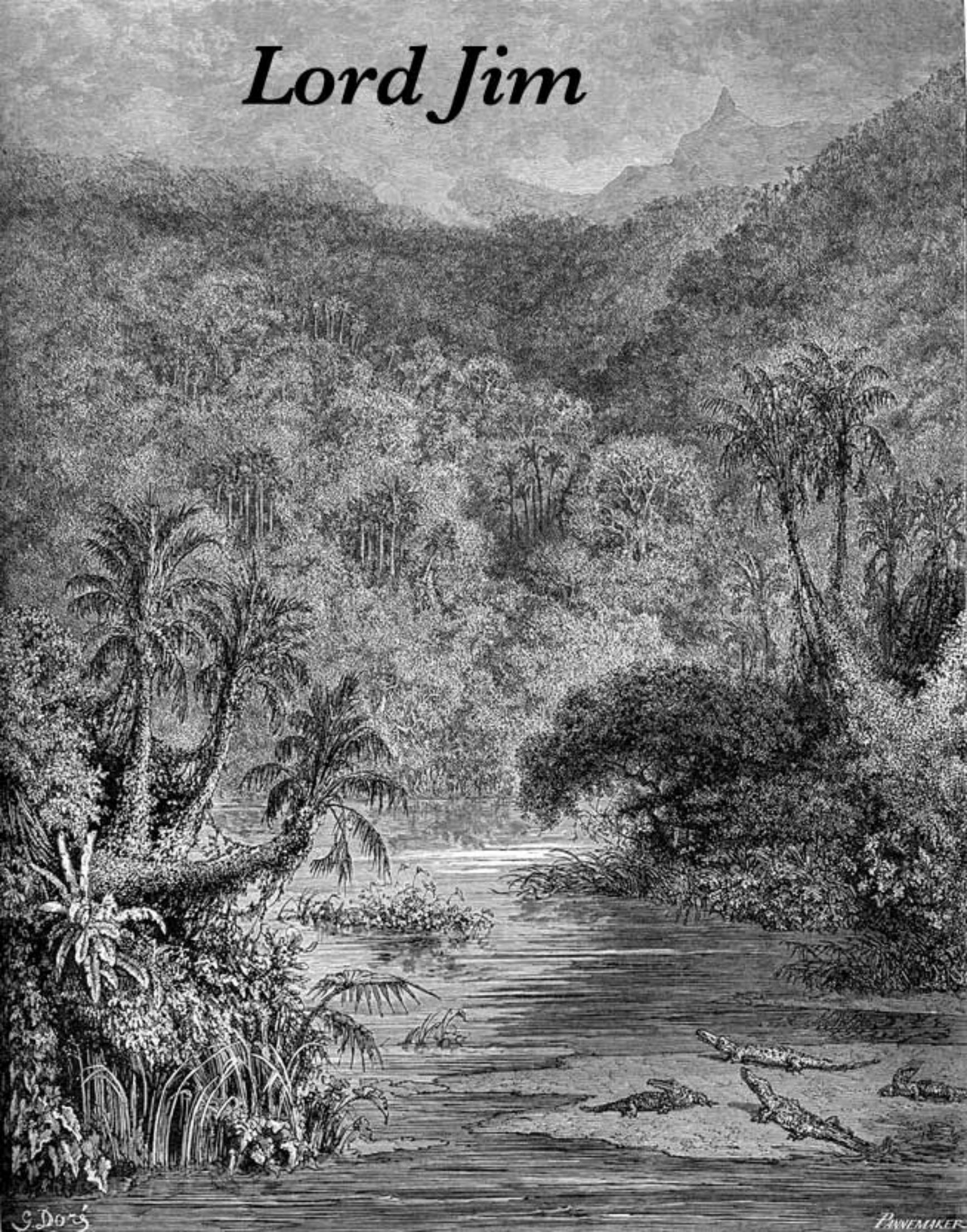


Lord Jim



Lord Jim

dramatization of the novel by Joseph Conrad

by Christian Lanciai (2008)

The Characters:

Jim
Steward
Jones, mate
George, chief
Captain Brierly
Captain of *Avondale*
His first mate
An examiner
A clerk
Captain Marlow
Engstrom
Schomberg
Johnny, Irishman
Doctor Stein
Rajah Allang
Doramin
Dain Waris, his son
Cornelius
Jewel
A scout
Gentleman Brown, pirate
Tamb'Itam
Dain Waris' mother

Court audience, sailors, Malaysians and pirates.

The action takes place in South East Asia around 1900.

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Lord Jim

Act I scene 1. At sea

Steward Have you ever seen a calmer sea?

Jim It feels like the safest harbour in the world. Nothing of the world's unrest could reach us here. We are secure of everything.

Steward And still it conceals the most horrible abyss in the world where only death is waiting to take care of us.

Jim But we are floating above it. Man controls it. The sea in all its overwhelming vastness and infinity can only become threatening when there is a storm on.

Steward It's the dead silence of it that always appals me.

Mate (passing by) Is everything all right?

Jim Everything is calm, mate. We have never been safer.

Mate Yes, it looks like a safe and calm journey. There are no storms in sight and not even any bad weather. We'll just cross safely straight over the ocean, which is good luck indeed considering our delicate cargo.

Steward Delicate? Hardly more delicate than cattle.

Mate No, steward, they are people, and eight hundred of them, whom we are to bring safely across the entire Indian Ocean, the most capricious sea in the world.

Jim Although our vessel is old and unsafe, mate, it's going nicely and even with good speed.

Steward No, mate, you can't call Muslims people. They are poor foolish pilgrims who in their stupidity are not even aware that they are risking their lives for the sake of an extravagant journey to Mecca, a worthless dump of slum out in the desert. It's not eight hundred people but eight hundred victims to fanaticism and superstition. They probably waged all they had to be able to make this one and only journey of their lives, a meaningless journey that only will ruin them. I can't think of them as people.

Jim None the less we are responsible for eight hundred souls.

Mate That's what I mean. (*the engineer comes forth*) What are you doing up here, chief? Do you think the machines can manage by themselves?

Chief Of course. They always do. It's just junk that needs human aid to get started and to be shut off. The rest it will all manage by itself automatically.

Mate Where did you get your liquor, chief?

Chief (slightly inebriated) Ask our friend the steward. He will probably offer you a glass as well, if you plead gently.

Steward It's my job to keep the crew happy and alert. If they get stuck in the doldrums they become careless and worthless.

Chief Right'o, steward! You should offer the captain a schnaps as well.

Steward It's already done. He was not happy with the food.

Jim Is he alone on the bridge?

Steward He will manage, Jim. It's just plain open sea. He can't lose the course.
*(a sudden jolt. The steward falls, and also the chief loses his foothold.
 Jim and the mate must bear off not to fall.)*

Mate What was that?
Chief We hit something.
Steward Nothing serious. Just some log or stone.
Jim There are no rocks out here. It was probably a floating wreck.
Steward But we passed it over easily.
Mate How is it, chief?
Chief I must have broken my arm.
Mate Was it such a hard blow?
Jim It must have been felt all over the ship, but the pilgrims keep on quietly sleeping.
Captain (enters) Do you have any idea what we might have collided with?
Mate Jim thinks it was a wreck.
Jim It was just a short hit. We probably got across it without any damages.
Captain This is an old rusty vessel with many loose bolts. We had better make sure. Go afore, Jim, and see if the bulkheads are intact. But do it quietly, and don't wake anyone up. It's in the middle of the night, and only we have kept awake. The last thing we want is a general panic among our eight hundred third class passengers.
Jim Yes, captain.
Mate What do you think, captain? Could there have been any damage?
Steward Never.
Captain We'll hear when Jim comes back. How is it, chief? Did you bust your arm?
Chief Damn it! Just a small jolt, and the entire arm is out of order!
Steward Come with me, and we'll set it straight.
Chief It hurts like hell. You should give me some sedative as well.
Steward Of course. *(helps the chief out)*
Mate Whatever it was it wasn't our fault. It must have been hidden under water, and we couldn't have seen it.
Captain Exactly. Here is Jim. What does the bulk say, Jim?
Jim I am afraid, captain, that we are leaking. The bulkhead afore is half way filled with water, and the crack might widen.
Mate Do you mean that we are sinking?
Jim Not yet, but the risk is imminent, but we have plenty of time.
Mate What do you mean? Do we have to abandon ship?
Jim If it gets worse, yes, then we have no choice.
Mate Are you aware that we have eight hundred passengers that we can't bring along?
Jim Then we'll just have to stay here and hope for another ship coming by to salvage us. We do have pumps and can send signals of distress.

Captain No rockets or distress-guns. The last thing we want is to frighten the pilgrims.

Mate What is your command, captain?

Captain Damn it! An awkward situation was the very last thing we needed! A rotten vessel, eight hundred passengers of conscience, and we crack up in the middle of the ocean. I took this job because it was easy enough and paid for, you wouldn't have to make an effort, and then this happens! Damn it!

Mate Is that all you can say, captain?

Captain Can you say anything else?

Mate We must abandon ship or stay on and risk foundering with all on board. That's our only options.

Captain What do you say, Jim?

Jim We can't just abandon eight hundred passengers on a sinking ship.

Captain That's what I mean. We couldn't have happened to a worse fix.

Mate Captain, they are all asleep. We could calmly leave the ship without anyone noticing it. It must perish anyway. If it sinks we are unaccountable, since no one except us knew what happened.

Captain You are stealing my own thoughts. But I am afraid that we five whites on board would not be quite agreed about it. Jim here, for example, is far too honest to be able to compromise with his own conscience.

Mate (watches Jim) Never mind Jim. Let him stay on board if he wants to and perish with the Muslims.

Captain Jim, walk another round and examine the situation. If we must go down we have no choice, and Jim may follow us or stay on board with the drowning mass if he chooses. If on the other hand the ship will make it we can't desert it. (*Jim leaves.*)

Chief We stand no chance. We are in the middle of the open sea. No other ships will pass here to pick us up. If there is a hole in the ship nothing can save it.

Mate Captain, the sooner we leave this sinking doomed ship, the better.

Captain You are the realist on board, mate. I actually believe that we have no choice. Lower the lifeboat, so that it at least will be afloat before we go down.

Mate (gets going) Ay, ay, captain. You live up to your responsibility.

Chief We will drown like rats. Before we get out the lifeboat, we have already sunk, and the ship will pull us down in the swirl. We are done for, fellows! We have no chance! We are going down with eight hundred pilgrims in a bloody coffin of Muslim fanatic superstition!

Mate Take it easy, chief. We haven't gone down yet.

Captain (to Jim, who has returned) Well, Jim?

Jim The situation is the same. The bulkhead is filling up but hasn't broken yet but could break any moment.

Captain Speak out, you dimwit! Are we sinking or not? Will we sink or not? Will the bulkhead hold or not?

Jim (hesitative) It looks bad, but nothing is certain.

Captain (to the mate) How many lifeboats do we have?

Mate Seven. It's not enough even for half the passengers.

Captain (back to Jim) Out with it, you simple dunderhead! What are the chances that the vessel will go down?

Jim We must go down. Look at the storm skies approaching out there. When that gale will hit us our chances will be reduced to a minimum.

Chief But the bulkhead seems to hold.

Jim It sags. It could give in any moment.

Mate And when it breaks we are not worth as much as any cursed innocently sleeping Muslim!

Captain Launch the lifeboat.

Mate Which one?

Captain It doesn't matter. There are too few of them anyway. That's what complicates the situation. That's why we shan't launch more than one.

Steward Get going, mate! The sooner we get away, the better.

Jim (aware of his weak position) And what about the pilgrims?

Captain Stay with them if you like, Jim. We are leaving.

Steward You can stay here sloshing about until doomsday like another flying Dutchman if you like with your darned pilgrims, but we mortals prefer to play it safe.

Chief I can't handle this. This will give me nightmares for the rest of my life. We sacrifice eight hundred pilgrims to save ourselves. It will not work. It must end up badly.

Steward Don't complain, chief. You are alive, we are alive, and the point is to survive. That's the only thing that matters. What the pilgrims do is their business. They didn't wake up by the collision. So let them sleep in peace. They knew they were risking their lives when they entrusted their lives to such an old ramshackle ship as this for the most risky journey of their lives. They knew what they were doing. Let them stand for it. If they go down with the vessel, it's their business and not ours.

Jim I can't just leave them. If you wish to abandon ship it's on your own responsibility.

Mate Yes, it is. Get lost, Jim, and snore in peace with the pilgrims.

Captain Is the lifeboat ready?

Steward Ready to be launched.

Mate Lucky for us that the sea is calm. That makes it easier.

Steward Not for long. Those storm skies are closing in on us fast. It will be vital to get as far away as possible from the ship before the storm wrecks it.

Mate But right now the sea is calm. We could also have a pleasant moonlight passage on a friendly sea, which will quietly lull us in peace until we are being picked up.

Captain Make ready to leave! Let's get over with it before this junk of shit goes down! (*passes over the rail. The steward and mate follow.*)

Jim How can they do it? It's total cowardice. In all my life I dreamt about a situation like this, to be able to demonstrate that I was not a coward, that I have an integrity and human dignity to be proud of. It doesn't matter if the vessel sinks or not, if I survive or not. The main thing is to do what is right.

Steward (outside, below) George is still on board.

Mate (equally) Why isn't George coming?

Captain (calling) George!

Mate Why the devil doesn't he answer?

Steward Maybe he had to go to the toilet.

Captain We can't just sit here sloshing and waiting for the ship to drag us down.

All 3 (urgently) George! George!

Jim What's the matter with George? He was here a moment ago. No, he didn't go to the toilet. (*discovers George, who has collapsed on deck*) My goodness! He has passed out! (*examines him quickly*) He is dead. He must have had a stroke. The nervous strain whacked him.

The others (outside, below) George! George!

Jim I can't tell them he is dead.

Captain Jump, George! We must get away before the ship goes down!

Jim (to himself) They can't leave without George. They must get him along. But they can't get him along, and how shall I explain it to them? It's dark, and they can't see who it is if I take George's place. If we quickly row away we might soon be picked up and might save the pilgrims... The ship is not sinking yet, although the water keeps seeping in all the time... Three hours, perhaps six... I can't stay alone on board with eight hundred Malayans, who soon must wake up to a desperate situation of extreme mortal panic... (*is getting nervous and more undecided*)

Steward Come on, George! Jump!

(*Jim swiftly crosses the rail and jumps down into the lifeboat*)

Mate At last! What were you up to?

Captain Never mind. The point is he is with us. Row away now quickly for the life of us!

Mate No panic, steward! The worst is over!

Steward How are you, George? We became worried about you.

Jim George is still on board. He is dead. He had a stroke of the excitement.

Captain By all fucking devils! It's not George but that foolhardy idiot Jim, who thought he would stay on board!

Jim I couldn't explain the situation to you from up there.

Mate Well, now you are here with us, and that is just as well. You finally got it that you were in the same boat with us. Well, well, poor George.

Captain Row on now, to keep warm! We have a long night ahead of us, and the storm could catch up with us any moment.

Steward You were wise enough to realize that you were as mortal and careful about your life as we, Jim. That's how you survive. You let those perish who can't be saved while at least you save yourself.

Mate Shut up and row on! *(They row on and vanish in the darkness.)*

Captain Be ready to scoop when the heavy rain comes!

Jim (to himself) How could I desert them? How could I fail my ideals and not live up to them? How could I fall so low, to the level of these cowards? George was right. This will amount to something we will be regretting for the rest of our lives.

Captain Here the squall comes! Keep steady!

(The storm breaks loose with thunder and lightning and pelting rain.)

Steward No leaking ship could keep afloat in this.

Mate She just vanished. She must have sunk like a stone.

Jim How could it be so deadly quiet? The entire sea is holding its breath, like a silent witness to our outrageous crime, standing by and awaiting the right position and course to take to determine our destiny and punishment. How can the universe keep silent in view of the outrage we have committed? We have abandoned eight hundred people in dire distress! And these three bandits of a crew, this fat captain, this drinking mate and this base steward praise themselves for what they have done and dare to be proud of having got away, while the booming silence in deafening fury is raised with all the universe against our inhuman betrayal. It would have been better to die than to survive this. After this iniquity of iniquities in the form of the basest possible cowardice and infamy, none of us could possibly end up well. We will be damned as long as we remain alive, the eight hundred will never leave us in peace with their unblest spirits, left to drown like rats without even a warning, and our fate will be the more merciful the more our remaining lives will be shortened.

Captain Is he sitting there brooding all by himself, that failure of a hero? Ask him to shut up.

Mate He is regretting that he followed us.

Steward It's too late now for any regrets, pal. You are with us. You are one of us, whether you like it or not. It's hard to be a man, since you always have to accept the constant humiliation of being obliged to live, and as long as you live you'll never be able to avoid the fact that people all the time will be dying around you. At best you get used to it and finally don't care any more that they necessarily do. It's part of life. You made it, pal. All the dead ones are to be forgotten.

Jim Are you trying to comfort me? It's not so simple. Sorrow and suffering, adversity and destruction, the constant defeat and failure is all what life is about which you'll never get away from, no matter how hard you try. You have tried to escape the responsibility for eight hundred people's death. It will just keep on pursuing you forever.

Mate Speak for yourself, Jonah, or we'll toss you overboard.

Jim You already tossed yourselves overboard and can't swim. But don't worry. It's true as the steward says. I am one of you. I have followed you, we sit in the same boat, and neither I can swim.

Captain What is he jabbering about?

Steward (meaningly with a finger to his front) He doesn't know what he is saying. The chief had a stroke of death, and Jim went crazy. This night can't get any funnier.

Mate I see a ship over there.

Captain (turns around) Indeed! Lanterns! We are saved!

Mate (rising, calling) Ohoy! Ohoy!

(The steward and captain also rise and start yelling. Only Jim remains passively seated.)

Jim Saved for what? For an unendurable life of just a constantly pursuing dishonour? The only happy soul this night was George who didn't have to live through it – the only one of us who dared to see through our crime in time to be able to die before it was committed.

Scene 2. On board the saving ship *Avondale*.

Captain Bring in the poor shipwrecked. In the middle of the open sea, alone, in the smallest possible lifeboat? What godforsaken ship had they lost?

Sailor *Patna*, Sir.

Captain *Patna*? What kind of a ship is that? Never heard of it.

Sailor It was to bring pilgrims across the Indian Ocean.

Captain I see, one of those discarded floating coffins that couldn't be used for anything else. *(The four shipwrecked in blankets are showed in by other sailors.)*

Well, my friends, undoubtedly you have an interesting story to tell. Do you mean to say that you are the only survivors?

Mate It doesn't look any better, does it?

Captain Brierly Let me do the talking, Jones.

Captain Are you the captain?

Brierly Yes, with respect, Sir, if you'll excuse the pyjamas, but we were caught in bed by the collision.

Captain What did you collide with?

Brierly We don't know. We never saw it. Jim here, second mate, thought it was a floating wreck, which seems credible enough, since it was hard and solid, and it wasn't land.

Captain And your ship immediately started leaking, and you went down like a stone and could only save yourselves at a hair's breadth. Is that how it happened? How many pilgrims did you have on board?

Brierly Eight hundred.

Captain And not one of them was saved with you? How many lifeboats did you have? Don't tell me you only had one.

Jim (noticing that captain Brierly is faltering in uncertainty) We had seven, Sir.

Captain And what happened to the other six? How many could have saved themselves in them?

(All four are getting uncertain as how to answer.)

Answer, Sir! You were the commanding officer!

Brierly To say the truth, Sir, the situation was so difficult that we couldn't risk a panic by waking and notifying the eight hundred pilgrims. By leaving them unaware of the situation, we could at least save ourselves.

Captain So you abandoned them?

Brierly Yes.

Captain At large in a sinking ship? And you saw the ship go down?

Brierly My mate saw it disappear. There was bad weather and a storm coming up, so it must have gone down like a stone the minute after we had left it.

Captain A very strange story, captain Brierly. There is something here that doesn't make sense. We must get to the bottom of this. Give us your position when you abandoned the ship. Fortunately we have a radio on board, so we can send the alarm. We must immediately get some rescuing ship to search the area. There could be more lifeboats with survivors, since there were six more, as you say.

Jim That's what we were hoping for, Sir. We saw it as our only possibility to save them to quickly get in touch with any other ship and get some rescue. Not even half of the pilgrims would have found room in the lifeboats on board. There would have been a panic, there would have been a stampede, they would have failed in launching the lifeboats, leaving perhaps no one to get away.

Captain We shall investigate the matter at once. Number one, send alarm telegrams at once and wait for answers.

First Mate We already did, Sir, and we have had answers.

Captain Well?

First Mate *Patna* has been found, Sir.

Captain Floating?

First Mate Floating and intact with all the eight hundred pilgrims peacefully asleep on board. No trace of any crew except for one man found dead, probably from a heart stroke.

Jones George!

Captain Did you leave a dead man on board?

Brierly He had a heart stroke. We couldn't take him with us. You must understand the panic situation, Sir. There was foul weather coming up, and the damaged bulkhead afore was bulging and could break any moment. Jim here inspected it twice.

Captain I see. So you were scared.

Jim Like rabbits.

Captain (*gets a completely different view of the whole thing*) You must understand, that there must be court procedures on this matter. You have abandoned a ship with eight hundred passengers in distress, believing that it would sink. You did nothing to help even one of them. Instead you got away in a panic, which must give the most cowardly imaginable impression. Fortunately the *Patna* has been found still floating with all passengers unharmed, but that puts you in a very remarkable position. You might as well realize, captain Brierly, that you will never again be given any command. Your mates will also lose their qualifications. (*The four shipwrecked stand*

ashamed and can't believe their ears.) Bring them out of here before I get mad with them. I can't bear seeing such vermin on board my ship.

First Mate What shall we do with them?

Captain By the way, leave them here. Let's have nothing more to do with them. They are lost by their own fault and negligence. You are the worst sailors ever of my experience, gentlemen. I leave you in peace with your shame. (*leaves. His sailors follow.*)

(The four shipwrecked remain numb in silence.)

Jim He is right.

Brierly Shut up!

Jones How could the ship last? How could they manage not to go down?

Steward The irony of fate. We have sunk ourselves. The ship we took for granted that would sink managed, but we who abandoned it are sunk for life.

Brierly Shut up!

Jones We can't abscond a trial.

Brierly Damn it, accursed hell, you blasted old tub, why didn't you at least sink, while you were at it!

Steward It was Jim who inspected the ship.

Jim Ships can remain afloat for any amount of time even if they fill with water. The water was coming in. I saw it with my own eyes both times. But the bulkhead must have withstood the pressure against all odds.

Jones An inconvenient miracle if anything! If she had gone down, we would at least have been surviving victims! Now we are just branded as despicable failures.

Jim We must pass the trial.

Brierly You may do it, Jim. Not I.

Jones I will also disappear.

Steward I intend to get well enough drunk and try to forget the whole story.

Jim You already escaped once too much, gentlemen. It will only get worse if you try to go on escaping.

Brierly Shut up! Blasted pilgrims that didn't perish when they should!

Jones We'll have to sleep it over.

Steward Do you think it will work? Never more in this life!

First Mate (enters) The captain has given you bunks to sleep. At least you may sleep in peace for the rest of the night.

Steward Do you have any sedative?

First Mate You will need it. I'll see what I can find. We always have whisky for shipwrecked no matter how miserable they are. (*brings them with him out of there.*)

Act II scene 1. The hearing.
A court of justice crowded with curious visitors.

Judge Have I understood the situation correctly, that out of the four who were summoned to this interrogation there is only one present?

Clerk Yes.

Judge What happened to the other three?

Clerk One is lost in a drinking bout of temporary permanence and is completely incommunicable until further. The second is confined in an asylum. The third actually appears to have committed suicide.

Judge Who is left? Is it the captain?

Clerk No, it was the captain who committed suicide.

Judge How did it happen?

Clerk To avoid the legal consequences, he left on the first ship he could get. From there it has been reported that he jumped over board at approximately the same spot where he abandoned his former ship. No one could guess that he would do such a thing, no one noticed it, and when he was missed it was too late.

Judge And the other two?

Clerk The mate and steward.

Judge And who is here?

Clerk The second mate.

Judge And one appears to have died on board of a heart failure. A strange affair. It's ships like this one that could bring unforeseeable curses and consequences if they aren't handled correctly with their sensitive cargo. Well, Sir?

Jim Call me Jim.

Judge Well, Mr Jim, what have you got to say for yourself?

Jim Nothing.

Judge No, nothing can defend what you did. Can you even explain what happened?

Jim I can only explain it by the crew getting into a panic and losing their judgement.

Judge Including yourself.

Jim As you see.

Judge But you appear to have had an original intention to stay on board. Why did you change your mind?

Jim The power of the circumstances. My three superiors refused to leave the ship without their comrade, who was lying dead on deck in a heart stroke, and I couldn't explain it to them. Perhaps the threatening weather decided the matter. It looked very dark on the sky, and sudden tropical storms are not to be trifled with.

Judge You were sent twice to examine the damages of the bulkhead, and the captain and crew acted on your report. What was your report?

Jim That the bulkhead was giving in.

Judge But it didn't give in.

Jim It threatened to break any moment, the hulk was rusty and neglected, the ship should never have been let out with such an extensive human cargo, the water was entering, the damage was a fact, and it was only a question of time when the bulkhead would burst and let in the ocean that then instantaneously would have sunk the ship on very short notice.

Judge But she was found intact and floating although filled with water.

Jim Yes, it was a miracle, and I am happy that every one of the eight hundred pilgrims got out of it alive.

Judge While only their five white crew members perished at least morally with all their prospects for the future. The captain fled and committed suicide. Your friends are hospitalized and declared unfit for any work maybe for good.

Jim Don't call them my friends!

Judge But you preferred solidarity with them in their despicable crime rather than staying on board with eight hundred innocent pilgrims.

Jim It was difficult panic situation. No one knew what he was doing. The nervous pressure was too strong. The chief died of it.

Judge Are you excusing yourself?

Jim Not at all. I just wish I could take on my responsibility although I know it's now too late.

Judge In contrast to your colleagues, you have at least had the courage to present yourself here. The others have only made it worse for themselves and can probably never be exonerated. Perhaps you could, by standing up for what you have done. But you can never again have any naval command certificate.

Jim I understand that very well.

Judge (to the other officials at court) Has anyone any questions? *(No answer.)* Then the matter is settled. The case is closed without any extenuating circumstances for the four men in charge, who deserted a ship with eight hundred passengers intending them to perish. Only the fact that they did not perish saves the four cowards from any other legal procedure than public disgrace for life by the loss of their certificates of command. *(confirms)*

(general break-up)

a voice Poor devil!

Jim (turns around immediately and confronts Marlow) I have neither asked for your sympathy nor any insult, Sir!

Marlow (surprised) And I assure you that I saved you from both.

Jim What do you mean?

Marlow What do *you* mean?

Jim You just called me a poor devil.

Marlow I assure you it was not I.

Jim Who was it then? *(looks around prepared to fight)*

Marlow Whoever it was, you were not intended. It was that poor dog over there.

Jim (relaxes) I am sorry. Evidently I am still rather over-strained.

Marlow No wonder after what you have been through.

Jim Can you understand me?
Marlow I could try.
Jim No, you could never understand me. No one can understand me, for my total shame is mine alone. The others couldn't even confront it. They try to escape it and only end up in derangement. Only the top of the iceberg appeared at the inquest. No one will ever get any idea of the depth of the abyss.
Marlow What about lunch?
Jim Why?
Marlow I am a good listener, and you could do with a better auditor than an ordinary scandal audience.
Jim Thanks for those words. I have almost felt like a failed gladiator, who is brought to trial for having run away from the fight.
Marlow I understand as much that it was a unique situation.
Jim There is only such a situation once in life, it was the chance of my life to at last be able to demonstrate triumphant civil courage by ordinary compassion with humanity, and then I blew it all myself by ordinary human fear and cowardice.
Marlow You were unlucky. If the chief hadn't had his stroke you would have made it.
Jim Yes, he got all the luck instead in getting away by a sort of mortal irony.
Marlow Let's talk about it.
Jim It could take hours.
Marlow I am a captain myself and used to slow occurrences that will take time.
Jim Then we could do with some lunch to survive the ordeal.
Marlow Let's go. (*taps his arm, and they leave.*)

Scene 2. An open restaurant

Marlow I can help you, Jim.
Jim I haven't asked for any help.
Marlow You need not take it so hard. Everything will pass.
Jim No, Marlow, if you have lost all your self-respect by a totally unnecessary and unforgivable mistake, you have a bleeding soul with a wound that nothing can stop bleeding except yourself, if you get a second chance. I will search for a second chance for the rest of my life until I find it, but no one can help me with that. I must find it myself by means of my own.
Marlow I could get you a job far away from here, like in Australia.
Jim That's decent of you. I could try, but don't expect any stable reliability on my side. I am still stuck in that boat lost at sea miserably escaping my responsibility, and I must get out of that boat and save myself by continuing to pursue my perpetual flight, if there is no other way.
Marlow Good. Then that's settled. I will give you a letter of recommendation to friends of mine since of old. Without doubt you will be accepted and appreciated.

You did your job on the *Patna* better than your command and would probably have managed any pilot's job without difficulty and with honour.

Jim You are welcome to test me. I will gladly take chances, risk anything and have nothing to lose.

Marlow I will not let you get lost, Jim. You don't see it yourself, but the honour you think you lost by the *Patna* has by its challenge made you a more honest man than most.

Jim I hope you are right, and I would welcome an opportunity to show that you could be right. Such an opportunity is all I have left to live for.

Marlow You are badly hurt, Jim, but there is nothing wrong with you.

Jim Except that I forfeited my right of life by sacrificing eight hundred others.

Marlow They did not die.

Jim It's the intention and action that counts. The result is secondary. It's the soul that hurts. My physical life has no bearing on the issue.

Marlow Just make the best of it. At least you have found a safe harbour in me.

Jim I am a sailor. Harbours are there for departures.

Marlow The unfathomable endlessness of the sea is not enough to halt the unrest that keeps urging you on.

Jim I know.

Scene 3.

1 Congratulations to your new man, Engstrom.

Engstrom Thank you. He sure is worth his weight in gold. We never had anyone so good.

1 How did you get him?

Engstrom Captain Marlow sent him here. He needed a job.

1 A recommendation as good as anyone. Do you know anything about him?

Engstrom Absolutely nothing. Marlow's recommendation was enough.

1 Yes, he has never been mistaken about human nature.

Engstrom Still I guess he is carrying some deep dark secret. He broods too much, is always alone, has no interest in girls at all, while he takes any risks in his job and manage them, as if he at any price wanted to prove his capability at least to himself.

1 How old is he?

Engstrom Only twenty-four. He has his whole life ahead but lives as if he already had spent the best part.

1 It would be interesting to hear his story.

Engstrom He is very reticent about it. And Marlow probably didn't conceal it without reason.

1 No.

Engstrom Here are those boys from Aden.

1 The pilgrim traffickers?

Engstrom Yes.

1 A bizarre story. Imagine, that not a single pilgrim was lost although the crew left them to die on the sea.

Engstrom The *Patras* scandal has become world famous all over the Indian Ocean.

1 What really happened to the crew?

Engstrom They appear to have ended up badly all of them. The captain lost his command forever and jumped overboard from a ship where he had abandoned his own. I heard that the mate ended up in some rehabilitation clinic to be detoxified after too much delirium tremens. The other two I gather try all sorts of different ways to get away from their reputation. But ask the mates from the pilgrim freighter. They should know.

1 Ohoy, sailor! Welcome home with all the pilgrims!

2 Thanks, and not one was lost on the way, and that's not the merit of those bastards who deserted them in the open sea.

1 We were just discussing them. What really happened to them?

2 The captain jumped overboard. He probably felt done for when he never could get any command any more. As far as I know the first mate drank himself to death. He never at least got over it. He could never be a mate any more. The second mate, who would have stayed on board, the only one who dared to show himself at the trial, no one knows anything about.

1 Wasn't there a steward as well?

2 Perhaps he was the one who caused the entire confusion. He was the one who provided the crew with liquor. The chief, who was found dead on board, probably had a heart stroke by his liquor. The entire bridge was probably under the influence that night. They saw nothing and just sailed on, and then happened to a floating wreck and immediately panicked.

1 Were you there when they found the *Patna*?

2 No, but I knew the French captain who saved her. He had never experienced anything more odd. A drifting wreck in the middle of the ocean that never went down with a vanished crew except for one dead man. None of the eight hundred pilgrims knew English, so it was impossible to understand anything, and they all knew nothing. The wreck was sinking but didn't sink, so the captain took the risk of towing her, ready to cut the lines if she would go down. Thus all the eight hundred pilgrims arrived without damages at Aden, and now we have brought all eight hundred of them back again totally unharmed.

Engstrom Here is Jim. (*He enters.*) A beer, Jim?

Jim Thanks, I'd love to.

Engstrom You did a great job today again as usual.

Jim We were lucky that it succeeded.

Engstrom You always succeed with the impossible.

Jim I never need to be afraid of risking anything. I have no one else to think of, so I don't even have to take any care myself.

Engstrom Meet Jim, boatswain, the best harbour pilot we ever had.

2 I heard a great deal about you. You are never afraid of risking your life.

Jim There is no reason.

2 (*back to 1*) But I tell you, that if there ever were any worthless miserable blokes to be ashamed of as paragons of incompetence for a ship command, it was those four who together abandoned ship, responsibility, honour, glory and the lives of eight hundred people out there in the middle of the sea in an attack of the worst weakness there is in man, which is cowardice.

1 We are discussing *Patna*, that pilgrim ship. Our boatswain here has just brought home the eight hundred pilgrims.

Engstrom The *Patna* scandal will stay alive as a ghost in every harbour of the Indian Ocean as an inextinguishable stain on seamanship.

Jim (to Engstrom, has lost his thirst) Thank you, I think I'll leave the beer.

Engstrom Are you leaving?

Jim Yes, I quit.

1 Yes, you have worked more than well enough today. (*Jim leaves.*)

2 Was his name Jim?

Engstrom Yes. Have you seen him before?

2 That was also the name of the second mate on the *Patna*. Could it be the man? Age, type and face would fit.

Engstrom (hurries out after Jim) Jim! Jim!

2 It must have been him.

1 He said he would quit.

2 Everything fits. It was him all right. Poor devil!

Scene 4. Another worse place of work.

Schomberg We are so happy to have you here, Jim. Everybody knows your story and don't care, you are simply one of us and we need you, so we hope you will stay on here.

Jim I already stayed longer here than on any other job.

Schomberg Bangkok is a paradise that beats them all, so anyone could find himself at large here. The climate is tolerant, the Siamese are open and lovable, so there is no reason not to like it here forever.

Jim The risk is that you are right, Mr Schomberg. I am inclined to agree.

Johnny (coming by) A round of pools, Jim?

Jim Are you sure you are not too drunk?

Johnny You can never get too drunk. Besides, handicaps only increase the excitement. Have a glass you yourself as well, and you will stumble more easily.

Jim Thank you, I don't drink.

Schomberg And even if he drinks he never gets drunk. He carries his liquor too well, so it's unnecessary for him to drink in contrast to you, Johnny, who most of the time are sore and bitter, except when you drink.

Johnny I am Irish and not ashamed of it. Come on, Jim!

*(They start playing.
Another guest enters the bar.)*

Steward I heard you were looking for people.

Schomberg Yes, with experience.

Steward If there is anything I have, it's experience.

Schomberg You have to be available at any time. Inconvenient working hours and long periods of void. Can you navigate?

Steward I have been at sea for many years.

Schomberg We could always take you on trial. Can you drink?

Steward Any amount.

Schomberg There is a lot of drinking here, so you should be able to carry your liquor well.

Steward If there is anything I can handle it's drinking. But who is that over there at the pools? I think I know him.

Schomberg Our best man. He is Jim simple and plain.

Steward Yes, it's him.

Schomberg Does he know you?

Steward If he does. May I go there and speak with him?

Schomberg At your own risk. Beware of the Irishman.

Steward *(approaches the game. Jim hasn't seen him. When Johnny takes the lead he steals prudently up to Jim.)* Hello, Jim.

Jim *(unpleasantly surprised)* What are you doing here?

Steward I just got a job here. We are together again. This should be a better working place than the last one, shouldn't it?

Johnny It's you, Jim. *(Jim takes over.)*
Do you know Jim?

Steward Yes, we were shipmates.

Jim Don't talk with him, Johnny.

Johnny Why not?

Steward He doesn't like being reminded of inconvenient episodes.

Johnny What do you have against him, Jim?

Jim Nothing. He just represents everything I wish to be rid of.

Johnny What could that be? Family? Background? Divorces? Mistakes? Defeats? Failures?

Steward Don't provoke him.

Jim I've had enough!

Johnny What is it, Jim?

Steward He doesn't enjoy seeing an old mate from the *Patna*.

Johnny Were you on the *Patna*?

Steward Yes, Jim and I were in the same boat.

Johnny Jim, I told you a thousand times that this incident belongs to the past.

Jim Do you think that helps? Will that rid me of the awareness of my crime? Wherever I turn in the world that failure turns up and keeps reminding me. You can

never do away with the past. The entire history of the world is the identity of man, which she can never deny or get away from. That man constantly tries to abscond it by any way of escape only makes matters worse.

Johnny Take it easy, Jim. Schomberg, give him a double. He needs to sober up.

Schomberg (pours a whisky) You are in good hands here, Jim. Forget the past. (*offers him the glass. Jim instantly knocks it back and breaks the empty glass on the floor.*)

Jim I quit, Schomberg.

Johnny No, you don't. We need you.

Jim You just try to restrain me.

Johnny If you quit, Jim, you just run away again and remain a coward.

Jim No one can accuse me of cowardice!

Johnny I know. That's why I do it.

Steward (alarmed) Don't provoke him. My goodness, I should never have come here.

Schomberg No, you shouldn't, but you couldn't know...

Jim Let me go! (*Johnny hinders him.*)

Johnny Calm down, Jim. Have another drink.

Jim (knocks him down, takes a cane to threaten with) You can't stop me!

Johnny It will do no harm to try. Don't be foolish, Jim. Don't be a rat. Mind you, the *Patna* never went down. (*He has got up. Jim attacks him with the cane, hits him bloody over the nose, lifts him up and throws him out of the window. A considerable crash and splash is heard outside.*)

Jim (leaves, to Schomberg:) I am sorry, Mr Schomberg, but I have to leave. (*leaves. Schomberg just looks down, with regret.*)

Steward (to Schomberg) Was it my fault?

Schomberg No, my friend, it was destiny. Let's try now to find our poor Irishman and get him dry. (*They go out to save the Irishman.*)

Scene 5.

Stein State the case, Marlow.

Marlow There is nothing wrong with him. He has just been unfortunate once and for all.

Stein That could be said about most of us.

Marlow He is different by being totally honest from the start but having been forced by circumstances into a blind alley of dishonesty.

Stein The *Patna* scandal. They all survived. So what's the problem?

Marlow The problem is that Jim is so sensitive. He is the son of a priest and comes from a large family in Devon, and because of this matter he feels he can never go back home. He can't show himself to decent people. That's why he keeps running away from them, but wherever he goes, new reminders turn up of what he calls his inexcusable crime, like for example in this latest incident in Bangkok.

Stein Yes, what really happened in Bangkok?

Marlow (sighs) He had a good position there and managed his job more than well as usual and had been there for six months, longer than anywhere else, when the steward from *Patna* turned up and got a job at the same place.

Stein There was a row, wasn't it?

Marlow Yes, with an Irishman, who provoked him unintentionally. He was innocent.

Stein Every single job you fixed for him turned out miserably for him.

Marlow That's why I turn to you. I can't go on taking care of him. At the same time I don't want to see him end up as one of those stranded vagabonds who only live for the bottle, pathetic wrecks of what once could have become proper human beings. Jim is still young. He still could have a future. You know all the Malayan archipelago. Is there nowhere you could give him a protected life from the civilization?

Stein You mean the nightmare of law and order that has been haunting him and bereft him of his honour because he happened to an infernally undeserved fate?

Marlow Something like that.

Stein That would be Patusan then.

Marlow Patusan?

Stein An inaccessible trading station 30 miles up the river. My agent Cornelius there needs to be replaced.

Marlow A wild lawless land beyond all honour, law and order?

Stein Not quite. It's a small sultanate, but no one knows about it. No whites go there. Min man Cornelius is the only one there, a burnt out wreck of incompetence who just has stayed on by the slothful lack of initiative of comfortable listlessness. He has nowhere to go and will probably waste away there in the staleness of the malaria swamps.

Marlow Some future for Jim.

Stein I think that such a man as Jim could do something about the situation there. The corruption chains the society in shackles of apathy, and someone is needed to just bring on some initiative. Perhaps it would be the very thing that would suit a man like Jim – unlimited possibilities for free human enterprise. He is after all a romantic and thinks well of humanity.

Marlow (impressed by the perspective) I think you could be right. I think you may have found the very right thing for him.

Stein Let's try the possibility. He has after all nothing to lose.

Marlow You know him, Stein, without having seen him.

Stein Unfortunately I know humanity all too well, and no matter how much I have always been disappointed, I am always prepared to give human nature yet another chance.

Marlow At best it will be a success. At worst...

Stein At worst, he will just perish, like all the others. His tragedy from the beginning, Marlow, was that he was not allowed to perish already with the *Patna*.

Marlow An enigmatic conclusion.

Stein He has survived himself, and never really wanted to but keeps on doing it unwillingly and suffers from it. That's where he differs from the rest of us. We survive ourselves and don't mind.

Act III scene 1.

1 We have kept him prisoner now for three days, Rajah. You should come to a decision whether to let him live or die.

Rajah That's the question. What is right? To kill one who deserves it, or to let someone live who does not deserve it? What does Allah and the Prophet command us? Forbearance and mercy. He only commands holy war against infidels collectively, but we can't kill a defenceless individual just like that.

2 He was not defenceless. We caught him armed.

Rajah Yes, with a gun without bullets. What kind of a defence is that? Only a fool brings a gun out into the jungle without also bringing bullets and gunpowder. What would he do with such a dummy? Make someone believe that he was dangerous?

1 Still he came here as an intruder.

Rajah Yes, but sent by others. He came here to relieve that piece of shit of a white man, the parasite Cornelius, who only is good for debasing himself by liquor, an abomination to every faithful Muslim. His relief at least seems young and fresh.

2 So shall we keep him or kill him?

Rajah A difficult question.

1 We can't keep him forever.

Rajah Why not? Then he might go back by his own will and allow that miserable scoundrel Cornelius to go on rotting to death on his own.

2 He is obstinate. He says he came here for a mission, which he intends to fulfil.

Rajah Then we can't let him go.

1 Wouldn't it be as well to kill him directly and let him vanish?

Rajah Only white villains do like that. We are Muslims.

3 (*enters upset in a rush*) Great Rajah! The white man has escaped!

Rajah He must not do that. Pursue him and catch him!

3 Too late! He is gone! He has a long start!

Rajah How did he manage to escape? Wasn't he watched?

3 He jumped the palisade at its lowest point.

Rajah He found our weakest spot and took advantage of it. Well, he should be in Patusan now. We'll deal with him later.

2 I don't think we'll ever see him again.

Rajah Don't be too sure. A white man here will always be marked as long as he stays. Even that wretched wreck Cornelius is talked about every day although he is never seen. I am afraid that this new Tuan will become a problem. Once he has managed to escape nothing more will ever stop him.

Scene 2. Patusan.

Doramin (sitting) We have saved you from Rajah and his men, who would have let you rot in captivity from sheer indecision, as they usually do with prisoners, but you showed courage enough to run away and have come to us all muddy, stinking and dirty but whole and healthy, and you say you were sent by doctor Stein. Do you have anything to prove it?

Jim (takes off a small link with a ring and shows it) This ring is a greeting from him.

Doramin (impressed, recognizes it) Then you really are sent by him. This ring I gave him in gratitude for having saved my life. Who ever brought that ring to me I promised him would be as well treated as he himself, my best friend. What can we do for you?

Jim No, Doramin, I am the one to be grateful. You have done so much for me and not just saved my life. Therefore I would like to do something for you.

Doramin What do you want to do? Liberate us from Rajah Allang's constant bandit raids and violence?

Jim More than that. I wish to expel Sherif Ali, who by his tyranny oppresses everyone here in this country. Rajah Allang is just a passive clown, and without Sherif Ali's supremacy he would be reduced to a shadow of ignominy.

Doramin You want to crush Sherif Ali. How would it be done?

Jim By simple strategy. You have some small cannons. I know exactly where to place them to cover the attack.

Doramin You suggest an attack in arms?

Jim Under the protection of our own cannon fire.

Doramin It would cost us a number of lives.

Jim Not many, if it is done correctly.

Dain Waris His plan is ingenious, father. It can't fail, if we have the right motivation and moral, which we do have. And imagine what we would gain – free trade without the constant threat of Sherif Ali behind our backs. Even Rajah Allang would be grateful to us.

Doramin It's taking a risk.

Jim Every oppressor has his point of weakness. Every bully has his Achilles heel. Every tyrant is empty inside. It's a matter of locating the weak point, hit it directly, and the blown up balloon will collapse to a pathetic remnant of a rag.

Doramin I can see that you and Dain Waris have found each other. You are almost of the same age and understand each other. Yes, I think you could make it together. Just get started. You will have all you need for the preparations. Every liberation from a tyranny is worth waging and can only bring profits at length.

Jim I am glad that you are with us, Doramin. Then nothing can go wrong.

Doramin We believe in you, Tuan Jim, for you are a brave man with an initiative of your own, and you escaped from Rajah Allang without losing your life and without even being wounded.

Jim I became the dirtier instead.

Doramin Dirt can be washed away, but a soul that has gained honour can never be sullied. We are happy to have you among us, Tuan Jim.

Jim I will do my best to stay on.

Doramin We don't doubt it. Do what you want. We follow you.

Jim Come, Dain Waris. We have plenty of things to do. (*leaves with his arm around Dain Waris.*)

Doramin What do you think, my friends? Can we trust him?

A counsellor Yes, until he falls.

Doramin Yes, like you should trust any man until he betrays you. No one is a traitor and can be suspected as such until the treason is a fact. So give Tuan Jim all the help and support he needs.

Scene 3.

Cornelius You are mad, Jim. You want to sacrifice your life for nothing.

Jim What's the alternative, Cornelius? Sitting here rotting like you through the years?

Cornelius I have managed and survived.

Jim Like what? Like a decayed rag of a man without honour and glory despised by all. You are not worthy of your own life, Cornelius. You were placed here with a mission of confidence, which was entrusted you by doctor Stein. He keeps you supported and lives up to his part of your deal by providing you with deliveries, but what have you delivered in return? Nothing, and to what extent you might have sold something you are suspected of having embezzled everything. That's why he sent me to replace you, but you are nothing to send back since you want to stay on her and go on rotting. Your only credit is your daughter, who is only maltreated by you.

Cornelius She is not my daughter.

Jim No, she is the daughter of your wife, whom you maltreated to death.

Cornelius You know nothing about that.

Jim I can draw logical conclusions. Why did she die?

Cornelius She was a witch! She enchanted me! She cast a spell on me! She got me stuck here in the jungle swamps of only fevers and mosquitoes and bloodthirsty natives! And my daughter will do the same to you!

Jim No, Cornelius, no one will determine my fate except myself.

Cornelius That's what you think. Then you know nothing about destiny.

Jim I have struggled with it all my life, but you have allowed yourself to succumb to it.

Cornelius You will be obliged to that also. We will all succumb to our destiny. That's why it exists.

Jim No, it's there to challenge us and show us which way we have to take.

Cornelius We are all obliged to walk the plank down into the abyss. All we can do about it is to prolong the march to the scaffold, which in reality just means increasing the suffering, which will only get worse the longer you endure. Get away from here, Jim, while you are still alive. You have no business here. You will only go down and perish.

Jim Are you trying to scare me off? Do you want to keep your position with Stein, and do you find me a threat? Keep your business and your corruption. I don't care. There are better things for me to do here.

Cornelius (scornfully) Like defeating Sherif Ali?

Jim That will only be the start. Then the country can start flourishing.

Cornelius Flourishing? It flourishes already! It has always been flourishing! The jungle is flooded with flourishing flowers, like the river is flourishing with crocodiles and the trees are flourishing with snakes. It's only man in his decay, his corruption and his perdition who disturbs the flourishing nature. You wish to cleanse the human cultivation from weeds, but it's the weeds that make the flourishing, poisonous almighty jungle with its wild discretion without concerns. And you want to do something about that? Ha-ha-ha!

Jim It's only corrupt individuals like Sherif Ali and Rajah Allang who make life difficult here. You are also completely corrupt and rotten, but you do no harm, so everyone ignores you. You are a parasite with no outcome and without results, so you are left in peace, as long as you don't harm others. But I intend to save your daughter from your bad influence.

Cornelius She is not my daughter! She is a witch!

Jim That's why she had better follow me away from here to the village.

Cornelius (jeeringly) Are you in love with her?

Jim (honestly, after a pause) No, but I feel the responsibility for her that you don't.

Cornelius (scornfully) Responsibility! Have you heard! He wants to take responsibility! Do you think it's possible in this world, you fool?

Jim (seriously) That's why we live.

Cornelius Ha-ha-ha! (*laughs scornfully and shrilly. Enter the girl.*) Here she is herself. Have you listened to every word as usual, you worthless witch?

Jewel I always hear what white men say between themselves, Cornelius, since my father was a white man but better than you.

Cornelius The bastard has spoken and confesses herself to her unclean origin! Your mother was a whore and a witch who seduced a white man! And you are the same!

Jim She has heard it before, Cornelius.

Cornelius I know! That's why I say it again! Go and fuck her, Jim! That's what she deserves! I esteem myself too good for that.

Jim Instead you do what is worse, despise her, scorn her, mistreat her and give her all the treatment that only you yourself would deserve.

Cornelius I warn you again, Jim, you will die if you stay here.

Jim I am entirely indifferent to that prospect. I will stay.

Cornelius Why?

Jim I have a mission to manage.
Cornelius It can't be managed.
Jim And duties to perform.
Cornelius There are no duties except for the stupid.
Jim I can't explain to you what I owe myself.
Cornelius What do you owe yourself?
Jim A decent life.
Cornelius That's the last thing you will find possible here.
Jim Perhaps that's the very challenge. Come, my Jewel. We'll leave your false father alone with his failures. *(leaves with the girl)*
Cornelius (angry with himself) Damn it! Where did I put that bottle? *(starts rummaging and looking for something he never can find.)*

Scene 4. Night.

Jim sleeps on the floor. Enter Jewel with a torch.

Jewel Wake up, Jim. *(wakes him)*
Jim What is it?
Jewel They are here to kill you.
Jim Not again!
Jewel You must leave the trading station and move to the village. Doramin has said himself that he can't protect you here. Sherif Ali's hoodlums have promised to kill all opponents.
Jim Are they here?
Jewel They are here. *(hands him his gun)*
Jim You have loaded it.
Jewel It was needed.
Jim Where are they?
Jewel Outside.
Jim They steal in silence.
Jewel They think you are asleep.
Jim Then they are cowards, if they want to kill me in my sleep.
Jewel Murderers are always cowards.
Jim Cornelius?
Jewel I don't know.
Jim He has probably nothing to do with it. He always keeps away as the sum of all cowardice. And you are right. Sherif Ali's hoodlums keep the population in terror by constantly new raids and threats against all opposition. They must have heard that I am awake. Where are they?
Jewel Outside.
Jim (shuffles the door to open. Immediately a Malayan attacks with his creese raised to strike. Jim shoots him straight in his mouth. He falls with gaping mouth in the middle of his attack.)

Come forth, you cowards! (*is prepared to fire again. Three terrified Malaysians appear with their hands up*) Join arms! Take hold of each other's arms! (*They do so.*) Move! (*They move.*) To the river! (*He forces them ahead.*) Jump! (*They do so and vanish. A loud splash is heard and some desperate swimming away from there.*) I don't think they will try it again.

Jewel I don't think so either.

Jim We must at last deal with Sherif Ali and chase him out of the country.

Jewel Everyone will be grateful to you.

Cornelius (appearing) I heard a shot. (*sees the body, examines it*) Stone dead. You really shot him. Right in his mouth. And the other three?

Jim Scared off. They will not try it again.

Cornelius That's for certain.

Jim We leave, Cornelius. You will have the entire trading station for yourself.

Cornelius And my daughter?

Jim She is not your daughter. I take her with me.

Cornelius It's your funeral.

Jim Good luck, Cornelius. Your only company here now will be your lonesomeness. (*leaves with Jewel.*)

Cornelius The conceited complacent presumptuous upstart! Who does he think he is? A lord?

Act IV scene 1.

Doramin You are welcome, doctor Stein's good friend. How is my old friend doctor Stein?

Marlow He couldn't be better at his advanced age. I heard that great things had happened here and decided therefore to make a visit.

Doramin At last we have order in our paradise. By a bold attack led by my son and Tuan Jim we chased Sherif Ali out of the country, and therefore Rajah Allang is no threat to us any more. We leave him in peace with his opium.

Marlow And Tuan Jim has become the leader of Patusan instead.

Doramin Everybody trusts him. What he has done no one else could have done. He is what you call an enlightened despot and a righteous man at that, who tries to do right in everything and therefore succeeds. We are grateful to you and doctor Stein for having sent him here.

Marlow And Cornelius?

Doramin No one cares about Cornelius. He is a decadent man whom everyone despises and laughs at.

Marlow And your son Dain Waris?

Doramin He loves Tuan Jim. They are very good friends. But our experience tells us that white men never remain for long, and when they disappear we never know when they may come back. We fear the day when Tuan Jim must leave. But when that day comes I hope he will help us make Dain Waris king.

Marlow I am sure he will.

Doramin Here he comes.

Jim (enters with his arm around Jewel) Captain Marlow! What a joy to see you here!

Marlow I must come and see with my own eyes the miracle you have accomplished here.

Jim I was given a responsibility and tried to live up to it in which I was fortunate enough to succeed. That is all.

Marlow And thereby Patusan is liberated from its perpetual darkness of civil wars and tyrants.

Jim It was just a small efficient cleaning operation.

Marlow What you have done here is what the whole world needs.

Jim I have forgotten all about that world. This microcosmos is enough for me. I am looking forward to go on living here until I die.

Marlow You seem to have settled down nicely. (*means Jewel*)

Jim She saved my life. It's the daughter of Cornelius' wife, whom he only abused. She kept watch over me every night until Sherif Ali's hired assassins arrived and she could warn me.

Marlow Your deadly shot started a glorious revolution.

Jim We ought to thank her for being alive.

Marlow What is your name, my daughter?

Jewel I am called Jewel.

Marlow Don't let Jim out of your sight.

Jewel Never. I am his guardian. I protect him with my life.

Jim She has assumed the role of my guardian angel and proved efficient as such.

Marlow It shows that she loves you.

Jim Who couldn't love her? Only her unworthy so called father Cornelius.

Marlow Do you understand what has happened here, Jim? Do you understand what you have done? You have triumphed! *You* have turned your destiny of defeat to its contrary, and you have crowned your triumph by preparing the way for a paragon colony. You are already a living legend to all the people here. You have brought peace and welfare and safety. You have brought Rudyard Kipling's ideal of the white man's burden alive, the mission of which is to bring peace and development, knowledge and welfare to all poorer people.

Jim This is no colony, Marlow. It's a prosperous community, which I happened to become the pilot of, and I have no more than come through the beginning and made a foundation. You are right as far that I accepted a responsibility which I succeeded in carrying, and I will go on doing so as far as it works. You may view Patusan as a paragon colony, but the consequence of the white man's burden and responsibility, if he does not live up to it, if he fails and betrays it like I did the eight hundred pilgrims, is that he must leave. If the vessel hits a rock during his guidance, he must perish with the ship. I failed once in living up to that responsibility, but I will never do it again.

Marlow I can well believe it, Jim. I can only wish you the best of luck, but you seem to be well established on the right course. The only crux is Cornelius, who mismanages Stein's business.

Jim That's his own business. I have got nothing to do with it.

Marlow He is not cross with you for having stolen his daughter?

Jim I don't know. I haven't seen him since.

Marlow Beware of him, Jim. He is a white man of the worst kind – a parasite.

Jim Would I have any reason to fear a despicable wreck of a man?

Marlow Mere stupidity could cause inconceivable harm by its mere irresponsibility.

Jim My guardian angel will protect me against him. And I have the rest of my family, the old chief Doramin and his crown prince Dain Waris, my best friend. And all the people are with me. Who could wish me any harm?

Marlow If only all the leaders of the world could say the same thing. Then the whole world would be a paradise like this one.

Jim Let's be happy with this one for a good start.

Marlow And all you really did was to intend to do what is right.

Jim All responsibility depends on that. Without the intention to do the right thing, you have no responsibility, chaos and dissolution, arbitrariness, civil war and rebellion.

Marlow Yes.

Jewel I will watch him and take care of him, captain Marlow. Nothing evil could happen to us any more. We have a holy trinity here leading our lives by Doramin, Lord Jim and Dain Waris with wisdom.

Jim And love.

Dain Waris And youth and beauty.

Doramin And patience.

Marlow Can there be a more perfect stability?

Jim No. Join us, captain Marlow, for dinner.

(they leave for dinner)

Scene 2.

Marlow You visit me alone, Lord Jim's Jewel. What is your wish?

Jewel Don't take him away from me!

Marlow Why should I?

Jewel Isn't that why you have arrived here?

Marlow Certainly not. On the contrary. I came here to make certain of his success.

Jewel But you come from the world outside, the same world which he came from.

Marlow It has discarded him, like he has discarded it.

Jewel So there is nothing out there that will claim him?

Marlow No, and I least of all, for he is doing well here.

Jewel Can I rely on that?

Marlow As firmly as I am certain of it.

Jewel Why did he come here then, if not to return out there?

Marlow To not return out there.

Jewel But you are returning there.

Marlow Yes, since I must, for I have responsibilities there.

Jewel Why doesn't he then also?

Marlow He found himself not good enough for the outer world.

Jewel That's what he told me himself. He wasn't enough. But here he is more than enough. Why wasn't he in your world?

Marlow My daughter, don't let the outside world bother you, which only brings worries to those who live there. You can be certain to be able to keep him, for he has nothing to do out there.

Jewel I wish I could believe you.

Marlow He has nothing out there, no family, no contacts, no history. Here he has you, his family, the handsome able Dain Waris, and the safe old Doramin. He has established and secured a world of his own here by working with you. He has nothing else.

Jewel Is it certain?

Marlow Yes, it is certain.

Jewel I don't believe you. Something will take him away from me one day, like all the other whites. You come only to give us a glimpse of how well organised and ideal life could be, and then you disappear. You are only dreams, that fill us with wonder, just to vanish and leave us longing for the next one.

Marlow You are not Lord Jim's Jewel, but you are the one who owns him. He is yours, my Jewel. Just enjoy him and protect him and keep him as long as you can.

Jewel I will do that.

Marlow There is nothing to threaten his or your happiness with him.

Jewel It sounds too good to be true.

Marlow Still it seems to be exactly as true as it sounds.

Jewel I hear my false father coming. I don't want anything more to do with him. (*leaves*)

Marlow Cornelius?

Cornelius (*coming out from the dark*) You haven't paid me a visit, captain Marlow, although you were sent by doctor Stein.

Marlow There was no reason.

Cornelius Why not?

Marlow You mind your own business, and Jim has nothing to do with you.

Cornelius Why did you want to see Jim and not me?

Marlow Because I feel responsibility for Jim but not for you.

Cornelius But Jim was sent here to replace me.

Marlow Obviously you didn't have to be replaced, since he has left you in peace.

Cornelius But he took my daughter away from me.

Marlow That's another issue. She is not your daughter.

Cornelius But I took care of her and brought her up.

Marlow What do you want?

Cornelius Some kind of compensation.

Marlow For having mishandled her through all the years and because she for that reason found a release by Jim?

Cornelius Jim took her away from me.

Marlow Is it your or Jim's or her fault?

Cornelius You are just trampling on me, all of you!

Marlow Do you deserve anything else? How have you managed Stein's business? If you had managed them better, Jim would never have come here.

Cornelius Don't tell me that I didn't try to save his life!

Marlow It was in your house that there was an attempt against his life. Were you quite innocent?

Cornelius Captain Marlow, you are against me like everyone else!

Marlow No, Cornelius, no one is against you, but no one can be for you either, the way you have been doing. Leave me in peace now. I am leaving tomorrow.

Cornelius Will you come back?

Marlow Never.

Cornelius Are you leaving Jim here?

Marlow He belongs here.

Cornelius So we shall never be rid of him!

Marlow Cornelius, he has created a paragon society here. Only you have anything against it. If you are not satisfied you could leave here yourself.

Cornelius Where would I go?

Marlow Where would Jim go?

Cornelius The devil take you, captain Marlow, who imposed Jim on us! (*leaves*)

Marlow What a miserable creep! All Patusan would be perfectly ideal, if only that parasite of a worm didn't go on crawling here.

Act V scene 1. The council.

Doramin Can we have a report of the situation, my scout.

Scout They are villains and pirates and have only come here to destroy.

Doramin But they are white.

Scout That only makes matters worse. If they are pirates and villains they are even more so if they are white. Rajah Allang was a great villain but harmless. If white men are villains they are dangerous.

Doramin What do you say, Dain Waris my son?

Dain Waris We must kill them to the last man, the sooner, the better.

Doramin Can we do it without Tuan Jim?

Dain Waris Where is Tuan Jim?

Jewel He is gone for a visit up the country to another village, but he will soon be back.

Doramin How does Tuan Jim's Jewel think that Tuan Jim would have counselled us in this situation?

Jewel I think that he unfortunately would have given the pirates a chance of safe retreat.

Doramin I think so too. The pirates are trapped in their branch of the river, but they have guns and have fired them to kill. No one knows why they went up the river to find us, but it was probably just to burn and loot. Tuan Jim does not wish to sacrifice any lives unnecessarily, and in this affair too many have been sacrificed already. Neither do I think the pirates are prepared to take any further risks with us. They would probably just want to get away. I suggest that we keep them watched and not let them out, until Tuan Jim comes home.

Dain Waris They are stuck and can't escape and can only die as long as they stay there.

Jewel Let them sit there and die every one of them.

Doramin That would maybe be the wisest thing, since they sailed there into the trap themselves. They only have themselves to blame. Let them rot and die until Tuan Jim comes.

Several Let them rot and die until Tuan Jim comes.

(The council is dissolved.)

Scene 2.

Pirate 1 We are lost! We are fenced in! We will die here! Why the devil did we go up the river?

Brown Shut up barking, you quaking cockroach! We came here to get supplies, to plunder and break free and loose, like we always do! There is nothing odd about that! We just didn't expect any resistance, palisades, gunfire and cannons! This is obviously a rich colony since it is so well organized.

Pirate 2 But how the devil will we get out of here? Six of our men were shot, and we only have another run of the gauntlet to expect if we try to get out again!

Pirate 1 That's what I say! We are stuck! We will die here and rot to death in tropical diseases and malaria among leeches and intestinal parasites!

Brown Shut up!

Pirate 3 Gentleman Brown, we have caught a spy.

Brown A spy? What kind of spy, you blockhead?

Pirate 3 He came here on his own.

Cornelius (shows himself more abominable than ever) Don't shoot! I just want to help you!

Brown What kind of a lousy wretch is that sneaking around in the jungle?

Cornelius I am a trader here! I had everything until Jim came! He took it all away from me! He is the one who dominates the whole place! You must shoot him! That's your only way out!

Brown A demented lousy old toothless hyena is offering us his generous help.

Cornelius You have everything to gain by shooting him! The community is rich! Everything is governed by him! All you need is to liquidate him, and everything here will be yours!

Brown Who is this Jim then that you keep gibbering about, you insufferable creature?

Cornelius An adventurer like you yourselves! He has acquired the whole country for himself!

Brown Aha! I smell a colleague here! What he has done we can do as well! A white man has acquired this corner of the world and made a fortune of it. That's why everything is so well organized here. Good! We will make business with him! We might even become partners, and when the time is ripe we'll knock him off and take over the rubble, burn everything and bring all we can with us!

Cornelius No, you have to kill him at once!

Brown Is he then so easily disposed of? No, I don't think so. If he has created this order he is clever. I am getting curious about him and wish to speak with him. Can we meet him, you piece of shit?

Cornelius As soon as he returns. He will probably be prone to negotiate with you.

Brown What type of a man is he? An ordinary lawless pirate or a gentleman like me?

Cornelius An intolerable gentleman but much younger.

Brown Thirty years?

Cornelius Twenty-six. And he took my daughter away from me.

Brown Ah! There's the rub! And that daughter, a half-blood no doubt, was all you had, a slave girl you could abuse, who did everything for you? You had nothing else, you empty barrel of some useless junk, for you could never have been fit for a trader.

Cornelius You must kill him.

Brown I want to talk with him first. We might reach an agreement. In that case it would be stupid to kill him directly. Arrange a meeting, you spineless bastard, as soon as he returns.

Cornelius If only you kill him afterwards.

Brown That will be a later issue. Get lost, you miserable skunk! (*Cornelius vanishes.*)

Pirate 2 Do you think we have any chance?

Brown With a white man as a leading colonialist here everything is possible. He is after all one of us. With our guns we could at worst kill a few and get out alive, but I admit it looked dark until this Jim turned up in our way.

Jim (above) I want to speak with Brown, alone!

Brown Here he is now. Away with you. This is our only chance. (*The other pirates disappear. Aloud to Jim:*) Gentleman Brown, if you please!

Jim I am known as Lord Jim or Tuan Jim, but I am just Jim. What do you want? What are you doing here?

Brown (feigns) We came here in peace to explore the river and perhaps make some good business by favourable contacts...

Jim Don't try it! You have used your guns to kill! You are a gang of lawless pirates who only came here for looting!

Brown Okey, okey, I give in, let us just get away from here without having to run the gauntlet, and everyone will be happy and content. You shot six of our men to death!

Jim In self-defence! You were lucky to get away alive at all! The people here would have preferred to have you all killed!

Brown And who are you then, who have taken charge here? Don't tell me you are not a greedy robber and colonialist like all the others! And why have you withdrawn from the rest of the world? You can't have any clean laundry yourself!

Jim You must surrender your weapons. Or else you will never get out alive from here. You are trapped, and there is no way out except through our lines.

Brown Even a captured rat can still bite.

Jim Not if you keep it at a distance and allow it to die in its trap.

Brown All right, we will retreat and leave you in peace. We will never come back. But we can never make it without our weapons.

Jim If you are a gentleman, Brown, you can guarantee that you will not use them against us?

Brown Of course.

Jim You will have safe conduct with your men on condition that you will never come back. Your only alternative is fight unto death, which no one can win anything by, least of all you. Too many lives have been sacrificed already. I am responsible for those who are left and will not lose one of them.

Brown Who are you, lawless chief, accused of having bereft your trading partner of all he had, an arbitrary despot in the middle of the jungle out of reach of the law and order of the exterior world, to talk of responsibility? You sound like an impostor.

Jim I have spoken my word, gentleman Brown. Keep your word, and I will keep mine. (*leaves*)

Brown He gives us safe conduct but nothing into the bargain. He kicks us out but refuses to share anything of his assets with us, while he grants us our lives as if that was a benevolence to be grateful for! So, there you are again, you revolting spider. (*Cornelius is there.*) Do we have any alternative?

Cornelius Yes.

Brown Tell me.

Cornelius There is another way out, a small canal behind the island, where the prince's son is waiting with his marksmen for you to glide by, so they can send you

to the crocodiles. But if you take the back way, you can surprise them from behind and shoot as many as you like of them.

Brown A very convenient farewell present, something of the very thing I was hoping for. Will you follow us and show the way?

Cornelius Of course.

Brown That Jim was too haughty. I could never stand lords or nobility. If we shoot some of his closest men on the way he will at least have something to think of. Perhaps the natives then will massacre him in gratitude for our farewell present. It will work out fine. Thank you, Cornelius. You are just the traitor we needed.

Scene 3. The council. Jim, Doramin, Dain Waris, Jewel and others.

Doramin But is it advisable to let a gang of lawless pirates and murderers pass without cover, and can we really trust the given word of such scoundrels?

Jim We just want to get rid of them, and the sooner, the better.

Doramin My son wanted to finish them all off at once from the beginning.

Dain Waris Tuan Jim has spoken with them. They have reached an agreement. If Tuan Jim says you can trust their word, I believe in him.

Jim They just want to get away, and they are desperate.

Doramin They shot one of our men on the beach without reason.

Jim The more reason to get rid of them fast before they shoot down some more.

Jewel Cornelius has joined them.

Jim How do you know?

Jewel He said so himself. He boasted of wishing to help them.

Doramin We can never trust Cornelius.

Jim He arranged my meeting with captain Brown. Perhaps he wishes to be a diplomat, since he can't be anything else.

Jewel He is all deceit.

Doramin What do you suggest, Tuan Jim? We trust you.

Jim To let them pass and disappear forever out at sea from whence they came. We can watch their retreat and have them in front sight all the way.

Dain Waris If they open fire we could easily gun them all down.

Doramin It's your people, Tuan Jim. You understand them. We don't. Sherif Ali and Rajah Allang were greedy robbers and tyrants but at the same time petty fools and ridiculous cowards, but the white man is never to be trifled with, and if he once grows into a greedy robber and murderer his cruelty is more terrible than any Muslim's. Take care, Tuan Jim. We trust you. If you say that we should give them a safe passage, we will give them a safe passage. But we do so only because you say so.

Jim Thanks, Doramin. All I want is to save as many lives as possible.

Doramin You are a good man, Tuan Jim. The problem is that you are rather lonesome as such, and our experience of the white world which is yours is that no one there is of that kind, except my friend doctor Stein, you and perhaps captain

Marlow, who all three make exclusive exceptions, while the trapped pirates in the forest belong to the ordinary white rule of evil that we never wished to be applied here. I hope your goodness will win, Tuan Jim. Or else the rule wins. (*rises. Break up.*)

Dain Waris I will go down the river and make ready with my men, Tuan Jim. I don't think the pirates will dare any mischief. They must be aware that they are all dead if they try.

Jim I am afraid they don't care, since they are desperate. Take care, Dain Waris. Take no risks.

Dain Waris Trust me, Tuan Jim. (*bids farewell by touching him gently on the shoulder. Departs.*)

Jewel I am afraid that you overestimate the humanity of the pirates, Tuan Jim. They are worse than beasts since they kill only to kill and not to survive. We shouldn't have allowed them to get away alive.

Jim Isn't mercy the first and last thing that is preached by every religion? Isn't empathy and compassion something natural to all normal people? Criminals who turn into murderers have been excluded from the community of normal humanity, but we wouldn't be human ourselves if we weren't always prepared to give them a second chance. Let them live, so that we may live in peace by them. To live and let live is the basic rule of all life. If we abandon it we are not worthy of living.

Jewel I love you, Jim, and don't want to lose you. I fear that something terrible is happening for which not even you can take any responsibility. We all want to keep you, but something wants to take you away from us.

Jim Don't worry, my Jewel. I have come here to you to stay.
(*Gunfire is heard at a distance.*)

Gunfire!

Jewel The pirates!

Jim No, nothing must have happened.

Jewel (embracing him) Don't leave us, Jim, whatever happens!

Jim That's the last thing I will do, but whatever has happened, I am responsible for it.

Jewel I hope the pirates are dead, if anyone is. They were doomed anyway. Even if they made it out at sea, they would not long have survived there.

Tamb'Itam (enters, prostrates himself to Jim)

Jim What has happened, Tamb'Itam?

Tamb'Itam A catastrophe! The pirates found the canal behind the island and surprised Dain Waris with an ambush. They had no chance. The murderers shot as many they could and then disappeared. Someone must have shown them the way.

Jewel Cornelius.

Jim And Dain Waris?

Tamb'Itam Dead, shot right at the front, one of the first who fell.

Jim No! (*utterly devastated*) My best friend! My chief Doramin's only son!

Tamb'Itam They carry him here. They will come with him any moment. I hurried to get here before them.

Jim Thank you, Tamb'Itam.

Tamb'Itam There are many dead. Bitterness is increasing while the tears start flowing and the sorrow and outrage start crying out in wailing woe.

Jim We must immediately start chasing the damned murderers. They must not get away. Summon the council immediately, Tamb'Itam.

Tamb'Itam I am sorry, Tuan Jim, but it is no longer safe for me to appear among my people. Most of them already know what has happened and think of you. Cornelius is already murdered.

Jewel Serves him right. He was the only guilty one.

Jim I understand, Tamb'Itam. I must take my responsibility.

Jewel No, Tuan Jim, it was not yours. Cornelius betrayed us. He alone was guilty, and he is dead.

Jim But I advised them to it. I took responsibility for it. I promised them that lives would be saved. Instead...

Tamb'Itam They are coming now carrying Dain Waris.

Jim The noblest of nobles and my best friend. How can destiny be so cruel? What did I do wrong? Did I love too much? Did I think too well of human nature?

Jewel Don't go out to them Tuan. They will kill you without thinking in blind rage and then afterwards regret it. It will do no good. We could escape down the river.

Jim No, my Jewel, such a cowardice I could never again make myself guilty of.

Jewel You were never a coward.

Jim I would be if I ran away with you. I must meet Doramin, my Jewel, and look into his eyes and accept the blame for this. Then he may do what he likes with me. I must be allowed to cry over Dain Waris' body.

Jewel Only women cry, Tuan Jim. Let's cry forever, but don't leave me, Tuan Jim. Love me, so that I may cry the more later.

Jim Leave me, my Jewel, so that I may ponder this by myself.

Jewel I will never leave you.

Jim I must leave you, my Jewel.

Jewel Never! I will never forgive you!

Jim You must forgive me, my Jewel, for having to do what I must.

Jewel You must live! That's all you must do!

Jim Not without responsibility.

Jewel Responsibility! That's your excuse for leaving me!

Jim No, it's my excuse for being able to bear with life. (*wants to go. Jewel clings crying to his legs and refuses to let him go. He must tear himself away by force.*)

(*outside, alone*) Is it then forbidden to be an idealist for being human? Is it then forbidden to at all think well of human nature, so that if you do, you have to be punished by seeing innocent people being hit? If I am good, what then am I doing here, if man is evil? If the rule of evil must win and crush the good exceptions, like the perfectly innocent Dain Waris in the flower of his freshest loveliest youth, how can man then at all exist and believe himself capable of doing so? I did no wrong in this case, who wanted to give grace a chance before right, since I only wished to do

what was right and let life live, but still I have been terribly and unjustly punished by a destiny that no one deserved. My only crime was that I did as well as I could. If man is to be punished for his good will, then you have only one thing to do, and that is to form the life you have into as powerful a manifestation as possible of a protest and demonstration against a destiny of injustice by openly and straightforwardly accepting it as a martyr for your foolhardy romantic idealism.

(Dain Waris is carried in on a litter. The scene opens to the only open space in the village. An old woman with long white hair let down in considerable length is celebrating orgies of sorrow around him: his mother. Doramin sits quiet and motionless in his chair with both his flint pistols resting in his bosom in his hands.)

Doramin I see a ring on his finger. What ring is that?

(some servants remove the ring from Dain Waris' finger.)

Tamb'Itam It's the ring that Tuan Jim gave Dain Waris as a sign that your son could trust him.

Doramin Let me see. *(examines the ring carefully)* It's the ring I gave my friend doctor Stein many years ago as a token of my friendship. If doctor Stein ever would send anyone here with that ring I promised I would do everything for him. Tuan Jim came with the ring doctor Stein had given him. We did everything for Tuan Jim, and Tuan Jim did everything for us. He promised to make my son chief of Patusan after me. How could everything go so terribly wrong?

Jim (comes up to Dain Waris' body) My noble prince and best friend, farewell. It must resound throughout the universe with deafening booming silence the obvious fact that this was the very last thing anyone of us wanted, since we all loved you as the loveliest and noblest of youths and most of all myself at least as much as your father. I can wage anything on that he who shot you did not know who he was murdering. *(at last turns to Doramin)* Doramin, I come to you openly and unarmed in the deepest sorrow of my life. Although I neither wanted it nor intended it, it was my fault.

General murmur He takes it all on himself.

Jim (louder, to all) Yes, I take it all on myself.

Doramin You came as a liberator and saved us from a curse, but still our curse has grown even worse. You were my son's best friend, like you also were like a son to me, but now all the good you managed to accomplish has been annihilated. You have asked yourself for death for your atonement, and we must grant your sincere wish. *(rises with difficulty aided by servants)*

Jim Don't hesitate, Doramin. Kill me for what I am.

Doramin (shoots him straight in his chest, furious)

Jim (looks around to see everyone one last time before falling)

Jewel (rushes forth, throws herself over him) I shall never forgive you! I shall never forgive you!

Doramin Bury him together with my son. They are both victims to the same murderer.

Jewel (picks up Jim's ring, dropped by Doramin)

Doramin Yes, keep it, my daughter. It's yours. Carry it back to my friend doctor Stein. (*Jewel doesn't answer but retires with the ring*)

(Jim is lifted and laid beside Dain Waris)

Doramin Let us never stop crying and never cease lamenting. And let us never forget my beloved son Dain Waris and his best friend Tuan Jim, who was the best friend of all of us, for he was one of us. (*retires. The crying women take over the scene led by the bitterly wailing mother. Jewel keeps his ring as the most precious possible jewel.*)

The End.

*(Verona, Easter 2008,
translated May 2020.)*

Post script.

Joseph Conrad's novels are difficult to dramatise, since the dialogue is so scant: his characters say as little as possible and never speak in vain. The worst example should be "Nostromo", his greatest and only failure of a novel, where the dialogue is practically non-existent. An exception from the lack of dialogue though is "Lord Jim", which mostly consists of Marlow's story, which is only talk, which makes a dramatization even more difficult. It has been impossible however to resist the challenge in this, and the result has become much stuff that Conrad never wrote. I have for example found myself obliged to let Doramin speak for himself which he never does in the novel, if I stuck strictly to the story though, which definitely is Conrad's most intriguing tale of destiny, which he was very much aware of himself, when he defended Marlow's three hours' long talk with that such a story very well could keep up the interest for the dilemma of Jim's romantic delicacy of conscience for ever.