

# *Eutychus & Eliza*

*The Second Coming as Dramatized for the Elizabethan Stage*

Bimillennial Preterist Association

*In that day the Lord with his sore and great and strong sword shall  
punish leviathan the piercing serpent, even leviathan that crooked  
serpent; and he shall slay the dragon that is in the sea.  
Isaiah 27:1*

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*The Destruction of Leviathan*

## Foreword

The following pages describe the historical events comprising the second coming of Christ, told dramatically in Elizabethan “blank verse” or “pentameter.” The story begins with the persecution under Nero and culminates in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Elizabethan pentameter is a form of poetic verse whose heightened language lends itself to subjects of especial moment. It is associated today most often with the works of William Shakespeare. In blank verse, each line consists of ten syllables, with the stress falling on the even numbered syllables. This accounts for the unusual word order sometimes required to adhere to its form and achieve its poetic rhythm and affect. About Strom Knidus, the author of this remarkable play, almost nothing is known. Its blank verse would seem to place it during the late English Reformation. There is no record of its production in English theatre. This is not surprising, given Knidus’ controversial interpretation of the Eschaton. Church authorities would almost certainly have suppressed it. Had the play been mounted four centuries ago, Christianity and the world today might have been radically different. Knidus seems to have worked from Biblical and primary sources from the first century Anno Domini. Where this is obvious and helpful, we have appended footnotes. - The Editorial Board

# Ettychus & Eliza

## Personae Dramatis

<b>Nero Caesar</b> , Emperor of Rome	<b>Paulinus</b> ,
<b>Poppaea Sabina</b> , Caesar's wife	<b>Procullus</b> , Advisors to Otho
<b>Otho</b> , Emperor of Rome	<b>Celsus</b> ,
<b>Vitellius</b> , Emperor of Rome	<b>Titianus</b> , Otho's brother
<b>Seneca</b> , Roman Senator and Tutor to Nero in his youth	<b>Agrippa II</b> , King of Chalcis
<b>Gallio</b> , Roman Senator, former Consul of Achaia	<b>Bernice</b> , Queen of Chalcis, Agrippa's sister
<b>Lucan</b> , Famous Roman poet and nephew of Gallio and Seneca,	<b>Darius</b> , Master of Agrippa's horse
<b>Barea</b> ,	<b>Phaon</b> , Nero's freedman
<b>Pactus</b> ,	<b>Epiphraditus</b> , Nero's secretary
<b>Natalis</b> ,	<b>Sporus</b> , Nero's catamite
<b>Scaevinus</b> , Roman Senators	<b>Annas, Son of Seth</b> ,
<b>Senecio</b> ,	<b>Jesus, Son of Gamaliel</b> , High Priests of the Jews
<b>Quintianus</b> ,	<b>Matthias Son of Theophilus</b>
<b>Tigellinus</b> , Captain of the Praetorian Guard	<b>Ismael</b> ,
<b>Pontius Pilate</b> , Procurator of the Jews	<b>Helcias</b> , Treasurer of Sacred Treasure - Roman Hostages & Instructors of Poppaea Sabina in Jewish Law and Custom
<b>Gessius Florus</b> , Procurator of the Jews during war	<b>John of Gischala</b> , Leader of the Galilean Rebels
<b>Marcus Antonius Julianus</b> , Procurator of Judea	<b>Manneus</b> , a defector from Jerusalem
<b>Flavius Vespasianus</b> , General and later Emperor of Rome	<b>Eutyclus</b> , a young man lately converted to Christ
<b>Titus Flavius</b> , Son of Vespasianus, General of Jewish war after father made Emperor	<b>Maiden</b> , a young woman, daughter to Lucellus
<b>Tiberius Alexander</b> , Commander under Titus of the Roman army	<b>Lucellus</b> , father to Maiden
<b>Larcus Lepidus</b> , Commander of the tenth legion	<b>Christ, the Lord</b>
<b>Sextus Cerealis</b> , Commander of fifth legion	Miscellaneous courtiers, soldiers, citizens, rebels
<b>Eternius</b> , Commander of two legions come from Alexandria	
	<b>Introduction</b>
	<i>Christ before Pilate</i>
	<i>Pilate</i> – What shall I do then with Jesus which is called Christ?
	<i>Mob</i> – Let him be crucified!
	<i>Pilate</i> – Why, what evil hath he done?
	<i>Mob</i> – Let him be crucified!
	<i>Pilate</i> – [Washing hands] I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to it!
	<i>Mob</i> – His blood be upon us and upon our children! His blood be upon us and upon our children! His blood be upon us and upon our children!
	Enter Tupper
	<i>Tupper</i> – Our play doth open with Nero in power, The Great Tribulation hath dawned in hour, Which Christ foretold when arrested, Before the Sanhedrim his divinity attested, That seated in his throne on high, He would come in clouds of the sky, <sup>1</sup> And when led out to Calvary The women he told 'Weep not for me, <sup>2</sup> If they do these things when green is the tree What shall be done unto the dry like thee? Behold, I send prophets whom ye shall stone and slay Yet vengeance shall have its day: Before their circuit through the land be done, The Son of Man will be come, <sup>3</sup> Before the last apostle hath died, Israel's end will have arrived. <sup>4</sup> When Jerusalem hath been destroyed by sword, Then all shall know that I am Christ the Lord. [Exeunt]
	<b>Act I</b>
	<b>Scene I</b>
	<i>Rome, Before the Imperial Palace</i>
	<i>Helcias</i> - Think thou that she will consent to move him?
	<i>Ismael</i> – Yea, methinks she will.
	<i>Helcias</i> – A deed unlike a woman's nature tis.
	<i>Ismael</i> – Woman's nature can be crueler than man's When after power she doth lust and grasp. In woman, ambition for power doth Destroy nature's stamp and confusion work. Mortifying her womanish instincts Given her for the nourishment of babes, She's turned like to a wolf with taste for blood. Dost not recall Queen Athaliah slew The royal seed to keep the throne herself, Although they were her very grandchildren? Woman therefore should not rule but be ruled.
	<i>Helcias</i> – Indeed, the law doth say no less.
	<i>Ismael</i> - When Nero she didst get to kill his wife, That she might thus be empress in her stead, Didst bid the head be brought that she should view it.
	<i>Helcias</i> – What, view the corpse's severed head?
	<i>Ismael</i> – Yea more, twas she didst goad Nero with taunts To kill his mother, chiding him that she Was lord of Rome and he a slavish boy Who covered 'neath his mother's angry eye. Nay, certain she'll not shrink from our errand;

<sup>1</sup> Matt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Rev. 1:7.

<sup>2</sup> Lk. 23:27-31.

<sup>3</sup> Matt. 10:23.

<sup>4</sup> Matt. 16:27, 28; Jno. 21:22.

This suited to her ambition.

*Helcias* – This well she is a religious woman<sup>5</sup>  
Else should we scruple to combine with her.

*Ismael* – An audience have we with the  
empress [handing writing to a palace  
servant].

*Servant* – I will escort you and see ye are  
announced. [Exeunt]

## Scene II

*A Chamber in Caesar's Palace*

Enter a lady in waiting.

*Lady* – Ye sent for me m' lady?

*Poppaea* – I expect important visitors soon,  
And require thy assistance to prepare.

*Lady* – Expectest thou some from the nobles,  
Ma'm?

*Poppaea* – Nay, but chief priests and leaders  
of the Jews.

*Lady* – Ah, the hostages from Jerusalem  
Retained by Caesar for good behavior  
Against the temple wall the Jews didst build?<sup>6</sup>

*Poppaea* – Speak not of them thus.  
They are my guests and counselors in law.  
There; is my veil arranged in proper form?

*Lady* – Yea, Ma'm, it lieth ever so nicely.

Enter servant-

*Servant* – M' lady, thy visitors have arrived.

*Poppaea* – Please, shew them in; leave us  
alone for now.

And see that we are not disturbed. [Exeunt]

Enter Helcias and Ismael

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<sup>5</sup> Notwithstanding her murders and intrigues, Josephus refers to Poppaea as a "religious woman," from which it is generally inferred she was a Jewish proselyte. Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX, viii, 11.  
<sup>6</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, XX, viii, 11.

A peg whereon they may their anger hang.

*Poppaea* – There is none upon whom blame  
may be placed  
Who would not say "Caesar bade m' do it."

*Ismael* – Not a person, but a people we've in  
mind.

There's a group of religious heretics,  
Small, but exceedingly irksome and hated.  
There is cause to believe the Roman people  
Would, if it meant their end, accept their  
guilt  
In place of Caesar's.

*Poppaea* – Where? Who? What people  
could so hated be?

*Ismael* – The Christians. They are hated by  
all men.

*Poppaea* – Ye of this sect have spoken to me  
oft.

*Ismael* – Paul of Taurus, acquitted by  
Caesar,<sup>7</sup>

Hath newly been arrested in Asia.

Against our law and temple he doth preach,  
And urgeth people Moses to forsake,  
Saying Christ will change the law and  
customs;

He says the temple soon shall be destroyed.<sup>8</sup>  
For these heresies, Paul should surely die.  
If Caesar could be persuaded to slay –

*Poppaea* – Caesar doth require something  
different,  
Grounds that the Roman people would  
approve.

The Jewish nation's hatred for this sect  
Is known throughout the Roman Empire.

If what ye suggest is to find approval,

Rome must seem to act in its own interest,

Not settle a private account for Jews.

Besides, if Paul were slain this very night,

This would not end the followers of Christ.

*Helcias* – Paul doth teach a coming day of  
great wrath.

A time of tribulation for all men,

When men's secrets will be declared by fire,

A great conflagration that will devour

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<sup>7</sup> II Tim. 3:16, 17.

<sup>8</sup> Acts 21:28; cf. 6:14; Matt. 24:1-3.

This age and give birth unto a new world.  
So Christians teach throughout the whole empire.

*Ismael* – The Christians for the most are poor and  
slaves,

Classes that harbor resentment and envy.

It is the wounded animal that strikes

Irrationally at the one helping it.

Who would be more likely to fire Rome

And strike at Caesar than the poor and slaves?

*Helcias* – The Roman masses relish the games  
much

And find diversion in the blood and gore.

Let the punishment of the Christians be

A spectacle the masses to amuse

And take their minds from all their many woes

And Caesar will they worship and adore.

*Ismael* – Their suffering a balm will soon become  
To sooth the people's wounds.

*Poppaea* – The branches wither when the root is  
cut.

The Nazarene hath been long time been deceased;

The Christians like sticks should be brought and

burned.

As ye suggest so will I undertake,

And Caesar move to root out this new sect.

Died Christ that Jew and Gentile might forever

live?

Die Christians dominion Caesar and Jewry to  
give!

## Scene III

*Rome, Catacombs*

*Christians assembled, chanting*

The Lord will come, the day is soon,

The Man of Sin he will consume.<sup>9</sup>

His enemies shall flee apace,

And be ashamed for his face.

Leviathan he shall slay!<sup>10</sup>

The night of sin be turned to day!<sup>11</sup>

Death shall yield up its hoard

And man shall live forever more.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> I/2., Nero Caesar; II Thess. 2:1-8

<sup>10</sup> Isa. 27:1; Rom. 16:20

<sup>11</sup> Rom. 13:12

<sup>12</sup> Rev. 20:11-15

The earth with fire shall be made new,  
The Mount of Olives cleave in two,  
His feet upon the earth shall stand,<sup>13</sup>  
And his blood of them demand.<sup>14</sup>

The Bridegroom comes, heed his call,  
Babylon the Great shall fall.<sup>15</sup>  
A footstool his enemies will be,<sup>16</sup>  
His retribution on all men see.<sup>17</sup>

Man to God will be restored,  
And Christ forevermore be Lord.  
Heavenly Jerusalem will descend,  
And the dwelling of God be with men.<sup>18</sup>  
A-men.

*Leader* – Beloved, I received news this day  
that our Linus hath been seized and is held  
prisoner. With him, five families were  
arrested; the children too were seized. All are  
condemned to die in the arena. Let us pray  
that their faith fail not, though they be cruelly  
tried and tested. The Lord hath said that the  
day of his coming will be revealed by fire;  
fire will test each of us and shew what sort  
we be, whether we have root or no.<sup>19</sup> We  
must watch and pray.

*I<sup>st</sup> Member* – Soft, I hear footsteps.

Enter, Eutyclus [rushes in]

*Eutyclus* – Eliza hath been seized with her  
parents  
And family!

*I<sup>st</sup> Member* – No! Not Eliza! Ye hoped to be  
married in spring, did ye not?

*2d Member* - Roman law doth not permit  
virgins to suffer the penalty of death; maids  
like Eliza are violated by their Roman guards  
before being led out to be torn of famished  
beasts or burnt alive whilst crucified.

*Eutyclus* – Bumt? Crucified?!

<sup>13</sup> Zech. 12:4

<sup>14</sup> Matt. 27:25

<sup>15</sup> Rev. 16:19; 18

<sup>16</sup> I Cor. 15:25; Heb. 2:8; Rom. 16:20

<sup>17</sup> Rev. 1:7

<sup>18</sup> Rev. 21:3

<sup>19</sup> I Cor. 3:13; Matt. 13:21

*3d Member* – Strength man, do not despair. Who  
knoweth whether God may yet deliver her?

*Eutyclus* – If I should hope Eliza would be  
spared,

Yet, I could not believe; It is not reason.

Whoever going into the arena  
Came out alive but such as Christ renounced?  
Eliza Christ will not renounce, therefore  
She will not be spared. Nay, it is certain  
She is lost to me forever. And I,  
Whither shall I go? ‘Twere better to die  
Than without Eliza live!

*2d Member* – ‘Tis a sin to speak such. Thou must  
accept God’s plan for Eliza. Eliza’s life is Christ’s  
to use for his own glory and purpose. All of  
earthly life is fleeting, it matters not how we die or  
when, only that we be found in Christ. Give God  
glory that Eliza hath been chosen to glorify him in  
death

*Eutyclus* – Give thou glory to him, for I cannot!  
[Exit]

*I<sup>st</sup> Member* – Someone go after him, he may do  
himself a harm in the state he is in. [Member exit]

*3d Member* – The whole world doth groan under  
Rome’s iron sceptre. Is there none to overthrow  
this tyranny?

*Leader* – Brother, hearken to me. God saved his  
people out of Egypt and will pluck us out of Nero’s  
hand. Verily, his day will come. What are we that  
Nero should hate us? It is not us the emperor  
rageth against, but our Lord and his doctrine.  
Though our bodies be torn of beasts, we know that  
Christ preserveth our souls, which no man can  
touch, and will clothe us anew with incorruptible  
bodies in the resurrection. Be patient; the coming of  
the Lord draweth nigh.<sup>20</sup>

Reenter, Member

*Leader* – Didst find Eutyclus?

*Member* – Nay, I did not.

*Leader* – I fear Satan hath desired to sift our dear  
brother. I entreat ye gentle folk, keep young  
Eutyclus near in prayer.

## Scene IV

*A street in Rome*

*Enter, Eutyclus*

*Eutyclus* – This black, incommodious night  
doth storm

And shew the elements in disarray.

The organizing principle of earth and

Foundations of creation are all fled.

All is in rebellion and disorder;

Earth’s primal darkness swalloweth life’s

light;

Love hath withdrawn from earth and chaos

reigns.

Winds scream and tempests blast; the cruel

cold

Of north doth stab at man with icy rain.

Like needles piercing sore his feeble flesh,

Making him cringe and cower like a cur

‘gainst nature’s elements, telling anew

The sad estate of Adam’s fallen sons,

Who live in banishment on earth below,

Estranged from God and heaven’s saving

grace.

Thou sky that lightnings flash and thunders

sound,

Amazing me with terror, dread, and fright,

Look thou upon my low estate and see

That I am frail, weak, and nearly spent.

Thou that with glacial winds dost scream

and blow,

Congaling streams with ice that waters bear

Like blood in veins of earth, which course

and flow,

Try not me with thy cold blasts and rending

storms.

The elements of this my mortal frame,

Knit in frail fixed form unchanging,

Cannot blow and bid the oaken tree bend,

But being flesh, am weak and soon

dissolved.

Yea, threaten me no more, for thou hast

won;

Declare thy terms, I shall concede thee all.

Eliza, my love, thou art all pleasant.

Like summer zephyrs upon twilight slopes

That rustle the sweet grass of yonder fields,

That swoons beneath the warm breeze’ fond

caress.

How terrible my love for thee hath turned;

Like this haughty and tempestuous night!

Thou wast all of life to me who doth wait

In prison cold and dank thy death to meet.

O God, wherefore dost thou requite me thus?  
[Exit]

## Scene V

*Rome, Gallio’s Villa*

*Enter Lucan*

*Gallio* – Ah, Lucan, my nephew. Come, see this  
mantis.

*Lucan* – Yea, such strange creature have I oft  
observed.

From childhood I do remember them.

*Gallio* – Ah, then thou dost know her hypocrisy;  
How piously she folds her arms in prayer,  
Only to catch prey and devour her mate.

*Lucan* – I blame her not so much for catching  
prey,

But am disturbed she doth consume her mate.

Let us hope Roman wives learn not from her

Or men will perish soon from Italy.

Ah, but look, here is uncle Seneca.

Enter Seneca

*Gallio* – Welcome, my brother.

*Seneca* – Lucan, Gallio, how are you both?

*Lucan* – Well, mine uncle, well.

*Seneca* – What is it ye watch in such earnest  
there?

*Gallio* – ‘Tis a mantis I was shewing Lucan.

*Seneca* – *Insectum mirum*. One of nature’s  
marvels.

*Gallio* - It seemeth me the Jews are like this  
mantis.

*Lucan* – Like the Jews? How so?

*Gallio* - Their hands are folded piously in prayer  
But are polluted with the blood of men.  
When Rome was burned all men didst Caesar  
blame.

The Jews to Caesar didst propose the Christians  
As they on whom should be placed Caesar’s guilt.

Thus, Caesar burned Rome and Rome  
burneth Christians.  
Whilst Claudius the kingdom's keys didst  
hold,<sup>21</sup>  
He gave command that all Jews Rome  
depart<sup>22</sup>  
For their attacks upon the sect of Christians.<sup>23</sup>  
Like a boar that hath in a pit been caught,  
Jewish persecution was thus restrained and  
The mystery of lawlessness was bound,<sup>24</sup>  
Then Nero loosed the beast from its pitfall<sup>25</sup>  
And Paul, whom I refused to try, hath now  
Unjustly been slain.<sup>26</sup>

*Lucan* – Dost thou defend the Christians,  
good mine uncle?

*Gallio* - A foolish superstition tis perhaps,  
But Rome is host to many that are worse.  
What is more, its members are virtuous.  
Their wives and daughters are both pure and  
chaste;  
Divorce among them is all but unknown.  
Those that are free work hard at honest  
trades;  
The rest are loyal servants to their masters.  
There is no criminality in them.

*Seneca* – Against my will I was forced to  
attend  
The burning of one thousand Christians live  
In Nero's gardens. I didst marvel then<sup>27</sup>  
That men and women of such mean estate  
Should, with such nobleness, endure torments  
And did not rather faith in Christ renounce.  
It seemed to me the firmest proof of their  
Complete innocence of all wrong doing.  
The vicious lack resolve and moral courage  
To rise above the vicissitudes of life,  
But cringe and cower 'neath life's  
misfortunes.

*Lucan* – The Christians thou dost praise for  
their resolve  
In holding fast their faith e'en unto death.

Yet, doth thy Stoic philosophy teach  
Men to escape life's troubles by self-slaughter.  
In this dost thou not thyself contradict?  
If good men shrink from moral struggle by  
Self-slaughter, how shall virtue be advanced?

*Seneca* – E'en scorpions when compassed by fire  
Themselves do sting; why should not men the  
same?  
I cannot see how virtue is the worse  
If men die not the better.

*Lucan* – Nay, but thou art wrong; in affairs of men  
The manner of our dying doth attest  
To what we are and what we do believe.  
The moral power of our convictions  
Is seen in the hold they take of our souls.  
Men do not die for what they know is wrong,  
But gladly suffer for the good and right.  
Self-slaughter therefore doth bespeak some want  
In man of life's sustaining principle;  
A moral debasement and rotteness  
That makes a man unequal to the day,  
Causing him to abandon his due post,  
And flee before the storm of darker times.  
Thou didst say as much when thou saidst the  
vicious  
Lack moral courage to rise above wrong.  
What dost thou say, uncle? [to Gallio]

*Gallio* – An old song to a new tune doth contain  
Parts that repel and attract, so thy plea  
Hath parts that both inspire and that disturb.  
Only this do I know, that Rome of late  
Hath lost her best and greatest citizens  
To suicide by the informant's craft.

*Seneca* – 'Tis that their fortunes might remain intact  
And pass to their kin that men make large gifts  
And flatter Caesar in their wills before  
Opening their own veins to kill themselves.  
Lest, they falsely of treason be condemned  
Or practicing magical arts against  
The emperor, their whole estates escheat  
To Caesar and his lying informants.  
Who can condemn such care for family?

*Lucan* – Now is the ancient Roman valor dead  
And Christians promoted to the world's head  
When truth and self are slain  
That kin in comfort may remain.

Enter servant, speaks privately to Gallio

*Gallio* – I am informed of business I must needs

*Leader* – Thou didst well, brother; I doubt not but  
that thou art right. Eliza lives and reigns with  
Christ in Paradise,<sup>29</sup> she is past suffering and  
beyond the cares of life. Let us commit the body  
of our dear sister to the earth and her spirit to the  
Lord. [Reads]

We that are in this mortal frame,  
In house of clay not long remain,  
Shadows lengthen, sun doth wane,  
Dust to dust doth soon obtain,  
Earth her sons must reclaim.

Beloved, we – [Enter Eutyclus] Eutyclus!  
What? Where hast thou been these many days?  
We sought thee every whither and feared ye'd  
done yourself a harm.

*Eutyclus* – Call me not Eutyclus, for I'm not he;  
A stranger to myself I am become.  
Pray tell, neighbor, whose course is there laid out?

*Leader* – It is Eliza.

*Eutyclus* – Eliza? Yea, I did hear word of it.  
This kindness ye do well to shew the dead;  
I give thee thanks. I pray thee, gentle friend,  
Do me the kindness as to leave us 'lone  
Before her body in the vault is sealed.

*Leader* – Of course; the office may wait. But  
what of thee, thou 'lt return to the fold, I trust; thy  
absence from us is but temporary, is it not?

*Eutyclus* – Nay, friend, I do not think I'll soon  
return.  
Was she burnt?

*Leader* – For her fair beauty she was spared  
burning but was stripped and crucified before the  
mob.

*Eutyclus* - Alack! Her torments pierce me  
through and through.  
Prithce, leave us. [Exeunt]

Didst think I would not come, my sweet, to bid  
thee sad farewell?  
Nay, thou knewest hither I would fly, a last time  
my love for thee to tell.  
Thine every part was poetry, nowhere was there  
flaw,  
Comely were thy proportions, beauty all thy law.

<sup>29</sup> Rev. 20:4-6; cf. Rev. 14:13.

<sup>28</sup> Lat. "Bronze-beard;" a term of  
contumely used of Nero.

<sup>21</sup> Rev. 20:1; cf. II Thess. 2:6, 7

<sup>22</sup> Acts 18:2

<sup>23</sup> Suetonius, *Claudius*, XXV, 4

<sup>24</sup> II Thess. 2:7

<sup>25</sup> Rev. 20:7; cf. 11:7; 17:8

<sup>26</sup> Acts 18:12-17

<sup>27</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, XV, xlii

Thou wast a tempest of wind and rain; I was lightning and thunder,  
Naught save death of all earth's powers,  
could rend our love asunder.

What dost thou in this gloomy vault beneath  
the shades of death,  
Where nor light nor heat doth abide, nor  
aught that draweth breath?  
Within these dark, dank walls naught but  
mildew breeds,  
And upon all that cometh here, rottenness  
doth feed.

Like the prison of Tartarus for the sons of  
Seth which fell,<sup>30</sup>  
This foul and fulsome hole seemeth like the  
very throat of hell.  
O that this loathed habitation thou mightst up  
and flee apace,  
And amongst the living again resume thy  
place.

I had thought to see us wed, my sweet, thee in  
gown and veil adorned,  
Whence comes it that, in this dread place  
thou art wept and mourned?  
The dreams and hopes of a lifetime nursed,  
gone without a trace,  
Disappointment 'tis appointed man in  
Death's grinning face.  
The marriage bed, soft caresses, drowsy love  
awakened,  
Envious Mortality one and all hath taken.

Ye ruling orbs, which from creation's dawn  
fixed course do run,  
By whose ceaseless cycles man numbereth  
his life beneath the sun,  
Ye stars that in the heavens bum bright,  
Look down upon us sons of Adam and  
commiserate our plight!  
Men are not like ye that endure endless ages  
long.

But are as a spark that bumeth for a moment  
and forever then are gone.  
Did thy guards find amusement to have thee  
in thy power?  
Did by turns they each east lots, that thee they  
might deflower?  
Did they with loathsome kisses defile the  
temple of thy mouth?  
Did they upon enforced bed by turn their lust  
debauch?

How was it when thy secret parts were discovered  
to vulgar eye?  
When cruel nails pierced thy hands and feet, didst  
aloud thou cry?

How long upon thy cross did thine agonies endure?  
Didst thou long for death to come thy torments for  
to cure?

Now thy pains are o'er, thine eyes in sleep eternal  
sealed,

Thy spirit lives a thousand years in Elysium's  
happy fields.<sup>31</sup>  
Like restless purgatorial spirit, whose sins must be  
atoned,<sup>32</sup>  
With broken heart in disconsolate breast, I wonder  
earth alone.  
Strings of pearls are the tears that from mine eyes  
distill,  
Till the measure of my life shall have reached its  
fill.

Thou King seated upon heaven's throne,  
Who all things sees and all things knows,

<sup>31</sup> "Elysium" was the name give by Greeks and Romans to Hades Paradise, where it was believed that the spirits of the dead sojourned a thousand years. St. John, who wrote to the Greek and Latin speaking people of Asia Minor, appears to allude to this when he says the martyrs under Nero would live and reign with Christ a thousand years in the "first resurrection." Reference to a thousand-year reign in the afterlife assisted readers in interpreting the first resurrection as a symbol of the soul's rest in the timeless realm of Hades, where one day is as a thousand years and a thousand years as a day (Ps. 90:4; II Pet. 3: 8); it was intended to strengthen the confessor's against the coming persecution, in which many would suffer death. (Rev. 20:4-6; cf. Rev. 14:13; Plato, *Republic*, Bk. X, 315-320; cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. VI, 734-769.)

<sup>32</sup> The notion of purgatory is distinctly Greek and Roman and has no source in the Bible. It found its way into the Christian church through pagan converts. Evidence of this is nowhere more apparent than Dante's *Divine Comedy*, in which Dante is led on a tour of Hades by Virgil, the Roman poet. Dante's description is a Christianized account of the afterlife that makes wholesale appropriation of Greek and Roman conceptions, including purgatory, the river Acheron, and Charon, the ferryman who conveys souls to the other side. (Cf. Virgil, *Aeneid*, Bk. VI, lines 235-769)

And doth all ordain and all dispose,  
Thou whom mortal sorrows cannot touch,  
It ill becometh thee to afflict men such.

Cruelly she died; dissolute I henceforth live,  
And to dissipation and riot myself now give.  
These sad events and this mournful place,  
Wine and libation will from thought erase.  
Die Eutyclus, another man become;  
From memory of these dread events now  
run.  
[Kisses forehead, exit]

## Act II

### Scene I

#### Rome, Imperial Palace

Nero – Who dares these slanders scrawl  
against our person?  
I want them found and punished!

*Praetorian* – The vandals write the  
messages at night.  
It is impossible to predict where  
They will appear else we would catch them,  
sire.

Enter Petronius

Nero – Incompetence; I tire of excuses!

*Praetorian* – I will see that the spies are  
doubled, sire.

Nero - If thou canst not produce results,  
another

Shall I find who can. Now get out! [Exit,  
Praetorian]

*Petronius* – More *graffiti*, divine emperor?

Nero – The people are weeds that make rank  
my garden.  
Would that I might pluck them hence one  
and all.

I have a mind to loose the soldiers on them  
That gratitude they might learn for our  
kindness.

*Petronius* – For which of thy many  
kindnesses, sire?

Nero – Why, naturally, for them all, of course.  
The taste and refinement we bring to Rome;  
Our golden palace and our voice divine.

*Petronius* - I fear the common herd hath little  
taste

For the delights of the immortal gods,  
But content is to lick up grass and herbs  
Like cattle, sheep, and goats.

Nero – Well art thou called *arbiter elegantium*;  
What doth the vulgar herd know of good taste?

Petronius – It is the lot of gods to bear with men  
Like the herdsman doth his cattle.

Nero – Yea, Petronius, I think thou art right.

A god should bear with much long-suffering  
Men who are our inferiors in all things.

Little wonder I am misunderstood.

I am now called an incendiary,

A matricide, a jockey, and a beast;

I'm faulted with my wife's and brother's murder.

My sensitive side they don't understand.

I am an artist and a musician.

If I seem brutal 'tis the burdens of

The state that greatly weigh upon me so.

An artist should not suffer as I do.

I wish all Rome had but a single throat

That I might cut it and be freed of them,

And so escape to Greece where I could sing

Upon the stage and be adored.

*Petronius* – I doubt it not, mine emperor.

Enter Tigellinus, whispers to Nero

Nero - Petronius, do thou excuse us, please;  
I have important matters to attend.

Petronius – Of course, most gracious Caesar.  
[Exit]

*Tigellinus* – The freedwoman Epicharis hath died  
Under examination, m' lord.

Nero – Did she say anything before she died?  
Have the conspirators been discovered?  
Out with it man, Speak!

*Tigellinus* – Nay, but nary a word did she e'er  
speak.

Nero – How many know that she is dead?

<sup>30</sup> II Pet. 2:4; Gen. 6:1-4.

*Tigellinus* – We only who are in this room, m' lord.

*Nero* – Good, good! Let no man know that she is dead.  
A trap shall we try to set for our prey.  
Give out rumor that she informant turned.  
Make some arrests among the senators.  
Perhaps the fox can from the brush be scared.  
Report as soon as anything doth occur.  
Now leave us. I grow weary and must rest.

*Tigellinus* – Ay, m' lord. [Exeunt severally]

## Scene II

*Rome, Villa of Scaevinus*

Enter Scaevinus, Natalis, Quintianus, and Senecio.

*Scaevinus* – There have arrests been made of senators.

It is almost certain that Epiclaris  
Didst under torture break and turn informant.

*Natalis* – How do we know she hath informed? have there  
Any of our party been put in chains?

*Senecio* – Nay, I know not any.

*Natalis* – I went to Lucan's home today and didst  
Not find him any wither and was seized  
By a certain dark foreboding that we  
Were under grave risk and imminent peril.

*Senecio* – Certain tis if Lucan was arrested  
All Rome wouldst have heard. I think twas  
but chance  
He was not then at home.

*Quintianus* – Why then were the senators arrested?  
Dost think she didst give false information  
To be avenged upon some private quarrel  
With her own enemies?

*Scaevinus* – Yea, methinks she did this and warns us too,  
That by these arrests we might learn our danger  
And move to save ourselves whilst we still can.

Of those involved in the conspiracy?

*Nero* – Let them die this very night.

*Tigellinus* – And what of Seneca, m' lord?

*Nero* – I take great satisfaction in his death  
For I hate him; but for appearance' sake,  
We grant that he may open his own veins;  
But let not perish with him Paulina;  
We would deprive him comfort of his wife's  
Companionship in death.

*Tigellinus* – And Lucan?

*Nero* – Our clemency doth permit that he open  
His veins himself and die by his own hand;  
If not, then let his head be struck clean off.  
Before the senate tomorrow we'll lay  
This plot against our life and for our throne.  
[Exeunt]

## Scene IV

*Rome, A Street at Night*

*Barea* – Ho such a one; I wouldst speak unto thee.

*Paetus* – What, who is there, friend or foe?

*Barea* – Peace, Paetus, tis I, Barea.

*Paetus* – Barea, thou didst give me a start.

*Barea* – Forgive me, I meant not to startle thee;  
Turn thou aside here I would speak with thee.

*Paetus* – What dost thou by thyself in black of night?

*Barea* – Looking for thee, Paetus; thou wast not home.  
But peace; tis safer here than at thy home  
Amidst servants that would their freedom buy  
With our heads to the emperor.

*Paetus* – Indeed, the times are dangerous, my friend.

*Barea* – Rome's greatest men and senators hath Nero

Caused to die or to commit suicide:

Lucan, Seneca, and Lateranus

The plot to kill Ahenobarbus hath

License turned to purge all of Caesar's foes.

The streets of Rome almost do daily witness

The funerals of political victims,

And them slain from envy or for their wealth.

*Paetus* – Yea, tis much like the days when Augustus,

Antony, and Lepidus divided

The world betwixt them and proscriptions wrote

Against all them whom they did fear or hate

And caused one hundred senators to die,

Among them Cicero the great.

*Barea* – I have been sickened to see men whose sons

Have falsely been slain, kiss the hands of Nero

And offer thanks to the immortal gods

For the safety of the emperor's life,

Fearing, lest if they mourned their own son's

deaths,

They should themselves accused be.

*Paetus* – Rome's wealth hath bred vice and made her core rot.

She is like an apple that outwardly

Appeareth whole, but hath a worm within.

Twere better we were tributary to

Another nation than be ruled by vice

And greed and live in abject tyranny

Where men their knees do bend and fawn upon

Him whose hands are bathed with their own son's

blood.

*Barea* – Yea, Comfort is the god that ruleth men's hearts

And doth make cowards of their consciences.

Where now is Caesar? I didst hear he fled

The pestilence to Antium.

*Paetus* – Yea, he didst fly unto his villa there.

Thirty thousand hath perished from the plague,

But not hath deigned the gods that Caesar be one.

*Barea* – The plague and Nero know each other well,

Both are sent from the very pit of hell

To visit death on Rome and Italy.

Twould be unfit if one destroy the other.

What news of Campania?

*Paetus* – The whirlwind destroyed whole villages,  
And many crops; great famine hath ensued.

*Barea* – I tell thee, Paetus, I do fear for Rome.  
Attempted outbreak of gladiators,  
The navy dashed amain, by storm destroyed,  
Lightning in numbers heretofore unknown,  
Unnatural births in both man and beast,  
Two-headed embryos cast out in public,  
Or found in sacrifices of pregnant victims.  
In Placentia there was born a calf,  
Whose leg grotesquely grown into its head,  
The soothsayers didst claim foretold coming  
Disasters in public affairs abroad.<sup>33</sup>  
Hath we angered the gods? What mean these  
progenies?

*Paetus* – There are among the servants of my  
house  
Some members of the sect called after Christ  
Of their sect; and I in part believe it.  
If he could he would slay virtue itself.

*Barea* – Paetus, dost know that our names are  
enrolled  
On Nero's list of enemies to die?

*Paetus* – Yea, old friend, tis almost certain.  
But I fear not to die.

*Barea* – Nor I, but I like not to die accused  
Of crimes I didst neither commit nor ponder.  
Tis bitter to die falsely.

*Paetus* – Indeed, it is; yet can we bravely die  
With honor and depart this life in virtue.  
That much is in our power, Barea.  
Nero can slay me but cannot harm me.

*Barea* – Indeed, that much to us doth  
appertain.  
Although small consolation it afford,  
Let us be constant thereunto.

*Paetus* – The gods grant better times in days  
to come.  
Good night, friend Barea, good night.

*Barea* – Yea, Paetus, I bid thee fare well;  
good night. [Exeunt]

## Scene V

*Rome, a tavern.*

Enter Eutyclus

*Tavern keeper* – Look ye merry mates, 'tis our  
Eutyclus; didst not I tell you he wouldst come?  
How now, Eutyclus, thou art late tonight and didst  
make us think thou wouldst not come.

*Eutyclus* – Didst have thee worried did I? Well,  
fear not.

Here I be to make merry with m' mates.  
Give me wine, Keeper, for my throat is dry  
And we shall sing, laugh, and rejoice our hearts.

*Patrons* – Yea, sing us a song, Euty. Make light  
our hearts. There is none like thee to give us  
laughter.

*Eutyclus* – What? Would ye have me sing whilst  
yet my throat is dry?

Cruel friends are ye to sore abuse me thus.  
But I shall have my just retribution, 'tis sure,  
For I shall sing most poor tonight indeed,  
Like a rooster being plucked I will crow  
Till ye buy me drink just to fill my mouth  
And stop my voice from its accursed sound.

*Patrons* – Nay, but thou must sing, for we have  
looked for thee these few hours.

*Eutyclus* – Didst wait for me? Indeed, now am I  
touched

And protest that ye fight not fair and square,  
To pluck the stings of mine heart thus, and make  
Mine eyes fountains, weeping women's salt tears.  
Hear, then, a most sad and mournful ballad. [Sings]

T'was a man who lived at Millwaters,  
Who had five fat and fulsome daughters.  
T'was tormented the miller's mind  
When husbands they could not find.  
Their mother with tears did overflow,  
While the daughters fatter did grow,  
Till finally one day they didst burst.  
And what made matters still worse  
The blast retouted the mill's waters!

*I<sup>st</sup> Patron* – Now it is thee that dost not fight fair,  
breakin' our hearts with sad and mournful songs,  
who look to thee for merriment! [Laughter]

*2d Patron* – Sing us another song, Euty.

sapphire; and her hair glistened like it was spun  
with opals, it did. Ah, that was a beauty, that one  
was.

*I<sup>st</sup> Soldier* – Fairest in all Rome, I dare say. Yea,  
the Emperor himself took notice of her, he did.  
She only of them that were crucified he ordered  
not to be burnt; but to leave her naked so as all  
could admire her beauty.

*Eutyclus* – What? When? What say, ye? Speak,  
man; when was this?

*I<sup>st</sup> Soldier* – 'T was a long time ago, man; afore  
the Saturnalia last, it was.

*Eutyclus* – Saturnalia, didst say? Wast crucified  
Uncovered, didst say? What was her name, man?  
Speak!

*I<sup>st</sup> Soldier* – Her name? I don't be recallin' her  
name.

*2d Soldier* – Methinks 'twas Eliza; why, what is it  
to thee that thou dost threaten thus?

*Eutyclus* – Therefore shall ye die; she was my  
betrothed. [Draws]

*2d Soldier* – Return thy sword to its place lest I  
strike off thy head; we touched not the maid  
[Drawing].

*Eutyclus* – Nay, but thou didst confess with thy  
own mouth.

[They fight; Eutyclus is smitten.]

*Eutyclus* – I am slain! [Exit]

*2d Soldier* – [To patrons] We touched not the  
maid, I swear. We were among them that did but  
guard the crowds, not them that crucified her. On  
our word, we never touched her.

*I<sup>st</sup> Soldier* – He drew on us, ye all saw it; we are  
innocent of his blood. 'T was he that drew; we  
touched not the maid. [Exeunt]

## Scene VI

*A street in Rome*

Enter Eutyclus

<sup>33</sup> Tacitus, *Annals*, XLVI-XL VII

*Eutyclus* - I bleed apace; life's crimsoned flood doth ebb  
 And flow away, my soul stranding high  
 Upon the littered shore of ruined hopes,  
 Like a jellyfish cast upon the sand.  
 My wound doth gape and smile like Death's grin.  
 My heart is gone; cold invadeth my limbs;  
 Death's chill shadow enfoldeth like a shroud.  
 Fast cometh Death's grim ferryman to convey  
 My soul whence none doth return again.  
 Now doth the crimsoned sun sink low and night  
 Begin to draw her purple veil across the sky,  
 Making chill the air with Death's icy hand;  
 Earth's warm breath into vapor doth distill;  
 Mists rise like ghostly figures up from hell,  
 Spirits denied rest in death for the sins  
 Committed in their earthly lives; condemned  
 To haunt the night till morning light doth break  
 And dissipate their insubstantial forms.  
 Now satyrs dance and jackals hunt for prey  
 Whilst hyenas their laughter raise aloud,  
 Offspring of chaos and disorder bred,  
 Whom nature hath foresworn and doth abhor;  
 Loathsome things that creep among the shadows,  
 Shrinking from light  
 Lest their misshapen forms appear,  
 And goodly things affright.  
 How I have erred and played the fool greatly,  
 And been like creatures that do haunt the night,  
 Drinking and carousing 'neath shades of dark,  
 Concealed from heaven's disapproving eye.  
 The wages of my sin do I now reap,  
 And pay with all I possess its sore price.  
 What terrors doth my punishment hold store?  
 'Tis said there are within the bowels of hell  
 Fearful torments prepared for souls of men;  
 That each sin hath its special place assigned  
 Where men receive their just deserts in full:  
 The tyrant and the usurer are there;  
 The cutpurse and the catamite also,  
 Cowards, drunkards, them that at heaven  
 mocked,  
 Thieves, robbers, cheats and frauds, harlots  
 and bawds  
 All suffer in proportion to their fault:  
 Brimstone and sulfurous exhalations,  
 Torments of fire and scourge of whip and chain,

And things from which the mind doth shrink in fear.  
 O God, let not my sins be counted up  
 Nor my sweet soul be numbered with that troop.  
 Forgive my sin before this life I part.  
 I would not live always amidst life's woe;  
 Its countless griefs upon my shoulders heaped  
 Like stripes upon the back of erring fools.  
 'Tis well to die and so escape mine ills,  
 This vile life whose lustre hath been lost,  
 Where joy hath fled and sorrows make their home.  
 Die Eutyclus, to oblivion descend;  
 So life long torment shall find an end!  
 [Collapses]

**Act III**  
**Scene I**

*Caesarea, Palace of the Governor*

*Enter, Cestius and Gessius Florus*

*Cestius* - Judaea is a refractory province.  
 In all the world there are none so hard  
 To govern as these fanatical Jews.  
 They must be ruled with strength, but also fairness.  
 They are a conquered people and nation  
 And cannot but resent all Romans sorely.  
 The more so if they rule with cruelty  
 And are extortionate in their exactions.  
*Florus* - Yea, I know the resentment they bear  
 toward  
 Their rulers and the slanders they heap on them.  
 I warrant thee their complaints are groundless;  
 They have made like charges against every  
 Procurator sent hither to rule them;  
 Felix, Festus, Albinus, and Florus;  
 The names change but the charges are the same.  
*Cestius* - I detest the Jews as much as any,  
 And care little how thou dost govern them,  
 So long as they their tribute pay on time  
 And at peace under Roman rule remain.  
 Their nation hath near Caesar Poppaea,  
 A proselyte of the Jew's religion,  
 Who undertakes the nation's cause with Caesar.  
 If they should send an embassy to Rome,  
 Thou dost risk Caesar's displeasure with thee.  
 And I would not that thou shouldst Caesar cross.  
 Do thou therefore ease somewhat thy rigor  
 And be conciliatory with them.  
 Then shall they well serve thee profitably  
 Like an ox accustomed unto the yoke.

*Florus* - I thank thee for thy advice, as always  
 Thy counsel and instruction will I heed.  
*Cestius* - Good. When thou comest into Syria,  
 Thou must dine with my lovely wife and I.  
 We yearn much for Roman society.  
*Florus* - I look forward to it with much pleasure.  
*Cestius* - Fare thee well. Keep me informed of things here. [Exit]  
*Gessius Florus* - Now hath these Jews my good repaid with evil.  
 Ten thousand of their murders did I wink at,  
 Suffering them to kill by Roman law  
 Whomsoever they accused as Christians.  
 Perfidious and thankless wretches they!  
 Dare they complain to Cestius that I  
 With too much rigor govern their vile nation,  
 And bid me rule with greater mildness?  
 Were they sheep I might tenderly shepherd them,  
 But being poisonous things which bite and sting,  
 Cannot with hand of man be touched or held,  
 But must be ruled with implement of iron.  
 Occasion against the Jews shall I now find  
 And mine enemies to powder grind.  
 A friend heretofore I myself did show,  
 Now shall I be their avowed foe!  
 Servant!  
 Enter servant  
*Servant* - M'lord?  
*Florus* - Send to the centurion, tell him I  
 Require his presence immediately.  
*Servant* - Yes, m' lord. [Exit]  
 Enter Centurion  
*Centurion* - Thou didst require my presence, m' lord?  
*Florus* - I did. Thou art to take ten men  
 with thee

And go to Jerusalem and compel  
 The Jews to pay full seventeen talents  
 In gold to Caesar for rebuilding Rome  
 Which long hath lain in ruins from the fire.  
*Centurion* - What if they claim they have not the money?  
*Florus* - Tell them they may pay from the temple treasure  
 For all I care, just so long as they pay.  
*Centurion* - Straight away, m' lord. [Exit]  
*Florus* - Now is my trap well set  
 And my prey I'll surely get  
 The rogue will I play still more  
 And bring this nation to brink of war  
 Then my vengeance shall I wreak  
 And tread the Jews beneath my feet. [Exit]

**Scene II**

*A street in Jerusalem, a throng with great commotion and howls, throwing dust and garments in the air*

*1st Citizen* - Caesar, save us from this evil  
 Florus!  
*2d Citizen* - Away with Florus! Away with the rogue!  
 Enter 3rd & 4th Citizens  
*3rd & 4th Citizens* - [Bearing basket betwixt them] Alms, alms, Florus beggeth alms, who will give Florus alms? He is impoverished and destitute of support. Alms, alms, Florus beggeth alms, who will give Florus alms?  
*5th Citizen* - [Laughing] Here, I will give money [casts into basket]. A shekel for Florus that he may buy bread!  
*6th Citizen* - Yea, I too will give alms to Florus [Laughing, casts into basket].  
*7th Citizen* - And I [Casts into basket].  
*3rd & 4th Citizens* - Alms, alms, Florus beggeth alms, who will give Florus alms?  
*8th Citizen* - I would not give that dog a bone, but would cast stones at him if he came about my

doorstep begging crumbs from my table. Let Florus come beg himself and not send his soldiers. Then will he see our generosity when we feed him with dung and drive him away with stones!

*9<sup>th</sup> Citizen* – The land is filled with robbers and despoiled;  
That dog doth go shares with them in the booty;  
He taketh bribes and loots whole toparchies  
And sendeth here for money from the temple?

That knave, that rogue, that whoreson cut-purse thief!  
Who will obey him in this matter, who?

*Diverse from crowd* – Yea, let the dog be stoned!  
Caesar, save us from this wicked Florus; Caesar save us!

10<sup>th</sup> – Gold and silver have I none for Florus, but iron have I plenty in my sword and would fane run the dog through! We Jews are not cattle to wear the yoke and pull the plow for our Roman owners; I say it is time to revolt!  
(Acclamations from crowd)

Enter, Elder of the people

*Elder* – Good people, my good people, calm yourselves.

Let there be no more of this dangerous talk  
For God has been our assistant this day.  
Let us give thanks to heaven for its help.  
The centurion hath left with his men;  
Our sacred treasure doth remain untouched!  
This is a day of triumph and great joy!  
[Shouts and acclamations from crowd]  
Now get ye home and let there be no mischief  
Lest this day be turned to mourning by blood.  
Get thee home, I pray, get thee home.  
[Exeunt]

### Scene III

*Before Procurator's palace, Florus sitting in tribunal*

[Enter high priest, members of counsel, and elders of the Jews]

*Matthias, Son of Theophilus* – Hale, noble Florus; peace to thee  
And at such a time.

And bring before me whomever they catch.

*Matthias* – M' lord, be not rash –

*Florus* – Rash! Ye Jews push me too far.  
Centurion!

*Centurion* – M' lord.

*Florus* – The Jews protect men known to urge revolt.

Moreover, their tribute is in arrears.  
Go to the market place and plunder it.  
Slay all whom ye meet; do not spare any.  
Bring to my court some of those whom ye catch

To be examples unto all the rest. [Centurion Exit]

Them who presume to shield malefactors  
Become their helpers and accessories.  
Men scourge the body for the mind's intent.  
Ye are the people's head; therefore all they  
That dwell in Jerusalem are guilty

And shall feel the scourge of our correction  
For your sake, and learn to do no more.  
Now get ye from our tribunal at once,  
Lest I make ye an example also. [To

Matthias and Jews]. [Exeunt]

### Scene IV

*Upper Marketplace in Jerusalem*

Enter Centurion with troops

*Centurion* – [To troops] Ye men, this is a day of sweet revenge.

Great glory shall he have whose purpled hands

And crimsoned sword doth reek and smoke  
and drop

With blood of countless enemies destroyed.  
Stoke high the fires of thy wrath and rage.

Thy hatred long pent up let now break out;  
Now is the day to grind these Jews to powder.

Kill such as ye meet; force the doors of homes

And slay the occupants; none spare alive.  
Those Jews most prominent take prisoner  
For public example and crucifixion.

Rob and plunder freely; seize what ye will.  
Let not thy sword be lax or slow to slaughter!

[Slaughters by soldiers of men, women, children, amidst screams and cries; exeunt all but centurion]

Enter, Queen Bernice with entourage

*Master of Queen's Horse* – M' lady, Florus hath his soldiers loosed;  
They plunder and destroy all whom they meet.  
'Tis dangerous to precede further, Ma'am;  
We should turn back and get ourselves to safety.

*Bernice* – Nay, do not turn back, but my message take

And tell the centurion and his soldiers  
Thus saith Queen Bernice, Stop now these slaughters

Else wise will I have thee before the gov' nor  
To give account of this day's proceedings.

Go to; make haste; carry thou mine message now.

*Master* – Yea, m' lady. [Crosses stage to centurion.]

*Bernice* – Ye men, stay here, draw not any closer  
Lest we be consumed in the soldiers' slaughters.

*Master* – [To Centurion] Centurion, a message from Bernice.

*Centurion* – Say on.

*Master* – Thus saith Queen Bernice, Stop now these slaughters

Or thee will she have 'fore the governor.

*Centurion* – Indeed; this message carry to thy queen:

Am I a Jew that I Bernice should obey?  
Let her see Florus, if she has aught to say.  
I'll not stay my soldiers at her bidding.

*Master* – Any thing more, centurion?

*Centurion* – Yea, tell thy queen, Bernice, Make haste, get hence,

For she in danger is from my men's rage,  
And like to be consumed in their fury.

*Master* – Very well. Thy message I shall take  
her. [Crosses stage to Bernice.]

[To Bernice] A message, lady, from the Centurion.

*Bernice* – Say on.

*Master* - He doth bid thee look to lest thou destroyed be  
By the excessive zeal of the soldiers.  
Moreover, he doth say, Am I a Jew  
That orders from Bernice I should now take?  
And bids thee Florus sue with thy complaint.

*Bernice* – Florus doth hold tribunal after noon.  
He shall know our displeasure at these events.  
Ye men, make haste, get us hence to safety.  
[Exit]

Reenter 5<sup>th</sup> soldier

*Soldier* 5<sup>th</sup> – [To Centurion] It is done as thou didst command; above three thousand are slain and two hundred taken prisoner, with members of the equestrian order not a few.

*Centurion* – Equestrian order? It is enough; Keep back the men from further slaughters now.  
Charge some the plunder to look close after; The rest cause to report at the palace  
Within the hour with the prisoners. [Exit]

**Scene V**

*Procurator's tribunal, Counsel of Jews present, with prisoners assembled*

*Enter Florus, sits in judgment seat*

*Florus* - Ye are adjudged all enemies of Rome.  
Your rulers have concealed malefactors  
And seditious persons that railed upon  
Our person and the government of Rome.  
Have them scourged, then have them crucified  
Beyond the city gates where all may see,  
And let the people learn to do no more.

*Matthias Son of Theophilus* - Your grace, I pray thee, have mercy.  
Above three thousand citizens have been slain;  
What can the death of these few men do more?

*Guard* – M' lord, Bernice doth seek thy audience.

*Florus* – Let her come in.

*Enter, Bernice*

*Bernice* – My lord, Florus.  
I have just come from the upper market;  
Thy soldiers slew all whom they chanced to meet;  
They plundered booths, forced private homes and slew  
Their occupants, and carried off the goods.  
How dost m' lord account for these events?

*Florus* – With all respect and deference, m' lady  
Thou dost interfere where thou shouldst not.  
We do this day punish those that hide rebels;  
Seditious persons who have urged revolt  
And speak against the government of Rome.  
Were not this course pursued to quench the coals  
Of sedition, revolt should soon break out.

*Bernice* – I was not aware that women, children  
And nursing babes at mother's swollen breasts  
Didst offer such grave threat to mighty Rome  
That they needs be cut down defenseless in the streets.

*Florus* – The sword, like pestilence, doth not distinguish  
'Twillt age and sex, but doth consume alike  
All whom it chance to meet in its dread path.  
The bitterness of war doth make men shun it;  
If war were sweet like love and soft like women,  
Men would not soon persuaded from it be.  
I trow thou art not ignorant of this.

*Bernice* - Mock me not.

*Florus* – M' lady, let there not be rancor 'twixt us.  
We both this nation's peace do urge, and seek  
To maintain order under Roman rule.  
In war, both citizens and soldiers die;  
If women with their babes were slain, it was  
Unfortunate, but unavoidable.  
I seek the good of Rome and to protect  
Her holdings and interests in this place.  
This day's events were necessary to  
Destroy those that would raise insurrection.

*Bernice* – I did not know the Roman senate hadst  
Declared against my nation war.

*Florus* – Thou dost sound like one that taketh part  
against Rome.

Is Nero Caesar not thy sovereign,  
Or is thine allegiance to Judea?  
Weigh thine allegiance and affections well.  
In times like these one must choose where he stands.

*Bernice* - Think not that I shall fail to inform  
Cestius of these events.

*Florus* – I thank thee and bid thee Good day,  
m' lady. [Exit Bernice]

*Centurion*, have away the prisoners;  
And see that they are punished presently.

*Centurion* – Ay, m' lord.

*Florus* – And Centurion.

*Centurion* – M' lord?

*Florus* – Recall it is a public execution;  
I want it to be an exhibition  
To burn like smoke the eyes of all who see  
And like a bone to stick within the throat  
Of all that do bewail the ones condemned.

*Centurion* – Ay, m' lord. [Exit]

**Scene VI**

*Jerusalem, Palace of the King*

*Enter Agrippa II*

*Agrippa* – Rufus!  
*Enter Servant*

*Rufus* – M' lord?

*Agrippa* – I am expecting elders of the Jews;  
When here, bring them in without announcement.  
And set before us raisins, figs, and dates,  
With water scented with rose and sweet wine.

*Rufus* – Yes, m' lord. [Exit]

*Rufus* – [Reenters with elders of Jews] M' lord, the elders of the Jews. [Exit]

*Agrippa* – Sirs, come in, come in; ye are most welcome.  
We are returned safe from Alexandria

And give you thanks for bidding us welcome.  
[Enter servant with refreshments]  
Here are our refreshments. Please, help yourselves;

*Matthias* – Thou art most gracious; we return thee thanks.  
We do always deem thy absence from Jewry  
Unfortunate, most excellent Agrippa.  
We trust thy journey was sans incident  
And thou didst experience no discomfort.

*Agrippa* – Without incident, but much discomfort.  
Oppressed with heat by day and cold by night;  
The desert is a dwelling for naught save  
Snakes and scorpions. But we do not complain.  
It is a fact of life that needs be borne.  
What news whilst we were gone? Has all been well?

*Matthias* – If it please your excellency, Roman  
Rule is not unlike thy desert crossing,  
But is full of discomfort for Judea.  
It is to be regretted that this Florus  
Hath sheathed himself most barbarous of late.  
Above three thousand were cut down by soldiers  
On Florus' orders, and hundreds crucified.<sup>34</sup>

*Agrippa* – Three thousand slain and hundreds crucified!  
What could provoke so great a massacre?

*Matthias* – Florus sought gold from the sacred  
treasure,  
Feigning Caesar did require money.  
Diverse of our people railed upon him;  
Some took up arms as if Florus were poor.  
When we did not deliver them to him,  
He loosed in vengeance upon us his soldiers.  
Those that they caught alive were crucified.

*Jesus Son of Gamaliel* – Two days thence, we persuaded the people  
To shew their goodwill and subjection to  
The cohorts coming up from Caesarea.  
When seditious men didst revile Florus,  
The soldiers didst attack them that misspoke;  
The multitude, affrighted, didst take flight,  
And trampled one another, killing many.  
They didst repair unto the temple and  
The cloisters they have torn down to prevent  
Entrance into the temple by the Romans.

<sup>34</sup> Josephus, Wars, II, xiv, 8, 9.

*Agrippa* – These soldiers' hatred for our nation hath occasioned manifold disturbances  
 And bear much blame in bringing us near to war.  
 When died my father, these same soldiers didst enter the palace and my sisters' statues Lay hold of, lewdly placing them in brothels In scorn against my family and nation.  
 When Claudius learned this, he made grave threats.  
 Resolved to send the soldiers unto Pontus, In punishment for their insolent acts.  
 But he didst yield and suffered them to stay.  
 Now do we taste the fruit of Claudius' Gentle and irresolute demeanor.  
 For they have grown bold in their impudence  
 And they have Florus as their protector,  
 Who doth stir them up to still more mischief.  
 Florus and the soldiers we must abide.  
 The seditious must be dealt with quickly,  
 For ye cannot be ignorant that war  
 Will come if our course be not corrected.  
 Indeed, I fear it is already too late.

*Mathias* – Why can not Florus be amended, lord?  
 If ambassadors be sent to Caesar,  
 Surely he will correct or remove Florus.

*Jesus* – We have near Caesar Poppaea Sabina.  
 Might not we Caesar's wife approach for help  
 And she the way for an embassy open?

*Agrippa* – There is much risk in what ye do propose.  
 The world doth seek Caesar's audience,  
 And there is not a nation or a people  
 That doth not chaff under the Roman yoke.  
 He'll not be easily moved to receive  
 Accusation against his governor.  
 And Florus doeth nothing but he doth  
 Make it appear to Caesar's advantage.  
 The money he demanded, did not he say  
 'Twas for Rome and Caesar? Thus will  
 Florus  
 Make ye appear to Caesar odious,  
 Because ye would not money send to Rome.  
 If he reprove him, 'twill but gentle be.  
 For Nero hath laid bare the treasury  
 And senators and private men doth Caesar  
 Accuse deceitfully and put to death

That he may seize upon their lands and wealth.  
 Shall Caesar condemn Caesar? I throw not.  
 But secretly will Nero commend Florus,  
 And slyly smile at his exactions  
 Who Caesar's example doth imitate.  
 Thus, whether Florus be reproved or no,  
 The government o'er Judah he'll retain  
 And vengeance surely wreak for your attempt.  
 And what is more, the tribute have not ye paid.  
 How can ye Caesar's favor hope to gain  
 When ye be late to pay the Roman tribute?  
 Nay, ye durst not to Caesar send for help.

*Mathias* – What remedy to cure these ills remaineth?  
 To do nothing is to invite our ruin.

*Agrippa* – Assemble ye the people on the morrow;  
 We will address them and seek to persuade  
 To give up these vain hopes of rebellion.  
 For 'tis certain if it doth come to war,  
 Jerusalem like a field shall be plowed.

**Scene VIII**  
*Gallery near to Temple, Multitude Assembled*

Enter *Agrippa*; *Bernice* is seated in House of Asamoneans above gallery in view of multitude.

*Agrippa* – We asked you to assemble here today  
 Out of our fond affection toward you  
 And high regard for your astute judgment.  
 The winds of heaven blow upon the land  
 And rend the peaceful climate of our times  
 With storms and whirlwinds of destruction.  
 The coming days and weeks may determine  
 Our nation's future for all time to come.  
 There be men risen up that move for war  
 And promise liberty from Roman rule.  
 We cannot but laugh at their pretensions.  
 If we can but dissuade you from committing  
 To this sad course before it is too late,  
 We shall have rendered you faithful service  
 And dispensed those duties demanded by  
 The bowels of our natural affection  
 And our nation's mutual religion.  
 Know first, that, though ye all be bent on war,  
 Ye be not all moved by the same reasons.  
 Some to regain their liberties do hope;  
 Some hope to be avenged of supposed wrongs;  
 Still others hope to get gain and to seize  
 For themselves power and men's property.  
 Now the former are by nature most mild.

But they who wish to get into power  
 By nature are men wicked and perverse,  
 Without regard for law or religion.  
 If then ye should get freed of Roman rule,  
 Who suppose ye shall thus become your rulers  
 But they who are the very worst of men?  
 For they who be by nature sweet and mild,  
 Whose motives going into war are honest,  
 Wish only the comfort of private life,  
 And are inclined to overlook their wrongs  
 And suffer long abuse of governors.  
 But the wicked will omit no artifice  
 Or crime that doth tend to their advantage.  
 How will this war improve your condition  
 then?  
 For ye will merely be exchanging tyrants,  
 And the wrongs ye hope to avenge will open  
 The way for other crimes by other men.  
 Now Florus hath the government lawfully  
 And was by Caesar himself hither sent.  
 But they who shall get themselves into power  
 If you revolt will do so unlawfully,  
 For they will not look for your permission  
 Nor shall they concern themselves with your goodwill.  
 If ye do bitterly complain of Florus  
 Who hath lawfully got the government,  
 What will ye do when they get into power  
 That seize the government unlawfully?  
 For ye cannot be ignorant that they  
 Who move most for revolt are no less than  
 Assassin bands of robbers and the Zealots  
 Who rove about and prey upon our people.  
 The crimes and innocent men they destroy  
 Shew how they will behave if they get power.  
 If this be the case if ye win this war,  
 What shall the case then be if ye should lose?  
 What evil will the Romans leave undone?  
 Your wives and daughters will they put in  
 brothels;  
 Your sons shall fight beasts in the arena,  
 And you shall be sold into slavery.  
 And lose ye must, for it is not possible  
 Ye can defeat the power of the Romans.  
 Go whether thou wilt, there the Romans rule.  
 The Euphrates in the east cannot contain  
 them;  
 Cadiz on the west is too small; Libya  
 Hath been searched over by them in the  
 south;  
 The Danube their boundary is northward.

And, as if these were not enough, they searched  
 For yet another habitable world  
 Beyond the seas, and brought their kingdom unto  
 The British Isles; places heretofore  
 Unknown in other quarters of the world.  
 The world is therefore insufficient  
 To contain or resist the Roman power.  
 Upon what then will ye pretend to rely?  
 Ye say that servitude is odious.  
 And so indeed it is. But when all nations  
 Endure the like estate, ye should take comfort  
 That your condition is common to all.  
 The Gauls above three hundred nations have,  
 And do endure to be subject unto  
 The Romans, yea, though they didst fight a war  
 Of eighty years their liberty to preserve.  
 These submit not from effeminacy  
 Of mind nor yet for frailty of body  
 Nor nakedness of land, but from respect  
 Their nations have toward the Roman army.  
 These are maintained by twelve-hundred of  
 troops.  
 A number less than all their nation's cities.  
 The Germans, though they be so great in number,  
 And are more fierce and wild than untamed  
 beasts,  
 And have mountains and rivers like to walls  
 Around about to protect them, are now  
 Maintained in subjection by eight small legions.  
 And if the Britons, who the ocean have  
 As a wall, kept the Romans not away,  
 On what do ye rely, this city's walls?  
 Yet, did not Pompey in the merest space  
 Of five short months defeat these walls and bring  
 Your tribes under the iron yoke of Rome?  
 If your forefathers were unable then  
 To keep Pompey out when the Roman power  
 Was still new to this corner of the world,  
 How shall ye keep them out now that they fill  
 The breath and length of all the land and have  
 All nations as their helpers in the sieges?  
 Upon what then are ye to place your trust?  
 Will ye to heaven look for assistance?  
 Shall Providence foreswear its purity  
 And pollute itself by affording help  
 To lawless and accursed men of blood  
 Which shall your leaders be in this great war?  
 Nay, nay, my countrymen, tis better by far,  
 Whilst the vessel be anchored in port,  
 To heed impending danger from the storm,  
 Than putting forth to sea amidst a gale  
 To suffer great, inestimable loss.  
 For ye now suffer but the infringement  
 Of your ancestral rights and liberties,  
 But if ye go to war, ye shall suffer

Loss of all things and be only destroyed.  
*Man from the crowd* – Nay, but we fight not against the Romans, but only Florus.

*2d man from crowd* – Yea, only Florus and not Rome. [Crowd assents]

*Agrippa* – If Florus only ye make war against,  
Whence do ye omit to pay the tribute?  
The cloisters which the Roman fortress join  
Unto the temple ye have now torn down.  
Are not these tokens ye intend to rebel?  
If unto Rome ye will remain subject,  
Ye must amend your faults and gather up  
The tribute and the cloisters now restore.  
If ye omit these, know of a certain  
That war will swiftly come upon the land.  
Let them that are for peace, therefore, go up  
And let the cloisters be repaired this day.  
For the rest, I return to my kingdom.  
Your leaders obey and all will be well.

[Multitude consents; Seditious depart grumbling; exeunt]

#### Scene VIII

*Jerusalem, city gates*

Enter Agrippa with entourage

*Agrippa* – Ho, Darius, ho!

[Enter Darius, master of the king's horse]

*Darius* – Yea, m' lord, thou didst send?

*Agrippa* – We return now to our kingdom in Chalcis.

Send thou some horsemen before to secure  
The way that we be safe from robber bands,  
For they have grown exceeding bold of late.

*Darius* – Straight away, m' lord. [Exit]

*Agrippa* – I hope thou wilt find our journey pleasant,  
My gentle sister. [To Bernice]

*Bernice* – Indeed, I shall; I like the solitude  
Of the desert; it is a balm to me,  
Bringing refreshment to my weary heart.  
How now, what is that? There is a tumult.

The garrisons at Masada and Jerusalem the Jews have taken and slain.  
Word of the Jews' revolt hath spread abroad;  
Throughout the province the Jews are attacked.

The whole province is filled with violence  
And become divided into armed camps.  
The Jews dwelling in foreign cities have  
Been destroyed by their inhabitants.

In Alexandria, fifty thousand slain;  
Twenty thousand here in Caesarea;  
The citizens of Scythopolis have  
Destroyed thirteen thousand; Tyre, Hippos,  
Askelon, Ptolemais, and Gadara,  
Without mercy slew those Jews dwelling there.

Unburied corpses lay scattered in heaps.

*Florus* – Didst say twenty thousand in this city?

Centurion – I did, m' lord; the Greeks  
begrudge them much  
And would destroy them all.

*Florus* – Twenty thousand slain in one hour's time;

Indeed, I am impressed. They have done in  
One hour what I thought would take them weeks.

This is good news indeed; I am most pleased.  
Hire two hundred men and their wagons  
To cast the corpses outside the city.

The stench will be soon insufferable  
And I would not that the air be thus fouled.  
The weather is most agreeable today;  
I think I shall dine on the veranda.  
Bring word if aught develops more. That is all. [Exeunt]

#### Act IV

#### Scene I

*Rome, a room in Lucellus' house*

Enter Lucellus and Maiden

*Lucellus* – 'Twas fortunate we found him when we did,  
Else certain he would soon have bled to death.

I cleansed his wound and the dressing hath changed.  
Bind fast his eyes with these cloth bandages;  
His head received a mighty blow when he fell.  
Then come away, my daughter, stay thou not.

*Maiden* – Yes, father, I shall obey and not tarry.  
[Exit; reenters]  
My father, will he live?

*Lucellus* – I cannot say, the wound is deep, my child.

He is in God's hands; let us watch and pray.  
Come now, away; let us to church; avaunt.  
Tis late and we are like to miss the reading.

*Maiden* – Is it well, father, that he be alone?

*Lucellus* – Sweet my daughter, trouble not thy heart;

He's not alone; God will his angels send  
To keep watch; let him rest; come now away.  
We shall be late; let us away; avaunt. [Exeunt]

#### Scene II

*The catacombs in Rome*

Enter Lucellus and Matden with Christians

*1st Member* – Greetings brother; the Lord be with you. Ye are as a fragrance of life from the dead to us; we thank the Lord for thy return and that of thy daughter. [To Lucellus]

*Lucellus* – I give thee thanks, my brother. God bless thee.

*2d Member* – What news, Lucellus? Hast thou any word?

*Lucellus* – The young man Eutyclus we found near dead;  
A sword wound in his side and a contusion  
Upon his head and face where he didst fall.

*1st Member* – Eutyclus! Nay, it cannot be; he disappeared months ago and hath not been seen.

*2d Member* – Eutyclus, didst say? Didst hear that all? The young man Eutyclus hath been found; Lucellus saith he is wounded.

*Leader* – Praise be to God; he hath been in all our hearts and minds. Didst say he is wounded?

*Lucellus* – A sword wound in the side; deep, but not mortal.  
He lost much blood, but I think he will live.

*I<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>d</sup> Members* – O, thank God!

*Leader* - Dost he know, brother?

*Lucellus* – Nay, he hath not yet consciousness regained.

*Leader* – And thy daughter, how doeth she?

*Lucellus* – She’s shaken, but well, I think.

*I<sup>st</sup> Member* – Lucellus, there is news from Jerusalem.

*Lucellus* – Indeed, I had not heard; what news?

*Leader* – The land is in revolt.

*Lucellus* – Revolt? Then, hath it finally begun.  
The days of wrath and vengeance are now come.

What news of the church and the brethren?

*Leader* - Word is that Cestius didst press a siege  
But left off suddenly and all escaped<sup>35</sup>  
To Pella in the land of Perea.

*Lucellus* – The siege abandoned? Is the war then stalled?

*Leader* – Nay, Nero hath sent thither Vespasian

To prosecute the war; all Galilee is conquered and subdued; Jerusalem and Judea alone remain in arms.

Yea, Rome also doth drink the cup of wrath; Vindex hath the purple offered Galba, And both march hither Nero to depose. But more of this anon; let us to church And do thou tell us more of Eutychus. [Exeunt]

<sup>35</sup> Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, v, 3; Josephus, *Wars*, II, xix, 7.

### Scene III

*Jerusalem, outer-court of temple; people assembled*

Enter Annas son of Seth, Jesus son of Gamaliel, priests and elders of the Jews

*Annas* – My friends, give ear unto me, your high priest.

Ye know how that the countryside is filled With Roman legions, which denude the land Of crops, trees, and men like clouds of locusts  
Hither swarmed from hell’s all-consuming mouth.<sup>36</sup>  
These, to escape, men have resorted here,

Including Zealots, robbers, and outlaws,  
Who have seized the city and gained control.  
With murder and robbery not content,  
These men’s impiety hath extended

Unto the temple itself, which they’ve made  
Their fortress whence to prosecute their war,  
And for themselves have made a false high priest,  
One Phannias, the son of Samuel,

Who winks at their murders and extortions  
And blesses them in all their crimes and sins.  
Unless their guilt we are prepared to share,  
We must retake control of the city

And drive these robbers from Jerusalem.  
Therefore, let us arm ourselves and besiege  
These wicked men

And our beloved capital city

Begin to cleanse from sin.

Ye citizens take arms and let us fight;  
May heaven’s assistance give us might. [They fight, Zealots flee to inner court; exeunt with Annas’ party in pursuit.]

### Scene IV

*Jerusalem, Inner Court*

Enter John of Gischala with Zealots

*John of Gischala* – Shut up those gates against our enemies;

Get men upon the cloisters and the walls.

Behold, the gates they dare not to attack

Lest they pollute the sacred court and house.  
Fools! Their superstition doth make us secure.

*Zealot captain* - M’ lord, we are shut up as in a cage.  
How long can we remain imprisoned thus?

<sup>36</sup> Rev. 9:1ff

Had their conscience ease from their foul deed?  
Think ye that heaven will wink at your crime?  
Would ye rescue the Zealots from our hand?

This city have they filled with innocent blood  
And ye are come to break them out of prison,  
And so become partakers of their guilt.

Look up and see the welkin’s dark’ning face;  
The heavens brood and lower, threat’ning wrath.  
Encamped this night before these walls and towers  
Ye shall learn whether heaven accepts your deeds.

Or ye do well this mad course to pursue.

*Simon son of Cathlas* – Ye Jews have ever been unsociable,

Holding yourselves aloof from other nations,  
Supposing ye are better than the rest.

Therefore it doth not surprise us that ye

Shut up the gates against your brother Esau;

Like Jacob, ye supplant us in our right

To enter this city, common to all.

Us ye exclude, the Zealots ye close in;

The Romans ye do eagerly welcome

That ye might deliver the city to them.

Defenders of liberty ye shut up

And shut out, but our enemies let in.

Will ye the gates adorn with festive garlands

When your beloved Romans have arrived?

I shudder to think of the treachery.

Ye do slyly evoke the brooding sky

As if this was an evil omen toward us;

It is not for our sakes this sign hath come

For it doth warn against the bloody deeds

And oppressions by which ye crush this people.

Ye make this people drink wormwood and gall

By your corrupt judgments and exactions

And heaven doth forewarn of coming wrath.

To love liberty ye durst not pretend,

Tis we who’ve come freedom to defend.

And shall by force of arms enforce our right

As soon as dawn doth blush with day’s first light.

[Exeunt]

### Scene VI

*Inner temple*

Enter John of Gischala and Zealot captains

*John of Gischala* – What fearsome prodigy doth this storm foretell?

Great sheets of rain with hail and howling winds;  
Continuous lightnings and thunderous blasts

Amazing concussions and bellowings  
That rend the earth and rocks as though the  
world  
Were suddenly come to its appointed end.<sup>37</sup>

*Captain* – M' lord, the Idumeans lay exposed  
To this terrible storm, encamped outside.  
They cower 'neath their shields pressed  
together  
Against the storm attempting to make shelter.

*John of Gischala* – Yea, I know too well they  
are like to die  
Unless we send rescue.

*Captain* – They came to help us, how shall  
we help them?  
We be enclosed within this prison-house.

*John of Gischala* – The watch hath Annas let  
sleep,  
Thinking we will nothing attempt tonight.  
Let us send men to cut the bars and gates  
With saws the priests use to cut altar wood.  
The wind's great howling will conceal the  
sound.

The Idumeans shall we then admit.  
Take men and saws and do as I have said;  
Bring hither their army to spring us hence.  
We shall have the city in our control  
Before the morning sun. [Exeunt]

### Scene VII

*Palace of the Annas the High Priest*

Enter a servant

*Servant* – Awake, awake, the streets are filled  
with murder!  
The master must away before tis too late.  
Awake, awake, I say, awake!

Enter Annas with servants

*Annas* – What means this noise at this dark  
hour of night?

*Servant* – M' lord, the Idumeans have gotten  
Within the walls and have the Zealots freed.  
Great slaughters and murders fill the city;  
Above eight thousand lay dead in the temple;

Above twelve thousand are slain in the streets.  
Thy son-in-law, lord Caiaphas, is slain,  
With high priests and council members not a few.<sup>38</sup>  
M' lord, they'll be here shortly; thou must flee.  
Delay not; make haste; flee this place.

Enter Idumeans, they fight; Annas is taken

*Idumean soldier* – Bind that pig and have him away  
to meet his fate;

This day shall thy corruptions return upon thy pate.  
Thou shalt die like a dog, cut down in the streets;<sup>39</sup>  
Thy corpse cast out naked, food for wild beasts;  
For this day hath vengeance waited long;

Rejoice ye heavens, let earth break out in song.  
[Exeunt]

### Scene VIII

*A room in Rome*

Enter Lucellus and Maiden

*Lucellus* – Come, we must look in upon the  
youngman.

Go thou and see how he doeth; mind you, stay not,  
But come again forthwith.

*Maiden* – Ay, father, I will do as thou dost bid.  
[enters room]

*Lucellus* – A good and obedient daughter she is.  
[Maiden emerges from room]

*Maiden* – Come, father, he doth stir! [Enter room]

*Eurychus* – I, where am I? Is any there?

*Lucellus* – Answer him not a word; stand thou afar;  
I only will speak to him. Dost hear me? [To  
maiden]

*Maiden* – Ay, father, I will stand hither.

*Lucellus* – Ay, my good lad, I am here; keep thy  
peace;  
Thou hast lost much blood and must needs rest  
there.

*Eurychus* – Mine eyes, I cannot see.

*Lucellus* – Thine eyes are bandaged; a bad  
blow thou didst  
Receive unto thy head when thou didst fall.  
Or so it doth appear.

*Eurychus* – How came I here? What place is  
this, good man?

*Lucellus* – We found thee collapsed outside  
on the street.

*Eurychus* – We? Thou dost not abide alone?

*Lucellus* – A servant, a young boy, abideth  
with me.

But thou must rest; enough talk for tonight.  
Let sleep mend thy wounds; I will come  
again

At morning light with some bread and broth  
and  
We will speak more then. Rest thee now,  
rest thee. [Exeunt]

### Scene IX

*Nero's Palace, Rome*

Enter Nero and Phaon

*Nero* – What news of Galba; will the  
Praetorians  
Remain loyal unto their oaths?

*Phaon* – All is lost, is lost, good mine  
emperor.

E'en Tigellinus doth abandon you.

*Nero* – Tigellinus? What e'er shall I do,  
Phaon?

Perhaps if I present myself unto  
The legions weeping and unarmed I can  
Move them unto pity and compassion.  
Nay, I will don my tragic robe and weep  
Before the people in the Forum and  
Implore their pardon and the Praefecture  
Of Egypt as a place of exile.

Where is my secretary to assist me;  
Mine oration I must compose e'en now.  
Surely I can move the people to tears  
And their good will and forgiveness obtain.

*Phaon* – Thou wouldst be torn to pieces; art  
thou mad?

Awake, Nero, thou dost dream idle dreams;  
The end is come, is come.

*Nero* – Nor friend nor enemy do I then have  
To mitigate my plight?

*Phaon* – Mine emperor; thou must escape from  
here.

The danger is too great; let us away  
Unto my villa and await there day.

*Nero* – This night? Thy villa? Yes, let us away.  
Nay, but I will be recognized and slain.  
I must remain safe, and in the palace stay.

*Phaon* – Don thou these beggar's clothes and let  
us flee  
Else wise ere morning come dead thou wilt be.

*Nero* – Give them here; thee will I obey.  
Avaunt; let us flee this place ere night doth turn to  
day. [Exeunt]

### Scene X

*In Route to Phaon's Villa, suburbs of Rome*

Enter Nero, Epaphroditus, and Sphorus

*Epaphroditus* – Tis sure that soldier didst  
recognize thee,  
For I didst hear him salute thee as Caesar.

*Nero* – Alack the day, Fate hath decreed mine  
end!

A corpse beside the road didst startle mine horse  
And mine hood fell from mine head as he passed  
by.

Dost think he will inform against me?

*Epaphroditus* – Yea, tis certain; here cometh  
Phaon now.

Enter Phaon

*Phaon* – The horses I let loose into the thicket;  
My villa is near; from here we go by foot.

*Epaphroditus* – Take care, there be here many  
thorns and brambles.

*Nero* – Alack, they rend my clothes and tear my  
flesh;

Doth nature also hate and torment me?

*Phaon* – The mud and ooze is thick and deep.

<sup>38</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, IV, v, 1-3.

<sup>39</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, IV, v, 1-3.

<sup>37</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, IV, v, 5.

*Nero* – I sink, I sink; o help!  
Earth ope's it mouth to swallow me alive;  
I prithee; let this not become my grave.

*Epaphroditus* – [Helping him] Our cloaks  
must we put over the mud thus.  
That we nor sink nor stink in this deep mud.

*Nero* – I thirst: have we some water?

*Phaon* – This marsh is foul and its waters  
stink.

Tis all there is mine emperor.

*Nero* – Give it me, this is Nero's chosen  
draught. [Drinks]

*Phaon* – The day doth dawn and matins light  
the sky.  
We must hurry, avaunt! Let us make haste.

*Nero* – Prithee, What day is this?

*Epaphroditus* – Methinks tis June the ninth, is  
it not?

*Nero* – Alack, the day of Octavia's death,  
My wife whom Poppaea moved me to  
murder!

Yester night I dreamed that Octavia  
Came from the realm infernal and my soul  
Dragged screaming to the nether-most abyss.  
Horrors, horrors, o horrors!

*Epaphroditus* – Think not on it; 'twas but a  
dream.  
The stuff of idle minds; see, she is not here.  
Do not thou agonize about such things.

*Phaon* – There, there, at last my villa.

*Epaphroditus* – It is unsafe mine emperor  
thou durst  
Not dare to enter lest a slave betray  
Thy presence for reward.

*Phaon* – The risk is great mine emperor; do  
not  
Thou enter but stay instead in this cave  
Here hard by my villa.

*Nero* – I fear what things may lurk in yonder  
cave.  
Dost know the shades of my wife haunt not  
that place?

Nay, but I'll not into earth's belly go alive.  
But will remain here 'neath the moon the sun.

*Phaon* – I will go first and so prepare a way  
That ye unseen may enter through a hole  
Into a servant's quarters where thou mayest  
Abide until thou dost accept thy fate  
And knowest what thou oughtest do. [Exit]

*Nero* – Fate? Nay, speak not of fate; tis a cruel  
word.

“Accept my fate;” O cruel, cruel word.

Some friends are ye that torment me with such  
words.

Will not I cheat death yet, my companions?

[Reenter Phaon]

*Phaon* – I have prepared a way into the house  
That ye may enter unobserved by all  
And there await day, come what ever may.

*Nero* – O cruel fate that I in beggar's clothes,  
Who was a god among men, should thus hide  
In servants' quarters; to this am I come?

*Phaon* – Come, come, mine emperor; let us away.  
[Exit]

## Scene XI

### Inside Servant's Room

Enter Nero, Phaon, Epaphroditus, and Sphorus

*Epaphroditus* – Take now thy rest a spell; thy mind  
relax.

*Nero* – Have ye some food and drink?

*Phaon* – A little bread and tepid water's all  
[offering].

*Nero* – [Eats] I cannot keep this down.

*Phaon* – Soon soldiers will arrive mine emperor.  
Since thou must die, let it be by thine own hand,  
As mighty Caesar, and not like a cur dog,  
Cut down with shame, a mockery to all.

*Nero* – If die I must, I will require a grave.  
Will not ye dig for me a simple grave?

A simple grave is all that I require.  
See, I will lie down that ye may know the length  
[lying down].  
Oh what an artist dies with me! [Exit Phaon]

*Epaphroditus* – A runner comes; see  
footsteps do approach.

Enter messenger

*Messenger* – A letter hath arrived my lord  
from Rome.

*Nero* – Give it me, let me read. [Snatches,  
reads] I am declared by the senate this day  
A public enemy and sentenced to  
Be punished in the manner of our ancestors.  
What manner is that, dost know?

*Epaphroditus* – To be stripped naked and  
thy neck fixed to

A gibbet with a fork and beaten to death  
with rods.

*Nero* – Give me thy dagger; I will try the  
edge.

[Reenter Phaon]

*Phaon* – Thy grave is ready.

*Nero* – Alack, alack should such an artist  
die?  
The edge is too dull; I cannot do it.

*Sphorus* – Hast thou no shame? Art thou  
weak as a woman?

*Phaon* – Thou dost lose the time; play the  
man and die  
A Roman and an emperor.

*Nero* – I know not how to die; will not  
someone  
Slay himself and shew me how?

*Epaphroditus* – This is infamy; Nero rouse  
thyself!  
But soft, I hear the hooves of horses.  
Certain it is soldiers are already come.

*Nero* – The thunder of swift coursers smiteth  
mine ears. [Places knife to neck]  
Alack, the wound is ineffectual!

*Epaphroditus* – I shall help thee to thy  
death. [Helps drive knife home]

Enter Centurion

*Centurion* – Stay, Nero, stay; to help thee am I  
come.

*Nero* – Too late, too late – Is this thy loyalty?  
[Dies]

*Phaon* – Thus dieth Nero and terror's reign end.  
A wicked life doth a cruel death portend.  
Take up the body; the proper rites to it show,  
The last of all the Caesars' blood in it did flow.  
[Exit]

## Act V

### Scene I

*A Roman camp in Judea*

Enter Vespasian and Cerealis

*Vespasian* – What places are not yet subdued,  
commander?

*Cerealis* – There doth remain Macherus, Masada,  
And Herodium, besides Jerusalem.

*Vespasian* – These rest are but islands in the  
desert.

Tis Jerusalem we must overcome  
It is the heart and capital of Jewry  
Destroy it and the rest shall die of itself.

Enter Titus

*Titus* – Hail, good my father.

*Vespasian* – I sent thee to greet Galba in my  
name  
And congratulations pay for obtaining  
The purple and art thou returned in haste?

*Titus* – I cut my journey short when I received  
Information that Galba hath been slain  
And Otho o'er the empire doth reign.

*Vespasian* – Otho! He Nero's trainer was in vice  
And sordid unnatural appetites.  
What fault was laid to Galba that the throne  
From him was so soon torn away?

*Titus* – His stinginess and severity didst  
The soldiers' hatred and resentment earn.  
When Galba came to Rome some mutinous  
Marines opposed him at the Mulvane bridge.

These overcome, he ordered every tenth man  
Be executed in the midst of Rome.  
Thousands were butchered and put to the  
death.  
The loyal troops this alienated  
And bred a rebellious mood and temper  
Which Otho didst fan into outright war.

*Vespasian* – His stinginess, what of that?

*Titus* – The customary gift promised the  
soldiers  
He did not pay.

*Vespasian* – A grave miscalculation to be  
sure.

*Titus* – Others he disaffected by recalling  
The public money Nero gave to friends,  
O'er twenty-two hundred million sesterces.

*Vespasian* – What? Twenty-two hundred  
million!

The empire cannot survive bankrupt.  
Well Galba did attempt those funds to claim  
Else Rome shall have to tax public latrines!

*Titus* – Nor is Otho secure; Vitellius  
From Germany doth march to seize the  
throne.

*Vespasian* – The government is tossed about  
upon  
A sea of avarice and ambition,  
His own advantage each man looking to  
Whilst Rome by civil strife is rent asunder.

*Titus* – Indeed, one wonders if Rome will  
survive.  
The people are beset with fear and dread;  
Three emperors in six months hath Rome  
had.  
Since Augustus, all wars on foreign soil  
Hath been fought; none in Rome or Italy.  
With Galba, war came to the Mulvane bridge  
And heaps of dead about the city lay.  
A few months more, this scene saw they  
repeated,

When Otho's soldiers filled the streets with  
slain,  
And spent the day in crime and cruel  
slaughter.

Now, Otho not three months upon the throne  
And civil war doth thither fly again.  
Would that were all, but nature too doth war;

Yon Tiber's flood the city hath deluged,  
Its current sweeping men away to death,  
Undermining apartments, which, collapsing,  
Their occupants beneath the rubble crush.  
The flood also hath cut off grain from Egypt  
Thus famine bearing in its wake.

*Vespasian* – Thou didst well to return; else had thou  
risk.

No gratitude wouldst thou enjoy for gestures  
Intended for another emperor  
And hostage might have been made by Otho.  
Abide here till we shall see how things go,  
Then we'll know better what to do.  
Upheavals such the world did never know;  
I fear what end these portents do foreshew.  
[Exeunt]

## Scene II

*Otho's tent, a field near Bedriacum*

Enter Otho, Paulinus, Celsus, Titianus, and  
Proculus with attendants

*Otho* – The gods have smiled on us thus far,  
gentlemen.

In each engagement, the enemy hath  
We bested and put to flight; but now Valens  
And Caecina have forces joined and seek  
Our armies to engage and try their strength.  
Thus are we put to the choice whether to  
Protract the war or try our fortune now.  
Give counsel; what say ye? Thou, Paulinus, speak  
first.

*Paulinus* – Their flood of angry arms hath reached  
its height and,  
Like swollen waters, doth begin to wane.  
Their whole force is now gathered in one place  
And have no source to look for assistance or  
Reserves to replenish their fallen ranks.  
They have nowhere whence to renew supplies  
And daily their provisions do consume.  
Each day we put off battle their troops spend  
In tedium and idleness and grow

Restive and insubordinate in mind;  
Wishing that matters might come to a head,  
Their discipline doth succumb to impatience  
And their resolve waneth attenuate.  
Their whole advantage, therefore, is in haste.  
Our forces have not yet attained full strength  
And daily groweth stronger more and more.  
Reserves we have almost beyond account.

We have no want or shortage of supplies  
But the whole of Italy have to supply our  
store.

Attrition and delay I counsel most;  
Send not into the field today thy host.

*Celsus* – I do agree with Paulinus, m' lord.

*Otho* – Yea, so also doth Gallus who,  
injured  
In a fall from his horse, could not be here,  
But sent his counsel by a messenger.  
Now, Titianus, my beloved brother,  
Give us thy sage advice.

*Titianus* – M' lord, I am impatient with  
delay

And counsel to let the gods decide the day.  
Send thy full army into the field;  
At the enemy thy whole strength wield.  
As the gods so decree,  
Shall the end of this contest be.

*Otho* – I also am impatient of delay  
And fane would bring this war to prompt  
conclusion.

Therefore let soldiers gird their glitt'ring  
swords;  
Let swords drip like icicles in the sun,  
Till drops wax into rivulets and rivulets  
Grow into streams and mountains melt and  
run,  
Making rich earth's clods with enemies'  
blood.

Let no man rest till day be done  
And Otho's right shall have been won.  
[Exeunt]

## Scene III

*A field near Bedriacum*

Enter armies from opposite sides; clash of  
arms; Otho's army routed and destroyed.  
[Exeunt armies with Vitellians in pursuit.]

## Scene IV

*Brixellum, Otho's tent*

Enter Otho, Advisors, Centurion, and  
attendants

*Otho* – Any news of the battle yet?

*Centurion* – None yet, m' lord.

Flourish without

*Otho* – Ah, I didst hear a signal that someone  
Hath entered camp; perhaps we shall get word.

Enter messenger

*Messenger* – M' lord, word from the battle lines.

*Otho* – Say on, say on; how goes the contest,  
man?

*Messenger* – Alack, m' lord, the day is lost!  
Tis a complete route; our troops have all fled.  
The roads are clogged with dead; forty-thousand  
Have fallen down slain.

*Centurion* – Forty-thousand slain; nay, it cannot  
be.

*Otho* – These things dost thou know of a truth?  
Didst thou come from the battle lines thyself,  
Or did others tell it thee?

*Messenger* – M' lord, I speak true and witnessed  
myself  
The battle and the day's events.

*Centurion* – There are fresh troops in abundance,  
m' lord.  
All is not lost; do not lose heart.

*Ist. Advisor* – Tis true, we have reserves in  
abundance  
And can regroup again and fight.  
Though the loss be great we've only begun.

*Otho* – Nay, but tis over; I will not this war  
Continue nor the lives of these brave men  
Expend or waste upon this vain effort.  
That were far too dear a price for my life.  
Although Vitellius began the war  
We shall contend in battle but this once.

I would posterity Otho judge thus  
That I didst spare my country needless blood.  
Fortune and I each the other know well.  
I fear not death; tis man's appointed end.

My death will purchase life for these brave men,  
And buy clemency from Vitellius.  
Regard as the chief proof of my resolve  
That I do not complain of any man.  
Tis for that man who has the wish to live  
Complaint to make against the gods or men.

*Centurion* – Say not thou so, m' lord.

*Otho* – Speak no more of it, I will not hear thee.

Instruct the troops to make peace with the victors;

The sun is set and evening doth descend;

The night approacheth; Otho's day doth end.

Go thou and live; I have had my day. [Exit]

Depart, depart, I say. [Exit]

A little dinner of bread, meat, and wine,

A little sleep before death's appointed time.

Before doth rise tomorrow morn the sun

My course fulfilled, the race I'll have run.

Come dagger, thy point a last office fill;

Upon thee shall I fall and this body kill.

[Exit]

### Scene V

*Vitellius' tent*

Enter Vitellius; centurion

*Centurion* – M' lord, Otho hath slain himself

And the senate declared thee emperor.

*Vitellius* – Then hath the war been won and

our task done.

Let us ordain a feast and celebrate

Our accession to the principate.

Otho murdered Galba to seize his throne,

And with his life Galba's death did atone.

Fortune is fickle and hither-thither flies;

Deposed and usurped the usurper dies;

The sun that set on Otho on us doth rise.

*Centurion* – M' lord, rumor hath it that the

legions

Of Asia, Syria, and parts beyond

Hath sworn allegiance unto Vespasian,

Who Egypt's granaries doth now control

And the supply of food for Rome the whole.

*Vitellius* – The empire by sword obtained

By its holder is not long retained;

Our legions into civil war we send

Our right, our crown, our throne to defend;

The contest for supreme power shall repeat

And the scepter fall at the victor's feet.

[Exit]

### Scene VI

### Rome, Imperial Palace

Enter Vitellius, counselors and attendants

*Vitellius* – What legions and detachments have we

sent

To meet Vespasian's threat unto our throne?

*Counselor* – Auxiliaries from Gaul, Spain and

Britain.

*Vitellius* – Hath Fabius Valens departed Rome

For Italy, to meet our enemies?

*2d Counselor* – M' lord, at last he hath departed

Rome.

Some days after Caecina didst he leave,

Not at all like a general to war,

But went along slowly as a parade,

With a long train of concubines and eunuchs,

Illicit pleasures snatching on the way,

Gaining much infamy and reproach

For his adulteries and debauches

In the homes of those that entertain him.

*Vitellius* – Thus are we held hostage by our

commanders.

We are at war and they do luxuriate

And stretch themselves upon a wanton and

Lascivious bed. Ye gods, attend us!

Valens is envious of Caecina,

Lest by his rival he should be outshined

Therefore doth he thus dawdle and delay.

At Rome he faced neither risk nor disgrace

And would scarcely depart but I forced him.

Let us hope he will play the man at last

And turn back the armies of Vespasian.

Enter messenger

What is it; have ye a message to bring?

*Messenger* – The eternal gods grant thee all success

And keep thy throne secure always.

*Vitellius* – I do perceive thou hast ill to report

That thy message with flatteries thou preface.

*Messenger* – Good my lord, Caecina hath traitor

turned

And didst attempt to disaffect his legions,

Delivering them unto Vespasian,

But they rebelled and threw him into chains,

Maintaining loyalty unto their oaths.

*Vitellius* – This news thou dost bring is both

bad and good.

Tis well that Caecina hath for his treason

Been clapped in chains and into prison

thrown.

But tis ill to lose our best general.

It will not bide well for our war effort.

Valens I do in part blame for this sad turn.

Had he departed Rome in proper time

This defection might have been prevented.

Messenger – M' lord, I fear there is still

more.

The Flavians hath taken Cremona

And slain Valens at Urbinum.

*Vitellius* – Valens! Now hath all hope surely

been lost.

To prolong the war is to increase the cost.

I am old and have tasted much of life;

I have known peace and I have known strife;

I care not for myself, but my children,

mother, and wife.

Peace is noble where honorably obtained;

To negotiate surrender, be not ashamed.

Terms of peace we should seek to conclude,

While the victor is in a conciliatory mood;

Lest by too stubborn a resistance, fighting to

the last breath,

Vespasian and his party be satisfied with

naught but death.

*Counselor* – What wouldst thou m' lord?

*Vitellius* – We shall assemble Rome and the

Senate

And surrender the imperial power

That virgin Rome civil war not deflower.

Go; give word that all be ready against the

morrow.

May this peace be a source of joy, not of

sorrow. [Exit]

### Scene VII

*Rome, a public place*

Enter Vitellius with wife and children,

citizens, senate, consul, and soldiers

assembled.

*Vitellius* – Good people, senators, and loyal

soldiers.

Since Nero's death, Rome hath been rent asunder  
By intestine strife and civil discord.

Two hundred thousands, perhaps more, have died  
In bloody battle and contest of arms.

The soil of our clime is drenched with blood;

The hills littered with bones of unburied slain.

Fair Italy, the maiden of the earth,

Is ruined, spoiled by ravages of war.

Whole villages and cities have been burned,

Their inhabitants slain or sold for slaves.

And what remains but Rome, the capital

And seat of all the earth, to be destroyed.

The Flavians with haste do hither march.

Should war and its attendant horrors come

Into the capital its very self?

Who can predict the loss such would accrue?

Indeed, who cannot such loss plainly see?

Not for earth's treasures would I consent thus.

Ye Vitellians have fought valiantly;

There is no shame or disgrace in defeat

Where heaven hath decreed it so to be.

Who can resist the salty sea and flood,

Oppose the stars or take hold of the wind?

No more can mortal man fortune prevent.

If ye have loved me, grant me this request,

Have pity on me and my youngest son

Whom I would save from the avenging sword,

By yielding to Vespasian this contest,

Retiring to the solitude of private life.

This dagger, emblem of the supreme power,

I now resign, and tender freely up. [Offers to

consul, Caecilius Simplex, who refuses)

*Man in crowd* – Nay, but we will have thee to our  
head; do not thou resign. [Affirmations from

crowd, refusing resignation]

*Vitellius* – Arrived I here your supreme emperor,

Depart I hence a private citizen. [Exit with

family]

*I<sup>st</sup> Senator* – The day belongs unto the Flavians.

We should to Sabinus' house and salute

The family of the next emperor.

*2d Senator* – Indeed; but note how the soldiers

complain.

They seem unwilling to concede defeat.

*I<sup>st</sup> Senator* – The legions pick the emperor, not

we.

Tis one thing if Vitellius resign

Another for the soldiers to agree.

Come, let's away

And our congratulations to the victor pay.  
[Exeunt]

### Scene VIII

*Imperial palace*

Enter Vitellius and centurion

*Centurion* – Good m' lord, Sabinus hath been attacked.

By mutinous soldiers of thy party,

Unwilling that thou shouldst resign the throne.

Sabinus flew unto the capital

With others of the Flavian party,

Where their defense they made 'gainst the assault.

As the combatants struggled, fire broke out,

Which the entire capital hath engulfed.

Vespasian's son, Domitian, didst escape,

But Sabinus was taken and is slain,

His body mutilated and beheaded,

Was cast upon the Gemonian stairs.

*Vitellius* – Vespasian's brother murdered in cold blood,

Who didst no part take in our civil war,

By mutinous and self-avenging soldiers.

The temple of Jupiter Maximus

Reduced to ash; consumed with angry flames.

Now is hope flown of peaceable accord

And the contest sure to come to Rome's streets.

Accursed civil war that cruelly rends

The sacred fabric of society,

The social compact twixt men of kindred blood,

In which are woven the felicities

Of familial familiarity,

Binding man to man and brother to brother;

O vile civil war and intestine strife,

Setting ancestral ties at naught so that

Sons slaughter fathers, fathers butcher sons,

And earth is made to drink her offspring's blood.

Whence rise these storms that make our native trees

Abort their fruit while yet in very blossom

And turn the heads of grain to mildewed ears

Of rottenness and death?

*Centurion* – M' lord, the Flavians do hasten hither;

Thou must flee hence and conceal thyself.

*Vitellius* – Whither shall I flee that I am not known

Nor recognized? If I am not safe here,

I sha 'nt be safe any whither.

Nay, but here shall I wait my destined fate.

Get you gone; hence I'll not depart. [Exeunt]

### Scene IX

*A house in Rome*

Enter Roman man and wife

*Man* – Get thee in, woman, and bar the door shut.

Be sure to shudder also the windows.

*Wife* – Why, what to such great cholera doth move thee,

Husband, that thou art so ghostly afraid?

*Man* – All Rome is mad; mayhem fills the city;

Everywhere death; the streets are clogged with slain,

As though the world were come to its end.

The Flavian army advanced in three

Several columns; part along the Tiber;

Another by the Flaminian Way.

The third column approached by the Colline gate.

The Vitellians met and them engaged,

Defending the city before the walls.

They kept the Flavians back by showers

Of stones and javelins until late day,

When their cavalry broke through the Colline gate

And didst surround the Vitellian troops.

The Vitellians didst win most engagements;

Again and again the process played out;

The Flavians still kept pressing forward.

As vapor doth condense into liquid,

And liquid doth with cold congeal to stone,

The gentle humour of men's hearts waxed dense,

And by degrees to adamant was turned;

Devoid of feeling: cold, hard, inhuman.

The people stood and watched as at the games;

By their applause and shouts they encouraged

First one, then the other party's army.

If one side gave way and hid in shops or homes,

The people urged they be drug out and slain;

Thus did they gain a larger share of booty,

And to the rabble didst the spoils fall,

Since the troops were absorbed in bloody work.

Sights horrible and hideous were seen;

Everywhere there were battles, wounds, and blood;

Open baths, drinking shops and piles of corpses

Along side men and harlots cheering on.

The merry-making and debauchery

With all the crimes committed in conquest,

So that one might suppose all Rome at once

Was mad with rage and drunken with pleasure.

Vitellius was dragged from the palace

By a tribune, with arms bound and clothes torn.

At the point of a sword he then was forced

To lift his face unto his captors' mocks.

Then, driven to the Gemonian stairs,

Where Sabinus' corpse had but lately lain,

He fell beneath a rain of many blows.

Dead, his body was mocked and kicked and stabbed

So that their ferocity in his death

Was equal to their flattery in life.<sup>40</sup>

O cruel, bloody, base and vile mob.

O horror, horror, horror! ---

The danger gone, Domitian came from hiding

And offered himself to the victor's party,

Which hailed him as Caesar and escorted

Him unto his ancestral hearth.

*Wife* – Come, come, away and rest yourself awhile.

Thou hast seen things no man should see;

come, rest.

The gods allow us peace from cursed war.

[Exeunt]

### Act VI

#### Scene I

*Roman camp, Titus' tent*

Enter Titus with commanders, attendants, etc.

*Titus* – The men are much dejected and down cast;

And good cause have they for their dejection.

Two months have we laid siege unto these walls

And have but small reward for all our work.

We have denuded the land of its trees

For wood to build our siege works and ramparts,

Only to watch them burn in a moment;

The labor of two months reduced to ash;

Set fire unto by these fanatic Jews.

The good fortune of the Zealots' attack

Hath made early defeat impossible.

Wood to rebuild must be brought from afar,

And not without great effort and expense.

Defectors whom we have captured tell us

There are three factions warring with each other<sup>41</sup>

Who have destroyed the city's store of grain

And that there is a want of food within.

Thus I propose we dig a ditch around,

Encompassing them in on every side,<sup>42</sup>

And let hunger devour their resistance,

So that they abandon this vain revolt.

What say ye unto this plan, gentlemen?

*Larcius Lepidus* -Agreed. Why should we use our strength and blood

To do what nature will soon accomplish.

When weakened by famine they'll give it up.

*Tiberius Alexander* – Or in their stubborn obstinacy die.

*Sextus Cerealis* – What of the people who have in the war

No part and must needs perish miserably?

*Larcius Lepidus* - Tis not we that were authors of this war.

Shall wicked men escape wrath by holding

Hostage this people? Then shall all revolt

And Roman government be at an end.

*Titus* – If it were in our power to avoid

Their suffering, another course we'd choose.

Those who defect we shall receive in peace,

With kindness treat, and send their ways unharmed.

More we cannot do. This is our command.

Begin at once the trench and wall to build.

Let us make haste this war in triumph to end.

[Exeunt]

#### Scene II

*Lucellus' Home*

Enter Maiden

<sup>41</sup> Rev. 16:19; cf. Josephus, Wars, V, i, 4.

<sup>42</sup> Lk. 19:41-44; Josephus, Wars, V, xii, 1, 2.

<sup>40</sup> Tacitus, Histories, III, lxxxiii



Ah well, posh! 'Tis nothing! Yet, hasten might  
That these eyes veiled in darkness may again  
see light.

### Scene III

*Roman camp, Titus' tent*

Enter Titus, commanders, attendants, etc.

*Titus* – What news about the siege, good my  
commanders?

*Tiberius Alexander* – Resistance doth  
decrease almost each day;

The famine doth slowly destroy defense.  
It will not be long ere falls the city.

*Titus* – What policy toward the citizens?

*Larcus Lepidus* - Those who defect we  
peaceably receive,  
Allowing them to go their ways unharmed.  
But those we catch in arms are crucified,  
Sometimes above five hundred in a day,  
And room for the crosses.<sup>43</sup>

Enter Captain

*Titus* – Yes, what is it?

*Captain* – There is escaped to us one  
Manneus.

A man who paid the public stipend out  
For those bodies carried forth of that gate  
Entrusted to him and would give account  
To thee about the number of the dead.

*Titus* – Bring him before me here.

*Captain* – Ay, m' lord. [Exit]

*Titus* – Now, gentlemen, shall we learn  
conditions  
About Jerusalem and the famine.

[Reenter Captain with Manneus; Manneus  
prostrates himself before Titus.]

It is permitted thee to speak at large;  
Tell us what conditions prevail within  
And the number of dead.

Children take food from their father's own  
mouths;  
And these can scarce devour what food they  
get.

But robbers break ope the doors and rush in  
And seize the crumbs almost out of their  
mouths.

If they swallow it down before it's seized,  
The robbers treat them with great cruelty,  
As if they were defrauded of their right.

If coming in they find them all alive,  
They make a trial if they have got food.  
Emaciated ones they leave to die.

As judging they are in great want of meat;  
The strong they judge somewhere to have  
hid bread,  
And so invent cruel torture to learn where.  
They stop up the privy members of women  
With lye and caustic matter that doth burn  
And sharpened stakes drive up the seats of  
men.

Thus are men forced to suffer and endure  
What is terrible even just to hear.<sup>45</sup>

But for the robbers it is all good sport  
And merriment that doth provoke laughter.  
Famine hath nature so far overcome  
One woman didst her child kill and eat.

*Sextus Cerealis* – Immortal gods forbid!

*Manneus* – Nay, but tis true, tis true,  
horribly true.

The wicked suborn lying prophecies,  
And so beguile the people with vain hopes  
That God will presently deliver them.  
City lanes are full of the dead and dying.

The dead are so many that the soldiers  
Do tread upon them when they go to battle.  
Men wander about, swollen with famine,  
Their skin withered like sticks and black as  
coal;

They stagger hither thither as though drunk,  
And wander into homes in search of food,  
Sometimes the same house several times  
each day.

They fall down dead where ever death finds  
them.

All with their eyes fixed hard upon the  
temple.

Yet have the wicked food enough and more.  
The temple's wine and oil they eat for food.  
And act as though they were at a banquet,

Laughing at them that starve before their eyes.  
Sure there was not a generation worse  
Since men were placed upon this earth.

*Titus* – A good service unto us thou hast wrought;  
Here is money; go thou thy way in peace.

*Manneus* – I give thee thank, m' lord.

*Titus* – [To captain] See that he is escorted safely  
hence  
To stay or go wherever he doth will. [Exit with  
captain]

Come, let us view the walls of the city  
We shall converse of what we have just heard,  
And how we should respond to what we've  
learned. [Exeunt]

### Scene V

*South-west of Jerusalem, overlooking the Valley  
of Hinnom*

Enter Titus, commanders, et alia

*Tiberius Alexander* – There is ahead, m' lord, a  
place of cliffs

Exceeding high, of precipitous drop,

Like to a chasm, whose valley below,

Hath been of old the place they put refuse.

'Tis said that there they burned and did bury

Almost two hundred thousand Assyrians

That died of pestilence before these walls

Whilst they besieged their capital city.<sup>46</sup>

'Tis there we think they cast those that have died

Of the famine within Jerusalem.

Here; this is the place whereof I didst speak.

*Titus* – Ye gods above that mortal men give  
breath,

What place is this that doth see the with hideous  
death?

*Sextus Cerealis* – Come, lord, away; this is no  
place for thee. [To Titus]

*Tiberius Alexander* – They call it the valley of

Hinnom;

I'm told it is the name they use for hell,

“Gehenna” in their tongue.

*Larcus Lepidus* - It is much like our poets picture  
hell.

<sup>43</sup> Josephus, Wars, V, xi, 1.

<sup>44</sup> Josephus, Wars, V, xiii, 7.

<sup>45</sup> Josephus, Wars V, x, 1-3.

<sup>46</sup> Isa. 30: 31-33; cf. 37:36.

Virgil describeth it as a great cavern,  
Debouching noxious fumes to heaven's vault,  
Whose vapors kill all birds that fly through  
them,  
And terrors hold for damned men in Tartarus.

*Titus* – Can hell hold horrors greater than  
seen here  
Or those we've heard ourselves this very  
day?

So many men have I ne'er seen alive  
As the bodies I see before me dead;  
Six hundred thousand men cast from those  
walls,  
Into this chasm; all piled high in heaps,  
A great entanglement of limbs and flesh,  
Unburied, bloated with flies and maggots,  
With thick putrefaction running out,  
Like carrion, food for the kites and dogs.  
I call earth and heaven as my witness  
That I am not author of these events  
Nor such torments didst willingly inflict.  
How often didst we offer terms of peace  
That were rejected and were scorned and  
mocked,

Saying they had God for their assistant?  
Did e'er a people guiltless suffer thus?  
Such miseries bespeak heaven's hot wrath,  
And what is done is done by God's  
command.

*Sextus Cerealis* – Pray, lord, let us depart  
this place. [To Titus]

*Titus* – Have fire brought and let this place be  
burned,  
Lest pestilence break out among the host.  
The gods for our assistants I do pray  
No more shall we our hand stay  
Nor linger longer nor delay,  
Our final push we make today;  
Come, ye that are Romans, let us away  
And bring to end this bloody fray. [Exeunt]

## Scene VI

### *Jerusalem*

Enter armies of Jews and Romans from  
opposite sides, Titus at head of Romans; great  
clash of arms; Jews routed. [Exeunt armies,  
with Romans in pursuit.]

## Scene VII

### *The Tower Antonia*

Enter Titus, with principal commanders, et alia

*Titus* – How goes the battle? What progress?  
Report.

*Tiberius Alexander* – The whole city is ours, saving  
the temple  
And upper city; banks were raised against  
The inner temple walls and our rams were brought,  
And battered the walls, but shewed no progress.  
The stones were too great for our rams to move.  
The northern gate we've undermined, removing  
Its outer stones, yet it still stood unhurt.  
Therefore was fire set and the gates were burned.  
These quenched, we've made a way to storm within  
And we await thy orders when to move.

*Titus* – Good; we shall make assault tomorrow  
morn.

But now, what policy about the temple?  
Shall it be saved or shall it be destroyed?  
I've called ye here today for your advice.

*Larcus Lepidus* – Methinks thou art at liberty to do  
As need require, to save or to destroy,  
According to the rules of war.  
The Jews have turned it into a fortress;  
Thus as a fortress it must be besieged.  
What sanctity it had with God above  
Hath been polluted by the Jews' own hands,  
Destroyed by their taking refuge inside,  
Turning it to a place of blood and war.  
To save the temple at cost of men's lives  
Is too costly a price for us to pay.

*Eternius* - It is a most magnificent building,  
And doth surpass all others in the world.  
Surely it doth behoove us to save it  
If we be able.

*Marcus Antonius Julianus* – It is a source and  
symbol of the Jews'  
National pride, where they always resort,  
And thus a source of national unrest.  
Twenty thousand died at their paschal feast  
Under Tiberius Alexander

By the seditious temper of the crowd  
If the Jews would leave off their rebelling.  
Reason would it might be allowed to stand.  
But as the contrary doth seem likely,  
We are almost compelled to bring it down.  
For if it stand, their rebellious temper  
Will soon break out again and come to war.

For the great crimes committed in this place.<sup>47</sup>

*Titus* – Hath heaven said? Then let be done its  
will

The high places bring down and the valleys fill.  
Let each stone be removed and none remain  
Until Jerusalem be made a plane.  
Fortress Antonia alone we leave,  
Its wall a place for Jews to grieve,  
Unto ages a monument to be  
Of heaven's wrath and Roman glory.<sup>48</sup> [Exeunt]

## Scene VIII

### *Rome, home of Lucellus*

Enter Lucellus and Eutyclus

*Lucellus* – Sit here, young friend; let us remove  
these strips  
That bind thine eyes and veil thy sight in black,  
And then shall we find out how thou hast healed.  
Art frightened to receive thy sight again?

*Eutyclus* – Nay, frightened? How? Why should I  
be affeared?

*Lucellus* – Sometimes men are afraid to face life's  
problems;  
Sometimes it is easier to give up.  
The young lady thou didst mention before,  
Perhaps her loss is too painful to face?

*Eutyclus* – At one time this was true, but now no  
more.  
I have accepted my loss and moved on.  
Yet am I disappointed with myself  
And am unworthy of the one I lost,  
For I didst play the fool and err greatly.

*Lucellus* – 'Tis our unworthiness that makes love  
great.  
There, that is the last; now, how dost thou see?

*Eutyclus* – 'Tis wonderful to see again at last.  
The moon is full and softly shineth beams  
Of silvery light upon earth's shadowed brow,  
Like silken cloth draped o'er a maiden's face.

*Lucellus* – The eyes provide the poet inspiration.

<sup>47</sup> Num. 24:24; Deut. 28:15-68; 32:15-43; Isa. 65:1-6, 15, 24; Dan. 9:24-27; 12:7; Mic. 3:12.

<sup>48</sup> Josephus, *Wars*, VII, 1, 1; cf. VI, ix, 1; VII, viii, 7.

*Eutychnus* – Mine eyes are yet somewhat blurry, tell me, Thy face, do not I know thee from somewhere?  
Enter Maiden  
Forsooth my eyes play tricks upon my mind! I see there a ghostly image, or phantom!  
*Lucellus* – Peace, my young friend, thy eyes betray thee not.  
Behold, it is Eliza!  
*Eutychnus* – Nay, she is dead; I saw and kissed her corpse,  
And this her spirit is, returned hence from Elystium, I know not how.  
*Lucellus* – Her corpse thou didst behold and touch?  
*Eutychnus* – Yea, in the vault, beneath a shroud, I saw it.  
*Lucellus* – Didst thou remove the shroud?  
*Eutychnus* – Nay, I durst not presume –  
Maiden – Eutychnus.

*Eutychnus* – Deceivest thou mine ears, o lying specter?  
Maiden – Eutychnus; it is I, Eliza.  
*Eutychnus* – Nay, I believe not; what proof canst thou give?  
Maiden – Here is the poem thou didst write for me In thine own hand.  
*Eutychnus* – Do not approach; put it o'er there.  
Maiden – There; read and see that it is I myself.  
*Eutychnus* – It is; it is in very truth! O Eliza! But how, who then – [Reads]  
Maiden – 'Twas my younger sister thou didst behold.  
She sealed her faith by death in the arena.  
The soldiers knew not whose body they gave,  
Thinking it mine, they surrendered my sister's.  
A guard, a Christian, didst help me escape  
With this my father, whom thou didst once meet  
When he returned from preaching in the east.  
Dost thou recall?  
*Eutychnus* - Indeed I do; I thought I knew thy face.  
But who was the young boy who brought me food

And washed my wound and dressed by bandages?  
Was it thou, Love, that silent vigil kept?  
Maiden – It was; and these salt tears did oft time flow  
For fear of losing thee, body and soul.  
But now nor life nor death may e'er us part;  
For God hath brought us both again from death  
And we shall live fore'er as man and wife,  
If, father, thou dost consent.  
*Lucellus* – I do, and may God his blessing bestow also.  
Come, let us to the brethren and inform Them of this good news.  
*Eutychnus* – Indeed, let us go. [Exit Lucellus]  
Maiden – Ah, Eutychnus.  
*Eutychnus* – Ay, m' love?  
Maiden – What colour is a melon?  
*Eutychnus* – A melon? Why they have orange flesh, of course.  
Why dost thou ask?

*Maiden* – O, never mind; tis nothing. [Exeunt]  
Enter Tupper  
*Tupper* – Thus ends our evening's story  
Of Christ's coming in clouds of glory.  
The chief object has been to see,  
How the Lamb of Calvary  
Could also the Lion of Judah be.  
Of Jews, perished eleven hundred thousand in Jerusalem alone,  
The murder of the Messiah to atone;  
Of Romans, who this life didst part asunder,  
Perhaps as many as half that number.  
Therefore ye people great and small,  
Kings, potentates, paupers, all,  
Be not foolish, receive instruction,  
Lest ye come to sudden destruction.  
What was true then is true today.  
Therefore, kiss the Son, his will obey.

**End**