

MERRICK. I'm sorry, Ross. It's just the way things are.

ROSS. By god. Then I am lost.

Fadeout.

SCENE 16

NO RELIABLE GENERAL
ANESTHETIC HAS APPEARED
YET

TREVES, *reading, makes notes.* MERRICK *works.*

MERRICK. Frederick—do you believe in heaven? Hell? What about Christ? What about God? I believe in heaven. The Bible promises in heaven the crooked shall be made straight.

TREVES. So did the rack, my boy. So do we all.

MERRICK. You don't believe?

TREVES. I will settle for a reliable general anesthetic at this point. Actually, though—I had a patient once. A woman. Operated on her for—a woman's thing. Used ether to anesthetize. Tricky stuff. Didn't come out of it. Pulse stopped, no vital signs, absolutely moribund. Just a big white dead mackerel. Five minutes later, she fretted back to existence, like a lost explorer with a great scoop of the undiscovered.

MERRICK. She saw heaven?

TREVES. Well. I quote her: it was neither heavenly nor hellish. Rather like perambulating in a London fog. People drifted by, but no one spoke. London, mind you. Hell's probably the provinces. She was

shocked it wasn't more exotic. But allowed as how had she stayed, and got used to the familiar, so to speak, it did have hints of becoming a kind of bliss. She fled. MERRICK. If you do not believe—why did you send Mrs. Kendal away?

TREVES. Don't forget. It saved you once. My interference. You know well enough—it was not proper.

MERRICK. How can you tell? If you do not believe?

TREVES. There are still standards we abide by.

MERRICK. They make us happy because they are for our own good.

TREVES. Well. Not always.

MERRICK. Oh.

TREVES. Look, if you are angry, just say so.

MERRICK. Whose standards are they?

TREVES. I am not in the mood for this chipping away at the edges, John.

MERRICK. That do not always make us happy because they are not always for our own good?

TREVES. Everyone's. Well. Mine. Everyone's.

MERRICK. That woman's, that Juliet?

TREVES. Juliet?

MERRICK. Who died, then came back.

TREVES. Oh. I see. Yes. Her standards too.

MERRICK. So.

TREVES. So what?

MERRICK. Did you see her? Naked?

TREVES. When I was operating. Of course—

MERRICK. Oh.

TREVES. Oh what?

MERRICK. Is it okay to see them naked if you cut them up afterwards?

TREVES. Good Lord. I'm a surgeon. That is science.

MERRICK. She died. Mrs. Kendal didn't.

TREVES. Well, she came back too.