

# THE EGYPTIAN.

A Play.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY

JOHN H. WILKINS,

*Author of " Civilization," &c. &c. &c.*

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THOMAS HAILES LACY,  
WELLINGTON STREET, STRAND,  
LONDON.

*First performed at the City of London Theatre,  
on Monday, April 18th, 1853.*

## Characters.

AURELIAN ( <i>Emperor of Rome</i> ) .....	Mr. H. RIGNOLD.
ANTIOCHUS ( <i>a Parthian, joint Commander of the Forces of Palmyra</i> ) .....	Mr. N. T. HICKS.
HUJUS ( <i>a Merchant and Senator of Palmyra —a Miser</i> ) .....	Mr. W. SEARLE.
ZABDAS ( <i>the Egyptian</i> ) .....	Mr. CHARLES PITT.
GRACCHUS ( <i>a young Roman Lord, attached to the Court of Zenobia</i> ) .....	Mr. W. TRAVERS.
SPONTANEOUS ( <i>Freedman to Hujus</i> ) ...	Mr. W. H. DIBDIN.
MICANOR, } LONGINUS, } ( <i>Counsellors of the Queen</i> ) OTHO }	Mr. ROWBOTHAM. Mr. W. STEVENS. Mr. LACY.
.....	
CERRONIUS BASSUS ( <i>General of the Roman Forces</i> ) .....	Mr. WORRELL.
TETTUS ( <i>Head Cook of the Palace</i> ) .....	Mr. A. SAVILLE.
BULBUS ( <i>his Nephew</i> ) .....	Mr. HAZLEWOOD.
ALCANDER .....	Mr. MORELLI.
TENELLUS .....	Mr. G. HOWARD.
.....	
ZENOBIA ( <i>Queen of Palmyra</i> ) .....	Mrs. HUGH CAMPBELL.
JULIA ( <i>Her Daughter</i> ) .....	Miss JULIA CLAYTON.
JOPPA ( <i>a Purveyor's Widow</i> ) .....	Mrs. LOVEDAY.
JILPHA ( <i>Her Daughter</i> ) .....	Mrs. B. BARNETT.
PHRYNIA ( <i>an Attendant</i> ) .....	Miss MACARTAY.

### ACT I.

## THE ROMAN EMBASSY.

### ACT II.

## THE EGYPTIAN AND THE PARTHIAN,

### ACT III.

## THE BRIDAL.

### ACT IV.

## THE FALL OF PALMYRA.

### ACT V.

## THE SACRIFICE.

# THE EGYPTIAN.



## ACT I.

SCENE I—*Exterior of the Royal Palace, with columns, portico, &c. to the L. U. E; the stage represents a terrace, with massive balustrades supposed to be on the brow of the hill, and looking down upon the temples and city of Palmyra.—Time, sunset, gradually changing to moonlight and its effects.*

*Enter, up steps, R. U. E., as if from the city beneath, HUIJUS and his freed-man, SPONTANEIUS.*

HUIJUS. You heard this talked of in the city ?

SPON. Yes.

HUIJUS. The seeming friendly visit of these lords  
From high-brow'd Rome was in reality  
A claim of tribute ?

SPON. Due from us to Rome:—  
Which, if denied, they have the power to take,  
And will to use the power. Hearing which,  
And answering my forward-driving impulse,  
I at once took horse to you!

HUIJUS. Impulsive ever :—  
And acting, spring-like, on the sudden : this  
Will ever be your fault: you should have waited,  
And gathered in more information. Well,  
Did none of the bystanders venture speech,  
Broach an opinion, hazard supposition,  
Upon the new event ?

SPON. But one, and he  
Said that the Queen feared Rome, and in that fear  
Would buy it's mercy with her city's wealth,  
Nor heed the people's troubles, but obey—  
The cowardly impulse.

HUIJUS. Well, and you

SPON. Obeyed  
My impulse—told him that he lied, and knocked him  
A coward's length along.

HUIJUS. Hot-headed fool!  
Haste's resolutions are but seldom wisdom's



BULBUS. You may as well know, for all the boys in the town do: you know the widow Joppa, whose husband, the Royal Purveyor, died last winter.

SPON. What, she with the pretty daughter ! the arch, merry-eyed Jilpha?

BULBUS. The very female.

SPON. And he's in love with——

BULBUS. The daughter.

SPON. While your flame is

BULBUS. The mother.

SPON. Humph ! She used to be very ugly.

BULBUS. Well, she isn't altered.

SPON. And she's getting old.

BULBUS. Yes, and she keeps at it.

SPON. And is she in love with you ?

BULBUS. Not that I am aware of: but she has advertized by proclamation for a young, active man to carry on her dead husband's business, and take the management of his affairs on his own hands, and that always includes the widow ! But look at lord Gracchus and the princess Julia ! there's love for you. He dare not own his love for fear of the Queen ! the princess don't know what love is, and yet is miserable when Gracchus is away ! the Queen's too busy to see it:—and for the Egyptian——

SPON. What, the general ! surely he's not in love !

BULBUS. He ! if he be, it's with his sword or his horse: there's more love in my staff than his nature. But, yonder comes his fellow in command, the great lord Antiochus ! If he only fights as well as he eats, I pity the enemy ! *Exit down steps, C.*

SPON. Antiochus ! Who has not heard of him !

Antiochus the giant, with an arm

Of iron, and a heart of adamant:—

For there's a story told, how once this man

Pinned with his javelin to the earth, a slave

For mere sport's sake ! I hate the man, and hate's

First impulse is to shun the object on't:—

I'll follow it, and wait my lord below ! *Exit down steps, C.*

*Enter ANTIOCHUS from Palace, L., looking back.*

ANTI. It gains on her: it grows:—her heart receives  
The passion that it knows not yet by name !  
And Gracchus is her world. I love the girl,  
And through the union hoped to mount the throne  
At the Queen's death, (which art might hurry on)  
Rome's friendship might be bought; yet all these hopes.  
Bright, glittering as rivers 'neath the moon,  
This Gracchus overthrows——

*Enter HUIJUS from Palace, L. U. E.; he goes down, R.*

I must not let

My tongue run riot in these precincts ! (*crosses, L.*) Well,  
Rogue merchant, what's the price of ship-commodities ?

HUJUS. (R.) Unsettled,; till 'tis known who leads the troops  
If war breaks out with Rome:—if the Egyptian,  
He'll ask who stands the firmest: if 'tis thou,  
You'll ask who runs the fastest ?

ANTI. Tongue without brains,  
As in your case.

HUJUS. Heels without hearts, as yours.

ANTI. Whom hast thou cheated since the dawn ?

HUJUS. No man.

ANTI. Hast prayed ?

HUJUS. I have.

ANTI. Then hast thou cheated heaven.

HUJUS. It would not list to thee.

ANTI. Not, if perchance

Thy name crept in my prayer.

HUJUS. Thou ! thou a soldier,  
And give thy voice for peace!

ANTI. And thou a merchant,  
To whom the breath of peace brings golden freights.  
And raise thy voice for war! why, thou would'st sell  
For gold thy very body.

HUJUS. And thou thy soul!  
We know each other, Parthian.

ANTI. Thy dark soul  
Can ne'er be bought on earth, being sold to——Psha!  
A devilish black bargain. *Exit HUJUS down steps, C.*

If Zenobia

Continues obdurate, and repulses Rome,  
As well I know her heart inclines to do,  
And Rome besiege us, our weak troops can ne'er  
Make head against the Emperor! and last night  
The heralds hiss'd, like serpents, in my ear  
Terms which a little shrewdness may——The Princess!

*Enter GRACCHUS and JULIA from Palace, L. U. E.; ANTIOCHUS retires  
up Stage, and seems to be looking out upon the city.*

JULIA. (R.) Ambition ! fie upon't! Can we not live  
Content to be content—to have enough :—  
To float in peace down life's smooth current, not  
To lash our little ocean into storms:  
Which if they wreck us not, must shatter us,  
And if they make us hardy, do they not  
To counterpoise that good, make hard our hearts,  
And close them to the cry of the less fortunate  
That struggle in the breakers ! Shun ambition !  
'Tis a self-serving friend, which, while it lifts  
Your humbleness up to its state of pride,  
Its turn once served, will fall away from you,  
And leave you to the sport of poverty !

GRAC. (L.) Who seeing greatness, pines not to be great ?

JULIA. Who loving sunlight, pines to sway the sun?

The mad, or sinful ? are you one of these ?

What say you, kinsman Antiochus?

ANTI. (*who has advanced R.*) In truth  
Mine ears were swallowed in my eyes, which see  
A fate-cloud in the far horizon.

JULIA. (C.) Fraught

With evil to Palmyra?

ANTI. To us all Rome threatens !

JULIA. Alas! alas! (*retires up C.*)

GRAC. (L.) . Let her threaten: we fear not  
While we have hearts within our breasts, and arms  
To wield the lance and buckler !

ANTI. (*sneering*) Bravely said !

Pity all Rome thinks not as Gracchus thinks:—

So nobly just, and he a Roman too !

But, spite of this, Palmyra is not built

Of Gracchuses, or paved with Gracchuses,

And should our fears fore-herald the event,

'Twill take more Gracchuses than I see now

To garrison Palmyra: truth is truth,

Peril is peril, call it what you will,

And robbers will be robbers though call'd Romans!

GRAC. Robbers!

ANTI. I've said the word: let us call all things  
Each by their proper titles:—your Aurelian  
Will call invasion glory, but the conquered  
And conqueror call it by two different names :—  
Men that betray to death do murder! men  
That calmly look on their defenders' slaughter  
Are traitors! men that fight against their lands  
Are renegades!

GRAC. Or heroes!

ANTI. Cowards sometimes:

Who stand by neutral till the fight's half won.

Then choose the winning side to fight upon !

GRAC. Now, by the gods of Rome!—

ANTI. Wolf-suckled Rome!

We see its whelps—in thee !

GRAC. (*clutching his sword*) Audacious !

ANTI. (*seizing his arm as he half-draws the sword*) Boy —  
Go grow a man first! (*flinging him violently off to R., and  
crossing to L. corner; JULIA in alarm advances*)

ZABDAS *enters up steps, R. U. E.*

ZABDAS. (*at back, R. C.*) Brows and tongues of war,  
What stirs this battle spirit in your hearts  
So strangely out of turn ! the field—the fight—  
That's war's domain ! here we are better housed,  
And, like our weapons, better tempered too

Than draw them on each other, save to show  
 Each other the brave actions we have done.  
 In their notched edges witness'd. What's amiss ?

GRAC. Here and now  
 Let him recall——

ZABDAS. (*advancing C.*) Your patience: you've lost that,  
 Gracchus. When men act headstrong upon passion,  
 And let the will go reinless on its way,  
 As Phaeton did the horses of the sun,  
 At best, they do destroy themselves—at worst,  
 They leave a world in darkness ; as what night  
 So gloomy and impenetrably thick  
 As falls upon a nation when it mourns  
 A hero slain in brawl ?

ANTI. I heed him not,  
 Nor ought that he can do!

ZABDAS. Nor strength alone,  
 Antiochus, comes ever victor off:—  
 O'er confident courage has been overthrown :  
 The vast Goliath—Power, with its strength  
 Laid prostrate by the shepherd's son, Address!  
 There's wisdom in the lesson: learn it. (*retires to JULIA*)

ANTI. Well;  
 At your desire, there's friendship. (*holds out his hand—*  
*GRACCHUS takes it, aside to him*) At the heart  
 A secret foe : you can be secret too!  
 Love-glances—whispers—soul-deep sighs—the Princess !  
(*GRACCHUS starts*)  
 Ha! have I plumb'd you to the depth, my Roman !  
(*crosses R. corner*)

*Enter Two ATTENDANTS, one from the Palace, the other up steps.*

1 ST ATTENDANT. (*on steps, to GRACCHUS*) The Queen has asked for you.  
 GRAC. I wait upon her.

*Exit with ATTENDANT to Palace*

2ND ATTENDANT. (*aside to ANTIUCHUS*) The Roman lords have bade  
 Me seek for you,  
 And tell you that they wait you on the terrace  
 Below, that overhangs the city.

ANTI. Good!  
 I'll join them.

*Exit ATTENDANT down steps, C.*

Ere I go, I know the errand,  
 And could I work on the Egyptian here  
 To second me, the Future glows as bright  
 Before my steps as sun-dawn i' the summer!  
 I'll make the venture, hap what may!

*Exit down steps, C.*

JULIA. (*looking off into the Palace*) The Queen; —  
 See where she comes: let's meet her! *Exit into Palace, L.U.E.*

ZABDAS. (*alone, his calm demeanour changing*) Here I stand,  
 And yet my heart goes with thee, follows thee,  
 Is ever round about thee like thy shadow,  
 That follows, speechless, as I follow thee,  
 That runs before thee, as I run before,  
 To brush aside the brambles of life's path!  
 Ever about thee worshipping—admiring !  
 And yet so proud it will not tell its freight,  
 To chance the royal frown, or people's sneer,  
 Or glance of jealousy, or worse, the sweet  
 Calm look of pity if she loved me not:—  
 And what in me is worthy loving, save  
 To have a name in war, or to be stern  
 In duty's cause, nor tremble, quail, or swerve  
 Mid peril and its terrors? I'll love on,  
 Unknown, undreamt of—I'll be hero still,  
 To wear the outward smile and inward grief,  
 To love, to doat, and share with death my secret. 

ZENOBIAS. (*without*) Let me have air! these news oppress me.   
 Calmly, coolly must we discuss this peril!

ZABDAS. The Queen and Councillors! (*grand flourish*)

*Enter* ZENOBIAS, JULIA, GRACCHUS, LONGINUS, OTHO, and NICANOR, L.U.E.

ZENOBIAS. (*C, looking over a paper*) Egypt, Mesopotamia, Syria!  
 These are loud claims!

NICA. (L.) But grant them, lest they take  
 More than they claim.

ZENOBIAS. (*shewing another paper*) Yet look here,  
 Sapor proposes terms of friendship!

OTHO. (L.) Sapor?  
 And what his terms? for never Persia's king  
 Was generous for nothing.

ZENO. Julia's hand,  
 And for his son Hormisdas!

GRAC. (*thunderstruck*) Julia's!

JULIA. Mine!

(ZABDAS starts at back)

LONGI. 'Tis worth consideration!

OTHO. At this time  
 Such an alliance cannot be o'erprized:—  
 Close with it.

NICANOR. Or capitulate with Rome!

LONGI. A noble offer!

GRAC. Past comparing base:—  
 What, sell the Princess like a market ware !  
 Make barter of her, as for kine or corn!  
 Tell Persia that its aid of men and spears,  
 Back'd by the eastern world, is overbought,  
 O'erpaid, and far outvalued by the tear  
 That Julia sheds :

ZENOBIAS. Nay, Gracchus—Julia, child!—

(JULIA crosses C, weeping to her)



To make great sacrifices as a duty,  
 And murmur not, though the heart ache within,  
 And swell to bursting : parents, not rulers, Zabdas,  
 And ready for their sakes to die as martyrs die !

*Exit into Palace, L. U. E.*

ZABDAS. Isis, I thank thee now: yea, trebly thank thee,  
 That thou hast made me a true jailor here, (*his heart*)  
 To keep my captive from the light so firm.  
 Suspicion breaks his lance but harmlessly  
 Upon my mail of proof within! Who dares  
 Despise Egyptian Zabdas but himself?—  
 The secret is his own!

*Enter JULIA hurriedly from Palace, L. U. E.*

JULIA. Zabdas, be my friend;  
 Brave, noble Zabdas, be my only friend!

ZABDAS. The Princess!

JULIA. While Zenobia dons her robes  
 For the gay banquet, I have hastened to thee,  
 As children to the friend storms cannot shake,  
 For aid and counsel! oh, this hated marriage!  
 Oppose it—push it down, or crush it out—  
 For your voice to Zenobia is a fiat,  
 And brush away these brambles that shut out  
 The sunlight from my path !

ZABDAS. (*aside*) She comes to me!  
 To me of all the world to stand her friend.  
 What makes this loathedness to Persia's son ?  
 He's noble, or—love you another, Julia ?

JULIA. I'm too young to love. (*looking downward*) As for Hormisdas  
 I feel a hate——

ZABDAS. (*quickly*) Nay, Julia, love  
 And hate are twins: if you're too young to love,  
 You are too young to hate:—or holds Palmyra  
 One dearer far to Julia ?

JULIA. Dearer ! yes—  
 My mother and yourself.

ZABDAS. None other?

JULIA. (*casts her eyes down*) No.

ZABDAS. None dearer than another ?

JULIA. (*slight pause*) Is't then to love  
 To feel each quick intuitive sense increased,  
 Thought, memory, turned about one object ever,  
 And tiring never ? Sleeping, to dream of it—  
 Waking, to find its name upon the lips,  
 Trembling like echoes of the dulcimer ?  
 To see *him* 'mid a myriad: hear his voice,  
 His footstep from among a multitude:—  
 To feel, with all the frame in a wild thrill,  
 The magic of his touch ? For his sake grow  
 Patient neath grief—'gainst disappointment strong:

Forgiving, gentle, lifted as on wings  
 Above the grovelling passions of mankind,  
 And fill'd with angel's pity: living for him,  
 And for his sake ready to lay down life  
 As we bid friends farewell? is't this to love?

ZABDAS. So true a coin, 'twill pass for current, Julia!  
 And you love thus? your secret is at large:  
 The man is noble? brave?

JULIA. Nay ask not!  
 Till now I scarcely knew my secret: now  
 Engines shall never drag it from my lips.  
 It is a bitter sweet, this love, for now  
 In telling it my heart chokes up my throat,  
 And finds a vent in tears! (*weeping, crosses, R.*)

TETTUS. (*without, down steps*) Get you along, eaves-dropper!

ZABDAS. We are disturbed ;  
 Retire you under shadow of this arch:  
 Let them not see you with these runnel eyes,  
 For these are natures that break in on sorrow,  
 With frivolous questions, albeit meaning well,  
 Yet sting as deep as purposed insult go:—  
 Then we'll go in together! *Exit JULIA R. 2 E.*

" Is this love ?"  
 Ah, who could tell—ah, none so well as I,  
 How truly it was love! (*goes up L. to Palace steps*)

*Enter TETTUS, driving in BULBUS, U. E. R., up steps.*

TETTUS. In with you, slinker, eaves-dropper, listener!

BULBUS. But you won't hear me speak!

TETTUS. Of course I won't. What right have boys to speak! What's  
 the good of being a man, if boys are allowed the same privileges?  
 Did I not send you on an errand to the widow Joppa, and didn't  
 I catch you listening to the conversation of the great Antiochus?  
 Do you know what listeners do?

BULBUS. Yes: hear what's being talked about.

TETTUS. Run a risk of being nailed by the ears to the gate post; and  
 a blessing for thee it was Antiochus did not spy thee out, for he's  
 as full of eyes as a hedgehog's full of prickles.

BULBUS. What does his greatness want to sell Palmyra for?

TETTUS. Sell Palmyra!

BULBUS. The Roman lords have offered him terms for the town, and  
 if they're agreed to, don't be astonished if they take the goods  
 away with them, and you and I no bit the wiser!

TETTUS. What Queen, and city, and all?

BULBUS. They'll clear the premises. He talked of the Princess too,  
 whom the Queen was going to marry to Persia! What's the  
 poor Princess to marry the whole empire for? Can't she be  
 satisfied with a home-made article? If outline's her object, here  
 she has it! (*crossing to R., conceitedly*)

TETTUS. Or a fine chest, here she has it. (*crossing to L.*)

BULBUS. Or a well-turned leg, look here!

TETTUS. Or if she leans towards a calf, let her look at me.

BULBUS. Truly, uncle, on the score of calves I withdraw my claim.

TETTUS. As I'm alive, the General's overheard us ! Trudge, trudge,  
you scapegrace, or we may swing by the heels for talking of state  
matters in so loud a breath ! *Exeunt, L. 2 E.*

ZABDAS. (*on steps*) Antiochus and treachery in a breath!

Antiochus is noble ! Psha! these churls  
Know not their own opinions. Julia loves !  
Should it yet come to pass, (and history's page  
Is rich in such like marvels!) that she loves  
The man whose iron heart obeys the magnet  
Of her sweet influence ! (*advances*) Bright hope, thou art  
Unnumber'd 'mong the deities of heaven:  
Yet are thy attributes all heavenly,  
Like summer and the stars ! (*standing R., and looking off*)

*Enter up steps, C, ANTIOCHUS, and two Roman LORDS—they cross  
conversing, into house, L. U. E., pointing to ZABDAS ; ANTIOCHUS  
remains)*

ANTI. (*aside at back*) He is alone:  
And now to sound his mettle to the business  
Hinted at darkly by the embassy, (*advances, L. C.*)  
(*aloud*) Zabdas, the banquet waits within : the wine  
Cools in the beakers, and the tables wait.

ZABDAS. (R.) Let them.

ANTI. (L.) Egyptian, we  
Can ne'er make head against the Roman force.  
Aurelian, on his embassy's return,  
Will come into the field against us. We  
Shall fall like corn.

ZABDAS. Well, there's an end of us!

ANTI. True, that's the very view the brave should take—  
That you and I take—of our true position:  
But I think of the people.

ZABDAS. You are grown  
Most strangely anxious for the people's good:  
It never was your wont.

ANTI. There you misjudge:  
I always loved the people. Is't not hard now  
That War should sap and plunder their scant wage—  
Their hard-earned chattels—when a little tact—  
Negotiation—artifice—or skill—  
Might bring all happily round ?

ZABDAS. I'd learn the means.

ANTI. I have been feasting with the Roman lords,  
And wine has cunningly unpegg'd their tongues;  
And from them it appears, their liege, Aurelian,  
Doth but aspire to hold the realm Palmyra,  
A fief of Rome's imperial sway—



ZABDAS. Remember that.  
 Two years ago a power, like Rome, essayed  
 To win me to its aid. The messenger  
 Stood here, as we stand now ; proffer'd, as you  
 Did now, rewards for actions which, being done,  
 Had raised me up so great, that men would bow  
 Before me as a god, and else so mean  
 The dust and he were fit companions for me.  
 How answer'd I the herald ?

ANTI. Thank'd his pains:  
 And gently tendered him denial.

ZABDAS. Very gently!  
 I dash'd the villain o'er this parapet!  
 The vultures and hyenas did their duty;  
 And there flies all that's left of him! " (crosses to L.)

ANTI. Remember,  
 I'm the Queen's friend !

ZABDAS Rome hinted: so do I.  
 A breath too loud: a meaning glance: an arm  
 Raised up too high, as 'twere a signal—mark,—  
 I say, be warn'd : it may save me a labour,  
 And you a broken neck. (crosses to R.)  
*(music within Palace; trumpet music only, but kept very  
 piano until close of the Act; the lights gleaming out from  
 within, throwing the rest of the scene into gloom and  
 obscurity)*

*Enter a SERVANT from the Palace.*

SERVANT. My lords, the Queen  
 Bade me seek both of you.

ANTI. Tell her we come.

*Exit SERVANT.*

I must be wary of this Egyptian : in him  
 I have a foe to dread. *Exit into Palace, L.U.E.*

ZABDAS. Rome panders with him !  
 The boy o'erheard the bargain haggled for:  
 Julia the price! O Isis! price of treachery!  
 And yet what angel but might turn a devil  
 To win so exquisite a meed for sin ?  
 If he wrong her—if he betray Palmyra—  
 If he should bleach the roses from her cheek,  
 Or set the current of her tears abroach,  
 May thunder rive me, if I will not fall  
 Upon him like an iron avalanche,  
 And pash him to a dust! *(with great energy)*

JULIA. *(entering quickly)* I heard but now  
 Your voice in tones of anger !

ZABDAS. *(calmly and gently)* 'Twas a wasp,  
 An idle wasp, that stung me.

*(they go into Palace slowly as the drop falls)*

**END OF ACT I.**

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Palmyra, D. in F. L.*

*Enter BULBUS, 1 E. R., running, as if to avoid some one.*

BULBUS. Either my uncle's nose originally belonged to a fox, or his eyes to a lynx, or else he'd never smell or sight me out as he does, go where I will. Oh, the delightful plump little widow! If we were only married, and—Furies and fireballs! Here he is! (*hides behind R. wing, a pillar*)

*Enter TETTUS, R., looking about.*

TETTUS. I could have sworn I saw the rascal, that nephew of mine, hopping along the streets like a grasshopper, as if in defiance of me. What right has the unprincipled rogue to fall in love at his years, with one old enough to be his mother? Let him take advice from me, and love the kitchen as I did; let him make the oven his wife, or marry the boiler! Roast, baked, and boiled should be his mistresses, for women are devils!

JILPHA *appears*, L. D. F.

JILPHA. (*whispering*) Tettus!

TETTUS. My angel! Where's your sainted progenitor?

JILPHA. Trying to overhear what our master and the strange gentleman are talking about, so for a minute or two we are safe (*advances*) I'm so glad you've come to-day.

TETTUS. Confession sweet as ambrosia! Speak on: my feeling's growing backward every instant. I'm two years younger already.

JILPHA. You say you love me!

TETTUS. Say it! Look at me! Do I look like your thin aerial fall-away lovers, the fire of whose passion melts them away, till they could hide behind their own shadow? No! I weigh twelve stone five; and the love of a man that weight is something at once noble and solid.

JILPHA. And I love you for it, Tettus! It's something to have a lover of bulk and valour, ready to fight and die for one as you would.

TETTUS. As I will.

JILPHA. That's what I wanted to see you for to-day—to fight and die for me.

TETTUS. (*starting back*) What?

JILPHA. I told the young man the danger he ran in falling in love with me so suddenly: and he said that he always acted on impulse, that he had loved me nearly ten minutes, that he'd kill you to-night, and marry me to-morrow.

TETTUS. And what did you say?

JILPHA. I said I liked the arrangement: only I was afraid you mightn't be ready to fill your part of the killing business up at once, and that might delay the marrying.

TETTUS. Crocodiles and cockatrices!

JILPHA. But that's not the worst.

TETTUS. The devil! What's worse?

JILPHA. Mother's in love with him, too!

BULBUS. (*rushing down, C.*) What's his d——d name?

JILPHA. } Bulbus!

TETTUS. }

BULBUS. Give him to me, tied hand and foot, that I may put him under a large stone, and sit upon it till he's dead! Show him to me as he walks along the streets, that I may rush to the top of the house, and drop something heavy upon his head! Tell me what they call him, that I may chalk the hated name upon the wall, and throw mud and dirty water at it!

TETTUS. Off home with you, sirrah! Are you mad or drunk?

BULBUS. Both! I'm bitten with the 'phobia of revenge, and drunk with the liquor of disappointment. I won't go home! I'll stop out all night—I'll—I'll——

*Enter the Widow JOPPA, from door, L. F.*

Widow! widow! look at me. (*in an extravagant attitude*)

JOPPA. (*striking him on the breast*) Get out of the way! (*crosses to JILPHA.*) So, jade, here you are, making love in this disgraceful manner. Good Tettus, (*crossing to him*) I honour and respect you very much, but if you come here courting my daughter any more, I'll have you ducked.

TETTUS. Ducked! A king's cook! Hear me speak.

JILPHA. No, hear me.

BULBUS. No, hear me.

JOPPA. I won't hear nobody speak but myself.

JILPHA. Nobody ever does.

TETTUS. I love your daughter; and till this day or two you smiled upon it!

JOPPA. I've changed my mind.

BULBUS. And till yesterday you said you doated upon the ground I walked on.

JOPPA. So I do, as soon as you've walked off.

But now I've another object.

BULBUS. You can't have a greater object than me! but I'll yet revenge myself on the object, only show me a chance!

JILPHA. A fight! delightful!

*Enter SPONTANEIUS, door L. F.*

JOPPA. And here he is!

BULBUS. (*runs to him*) Are you prepared to die?

TETTUS. (*runs to him*) Or resign Jilpha?

SPON.(C.) I've two impulses: one to knock you down, and the other to laugh at the pair of you.

BULBUS. (R.) Try the second!

SPON. Widow, our master calls you: hasten to him, I beg, and let his harsh temper sleep.

JOPPA. What a sweet-spoken youth it is. *Exit into house, L.*

SPON. Get you within, Jilpha! I've something important to say to you within. (*kisses her, she goes in, L.*) And now a word with you.

TETTUS. Give me back my Jilpha.

BULBUS. Hand over my outraged feelings.

SPON. Take this: (*gives TETTUS a packet*) at another time I can better answer you, and will. See this delivered to the Queen's own hand: the nature of its contents will excuse the abruptness of its presentation. Away! Palmyra depends upon it.

*Exit, L. F.*

TETTUS. Fudge! I'm not to be cheated out of my redress this way! I shan't give it to the Queen. She'd wring my ears off, or hang me over the walls, heels upward, for the besieging Romans to practise their archery on. Besides, I'll not disgrace myself by being his messenger. (*pockets it*)

BULBUS. Keep it till the battles are all over, and then it won't do any good to anybody! If I could only push him in the river when his back was turned to me!

TETTUS. Contemptible! a treacherous act to kill a man behind his back: my plan's far nobler.

BULBUS. Which is——

TETTUS. To invite him to supper, and poison his victuals; there's no treachery there! *Exeunt, R. 1 E.*

*Enter, from house, HUIJUS and ANTIOCHUS.*

HUIJUS. An excellent scheme, Antiochus, and promising  
A golden harvest, like a standing field  
Of corn; but yet——

ANTI. But yet—you hesitate——

HUIJUS. My honour!

ANTI. You mouth the loud word honour!—take your choice,  
And act with what you cunning men call wisdom.  
This is not haggling for a coin or two,  
But realms and hundreds! Queen's the bargain'd goods:  
An Emperor the purchaser! consider!

HUIJUS. I do—now that Zenobia hath a heart  
And arm that act in concert with revenge,  
And know not mercy! Should we be betrayed—  
Her retribution would be terrible,  
And instant as the lightning!

ANTI. Throw away this fear.  
Had fear held back the man who first essayed  
To stem the river's current, he had ne'er  
Learn'd how to swim, which, in an after wreck,  
Preserved his life. Palmyra is besieged:  
The Emperor hath lash'd us from the plains  
Of Syria, like curs before the whip.

HUIJUS. But had not done so had not Zabdas trusted  
To one that played the traitor.

ANTI. Let us two  
Close with the offers of Aurelian,  
Give up the Queen, and live. Be obstinate,  
And still oppose him, all our lives are straws,  
And all your gold will feed the ravenous maws  
Of plundering soldiery!

- HUJUS. It shall not. No—  
It's safely buried ! aha ! snugly buried!  
They'll ne'er enjoy it—ha, ha, ha!
- ANTI. No, nor you.
- HUJUS. (*suddenly serious*) That's true.  
But Zabdas will not trust you with command  
To be again deceived ! I marvel much,  
Remembering how you once strove to make him  
A traitor, that he trusted you so far.
- ANTI. Psha! He was blinded easily : I told him  
I did but try his loyalty and honor,  
For Queen Zenobia's sake, and he was dumb'd.  
I play my game too well. (*a distant trumpet and shouts, L.*)  
The show is over,  
The Queen has just reviewed her soldiery,  
By her soul-stirring eloquence uproused  
The valour that will strike in her defence  
To the last gasp. Think it over, Hujus;  
A bloody grave, or life and endless wealth ! *Exit, L.*
- HUJUS. Wealth! wealth! I hear the echo everywhere !  
I see it dazzle me with golden beams  
Turn where I will: by day, my thought: at night  
A dream that lifts me to a mortal heaven !  
But then the price is treachery: that's bad—  
Yet should I not consent others will,  
And my honorable obstinacy will avail me  
Nothing at all, but rob me of life and wealth,  
Besides the profit of the deed! I hear  
Its whisper like a distant song! I feel  
Its influence tingling up and down my veins,  
And mixing with my blood till all my life  
Seems gold, and all around me blazing out  
In characters of fire the word is written,  
And leads me like a slave! Honor or wealth—ha! ha!  
Let honor kick the beam,—let wealth be mine,—  
Let the world scorn ! What is the world to me ?  
Ha! ha! ha ! gold—gold! *Exit, R. 1 E.*

SCENE II.—*Interior of the Palace.*

ZENOBIA *enters from terrace without, R. U. E., GRACCHUS and a SLAVE following.*

- ZENOBIA. (*to SLAVE*) Tell the lords  
Sent by Aurelian to propose surrender,  
That we will give him battle to the last,  
And that Palmyra yet is wide enough  
To be our grave, our tomb, and epitaph;  
As relics of brave deeds are the last epitaphs  
Of heroes that achieved them : tell them so.

*Exit SLAVE.*

GRAC. Then dawn renews the siege ?

- ZENOBIA.           And       e'er       night       falls  
                   The baffled legions of presumptuous Rome  
                   Shall crawl defeated back.
- GRAC.            And       should       all       fail——
- ZENOBIA.       We die!
- GRAC.            And do not thoughts remain behind  
                   For those we leave ? Julia——
- ZENOBIA.                           Well                           ?
- GRAC. Shall she endure the bleak world's bitterness?  
           The parasitic world, that crowns with rays  
           The fortunate, but turns it's back, and sneers,  
           And mocks at worthy greatness fallen ? Shall  
           A world like this mock Julia ?
- ZENOBIA.           True;                           but                           fall  
                   The worst upon our hopes, Zabdas is noble,  
                   And will be her protector and her friend.
- GRAC. Zabdas will not outlive Palmyra.
- ZENOBIA.                           No                           :  
           I do believe it. She is Persia's bride,  
           By promise given: they will shelter her  
           Against the storm.
- GRAC.                           Should Persia fail to come,  
           Give to some heart that loves her like a star  
           A husband's right to champion her.
- ZENOBIA.                           Well                           counsell'd:  
           Antiochus but yesterday avow'd  
           He loved her, 'spite that she rejected him.
- GRAC.                           Antiochus!  
           I'd sooner mate her with a satyr.
- ZENOBIA. If in the coming conflict I should fall,  
           And Zabdas or Antiochus remain,  
           Let the survivor take her to his arms,  
           And strike her to the heart!
- GRAC.                           Zenobia I
- ZENOBIA.                           Shall  
           Zenobia's child grace proud Aurelian's triumph—  
           In fetters march through Rome's outpouring streets—  
           Alive with eyes that look insulting pity ?  
           Shall it be so ?
- GRAC.                           No : death were a boon, and fame a longer life  
           Than life slain by dishonour!

*Enter ZABDAS, with papers, R. U. E.*

- ZENOBIA. (*to ZABDAS*)                           Wears not hope  
           A gallant crown ?
- ZABDAS. (*down L.*)       The crest of conquerors!  
           Who gazes there looks not on men, but gods—  
           With every one a fearless soul within him—  
           Which terrors cannot quail, nor death destroy!
- ZENOBIA. (C.) And with each day from Persia and Armenia,  
           March armies to our aid.

ZABDAS. That's not true valour  
 That being beaten, must lie down and kick,  
 Or send for older help. Stand up and die.  
 But bravely die. There's not an arrow kills,  
 Shot against him, but ennobles him  
 Who shoots it, and degrades the man that's slain,  
 As if he wore his wounds behind his back !  
 Let snow and storms lock up these helpers' march,  
 Till we have done the work—then let 'em come:  
 We'll give 'em leave to share the plunder with us,  
 And shout with us, but not an inch of glory :  
 Give us the honour all! give them the rest.

ZENOBIA. (C.) What are those scrolls you carry, Zabdas ?

ZABDAS. (L.) These?

That's well remembered. As I entered here,  
 A messenger half dead with riding hard,  
 To 'scape the enemy's darts, came up. He bore  
 These tidings for Zenobia, from her friends  
 Now marching to her aid.

(gives them to ZENOBIA, who walks to R. reading them)

Why, Gracchus, boy,  
 That's not thy battle brow, nor fits that garland  
 The head whereon the casque should glitter proudly—  
 And in that hand the lance and sword should gleam  
 As lightnings in the hand of Jove.

GRAC. (avoiding him) The Queen  
 Seems moved.

ZABDAS. What say the scrolls, great Queen ?

ZENOBIA. (crossing to C.) Dark words

That kill to read them: the Armenian legions  
 Have taken bribes from Rome to play us false,  
 And have retraced their homeward steps.

ZABDAS. That's well:

We have no thanks to pay them for their help:  
 And better they should stay away, than bring  
 The palms that cannot choose, but itch for gold,  
 To play us false at last. We know them now.  
 We might have bought our knowledge dearer far,  
 Had they arrived to fail us in the hour  
 We leant upon them most.

ZENOBIA. (examining the other paper) Why worse and worse !

ZABDAS. What's worse ?

ZENOBIA. The Persian horse within a league,  
 Encountered with the Emperor.

ZABDAS. I trust  
 Were soundly thrashed ?

ZENOBIA. Fought bravely!

ZABDAS. To be sure

They'd never tell you how they ran away.

ZENOBIA. They fought till nightfall, but——

ZABDAS. I like that but—  
It sounds like victory lost.

ZENOBIA. Alas!

ZABDAS. They were  
Defeated there!

ZENOBIA. They were!

ZABDAS. I thank the gods!  
Call you that worse! I call it better still!  
Now we owe nothing to our friends, but stand  
To live or die: the name of victory  
Is nought: it is the deeds that hallow it,  
And rise like eagles on it to the skies,  
To tell each hero's story to the gods,  
And win him state there! (*pointing up*)

ZENOBIA. Where's this messenger?  
I must learn more of him! Beloved Palmyra!  
What will to-morrow see thee!

ZABDAS. Something better  
If it entombs us 'mid its monuments,  
Than if it shelter'd mercenary soldiery,  
Who shed their blood—for plunder!

*Exit ZENOBIA.*

(*pulls the wreath off the head of GRACCHUS*) Off with this!  
By Isis, in a spirit-rousing time  
Like this, but that I know you honorable  
And valiant too, I should despise you, Gracchus,  
For being half a man! Should Zabdas fall  
And you wear still this love-sick character,  
Who then will lead the soldiers of Palmyra,  
Against the foe?

GRAC. Antiochus! — on whom  
Death striking, would give life to me, but living,  
A desolation bitterer than death, (*weeps*)

ZABDAS. What does this mean? as I'm a man, he weeps :—  
Check them—come check them! Tears to men are sparks  
Of fire from the heart. Why, soldier Gracchus!—  
Boy!—Friend!—Old friend, to look upon thee thus,  
Turns the red blood a backward course within me,  
And chills and roughens all my flesh!

GRAC. You're right:  
I'll hide my degradation till my eyes  
Change tears for fire—like flashes! (*turning, L.*)

ZABDAS. No, not yet,  
Till you have shown your heart to me—you spoke  
Of one just now——

GRAC. Antiochus, to whom  
If he survives the fury of the battle,  
And Persia's aid should fail her, (as it has,)  
The Queen has promis'd——

ZABDAS. What?

GRAC. The hand of Julia!

ZABDAS. (*startled*) You dream!

GRAC. How now! this paleness of the grave—  
These trembling limbs, and you have tears too now.

ZABDAS. 'Tis false! I'm iron upwards from the heart:  
I have no tears: my limbs are firm; my cheek  
Belies me if it pales—look, look again!  
See, do I weep, wax pale, or tremble now?

GRAC. You are again yourself. O, dare I trust you!

ZABDAS. With your heart, Gracchus!

GRAC. Can we hoop our hearts  
Like mortal things! Can we shut out from them  
Their monarch, love!

ZABDAS. Why ask you me this thing?  
Think you I—love?

GRAC. No, Zabdas, for I know  
Your soul hath but one mistress in the world,  
And that's Palmyra's glory.

ZABDAS. (*bitterly*) O yes—yes.  
Well then, your love—

GRAC. I tremble when I speak,  
Lest you despise me, but it masters me—  
It is my breath, my sunlight, my religion!  
How I love Julia—

ZABDAS Julia!

GRAC. Like the birds  
Love day-dawn, or the flowers the fresh rain  
That brings them life and beauty out of heaven, (*crosses to R.*)

*Enter ANTIOCHUS from L. U. E., who remains at the back overhearing.*

And she returns the love.

ZABDAS. Returns it? Ah!  
You're sure of that? She told you so herself,  
With her own lips?

GRAC. Hath nothing else a voice  
But the inanimate and bell-like tongue,  
That answers but the will?  
A look, a sigh,—'tis with these  
Julia declared her love, and these alone  
Will nerve me to dispute the golden prize  
With proud Antiochus! (*crosses to L., ANTIOCHUS threatens*)

ZABDAS. He! Antiochus, love!—  
And such an incarnated gentleness  
As Julia's: it must be! Go seek her!—  
I'd speak with her: and if she loves you—Go, go! (*goes R.*)

*Exit GRACCHUS, L. 1 E., ANTIOCHUS following at a distance,  
threatening with a dagger.*

And still I've kept my secret—held it in,  
Though it came spouting upward like a flood  
Of burning lava—it shall burn me up—  
Consume me into ashes ere it finds

A tongue abroad ! Now if she loves him—Well,  
 What's then to do ? Why this Antiochus  
 Shall never wed her ! If he turns his back,  
 Or his cheek blanches looking on the foe,  
 I'll strike the coward dead !

JULIA *utters a shriek outside and rushes on, L. 1 E.*

'Tis Julia's voice !

JULIA. Oh, save him, Zabdas, or revenge him !

ZABDAS. Who ?

JULIA. Gracchus is slain : struck by a base assassin  
 Here in the corridor—a cloak'd man's hand—  
 I saw the How, but not the striker. Oh,  
 My brain seems bursting while I tell it ! Gracchus,  
 They've murdered him, and struck——

ZABDAS. Two hearts at once ;  
 Now, Julia, your caged prisoner hath escaped:—  
 Love blazons its bright colours like the prism  
 That waits upon the rainbow !

SOLDIERS *enter slowly from back of pillars, L., they are carrying  
 the body of GRACCHUS extended on their shields.*

Shame upon me !

That prating thus, I let the murderer 'scape,  
 The victim bleed !.—You say you mark'd not well  
 The man who struck ?

JULIA. I gazed with eyes that saw  
 No form but Gracchus.

ZABDAS. Was he tall or short ?

JULIA. In the one glance, he seemed somewhere about  
 The stature of Antiochus.

ZABDAS. Antiochus !

JULIA. O look, look, look ! the white rose of the dead  
 Is on his cheek—turning lookers-on  
 To senseless marble !

ZABDAS. (*looking at the body, crosses to C, waves on two LADIES,  
 R., who take JULIA off*) No, not dead, but yet  
 Upon the brink of the unfathom'd lake  
 That runs into eternity.

*Enter ANTIOCHUS, L. 1 E.*

ANTI. What means  
 This rumour of attempted murder ?

ZABDAS. See,  
 Noble Antiochus, the damned hand  
 Of some all-sacrilegious wretch hath struck  
 Life's altar in its temple ! But there's hope  
 He yet may live.

ANTI. Not much, the blow was sure.

ZABDAS. Indeed ! Were you far off when he was struck ?

ANTI. I was.

ZABDAS. Nor saw the wound inflicted ?

ANTI. No !

ZABDAS. How know you then  
The blow is sure, who neither saw it given,  
Nor were near when it was struck ?

ANTI. How?—am I not  
A soldier—are not death and wounds familiar ?

ZABDAS. True, true—take up the body, bear it in,  
We'll try physicians' help: the hand that struck  
Fitted some such a bulk as yours, Antiochus.

*(they move the body a step or two, R.)*

ANTI. Who could have done it, who ?

ZABDAS. Ay, who indeed ?

SOLDIERS *enter*, L. 1 E.

Take in the body. *(as they are bearing it out, L. 2 E., he points to SOLDIERS who stand behind ANTIOCHUS)*

ANTI. What means this ? a captive!

ZABDAS. If Gracchus dies, Antiochus, to-morrow  
Shall see you hanging from the battlements. *(ANTIOCHUS starts)*  
Think of it—the Egyptian keeps his word.

ZABDAS *stands in centre—his finger pointing threateningly—*  
ANTIOCHUS *stands L., baffled and surrounded by the*  
GUARDS—*the drop falls.*

END OF ACT II.

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The Hall of Hujus's House.*

*Enter HUIJUS and BULBUS, L. 1 E.*

HUIJUS. And so my freed-man, Spontaneius, gave you this packet to deliver to the Queen a few days back ?

BULBUS. Not to me: to uncle Tettus, who would have brought it to you himself, only he's too busy preparing the marriage feast.

HUIJUS. The marriage feast! what feast? whose marriage ?

BULBUS. The Princess Julia with Lord Gracchus: it's to be celebrated in the Temple this night.

HUIJUS. He bids fair to live then ?

BULBUS. Catch him dying ! he never meant to die a bachelor, my lord. He sunk and sunk, lower and lower, till the Queen, to save his life, gave her consent to the union, and then he recovered, at an astonishing rate!

HUJUS. Humph! love is a subtle physician. Then to revenge yourselves on Spontaneius, who is your rival in a woman's love, you opened and read this packet confided to your care ?

BULBUS. Opened, not read, your nobleness.

HUJUS. Not read, because——

BULBUS. We couldn't read. But we hoped it might draw him into a hobble for betraying your confidence.

HUJUS. You were right. But in betraying him, you confess yourself implicated in his villainies. Begone ! breathe but a word of this and I'll have you bow strung, and your uncle hanged.

BULBUS. What for being honest, we expected reward.

HUJUS. You were honest for your own ends, not mine! besides honesty is its own reward! hence! (*goes up*)

BULBUS. All the world's in a general conspiracy to snub me! but there's one comfort, I've undone Spoutaneius !—and uncle's in the mess too ! *Exit, L. 1 E.*

HUJUS. (*comes down*) Reward! ha! ha! his fears will seal his lips, And that saves money. Then this scroll—my freed-man Hath play'd the spy, and would betray us here To the revengeful Queen : this overthrows him.

*(goes to door, and speaks off, L. 1 E.)*

Ho, soldier! bid your captain come to me.  
We must be sudden : for above us threatens  
The hair-hung sword of Damocles. To-night  
They wed : here's news to cheer Antiochus,  
Whose life hung on the Roman's. Then the act  
Long plotted, ripened day by day to fruit,  
Must 'neath the shadows of the night be pluck'd.  
By day-dawn the attack : noon victory,  
And then immortal wealth

*Enter a CAPTAIN, L. 1 E.*

Who's there?

CAPTAIN. My lord,  
You sent for me.

HUJUS. Did I—for what ? I know—  
Seek Spontaneius—he's about the house,  
Bind him, and bring him hither:—heed him not,  
Let him say what he will, but bring him here.  
To all his cries, entreaties, and commands,  
Answer but this, it is my order. Go.

*Exit CAPTAIN, L.1 E.*

*Enter ANTIOCHUS, R.*

Joy to you, brave Antiochus!

ANTI. For what ?

HUJUS. He lives, and you are free.

ANTI. You wish me joy  
Of that which is my curse!

HUJUS. What's now to do  
Must be at once : the deed and resolution  
Must tread the one upon the other's heels:  
To-night will foil us quite else.

ANTI. How, to-night ?

HUJUS. Yon know not? True : the prison walls were thick.  
To-night the temple will be hung with flowers !  
And Hymen Hymenæus crown with wreaths  
Two hearts that love——

ANTI. Not theirs ! It poisons me  
To speak his name with hers, but look me no:  
Look yes, and I detest thee.

HUJUS. If I look  
The truth, I must be hated, for it is so.

ANTI. They wed to-night then ? (*crossing to L. thinking*)

HUJUS. Aye, to-night!

ANTI. (*kneels*) To thee,  
Bridegroom of hatred, purple-arm'd revenge,  
Thou hypocrite spirit of the law  
Call'd Justice, and thou—brother to the fiend  
Of evil harvest, evil-breeding Ate,  
I do commit myself, and my whole soul  
Devote to thee and thy death worship, till  
My debt is to the uttermost discharged.  
'Tis sworn ! (*rises*) Now, Hujus, hear and mark me:—when  
The choral hymn swells highest, and the hearts  
Of joy partake of heaven more than earth  
Look for the tempest:—see the secret gate  
Unbarr'd for my return with Roman troops,  
To swoop upon them like a bird of prey ;  
Draw off the guard, and be you blind and deaf  
To threat and peril till we meet again. (*going, L.*)

HUJUS. You'll bring the gold! that's in the bargain.

ANTI. Yes.

Your soul is bought, and shall be paid for justly:  
Each to his idol! Mammon is your god,  
But mine, revenge!

*Exit, L. 2 E.*

HUJUS. I would not change with thee.  
Each to his idol! I will worship mine,  
For wealth is man's true paradise, the gates  
Of which are opened with a golden key,  
And any price is cheap that buys it; ha,  
They have secured the spy.

*Enter CAPTAIN and SOLDIERS with SPONTANEIUS, L. 1 E.*

SPON. (L.) What means this usage ?

My lord, they say your order—

HUJUS. (C.) Oh dear no, (*satirically*)

This is some error, you're my servant—friend—

And sometime, confident, you're noble; you !  
This Captain hath mistaken.

SPON. On your order  
They do aver I was thus made prisoner,  
And dragg'd before you.

HUJUS. Spontaneius, you—  
Were never guilty of the coward act  
Of slinking in the track of talking men,  
And listening to their speech, or penning it  
For eyes to look upon, who reading there;  
Turn all their thoughts to vengeance ! some such man  
As this, I bade the soldiers seize upon.  
Deny it, and be free.

SPON. Is not this strange——

HUJUS. Oh, above strangeness strange ! that guilt, that sins  
Above the shame-rich level of a lie;  
Shrinks at a lie at least, If you denied it,  
Here's that would strike you dumb, and blind, and dead,  
As though it were the lightning! Look at it.

SPON. I do, the words are mine!

HUJUS. And you avow them.

SPON. Proudly avow them; as in looking there,  
I see a venture to preserve the land,  
And foil a traitor.

HUJUS. Hence! (*crosses, L.*)  
Howl out this sermon to the dungeon walls,  
A slow and lingering death be thine, to starve  
In rayless darkness, by the world unseen,  
And by mankind forgotten.

SPON. Not by heaven ! *Exeunt, C. D.*

HUJUS. (*aloud*) With him will die all record of this deed,  
Save on such tongues as money will buy silent;  
And I, to-morrow shall be rich enough,  
To pay the price. He came to triumph—ha !

*Enter ZABDAS, SPONTANEIUS liberated, and CAPTAIN, C. D.*

We little know how fast we near the grave,  
Or who shall fill it first;

ZABDAS. Old age is wise,  
And sometimes utters prophecy.

HUJUS. Lord Zadbass!  
(*sees SPONTANEIUS and speaks aside*)  
Free, and with him ! there's peril near me then.  
And I must brave it firmly.

ZABDAS. This man hath fallen under your displeasure,  
I do entreat his pardon.

HUJUS. He deserves  
Death at my hands—the traitor !

ZABDAS. Do all traitors  
Deserve no less than death ?

HUJUS. I'm caught, and yet  
To hesitate were fatal. (*aside*) Nought but death.

ZABDAS. (*as if repeating to himself*) " We little know how fast we  
near the grave,  
Or who shall fill it first!"

HUJUS. (*quickly*) What's that ?

ZABDAS. A quaint conceit.

Where is Antiochus ?

HUJUS. (*trembling*) I know not.

ZABDAS. Ha!

How ill these white hairs sort with falsehood, Hujus,  
Look in my face and answer me.

HUJUS. (L.) I know not—

I have forgotten—(*hesitatingly*)

ZABDAS. (R.) Shall I help your memory ?

For we have engines to extort the truth  
From stubbornness, as wine express'd from grapes !  
Grinding and torturing ! The truth!

HUJUS. (*aside*) To tell it

Destroys my golden hopes: I lose the wealth  
I've sinned so much for. If I keep the secret,  
I lose but life! and let life go—for gold.

ZABDAS. I wait your answer, Hujus.

HUJUS. In your ear

I'll tell it: not to these around us now—  
Come closer—this !

(*about to stab ZABDAS, SPONTANEIUS foils and wounds him  
with his own dagger; he is caught by the CAPTAIN*)

Well struck, for you have lock'd  
The secret up in death! Go, call your tortures:  
" We little know how fast we near the grave,  
Or who shall fill it first!"

(*dies, and is borne off, L. 1 E., by the CAPTAIN*)

ZABDAS. Unfortunate!

For there was much to learn concealed beneath  
This mass of white infirmity. This haste  
Has undone all. Strange rumours are abroad  
Of treachery now threatening Palmyra,  
And of Antiochus' flight! Should it prove so,  
We have worse foes than Romans to encounter—  
Traitors among ourselves.

*Enter ALCANDER, hastily, L. 1 E.*

Now, this speed  
Foreruns some news of import.

ALCAN. Pardon me,

Are you Lord Hujus ?

ZABDAS. I am not Lord Hujus :

But if your business concerns the state,  
I am its friend, and yours.

ALCAN. (L.) Forgive my tidings,  
For the dark omen that they wear.

ZABDAS. (C.) Declare them:  
Let omens frighten children ! the proud heart  
Of Zabdas quails not at a shadow'd fear.

ALCAN. Antiochus——

ZABDAS. What of Antiochus ?

ALCAN. (*in alarm*) My lord, he has fled.

ZABDAS. Well, then, he has fled: (*calmly*)  
To join the Emperor ?

ALCAN. 'Tis even so.

ZABDAS. Why, then, he has left room for better men.  
And is this nothing all ?

ALCAN. He meditates  
A treacherous assault upon the city.

ZABDAS. Well, let him try : we do not sleep unarmed.  
Our helms will guard our heads. What more ?

ALCAN. To take  
Zenobia captive.

ZABDAS. We've our shields around her:  
Let him think twice upon it.

ALCAN. And to seize  
The person of the Princess at the altar,  
And force her to be his.

ZABDAS. (*energetically*) Let him take care  
He fall not on our swords in the attempt,  
And slay himself. (*crosses, L.*) The serpent shows himself:  
And this is but the slough he leaves behind.  
The mischief is abroad. (*crosses, C.*) Let every guard  
(to SPONTANEIUS)  
Be doubled—every point of danger scann'd—  
The troops in readiness upon the word  
To answer to the battle-call! For thee,  
There's gold, (*to ALCANDER*) No thanks, I'm deaf o' that ear.  
Follow ! (*crosses, L. ; ALCANDER goes R. C.*)  
Assault the city ! Let him try ! Attack  
The Queen ! well, let him try ! Seize on the Princess,  
And force her to the altar to be his—  
Ah, let him try !  
I pray that he may come ! that no cross hap  
May keep him back, and mar the pleasant greeting  
I'll give him when he clasps her ! Let him try !  
*Exeunt, C. D.*

SCENE II.—*The Entrance to the Sacred Grove. A flight of steps rises from stage, and the path is continued to the back of the stage, lined on each side with alternate trees and statues.*

*Enter ZENOBIA and GRACCHUS, L.U.E.*

ZENOBIA. Nay : calm this intemperate extacy! your wound  
Is not yet cured.

GRAC. Julia's mine!  
 And in those brief words and eternal thoughts,  
 Are centered empyreal extacies !  
 Oh, Queen—oh, mother—dearer in that name  
 Than thy regality, demand some proof  
 How much I honor thee.

ZENOBIA. If the worst fall, and we are conquer'd  
 'Twere better that she died i'the innocent spring  
 Of life, than live to share a conqueror's bed,  
 Made hateful by its shameful splendour!

*(in the distance music is heard)*

GRAC. *(crosses L.)* Hold!  
 Hark to that music ! O let not sounds that bear  
 The gloomy warning of a raven's note  
 Mix with your joyful melodies that voice  
 Our happiness to heaven.  
 I'll meet them at the Temple! Ah, the thought  
 Of her bright smile brings all the summer back,  
 And dissipates the winter on my heart!

*Exit up steps, L.U.E.*

ZENOBIA. How light a step, how bright a glance, how gay  
 The heart that throws its radiance all around.  
 And yet to-morrow may ! I will not shade  
 To-day with presages of fear! to-morrow  
 Is the dead's day !—to-day is for the living.

*Enter JULIA from back, R. down the C. steps.*

Julia, and here!

JULIA. I've sought you, gentle mother !  
 To feel your kiss, and hear you speak the words  
 Of blessing to the timid bark that sets  
 Her tiny sails unto the winds that blow  
 Across the ocean of existence. Love  
 Is a new world I steer for, and to-morrow  
 I cast my anchor in its bay.

ZENOBIA. How true,  
 Love sees not past to-day: to-morrow, Julia,  
 You'll learn the duties of a wife.

JULIA. The duties ?  
 You'll say, the gods speed thee,  
 Upon my voyage, mother!

ZENOBIA. With a heart  
 That hath a voice more hallow'd than my words,  
 And bids God speed thee as we utter prayers,  
 Where heart and voice subliming into one,  
 Are heard and answered with a blessing, girl.

*Enter ZABDAS, L. U. E.*

*(crosses to him)* Here's valiant Zabdas, you have yet a word  
 Of lovingness to him.

- ZABDAS. (*to himself*) All is prepared:  
No item overlook'd. The Queen—the Princess!
- ZENOBIAS. To say farewell, brave soldier. For the wife  
Disowns the friendships that the maiden made  
For higher aspirations, brighter thoughts,  
And nobler dreams. The Temple waits: one word  
To Zabdas, and then join me, Julia.  
You'll follow quickly? (*goes up, C.*)
- JULIA. (R.) Ay, as life to heaven  
Upon the summons of the angel Death.  
*Exit ZENOBIAS up steps, C. into Temple, L. U. E*  
You'll bless me, too? (*gaily*)
- ZABDAS. My blessing? And to you? (*pause*)  
Yea, with my soul within, which blesses thee  
As it adores the sun!
- JULIA. (R.) And bless thee, too,  
That strove to make me happy in this marriage,  
With my soul's idol! I owe all to thee!  
For who but thou couldst trace the growing love  
That had no voice to speak, but in its stealth  
Grew fast and strong; and when at last it breathed  
Its tale to mortal ear, found only thine  
That listened with a brother's tender patience,  
And bade it smile and flourish? Oh, I love thee,  
As only sisterhood can love, and thank thee  
With tears that teem with blessings.
- ZABDAS. You are happy,  
And joyfully leap forward to a step  
Which made, is past recalling.
- JULIA. Happy! Oh,  
So happy!
- ZABDAS. Then I am content—content  
As he that sees his sinking child caught up  
While he is drowning.
- JULIA. That's a sad content.  
Yours should be gayer—brighter.
- ZABDAS. More refined,  
More mated with the angels and the gods.  
Yes, it should be so, and it shall be so.  
And you love Gracchus well?
- JULIA. With a passion deep  
And fervent as eternity.
- ZABDAS. That's well.
- JULIA. Oh, but to listen to his honey'd tales,  
The music of his tones, that syren like  
Might draw the listen'r to destruction, or  
To perish 'mid delight;
- ZABDAS. Love tales! I'd weave ye,  
A score of idle legends in an hour,  
As true as his.
- JULIA. But if you heard him tell them



ZABDAS. Chide thee! forgive thee!—Go!  
 Thy lover waits thee: he that's left behind  
 Worships thy image! Go, I say—you see  
 There's nought but smiles upon my lips, and words  
 Rich'd with warm wishes! To the Temple! Go!  
 The heart that loves thee best, cries "To the Temple!"  
 For there waits happiness and Gracchus!

*Exit JULIA and PRIESTESS up steps, C. into Temple, L*

Gone!

My limbs lose power—every fibre shakes  
 With the strong combat that was fought within!  
 I grow o' the sudden old, as if I stood  
 Upon a precipice looking down on death,  
 And could not move or cry! She's gone, the world  
 Is empty, and the sun expired—the stars  
 Rayless as eyes of death, and one great blankness  
 Fallen over creation! Zadbass, now no more:  
 A tottering broken motiveless old man.

*(music ceases—he sinks on his knee—on a sudden, in the distance are heard shouts, the screams of women, and the voice of conflict)*

No, no, not motiveless! I have left revenge! *(starting up)*  
 The slave told truth—the threaten'd treachery  
 Hath burst upon them, but, unlook'd for by them,  
 Hath met my timely-set precautions! *(murmurs)* Yes!  
 I hear the battle-cry of our brave legions  
 Mingling with the outwitted traitors' yells  
 For mercy!—Do not give it! Slay them all,  
 Except Antiochus! For Aurelian's empire  
 I would not have him slain! I dedicate  
 His blood unto the Fates!

*Enter SPONTANEIUS, L.*

Well, is it done?

SPON. Beyond your hopes! the Romans burst on them  
 Before the very altar: those brave troops  
 Of your own choosing were in readiness  
 And at my trumpet-call rush'd like a tempest  
 Upon their enemies!

ZABDAS. Load high that slave,  
 That brought the news with gold!

SPON. I struck the ruffian  
 Dead at my feet that seized the Queen!

ZABDAS. That deed  
 Shall make thee noble: well, the Princess—

SPON. Clung  
 With terror to the altar, Gracchus soon  
 Was dragg'd away, but rescued

ZABDAS. Well—go on.

SPON. Antiochus——

ZABDAS. That's him! go on, go on!

SPON. Soon tore her  
From her frail grasp, and would have borne her off,  
Despite her shrieks and cries, but for a spearman  
Who fell'd him with the broken staff!

ZABDAS. God bless him!

SPON. Quickly a host released the Princess from His grasp,  
And she's at liberty.

ZABDAS. Thank heaven!

SPON. Then  
The trustiest swordsman of the camp engaged  
The desperate Antiochus, and he——

ZABDAS. Was taken ?

SPON. Yes!

ZABDAS. Good night, Antiochus ! (*crosses to L.*)  
He lives! you're sure he lives ?

SPON. He lives indeed,  
But wounded dangerously.

ZABDAS. Send round the city  
For the most skilful surgeons—bind his wounds !  
Tend him as gently as a bird, and cherish  
The smouldering spark of life, until it glows  
With fiery health ! I would not have him die  
For all the treasures 'twixt the earth and heavens !  
Not till we meet foot set to foot, and sword  
Cross'd against sword! Feed him with choicest viands  
To generate fresh strength : tempt him with wines  
To give him blood to shed, as I will shed it,  
An offering to Julia and revenge !  
(*SPONTANEIUS crosses behind to L.*)  
Don't speak to me, but lead me to him—Quick ?  
My soul is there already!

*Rushes out, L., with SPONTANEIUS  
(as he goes off, in the distance three distinct shouts of  
triumph are heard)*

END OF ACT III.

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*A Street in Palmyra, supposed to be that in which the house of Hujus is situated; the portal of the house, with doors closed and barred on one side, with steps before it.*

*Enter JOPPA and JILPHA with bag and baggage, crying and consoling each other.*

JOPPA. It's all over, Jilpha: we're outcasts and wanderers like the little birds, condemned to perch wherever we can, and to live on what we can pick up. Oh, who would be a widow !

JILPHA. Don't talk of widows, mother: who'd be a maiden in these times of war.

JOPPA. Hang the fellows !—there's nothing thought of but military glory now : and connubial comfort is mentioned among the things that were. (*changing her tone suddenly*) What a fool you were not to accept Tettus, the Queen's cook : he was madly in love with you.

JILPHA. Well so I was : but who could resist Spontaneius ?

JOPPA. Spontaneius ought to have blushed for his insensibility to me, till he was red hot from his toes to the roots of his hair: but they've made him an officer, and he's all armour and importance,

JILPHA. What's to be done, mother ?

JOPPA. I'm sure I don't know, girl. I'm willing to drown myself in the great conduit, only I'm afraid of sticking in the water-pipe, and thereby incommoding the city. Let's go over to the Emperor!

JILPHA. What, desert our native town, mother ! no, never!

JOPPA. Why not, girl ? they say the Emperor is very kind to the gentle sex, and has already made liberal presents to those who have surrendered themselves to his mercy—perhaps he buys widows.

JILPHA. I'd die first. Besides, there may be a chance of getting a husband here in Palmyra.

JOPPA. I don't know whether it's grief or the weather affects my eyesight, Jilpha, but I don't see so well as I did. From this distance, that's very like Bulbus's walk.

JILPHA. And Tettus is with him. Let's hide ourselves.

JOPPA. Hide ! I don't put my candle under a bushel for any man. Step aside with me, and I'll teach you how to make the best use of tears. Ha ! I should never have been a widow but for them : your poor father was insensible to a hurricane, but he couldn't stand rain, so he always had it. I took care of that.

(*they retire up stage*)

*Enter* BULBUS *and* TETTUS, L. 1 E.

BULBUS. But you see, uncle——

TETTUS. But you don't see, nephew—at a time like this, we must look on ourselves in a mercantile point of view—our married soldiers being all killed, all the single men are getting promoted: therefore, this fall of husbands creates an answerable rise in bachelors. Now widowers stand between married and single like pilots between land and sea, with the experience of the one joined to the availability of the other. Now when these widows, past, present, and future, fall in love with us——

BULBUS. Well, but suppose they don't.

TETTUS. They must: they can't help themselves ! all these repeated sieges are killing married men and raising our price in the matrimonial market. Three days ago I'd have married the pretty little kitchen maid, Jilpha; next day, I wouldn't have struck under to less than a merchant's daughter; yesterday, I only would have condescended to espouse a knight's widow; to-day,

THE EGYPTIAN.

I'll not take fetters but from a princess; and to-morrow, the Queen, or nobody.

BULBUS. And when you are married, shall you fight ?

TETTUS. Well, Bulbus, I shall not volunteer: when I marry, in the depopulated state of the country, I shall have a duty to society to perform which won't admit of fighting much. And for you—if I marry the Queen, who, being mother of her subjects, can have no objection to extend the title—you shall marry——

BULBUS. Her tire woman!

TETTUS. Her apron-string! the Princess.

BULBUS. Well, but she's married this very day.

TETTUS. But her husband's sure to be killed.

BULBUS. But suppose he is not.

TETTUS. He can't help himself I tell you, and he's no choice in the matter; if he's a man he'll die for glory, and if she's a woman she'll marry again.

*(turning from each other they find the WOMEN on either side of them pretending to cry, JILPHA next to TETTUS, and JOPPA next to BULBUS, they turn up their noses at the sight of them and cross each other; by which means they find their positions reversed, TETTUS meeting JOPPA and BULBUS encountering JILPHA)*

JOPPA. } *(crying)* Oh, dear! Oh, dear!

JILPHA. }

BULBUS. I never noticed it before, but Jilpha is certainly prettier than her mother.

TETTUS. I don't think the old woman would make a bad match in case the Queen and I shouldn't quite bring matters to the square.

JILPHA. Bulbus. I always liked you.

BULBUS. I am not surprised to hear it.

JOPPA. Love, you know, is not our fault.

TETTUS. The flesh is weak, widow, and I am weaker and fleshier than many men.

JOPPA. I have been told I was pretty.

BULBUS. Odd singularity—so have I.

JOPPA. I have taken care of myself, friend Tettus.

TETTUS. Pattern of prudence, so have I.

ALL. And so—*(about to embrace)*

*Enter SPOSTANEIUS and SOLDIERS, JILPHA avoids BULBUS' embrace and runs to SPONTANEIUS who receives her.*

JOPPA. Spontaneius!

BULBUS. Forty thousand devils—tails and all!

SPON. Nay, Jilpha, I had not forgotten you, though greater businesses engaged my mind, soldiers, see this lady safely conducted to my quarters; if heaven sees me 'scape the perils of to-day, to-morrow makes you my wife.

JILPHA. How delightful!—so soon?

SPON. Quick impulses are sometimes happy heralds, Jilpha ; I act

on impulses. Besides, in busy times like these when law is forced to wink at minor evils, the good hour is the present one !

JILPHA. (*consequentially*) Good bye, good friends ! I invite you all to my marriage, good folks! I'm going to be quartered; I haven't the least idea what it is, but I suppose it's a military manoeuvre.

*Exit with SOLDIERS, L.*

BULBUS. I'll be hanged if I don't hang myself.

*Exit, R.*

TETTUS. It's a bargain, widow, between us.

JOPPA. Clinched and soldered. But your poor nephew, how wretched he looked; Captain, (*crosses to SPONTANEIUS*) look at poor Bulbus, it pains me very much to see youth suffer; you said just now that law winks its reverend eye at minor evils; do you think it would bestow a tight wink on a small bit of bigamy ?

SPON. Psha! see—yonder comes the General.

*Exit, L.*

TETTUS. Does he ? then I'll secure my game before he pounces on it. Widow, love is retiring, and goes home early.

JOPPA. And matrimony goes home with it; Spontaneius, you have lost a great chance ; I am lost to you for ever.

*Exeunt JOPPA and TETTUS, R. 1 E*

SCENE II.—*Terrace before the Palace, R. ; with a beacon on the pillar to be fired during the Scene. A View of Palmyra, with beacons painted in perspective around the city, to be lit (the early ones by fire the distant ditto by transparencies) at a given signal in the Scene.*

*Enter JULIA and GRACCHUS, disturbed, R.*

JULIA. And you have promised this ?

GRAC. But hear me—

JULIA. Promised to give me up to the assassin's knife.

A calm and passive victim ! See me bound

An offering at the altar to the gods.

Angered against our city! At that altar

Whereon still burns the sacred fire that glow'd

Upon our vows of ever-flaming love!

Oh, Gracchus, could it be your tongue that spoke ?

The angel and the fiend!

GRAC. You will not listen.

If the victorious Emperor takes our city,

And paler every day our hopes become,

What is your fate?

JULIA. He will not murder us.

Barbarians spare the sex that mother'd men:

Aurelian is a man.

GRAC. Your lives he'd spare,

To stud his triumph with, like a stolen jewel,

A centre for all gloating prideful eyes

And pitiless sneers. Protectionless, can you

Face Rome's rejoicing with insulting pomp,  
Or (*sinking his voice*) fall a victim to the lustful rage  
Of conquering soldiery ?

JULIA. Come the worst, your arm  
Will guard me.

GRAC. Mine ! Will Rome forgive a Roman  
That fought against her ?—for a Princess' love  
Gave country up and life ? If falls Palmyra,  
My doom is ending death or endless bonds.  
I choose the former.

JULIA. Gracchus, save me from this fate,  
And let me hallow thee as well as love thee.

*Enter ZABDAS from back, R. U. E. ; he comes down, C.*

ZABDAS. Gracchus, the Queen would speak with you within.  
Leave Julia to my care.

GRAC. You seem disturbed,  
Your brow is clouded.

ZABDAS. Psha! these are not times  
To wear eternal summer.

GRAC. I obey  
The Queen's desires. Be careful of my bride:  
My soul stays with ye.

*Exit, R. U. E.*

ZABDAS. Julia, look on me.  
A word—not of the past—(for that is sunk  
Among the wretched yesterdays of life)—  
But of ourselves—of thee ! I've seen the Queen,  
And she hath told me——

JULIA. Should Palmyra fall,  
Julia must die. But, oh, to die so young!  
And life so sweet as liberty denied  
For years and freshly gained! Love's world new found—  
Not one would strike the blow !

ZABDAS. Yes, Julia.

JULIA. At  
The breast that's rich with gentleness to all!  
, Whose heart so stern ? whose arm so firm ?

ZABDAS. The heart  
That broke for you—not broken by you, Julia,  
And arm to strike, not as a murderer strikes,  
But as the ancient Roman smote Virginia,  
That she might live eternally in honour!  
Mine, Julia, mine!

JULIA. Then to my heart at once,  
My lip shall never quiver, nor my cheek  
Wax pale, nor tongue upbraid you for my death;  
But patient, like a victim——

ZABDAS. No, not yet.  
Here, Spontaneus. (*crosses,*

C.)

*Enter SPONTANEIUS, L. 3 E.*

Julia, there is hope  
Yet left you of escape. A secret passage  
Emerging many miles beyond the city  
Is known to this true friend. To-morrow noon  
Your mother and your husband follow you.  
And in another land around you weave  
A deathless happiness.

JULIA. And you——

ZABDAS. Will stay here.

What should I do elsewhere ? this is my grave,  
And I can rest here peacefully. No more.  
He will be ever near you, and let peril  
Threaten the city, trust him in your flight,  
For heaven hath written him man. Be on the watch.  
For you may fly to-night! (*SPONTANEIUS crosses behind*)

JULIA. Should we ne'er meet

In life again——

ZABDAS. Why then, we part for ever;  
But like dear friends that sail for distant climes,  
Blessing those left behind.

*Exeunt SPONTANEIUS and JULIA, R. 2 E*

And now I stand

Alone upon the wreck amid the storm,  
Heedless and hopeless!

*Enter CAPTAIN and four GUARDS with ANTIOCHUS, L. 1 E.*

Brother general,

I greet you humbly, you have shunn'd us lately :—  
We've miss'd your noble company; the foe  
Batter our gates, and we have look'd in vain  
For valiant faithful true Antiochus  
To head our sallies. You are welcome back  
To long-deserted honour.

ANTI. Taunt me, Zabdas,  
I am your captive, and must bear your buffets  
Of scorn, whose stings sink deeper than the stripe  
Of ignominy upon vassal slaves ;  
Taunt on ! I'll bear it!

ZABDAS. Would you not have sold  
Our city to the Roman Emperor ?

ANTI. I would.

ZABDAS. Betrayed the Queen ?

ANTI. I would.

ZABDAS. And seized  
By force the sacred person of the Princess,  
Defiling the proud temple of the gods  
With sacrilege and vestal-wronging lust,  
Hateful and hideous ! Yet you raise the tone  
Of honourable valour, answering scorn  
Proudly as martyr'd hero!

ANTI. Yes, I did  
All these; and were the things to do again,  
I'd do them all again!

ZABDAS. To show the world  
A thorough traitor !

ANTI. No, to show the world  
My hate to thee! Egyptian, not alone  
In-honour, but in love, you thwarted me,  
Well, let it pass; 'tis but an oft-told story,  
And will be told again an hundred times,  
But triumph not, for surely as the night  
Succeeds the dawn, the blackness of defeat  
Shall fall across the sunlight of Zenobia,  
And proud Palmyra perish ! Wait the hour—  
Slowly and silently it comes, but surely !  
Kill me, but at the gate of purgatory,  
Upon the Stygian shore our shades shall meet  
To take our journey unto heaven or hell  
Together! (*distant attack*) Hark ! My words turn prophecy!  
The retribution comes!

*Enter GRACCHUS and ZENOBIA, R. U. E.*

ZENOBIA. The foe ! the foe!  
Mask'd 'neath the night, they're stolen to the walls  
Unheeded! we are lost!

ZABDAS. Not yet; a torch! (*crosses to L., calls*)  
Bear yonder traitor to the parapet;  
There bind him where the foe may look on him,  
And every dart of his new-called friends  
Make passage to his breast! Away !

ANTI. Remember!  
Hate's vengeance dies not with the life! 'Twill come  
Unseen and terrible!

*Exit ANTIOCHUS, guarded, R. U. E.*

ZABDAS. Ho, there ! A torch ! (*a SOLDIER brings one, L.*)  
Arouse our chieftains from their revellings  
To sterner duty ! Fire the beacons, ho!

*(at his command a SOLDIER, lights the beacon, and rapidly,  
one by one, the beacons are lighted all round the city)*

Bring me my arms ! *Exit SOLDIER, L. 1 E.*

GRAC. Where's Julia ?

ZABDAS. Trust me, safe.  
Waste no more thoughts for her. You're armed; that's well.  
You, Gracchus, to the western bastion, (*crosses to C.*) You,  
My Queen, inspire your soldiers to the east:  
I'll to the towers and the ports ! they shall not  
Make it their boast they vanquished us like Caesar  
Conquered Pharnaces ! For each Palmyrene  
They slay, shall fall two Romans !

GRAC. But, my bride ?  
I've heard your nobleness——

ZENOBIA. 'Twas worthy you—  
You who out-work the olden heroes !

ZABDAS. Psha!  
We'll talk of that to-morrow.

*Enter all the NOBLES, R. and L., also the CAPTAIN and six SOLDIERS*

See, the chiefs

Rally round us!

GRAC. I'll to my charge.

*Exit, R. 1 E.*

ZENOBIA. And I.  
Let fall the worst, the secret way is open  
To cross the great Euphrates.

*Exit, L. 1 E*

*Enter the SOLDIER with ZABDAS' helmet, sword, and buckler, followed  
by the CHIEFS and LEADERS. ZABDAS arms.*

CHIEF. To the battle,  
We'll die with Zabdas!

ZABDAS. To the walls!

CHIEF. The attack upon the walls was but a mask:  
The secret entrance to the citadel,  
Betrayed by curs'd Antiochus, has oped them  
A passage to the very heart of——

ZABDAS. Are they here  
Already?

CHIEF. Yes:—led on in person by  
Cerronius Bassus and the Emperor!

ZABDAS. The Emperor ! I swoop upon your high game,  
And he is mine alone! the hand that slays  
The Emperor is Zabdas' foe !

CHIEF. There's more  
Of terror to be heard.

ZABDAS. Out with it, man!

CHIEF. The troops that held Antiochus in bonds,  
Have been dispersed by conquering Aurelian—  
Antiochus set free.

ZABDAS. The dog is loose !  
There's work for thee, my sword ! Oh, heaven! one thought  
Beats on me like a hammer! Julia—she  
Flying that road, must fall into their hands,  
And down falls every hope ! Come on, come on!  
And he that loves his country best, and fears  
The least to die—nay, fears not death at all,  
Advance, and strike by me ! On, brothers, on!  
For we are children of Bellona now,  
And brothers to the death ! Who follows me ?

OMNES. All, all!  
*They rush out shouting with ZABDAS, R. 1 E., alarms without.*

*Enter* ANTIUCHUS, *bearing* JULIA *in his arms*, R. U. E.

ANTI. Choose, Julia, and choose quickly ! Even now  
Aurelian wins the city—the proud Queen  
Is taken, and to-morrow sees you seated  
Palmyra's Queen, and bride to Antiochus,  
Or else his slave and mistress—choose !

JULIA. I'll call  
On the august and just Aurelian

To save me and protect me. (*breaks from him, and goes, L.*)

ANTI. 'Tis beyond (*seizing her R. arm*)  
His power: you are mine—my prisoner,  
Sworn by his oath as price of services,  
To be my slave or queen!—Palmyra's mine  
In the great name of Rome !

JULIA. How bitter now  
Grows life—so sweet a little hour ago!  
How welcome death!

ANTI. Shall death usurp the realm  
Of blushing love ? Thou'rt mine !

JULIA. Avaunt, away! (*fiercely breaking from him*)  
Gazing on thee, the hateful sight becomes  
Time's minister, and on my girlish heart  
Showers the strength of womanhood, matured  
With woman's iron desperation!

ANTI. Thy anger, Julia,  
Is pretty as the playful summer lightning,  
And neither harms nor awes! I'll be thy friend,  
And force thee to thy fortune!

*Enter* ZABDAS, R. U. E.

ZABDAS. (*coming down between them*) To the Temple  
Fly, Julia—if despair is there, at least  
There's honour also! We have met once more!

*Exit* JULIA, R. U. E.

ANTI. To part in death ! you bleed——

ZABDAS. And so do you.  
You are unhelm'd—let mine go too. (*throws helmet away up R.*)  
You bear

No buckler—there, I cast away mine own,  
Now, sword to sword—and bleeding life to life—  
The last of all the glories of Palmyra,  
Doth Zabdas throw before thee !

ANTI. Ay, and hate  
For hate, the bitt'rest and the deadliest,  
I strike for vengeance !

ZABDAS. I, for Julia !  
(*flourish and shouts—a short but fierce fight round—as  
ZABDAS beats ANTIUCHUS to his knee, he tightly grasps  
him by the throat, when CERRONIUS BASSUS, the Roman  
General, enters suddenly with SOLDIERS, R. U. E.*)

CERRO. (R.) You are Egyptian Zabdas ?

ZABDAS. Yes!

To Rome defiant still!

CERRO. In the great name  
Of conquering Aurelian, I command you  
To yield yourself a prisoner, and restore  
The General Antiochus.

ZABDAS. (*flinging down the dead body of ANTIOCHUS*) He's there !

*Enter all the SOLDIERY, grand flourish, and the drop falls.*

END OF ACT IV.

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*The Road to the Temple; a broken pillar, L. C.; JULIA, fainting, against it; SPONTANEIUS standing R., looking out; distant trumpets and shouts before and as the drop rises; lights down.*

*Enter ZABDAS, R.*

SPON. My lord is here.

JULIA. Oh, hide me from this scene of raging terror.

ZABDAS. You did not gain the Temple, then ?

JULIA. I strove:

But the mad tide of battle in the streets  
Raged fiercely, and I timidly sank down,  
Crouching in fear, till it had storm'd beyond me,  
And then I strove to fly.

ZABDAS. The Queen's a prisoner.

JULIA. And Gracchus too: he saw him seized upon,

And flying for his life encountered me.  
All's done that could be done, and every hero  
Hath done a hero's duty.

ZABDAS. Which hath left

Our own undone, but must be done at last.  
Plague o' these jewels, Julia, they but mock  
Death's lily-like sublime simplicity.

*(plucking ornaments off her dress and his own, and giving them with gold to SPONTANEIUS)*

Fly, Spontaneius, these may buy you mercy  
At Roman hands : where we go, Spontaneius,  
Mercy is given, not sold. No word of parting:  
Let your eyes speak farewell, and save your breath.

*Exit SPONTANEIUS, R.*

Come, hasten, Julia, for the time is speeding;  
And we've a long way to go, from earth to heaven.

*(a distant peal of thunder)*

Hush, do you hear ?

- JULIA. A storm is coming on :  
Fit emblem of the day!
- ZABDAS. And of the night  
That follows.  
Come, you'll not tremble ?
- JULIA. No : my heart is firm,  
Though my limbs yield. You will not scorn me, Zabdas,  
If a rebellious tear usurp mine eye—  
Or my lips whiten—or unbidden shakes  
My frame with tremors, when my foot shall tread  
The threshold of my grave ? It is not fear;  
For even in its power I shall cry,  
" Strike, Zabdas," though the words may catch and quiver  
As they forsake my lips. It is not fear—  
It shall not be for fear—so scorn me not,  
But strike, and boldly! (*distant peal of thunder*)
- ZABDAS. Look thy last, and bid  
Farewell to the gay world, across whose brightness  
Yon iron thunder-cloud, like a dark death,  
Dews its tremendous shadow.
- JULIA. Oh, sweet world!  
Never in all thy beauty sweet as now !  
Never so bright as in this darkening hour,  
I'm bidding thee farewell! My only friend,  
I turn to thee heart-wearied.
- ZABDAS. As the child  
Wearied with sporting with the frivolous world  
In its upward course to manhood, turns its face  
Unto Death's minister, and sleeps. Let's haste  
To the great Temple! There's my woman, Julia!  
No, not a quiver—not a tear—but firm  
As rooted trees, and on thy face a smile  
Noble and death defiant, (*she sinks on his shoulder*)  
Ah, it shakes thee!  
Thou hadst over-judged thy strength; but 'tis soon past.  
I'm with thee, Julia. Do not tremble, girl,  
I'm with thee—and the gods are with thee too!
- Exeunt, L. 1 E.*

## SCENE II.—A Street.

*Enter BULBUS, R., and TETTUS, L., meeting, disconsolate.*

- TETTUS. Is that you, Bulbus ?
- BULBUS. Yes, it's me, miseries and all ! But that can't be you, uncle ?
- TETTUS. I wish it couldn't, but it is. You haven't heard of course?
- BULBUS. Nothing: I've been so long preparing to hang myself, and so I should, only it's a new moon to-morrow, and it's lucky to hang one's self in a new moon. Oh, these Romans, uncle!
- TETTUS. Oh, these Romans, nephew! They've carried off the Queen!

BULBUS. They've carried off the plate in the palace !

TETTUS. They've carried off all the money in the treasury !

BULBUS. They've carried off the statues of the Temple.

TETTUS. The sacrilegious wretches ! but that's nothing.

BULBUS. What's worse ?

TETTUS. They've carried off mother Joppa.

BULBUS. They didn't dare !

TETTUS. Didn't they ! it's lucky I wasn't there—for my own sake !

BULBUS. (*gloomily*) I'm glad of it, for I can propose something pleasant.

TETTUS. Then let's have it—for the taste of it's quite out of my mouth at present.

BULBUS. Are you tired of life ?

TETTUS. Disgusted.

BULBUS. So am I. There's room enough at the other end of my rope—let's have a good breakfast to-morrow, to make us heavier, and then hang ourselves.

TETTUS. It's not a bad idea, Bulbus, if we were only certain of having quite time enough to do it, but I should hate being broken in upon and prematurely cut down. A brilliant thought!

BULBUS. Out with it.

TETTUS. I saw Spontaneius at the corner of the street but now, kissing Jilpha: let us betray him to the Romans, and conclude the kissing on our own account.

BULBUS. Not original. I've just done that myself. I gave the villain into the very hands of the Romans, flung myself at her feet——

TETTUS. Well?

BULBUS. And the Romans kick'd me into the kennel, and carried off Jilpha as their prize.

TETTUS. Well, that's revenge—she isn't his!

BULBUS. No, it is not revenge. If one dog runs away with another dog's bone, and a third dog steals it from him, number two dog feels no glow of happiness at the disappointment of number one dog, but misery at the non-recovery of his bone from number three dog. (*crosses to L.*) I've a thought—let's surrender.

TETTUS. Then I've a thought for you!—let's surrender!

BULBUS. Well I don't see we can do anything else.

TETTUS. And it's not brave to kill ourselves.

BULBUS. Don't you think it is ? then it's my natural bravery that kept me back from hanging myself just now! I'm glad I didn't do it: I'd not have been a coward on any account.

TETTUS. Your hand upon it. We'll surrender ! we'll throw down our arms.

BULBUS. I did mine at the outstart.

TETTUS. I mean figuratively.

BULBUS. Oh, if you mean that way, I'm ready for any fate—hang me, draw me, quarter me—if you only do it figuratively.

*Exeunt, L.*

SCENE III.—*A Garden. A flourish of trumpets at opening.*

*Enter ZENOBIA and GRACCHUS prisoners, led by TITUS FLAVIUS, R. 2 E., meeting AURELIAN the Emperor with GUARDS, L. 2 E.*

AUREL. See, haughty Queen, the evil of the pride  
With which you turned our offerings of love  
Forth on the winds! Palmyra is a name  
For something levell'd with the dust of earth,  
And its proud Queen but lackey to that power  
She greeted with such scorn !

ZENOBIA. Taunt on ! were I  
Your conqueror, I should triumph over you,  
So say your worst.

AUREL. Lo, pride is fallen : see,  
The renegade to honour and to Rome  
Bound in his angry country's iron bonds,  
On the open road to death!

GRAC. Aurelian, death  
Is to the soldier scarce a terror. Wrong'd  
By your great predecessor on the throne  
Of high-brow'd Rome, in Flavius Claudius' power  
Mine was a life of risk, and fleeing here  
I found a welcome, by my land denied,  
And for its love I loved it as mine own  
That cast me from it. Kill me—but I struck  
At Parthians and the Roman mercenaries,  
But not upon my sword rusts there one drop  
Of fellow Roman's blood.

TITUS.(L.) 'Tis true, my lord,  
He would not strike at Romans.

AUREL. But he struck  
'Gainst Rome and for Zenobia, who dared wave  
Defiance in the teeth of a sleeping wolf.  
Implacable when roused.

GRAC. Had not proud Rome  
Uneasiness and realms enough within her sway,  
But she should covet these ?

ZENOBIA. What wonder, Gracchus !  
It is the nature of the wolf to covet  
More than it holds.

AUREL. Not more than it could win.

ZENOBIA. Dishonourable winnings.

AUREL. 'Tis a churlish loser  
That rails against the winner. 'Twas a stake  
High prized, and most labouriously won,  
This paradise—Palmyra!

ZENOBIA. Ay, how won ?  
By cheating and false play ! Enough ! our City's lost.  
Let liberty go with it into Rome;  
Sold into slavery, to a race descended

From outlaw'd malefactors ; set our hands  
 To till your fields, to feed your cattle ; tend  
 Your meanest will and meaner pleasures, still  
 I would not change the proud name of Zenobia  
 For every jewel, set like stars in heaven,  
 In Rome's imperial diadem.

AUREL. Zenobia,  
 Those who have painted us ignobly to you—  
 A bear in peace, a panther in the battle—  
 Have wrong'd our honour and your ear. We fought  
 Against your pride, and it is levell'd now—  
 So ends our enmity. We who were foes  
 An hour ago, the cause of quarrel past,  
 Are friends right heartily. Beyond the Tiber  
 Glitter bright lands, where you shall Queen it yet,  
 Honour'd and lov'd. Aurelian's word is pledged  
 To this before his lords.

ZENOBIA. What do I hear ?  
 So noble! You have found indeed a way  
 To bend Zenobia.

AUREL. You've a daughter, Queen——  
 ZENOBIA. Fierce thought, it strikes me palsied! If she lives,  
 She lives to perish.

AUREL. No: among my host  
 I issued orders to preserve you both,  
 At every peril.

ZENOBIA. I have rendered null  
 Your every caution. Should the city fall,  
 Zabdas is bound by solemn-utter'd oaths,  
 Ere she should fall in Rome's marauding hands,  
 To strike her dead i' the Temple !

AUREL. But my troops  
 Will soon surround it.

GRAC. And confirm her doom.  
 The first that strikes at the great Temple's gate,  
 Strikes Julia dead!

*Enter two SOLDIERS and a ROMAN OFFICER, with SPONTANEIUS  
 prisoner, L.*

OFFICER. A prisoner, my lord:  
 When taken, he essayed with jewell'd bribes  
 To buy his liberty. These gems we took  
 Argue a nobler owner than this man.  
 Look, sire.

GRAC. The jewels of the Princess !

SPON. Zabdas gave me these,  
 Saying that death had need of no such gauds,  
 And with the Princess Julia took the road  
 On towards the Temple.

GRAC. She is lost then !

AUREL. No.

Fly, Captain, to the Temple: preserve the Princess  
 At any cost from this self-sacrifice.  
 Spare threats, for that may bring the upraised knife  
 Surely and swiftly down. Promise life, honour,  
 Or whatso'er demanded: I will back  
 Whate'er you promise with performance. Speed!

*Exit* CAPTAIN, TITUS, and two SOLDIERS, L.

This Zabdas is already wounded ?

SPON. To the death ;  
 But yet not dead, sire: there is life enough  
 To do this act of agony.

ZENOBIA. Haste you,  
 With favour of Aurelian, to the Temple:  
 He knows your voice.

AUREL. A timely thought! Away !

*Exit* SPONTANEIUS, L. 1 E.  
 For Julia, she—

If truth begot the rumour—yesterday  
 Wedded Lord Gracchus ?

ZENOBIA. Yes, sire.

AUREL. It would ill

Become a day of noble deeds and mercy  
 To stain it with revenge! the Princess safe—  
 Which heaven grant—take, Gracchus, to your arms,  
 With trust and dignity in place of that  
 Wrench'd from you by the Emp'ror Claudius: pardon  
 And honours from Aurelian.

GRAC. Noble Emperor!  
 I am your faithful servant unto death !

ZENOBIA. If I could feel a pride in my city's fall,  
 Twould be that such a conqueror subdued it.

AUREL. Say so, when the fickle and short-mem'ried world  
 Speaks of me after death—and say, Aurelian  
 Had something nobler than the outside form,  
 Inherited from heaven ! Come, let's follow!  
 Heed not the storm,—the brightness of the heart  
 Out-glitters all the darkness, like a sun!

*Exeunt*, L. 1 E.

SCENE THE LAST.—*The Temple, open at the top, the storm is seen raging fiercely without: an altar with sacred fire; around the Temple are grouped PALMYRENES, in various attitudes,—some wounded are assisted by their wives, sons, brothers, &c.; some kneeling; some watching the enemy's approach; ZABDAS discovered at the altar, his sword upraised, JULIA kneeling in prayer before it. Thunder and lightning during the scene.*

ZABDAS. Ye gods of crush'd Palmyra ! embleming  
 The many virtues of the only one,  
 Here 'fore thy altar I throw down this sword,  
 Which in thy grace-forgotten city's cause—

Struck to the last. (*throws down sword*) There lies Palmyra too,  
 Edgeless and glittering prostrate in the dust! (*thunder*)  
 Rage on, ye thunder ! for ye chide the deeds  
 That rouse the anger of the ruling powers! (*lightning*)  
 And flash, ye lightnings ! for your gleaming ire  
 Is witness that they see and pity us ! (*murmurs, R.*)

A CITIZEN. See, Zabdas, soldiers of the Emperor!

ZABDAS. I must be sudden then. Julia ! (*thunder*)

JULIA, (*rising*) Yes. (*starting up to I.*)

ZABDAS. Do you not hear ? they come !

JULIA. I'm ready, Zabdas.

Death's terrors have flown from me like a dream:  
 To die were pleasant now.

ZABDAS. That's my brave girl! (*advances to her*)

And yet so fair—so lov'd. Is this a time to prate ?  
 Can we not yet throw off the earth about us,  
 And calmly look to heaven ? To the altar,  
 And let our proud pursuers meet us there  
 And hear us speak from there ! In the last hour  
 Let us be victors o'er the conquerors,  
 And noble 'bove nobility, (*they go up to the altar*)

*Enter TITUS FLAVIUS, and SOLDIERS, R.*

TITOS. To thee,  
 Lord Zabdas, I bear message from Aurelian,  
 Commanding thee to yield the Princess up  
 To his all-conquering hands.

ZABDAS. You hear him, Julia!  
 Commands—let him command the dead to walk,  
 And we'll obey him then.

JULIA. Go, tell your Emperor  
 We scorn him, and defy him in his power!  
 And from our sorrow, made by pride sublime,  
 Pity and mock him yet.

TITUS. But hear me.

ZABDAS. Speak:  
 And keep your eager soldiers back, or this  
 Will toil your Emperor yet. (*shows dagger*)

TITUS. Back, sirs ! (*SOLDIERS retire*) Aurelian  
 Commissions me, in his imperial name,  
 To grant your wishes as his own commands,  
 As price of your immediate surrender.

ZABDAS. The liberal Emperor ! Who can resist  
 Such floods of magnanimity ? Go, tell him  
 I do accept his mercy !

JULIA. Zabdas ! you——

ZABDAS. Yon shivering wretches  
 Quail 'neath the Emperor's frown and dread his fury!  
 Your honour, in Aurelian's name, to give  
 Them liberty and life, and what remains  
 In a few seconds more of us are yours.

TITUS. I promise it.

ZABDAS. On oath?

TITUS. On sacred oath !

ZABDAS. Live, thou despairing ones ; go free, and leave  
The Temple to the gods and us.

*The PEOPLE go out, R. 1 E.*

TITUS. I'll keep  
My word most faithfully; keep yours.

ZABDAS. I shall!  
And thus (*raises dagger*) take all that will remain of us  
That's man's to take, and man's to give. Our bodies,  
Our souls, and lives, own them another lord's—  
To whom, like faithful stewards, we offer back  
His mighty own ! Look, Romans, on her now!  
Stately in beauty, like a throned angel  
Radiant with virtue—glittering like a star,  
With graces that inspire and garnish love !  
Pure as the immaculate vestals, and more rich  
In noble thoughts than mines of diamonds:  
Up from the clogging and soul-cramping earth  
She turns her eyes of light; and tearless, voiceless.  
Majestic in her simpleness, she stands !  
Her heart already up among the gods,  
Her body only upon earth, which thus  
I sever at a blow.

SPONTANEIUS *rushes in R. 1 E., as he speaks to ZABDAS in C, back to the audience.*

SPON. Lord Zabdas,  
Zenobia's free ! the noble Gracchus lives—  
The Emperor—(*in C, back to audience*)

ZABDAS. Ha ! art thou bought and sold.  
Time chides me, and the quiver of my hand  
Tells me my number'd moments. (SPONTANEIUS *gets L.*)

AUREL. (*without*) For your life  
Hold your mad hand !

TITUS. The Emperor!

ZABDAS. He's welcome  
To see a sacrifice in fall'n Palmyra.  
I greet thee, Roman !

*Enter AUEELIAN, ZENOBIA, GRACCHUS, NOBLES, OFFICERS, &C, R.*

ZENOBIA. (*entering*) Spare her, great Zabdas !

GRAC. (*entering*) Julia! my bride, my wife!

(JULIA, *hearing his voice, utters a cry of delight and rushes forward to his arms; ZABDAS. falls at the altar's foot, and the characters close anxiously and pitying round him; ZENOBIA gets to L. C.*)

GRAC. We're free, my Julia, free!  
Lands, honours all, in Rome,—an Emperor's love  
And friendship to enhance the boon !

JULIA. My mother! thee! Am I in heaven, or on earth?

AUREL. With men, not all confounded with the viler things  
That are earth's slanders! (JULIA crosses to AURELIAN)

ZENOBIA. (*crossing C.*) Where is Zabdas?

ZABDAS. Here! (*the people support him forward,* C.)

ZENOBIA. And dying!

ZABDAS. Free! free as the air, my Queen!

Would you not have it so?

ZENOBIA. I would! I would!

ZABDAS. Stand from me! give a great soul room to die!

For you there's a bright world yet, with summer in it!

For you. (*to JULIA*) Keep yet my secret—no, no tears

Conjure one smile, though it shine through thy tears

To set my soul free. Yes, there shines the sun!

The storm is all around—but there's the sun!

I see it in my blindness—feel its beams

Through this death-chill! 'Tis on me as I go.

Unchain my heart—it clings to thee in death;

It will not leave thee to the last—the last! (*he dies*)

**Curtain.**