliatory - we are taking care of you.

MAXIMILLAN HERTZOG

(hoarse screaming) Is that it - I'm a catto? Let me out of here.....out I'm as sane as anyone Aargh.....

Maximilian Herzog goes beserk. Sara Caddigan drops the swaddle Basil Thinkoup administers hypo-spray.
Maximilian Herzog collapses inert

SARA CADDIGAN

The process certainly shows promise.

BASIL THINKOUP

Sara -if you do not wish to aide me I shall use Gavin Waylock as my assistant.
I'm sure he will be eager to help.

Scene 4

fade to black - time passes -lights up GW comes on - steals anti-heptant - replacing it with water- writes himself a note - then reads it aloud

Music no 6d

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I am to read this message after a mind read which will soon occur.
My name is Gavin Waylock.
I have just erased the memory of an experience from my mind
- perhaps I have forgotten other things.

Scene Five - The Mind Read Facility

A narrow room with whitewashed walls - centre is a padded dentist type chair with wires and attachments supervised by a preceptress. An Inquisitor and two Tribunes stand by the chair.

Music no 7 - Mind read Music

INQUISITOR, TRIBUNES

Gavin Waylock you are to be questioned regarding the passing of The Jacynth Martin and your activities during that period.
Do you have any objection?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You say during that period.
I think this is too vague.
You may question me as to my activities at the exact time the passing occurred;
this I believe is sufficient for your needs.

INQUISITOR, TRIBUNES

We must be allowed a certain degree of leeway.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

If I am guilty I will know the exact instant of the crime.
If I am innocent it will serve no purpose to intrude upon my privacy.

INQUISITOR

But sir, we are public servants, sworn to discretion.
Surely there is nothing in your life you would have concealed?

GW turns to tribunes

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You have heard my stipulation.
Will you protect me accordingly?

TRIBUNE 1

We will allow only questions bearing upon the three minutes
before and after the passing.

TRIBUNE 2

This is the usual latitude.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Very well. You may proceed.

GW settles back into the chair. The preceptress connects a pair of padded head-contacts and wields a hypospray

INQUISITOR

Watch the light.. merely relax...
it will soon be over.

GW slumps unconscious - JM enters, moves the preceptress gently aside and stands over GW - the Inquisitor begins the inquisition - fade out - music as time passes - then fade up the lights as it ends - GW awakes

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Why has this woman been allowed in here? You have done me a serious wrong! I shall apply for redress. None of you will escape!

TRIBUNE ONE

(wearily) The presence of this woman is irregular. It is in poor taste. However it is not illegal. The Jacynth is present because she herself is an assassin and therefore entitled. A recent enrollee I might add.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

(a cold smile) Yes. I am investigating my own transition. Some horrible creature did his worst upon me. I am anxious to learn who he may be.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Your preoccupation seems morbid and unnatural, if I may say so.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Perhaps. But I do not plan to give it up

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Have you made any progress?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

So I believed - until we encountered your peculiarly porous memory.

INQUISITOR

(clears his throat) You have no conscious information to volunteer?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

How could I? I know nothing about the crime.

INQUISITOR

We have established that. Your mind is devoid of incident during the critical period. Thank you Mr. Waylock.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

(bows to the tribunes) Thank you for your help.

TRIBUNE ONE

It is our duty Mr. Waylock.

Gavin Waylock goes to exit The Jacynth Martin catches up with him - they have a private conversation

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

How you have contrived it I don't know. I intend to learn the truth. In the meantime I will see you derive no benefit from your crimes.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You are a strange creature.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I am an ordinary person with strong feelings.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I likewise have strong feelings.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

What do you intend to imply.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Only that a contest between us might bring ill consequences.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

(laughs) You are more vulnerable than I.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

(beat) And correspondingly more reckless.

GW exits - fade to black and tabs in as JM stares after him

Scene Six - Later in the Balliase Palliatory

Sara Caddigan is in the ward with Basil Thinkoup working over Maximilian Hertzog's bed- a bottle of orange anti-heptant is fixed up on a drip

Music no 8 - Balliase Wingding

SARA CADDIGAN

There's a rumour going round the palliatory.

They are saying your days are numbered.

You are to be discharged on grounds of professional incompetence.

BASIL THINKOUP

Hah. I can't stop now.
We're on the verge of a great advance.
If we let ourselves be harassed by trifles we're lost.
Let's go to work.

They work on MH injecting with the orange anti-heptant

BASIL THINKOUP

More, more.
What the devil's wrong with it?

SARA CADDIGAN

The wrong type of reactant
- or perhaps it's old?

BASIL THINKOUP

I can't understand it.
It was accurate yesterday
- this is the identical setup.
Well we must do our best.
Wake up Maximilian Hertzog.
You are cured.
Today we discharge you from the palliatory.
Awake!

MH starts up - a guttural sound come from his throat - he emits a bloodcurdling scream of rage

MAXIMILLAN HERTZOG

I am Hertzog the killer,
Maximilian Hertzog!

BT leaps back and cowers against a wall, SC is seized, screams with terror - has her neck broken and is flung to the floor - GW rushes in and grabs a hypo-spray, attempting to jab MH - Didactor Benberry and several nurses rush in - DB is seized and flung dead on the floor, one nurse is straddled, held by the hair and her neck playfully manipulated - all cower frozen

Let me get my hands on you,
I'll tear you apart!
I'll kill the whole mortal world!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Why don't you co-operate,
then you'll be set free..

MAXIMILLAN HERTZOG

You may co-operate
- by voiding up your life!

GW is seized but somehow applies the hypo-spray and Hertzog collapses inert. GW leans against a wall. More orderlies arrive and stare at the dead bodies littering the floor - black out

INTERVAL

ACT 4

Scene One - The Pan-Arts Union Hall

- reception cocktail party for the exhibition of *The Aquefacts of Renata Biebursson*: large sculptures of congealed water set on pedestals. A chattering crowd is admiring the exhibits.

Tab's open showing front of stage with spotlight

Music no 9 - Acqua sculpture

RENATA BIEBURSSON

After the shambles at the Palliatory Basil Thinkoup was dismissed.
Gavin Waylock was at first acclaimed for his unexampled bravery.

Then he was suddenly dismissed
- they told him that he was unqualified.

His applications to other establishments met with the mantra
'my superiors have vetoed this appointment'.
He was apparently blacklisted from any job other than a menial employment
with no hope of advancement...

An exhibition of my art was held at the Pan-Arts Union Hall.
A splendid occasion.

The famous mime The Anastasia Fancourt was to give a performance.
Her close friend, The Jacynth Martin, had apparently invited Gavin Waylock.
He did come - but in disguise.

CHORUS

This acqua sculpture is like
music from the void.
The vastness of space dazzles.
What is not implies what is.

GW enters in disguise - he sees JM talking to AF and overhears their conversation

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

(petulant) This Vincent - will he come? Will he come and bring me what I want?

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

Of course - the ridiculous creature dotes on me.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Even to this extent?
The theft of televector flakes is criminal...
but Gavin Waylock's flake will reveal his location and that of his clones...
I shall be able to see if he is the Grayven Warlock or not..
this criminal deed will serve a worthy cause.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

Vincent will do anything I ask.

Here he is now.

VR enters looking for AF

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Perhaps he should not see us together.

They separate - RB is talking to an admiring crowd - VR joins the crowd

CHORUS

We of Clarges are not space travellers
The void is a mouth crying to be filled
Worlds without number exist through the void

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Allow me to introduce myself. I am The Olaf Maybrow, the Chairman of the Pan-Arts Union. It puzzles me - the use of congealed water - How do you form the water into these patterns?

RENATA BIEBURSSON

No problem with the natural advantages that are mine. I am a space captain - I work where the forces of gravity have no effect, where the whole of time is mine for contemplation.

THE OLAF MAYBROW

But I should think the vastness of space would daze rather than stimulate you.

RENATA BIEBURSSON

The void is a mouth crying to be filled, a blank mind aching for thought, a cavity desperate for shape.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Where did your last voyage take you Ms Biebursson?

RENATA BIEBURSSON

Sirius and the Dog planets.

VINCENT RODENAVE

Ah - then you were aboard the Star Endeavour. I've never spoken with a space traveller before. From what I have read it appears that worlds without number exist throughout the void?

RENATA BIEBURSSON

Worlds without number.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Surely there are worlds where men may walk abroad and live?

RENATA BIEBURSSON

I have seen such worlds.

THE OLAF MAYBROW

We of Clarges are not space travellers by instinct.

RB is swept away by other eager admirers - VR and GW are left

VINCENT RODENAVE

I strive at the Actuarian. I have just reached Third. Do I recall your enlisting there recently?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Yes. I am considering transferring my striving to the Actuarian.

VINCENT RODENAVE

You'll make no slope there. We are a prosaic lot: we face no challenges.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You seem to have done well.

VINCENT RODENAVE

The technical area is different. I am an expert in televector flakes. Ah there she is now!

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

(kittenish) Good evening Vincent

VINCENT RODENAVE

I have that for which you asked. I secured it at no small risk.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

Excellent Vincent. Come to my dressing room after the performance.

she touches him on the arm with a quick intimacy - then slips away - GW takes VR to one side in an alcove

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Give it to me!

VINCENT RODENAVE

What!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You carry something intended for The Anastasia which concerns me. I want to see it

VINCENT RODENAVE

You are mistaken

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Give it to me I said!

GW strongarms VR , opening his jacket and taking the televector flake

These are televector flakes!... this is one of me...and it shows my location... and that of my clones.... Ah I begin to see. Do you realise what can happen to you if I choose to lay charges?

VINCENT RODENAVE

A harmless joke- a matter of curiosity.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Harmless! When you interfere with my life - when even the assassins may not use televection?

VINCENT RODENAVE

If you are done give them to me.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Are you mad?

VINCENT RODENAVE

After all I only obtained these at the behest of The Anastasia. You exaggerate the seriousness of the matter.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You exaggerate your distance from the cage of shame.

VINCENT RODENAVE

(pause) ...What do you want?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You were able to remove one televector flake. I want others. Those of all the Amaranth.

VR writhes, sweats and hesitates

VINCENT RODENAVE

(hollowly) I have no choice in the matter.

he walks away - GW removes his disguise - JM sees him at once - their eyes meet and the air between them tingles with the challenge - she indicates someone standing behind GW

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Here is someone you must meet. The Anastasia's current lover. One of them at least.

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

(bristling) The Grayven Warlock!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

My name is Gavin Waylock.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

Gavin claims to be the relict of the Grayven Warlock current lover.

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

(staring closely) Possible, possible indeed. But you are no relict. You are The Grayven Warlock and the fact that you escaped your just deserts is an outrage. Cannot something be done? When the assassins take a man they should extirpate all of him - remove his taint from Clarges!

AM stalks off

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

He is more irascible than usual tonight. Jealousy eats at him.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Did you invite me here tonight to meet The Abel?

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

You are perceptive. Yes I wanted to witness the meeting. At Carnevalle I recognised you - you feared I would report you to the assassins before your seven years were up. You were guilty of an unspeakable crime and you duplicated it at Carnevalle.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You are obsessed. The mind search refuted your belief and still you cling to it.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

I am not a simpleton Gavin Waylock.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Even if I were guilty where is the crime. Neither you nor The Abel suffered more than minor inconvenience.

music no 10 aria and duet - 'If extinguishing life is a crime'

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

The crime is abstract and fundamental.
The innate depravity of extinguishing life!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

If extinguishing life is a crime

Then we are all guilty
Except the glarks.
One Amaranth per two thousand
Is the decreed ratio.
When you were received into the Amaranth Society
Two thousand black wagons went forth on their mission,
Two thousand doors opened,
Two thousand despairing creatures left their homes...

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

(with a rasp as harsh as an untuned violin)

This is no guilt of mine. Everyone strives alike.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

It is simple dog eat dog.
You have blinded yourself - not only you but all of us.
If we faced the facts of our existence
Our palliatives would be less crowded.

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Bravo! An unorthodox view, a fallacious premise developed with great vigour and precision.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Thank you.

GW inclines his head and disappears into the crowd. Maybrow claps his hands for silence and addresses the crowd who turn to face the stage on a stage

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Friends of art, fellow patrons!
Tonight the most delightful performer in all history has agreed to entertain us.
I refer of course to The Anastasia Fancourt.
Tonight she takes us behind the facade of the Apparent
and unveils the Actual.

Several fragile white figures comes out of dark wings - so begins the dance

music no 11 - ballet

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

There is a world I seldom speak of,
Fresh and beautiful,
A primeval garden.
It is mine.

No one else claims it.
This virgin earth,
With its ice-caps, continents and oceans,
Its forests, deserts, rivers, beaches and mountains
Mine.
This world I chanced upon once,
As one might see a beloved face in a crowd.
I have lost it.
Perhaps I will never find it again.

dancers perform again - they bow to applause - then stage on stage goes black - lights dim - tabs in

Scene 2

The Anastasia's dressing room after the performance

music no 12 Anastasia Dressing Room Scena

The Anastasia enters the dressing room and sits, removing her makeup, she hears a sound and RB is revealed to have been in the room in a corner

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

Renata Biebursson, I am honoured.

RENATA BIEBURSSON

No, the honour, the presumption I should say, is mine.
I will not apologize, a spacefarer feels she is above convention.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

(laughs coquettishly) I might agree if I knew what convention you had in mind.

RENATA BIEBURSSON

I am not a person who speaks well.
My thoughts come in images.
For days, for weeks, for months
I keep watch.
I maintain the ship
While the scientists sleep in the cells.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

It must be very lonely.

RENATA BIEBURSSON

I have my work.
I have my sculpture.
And I have music.
Tonight I watch you.
Only in my music do I find the eloquence, the subtlety...

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

I understand completely...
You are a magnificent woman...
why are you here?

RENATA BIEBURSSON

I have come to ask you to go with me.
Into space.

I would have you live with me,
in the black and star-coloured sky.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

I am as craven as the rest.
I could not leave my clones;
Our empathy would fail.

I dare not take them along -
There is too much risk of
Total annihilation..
So I am fettered
By my own freedom.

A clatter, a thud of feet, a harsh voice

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

I must say, this is a pretty scene. Hobnobbing with this scarecrow - embracing her!

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

Abel, at last you overreach yourself!

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

Bah! My bluntness is less nauseating than your nymphiasis!

RENATA BIEBURSSON

I am afraid I have brought dissention to your evening.

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

Don't inflate yourself. You and your gender.

another appears at the door

VINCENT RODENAVE

If I might have a word with you Anastasia?

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

Another one!

VINCENT RODENAVE

You are offensive sir!

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

No matter. What do you do here?

VINCENT RODENAVE

I can see no basis for your interest.

The Abel strides forward. VR stands his ground. AF steps between them

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

You cockerels! This must stop!

Abel will you go?

All of you leave me!

RB bows with grace and leaves

VINCENT RODENAVE

Perhaps I could see you later. I must explain.

I can not provide that item you wanted.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

Not tonight Vincent.

I desperately want to rest.

VR hesitates - then leaves

Now Abel. I must dress.

AM stands like a bull

THE ABEL MANDEVILLE

I want words with you.

THE ANASTASIA FANCOURT

I want none with you. (voice rises suddenly - with contempt)

Do you understand me Abel?

I am finished with you!

Finally - completely!

Now leave me!

AF returns to her dressing table and sits, taking off her makeup - AM stalks up behind her and hits her over the head with a heavy instrument. She falls dead as blood pools on floor - blackout tabs in

ACT 5

Scene 1

The Prytaneon - the 229th conclave of the Society of Amaranth- 92 percent of the society are present- each has a voting indicator light in front of them- the red of vigorous dissent, the orange of disapproval, the yellow of neutrality, the green of approval or the blue of vehement approbation. Any member addressing the society is depicted on a large central screen.

Prytaneon music no 13

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

I will waste no time on introductory flourishes.

We meet tonight to discuss the increasing frequency of violent destemporization of one Amaranth by another

- The Abel Mandeville has destemporized The Anastasia Fancourt and himself been destemporized by an unknown hand.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

The quenching of life is a fundamental evil:
we must react savagely against any transgressor.

Let me list the violent destemporizations
for which Gavin Waylock appears to be responsible:

The Abel Mandeville, myself, Seth Caddigan, Didactor Benberry
and possibly once again The Abel Mandeville.

These are events known to us - doubtless there have been others....

Evil follows Waylock.

I have studied Waylock. He is a Monster.

His morals are those of the Jurassic swamp.

He ignores our laws.

Like a virus molecule he will contaminate our entire community.

His goal is Amaranth.

If we felt so inclined we could ignore the law of Clarges
and give him what he wants.
What is your will on this?

twinkles of colour - the central indicator glows red

THE ASSEMBLED AMARANTH

Evil follows Waylock.
He is a Monster.
He ignores our laws.

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

But if we don't surrender I warn you we must fight this man.
He is a physical threat to all of us.
We must extinguish him!

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

I merely note that Waylock was subject to extreme provocation,
and that he fought back.
Beyond question he is a clever rogue:
he seems to have outwitted the assassins and then laid low for seven years;
then registered in Brood
with the intention of making the climb once again to Amaranth.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

And where is the wrong in that?

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Who spoke?

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Seven years ago I was relinquished to the assassins
- convicted of a crime of which I was only technically guilty.
By good fortune I am here to protest.
I petition this conclave to rescind the order of arrest,
to acknowledge the mistake and declare me once more
a member of the Amaranth Society in good standing.

THE ASSEMBLED AMARANTH

You are a Monster. We will never submit.

twinkles of colour - the central indicator glows red

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I warn you: I am not helpless.
I have been victimized once.
I spent years in misery.
I will act with the same ruthlessness that you have shown me.

THE ASSEMBLED AMARANTH

We will not be hectorred by you.
We will not submit to extortion.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

You dealt me the harshest possible penalty for a nominal offence .
The Abel Mandeville extinguished two souls
- but he survives unscathed in his clones.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

I can only say The Grayven should have guarded himself until his clones were ready.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Is not each of your clones the identity of you - an individual but not at liberty?

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Each clone is an individual (not at liberty but sequestered in stasis)
- until he is invested with the legal identity of the proto Amaranth,
whence he becomes the Amaranth.

twinkles of colour - the central indicator glows blue

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I can liberate these individuals....your clones...
In fact 400 of you have had their clones liberated at this moment for I anticipated your stubbornness.
Tomorrow 400 more of you will undergo the same
- now will you give me my right?

gasps of shock come from the Amaranth - faces jerk and bob as they consult their phones, many rush away in
panic to save their clones

THE ASSEMBLED AMARANTH

It is true. They are breaking open the cells
- all the clones are cast into the world - out of empathy!
But we can not break the laws of Clarges

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I ask you to break no laws.
I am Amaranth.
I wish recognition for my status.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

We must have time. I can not speak for the Society.

GAVIN WAYLOCK

I can give you no time. You must decide now!

THE ASSEMBLED AMARANTH

Let the Society vote.

panic continues - twinkles of colour - the central indicator glows blue/green

You have won.....
we pledge you now brother Amaranth....

JM appears behind Waylock - she wears a ghastly smile, her eyes wide and staring - a chattering sound is heard -
Gavin Waylock falls dead

THE JACYNTH MARTIN

You spoke of justice.
It has now been done.
Now I am tainted with the blood of the Monster.
You will see no more of me.

she kills herself and falls dead - screams and pandemonium in the Prytaneon

ACT 6

Scene 1

Street scene with newspaper stand and headlines.

Music no 14

RENATA BIEBURSSON

Of course that was not the end of Gavin Waylock.
As The Grayven Warlock he had been Amaranth and he had had seven years to create his clones
and empathise them till they were his clones.
The new Waylock soon emerged
- knowing nothing of these events other than what he read in the newspapers.

Gavin Waylock walks innocently across upstage, regards headlines on newstand - 1062 SURROGATES
RELEASED , buys newspaper and exits

But the consequences of his release of the clones of 400 Amaranth
- some 1762 in all
- had a profound and catastrophic effect on Clarges.

A newsboy brings the latest edition and changes the headline

RELEASED SURROGATES - DECLARED AMARANTH

Another change of headline - 500,000 LOSE 4 MONTHS OF LIFE

The Amaranth Society decreed that all the released clones were Amaranth.

The Actuarian computer calculated the balance on society
- the ratio of Amaranth to Brood was 2000 to one
- life for over 3 and a half million members of Brood was suddenly considerably foreshortened

Two black clad assassins enter and exit escorting GOLD FORTAM She goes meekly with them.

- there was a spate of new instructions to the assassins.

Two black clad assassins enter and escort the news seller off. She goes meekly.

Some of those on the verge of breaking through into a higher phyle resisted

BASIL THINKOUP enters escorted by two black clad assassins

- violently.

He produces a weapon - threatens them - they release him - he runs off

They pursue him

Reaction to the implications was instantaneous.

Thousands discarded all inhibition and sense of responsibility.
Why strive - why not give up?
The population of Clarges boiled into the streets.

Scene Two

lights dim and come up again - the two chiefs of the Amaranth Society appear front of stage - crowd noises off

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Roland - have you seen it - what shall we do?

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

There is a great crowd in the street - is this what you refer to?

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Crowd! It's a mob! A convulsion!

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

But why - what's the occasion?

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Haven't you seen the news?

The Roland consults his news screen

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Great Eternal Principle!

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Exactly - what shall we do?

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

I suppose something must be done.

THE OLAF MAYBROW

So it would seem.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

In some terrible respect our civilization has failed.

THE OLAF MAYBROW

We can't talk failure now. Someone must issue a statement. Someone must take charge.

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

But I can't contradict the Actuarian. No more can I consign 1762 Amaranth to Brood.

music no 15 - give us our lives

bass rumble from barely audible large angry mob offstage - low chant 'Give us our lives'

THE OLAF MAYBROW

Listen to them. Hear how they roar!

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Very well I shall go before them - I shall counsel reason patience.....

they exit - lights dim - tabs open on scene 3

Scene Three

The plaza before the Actuarian is packed dense with bodies. Faces shine from drab clothing like confetti on dark water- restless motion, throaty rumbles. .

THE MOB

Give us our lives

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT enters accompanied by THE OLAF MAYBROW.

THE ROLAND climbs on chair to address the crowd

THE ROLAND ZYGMONT

Good citizens of Clarges..

I counsel patience..return to your homes.. attend to your strivings...

THE OLAF MAYBROW

I counsel patience..return to your homes.. attend to your strivings...

THE MOB

The Roland!

It's The Roland Zygmont of the Society

Give us our lives

The mob rolls forward, fingers grasping and groping.

Give us our lives

The Olaf flees. The Roland's life ends.

Give us our lives

VINCENT RODENAVE appears before the Actuarian

VINCENT RODENAVE

What is this madness? Are you barbarians, destroying property and ignoring the laws of Clarges?

The mob tear apart RODENAVE and then the Actuarian.

Give us our lives

Power crackles, smoke and flames rise. The great mechanism dies as a man dies when his brain is wounded.

BIEBURSSON and WAYLOCK flee before the mob, then turn and address them.

THE MOB

Our lives, truncated, wasted .

We avenge our lives.

Give us Gavin Waylock!

Give us Gavin Waylock!

GAVIN WAYLOCK

Friends - What I have done is vast - I have broken the system - we are free.

WAYLOCK has succeeded in calming the mob - who now listen attentively

The Actuarian is demolished, the records are lost, each is like his neighbour.
How will we use our freedom?
We can rebuild the Actuarian and imprison ourselves like flies in a web
or we can break out into a new phase of history where life is for all -
not just one in two thousand!

RENATA BIEBURSSON

Come Waylock!

The pair distance themselves from the mob as the spaceport is reached - lights change

The world is too small for those with eternal life.
Where is living space?
Out among the stars!

The pair climb the gantry steps to the spaceship

THE MOB

Flies in a web
Life is for all
He has broken the system
We are free.

The pair exit as the gantry closes The ship is ready to depart.

THE MOB

Out among the stars.

The Mob starts back Some fall on knees.

The spaceship ship takes off - pillar of blue flame

End of the Opera