

EVERYMAN

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HERE BEGINNETH A TREATISE HOW THE HIGH FATHER OF HEAVEN SENDETH
DEATH TO SUMMON EVERY CREATURE TO COME AND GIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR
LIVES IN THIS WORLD, AND IS IN MANNER OF A MORAL P LAY.

MESSENGER: I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure a moral play:
The Summoning of Everyman called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
The story saith:
Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth the soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
For ye shall hear how our heaven king (God)
Calleth Everyman to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say.
God speaketh.

[Exit]

GOD: I perceive, here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
They use the seven deadly sins damnable,
As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery
Now in the world be made commendable;
Every man liveth so after his own pleasure,
The worse they be from year to year.
They thank not me for the pleasure that I to them meant,
Nor yet for their being that I have them lent.
They be so cumbered with worldly riches
That needs on them I must do justice,
On every man living without fear.
Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?

[Enter Death]

DEATH: Almighty God, I am here at your will,
GOD: Go thou to Everyman,
And show him, in my name,
A pilgrimage he must on him take,
Which he in no wise may escape;

And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
Without delay or tarrying.

[*God withdraws.*]

DEATH: Lord, I will in the world go run overall.
Lo, yonder I see Everyman walking.
Full little he thinketh on my coming;
His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure.
And great pain it shall cause him to endure
Before the Lord, Heaven King.

[*Enter Everyman*]

Everyman, stand still! Whither art thou going
Thus gaily? Hast thou thy Maker forget?

EVERYMAN: Why askest thou?

DEATH: In great haste I am sent to thee
From God out of his majesty.

EVERYMAN: What, sent to me?

DEATH: Yea, certainly.

Though thou have forgotten him here,
He thinketh on thee in his heavenly sphere.

EVERYMAN: What desireth God of me?

DEATH: That shall I show thee:

A reckoning he will have

EVERYMAN: To give a reckoning.

DEATH: On thee thou must take a long journey;
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring,
And look you be sure of thy reckoning,
For before God thou shalt show
How thou hast spent thy life.

EVERYMAN: I know thee not. What messenger art thou?

DEATH: I am Death, that no man dreadeth

EVERYMAN: O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind!

Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have
And defer this matter till another day.

DEATH: Everyman, it may not be, by no way.

I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
Ne by pope, emperor, king, duke, ne princes
I give thee no respite. Come hence, and not tarry.

EVERYMAN: Alas, shall I have no respite?

I may say Death giveth no warning!
To think on thee it maketh my heart sick
For all unready is my book of reckoning.

Spare me till I be provided of remedy.

DEATH: It availeth not to cry, weep, and pray;

No, Everyman.

EVERYMAN: Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial

DEATH: Yea, if any be so hardy

That would with thee and bear thee company.

[Exit Death]

EVERYMAN: Alas, I may well weep with sighs deep!

Now have I no manner of company

To help me in my journey, and me to keep.

And also my writing is full unready.

[Enter Fellowship]

FELLOWSHIP: Everyman, good morrow, by this day!

Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?

If any thing be amiss, I pray thee me say,

That I may help to remedy.

EVERYMAN: Yea, good Fellowship, yea;

I am in great jeopardy.

FELLOWSHIP: Show me your grief, and say no more.

EVERYMAN: Ye speak like a good friend; I believe you well.

FELLOWSHIP: I speak of no deserving, by this day!

For he that will say, and nothing do,

Is not worthy with good company to go;

Therefore show me the grief of your mind,

As to your friend most loving and kind.

EVERYMAN: I shall show you how it is:

Commanded I am to go a journey,

A long way, hard and dangerous,

And give a strait count without delay,

Wherefore, I pray you, bear me company,

FELLOWSHIP: If we took such a journey,

EVERYMAN: Nay, never again, till the day of doom.

FELLOWSHIP: Who has you these tidings brought?

EVERYMAN: Indeed, Death was with me here.

FELLOWSHIP: Now, by God that all hath bought,

If Death were the messenger,

I will not go that loath journey -

EVERYMAN: Ye promised otherwise.

FELLOWSHIP: Now in good faith I will not that way.

But and thou will murder, or any man kill,

In that I will help thee with a good will.

EVERYMAN: O, that is a simple advice indeed.

Gentle fellow, help me in my necessity!

FELLOWSHIP: Nay,

God speed thee in thy journey,

For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.

EVERYMAN: Wither away, Fellowship? Will thou forsake me?

FELLOWSHIP: Yea, by my fay! To God I betake thee.

For you I will remember that parting is mourning.

[Exit Fellowship.]

EVERYMAN: Alack! shall we thus depart indeed

Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need.

For help in this world wither shall I resort?

It is said 'In prosperity men friends may find,

Which in adversity be full unkind.

Now wither for succour shall I flee?

To my kinsmen I will, truly,

Praying them to help me in my necessity;

I believe that they will do so,

Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

[Enter Kindred and Cousin]

KINDRED: Here be we now at your commandment.

Cousin, I pray you show us your intent.

COUSIN: Yea Everyman, and to us declare

If ye be disposed to go anywhither;

For, wit you well, we live and die together.

EVERYMAN: Gramercy my friends and kinsman kind.

Now I shall show you the grief of my mind.

I was commanded by a messenger,

He bade me go a pilgrimage, to my pain,

And I know well I shall never come again;

Also I must give a reckoning strait.

KINDRED: What account is that which ye must render?

That would I know.

EVERYMAN: Of all my works I must show

How I have lived and my days spent;

Also of ill deeds that I have used

In my time, sith life was me lent;

And all virtues that I have refused

Therefore, I pray you, go thither with me.

To help to make mine account

COUSIN: What, to go thither? Is that the matter?

Nay, Everyman.

EVERYMAN: My Cousin, will you not with me go?

COUSIN: No, by our Lady! I have the cramp in my toe.

KINDRED: It availeth not us to tice.

Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;

She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,

And to dance, and abroad to start:
I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
If that you and she agree.

EVERYMAN: Now show me the very effect of your mind:
Will you go with me, or abide behind?

KINDRED: Abide behind? Yea, that will I, and I may!
Therefore farewell till another day.

[Exit Kindred and Cousin.]

EVERYMAN: They promised and nothing do,
My kinsman promised me faithfully
And now fast away do they flee:
I lose my time here longer to abide.
Yet in my mind a thing there is:
All my life I have loved riches;
I will speak to him in this distress -
Where art thou, my goods and riches?

[Goods speaks from a corner]

GOODS: What calleth me? Everyman? What!

EVERYMAN: Come hither, Good, in all the haste thou may.
All my life I have had pleasure and joy with me,
Therefore I pray thee, go with me;
For it is said,
That money maketh all right that is wrong.

GOODS: Nay.

EVERYMAN: Up, let us go thither together.

GOODS: Nay. Weenest thou that I am thine?

EVERYMAN: I had wend so.

GOODS: Nay, Everyman, I say no.
As for a while I was lent thee;
A season thou hast had me in prosperity.
My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill.
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, not from this world, verily.

[Exit Goods]

EVERYMAN: O, to whom shall I make my moan?
I think that I shall never speed
Till that I go to my Good Deed.
My Good Deeds, where be you?

[Good Deeds speaks from the ground]

GOOD DEEDS: Here I lie, cold in the ground;
Thy sins hath me sore bound,

That I cannot stir.

Everyman, I have understanding
That ye be summoned account to make
That journey with you will I take.

But I cannot stand, verily.

Though that on my feet I may not go,
I have a sister that shall with you also,
Called Knowledge, which shall with you abide,
To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.

[Enter Knowledge]

KNOWLEDGE: Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
In thy most need to go by thy side.

EVERYMAN: My Good Deeds, gramercy!
I am well content, certainly,
With your words sweet.

KNOWLEDGE: Now go we together lovingly
To confession, that cleansing river.

EVERYMAN: For joy I weep.
Where dwelleth that holy man, Confession.
[Knowledge takes Everyman to Confession]

KNOWLEDGE: Lo, this is confession. Kneel down and ask for mercy,
For he is in good conceit with God.

EVERYMAN: Wash from me the spots of vice unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen.
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.

CONFESSION: I know your sorrow well, Everyman.
Because with Knowledge you come to me,
I will comfort you as well as I can,
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance;

Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
Which is penance strong that ye must endure.

Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time good Deeds will be with thee.

EVERYMAN: Thanked be god for his gracious work!
For now I will my penance begin;
Though the knots be painful and hard within.
Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance;
My flesh therewith shall give acquittance:
I will now begin, if God give me grace.

KNOWLEDGE: Everyman, god give you time and space!

EVERYMAN: My body sore punished shall be:

Take this, body, for the sin of the flesh!
 Therefore suffer now strokes of punishing,
 To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

[Scourges himself]

GOOD DEEDS: I thank God, now I can walk and go.

And am delivered of my sickness and woe
 Therefore with Everyman I will go, and not spare;
 His good works I will help him declare.

KNOWLEDGE: Now your good Deeds whole and sound,
 Going upright upon the ground.

GOOD DEEDS: Everyman, pilgrim, my special friend.

EVERYMAN: Welcome, my Good Deeds; now I hear
 Thy voice,

I weep for very sweetness of love.

Good deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

GOOD DEEDS: Yea, indeed, I have it here.

EVERYMAN: Then I trust we need not fear;

Now, friends, let us not part in twain.

KNOWLEDGE: Nay, Everyman, that will we not, certain.

GOOD DEEDS: Yet must thou lead with thee

Three persons of great might.

EVERYMAN: Who should they be?

GOOD DEEDS: Discretion and Strength they hight,

And thy Beauty may not abide behind.

You must have them ready at all hours.

EVERYMAN: How shall I get them hither?

KNOWLEDGE: You must call them all together.

EVERYMAN: My friends, come hither and be present,

Discretion, Strength, and Beauty.

[Enter Beauty, Strength, Discretion, and Five Wits]

BEAUTY: Here at your will we be all ready.

What will ye that we should do?

GOOD DEEDS: That ye would with Everyman go.

And help him in his pilgrimage.

Advise you, will ye help him or not in that voyage?

STRENGTH: We will bring him all thither.

DISCRETION: So will we go with him all together.

EVERYMAN: I give thee laud that I have hither brought

Strength, Discretion, Beauty, Lack I nought

And my Good Deeds, with Knowledge clear,

All be in my company at my will here;

I desire no more to my business.

STRENGTH: And I, Strength, will stand by you in distress,

Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

DISCRETION: Everyman,
We all give you virtuous monition
That all shall be well

BEAUTY: No more will I unto death's hour,
Whatsoever thereof befall.

KNOWLEDGE: Everyman, harken what I say:
Go to priesthood, I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together.
We will all abide you here.

EVERYMAN: Fain would I receive that holy body,
And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.
[Everyman goes to the priest to receive the last sacraments]
[Re-enter Everyman]

EVERYMAN: I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction:
Blessed be all that counselled me to take it,
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite.

STRENGTH: Everyman, we will not from you go
Till ye have done this voyage long.

DISCRETION: I, Discretion, will bide by you also.
KNOWLEDGE. And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,
I will never part you fro.
[Everyman comes to his grave]

EVERYMAN: Alas, I am so faint I may not stand;
My limbs under me doth fold.
Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold;
For into this cave must I creep
And turn to earth, and there to sleep.

BEAUTY: What, into this grave? Alas!

EVERYMAN: Yea, there shall ye consume, more and less.

BEAUTY. And what, should I smother here?

EVERYMAN: Yea, by my faith, and never more appear.
In this world live no more we shall.

BEAUTY: I cross out all this; adieu, by Saint John!
I take my tap in my lap, and am gone.

EVERYMAN: What, Beauty, wither will ye?

BEAUTY: Peace I am deaf; I look not behind me,
Not and thou wouldest give me all the gold in thy chest.

[Exits Beauty]

EVERYMAN. Alas, whereto my I trust?

Beauty goeth fast away from me;
 She promised with me to live and die.
STRENGTH. Everyman, I will the also forsake and deny;
 Thy game liketh me not at all.

EVERYMAN: Why, then, ye will forsake me all?
 Sweet Strength, tarry a little space.
 Ye would ever bide with me, ye said.

STRENGTH: In Faith, I care not,
 Thou art but a fool to complain;
 You spend your speech and waste your brain.
 Go thrust thee into the ground!

[Exit Strength]

EVERYMAN: Both Strength and Beauty forsaketh me;
 Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

DISCRETION: Everyman, I will after Strength be gone;
 As for me, I will leave you alone.

EVERYMAN: Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me?

DISCRETION: Yea in faith, I will go from thee,
 For when Strength goeth before,
 I follow after evermore.

EVERYMAN: Yet, I pray thee,
 Look in my grave once piteously.

DISCRETION: Nay, so nigh will I not come;
 Farewell, every one!

[Exit Discretion]

EVERYMAN: O, all thing faileth,
 Beauty, Strength, Discretion;
 For when Death bloweth his blast,
 They all run from me full fast!

GOOD DEEDS: Nay, Everyman; I will bide with thee.
 I will not forsake thee indeed;
 Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

EVERYMAN: Gramercy, Good Deeds! Now may I
 True friends see.

They have forsaken me, every one;
 I loved them better than my good deeds alone.
 Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

KNOWLEDGE: Yea, Everyman, when ye to Death shall Go;
 But not yet.

EVERYMAN: Gramercy.

KNOWLEDGE: Nay, yet I will not hence depart
 Till I see where ye shall become.

EVERYMAN: Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,

How they that I loved best do forsake me,
 Except my Good Deeds that bideth truly.

GOOD DEEDS: All earthly things is but vanity;
 Beauty, Strength, and Discretion do man forsake,
 Foolish friends, and kinsmen, that fair spake -
 All fleeth save Good Deeds, and that am I.

EVERYMAN: Have mercy on me, God most mighty.

GOOD DEEDS: Fear not; I will speak for thee.

EVERYMAN: Here I cry God mercy.

GOOD DEEDS: Let us go and never come again.

EVERYMAN: Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
 (In manus tuas, of mights most
 For ever, commendo spiritum meum)

[He sinks into his grave]

KNOWLEDGE: Methinketh that I hear angels sing.

ANGEL: Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.
 Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere.

[Enter Doctor]

DOCTOR: This moral men may have in mind.

Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
 And forsake Pride, for he deceiveth you in the end;
 And remember Beauty, Strength, and Discretion,
 Thy all at the last do every man forsake,
 Save his Good Deeds there doth he take.
 But beware, for and they be small
 Before God, he hath no help at all;
 None excuse may be there for everyman.
 Alas, how shall he do then?

For after death amends may no man make.

If his reckoning be not clear when he doth come,
 God will say: "Ite, maledicti, in ignem eternum."

But he that hath his account whole and sound,
 High in heaven he shall be crowned.

THUS ENDETH THIS MORAL PLAY OF EVERYMAN