The Roman Actor.

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**DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.**

- Domitianus Caesar
- Paris, the ROMAN ACTOR
- Ėlius Lamia,
- Junius Rusticus,
- Palphurius Sura,
- Fulcinius,
- Parthenius, Caesar's freedman
- Aretinus, Caesar's spyl
- Stephanus, Domitilla's freedman.
- Ėsopus, Latinus, players
- Philargus, a rich miser; father to Parthenius
- Ascleario, an astrologer.
- Sejeius, conspirators
- Domitia, wife of Ėlius Lamia
- Domitilla, cousin-german to Caesar
- Julia, daughter of Titus
- Caenis, Vespasian's concubine
- A Lady.

**ACTORS' NAMES.**

- J. Lowin.
- J. Taylor.
- T. Pollard.
- R. Sharpe.
- E. Swanstone.
- R. Robinson.
- C. Greville.
- A. Smith.
- G. Vernon.
- J. Horne.
- J. Thompson.
- A. Smith.
- W. Trigge.
- G. Vernon.
- W. Trigge.
- A. Gough.

**SCENE,—Rome.**

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**ACT 1.**

**SCENE 1.—The Theatre.** Enter Paris, Latinus, and Ėsopus.

- Ėsopus. What do we act to-day?
- Latinus. Agave's frenzy,
- Paris. With Pentheus' bloody end.
- Latinus. It skills not what;
- Paris. The times are dull, and all that we receive
- Latinus. Will hardly satisfy the day's expense.

The Greeks, to whom we owe the first invention

- Both of the buskin'd scene, and humble sock,
- That reign in every noble family,
  Declaim against us; and our theatre,
  Great Pompey's work, that hath given full delight
  Both to the eye and ear of fifty thousand spectators in one day, as if it were
  Some unknown desert, or great Rome unpeopled,
  Is quite forsaken.

- Latinus. Pleasures of worse natures
- Paris. Are gladly entertain'd; and they that shun us,
  Practise, in private, sports the stews would blush at.

A litter borne by eight Liburnian slaves,

To buy diseases from a glorious strumpet,
The most censorious of our Roman gentry,
Nay, of the garded robe, the senators,
Esteem an easy purchase.

- Paris. Yet grudge us,
  That with delight join profit, and endeavour
  To build their minds up fair, and on the stage
  Decipher to the life what honours wait
  On good and glorious actions, and the shame
  That treads upon the heels of vice, the salary
  Of six sestertii.

- Ėsopus. For the profit, Paris,
  And mercenary gain, they are things beneath us;
  Since, while you hold your grace and power
  With Caesar,
  We, from your bounty, find a large supply,
  Nor can one thought of want ever approach us.

- Paris. Our aim is glory, and to leave our names
  To aftertime.

- Latinus. And, would they give us leave,
  There ends all our ambition.

- Ėsopus. We have enemies,
  And great ones too, I fear. 'Tis given out lately,
The consul Aretinus, Cæsar's spy,
Said at his table, ere a month expired,
For being gall'd in our last comedy,
He'd silence us for ever.

Par. I expect
No favour from him; my strong Aventine is,
That great Domitian, whom we oft have
cheer'd
In his most sullen moods, will once return,
Who can repair, with ease, the consul's ruins.

Lat. 'Tis frequent in the city, he hath
subdued
The Catti and the Daci, and, ere long,
The second time will enter Rome in triumph.

Enter two Lictors.

Par. Love hasten it? With us?—I now
believe
The consul's threats, Æsopus.

1 Lict. You are summon'd
to appear to-day, in senate.

2 Lict. And there to answer
What shall be urged against you.

Par. We obey you.

Nay, droop not, fellows; innocence should
be bold.
We, that have personated in the scene
The ancient heroes, and the falls of princes,
With loud applause; being to act ourselves,
Must do it with undoubted confidence.
Whate'er our sentence be, think 'tis in sport:
And, though condemn'd, let's hear it without
sorrow,
As if we were to live again to-morrow.

1 Lict. 'Tis spoken like yourself.

Enter Ælius Lamia, Junius Rusticus, and
Palphurius Sura.

Lam. Whither goes Paris?

1 Lict. He's cited to the senate.

Lat. I am glad the state is
so free from matters of more weight and
trouble,
That it has vacant time to look on us.

Par. That reverend place, in which the
affairs of kings
And provinces were determined, to descend
To the censure of a bitter word, or jest,
Dropp'd from a poet's pen!—Peace to your
lordships!

We are glad that you are safe.

[Exeunt Lictors, Paris, Latinus, and
Æsopus.

Lam. What times are these!
To what 's Rome fallen! may 'we, being
alone,
Speak our thoughts freely of the prince and
state,
And not fear the informer?

Rust. Noble Lamia,
So dangerous the age is, and such bad acts
Are practised every where, we hardly sleep,
Nay, cannot dream with safety. All our
actions
Are call'd in question; to be nobly born
Is now a crime; and to deserve too well,
Held capital treason. Sons accuse their
fathers,
Fathers their sons; and, but to win a smile
From one in grace at court, our chastest
matrons
Make shipwreck of their honours. To be
virtuous
Is to be guilty. They are only safe
That know to sooth the prince's appetite,
And serve his lusts.

Sura. 'Tis true; and 'tis my wonder,
That two sons of so different a nature
Should spring from good Vespasian. We
had a Titus,
Styl'd, justly, "the Delight of all Man-
kind,"

Who did esteem that day lost in his life
In which some one or other tasted not
Of his magnificent bounties. One that had
A ready tear, when he was forced to sign
The death of an offender: and so far
From pride, that he disdain'd not the con-
verse
Even of the poorest Roman.

Lam. Yet his brother,
Domitian, that now sways the power of things,
Is so inclined to blood, that no day passes
In which some are not fasten'd to the hook,
Or thrown down from the Gemonies. His
freed men
Scorn the nobility, and he himself,
As if he were not made of flesh and blood,
Forgets he is a man.

Rust. In his young years,
He shew'd what he would be when grown
to ripeness:
His greatest pleasure was, being a child,
With a sharp-pointed bodkin to kill flies,
Whose rooms now men supply. For his
escape
In the Vitellian war, he raised a temple
To Jupiter, and proudly placed his figure
In the bosom of the god: and, in his edicts,
He does not blush, or start, to style himself
(As if the name of emperor were base)
Great Lord and God Domitian.

Sura. I have letters
He's on his way to Rome, and purposes
To enter with all glory. The flattering senate
Decrees him divine honours; and to cross it,
Were death with studied torments:—for
my part,
I will obey the time; it is in vain
To strive against the torrent.
Rust. Let's to the curia,
And, though unwillingly, give our suffrages,
Before we are compell'd.
Lam. And since we cannot
With safety use the active, let's make use of
The passive fortitude, with this assurance,
That the state, sickinhim, the gods to friend,
Though at the worst, will now begin to mend.
[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—A Room in Lamia's House.
Enter Domitia and Parthenius.

Dom. To me this reverence!
Parth. I pay it, lady,
As a debt due to her that's Caesar's mistress:
For understand with joy, he that commands
All that the sun gives warmth to, is your
servant;
Be not amazed, but fit you to your fortunes.
Think upon state and greatness, and the
honours
That wait upon Augusta, for that name
Ere long, comes to you:—still you doubt
your vassal—[Presents a letter.
But, when you've read this letter, writ and
sign'd
With his imperial hand, you will be freed
From fear and jealousy; and, I beseech you,
When all the beauties of the earth bow to
you,
And senators shall take it for an honour,
As I do now, to kiss these happy feet;
When every smile you give is a preferment,
And you dispose of provinces to your crea­
tures,
Think on Parthenius.
Dom. Rise. I am transported,
And hardly dare believe what is assured here.
The means, my good Parthenius, that
wrought Caesar,
Our god on earth, to cast an eye of favour
Upon his humble handmaid?
Parth. What, but your beauty?
When nature framed you for her masterpiece,
As the pure abstract of all rare in woman,
She had no other ends but to design you
To the most eminent place.
I will not say
(For it would smell of arrogance, to insinuate
The service I have done you) with what zeal
I oft have made relation of your virtues,
Or how I've sung your goodness, or how
Caesar
Was fired with the relation of your story:
I am rewarded in the act, and happy
In that my project prosper'd.
Dom. You are modest:
And were it in my power, I would be thankful.
If that, when I was mistress of myself,
And in my way of youth, pure and untainted,
The emperor had vouchsafed to seek my
favourites,
I had with joy given up my virgin fort,
At the first summons, to his soft embraces;
But I am now another's, not mine own.
You know I have a husband:—for my
honours,
I would not be his strumpet; and how law
Can be dispensed with to become his wife,
To me's a riddle.
Parth. I can soon resolve it:
When power puts in his plea the laws are
silenced.
The world confesses one Rome, and one
Caesar,
And as his rule is infinite, his pleasures
Are unconfined; this syllable, his will,
Stands for a thousand reasons.
Dom. But with safety,
Suppose I should consent, how can I do it?
My husband is a senator, and of a temper
Not to be jested with.

Enter Lamia.

Parth. As if he durst
Be Cæsar's rival!—here he comes; with ease
I will remove this scruple.
Lam. How! so private!
My own house made a brothel! [Aside.]—
Sir, how durst you,
Though guarded with your power in court,
and greatness,
Hold conference with my wife? As for you,
minion,
I shall hereafter treat—
Parth. You are rude and saucy,
Nor know to whom you speak.
Lam. This is fine, i'faith!
Is she not my wife?
Parth. Your wife! But touch her, that
respect forgotten
That's due to her whom mightiest Cæsar
favours,
And think what 'tis to die. Not to lose time,
She's Cæsar's choice: it is sufficient honour
You were his taster in this heavenly nectar;
But now must quit the office.
Lam. This is rare!
Cannot a man be master of his wife
Because she's young and fair, without a
patent?
I in my own house am an emperor,
And will defend what's mine. Where are
my knaves?
If such an insolence escape unpunish'd—
Parth. In yourself, Lamia—Cæsar hath forgot
To use his power, and I, his instrument,
In whom, though absent, his authority
speaks,
Have lost my faculties! [Stamps.

Enter a Centurion with Soldiers.

Lam. The guard! why, am I
Design’d for death?

Dom. As you desire my favour
Take not so rough a course.

Parth. All your desires
Are absolute commands: Yet give me leave
To put the will of Cæsar into act.
Here’s a bill of divorce between your lordship
And this great lady: if you refuse to sign it,
And so as if you did it uncompell’d,
Won’t by reasons that concern yourself,
Her honour too untainted, here are clerks,
Shall in your best blood write it new, till

Lam. Is this legal?

Parth. Monarchs that dare not do unlaw­ful things,
Yet bear them out, are constables, not kings.
Will you dispute?

Lam. I know not what to urge
Against myself, but too much dotage on her,
Love, and observance.

Parth. Set it under your hand,
That you are impotent, and cannot pay
The duties of a husband; or, that you are
mad;
Rather than want just cause, we’ll make
you so.

Dispatch, you know the danger else;—de­liver it,
Nay, on your knee.—Madam, you now are
free,
And mistress of yourself.

Lam. Can you, Domitia,
Consent to this?

Dom. Twould argue a base mind
To live a servant, when I may command.
I now am Cæsar’s: and yet, in respect
I once was yours, when you come to the
palace,
Provided you deserve it in your service,
You shall find me your good mistress. Wait
me, Parthenius;
And now farewell, poor Lamia!

[Exeunt all but Lamia.

Lam. To the gods
I bend my knees, (for tyranny hath banish’d
Justice from men,) and as they would deserve
Their altars, and our vows, humbly invoke them,

That this my ravish’d wife may prove as fatal
To proud Domitian, and her embraces
Afford him, in the end, as little joy
As wanton Helen brought to him of Troy!

[Exit.

SCENE III.—The Curia or Senate-house.

Enter Lictors, Aretinus, Fulcinius, Rusticus,
Sura, Paris, Latinus, and Æsopus.

Aret. Fathers conscript, may this our meeting be
Happy to Cæsar and the commonwealth!

Lict. Silence!

Aret. The purpose of this frequent senate
Is, first, to give thanks to the gods of Rome,
That, for the propagation of the empire,
Vouchsafe us one to govern it, like themselves.
In height of courage, depth of understanding,
And all those virtues, and remarkable graces,
Which make a prince most eminent, our
Domitian
Transcends the ancient Romans: I can never
Bring his praise to a period. What good man,
That is a friend to truth, dares make it
doubtful,
That he hath Fabius’ staidness, and the
courage
Of bold Marcellus, to whom Hannibal gave
The style of Target, and the Sword of Rome?
But he has more, and every touch more
Roman;
As Pompey’s dignity, Augustus’ state,
Antony’s bounty, and great Julius’ fortune,
With Cato’s resolution. I am lost
In the ocean of his virtues: in a word,
All excellencies of good men meet in him,
But no part of their vices.

Rust. This is no flattery!

Sura. Take heed, you’ll be observed.

Aret. ’Tis then most fit
That we, (as to the father of our country,
Like thankful sons, stand bound to pay true
service
For all those blessings that he showers upon us,)
Should not connive, and see his government
Depraved and scandalized by meaner men,
That to his favour and indulgence owe
Themselves and being.

Par. Now he points at us.

Aret. Cite Paris, the tragedian.

Par. Here.

Aret. Stand forth.

In thee, as being the chief of thy profession,
I do accuse the quality of treason,
As libellers against the state and Cæsar.

Par. Mere accusations are not proofs, my
lord;
In what are we delinquents?
Aret. You are they
That search into the secrets of the time,
And, under feign'd names, on the stage;
present
Actions not to be touch'd at; and traduce
Persons of rank and quality of both sexes,
And, with satirical, and bitter jests,
Make even the senators ridiculous
To the plebeians.

Par. If I free not myself,
And, in myself, the rest of my profession,
From these false imputations, and prove
That they make that a libel which the poet
Writ for a comedy, so acted too;
It is but justice that we undergo
The heaviest censure.

Aret. Are you on the stage,
You talk so boldly?

Par. The whole world being one,
This place is not exempted; and
I am
So confident in the justice of our cause,
That I could wish Caesar, in whose great
Name
All kings are comprehended, sat as judge,
To hear our plea, and then determine of us.—
If, to express a man sold to his lusts,
Wasting the treasure of his time and fortunes
In wanton dalliance, and to what sad end
A wretch that's so given over does arrive at;
Deterring careless youth, by his example,
From such licentious courses; laying open
The snares of bawds, and the consuming arts
Of prodigal strumpets, can deserve reproof;
Why are not all your golden principles,
Writ down by grave philosophers to instruct
Us
To choose fair virtue for our guide, not pleasure,
Condemn'd unto the fire?

Sura. There's spirit in this.

Par. Or if desire of honour was the base
On which the building of the Roman empire
Was raised up to this height; if, to inflame
The noble youth with an ambitious heat
To endure the frosts of danger, nay, of death,
To be thought worthy the triumphal wreathe
By glorious undertakings, may deserve
Reward, or favour from the commonwealth;
Actors may put in for as large a share
As all the sects of the philosophers:
They with cold precepts (perhaps seldom read)
Deliver, what an honourable thing
The active virtue is: but does that fire
The blood, or swell the veins with emulation,
To be both good and great, equal to that
Which is presented on our theatres?
Let a good actor, in a lofty scene,
Show great Alcides honour'd in the sweat
Of his twelve labours; or a bold Camillus,
Forbidding Rome to be redeem'd with gold
From the insulting Gauls; or Scipio,
After his victories, imposing tribute
On conquer'd Carthage: if done to the life,
As if they saw their dangers, and their glories,
And did partake in their rewards,
All that have any spark of Roman in them,
The slothful arts laid by, contend to be
Like those they see presented.

Rust. He has put
The consuls to their whisper.

Par. But, 'tis urged
That we corrupt youth, and traduce superiors,
When do we bring a vice upon the stage,
That does go off unpunish'd? Do we teach,
By the success of wicked undertakings,
Others to tread in their forbidden steps?
We shew no arts of Lydian pandermism,
Corinthian poisons, Persian flatteries,
But mulcted so in the conclusion, that
Even those spectators that were so inclined,
Go home changed men. And, for traducing
such
That are above us, publishing to the world
Their secret crimes, we are as innocent
As such as are born dumb. When we present
An heir, that does conspire against the life
Of his dear parent, numbering every hour
He lives, as tedious to him; if there be,
Among the auditors, one whose conscience
Tells him
He is of the same mould,—we cannot
Help it.
Or, bringing on the stage a loose adulteress,
That does maintain the riotous expense
Of him that feeds her greedy lust, yet suffers
The lawful pledges of a former bed
To starve the while for hunger; if a matron,
However great in fortune, birth, or titles,
Guilty of such a foul unnatural sin,
Cry out, 'Tis writ for me,—we cannot
Help it.
Or, when a covetous man's express'd, whose
Wealth
Arithmetic cannot number, and whose lord-
ships
A falcon in one day cannot fly over;
Yet he so sordid in his mind, so griping,
As not to afford himself the necessaries
To maintain life; if a patrician,
(Though honour'd with a consulship,) find
himself
Touch'd to the quick in this,—we cannot
Help it.
Or, when we shew a judge that is corrupt,
And will give up his sentence, as he favours
The person, not the cause; saving the guilty,
If of his faction, and as oft condemning
The innocent, out of particular spleen;
If any in this reverend assembly,
Nay, even yourself, my lord, that are the
image
Of absent Cæsar, feel something in your
bosom
That puts you in remembrance of things
past,
Or things intended,—'TIS NOT IN US TO
HELP IT.
I have said, my lord: and now, as you find
cause,
Or censure us, or free us with applause.
Lat. Well pleaded, on my life! I never
saw him
Act an orator's part before.
Esop. We might have given
Ten double fees to Regulus, and yet
Our cause deliver'd worse. [A shout within.

Enter Parthenius.

Aret. What shout is that?
Parth. Cæsar, our lord, married to con­quest, is
Return'd in triumph.
Ful. Let's all haste to meet him.
Aret. Break up the court; we will reserve
to him
The censure of this cause.
All. Long life to Cæsar!  

Enter Captains with laurels, Domitian in
his triumphant chariot, Parthenius, Paris,
Latinus, and Esopus, met by Aretinus.
Sura, Lamia, Rusticus, Eulcinius, Soldiers,
and Captives.

Cæs. As we now touch the height of human
glory,
Riding in triumph to the capitol,
Let these, whom this victorious arm hath
made
The scorn of fortune, and the slaves of Rome,
Taste the extremes of misery. Bear them off
To the common prisons, and there let them
prove
How sharp our axes are:  

[Exeunt Soldiers with Captives.
Rust. A bloody entrance!  

Cæs. To tell you you are happy in your
prince,
Were to distrust your love, or my desert;
And either were distasteful: or to boast
How much, not by my deputies, but myself,
I have enlarged the empire; or what horrors
The soldier, in our conduct, hath broke
through,
Would better suit the mouth of Plautus' braggart,
Than the adored monarch of the world.
Sura. This is no boast!  

Cæs. When I but name the Daci,
And gray-eyed Germans, whom I have sub­­dued,
The ghost of Julius will look pale with envy,
And great Vespasian's and Titus' triumph,
(Truth must take place of father and of
brother,) Will be no more remember'd. I am above
All honours you can give me: and the style
Of Lord and God, which thankful subjects
give me,
Not my ambition, is deserved.
Aret. At all parts
Celestial sacrifice is fit for Cæsar,
In our acknowledgment.
Cæs. Thanks, Arctinus; Still hold our favour. Now, the god of war,
And famine, blood, and death, Bellona's
pages,
Banish'd from Rome to Thrace, in our good
fortune,
With justice he may taste the fruits of peace,
Whose sword hath plough'd the ground, and
reap'd the harvest
Of your prosperity. Nor can I think
That there is one among you so ungrateful,
Or such an enemy to thriving virtue,
That can esteem the jewel he holds dearest,
Too good for Cæsar's use.

Enter Julia, Cænis, Domitilla, and Domitia.

Cænis. Stand back—the place is mine.
Jul. Yours! Am I not
Great Titus' daughter, and Domitian's niece?
Dares any claim precedence?
Cænis. I was more: The mistress of your father, and, in his right,
Claim duty from you.
Jul. I confess, you were useful
To please his appetite.
Dom. To end the controversy,
For I'll have no contending, I'll be bold
To lead the way myself.
Domitil. You, minion!
Dom. Yes;
And all, ere long, shall kneel to catch my
favours.
Jul. Whence springs this flood of great­ness?
Dom. You shall know
Too soon, for your vexation, and perhaps
Repent too late, and pine with envy, when
You see whom Cæsar favours.
Jul. Observe the sequel.
Scene I.—A State Room in the Palace.

Enter Philargus in rags, and Parthenius.

Phil. My son to tutor me! Know your obedience, and question not my will.

Parth. Sir, were I one, whom want compell'd to wish a full possession Of what is yours: or had I ever number'd Your years, or thought you lived too long, with reason You then might nourish ill opinions of mee: Or did the suit that I prefer to you Concern myself, and aim'd not at your good, You might deny, and I sit down with patience, And after never press you.

Phil. In the name of Pluto,
What wouldst thou have me do?

Parth. Right to yourself; Or suffer me to do it. Can you imagine This nasty hat, this tatter'd cloak, rent shoe This sordid linen, can become the master Of your fair fortunes? whose superfluous means, Though I were burthensome, could clothe you in The costliest Persian silks, studded with jewels, The spoils of provinces, and every day Fresh change of Tyrian purple.

Phil. Out upon thee!

My monies in my coffers melt to hear thee. Purple! hence, prodigal! Shall I make my salute her (by this kiss I make it good) mercer, with the title of Augusta. Or tailor heir, or see my jeweller purchase?


Par. [kissing it.] The gods still honour Caesar!

Ces. The wars are ended, and, our arms laid by, We are for soft delights. Command the poets To use their choicest and most rare invention, To entertain the time; nor be you careful To give it action: we'll provide the people Pleasures of all kinds.—My Domitia, think not I flatter, though thus fond.—On to the capitol: 'Tis death to him that wears a sullen brow. This 'tis to be a monarch, when alone He can command all, but is awed by none.

[Exeunt.]
The scurf, ach in your bones, to grow upon you, 
And hasten on your fate with too much sparing: 
When a cheap purge, a vomit, and good diet, 
May lengthen it. Give me but leave to send 
The emperor's doctor to you. 

Phil. I'll be borne first, 
Halfrotten, to the fire that must consume me!
His pills, his cordials, his electuaries, 
His syrups, julaps, bezoar stone, nor his 
Imagined unicorn's horn, comes in my belly; 
My mouth shall be a draught first, 'tis resolved.
No; I'll not lessen my dear golden heap, 
Which, every hour increasing, does renew 
My youth and vigor; but, if lessen'd, then, 'Then my poor heart-strings crack. Let me 
Enjoy it, while I live, it being my life, 
My soul, my all: but when I turn to dust, 
And part from what is more esteem'd, by me, 
Than all the gods Rome's thousand altars smoke to, 
Inherit thou my adoration of it, 
And, like me, serve my idol. [Exit. 

Parth. What a strange torture 
Is avarice to itself! what man, that looks on 
Such a penurious spectacle, but must know what the fable meant of Tantalus, 
Or the ass whose back is crack'd with curious viands, 
Yet feeds on thistles. Some course I must take, 
To make my father know what cruelty 
He uses on himself. 

Enter Paris. 

Par. Sir, with your pardon, 
I make bold to enquire the emperor's pleasure; 
For, being by him commanded to attend, 
Your favour may instruct us what's his will 
Shall be this night presented. 

Parth. My loved Paris, 
Without my intercession, you well know, 
You may make your own approaches, since his ear 
To you is ever open. 

Par. I acknowledge 
His clemency to my weakness, and, if ever 
I do abuse it, lightning strike me dead! 
The grace he pleases to confer upon me, 
(Without boast I may say so much,) was never 
Employ'd to wrong the innocent, or to incense 
His fury. 

Parth. 'Tis confess'd: many men owe you 
For provinces they ne'er hoped for; and 
their lives, 
Forfeited to his anger — you being absent, 
I could say more.
They dare affirm to be removed with poison
And he compell'd to write you a coheir
With his daughter, that his testament might stand,
Which, else, you had made void. Then your much love
To Julia your niece, censured as incest,
And done in scorn of Titus, your dead brother:
But the divorce Lamia was forced to sign
To her you honour with Augusta's title,
Being only named, they do conclude there was
A Lucrece once, a Collatine, and a Brutus;
But nothing Roman left now but, in you,
The lust of Tarquin.

Cæs. Yes, his fire, and scorn
Of such as think that our unlimited power
Can be confined. Dares Lamia pretend
An interest to that which I call mine;
Or but remember she was ever his,
That's now in our possession? Fetch him hither.
I'll give him cause to wish he rather had
Forgot his own name, than 'er mention'd hers.
Shall we be circumscribed? Let such as cannot
By force make good their actions, though wicked,
Conceal, excuse, or qualify their crimes!
What our desires grant leave and privilege to,
Though contradicting all divine decrees,
Or laws confirm'd by Romulus and Numa,
Shall be held sacred.

Aret. You should, else, take from
The dignity of Cæsar.

Cæs. Am I master
Of two and thirty legions, that awe
All nations of the triumphed world,
Yet tremble at our frown, to yield account
Of what's our pleasure, to a private man!
Rome perish first, and Atlas's shoulders shrink,
Heaven's fabric fall, (the sun, the moon,
the stars
Losing their light and comfortable heat,)
Ere I confess that any fault of mine
May be disputed!

Aret. So you preserve your power,
As you should, equal and omnipotent here,
With Jupiter's above.

[Parthenius kneeling, whispers Cæsar.

Cæs. Thy suit is granted,
Whate'er it be, Parthenius, for thy service
Done to Augusta.—Only so? a trifle:
Command him hither. If the comedy fail
To cure him, I will ministersomething to him
That shall instruct him to forget his gold,
And think upon himself.

Parth. May it succeed well,
Since my intents are pious!

Cæs. We are resolved
What course to take; and, therefore, Aretinus,
Enquire no further. Go you to my empress,
And say I do entreat (for she rules him
Whom all men else obey) she would vouchsafe
The music of her voice at yonder window,
When I advance my hand, thus. I will blend
My cruelty with some scorn, or else 'tis lost.
Revenge, when it is unexpected, falling
With greater violence; and hate clothed in smiles,
Strikes, and with horror, dead the wretch that comes not
Prepared to meet it.—

Re-enter Guard with Lamia.

Our good Lamia, welcome.
So much we owe you for a benefit,
With willingness on your part conferred upon us,
That 'tis our study, we that would not live
Engaged to any for a courtesy,
How to return it.

Lam. 'Tis beneath your fate
To be obliged, that in your own hand grasp
The means to be magnificent.

Cæs. Well put off;
But yet it must not do: the empire, Lamia,
Divided equally, can hold no weight,
If balanced with your gift in fair Domitia—
You, that could part with all delights at once,
The magazine of rich pleasures being contain'd
In her perfections,—uncompell'd, deliver'd
As a present fit for Cæsar. In your eyes,
With tears of joy, not sorrow, 'tis confirm'd
You glory in your act.

Lam. Derided too!
Sir, this is more—

Cæs. More than I can requite;
It is acknowledged, Lamia. There's no drop
Of melting nectar I taste from her lip,
But yields a touch of immortality
To the blest receiver; every grace and feature,
Prized to the worth, bought at an easy rate,
If purchased for a consulship. Her discourse
So ravishing, and her action so attractive,
That I would part with all my other senses,
Provided I might ever see and hear her.
The pleasures of her bed I dare not trust
The winds or air with; for that would draw down, In envy of my happiness, a war From all the gods upon me. Lam. Your compassion To me, in your forbearing to insult On my calamity, which you make your sport, Would more appease those gods you have provoked, Than all the blasphemous comparisons You sing unto her praise.

Domitia appears at the window. Cas. I sing her praise! 'Tis far from my ambition to hope it; It being a debt she only can lay down, And no tongue else discharge. [He raises his hand. Music above. Hark! I think, prompted With my consent that you once more should hear her, She does begin. An universal silence Dwell on this place! 'Tis death, with lingering torments, To all that dare disturb her.—

A SONG by Domitia. —Who can hear this, And fall not down and worship? In my fancy, Apollo being judge, on Latmos’ hill Fair-haired Calliope, on her ivory lute, (But something short of this,) sung Ceres’ praises, And grisly Pluto’s rape on Proserpine. The motions of the spheres are out of time, Her musical notes but heard. Say, Lamia, say, Is not her voice angelical? Lam. To your ear: But I, alas! am silent. Ces. Be so ever, That without admiration canst hear her! Malice to my felicity strikes thee dumb, And, in thy hope, or wish, to repossess What I love more than empire, I pronounce thee Guilty of treason.—Off with his head! do you stare? By her that is my patroness, Minerva, Whose statue I adore of all the gods, If he but live to make reply, thy life Shall answer it! [The Guard leads off Lamia, stopping his mouth. My fears of him are freed now; And he that lived to upbraid me with my wrong, For an offence he never could imagine, In wantonness removed.—Descend, my dearest; Plurality of husbands shall no more Breed doubts or jealousies in you: [Exit Dom. above.] 'tis dispatch’d, And with as little trouble here, as if I had kill’d a fly.

Enter Domitia, ushered in by Aretinus, her train borne up by Julia, Cænis, and Domitilla. Now you appear, and in That glory you deserve! and these, that stoop To do you service, in the act much honour’d! Julia, forget that Titus was thy father; Cænis, and Domitilla, ne’er remember Sabinus or Vespasian. To be slaves To her is more true liberty, than to live Parthian or Asian queens. As lesser stars, That wait on Phœbe in her full of brightness, Compared to her, you are. Thus, thus I seat you By Caesar’s side, commanding these, that once Were the adored glories of the time, To witness to the world they are your vassals, At your feet to attend you. Dom. 'Tis your pleasure, And not my pride. And yet, when I consider That I am yours, all duties they can pay I do receive as circumstances due To her you please to honour. Re-enter Parthenius with Philargus. Parth. Caesar’s will Commands you hither, nor must you gain-say it. Phil. Lose time to see an interlude! must Is not her voice angelical? I pay too, For my vexation? Parth. Not in the court: It is the emperor’s charge. Phil. I shall endure My torment then the better Ces. Can it be This sordid thing, Parthenius, is thy father? No actor can express him: I had held The fiction for impossible in the scene, Had I not seen the substance.—Sirrah, sit still, And give attention; if you but nod, You sleep for ever.—Let them spare the prologue, And all the ceremonies proper to ourself, And come to the last act—there, where the cure By the doctor is made perfect. The swift minutes Seem years to me, Domitia, that divorce thee.
From my embraces: my desires increasing
As they are satisfied, all pleasures else
Are tedious as dull sorrows. Kiss me again:
If now wanted heat of youth, these fires
In Priam's veins, would thaw his frozen blood,
Enabling him to get a second Hector
For the defence of Troy.
Dom. You are wanton!
Pray you, forbear. Let me see the play.
Cäs. Begin there.

Enter Paris, like a doctor of physic, and
Esopus: Latins is brought forth asleep
in a chair, a key in his mouth.
Esop. O master doctor, he is past recovery;
A lethargy hath seized him; and, however
His sleep resemble death, his watchful care
To guard that treasure he dares make no use of,
Works strongly in his soul.
Par. What's that he holds
So fast between his teeth?
Esop. The key that opens
His iron chests, cramm'd with accursed gold,
Rusty with long imprisonment. There's no duty,
In me, his son, nor confidence in friends,
That can persuade him to deliver up
That to the trust of any.
Phil. He is the wiser:
'Twere fashion'd in one mould.
Esop. He eats with it:
And, when devotion calls him to the temple
Of Mammon, whom, of all the gods, he kneels to,
That held thus still, his orisons are paid:
Nor will he, though the wealth of Rome
were pawn'd
For the restoring of it, for one short hour
Be won to part with it.
Phil. Still, still myself!
And if like me he love his gold, no pawn
Is good security.
Par. I'll try if I can force it——
It will not be. His avaricious mind,
Like men in rivers drown'd, make him
gripe fast,
To his last gasp, what he in life held dearest;
And, if that it were possible in nature,
Would carry it with him to the other world.
Phil. As I would do to hell, rather than leave it.
Esop. Is he not dead?
Par. Long since to all good actions,
Or to himself, or others, for which wise men
Desire to live. You may with safety pinch him,
Or under his nails stick needles, yet he stirs not:
Anxious fear to lose what his soul doats on,
Renders his flesh insensible. We must use
Some means to rouse the sleeping faculties
Of his mind; there lies the lethargy. Take
a trumpet,
And blow it into his ears: 'tis to no purpose;
The roaring noise of thunder cannot wake
him:
And yet despair not; I have one trick left yet.
Esop. What is it?
Par. I will cause a fearful dream
To steal into his fancy, and disturb it
With the horror it brings with it, and so free
His body's organs.
Dom. 'Tis a cunning fellow;
If he were indeed a doctor, as the play says,
He should be sworn my servant; govern
my slumbers,
And minister to me waking.
Par. If this fail, [A chest brought in.
I'll give him o'er. So; with all violence
Rend o'pe this iron chest, for here his life lies
Bound up in fetters, and in the defence
Of what he values higher, 'will return,
And fill each vein and artery.—Louder yet!
'Tis open, and already he begins
To stir; mark with what trouble.

Dom. 'Tis a cunning fellow;
If he were indeed a doctor, as the play
says,
He should be sworn my servant; govern
my slumbers,
And minister to me waking.
Par. Peace! the emperor frowns.
Par. So; now pour out the bags upon the

Latinus stretches himself.

Phil. As you are Caesar,
Defend this honest, thrifty man! they are
thieves,
And come to rob him.
Parth. Peace! the emperor frowns.
Par. So; now pour out the bags upon the

Remove his jewels, and his bonds.—Again,
Ring a second golden peal. His eyes are open;
He stares as he had seen Medusa's head,
And were turn'd marble.—Once more.
Lat. Murder! murder!
They come to murder me. My son in the
plot?
Thou worse than parricide! if it be death
To strike thy father's body, can all tortures
The Furies in hell practise, be sufficient
For thee, that dost assassinate my soul?
—My gold! my bonds! my jewels! dost thou
 envy
My glad possession of them for a day;
Extinguishing the taper of my life
Consumed unto the snuff;
Par. Seem not to mind him.
Lat. Have I, to leave thee rich, denied
myself
The joys of human being; scraped and
hoarded
A mass of treasure, which had Solon seen,
The Lydian Cræsus had appeared to him
Poor as the beggar Iris? And yet I,
As neither my heir should have just cause to think
I lived too long, for being close-handed to him,
Or cruel to myself.
Par. Have your desires.
Phæbus assisting me, I will repair
The ruin'd building of your health; and I think not
You have a son that hates you; the truth is,
This means, with his consent, I practised on you
To this good end: it being a device,
In you to shew the Cure of Avarice.

[Exeunt Paris, Latinus, and Æsopus.]

Phil. An old fool, to be gull'd thus! had he died
As I resolve to do, not to be alter'd,
It had gone off twanging.

Ces. How approve you, sweetest,
Of the matter and the actors?

Dom. For the subject,
I like it not; it was filch'd out of Horace.
—Nay, I have read the poets:—but the fellow
That play'd the doctor, did it well, by Venus:
He had a tuneable tongue, and neat delivery:
And yet, in my opinion, he would perform
A lover's part much better. Prithee, Cæsar,
For I grow weary, let us see, to-morrow,
Ipms and Alcàsarete.

Cæs. Any thing
For thy delight, Domitia; to your rest,
Till I come to disquiet you: wait upon her
There is a business that I must dispatch,
And I will straight be with you.

[Exeunt.]


Parth. Now, my dread sir,
Endeavour to prevail.

Cæs. One way or other
We'll cure him, never doubt it. Now,
Philargus,
Thou wretched thing, hast thou seen thy'
sordid baseness,
And but observed what a contemptible creature
A covetous miser is? Dost thou in thyself
Feel true compunction, with a resolution
To be a new man?

Phil. This crazed body's Cæsar's;
But for my mind—

Cæs. Trifle not with my anger.
Canst thou make good use of what was now presented;
And imitate, in thy sudden change of life,
What thou art to the life?

Phil. Pray you, give me leave
To die as I have lived. I must not part with
My gold; it is my life: I am past cure.
Caesar
No! By Minerva, thou shalt never more
Feel the least touch of avarice. Take him hence
And hang him instantly. If there be gold in hell,
Enjoy it; thine here and thy life together
Is forfeited.

Philargus
Was I sent for to this purpose?

Parthenius
Mercy for all my service, Caesar, mercy!

Caesar
Should Jove plead for him, 'tis resolv'd he dies,
And he that speaks one syllable to dissuade me;
And therefore tempt me not. It is but justice.

Exeunt
ACT THREE

SCENE ONE

Enter Julia, Domitilla, Stephanos

No, Domitilla; if you but compare
What I have suffer'd with your injuries
(Though great ones, I confess), they will appear
Like molehills to Olympus.

You are tender
Of your own wounds, which makes you lose the feeling
And sense of mine. The incest he committed
With you, he won by his perjuries that he would
Salute you with the title of Augusta.
Your faint denial show'd a full consent
And grant to his temptations. But poor I,
That would not yield, but was with violence forc'd
To serve his lusts, and in a kind Tiberius
At Caprae never practis'd, have not here
One conscious touch to rise up my accuser,
I in my will being innocent.

Pardon me,
Great princesses, though I presume to tell you,
There is something more in Rome expected
From Titus' daughter and his uncle's heir
Than womanish complaints after such wrongs,
Which mercy cannot pardon. But you'll say
Your hands are weak, and should you but attempt
A just revenge on this inhuman monster,
This prodigy of mankind, bloody Domitian,
Hath ready swords at his command, as well
As islands to confine you, to remove
His doubts and fears, did he but entertain
The least suspicion.

**Julia**

'Tis true, Stephanos.
The legions that sack'd Jerusalem
Under my father Titus are sworn his,
And I no more remember'd.

**Domitilla**

And to lose
Ourselves by building on impossible hopes
Were desperate madness.

**Stephanos**

You conclude too fast.
One single arm, whose master does contemn
His own life, holds a full command o'er his,
Spite of his guards. I was your bondman, lady,
And you my gracious patroness; my wealth
And liberty your gift; and though no soldier,
To whom or custom or example makes
Grim death appear less terrible, I dare die
To do you service. Say but you, 'Go on!'
And I will reach his heart, or perish in
The noble undertaking.

**Domitilla**

I must not
Upon uncertain grounds hazard so grateful
And good a servant. The immortal powers
Protect a prince, though sold to impious acts,
And seem to slumber till his roaring crimes
Awake their justice; but then looking down,
They in their secret judgements do determine
To leave him to his wickedness, which sinks him
When he is most secure.

**Julia**

His cruelty
Increasing daily, of necessity
Must render him as odious to his soldiers,
Familiar friends, and freemen, as it hath done
Already to the Senate; then, forsaken
Of his supporters, and grown terrible
E’en to himself, and her he now so dotes on,
We may put into act what now with safety
We cannot whisper.

Stephanos
I am still prepar’d
To execute when you please to command me.

Enter Caenis

Julia
Oh, here’s Caenis.

Domitilla
Whence come you?

Caenis
From the empress, who seems mov’d
In that you wait no better. Her pride’s grown
To such a height that she disdains the service
Of her own women, and esteems herself
Neglected when the princesses of the blood
On every coarse employment are not ready
To stoop to her commands.

Domitilla
Where is her greatness?

Caenis
Where you would little think she could descend
To grace the room or persons.

Julia
Speak; where is she?

Caenis
Among the players; where all state laid by,
She does inquire who acts this part, who that,
And in what habits; blames the tire-women
For want of curious dressings; and so taken
She is with Paris the tragedian’s shape,
That is to act a lover, I thought once
She would have courted him.

Domitilla
In the meantime
How spends the emperor his hours?
Caenis  

And but this morning (if't be possible)  
He hath outgone himself, having condemn'd  
At Aretinus his informer's suit,  
Palphurius Sura and good Junius Rusticus,  
Men of the best repute in Rome for their  
Integrity of life; no fault objected,  
But that they did lament his cruel sentence  
On Paetus Thrasea the philosopher,  
Their patron and instructor.

Stephanos  

Can Jove see this,  

And hold his thunder!

Domitilla  

Nero and Caligula  
Commanded only mischiefs; but our Caesar  
Delights to see 'em.

Julia  

What we cannot help,  
We may deplore with silence.

Caenis  

We are call'd for  
By our proud mistress.

Domitilla  

We a while must suffer.

Stephanos  

It is true fortitude to stand firm against  
All shocks of fate, when cowards faint and die  
In fear to suffer more calamity.

Exeunt
Act Three, Scene Two

Scene Two

Enter Caesar, Parthenius

Caesar They are then in fetters?

Parthenius Yes, sir, but –

Caesar I'll have thy thoughts. Deliver them.

Parthenius I shall, sir. But still submitting to your god-like pleasure Which cannot be instructed –

Caesar To the point.

Parthenius Nor let your sacred majesty believe Your vassal, that with dry eyes look'd upon His father dragg'd to death by your command, Can pity these, that durst presume to censure What you decreed.

Caesar Well? Forward.

Parthenius Alas, I know, sir, These bookmen, Rusticus and Palphurius Sura, Deserve all tortures. Yet, in my opinion, They being popular senators, and cried up With loud applauses of the multitude For foolish honesty and beggarly virtue, 'Twould relish more of policy to have them Made away in private, with what exquisite torments You please – it skills not – than to have them drawn To the degrees in public; for 'tis doubted That the sad object may beget compassion In the giddy rout, and cause some sudden uproar That may disturb you.

Caesar Hence, pale-spirited coward!
Can we descend so far beneath ourself
As or to court the people's love, or fear
Their worst of hate? Can they, that are as dust
Before the whirlwind of our will and power,
Add any moment to us? Or thou think,
If there are gods above, or goddesses
(But wise Minerva that's mine own and sure),
That they have vacant hours to take into
Their serious protection or care
This many-headed monster, the people!
Bring forth those condemn'd wretches. Let me see
One man so lost as but to pity 'em,
And though there lay a million of souls
Imprison'd in his flesh, my hangmen's hooks
Should rend it off and give 'em liberty.
Caesar hath said it.

Exit Parthenius

Enter Parthenius, Aretinus, and the Guard; Hangmen
dragging in Junius Rusticus and Palphurias Sura, bound back to back.

Aretinus [To the Guard] 'Tis great Caesar's pleasure
That with fix'd eyes you carefully observe
The people's looks. Charge upon any man
That with sigh, or murmur, does express
A seeming sorrow for these traitors' deaths.
You know his will, perform it.

Caesar A good bloodhound,
And fit for my employments.

Sura Give us leave
To die, fell tyrant.

Rusticus For beyond our bodies
Thou hast no power.

Caesar Yes; I'll afflict your souls,
And force them groaning to the Stygian lake,
THE ROMAN ACTOR.

And all those glorious constellations
That do adorn the firmament, appointed,
Like grooms, with their bright influence to attend
The actions of kings and emperors,
They being the greater wheels that move the less.

Bring forth those condemn'd wretches;—
Exit Parthenius. Let me see
One man so lost, as but to pity them,
And though there lay a million of souls
Imprison'd in his flesh, my hangmen's hooks
Should rend it off, and give them liberty.

Caesar hath said it.

Re-enter Parthenius, with Aretinus, and
Guard; Executioners dragging in Junius
Rusticus and Palphurius Sura, bound back to back.

Aret. 'Tis great Caesar's pleasure,
That with fix'd eyes you carefully observe
The people's looks. Charge upon any man
That with a sigh or murmur does express
A seeming sorrow for these traitors' deaths.
You know his will, perform it.

Cas. A good bloodhound,
And fit for my employments.

Sura. Give us leave
to die, fell tyrant.

Rust. For, beyond our bodies,
Thou hast no power.

Cas. Yes; I'll afflict your souls,
And force them groaning to the Stygian lake,
Prepared for such to howl in, that blaspheme
The power of princes, that are gods on earth.

Tremble to think how terrible the dream is
After this sleep of death.

Rust. To guilty men
It may bring terror: not to us, that know
What 'tis to die, yet my sinews shrink,
The spectacle is so horrid.

Caesar. I was never
O'ercome till now. For my sake roar a little,
And shew you are corporeal, and not turn'd
Aerial spirits.—Will it not do? By Pallas,
It is unkindly done to mock his fury
Whom the world styles Omnipotent! I am tortured
In their want of feeling tortures. Marius' story,
That does report him to have sat unmoved,
When cunning surgeons ripp'd his arteries
And veins, to cure his gout, compared to this,
Deserves not to be named. Are they not dead?

If so, we wash an ...-Ethiop.

Sura. No; we live.

Rust. Live to deride thee, our calm patience treading
Upon the neck of tyranny.

Cas. We will hear no more.

Rust. This only, and I give thee warning of it:

Though it is in thy will to grind this earth
As small as atoms, they thrown in the sea too,
They shall seem re-collected to thy sense:

And, when the sand building of thy greatness
Shall with its own weight totter, look to see me
As I was yesterday, in my perfect shape;
For I'll appear in horror.

Caesar. By my shaking
I am the guilty man, and not the judge,
Drag from my sight these cursed ominous wizards,
That, as they are now, like to double-faced Janus,
Which way so’er I look, are Furies to me,
Away with them! first shew them death,
then leave
No memory of their ashes. I’ll mock Fate.
[Exeunt Executioners with Rusticus and Sura.
Shall words fright him victorious armies circle?
No, no; the fever does begin to leave me.
Enter Domitia, Julia, and Cænis; Stephanos following.
Or, were it deadly, from this living fountain
I could renew the vigour of my youth,
And be a second Virbius.
Oh, my glory! My life! command! my all!
Dam. As you to me are.
[Embracing and kissing.
I beard you were sad: I have prepared you
sport
Will banish melancholy. Sirrah, Caesar,
(I hug myself for’t,) I have been instructing
The players how to act; and to cut off
All tedious impertinence, have contracted
The tragedy into one continued scene.
I have the art of’t, and am taken more
With my ability that way, than all knowledge
I have but of thy love.
Cæs. Thou art still thyself,
The sweetest, wittiest,—
Dom. When we are abed
I’ll thank your good opinion. Thou shalt see
Such an Iphis of thy Paris!—and, to humble
The pride of Domitilla, that neglects me,
(Howe’er she is your cousin,) I have forced
her
To play the part of Anaxarete—
You are not offended with it?
Cæs. Any thing
That does content thee yields delight to me:
My faculties and powers are thine.
Dom. I thank you:
Prithée let’s take our places. Bid them enter
Without more circumstance.
After a short flourish, enter Paris as Iphis.
How do you like
That shape? methinks it is most suitable
To the aspect of a despairing lover
The seeming late-fallen, counterfeited tears
That hang upon his cheeks, was my device.
Cæs. And all was excellent.
Dom. Now hear him speak.
Iphis. That she is fair, (and that an
epithet—
Too foul to express her,) or descended nobly,
Or rich, or fortunate, are certain truths
In which poor Iphis glories. But that these
Perfections, in no other virgin found,
Abused, should nourish cruelty and pride
In the divinest Anaxarete,
Is, to my love-sick, languishing soul, a riddle;
And with more difficulty to be dissolved,
Than that the monster Sphinx, from the steep rock,
Offer’d to Edipus. Imperious Love,
As at thy ever-flaming altars Iphis,
Thy never-tired votary, hath presented,
With scalding tears, whole hecatombs of sighs,
Preferring thy power, and thy Paphian
mother’s,
Before the Thunderer’s, Neptune’s, or Pluto’s
(That, after Saturn, did divide the world,
And had the sway of things, yet were compell’d
By thy inevitable shafts to yield,
And fight under thy ensigns) be auspicious
To this last trial of my sacrifice
Of love and service!
Dom. Does he not act it rarely?
Observe with what a feeling he delivers
His orisons to Cupid; I am rapt with’t.
Iphis. And from thy never-emptied quiver take
A golden arrow, to transfixed her heart,
And force her love like me; or cure my wound
With a leaden one, that may beget in me
Hate and forgetfulness of what’s now my idol—
But I call back my prayer; I have blasphem’d
In my rash wish: ’tis I that am unworthy;
But she all inert, and may in justice chal-
lenge,
From the assurance of her excellencies,
Not love but adoration. Yet, bear witness,
All-knowing Powers! I bring along with me,
As faithful advocates to make intercession,
A loyal heart with pure and holy flames,
With the soul fires of lust never polluted,
And, as I touch her threshold, which with tears,
My limbs besmear’d with cold, I oft have wash’d,
With my glad lips I kiss this earth, grown
proud
With frequent favours from her delicate feet.
Dom. By Caesar’s life he weeps! and I
forbear
Hardly to keep him company.
Iphis. Blest ground, thy pardon,
If I profane it with forbidden steps.
I must presume to knock—and yet attempt it
With such a trembling reverence, as if
My hands [were now] held up for expiation
To the incensed gods to spare a kingdom.
Within there, ho! something divine come forth
To a distressed mortal.

Enter Latinus as a Porter.

Port. Ha! Who knocks there?
Dom. What a churlish look this knave has!
Port. Is't you, sirrah?
Are you come to pule and whine? Avaunt, and quickly;
Dog-whips shall drive you hence, else.

Dom. Churlish devil!
But that I should disturb the scene, as I live
I would tear his eyes out.

Cæs. 'Tis his part;
Dom. I do not like such jesting: if he were not
A flinty-hearted slave, he could not use
One of his form so harshly. How the toad swells
At the other's sweet humility!

Cæs. 'Tis his part;
Let them proceed.

Dom. A rogue's part will ne'er leave him.
Iphis. As you have, gentle sir, the happiness
(When you please) to behold the figure of
The masterpiece of nature, limned to the life.
In more than human Anaxarete,
Scorn not your servant, that with suppliant hands
Takes hold upon your knees, conjuring you,
As you are a man, and did not suck the milk
Of wolves, and tigers, or a mother of
A tougher temper, use some means these eyes,
Before they are swept out, may see your lady.
Will you be gracious, sir?
Port. Though I lose my place for't,
I can hold out no longer.

Dom. Now he melts,
There is some little hope he may die honest.

Port. Madam!

Enter Domitilla as Anaxarete.

Anax. Who calls? What object have we here?
Dom. Your cousin keeps her proud state still; I think
I have fitted her for a part.
Anax. Did I not charge thee
I ne'er might see this thing more?
Iphis. I am, indeed,
What thing you please; a worm that you may tread on:
Lower I cannot fall to show my duty,
Till your disdain hath digg'd a grave to cover.

This body with forgotten dust; and, when
I know your sentence, cruellest of women!
I'll, by a willing death, remove the object
That is an eyesore to you.

Anax. Wretch, thou dar'st not:
That were the last and greatest service to me
Thy doting love could boast of. What dull fool
But thou could nourish any flattering hope,
One of my height in youth, in birth and fortune,
Could e'er descend to look upon thy lowness,
Much less consent to make my lord of one
I'd not accept, though offer'd for my slave?
My thoughts stoop not so low.

Dom. There's her true nature:
No personated scorn.

Anax. I wrong my worth,
Or to exchange a syllable or look
With one so far beneath me.

Iphis. Yet take heed,
Take heed of pride, and curiously consider,
How brittle the foundation is, on which
You labour to advance it. Niobe,
Proud of her numerous issue, durst contemn
Latona's double burthen; but what follow'd?
She was left a childless mother, and mourn'd to marble.
The beauty you o'erraze so, time or sickness
Can change to loath'd deformity; your wealth,
The prey of thieves; queen Hecuba, Troy fired,
Ulysses' bondwoman; but the love I bring you
Nor time, nor sickness, violent thieves, nor fate,
Can ravish from you.

Dom. Could the oracle
Give better counsel!

Iphis. Say, will you relent yet,
Revoking your decree that I should die?
Or, shall I do what you command? resolve;
I am impatient of delay.

Anax. Dispatch then:
I shall look on your tragedy unmoved,
Peradventure laugh at it; for it will prove
A comedy to me.

Dom. O devil! devil!
Iphis. Then thus I take my last leave.

All the curses
Of lovers fall upon you, and, hereafter,
When any man, like me contemn'd, shall study,
In the anguish of his soul, to give a name
To a scornful, cruel mistress, let him only
Say, This most bloody woman is to me,
As Anaxarete was to wretched Iphis!

Now feast your tyrannous mind, and glory in
The ruins you have made: for Hymen's hands,
That should have made us one, this fatal halter
For ever shall divorce us: at your gate,
As a trophy of your pride and my affliction,
I'll presently hang myself.

Dom. Not for the world —

[Starts from her seat.

Restrain him, as you love your lives!

Ces. Why are you
Transported thus, Domitia? 'tis a play;
Or, grant it serious, it at no part merits
This passion in you.

Par. I ne'er purposed, madam,
To do the deed in earnest; though
I bow
To your care and tenderness of me.

Dom. Let me, sir,
Entreat your pardon; what
I saw presented,
Carried me beyond myself.

Ces. To your place again,
And see what follows.

Dom. No, I am familiar
With the conclusion; besides, upon the sudden
I feel myself much indisposed.

Ces. To bed then;
I'll be thy doctor.

Arel. There is something more
In this than passion,—which I must find out,
Or my intelligence freezes.

Dom. Come to me, Paris,
To-morrow, for your reward.

[Exeunt all but Domitilla and Stephanos.

Steph. Patroness, hear me;
Will you not call for your share? Sit down
With this,
And, the next action, like a Gaditane
strumpet,
I shall look to see you tumble!

Domitil. Prithree be patient.
I, that have suffered greater wrongs, bear this;
And that, till my revenge, my comfort is.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.—A Room in the Palace.

Enter Parthenius, Julia, Domitilla, and Cenis.

Parth. Why, 'tis impossible.—Paris!

Jul. You observed not,
As it appears, the violence of her passion,
When personating Iphis, he pretended,
For your contempt, fair Anaxarete,
To hang himself.

Parth. Yes, yes, I noted that;
But never could imagine it could work her
To such a strange intemperance of affection,
As to doat on him.

Domitil. By my hopes, I think not
That she respects, though all here saw, and,
mark'd it;

Presuming she can mould the emperor's will
Into what form she likes, though we, and all
The informers of the world, conspired to
cross it.

Can. Then with what eagerness, this morning, urging

The want of health and rest, she did entreat
Cæsar to leave her!

Domitil. Who no sooner absent,
But she calls, Dwarf! (so in her scorn she
styles me,)

Put on my pantofles; fetch pen and paper,
I am to write:—and with distracted looks,
In her smock, impatient of so short delay
As but to have a mantle thrown upon her,
She seal'd—I know not what, but 'twas in-
dorsed,

To my loved Paris.

Jul. Add to this, I heard her

Say, when a page received it, Let him wait me,
And carefully, in the walk call'd our Retreat,
Where Cæsar, in his fear to give offence,

Unsent for, never enters.

Parth. This being certain,

(For these are more than jealous supposi-
tions,)

Why do not you, that are so near in blood,

Discover it?

Domitil. Alas! you know we dare not.
'Twll be received for a malicious practice,
To free us from that slavery which her pride
Imposes on us. But, if you would please
To break the ice, on pain to be sunk ever,
We would aver it.

Parth. I would second you,

But that I am commanded with all speed
To fetch in Ascletario the Chaldæan;
Who, in his absence, is condemn'd of treason.

For calculating the nativity
Of Cæsar, with all confidence foretelling,
In every circumstance, when he shall die
A violent death. Yet, if you could approve
Of my directions, I would have you speak
As much to Aretinus, as you have
To me deliver'd: he in his own nature
Being a spy, on weaker grounds, no doubt.
Will undertake it; not for goodness' sake,
(With which he never yet held correspon-
dence,)

But to endear his vigilant observings
Of what concerns the emperor, and a little.
To triumph in the ruins of this Paris,

That cross'd him in the senate-house.—

Exeunt.
Enter Aretinus.

Here he comes,
His nose held up; he hath something in the wind,
Or I much err, already. My designs
Command me hence, great ladies; but I leave
My wishes with you. [Exit.

Aret. Have I caught your Greatness
In the trap, my proud Augusta!

Dom. What is't raps him?

Aret. And my fine Roman Actor! Is't even so?
No coarser dish to take your wanton palate,
Save that which, but the emperor, none
durst taste of!
'Tis very well.
I needs must glory in
This rare discovery: but the rewards
Of my intelligence bid me think; even now,
By an edict from Cæsar, I have power
To tread upon the neck of slavish Rome,
Disposing offices and provinces
To my kinsmen, friends, and clients.

Domitil. This is more
Than usual with him.

Jul. Aretinus!

No more respect and reverence tender'd to me,
But Aretinus! 'Tis confess'd that title,
When you were princesses, and commanded all,
Had been a favour; but being, as you are,
Vassals to a proud woman, the worst bondage,
You stand obliged with as much adoration
To entertain him, that comes arm'd with strength
To break your fetters, as tann'd galley-slaves
Pay such as do redeem them from the oar.
I come not to entrap you; but aloud
Pronounce that you are manumiz'd: and to make
Your liberty sweeter, you shall see her fall,
This empress,—this Domitia,—what you will,—
That triumph'd in your miseries.

Domitil. Were you serious,
To prove your accusation I could lend
Some help.

Can. And I.

Jul. And I.

Aret. No atom to me.—
My eyes and ears are every where; I know all,
To the line and action in the play that took her:
Her quick dissimulation to excuse
Her being transported, with her morning passion.
I bribed the boy that did convey the letter,

And, having perused it, made it up again:
Your griefs and angers are to me familiar.
—That Paris is brought to her, and how far
He shall be tempted.

Domitil. This is above wonder.

Aret. My gold can work much stranger miracles,
Than to corrupt poor waiters. Here, join with me—

[Takes out a petition.

'Tis a complaint to Cæsar. This is that
Shall ruin her, and raise you. Have you set your hands
To the accusation?

Jul. And will justify
What we've subscribed to.

Can. And with vehemence.

Domitil. I will deliver it.

Aret. Leave the rest to me then.

Enter Cæsar, with his Guard.

Cæs. Let our lieutenants bring us victory,
While we enjoy the fruits of peace at home:
And being secured from our intestine foes,
(Far worse than foreign enemies,) doubts and fears,
Though all the sky were hung with blazing meteors,
Which fond astrologers give out to be assured presages of the change of empires,
And deaths of monarchs, we, undaunted yet,
Guarded with our own thunder, bid defiance to them and fate; we being too strongly arm'd
For them to wound us.

Aret. Cæsar!

Jul. As thou art
More than a man—

Can. Let not thy passions be rebellious to thy reason—

Domitil. But receive

[Delivers the petition.

This trial of your constancy, as unmoved
As you go to or from the capitol,
Thanks given to Jove for triumphs.

Cæs. Ha!

Domitil. Vouchsafe
A while to stay the lightning of your eyes,
Poor mortals dare not look on.

Aret. There's no vein
Of yours that rises with high rage, but is an earthquake to us.

Domitil. And, if not kept closed
With more than human patience, in a moment
Will swallow us to the centre.

Can. Not that we repine to serve her, are we her accusers.

Jul. But that she's fallen so low.
THE ROMAN ACTOR.

Aret. Which on sure proofs
We can make good.

Domitil. And shew she is unworthy
Of the least spark of that diviner fire
You have conferr'd upon her.

Caes. I stand doubtful,
And unresolved what to determine of you.
In this malicious violence you have offer'd
To the altar of her truth and pureness to me,
You have but fruitlessly labour'd to sully
A white robe of perfection, black-mouth'd
evny
Could belch no spot on.—But I will put off
The deity you labour to take from me,
And argue out of probabilities with you,
As if I were a man. Can I believe
That she, that borrows all her light from me,
And knows to use it, would betray her
darknes
To your intelligence; and make that ap-
parent,
Which, by her perturbations in a play,
Was yesterday but doubted, and find none
But you, that are her slaves, and therefore
hate her,
Whose aids she might employ to make way
for her?
Or Arethnus, whom long since she knew
To be the cabinet counsellor, nay, the key
Of Cesar's secrets? Could her beauty raise
her
To this unequall'd height, to make her fall
The more remarkable? or must my desires
To her, and wrongs to Lamia, be revenged
By her, and on herself, that drew on both?
Or she leave our imperial bed to court
A public actor?

Aret. Who dares contradict
These more than human reasons, that have
power
To clothe base guilt in the most glorious
shape
Of innocence?

Domitil. Too well she knew the strength
And eloquence of her patron to defend her,
And thereupon presuming, fell securely;
Not fearing an accuser, nor the truth
Produced against her, which your love and
favour
Will never discern from falsehood.

Caes. I'll not hear
A syllable more that may invite a change
In my opinion of her. You have raised
A fiercer war within me by this fable,
Though with your lives you vow to make it
story,
Than if, and at one instant, all my legions
Revolted from me, and came arm'd against
me.

Here in this paper are the swords pre-
destined
For my destruction; here the fatal stars
That threaten more than ruin; this the
Death's head
That does assure me, if she can prove false,
That I am mortal, which a sudden fever
Would prompt me to believe, and faintly
yield to.
But now in my full confidence what she
suffers,
In that, from any witness but myself,
I nourish a suspicion she's untrue,
My toughness returns to me. Lead on,
monsters,
And, by the forfeit of your lives, confirm
She is all excellence, as you all baseness;
Or let mankind, for her fall, boldly swear
There are no chaste wives now, nor ever
were.

[Exeunt.

SCENE II.—A private Walk in the
Gardens of the Palace.

Enter Domitia, Paris, and Servants.

Dom. Say we command, that none pre-
sume to dare,
On forfeit of our favour, that is life,
Out of a saucy curiousness, to stand
Within the distance of their eyes or ears,
Till we please to be waited on.

[Exeunt Servants.

And, sirrah,

Howe'er you are excepted, let it not
Beget in you
an
arrogant opinion
'Tis done to grace you.

Par. With my humblest service
I but obey your summons, and should
blush
else,
To be so near you.

Dom. 'Twould become you rather
To fear the greatness of the grace vouch-
safed you
May overwhelm you; and 'twill do no less,
If, when you are rewarded, in your cups
You boast this privacy.

Par. That were, mightiest
empress,
'Twould ill become the lowness
of my fortune,
To question what you can do, but with all
Humility to attend what is your will,
And then to serve it.

Dom. And would not a secret,
Suppose we should commit it to your trust,
Scald you to keep it?

Par. Though it raged within me
Till I turn’d cinders, it should ne’er have vent.
To be an age a dying, and with torture,
Only to be thought worthy of your counsel,
Or actuate what you command to me,
A wretched obscure thing, not worth your knowledge,
Were a perpetual happiness.

Dom. We could wish
That we could credit thee, and cannot find
In reason, but that thou, whom oft I have seen
To personate a gentleman, noble, wise,
Faithful, and gainsome, and what virtues else
The poet pleases to adorn you with;
But that (as vessels still partake the odour
Of the sweet precious liquors they contain’d)
Thou must be really, in some degree,
The thing thou dost present.—Nay, do not tremble;
We seriously believe it, and presume
Our Paris is the volume in which all
Those excellent gifts the stage hath seen him graced with,
Are curiously bound up.

Par. The argument
Is the same, great Augusta, that I, acting
A fool, a coward, a traitor, or cold cynical,
Or any other weak and vicious person,
Of force I must be such. O, gracious madam,
How glorious soever, or deform’d,
} do appear in the scene, my part being ended,
And all my borrow’d ornaments put off,
I am no more, nor less, than what I was
Before I enter’d.

Dom. Come, you would put on
A wilful ignorance, and not understand
What ‘tis we point at. Must we in plain language,
Against the decent modesty of our sex,
Say that we love thee, love thee to enjoy thee;
Or that in our desires thou art preferr’d,
And Cæsar but thy second? Thou in justice,
If from the height of majesty we can
Look down upon thy lowness, and embrace it,
Art bound with fervor to look up to me.

Par. O, madam! hear me with a patient ear,
And be but pleased to understand the reasons
That do deter me from a happiness
Kings would be rivals for. Can I, that owe
My life, and all that’s mine, to Cæsar’s bounties,
Beyond my hopes or merits, shower’d upon me,
Make payment for them with ingratitude,

Falsehood, and treason! Though you have a shape
Might tempt Hippolitus, and larger power
To help or hurt than wanton Phaedra had,
Let loyalty and duty plead my pardon,
Though I refuse to satisfy.

Dom. You are coy,
Expecting I should court you. Let mean ladies
Use prayers and entreaties to their creatures
To rise up instruments to serve their pleasures;
But for Augusta so to lose herself,
That holds command o’er Cæsar and the world,
Were poverty of spirit. Thou must—thou shalt:
The violence of my passion knows no mean,
And in my punishments, and my rewards,
I’ll use no moderation. Take this only,
As a caution from me; threadbare chastity
Is poor in the advancement of her servants,
But wantonness magnificent; and ‘tis frequent
To have the salary of vice weigh down
The pay of virtue. So, without more trifling,
Thy sudden answer.

Par. In what a strait am I brought in!
Alas! I know that the denial’s death;
Nor can my grant, discover’d, threaten more.
Yet, to die innocent, and have the glory
For all posterity to report, that I
Refused an empress, to preserve my faith
To my great master; in true judgment, must
Show fairer, than to buy a guilty life
With wealth and honour. ’Tis the base I build on:
I dare not, must not, will not.

Dom. How! contemn’d?
Since hopes, nor fears, in the extremes, prevail not,
I must use a mean. [Aside.]—Think who
’tis sueṣ to thee.
Deny not that yet, which a brother may
Grant to a sister: as a testimony
Enter Cæsar, Aretinus, Julia, Domitilla,
Cœnis, and a Guard behind.
I am not scorn’d, kiss me;—kiss me again:
Kiss closer. Thou art now my Trojan Paris,
And I thy Helen.

Par. Since it is your will.
Cæs. And I am Menelaus: but I shall be
Something I know not yet.

Dom. Why lose we time
And opportunity? These are but salads
To sharpen appetite: let us to the feast,
[Courting Paris wantonly.
Where I shall wish that thou wert Jupiter,  
And I Alcmena; and that I had power  
To lengthen out one short night into three,  
And so beget a Hercules.

*Cas. [Comes forward.] While Amphitrio  
Stands by, and draws the curtains.  
Par. Oh!—[Falls on his face.  
Dom. Betray'd!  
Cas. No; taken in a net of Vulcan's  
filings,  
Where, in myself, the theatre of the gods  
Are sad spectators, not one of them daring  
To witness, with a smile, he does desire  
To be so shamed for all the pleasure that  
You've sold your being for! What shall I  
name thee?

Ingratitude, treacherous, insatiate, all  
Invectives which, in bitterness of spirit,  
Wrong'd men have breathed out against  
wicked women,  
Cannot express thee! Have I raised thee  
from  
 Thy low condition to the height of greatness,  
Command, and majesty, in one base act  
To render me, that was, before I hugg'd thee,  
An adder, in my bosom, more than man,  
A thing beneath a beast! Did I force these  
Of mine own blood, as handmaids to kneel to  
Thy pomp and pride, having myself no  
thought  
But how with benefits to bind thee mine;  
And am I thus rewarded! Not a knee,  
Nor tear, nor sign of sorrow for thy fault?  
Break, stubborn silence: what canst thou  
allege  
To stay my vengeance?

Dom. This. Thy lust compell'd me  
'To be a strumpet, and mine hath return'd it  
In my intent and will, though not in act,  
To cuckold thee.

*Cas. O, impudence! take her hence,  
And let her make her entrance into hell,  
By leaving life with all the tortures that  
Flesh can be sensible of. Yet stay. What  
power Her beauty still holds o'er my soul, that  
wrongs  
Of this unpardonable nature cannot teach me  
To right myself, and hate her!—Kill her.—  
Hold!  
O that my dotage should increase from that  
Which should breed detestation. By Minerva,  
If I look on her longer, I shall melt,  
And sue to her, my injuries forgot,  
Again to be received into her favour;  
Could honour yield to it! Carry her to her  
chamber;
In wantonness, like Nero, fired proud Rome,
Betray'd an army, butcher'd the whole senate,
Committed sacrilege, or any crime
The justice of our Roman laws calls death,
I had prevented any intercession,
And freely sign'd thy pardon.

Par. But for this,
Alas! you cannot, nay, you must not, sir;
Nor let it to posterity be recorded,
That Cæsar, unreavenged, suffer'd a wrong,
Which, if a private man should sit down
with it,
Cowards would baffle him.

Cæs. With such true feeling
Thou arguest against thyself, that it
Works more upon me, than if my Minerva,
The grand protectress of my life and empire,
On forfeit of her favour, cried aloud,
Cæsar, show mercy! and, I know not how,
I am inclined to it. Rise. I'll promise
nothing;
Yet clear thy cloudy fears, and cherish hopes.
What we must do, we shall do: we remember
A tragedy oft have seen with pleasure,
Call’d the False Servant.

Par. Such a one we have, sir.

Cæs. In which a great lord takes to his
protection
A man forlorn, giving him ample power
To order and dispose of his estate
In his absence, he pretending then a journey:
But yet with this restraint that, on no terms,
(This lord suspecting his wife’s constancy,
She having play’d false to a former husband,)
The servant, though solicited, should con-
sent,
Though she commanded him to quench her
flames.

Par. That was, indeed, the argument.

Cæs. And what
Didst thou play in it?

Par. The False Servant, sir.

Cæs. Thou didst, indeed. Do the players
wait without?

Par. They do, sir, and prepared to act
the story
Your majesty mention’d.

Cæs. Call them in. Who presents
The injured lord!

Enter Æsopus, Latinus, and a Lady.

Æsop. ’Tis my part, sir.

Cæs. Thou didst not
Do it to the life; we can perform it better.
Off with my robe and wreath: since Nero
scorn’d not
The public theatre, we in private may
Disport ourselves. This cloak and hat,
without

Wearing a beard, or other property,
Will fit the person.

Æsop. Only, sir, a foil,
The point and edge rebated, when you act,
To do the murder. If you please to use this,
And lay aside your own sword.

Cæs. By no means.

In jest nor earnest this parts never from me,
We’ll have but one short-scene—that, where
the lady
In an imperious way commands the servant
To be unthankful to his patron: when
My cue’s to enter, prompt me:—Nay, begin,
And do it sprightly: though but a new actor,
When I come to execution, you shall find
No cause to laugh at me.

Lat. In the name of wonder,
What’s Cæsar’s purpose!

Æsop. There is no contending.

Cæs. Why, when?

Par. I am arm’d:

And, stood grim Death now in my view,
And his
Inevitable dart aim’d at my breast,
His cold embraces should not bring an ague
To any of my faculties, till his pleasures
Were served and satisfied; which done,
Nestor’s years
To me would be unwelcome. [Aside.
Lady. Must we entreat,
That were born to command or court a
servant,
That owes his food and clothing to our bounty,
For that, which thou ambitiously shouldst
kneel for?

Urge not in thy excuse, the favours of
Thy absent lord, or that thou stand’st engaged
For thy life to his charity; nor thy fears
Of what may follow, it being in my power
To mould him any way.

Par. As you may me,
In what his reputation is not wounded,
Nor I, his creature, in my thankfulness suffer.
I know you’re young and fair; be virtuous too,
And loyal to his bed, that hath advanced you
To the height of happiness.

Lady. Can my love-sick heart
Be cured with counsel? or must reason ever
Offer to put in an exploded plea
In the court of Venus? My desires admit not
The least delay; and therefore instantly
Give me to understand what I must trust to:
For, if I am refused, and not enjoy
Those ravishing pleasures from thee, I run
mad for,
I’ll swear unto my lord, at his return,
(Making what I deliver good with tears,) That brutishly thou wouldst have forced
from me
THE ROMAN ACTOR.

What I make suit for. And then but imagine
What 'tis to die, with these words, slave and
traitor,
With burning corsives writ upon thy fore­
head,
And live prepared for't.
Par. This he will believe
Upon her information, 'tis apparent;
And then I'm nothing: and of two extremes,
Wisdom says, choose the less. [Aside.]—
Rather than fall
Under your indignation, I will yield;
This kiss, and this, confirms it.
Cesar. I must take them at it?
Cesar. Yes, sir; be but perfect.
Cesar. O villain! thankless villain!—I
should talk now;
But I've forgot my part. But I can do:
Thus, thus, and thus! [Stabs Paris.
Par. Oh! I am slain in earnest.
Cesar. 'Tis true; and 'twas my purpose,
my good Paris:
And yet, before life leave thee, let the honour
I've done thee in thy death bring comfort to
thee.
If it had been within the power of Cesar,
His dignity preserved, he had pardon'd thee:
But cruelty of honour did deny it.
Yet, to confirm I loved thee, 'twas my study,
To make thy end more glorious, to dis-
tinguish
My Paris from all others; and in that
Have shown my pity. Nor would I let
thee fall
By a centurion's sword, or have thy limbs
Rent piecemeal by the hangman's hook, however
Thy crime deserved it: but, as thou didst live
Rome's bravest actor, 'twas my plot that thou
Shouldst die in action, and to crown it, die,
With an applause enduring to all times,
By our imperial hand.—His soul is freed
From the prison of his flesh; let it mount
upward!
And for this trunk, when that the funeral pile
Hath made it ashes, we'll see it enclosed
In a golden urn; poets adorn his hearse
With their most ravishing sorrows, and the stage
For ever mourn him, and all such as were
His glad spectators, weep his sudden death,
The cause forgotten in his epitaph.

[Act V.
SCENE I.—A Room in the Palace, with an image of Minerva.

Enter Parthenius, Stephanos, and Guard.
Parth. Keep a strong guard upon him, and admit not
Access to any, to exchange a word
Or syllable with him, till the emperor pleases
To call him to his presence.—[Exit Guard.]
—The relation
That you have made me, Stephanos, of these late
Strange passions in Cæsar, much amaze me.
The informer Aretinus put to death
For yielding him a true discovery
Of the empress' wantonness; poor Paris kill'd first,
And now lamented; and the princesses
Confined to several islands; yet Augusta,
The machine on which all this mischief moved,
Received again to grace!
Steph. Nay, courted to it:
Such is the impotence of his affection!
Yet, to conceal his weakness, he gives out
The people made suit for her, whom they hate more
Than civil war or famine. But take heed,
My lord, that, nor in your consent nor wishes,
You lend or furtherance or favour to
The plot contrived against her: should she prove it,
Nay, doubt it only, you are a lost man,
Her power o'er doating Cæsar being now
Greater than ever.
Parth. 'Tis a truth I shake at;
And, when there's opportunity—
Steph. Say but, Do,
I am yours, and sure.
Parth. I'll stand one trial more,
And then you shall hear from me.
Steph. Now observe
The fondness of this tyrant, and her pride.

[They stand aside.

Enter Cæsar and Domitia.

Cæs. Nay, all's forgotten.
Dom. It may be, on your part.
Cæs. Forgiven too, Domitia:—'tis a favour
That you should welcome with more cheerful looks.
Can Cæsar pardon what you durst not hope for,
That did the injury, and yet must sue
To her, whose guilt is wash'd off by his mercy,

Only to entertain it?
Dom. I ask'd none;
And I should be more wretched to receive
Remission for what I hold no crime,
But by a bare acknowledgment, than if,
By slighting and contemning it, as now,
I dared thy utmost fury. Though thy
flatterers
Persuade thee, that thy murders, lusts, and
rapes,
Are virtues in thee; and what pleases Cæsar,
Though never so unjust, is right and lawful;
Or work in thee a false belief that thou
Art more than mortal; yet I to thy teeth,
'When circled with thy guards, thy rods, thy
axes,
And all the ensigns of thy boasted power,
Will say, Domitian, nay, add to it Cæsar,
Is a weak, feeble man, a bondman to
His violent passions, and in that my slave;
Nay, more my slave than my affections
made me
To my loved Paris.

Cæs. Can I live and hear this?
Or hear, and not revenge it? Come, you
know
The strength that you hold on me, do not
use it
With too much cruelty; for though 'tis
granted
That Lydian Omphale had less command
Over Hercules, than you usurp over me,
Reason may teach me to shake off the yoke
Of my fond dotage.

Dom. Never; do not hope it:
It cannot be. Thou being my beauty's
captive,
And not to be redeem'd, my empire's larger
Than thine, Domitian, which I'll exercise
With rigour on thee, for my Paris' death.
And, when I've forced those eyes, now red
with fury,
To drop down tears, in vain spent to appease me,
I know thy fav'our such to my embraces,
Which shall be, though still kneel'd for,
still deri'd thee,
That thou with languishment shalt wish my
actor
Did live again, so thou mightst be his
second
To feed upon those delicates, when he's sated.

Cæs. O my Minerva.

Dom. There she is, [Points to the statue.]
invoke her:
She cannot arm thee with ability
To draw thy sword on me, my power being
greater:
Or only say to thy centurions,
Intelligence with the stars, and dare prefix
The day and hour in which we are to part
With life and empire, punctually foretelling
The means and manner of our violent end;
As you would purchase credit to your art,
Resolve me, since you are assured of us,
What fate attends yourself?

_Aesfle._ I have had long since
A certain knowledge, and as sure as thou
Shall die to-morrow, being the fourteenth of
The kalends of October, the hour five;
Spite of prevention, this carcass shall be
Torn and devoured by dogs;—and let that
stand
For a firm prediction.

_CaJs._ May our body, wretch,
Find never nobler sepulchre, if this
Fall ever on thee! Are we the great disposer
Of life and death, yet cannot mock the stars
In such a trifle? Hence with the impostor;
And having cut his throat, erect a pile,
Guarded with soldiers, till his cursed trunk
Be turn'd to ashes;—and let that
stand
For a firm prediction.

_CaJs._ 'Tis in vain;
When what I have foretold is made apparent,
Tremble to think what follows.

_Dom._ Write my name
In his bloody scroll, Parthenius! the fear's idle:
He durst not, could not.

_Parth._ I can assure nothing;
But I observed, when you departed from him,
After some little passion, but much fury,
He drew it out: whose death he sign'd, I
know not;
But in his looks appear'd a resolution
Of what before he stagger'd at. What he hath
Determined of is uncertain, but too soon
Will fall on you, or me, or both, or any,
His pleasure known to the tribunes and cen-
turions,
Who never use to enquire his will, but serve it.
The bloody catalogue being still about him,
As he sleeps you dare peruse it, or remove it,
You may instruct yourself, or what to suffer,
Or how to cross it.

_Dom._ I would not be caught
With too much confidence. By your leave, sir. Ha!
No motion!—you lie uneasy, sir,
Let me mend your pillow.

[Takes away the book.]

_Parth._ Have you it?

_Dom._ 'Tis here.

_CaJs._ Oh!

_Parth._ You have waked him: softly,
gracious madam,
While we are unknown; and then consult
at leisure.

_Exeunt._

_Dreadful music._ The Apparitions of Junius
Rusticus and Palphurius Sura rise, with
bloody swords in their hands; they wave
them over the head of Caesar, who seems
troubled in his sleep; and as if praying to
the image of Minerva, which they scorn-
fully seize, and then disappear with it.

_CaJs._ [Starting.] Defend me, goddess, or
this horrid dream
Will force me to distraction! whither have
These furies borne thee? Let me rise and follow.

I am bathed o'er with the cold sweat of death,
And am deprived of organs to pursue
These sacrilegious spirits. Am I at once
Robb'd of my hopes and being? No, I live—

[Rises distractedly.]
Yes, live, and have discourse, to know myself
Of gods and men forsaken. What accuser
Within me cries aloud, I have deserved it,
In being just to neither? Who dares speak
this?
Am I not Cæsar?—How! again repeat it?
Presumptuous traitor, thou shalt die!—

What traitor?
He that hath been a traitor to himself,
And stands convicted here. Yet who can sit
A competent judge o'er Cæsar? Cæsar. Yes,
Cæsar by Cæsar's sentenced, and must suffer;
Minerva cannot save him. Ha! where is she?
Where is my goddess? vanished! I am lost then.
No; 'twas no dream, but a most real truth,
That Junius Rusticus and Palphurius Sura,
Although their ashes were cast in the sea,
Were by their innocence made up again,
And in corporeal forms but now appear'd,
Waving their bloody swords above my head,
As at their deaths they threaten'd. And
methought,
Minerva, ravish'd hence, whisper'd that she
Was, for my blasphemies, disarm'd by Jove,
And could no more protect me. Yes, 'twas so,

[Thunder and lightning.]
His thunder does confirm it, against which,
How'er it spare the laurel, this proud wreath
Enter three Tribunes.

Is no assurance. Ha! come you resolved
To be my executioners?

1 Trib. Allegiance

And faith forbid that we should lift an arm
Against your sacred head.

2 Trib. We rather sue
For mercy.

3 Trib. And acknowledge that in justice
Our lives are forfeited for not performing
What Cæsar charged us.

1 Trib. Nor did we transgress it
In our want of will or care; for, being but
men,
It could not be in us to make resistance,
The gods fighting against us.

Cas. Speak, in what
Did they express their anger? we will hear it,
But dare not say, undaunted.

1 Trib. In brief thus, sir:
The sentence given by your imperial tongue,
For the astrologer Asclepius's death,
With speed was put in execution.

Cas. Well.

1 Trib. For, his throat cut, his legs bound,
and his arms
Pinion'd behind his back, the breathless trunk
Was with all scorn dragg'd to the field of
Mars,
And there, a pile being raised of old drywood,
Smeard o'er with oil and brimstone, or what else
Could help to feed or to increase the fire,
The carcass was thrown on it; but no sooner
The stuff, that was most apt, began to flame,
But suddenly, to the amazement of
The fearless soldier, a sudden flash
Of lightning, breaking through the scatter'd
clouds,
With such a horrid violence forced its passage,
And, as disdaining all heat but itself,
In a moment quench'd the artificial fire:
And before we could kindle it again,
A clap of thunder follow'd with such noise,
As if then Jove, incensed against mankind,
Had in his secret purposes determined
An universal ruin to the world.

This horror past, not at Deucalion's flood
Such a stormy shower of rain (and yet that
word is
Too narrow to express it) was e'er seen:
Imagine rather, sir, that with less fury
The waves rush down the cataracts of Nile;
Or that the sea, spouted into the air
By the angry Orc, endangering tall ships
But sailing near it, so falls down again.
Yet here the wonder ends not, but begins:
For, as in vain we labour'd to consume
The wizard's body, all the dogs of Rome,
Howling and yelling like to famish'd wolves.

I Trib. Come you resolved
And v.ith their eager fangs seized on the
carcass.

Assure me I am lost, since all

1 Trib. But have they torn it?

I Trib. Torn it, and devour'd it.

Cas. I then am a dead man, since all

Cas. But have they torn it?

1 Trib. Torn it, and devour'd it.

Cas. I then am a dead man, since all

predictions
Assure me I am lost. O, my loved soldiers,
Your emperor must leave you! yet, however
I cannot grant myself a short reprieve,
I freely pardon you. The fatal hour
Steals fast upon me: I must die this morning
By five, my soldiers; that's the latest hour
You e'er must see me living.

1 Trib. Jove avert it!

In our swords lies your fate, and we will

guard it.

Cas. But have they torn it?

1 Trib. Torn it, and devour'd it.

Cas. I then am a dead man, since all

predictions
Assure me I am lost. O, my loved soldiers,
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You e'er must see me living.

1 Trib. Jove avert it!

In our swords lies your fate, and we will

guard it.
Fathoming the earth; that would be styled
a God,
And is, for that presumption, cast beneath
The low condition of a common man,
Sinking with mine own weight.
1 Trib. Do not forsake
Yourself, we'll never leave you.
2 Trib. We'll draw up
More cohorts of your guard, if you doubt
treason.
Caes. They cannot save me. The offended
 gods,
That now sit judges on me, from their envy
Of my power and greatness here, conspire
against me.
1 Trib. Endeavour to appease them.
Caes. 'Twill be fruitless:
I am past hope of remission. Yet, could I
Decline this dreadful hour of five, these
terrors,
That drive me to despair, would soon fly
from me:
And could you but till then assure me—
1 Trib. Yes, sir;
Or we'll fall with you, and make Rome the urn
In which we'll mix our ashes.
Caes. 'Tis said nobly:
I am something comforted: howe'er, to die
Is the full period of calamity. [Exeunt.

SCENE II.—Another Room in the Palace.

Enter Parthenius, Domitia, Julia, Caenis,
Domitilla, Stephanos, Sejelus, and En-
tellus.

Parth. You see we are all condemn'd;
there's no evasion;
We must do, or suffer.
Steph. But it must be sudden;
The least delay is mortal.
Dom. Would I were
A man, to give it action!
Domitil. Could I make my approaches,
though my stature
Does promise little, I have a spirit as daring
As hers that can reach higher.
Steph. I will take
That burthen from you, madam. All the
art is,
To draw him from the tribunes that attend
him;
For, could you bring him but within my
sword's reach,
The world should owe her freedom from a
tyrant
To Stephanos.
Sej. You shall not share alone
The glory of a deed that will endure
To all posterity.
Ent. I will put in
For a part, myself.
Parth. Be resolv'd, and stand close.
I have conceived a way, and with the hazard
Of my life I'll practise it, to fetch him hither.
But then no trifling.
Steph. We'll dispatch him, fear not:
A dead dog never bites.
Parth. Thus then at all.
[Exit; the rest conceal themselves.

Enter Caesar and the Tribunes.

Caes. How slow-paced are these minutes!
in extremes,
How miserable is the least delay!
Could I imp feathers to the wings of time,
Or with as little ease command the sun
To scourge his coursers up heaven's eastern
hill,
Making the hour to tremble at, past re-
calling,
As I can move this dial's tongue to six;
My veins and arteries, emptied with fear,
Would fill and swell again. How do I look?
Do you yet see Death about me?
1 Trib. Think not of him;
There is no danger: all these prodigies
That do affright you, rise from natural causes;
And though you do ascribe them to yourself,
Had you ne'er been, had happened.
Caes. 'Tis well said,
Exceeding well, brave soldier. Can it be,
That I, that feel myself in health and
strength,
Should still believe I am so near my end,
And have my guards about me? perish all
Predictions! I grow constant they are false,
And built upon uncertainties.
1 Trib. This is right;
Now Caesar's heard like Caesar.
Caes. We will to
The camp, and having there confirm'd the
soldier
With a large donative, and increase of pay,
Some shall—I say no more.

Re-enter Parthenius.

Parth. All happiness,
Security, long life, attend upon
The monarch of the world!
Caes. Thy looks are cheerful.
Parth. And my relation full of joy and
wonder.
Why is the care of your imperial body,
My lord, neglected, the fear'd hour being
past,
In which your life was threaten'd?
Caes. Is't past five?
Parth. Past six, upon my knowledge; and, in justice, your clock-master should die, that hath de­ferr'd your peace so long. There is a post new lighted, that brings assured intelligence, that your legions in Syria have won a glorious day, and much enlarged your empire. I have kept him conceal'd, that you might first partake the pleasure in private, and the senate from yourself be taught to understand how much they owe to you and to your fortune.  

Caes. Hence, pale fear, then! Lead me, Parthenius.  

1 Trib. Shall we wait you?  

Caes. No. After losses guards are useful. Know your distance.  

[Exeunt Caesar and Parthenius.  

2 Trib. How strangely hopes delude men! as I live, the hour is not yet come.  

1 Trib. Howe'er, we are to pay our duties, and observe the sequel.  

[Exeunt Tribunes. Domitia and the rest come forward.  

Dom. I hear him coming. Be constant. 

Re-enter Caeser and Parthenius.  

Caes. Where, Parthenius, is this glad messenger? Steph. Make the door fast.—Here; a messenger of horror.  


Caes. Nay, then I am lost. Yet, though I am unarm'd, I'll not fall poorly. [Overthrows Stephanos.  

Steph. Help me.  

Ent. Thus, and thus! They stab Sej. Are you so long a falling?  

Caes. 'Tis done basely. [Falls, and dies. Parth. This for my father's death. Dom. This for my Paris. Jul. This for thy incest. Domitil. This for thy abuse of Domitilla. [They severally stab him. Tribunes. [within.] Force the doors!  

Enter Tribunes.  

O Mars! What have you done? Parth. What Romes shall give us thanks for. Steph. Dispatch'd a monster.  

1 Trib. Yet he was our prince, however wicked; and, in you, this murder,—Which whoso'er succeeds him will revenge: Nor will we, that serv'd under his command, consent that such a monster as thyself, for in thy wickedness Augusta's title hath quite forsok thee, thou, that wert the ground of all these mischiefs, shall go hence unpunish'd. Lay hands on her, and drag her to her sentence.—We will refer the hearing to the senate, who may at their best leisure censure you. Take up his body: he in death hath paid for all his cruelties. Here's the difference; good kings are mourn'd for after life; but ill, and such as govern'd only by their will, and not their reason, un lamented fall; no good man's tear shed at their funeral. [Exeunt; the Tribunes bearing the body of Cæsar.