

Excerpt from Splendid Productions' Everyman

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EPISODE 4: BLOOD IS THICKER THAN WATER. BUT WHAT IS THICKER THAN BLOOD?

Undertaker 1 Episode four: Blood is thicker than water. But what is thicker than blood?

Undertaker 2 Consider your family for a second.
Your blood, your tribe, your kin. Like a slice of earth you are made up of layer upon layer of mistakes and successes. But what would you do for your family? What would they do for you?

Everyman enters, and takes up his previous freeze.

Undertaker 3 We are about to welcome to the stage Kindred, closely related to Everyman by blood...

Undertaker 1 ...and a surprise character, Ex-wife. Who is Everyman's ex-wife. You can't choose the family you are born into...

Undertaker 2 ...but you can ignore them. Can't you?

Kindred *(entering)* Enter Kindred.

Ex-wife *(entering)* Enter Ex-Wife.

Everyman greets Kindred warmly.

Everyman What is she doing here?

Ex-wife Here we are then Everyman.
After all this time you finally get in touch.
I suppose you are in trouble.
What have you got yourself mixed up in this time?

Kindred Yes, Everyman speak. We can't change the past, it has passed. But we are family. Like branches of a tree, we grow in different directions but our roots remain one!

Kindred does a gesture of solidarity

Everyman You are both my family and my...

Everyman looks at Ex-wife searching for the word.

Ex-wife Your ex-wife.

Everyman Thank you for coming. I have a problem.

Ex-wife rolls her eyes at the audience.

Everyman I have been selected by a 'messenger' to go on a pilgrimage, which I am sad to say will be the end of my time here on earth.

Kindred No!

Everyman At the end of this journey, I have to account for myself on behalf of the human race before God.

Kindred God!

Ex-wife Why did God choose you? You of all people?

Ex-wife finds someone better in the audience

Ex-wife This person here is a much better 'Everyman' than you... Look at them! So strong. Faithful. Dependable. And clearly much better looking.

Everyman Perhaps, but I would still be the best 'Everyman' in the room.
Does this 'child' know anything about living?
(to audience member) Have you lived? No!
Does this 'infant' know what it is to love?
(to audience member) Have you lived? No!
Has he swum with the fishes and danced with the bees?
I have lived a FULL life.
Therefore I am the best person in this entire room to represent humanity, rather than this 'baby'.

Ex-wife And how are you going to 'represent humanity'?

Everyman *(holds up the Book of Account)* With my Book of Account.
Even my smallest actions will be considered.
My treatment of others. My good deeds.
The times I lived solely for my own pleasure...

Ex-wife rolls her eyes at the audience.

Everyman Yes, it is an exercise in self-discovery.

Ex-wife *(sceptically)* Oh, really?

Everyman Therefore, as important parts of my life, I would appreciate your company. Will you come with me and help me make my account?

Ex-wife What? Go with you?

Kindred That's what you called us here for? You want us to accompany you to death?

Ex-wife No, Everyman.

Both No!

Ex-wife Your memory is short.
I loved you, but you loved yourself more.
You are lucky I came to see you at all.

Everyman It was a mistake! I made a mistake. We all make mistakes, that is what makes us human!

Ex-wife Yes, but some people can learn from them.

Ex-wife turns her back on him

Everyman I did! I have!

Everyman approaches Kindred.

Everyman How can I ever be happy, knowing that my own brother should turn his back on me?

Kindred Me? Turn my back?
You are the one who hasn't been in touch for years.
You've even changed your accent!

Everyman A little!

Kindred And now you show up and expect so much of everyone else? This is my advice. Stop complaining. Life is what you make it. You will go alone.

Kindred turns his back on him so he tiptoes up to Ex-wife.

Ex-wife Oh no, don't bother asking me!

Everyman Come with me...

Ex-wife No.

Everyman *(charming her with her old pet-names)*... My darling?... My kitty cat?... My Yorkshire Pudding?

Ex-wife *(going to him, passionately)* There was a time when I would have followed you to the ends of the earth. But not now. If you remember, you called me 'selfish' and 'annoying'. I was too tall, which crushed your man ego. My collection of shoes overflowed onto YOUR side of the room. My moods were 'unpredictable'. There were too many cushions on the sofa. You weren't 'psychic'. I was 'too demanding'. And do you know what; sometimes all I wanted was a cuddle!

Ex-wife breathes. Everyman opens his arms ingratiatingly for a cuddle. Ex-wife is unimpressed.

Ex-wife Besides, my mother is sick and she deserves my time more than you.

Kindred It's useless to try and persuade us Everyman. You can't suddenly cry 'family' now that you need our help. You neglected us. The people who loved you the most.

Everyman But our roots! Our roots!

He repeats solidarity gesture from earlier. Kindred is not impressed.

Everyman Please?

Kindred No, I can't. I'm sorry, I really am.