

Ken Follett's

The Pillars of the Earth

A musical by Høg-Aagaard-Svanekier

Revised Edition

Synopsis January 2025

ACT ONE

PROLOGUE

MUSIC CUE # 01: THE HANGING AND ELLEN'S CURSE

Solos: Ellen, Jacques + Underscore and Dialogue

The performance begins musically and dramatically with a bang, as the year **1123** is projected onto the backdrop.

Troubadour **Jacques Cherbourg** stands on the scaffold, sentenced to death for the theft of a jewel-encrusted altar vessel by **Priest Waleran Bigod**, **Knight Percy**, and **Monk James**.

With the noose around his neck, Jacques sings a love song, and a young, pregnant woman in the crowd, **Ellen**, joins in. The executioner hangs Jacques, and Ellen curses his three murderers with sickness, sorrow, oblivion, regret, and sudden death. She flees into the forest, singing to the unborn child in her womb, warning him to beware of the world's wrath.

A caption on the backdrop reads **20 years later**.

SCENE 1: SHIRING

MUSIC CUE # 02: SHIRING

Ensemble Song and Dialogue

In the southern English town of Shiring, ordinary citizens struggle daily to make ends meet. Great is the joy when something new and unexpected happens: a proposal and a major drama. The townspeople take great pleasure in recounting the events.

The women tell how the noble lady Aliena has rejected the lesser nobleman, **William Hamleigh**. In a flashback, we see the rejection witnessed by William's parents, **Percy** and **Regan Hamleigh**, as well as Aliena's father, **Earl Bartholomew**, and her brother, **Richard**. Richard tries to reason with Aliena, but she reminds him that their father promised she could choose her future husband. The Hamleigh family is furious over the broken engagement.

The men in the town talk about the master builder, **Tom Builder**, who is constructing a new house, a commission from William Hamleigh. It was meant for him and his bride, Aliena, but what will

happen now that the marriage is off? No one likes William, so everyone, both men and women, watch eagerly when he shows up at the house.

Unfortunately for Tom Builder and his family, William no longer needs the house and fires Tom. Tom demands payment for the work he has already done and stands firm even though William is tempted to strike him down then and there. Tom threatens William with God's vengeance, and the young nobleman backs off and pays Tom but exiles him and his family from Shiring.

SCENE 2: TOM AND AGNES

Tom's pregnant wife, **Agnes**, worries about their future as they pack their things. What will they do now? Tom muses about pursuing his dream and seeking work on the construction of a cathedral, and he pulls out his designs. But Agnes dismisses the idea almost before he can voice it. Tom must put his daydreams aside, for now it's all about survival and finding a safe place for her to give birth. They already have **Alfred** and little **Martha** to take care of, so they need security and stability in their lives. Their argument ends in laughter when Martha and Alfred return with a piglet they bought with the remainder of the family fortune.

Tom and Agnes look lovingly at their children, pack up their things, and leave. Like most others, their family struggles daily to make ends meet. But they have the children – and, most importantly, each other.

SCENE 2: THE FAMILY IN THE FOREST

In the forest, the family is attacked by outlaws, and the pig is stolen. Little Martha is struck on the head and falls unconscious. Ellen (the woman from the Prologue, now 20 years older) appears and offers help. Agnes is skeptical, but Tom is grateful for any assistance they can get. Fortunately, Ellen revives Martha and then disappears back into the forest with her son, **Jack**, as quickly as she appeared.

MUSIC CUE # 03: ONLY WITH YOU

Solo: Tom

While the family rests in the forest, Tom prays to God. "Let me build You the most beautiful cathedral if only You will save my family from hunger and cold!"

As the song ends, Agnes goes into labour. But something is very wrong.

SCENE 4: A NEW FRIAR

The **monk Philip** from Wales arrives at Kingsbridge Priory and is received by the somewhat gruff **Prior James**. Philip apparently has a guest waiting for him in his cell. "He won't say who he is. We don't want trouble here, Brother Philip."

SCENE 5: TWO BROTHERS

In his cell, Philip discovers that the guest is his brother, **Francis**, who has come in disguise and babbles about politics and coup attempts against the new king. Philip asks him to stop. “Powerful people have always tried to eliminate each other. Ordinary people can’t do anything about it – certainly not a simple monk.”

But Francis is impossible to stop. In crosscuts between Philip’s cell and the great hall at Earls castle outside Shiring, we hear Francis (in the present) reveal the sinister plans to Philip, and we see Francis (in the past) eavesdropping on a conversation between his lord, **Robert of Gloucester**, and Bartholomew, Earl of Shiring (Aliena’s father), who both support the king’s rival. Francis moves freely between the past and present, between Earls castle and Kingsbridge Priory, so the complex plan is visualized for the audience.

To avoid betraying his own lord, Francis wants Philip to go to the Bishop of Kingsbridge and reveal the plot. But Philip refuses. What does politics and the secular world matter to him? He has devoted his life to God and His heavenly kingdom. But Francis insists and plays his trump card: If the coup against the king succeeds, the Church and God’s kingdom will suffer. The king is a strong supporter of the Church, and that support will diminish if he is removed from power. It is nothing less than a holy act to go to the bishop and stop the rebellion. In haste, Francis bids farewell to Philip, leaving his brother alone with his doubts.

MUSIC CUE # 04: PHILIP’S DOUBTS

Solo: Philip

In a precursor to the Act 2 song **THERE IS A GOD**, Philip considers his options. He has devoted his life to God. Should he risk everything by meddling in worldly affairs? As the song ends, he makes his decision and heads for the bishop.

SCENE 6: TOM’S FAREWELL

MUSIC CUE # 05: TOM’S FAREWELL

Solo: Tom

Agnes has died in labour. Tom, Alfred, and Martha stand in sorrow over her grave. Tom holds his newborn son in his arms.

Knowing he cannot possibly feed the little child, Tom places it by the grave and walks away with Alfred and Martha.

SCENE 7: PHILIP WITH WALERAN

Philip has tried to get an audience with the bishop – but in vain. **Archdeacon Waleran Bigod** has told him that the bishop is ill – nothing to worry about, but he cannot receive visitors. Waleran has urged Philip to tell him what troubles him, and despite nagging doubts, Philip has revealed the upcoming coup against the king.

Waleran can barely hide his excitement over the juicy revelation. He senses that in Philip (who has only just arrived in the arena), he can find an excellent ally/puppet. “Our fates are now intertwined, Brother Philip,” he says. “I will do you the favour of relieving you of this burdensome knowledge and bring it to the king, and you can do me a favour one day.” As he sends Philip off, Waleran can hardly believe his luck. This will help him climb the ecclesiastical ladder.

SCENE 8: HAMLEIGHS HOS WALERAN

The light changes, and Waleran is now with the Hamleigh family. Parents Regan and Percy are still furious over their son William’s rejected proposal – William even more so. But when Waleran tells them about Earl Bartholomew’s treasonous plans, rage turns to hopeful joy. What better way to get revenge than to strike at Aliena’s father? The family will be destroyed forever, and Percy Hamleigh will become the new earl. All Waleran asks in return is the right to use Earls castle’s quarry. For when he becomes bishop (which won’t take long: the bishop’s health is much worse than he implied to Philip), Waleran will build a castle befitting a bishop. The Hamleighs agree.

SCENE 9: PHILIP FINDS THE CHILD

MUSIC CUE # 06: PHILIP FINDS THE CHILD

Instrumental/Chorus

In the forest, Tom’s abandoned child cries inconsolably. Jack, who has been hiding in the bushes, comes forward. However, he must quickly hide again when Philip walks by on his way through the forest from his meeting with Waleran.

Philip hears the infant’s cries and kneels by it. He looks around, realizes the child is abandoned, and takes it with him back to the priory.

SCENE 10: WHERE IS MY SON

The family is on their way back to the grave. Tom regrets leaving his child and panics when he is no longer where he left him. Jack emerges from his hiding place and tries to tell him what he saw, but Tom attacks him. Ellen intervenes and calms the situation. She asks Jack to take the children back to their hideout while she stays with Tom and talks him down.

MUSIC CUE # 07: ELLEN COMFORTS TOM

Instrumental

Ellen kisses Tom’s sorrow away, and they end up making love on the forest floor.

SCENE 11: CURMUDGEONS

The conniving **subprior Remigius** complains to Prior James about Philip bringing an infant to the monastery. But James is happy. The monks are no longer complaining, there is peace and quiet! The monks pull Remigius over to see the little one smile. Philip has given him the name Jonathan, God's Gift.

SCENE 12: HUNGER

MUSIC CUE # 08: HUNGER

Ensemble Song

Winter rages. Poor people freeze and starve. Tom, Ellen, and their blended family travel around the region looking for work and food, but it is not easy. Alfred struggles to accept his father's new girlfriend and her son. Three mouths to feed are hard. Five mouths are impossible. They arrive at Earls castle (along with other poor people) and seek work from the Earl, but all are rejected by Richard.

Martha collapses from exhaustion, and Aliena, who has witnessed her brother's rejection of them, comes to her aid. She gives them all bread and suggests they try their luck at the priory in Kingsbridge. Jack gazes admiringly at Aliena and is too late to notice that Alfred has snatched Jack's piece of bread. Ellen takes the bread from Alfred and gives it back to Jack. She complains to Tom about Alfred's behaviour, but Tom brushes it off. "It's just boyish pranks. We have to stick together now! We must go to the priory in Kingsbridge. God will help us."

SCENE 13: ELECTION OF THE PRIOR

At the priory, there is commotion. Prior James has suddenly died, and Remigius is confident he will succeed him. But Philip suspects that Remigius will continue in James' footsteps and lead the priory to ruin, so he proposes that he should be the prior instead of Remigius. Although most of the monks sympathize with Philip's cause, they lean towards supporting Remigius. At least they know what they are getting with him. To everyone's surprise, Archdeacon Waleran appears and gives his support to Philip. But on the condition that Philip secures the monks' support so they will elect Waleran when the time comes for a new bishop to be chosen.

Philip succumbs to temptation and his own ambitions and makes a deal with Waleran. Remigius is forced to step down (which he does willingly, his respect for Waleran apparently boundless), and Philip becomes the new prior.

To Philip's horror, Waleran now tells him that the bishop died earlier that morning after being seriously ill for a long time. Philip has been tricked and must now fulfil his promise and help Waleran become bishop.

SCENE 14: THE FAMILY AT THE PRIORY

Philip is quickly distracted. A family has just arrived at the priory and requests an audience with the prior. It is Tom, Ellen, and the children.

While Tom talks to Prior Philip to seek work, the children and Ellen look around. Jack notices that the church is in very poor condition. Old and dilapidated. There must be work for a builder here. Alfred mocks him. "What do you know about building, Jack?"

Jack is about to retort, but just then, Tom returns with bad news. The family can get a meal and stay overnight at the priory – but there is no work. Tomorrow they must move on. On their way to the cell where they will sleep, Jack recognizes the friar who took Tom's child with him, and Tom is relieved when he sees one of the monks hand the child to Philip. His son is in good hands here, and Tom is grateful. Even if the family must move on tomorrow.

SCENE 15: THE PRIORY CHURCH HAS TO BURN

MUSIC CUE # 09: THE PRIORY CHURCH HAS TO BURN

Solo: Jack

Jack does not accept that they must all move on. This monastery is their salvation. He makes his decision. When everyone is asleep, he sneaks out and sets the cathedral on fire. Only this way Tom can get work and save the family's life.

SCENE 16: THE PRICE OF TREASON

MUSIC CUE # 10: THE PRICE OF TREASON

Dialogue with Underscore and Chorus

Just before Waleran is to be installed as bishop, he receives a letter from Regan Hamleigh, informing him that her husband and son plan to initiate the attack on Bartholomew that very day. **The Archbishop of Canterbury** leads Waleran into the consecration ceremony.

In a sequence with two locations, we follow the bishop's installation with crosscuts to Percy Hamleigh and his men attacking Earls castle and confronting Earl Bartholomew with his treason against the King. The Earl knows he is doomed but begs for mercy for his children. Percy promises, whereupon his men execute Bartholomew. Percy leaves Aliena and Richard to his son, William, who, along with his squire **Walter**, rapes Aliena and forces Richard to watch.

SCENE 17: GOD BE MY WITNESS

MUSIC CUE # 11: GOD BE MY WITNESS

Solo: Aliena

Aliena's life is in ruins. Gone are her girlish dreams of finding true love. She is certain she will never love any man again. Her only goal in life now is to commit to her vow to her late father: That she will do anything she can to restore her brother in Earls castle as the rightful earl of Shiring.

SCENE 18: THE DREAM OF A CATHEDRAL PROPER

Philip is devastated that the cathedral has burned down. So, when Tom offers his help to rebuild it, Philip is grateful and believes that Tom's arrival at the priory is a blessing from God. He hires Tom as the master builder responsible for the church's reconstruction, and Tom's family is allowed to stay at the priory. The family is relieved.

But Tom does not just want to rebuild the rather modest cathedral. The diocese deserves a proper cathedral! He pulls out his drawings and shows Philip the visionary columns and arches he has created. Philip is impressed, and the idea appeals to his vanity and awakens a dream in him. But where can they get the stones, they need? Tom asks. Philip smiles cunningly. He has a feeling that someone owes him a favour.

Tom is happy. Not only can he finally build a cathedral, but he also gets the opportunity to witness his son, Jonathan's, upbringing. Although he obviously cannot reveal that he is Jonathan's father.

SCENE 19: PHILIP AND JACK MEET ALIENA

MUSIC CUE # 12: PHILIP AND JACK MEET ALIENA

Ensemble Song and Dialogue

Aliena and Richard are at the fleece market in Shiring. The two, who have lost both home, father, and fortune, are now trying to create a new life, somewhat lower down on the social ladder than before. Aliena has bought fleece from a local farmer and plans to sell it at the market for profit, but Richard is furious that she has spent their last money on buying wool. He only thinks about buying swords and equipment so he can impress the King and win back his title and inheritance – as they both promised their father before he was killed. But Aliena has her wits about her and knows that they need to invest if they want to make money and survive. She is, however, almost losing hope when a buyer tries to cheat her because she is inexperienced as a trader.

Just then, Philip steps in. He and Jack are also at the market to sell fleece from the priory's sheep, and he helps Aliena, so she does not lose her investment. She is grateful, especially when he also invites her to return to Kingsbridge with them. Jack remembers Aliena as the angel who helped Martha when she was near death from starvation and is deeply fascinated by her.

SCENE 20: THE STONE SPEAKS TO JACK

MUSIC CUE # 13: THE STONE SPEAKS TO JACK

Solo: Jack + Underscore

Back at the priory, Philip happily tells Tom that the King has replied to a letter of his, granting them permission to carve stones from the Shiring quarry: They can start building the new cathedral! Jack, meanwhile, has snuck into Tom's workshop, and – obsessed with Aliena – tries to recreate her beauty in a large piece of rock. He is totally absorbed in his infatuation and his creative work that he does not notice Tom and Alfred entering the workshop.

SCENE 21: YOU SHALL BE MY APPRENTICE

Alfred can't wait to see Jack scolded. No one touches Tom's tools without permission. But Tom is not angry. Quite the contrary. He is impressed with Jack's work and sees potential in the boy. He suggests that Jack become his apprentice, and Jack accepts immediately. Tom begins to tell Jack about the various tools in his bag and about masonry in general, and Alfred feels ignored. He leaves the workshop, consumed by jealousy.

SCENE 14: WALERAN WITH PHILIP

Waleran visits Kingsbridge with Percy Hamleigh (the new Earl of Shiring after the successful elimination of Bartholomew) to inspect the reconstruction of the cathedral. Philip tells him that

the king has given him permission to use stone from the Earl's quarry – a gesture of thanks for preventing the coup against him. Although Waleran is surprised, he is initially accepting and accommodating – of course, Philip and Tom can share the quarry with him. But to his horror, he realizes that this is no ordinary reconstruction they are undertaking. Philip proudly presents Tom's drawings to him and Percy and explains that the King has agreed that Kingsbridge should have exclusive rights to the quarry. Waleran's dream of building a castle is shattered.

Outside, Waleran is furious: "Who does this little prior think he is? Why is he allowed to rebuild the cathedral? I am a bishop; he is a damn monk!" Suddenly they see Ellen, who is bringing lunch to Tom, Alfred, and Jack at the construction site. They both recognize her and are shocked. Has the witch returned? "What is she doing here?" Percy is alarmed. It must be a sign. "Remember the curse she cast upon us!" Waleran reassures him. "It cannot be the Lord's will that a cathedral in His honour be built by a man married to a witch." He grabs Remigius and questions him angrily why he had not informed him that the witch had returned! "You must inform me of everything that happens here at the priory!"

SCENE 23: THE MIDSUMMER FEAST

MUSIC CUE # 14: THE MIDSUMMER FEAST

Ensemble Song with Dialogue

It is midsummer, and there is a celebration in the square in front of the construction site in Kingsbridge. As a prelude to the festivities, Philip proclaims that he, in collaboration with Aliena, will open Kingsbridge's own fleece market next summer. The game "how-many-bread" is played, a pagan custom that Philip tolerates but is not enthusiastic about. One asks a question (e.g., "how many years until..." or "how many men love you") and breaks off a piece of bread. The number of kernels in the bite constitutes the answer. It leads to stolen glances, blushing cheeks, laughter, and much-needed fun after the toil of construction. Both Jack and Alfred court Aliena.

Philip seizes the opportunity to pull Jack aside and urges him to become a monk. But Jack declines the offer. Aliena has taken an interest in him. He cannot let that chance slip away by becoming a monk. He dances with Aliena, and he sings a song that Ellen taught him (hers and Jacques Cherbourg's love song). A song that Aliena also knows.

SCENE 24: A STORY JUST FOR YOU

MUSIC CUE # 15: A STORY JUST FOR YOU

Duet: Jack, Aliena

Some time has passed. Jack and Aliena meet in the forest and can no longer hide their love. Jack makes up a story just for her, and they kiss.

SCENE 25: CAUGHT

Alfred sees Jack and Aliena kissing and loses his temper. He chases Jack back to town.

SCENE 26: JACKS DECISION

MUSIC CUE # 16: BROTHER AGAINST BROTHER

Instrumental

Alfred and Jack fight each other, and during the brawl, they damage part of the construction.

Philip is furious. Tom must take action. There is too much at stake, especially now that Kingsbridge is to have its own fleece market. More business in town will attract more people. And the construction of the cathedral must not be delayed by childish pranks. Tom must choose. Both boys cannot stay and work on the cathedral. One of them must be expelled from the town. To Ellen's great dismay, Tom sides with Alfred. Jack is to be sent away. But Jack pleads with Philip. Does the offer still stand? Can he become a monk? He can, says Philip, but that means he must dedicate his life to the church. He can no longer work on the cathedral. Jack accepts Philip's offer, even though it means he can never have Aliena. But at least he is still close to her.

MUSIC CUE # 17: GOD BE MY WITNESS Reprise 1

Solo: Aliena

Aliena is devastated. Jack is the first man she has felt safe with – and attracted to – since the rape, and now he is being taken from her because he is to be a monk!

SCENE 27: WILLIAM'S INHERITANCE

Earl Percy Hamleigh has died after a lengthy illness and lies in state. Waleran offers his condolences to Regan and William. He is shaken by Percy's death. He recalls the curse cast upon Jacques Cherbourg's three murderers: "You shall suffer disease and sudden death. You shall die in poverty and oblivion. Prior James died suddenly. Percy was eaten up from the inside... What will happen to me?"

But Regan has other, more pressing matters to think about: Now that Percy is dead, both William and Bartholomew's son Richard can claim the earldom! What should they do? "Support the King's opponent," says Waleran. The King has suffered a setback in the civil war, and Richard is fighting on the King's side, so now is the time for William to cement his position. The new fleece market in Kingsbridge is a threat to Shiring. Furthermore, Aliena has become the region's largest fleece merchant. Shall she continue to humiliate the Hamleighs? William is on board. He is eager to confront Aliena again.

And if something were to happen to the witch Ellen, that would not be bad either, Waleran continues. "She was the one who cursed your father!"

William charges off. Regan is shaken. Has Waleran just incited her son to commit murder? "It is doing God's work to eradicate witches," Waleran responds. "And with Ellen dead the curse will be lifted. Remember the rest of her words: 'Your children will hang from the gallows!' Is that what you want for your William?" Regan is convinced.

SCENE 28: FLEECE MARKET IN KINGSBRIDGE

MUSIC CUE # 18: PRELUDE TO THE FLEECE MARKET

Solo: Jonathan + Instrumental w. Dialogue

There is a celebration in Kingsbridge. The grand fleece market is finally open for business. People are flocking in, and Aliena and the other merchants are busy.

The friars and labourers are touched as Martha presents the now **5-year-old Jonathan** in a monk's habit, and Philip asks him to open the market by asking for God's blessing.

MUSIC CUE # 19: TOM'S DEATH

Solo: Jonathan + Instrumental w. Dialogue

Afterwards, Jonathan climbs up the scaffolding around the cathedral tower but gets scared. Tom spots him and hurries up there. He comforts the boy and is about to tell him that he is his father when they spot armed men approaching the town in the distance. Tom raises the alarm, but the warning comes too late. William and his men rush through the town with torches and strike people down. William sets fire to Aliena's wool and laughs mockingly at her. She tries to save her goods but has to give up. Jack rescues her from the flames.

William spots Ellen and attacks her, but Tom saves her and is himself cut down. Philip shouts to William that he will burn in Hell for his misdeeds. William, drunk on his actions, shouts back: "This is Hell!" He leaves Kingsbridge, and the town burns down.

MUSIC CUE # 20: YOUR HEART'S CATHEDRAL

Solo: Jack with Chorus

Ellen holds Tom's dead body in her arms. Jack holds Jonathan close and sings a song to the man who has been like a father to him. He vows to take care of Jonathan and to complete Tom's work on the cathedral. He will build columns so high they reach the heavens.

INTERMISSION

ACT TWO

SCENE 29: GRIEF

MUSIC CUE # 21: HUNGER Reprise

Chorus

The citizens of Kingsbridge are furious and devastated by the situation William Hamleigh has put them in. The town has burned down, dear friends and family members are dead, they have lost everything!

MUSIC CUE # 22: THERE IS A GOD

Solo: Philip with Ensemble

Philip, who himself is crushed after the disastrous fleece market, has listened to the angry and sorrowful townspeople and now speaks courage and determination back into both himself and the inhabitants. The harvest must be gathered, and the town must be rebuilt.

SCENE 30: ABSOLUTION

Waleran is with Remigius when Regan and William arrive. Waleran congratulates William on the attack on the fleece market, which has burned down. "And the witch is dead, I assume?" William responds evasively, and Remigius must confess. "Not quite, but the master builder is." Waleran becomes furious with William. Killing a witch is a holy act – killing a builder will send him straight to purgatory.

"But without a master builder, they won't be able to finish the cathedral," William retorts. "That's not entirely true," says Remigius. "Philip has hired Tom's son, Alfred, to finish the construction."

"But the fleece market ..." William chokes out desperately.

"Will be restored. And they're also about to begin harvesting in Kingsbridge."

Waleran boils over and orders them to get out. What use are they to him anymore?

"I presume the bishop still needs money for his construction?" says Regan.

"I know as well as you that you have been penniless since your husband's death," Waleran snaps.

"That's not entirely true," chirps Remigius. "William is to be betrothed to the young Elizabeth Weymouth. A wealthy family."

"You are well-informed," smiles Regan icily. "But it's true. My William is to marry Elizabeth, and when it rains on the nobility, it drips on the bishop. The girl is here, actually. Perhaps your grace will bless the union? And give my son absolution. I promise it will serve your best interest."

William meets **Elizabeth Weymouth** for the first time and is unimpressed. She is young (14 years old) and a small, flat-chested mouse. He refuses. He won't be burdened with a blue-eyed, horse-loving girl. Regan hisses: If he wants his absolution, he will do as she says! Waleran urges them to move into the chapel, and he will come soon to bless the happy couple. Regan, William, and Elizabeth exit. Waleran thanks Remigius for the information. Remigius knows he should leave, but he still airs his concern: With Ellen still alive, she is a threat to them both.

"I know," says Waleran, assuring him there is still time. If they just keep their secret and if Remigius follows Waleran's instructions and puts as many obstacles as possible in Prior Philip's way, their time will come.

SCENE 31: LOVE IMPOSSIBLE

Preparations are being made for the harvest festival in the square. Jack walks with Jonathan, who has lost the ability to speak since Tom died. They run into Aliena, an awkward moment. Aliena hates the fact that she and Jack are not allowed to be together, and she persuades Jack to meet her at the cathedral after the harvest festival.

Philip delivers the news to Aliena that King Stephen has lost a major battle in the war with Queen Maud and is in retreat. Richard survived the battle but has lost his warhorse and needs money.

SCENE 32: HARVEST FESTIVAL

MUSIC CUE # 23: HARVEST FESTIVAL

Ensemble Song + Dialogue

There is a harvest festival in Kingsbridge. Each household has baked a loaf of bread, and they are displayed on long tables. Alfred airs his marriage proposal to Aliena and gets a blunt refusal. When Richard arrives at the festival, however, everything is turned upside down. He reminds Aliena of the promise to their father. If a marriage to Alfred will make it possible for Richard to reclaim title and land, she must sacrifice herself.

SCENE 23: YOU HAVE TO HEAR ME

MUSIC CUE # 24: YOU HAVE TO HEAR ME

Solo: Aliena

Aliena is devastated. She is torn between the man she loves and the brother she must help. She is bound by her oath. But most of all bound to her father who is gone forever.

SCENE 34: JACK APPREHENDED

Jack meets up at the cathedral as agreed, but to his dismay, Aliena declares that she will marry Alfred. Jack loses his temper, thereby calling attention to himself, and ends up being thrown in the dungeon by Philip.

SCENE 35: JACK'S CELL

MUSIC CUE # 25: ELLEN FREES JACK

Short Dialogue Intro/Solo: Ellen

Jack sits alone in his cell when Ellen comes to him through a secret passageway. She tells him the story of his father, Jacques Cherbouurg. He was a French troubadour who came to England on the White Ship, a vessel carrying the English heir to the throne, but it sank under mysterious circumstances, and Jacques was the only survivor. He met Ellen, they fell in love, but evil people

were after him for some reason. They accused him of stealing a golden chalice from a church, a crime he did not commit, and he was hanged.

Ellen tells him that Aliena is to be married the next day and leads him through the secret passage to freedom.

SCENE 36: TWO WEDDINGS

MUSIC CUE # 26: TWO WEDDINGS

Underscore with Dialogue

Jack seeks out Aliena, and they make love. But the next day she prepares to marry Alfred. Jack is heartbroken. In crosscuts, we follow the weddings of Alfred/Aliena and William/Elizabeth. Jack packs his sack and bids his mother farewell. He will travel south and find his fortune there.

MUSIC CUE # 27: ELLEN'S CURSE Reprise

Solo: Ellen

Ellen enters the church and curses the marriage between Aliena and Alfred.

SCENE 37: EVERYTHING HE TOUCHES DIES

MUSIC CUE # 28: EVERYTHING HE TOUCHES DIES

Quartet: William, Elizabeth, Alfred, Aliena

William sits in his house after the wedding night, which did not go as planned. Elizabeth is curled up in his bed. She is bruised and bleeding and terrified of the monster she has married. William looks at her with contempt. She did everything he wanted, unlike Aliena, and he found no pleasure in her at all.

In Alfred's house, we see the same scene with Alfred and Aliena, who also have had a failed wedding night. Alfred couldn't perform and took out his frustrations on Aliena. The four sing a quartet about the hell they each feel trapped in.

SCENE 38: LETTER FROM JACK

Time has passed. Aliena lives in the house Alfred built for her, always on guard. One day, she comes home in pain – she has had her first period. She carries a letter from Jack, who is in Spain, experiencing great beauty. He wishes Aliena were with him. He plans to travel to St. Denis, just outside Paris, where an exciting cathedral is under construction.

As Aliena reads the letter aloud, Jack's voice takes over, narrating his experiences abroad.

Alfred enters and orders Aliena about. Why isn't the food on the table? He is under pressure – he has promised Philip that the church choir will be completed by Pentecost. Aliena hides the letter and begins preparing food, helped by Martha. Alfred retreats to work on his drawings, telling them to call him when the food is ready.

Martha thanks Aliena for helping her with her bleeding. Aliena suddenly realises that her own bleeding has not come for some time. The realisation dawns on her – she is pregnant.

MUSIC CUE # 29: THE MOST BEAUTIFUL SIGHT IN THE WORLD

Trio: Alfred, Aliena, Jack

Aliena is worried. She is not pregnant with Alfred's child, but with Jack's, and soon her condition will be obvious to everyone. But though the thought of Alfred discovering the truth frightens her, the child she carries will be "the most beautiful sight the world has ever seen."

Alfred works hard on the new roof and looks forward to showing the whole town what he is capable of. This will be "The most beautiful thing the world has seen."

Jack admires the cathedral in Saint Denis and is completely captivated. The construction here is: "The most beautiful thing the world has seen."

SCENE 39: WHIT SUNDAY

MUSIC CUE # 30: THE CHURCH ROOF COLLAPSES

Chorus and Dialogue

Whit Sunday: The cathedral doors open for the first time, and the congregation enters the still unfinished building. Philip is proud, and everyone gathered is fascinated by the new vaulted stone roof. Alfred is also proud and excited. To Philip's great surprise, Waleran makes his entrance during the song. Accompanied by William Hamleigh in fine clothing, Waleran announces that William is the new Earl of Shiring.

Chaos then ensues. The roof is not strong enough and collapses onto the people. Many die, and Aliena gives birth to her son amidst the ruins.

Alfred is disappointed by his failure but even more enraged with Aliena. She has given birth to another man's child, and he can guess who! He demands that she leave his house.

SCENE 40: REGAN'S DEATH

Regan is mortally wounded from the accident at the church. She wants William to send for a priest. However, William is so flustered that he sends for Waleran too late, and Regan has already passed away by the time Waleran arrives. William is distraught and breaks down completely. Will Regan now burn in Purgatory?

Unfortunately, Waleran confirms William's worst fears. Without the last rites and forgiveness, Regan is forever lost. But perhaps there is a chance. Waleran persuades William to sabotage Philip's construction. "Get all the workers to come to Shiring—offer them money. If you do this, if you build a cathedral for me, your mother will not suffer in Purgatory."

SCENE 41: BREAKUP

Alfred approaches Philip. He and the men have agreed. The money is better in Shiring, and besides, a cathedral should be built by a bishop, not a monk. Philip is on his knees, but no matter how much he pleads and begs, all the workers leave Kingsbridge and are welcomed with open arms by Waleran. Aliena, holding her infant, watches in despair as everything crumbles in the city that became hers but is now so changed. She sees Ellen and approaches her. Aliena hands the child to Ellen. They both agree that Aliena should travel south to find Jack, but the agreement ends there. Ellen insists that Aliena take Jack's son with her. He must see his father.

MUSIC CUE # 31: TRAVEL MONTAGE

Instrumental

Aliena travels through northern France.

SCENE 42: ST. DENIS

MUSIC CUE # 32: I WOULD MOVE THE WORLD FOR YOU

Duet: Jack, Aliena

Aliena reaches St. Denis and heads towards the cathedral. She sees Jack working on a stone statue. He looks up and notices the child she is holding. "This is Tommy, your son."

Aliena tells Jack about all the disasters that have befallen Kingsbridge and persuades him to come home. Jack tells her about The Weeping Madonna, a statuette he has been given, which starts to weep when the temperature changes. Perhaps a "miracle" like The Weeping Madonna could appease Father Philip.

SCENE 43: THE WEeping MADONNA

MUSIC CUE # 33: THE WEeping MADONNA

Ensemble Song

Jack, Aliena, and Tommy travel through France and then South England. The Weeping Madonna captures people's attention in the towns they pass through. People are captivated by the weeping eyes and believe, as Jack guessed, that it is a genuine miracle. People queue up in the marketplaces to see and touch the statuette, convinced that it is a conduit to God. People even donate money to be helped by the Madonna. Jack, Aliena, and Tommy continue their journey.

SCENE 44: REMIGIUS WITH WALERAN

Remigius seeks out Waleran in Shiring. Rumour has it that Jack Builder is on his way back with some sort of holy relic, and Ellen has returned from the forest, eager to see her son again. Remigius is scared and filled with remorse. Jacques Cherbourg could not possibly have witnessed that the White Ship was deliberately sunk by people who wanted to kill the heir to the throne. And their involvement in sentencing an innocent man to death was wrong. When will God's

punishment strike them? Waleran is less concerned with Remigius' remorse than with hearing about Jack Builder's return. And a holy relic? He has to see it with his own eyes. They hurry off and blend in with the crowd heading to Kingsbridge.

SCENE 45: HOMECOMING

The Weeping Madonna has arrived in Kingsbridge. Along the way, silver and gold coins have been given to the statue. Jack returns home with both the Madonna and a chest full of coins. Philip is furious to see the commotion outside the cathedral and pulls Jack aside. They argue about whether The Weeping Madonna is a true miracle. Philip initially refuses to accept it.

MUSIC CUE # 34: THE WEEPING MADONNA IN KINGSBRIDGE

Ensemble Song

Then something miraculous happens: Jonathan touches the statuette and begins to speak—for the first time since Tom's death. The crowd gasps. This must be a true miracle. Jack proclaims that he will continue the cathedral construction in Kingsbridge if Philip wishes it so. With The Weeping Madonna, they have both God and The Holy Virgin on their side. The people cheer, and many of those who followed The Weeping Madonna decide to settle in Kingsbridge. Waleran watches the scene and sees his world and ambitions for his own cathedral come crashing down.

SCENE 46: SEND DOWN ALL YOUR ANGELS

MUSIC CUE # 35: SEND DOWN THE ANGELS

Solo: Waleran

Waleran prays to God. How can He support a mere monk over him? During the song, he notices Philip and the boy Jonathan. In an interlude, he asks Remigius, who reveals that the boy was found in the forest by Philip. A realization dawns on Waleran. The boy must be Philip's son – created in adultery and born in secrecy. He thanks God for sending him a clear sign.

SCENE 47: NO DIVORCE

Philip comes to Jack and Aliena with Remigius, who has informed him that the two are living in sin. Aliena is married to Alfred, so it's not acceptable! If Jack wants to work on the cathedral, they must end their relationship.

"But we have a child," they protest. "The marriage to Alfred was never consummated."

"If Alfred agrees to a divorce, then you can marry," says Philip.

"But he will never agree. He hates me," says Aliena, who is then escorted away by Remigius.

Jack rages against Philip. There may be a God, but where is he? Where is the God of love? Why can't two people who love each other be together? Philip understands him, but there's nothing he can do. He will be sorry to lose Jack and his skills, but so be it. But Jack cannot leave the cathedral. He promised Tom to complete his work. But as soon as he is finished, even if it takes him the next 20 years, he will be done with it.

SCENE 48: ELIZABETH

The civil war is over. Stephen has won. William fears for his title. He is drunk and wants more liquor but dares not venture out of the castle. He gives Elizabeth a slap and sends her away. Severely bruised, she seeks out Aliena and tells her about the hellish marriage with William. She says it's rumoured that Aliena's brother, Richard, is coming back to claim his rightful title as earl, and when that happens, Elizabeth will be ready tonight to let him into the castle so that her husband can be dealt with. Aliena agrees.

SCENE 49: ALFRED'S DEATH

After Elizabeth has left, there is a knock at the door. Aliena thinks it's Richard, but it turns out to be Alfred, who is drunk and wants to have sex with his wife. He becomes violent towards Aliena—but just then, Richard returns home and kills Alfred. Aliena sends Richard off to Earls castle.

MUSIC CUE # 36: GOD BE MY WITNESS Reprise 2

Solo: Aliena

Aliena is in shock. But she is free from Alfred. Now she and Jack can have a future together.

SCENE 50: THE TRIAL

MUSIC CUE # 37: THE TRIAL Part 1

Dialogue with Underscore

Richard leads William in chains to the square in Kingsbridge. He is to be judged for his numerous crimes. The crowd gathers, and there is a mood of divine retribution. William protests pitifully, but there is nothing to be done: Richard's earl title is secured, and *he* is now the highest authority in Kingsbridge. Waleran steps in and halts the trial. There is a greater criminal present, one who has sinned against God: Philip has committed adultery and broken his vow of chastity. He is the father of the young novice Jonathan.

MUSIC CUE # 38: THE TRIAL Part 2

Ensemble Song

Philip is to be held accountable before the archbishop and locked in the crypt until then. Despite Jack's protests, Philip willingly goes along. He entrusts the city's welfare to Remigius while he is away. Jack shouts at Waleran: "Philip is not Jonathan's father."

"Really?!" says Waleran. "Who is then?"

"Tom Builder!"

"That is true," says Ellen, who is also present. Waleran becomes nervous and protests. Ellen directs her accusations at Waleran: He is the impious one. He is the one who gave false testimony! Against Jack's father—for his own gain. To become archdeacon.

Remigius supports Ellen's words. He confesses that he has constantly worked against Philip since he became prior, and that he was the one who planted the chalice in Jacques Cherbourg's possession, causing him to be unjustly convicted and hanged. He did it because Waleran promised him promotion and wealth!

"I am a sinner!" proclaims Remigius, turning to Waleran, "but you are a godless monster! Because Jacques Cherbourg might have known the truth about the king's son's death aboard the White Ship, he had to die, and Ellen was banished as an outlaw. Because you thirsted for power, everyone else had to suffer." Richard proclaims that Philip is to be released, that Waleran's fate will be decided by the archbishop, and that William is to be hanged. The crowd gathers around the terrified William, and Waleran is led away by Richard. William is hanged.

EPILOGUE

MUSIC CUE # 39: EPILOGUE Part 1

Dialogue with Underscore

Jack stands with little Jonathan. Aliena approaches, and Jack proposes to her. They accompany Jonathan to his mother Agnes' grave in the forest. Jonathan kneels and prays. The light changes. Jonathan, now an adult friar, kneels by the grave. Philip, visibly older, joins him. "I understand why you have come to your mother's grave on this special day. Today, her husband's dream is fulfilled."

Waleran, dressed in a plain monk's robe, enters. "It is time, Prior Philip," he says humbly. Today, the cathedral of Kingsbridge is finished and will be consecrated. They leave.

Tom Builder enters the empty space and looks around.

MUSIC CUE # 40: EPILOGUE Part 2

Solo: Jack with ensemble

Jack sings to Tom's ghost about the cathedral that Tom created. Suddenly, the surroundings change. The completed cathedral is revealed. The congregation enters, citizens and monks from Kingsbridge. Tom observes them all as they stare in awe, admiring his life's work, his cathedral, completed by Jack. The choir sings in jubilation.

CURTAIN

THE PILLARS OF THE EARTH – CAST OF CHARACTERS

Tom Builder, master builder

- **Agnes**, his wife
 - **Alfred**, their son, aged 22
 - **Martha**, their daughter, aged 11
 - **Jonathan**, their son (as a five-year-old)

Ellen, an outlaw

- **Jacques Cherbourg**, her lover
 - **Jack**, their son, aged 20

Bartholomew, Earl of Shiring

- **Aliena**, his daughter, aged 18
- **Richard**, his son, aged 16

Percy Hamleigh, nobleman of low nobility

- **Regan Hamleigh**, his wife
 - **William Hamleigh**, their son, aged 25
 - **Walter**, his squire
 - **Elizabeth Weymouth**, his future wife, aged 14

Waleran Bigod, the Bishop's archdeacon and later the Bishop of Kingsbridge

Prior James, Prior of Kingsbridge Priory

Philip, a friar and later the Prior of Kingsbridge Priory

- **Francis**, his brother and a chaplain
 - **Robert of Gloucester**, his lord

Friars, including:

Remigius, subprior

Cuthbert, cellarer

Milius, kitchener

Paul, gatekeeper

Monastic servant

Archbishop of Canterbury

Waleran's **Manservant**

Fleece merchant

Shiring Citizens, including:

Woman 1

Woman 2

Woman 3

Man 1

Man 2

Man 3

Poor people, including:

Pauper 1

Pauper 2

Pauperess 1

Pauperess 2

Pauperess 3

Kingsbridge Citizens, including:

A Citizen

A Woman of the Congregation

A Man of the Congregation

French Citizens, including:

A French woman

A Traveller

A Wealthy man

Otto, a construction worker

Ensemble and non-speaking parts:

Spectators at the execution

Executioner

Two outlaws

Monks

Poor people

Monastic servants

Bartholomew's servants

William's two men-at-arms

Fleece selling farmer

Workers

Merchants

Customers

Jugglers

Minstrels

Lady Elizabeth's chaperone

Lord Weymouth, Elizabeth's father

Richard's two men-at-arms

Jonathan, Tom's son as a grown up friar