

I ask but death—death from thy hand—*that hand can deal death well*—and yet thou wilt not give it.

BER. (*Gazing on her for a moment, then rushing to the Prior, and sinking at his feet.*)

Who hath done this? Where are the racks I hoped for?

Am I not weak? am I not humbled now?

Groveling at the Prior's feet, and then turning to the Knights.

Hast thou no curse to blast—no curse for me—

Is there no hand to pierce a soldier's heart?

Is there no foot to crush a felon's neck?

IMO. (*Raising herself at the sound of his voice.*) Bertram.

He rushes towards her, and first repeats "Imogine" feebly, as he approaches, he utters her name again passionately, but as he draws nearer and sees her look of madness and desperation, he repeats it once more in despair, and does not dare to approach her, till he perceives her falling into Clotilda's arms, and catches her in his.

IMO. Have I deserved this of thee?—*She dies slowly with her eyes fixed on Bertram, who continues to gaze on her unconscious of her having expired.*

PRIOR. 'Tis past—remove him from the corse—

The Knights and Monks advance, he waves them off with one hand still supporting the body.

PRIOR. (*To the Monks.*)—Brethren, remove the corse—

BER. She is not dead—(*Starting up.*)

She must not, shall not die, till she forgives me—

Speak—speak to me—(*Kneeling to the corse.*)

(*Turning to the Monks.*)—Yes—she will speak anon—

A long pause, he drops the corse.

She speaks no more—Why do ye gaze on me—

I love her, yea, I love, in death I love her—

I killed her—but—I loved her—

What arm shall loose the grasp of love and death?

The Knights and Monks surround, and attempt to tear him from the body, he snatches a sword from one of the Knights, who retreats in terror, as it is pointed towards him. Bertram resuming all his former previous sternness, bursts into a disdainful laugh.

BER. Thee—against thee—oh, thou art safe—thou worm—

Bertram hath but one fatal foe on earth—

And he is here—(*Stabs himself.*)

PRIOR. (*Rushes forward.*) He dies, he dies.

BER. (*Struggling with the agonies of death.*)

I know thee holy Prior—I know ye, brethren

Lift up your holy hands in charity.

With a burst of wild exultation.

I died no felon death—

A warrior's weapon freed a warrior's soul—¹¹⁹

EPILOGUE

Written by the Honourable George Lamb¹²⁰

Spoken by Miss Kelly

Say, for our Author whose proud hopes aspire,
To sound the Tragic Bard's neglected lyre;
Say, for our novice who at once the weight,
Bears of her own and of the Poet's fate,
Oh say, what hope? 'Tis mine with doubt and fear
In this dread hour to ask your judgment here;
Yet, for my sake, before your sentence, stay,
And hear me draw one moral from the play.

Enough for IMOGINE the tears ye gave her;
I come to say one word in BERTRAM's favour.—
BERTRAM! ye cry, a ruthless blood-stain'd rover!!
He was—but also was the truest lover:
And, faith! like cases that we daily view,
All might have prosper'd, had the fair been true.

Man, while he loves, is never quite deprav'd,
And woman's triumph, is a lover sav'd.
The branded wretch, whose callous feelings court
Crime for his glory, and disgrace for sport;
If in his breast love claims the smallest part,
If still he values one fond female heart,
From that one seed, that ling'ring spark, may grow
Pride's noblest flow'r, and virtue's purest flow:
Let but that heart—dear female lead with care
To honour's path and cheer his progress there,
And proud, though haply, sad regret occurs
At all his guilt, think all his virtue hers.

The fair not always view with fav'ring eyes
The very virtuous or extremely wise;
But, odd it seems, will sometimes rather take

119. For the Abbotsford manuscript's different close, see the appendix. 120. George Lamb (1784–1834) served on the sub-committee of management for Drury Lane (along with Byron). An amateur actor and playwright, he helped Maturin recast *Bertram* for the stage.