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
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

The Destruction of Leviathan
Personae Dramatis

Nero Caesar, Emperor of Rome
Poppaea Sabina, Caesar’s wife
Otho, Emperor of Rome
Vitellius, Emperor of Rome
Seneca, Roman Senator and Tutor to Nero in his youth
Gallio, Roman Senator, former Consul of Achaia
Lucan, Famous Roman poet and nephew of Gallio and Seneca,
Borea, Paetus, Natalis, Scaevinus, Roman Senators
Senedio, Quintianus,
Tigellinus, Captain of the Praetorian Guard
Pontius Pilate, Procurator of the Jews
Gessius Florus, Procurator of the Jews
Marcus Antonius Julianus, Procurator of Judea during war
Flavius Vespasianus, General and later Emperor of Rome
Titus Flavius, Son of Vespasianus, General of Jewish war after father made Emperor
Tiberius Alexander, Commander under Titus of the Roman army
Larcius Lepidus, Commander of the tenth legion
Sextus Cerealis, Commander of fifth legion
Eternius, Commander of two legions come from Alexandria

Paulinus, Procclus, Advisors to Otho
Celsus, Titianus, Otho’s brother
Agrippa II, King of Chalclis
Bernice, Queen of Chalclis, Agrippa’s sister
Darius, Master of Agrippa’s horse
Phaon, Nero’s freedman
Epiphroditus, Nero’s secretary
Sphorus, Nero’s catamite

Amnas, Son of Seth,
Jesus, Son of Gamaliel, High Priests of the Jews
Matthias Son of Theophilus
Ismael
Helcias, Treasurer of Sacred Treasure - Roman Hostages & Instructors of Poppaea Sabina in Jewish Law and Custom
John of Gischala, Leader of the Galilean Rebels
Manneus, a defector from Jerusalem
Eutychus, a young man lately converted to Christ
Maiden, a young woman, daughter to Lucellus
Lucellus, father to Maiden

Christ, the Lord

Miscellaneous courtiers, soldiers, citizens, rebels

Introduction

Act I

Scene 1

Rome, Before the Imperial Palace

Helcias - Think thou that she will consent to move him?

Ismael - Yea, methinks she will.

Helcias - A deed unlike a woman’s nature tis.

Ismael - 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. Dest not recall Queen Athalath slew the royal seed to keep the throne herself, although they were her very grandchildren? Woman therefore should not rule but be ruled.

Helcias - Indeed, the law doth say no less.

Ismael - 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.

Helcias - What, view the corpse’s severed head?

Ismael - - 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. It was not the body alone, Who covered thee with his mother’s angry eye. Nay, certain she’ll not shrink from our errand.

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1 Matt. 26:64; Mk. 14:62; Rev. 1:7.
3 Matt. 10:23.
4 Matt. 16:27, 28; Jno. 21:22.
Tis suited to her ambition.

**Helcias** – Tis well she is a religious woman, 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’am?

**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?²

**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’am, 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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² 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.

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5 Noble Poppaea, wife of mighty Caesar, We give thee humble thanks for seeing us.

**Poppaea** – Ye are my honored guests; be seated, please. What is it ye asked to see me about?

**Helcias** – In questions of policy to intrude, Thou knowest that we durst never presume.

**Ismael** – However, there is a matter in which We may be able to render thee service.

**Helcias** – The late catastrophe hath made Rome restless; Untold numbers didst perish in the flames; Many hath their homes and possessions lost, Who now, in squallor, do huddle in tents, Their losses grieving and won’t be consoled.

**Ismael** – Riots occur for want of food and drink. Men comfort themselves by talk of revolt. A comet hath been seen; soothsayers claim It doth portend a change in government. Such rumors do excite the multitude And add to their unrest and agitation.

**Helcias** – Tis spoke abroad Caesar didst sing and play The “Sack of Troy” whilst Rome in flames didst perish, And verse compose praising the flower and beauty of the flames.

**Ismael** – Such charges Caesar’s enemies can use To stir up a revolt.

**Poppaea** – All this have I heard and the danger know. What do ye thus propose?

**Ismael** – Though in the light these things cannot be spoken And our words must needs be kept dark and brief, We will state facts and how they may be framed To help preserve Caesar’s power and throne.

**Poppaea** – Wouldst raise a phoenix from the sooty ash?

**Helcias** – Yea, not by magic, but by sacrifice.

**Ismael** – If Caesar would clear himself of the crime, The people should be offered a scapegoat.

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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?

**Ismael** – The Christians. They are hated by ye of this sect have spoken to me oft.

**Poppaea** – Ye are my honored guests; be seated, please.

**Helcias** – Tis well she is a religious woman Noble Poppaea, wife of mighty Caesar,

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**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.⁹ His enemies shall flee apace, And be ashamed for his face. Leviathan he shall slay¹⁰ The night of sin be turned to day,¹¹ Death shall yield up its hoard And man shall live forever more.¹²

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⁹ *Viz.*, Nero Caesar; II Thess. 2:1-8

¹⁰ Is. 27:1; Rom. 16:20

¹¹ Rom. 13:12

¹² 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, And his blood of them demand. The Bridegroom comes, heed his call, Babylon the Great shall fall. A footstool his enemies will be, His retribution all men see. Man to God will be restored, And Christ forevermore be Lord. Heavenly Jerusalem will descend, And the dwelling of God be with men.

13 Zech. 12:4  
14 Matt. 27:25  
15 Rev. 16:19; 18  
16 I Cor. 15:25; Heb. 2:8; Rom. 16:20  
17 Rev. 1:7  
18 Rev. 21:3  
19 I Cor. 3:13; Matt. 13:21

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, for the fire will test each of us and shew what sort we be, whether we have root or no. We must watch and pray.

1st Member – Soft, I hear footsteps. Enter, Eutychus [rushes in]

Eutychus – Eliza hath been seized with her parents and family!

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. What are we that Nero should hate us? It is not us the emperor raggeth 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.

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

1st Member – Someone go after him, he may do himself a harm in the state he is in. [Member exit]

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. 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

2d 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? Is it not us the emperor raggeth 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.

Eutychus – Burnt? Crucified?!
Lucan

– Yea, daily doth the conspiracy grow
And new adherents gain to freedom's cause. The Praetorian Praefect, Faenius Rufus, and consul-elect, Plautius Lateranus, both pledge their firm support
To depose the tyrant and enthrone instead.

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... The emperor, their whole estates escheat
To Caesar and his lying informants. Who can condemn such care for family?

Gallio

– An old song to a new tune doth contain
That thou art right. Eliza lives and reigns with Christ in Paradise;
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]

Eutychus

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

Leader

– It is Eliza. [Reads]

Gallio

– Of course; the office may wait. But
what of thee, thou'lt return to the fold, I trust; thy

Eutychus

– Nay, friend, I do not think I'll soon
approach the fire that burns Christians.

Leader

– Why? Where hast thou been these many days? We sought thee every where and feared ye'd done thyself a harm.

Eutychus

– For her fair beauty she was spared... Prithee, leave us. [Exeunt]

Seneca

– What news hast thou, kind Lucan?
Attend. Forgive me, please. [Exeunt Gallio and servant]

Lucan

– Doth my 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?

Leader

– Thus, Caesar burned Rome and Rome
burneth Christians.
Thou wast a tempest of wind and rain; I was lightening 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 ought 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, This foul and fulous hole seemeth like the very throat of hell. O that this loathed habitation thou might 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 adored, 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 stand that in the heavens burn 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 burneth for a moment and forever then are gone. Did thy guards find amusement to have thee in their power? Did by turns they each cast 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 debouch?

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. Like restless purgatorial spirit, whose sins must be atoned,

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,

31 “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 confessors against the coming persecution, in which many would suffer death.

32 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)

Senecio – What dost thou propose, Scaevinus?

Quintianus – Should we like noble Brutus slay ourselves?

Natalis – Tis certain Nero fearsome tortures will inflict if he arrest us.

Scaevinus – Yea, but what if we turn informers first? We have not yet come to so desperate a resort. Let us entreat for mercy and implead the others in ransom for our own lives. What do ye say, are ye in or out?

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 be accused.

Natalis – Yea, and I; I want not to die of torture. 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...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.

Scaevinus – Then let us make what changes in our wills each seeth fit and meet six hours hence. [Exeunt]

Scene IV

Rome, A Street at Night

Barea – Yea, Comfort is the god that ruleth men's hearts and doth make cowards of their consciences.

Scene III

Rome, Imperial Palace

Tigellinus – And what of Seneca, m' lord?

Nero – Our clemency doth permit that he be slain. But his veins himself and die by his own hand.

Tigellinus – And Lucan?

Nero – Our heads to the emperor. Do them away; let no one speak with them. There is more they can tell us, I am sure. [Exeunt centurion with Scaevinus, Natalis, Quintianus, and Senecio bound.]

Exeunt Nero, Tigellinus, and Centurion, with Scaevinus, Natalis, Quintianus, and Senecio bound.
Scene V

Rome, a tavern.

Enter Eutychus

Tavern keeper – Look ye merry mates, ’tis our Eutychus; didst not you he wouldst come? How now, Eutychus, thou art late tonight and didst make us thoukst wouldst not come.

Eutychus – 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.

Eutychus – 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.

Eutychus – Didst wait for me? Indeed, now am I touched And protest that ye do not sing 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,
When the daughters fatter did grow,
Till finally one day they did burst.
And what made matters still worse
The blast rerouted the mill’s waters!

[They fight; Eutychus is smitten.]

Barea – I am slain! [Exit]

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.

Paetus – The gods grant better times in days to come.

Berea – Yes, Paetus, I bid thee fare well; good night. [Exit]

3d Patron – Ay, another song would we have of thee.

Eutychus – More merriment anon; I now must drink. Keeper, pour me some wine to make me merry That I may sing and mine heart may rejoice.

Enter Soldiers


2nd Soldier – Ay, that was a pretty one; like none I have seen before or will see the likes again.

1st Soldier – Indeed, fairer than any I hath set eye on she was. Like Diana herself.

2nd Soldier – ’T was a shame seen’ her go that way. Pitifull sight it was. Ah, well, let us drink to her. A toast to her that was most fair; to Diana of the Christians.


1st Soldier – Get thee gone, wench, and put a rag in that mouth of thine; we’ll be havin’ none of thy saucy talk this evenin’.

2nd Soldier – Do ye hear that, ye all? They be toastin’ Diana of the Christians, they be. Wondrous fair, was she, says they. Why, thou wouldst think they were drinkin’ to me, thou wouldst, being how she was wondrous fair and all. Fancy that, me beautiful as Diana.

1st Patron – Wondrous fair, didst say? Tell us of her, friends; certain ’tis a story we be wantin’ to hear.

Patrons – Ay, tell of Diana of the Christians.

2nd Soldier – A beauty, she was; fair as the moon in a wintry sky. Eyes had she like sapphire; and her hair glistened like it was spun with opals, it did. Ah, that was a beauty, that one was.

1st 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.

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

1st Soldier – ’T was a long time ago, man; afore the Saturnalia last, it was.

Eutychus – Saturnalia, didst say? Wast crucified Uncovered, didst say? What was her name, man?

2nd Soldier – Her name? I don’t be recallin’ her name.

[They fight; Eutychus is smitten.]

Eutychus – I am slain! [Exit]

Paetus – Oh, my friend Barea, do not fight. They have five fat and fulsome daughters. They didst confess with thy own mouth. [They fight; Eutychus is smitten.]

Barea – 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. Although small consolation it afford, Let us be constant thereunto.

Paetus – The gods grant better times in days to come.

Berea – Yea, Paetus, I bid thee fare well; good night. [Exit]

[Tacitus, *Annals*, XLVI-XLVII]
Eutychus—What if they claim they have not the money?

Florus—I shall have them pay the full amount, as they are always the same. My beloved, keep your counsel and instruction in mind. Avoid giving them any treatment, as they are a conquered people and nation. We must rule them 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. But... I will not be swayed by their demands. The more I rule with cruelty, the more they will repent. I will not... have mercy on them. They must be ruled with strength, but also fairness. They are a conquered people and nation, and cannot but resent all Romans sorely. And... we must be... strict with them. We must be... strict with them.

Florus—Yea, I know the resentment they bear. But... I will not be swayed by their demands. The more I rule with cruelty, the more they will repent. I will not... have mercy on them. They must be ruled with strength, but also fairness. They are a conquered people and nation, and cannot but resent all Romans sorely.

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doctors 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!

9th 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 cutpurse 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!

10th – 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, Eder of the people

Eder – 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. Florus – Save your empty courtesies for yourselves, I’ll not be flattered or put off by you Jews. I sent for seventeen talents of gold For Rome and Caesar and ye did refuse. Yea, and the people didst insolently Abuse us and upbraid our person and Bist us come, that we should thus be stoned. Here I am; where now are your lofty boasts And those proud speeches?

Matthias – We pray thy grace that, in thy clemency, Thou wouldst forgive thy servants’ trespass. We had no gold at hand to meet thy grace’s Demand, except the sacred money paid Into the temple, which our law doth not Permit us to touch.

Florus – Rome doth in ashes lie and her subjects Hoard up gold. I care not whence ye get it, Only so that it be presently paid.

Matthias – All will be paid; we pray thou wouldst have patience.

Florus – Look ye to it and see that it be done. Now, deliver up them that did abuse Our person yesterday with mocks and taunts, For we will not wink at their insolence.

Matthias – M’ lord, the people shew all due subjectation To Roman rule and seek only peace, As do thy servants. There always are found Amidst the vines some thieves that do grow. The lord of the vineyard should not trouble Himself, but leave them to his husbandmen. Leave these proud boosters to us; we will see That they are gathered up and duly dealt with.

Florus – Nay, but we shall deal with them ourselves And ye shall deliver them up this day!

Matthias – M’ lord, we know not the names of those who Reproached thee, nor is it a matter for A single day, but they must be sought out, Arrested and in due course each one tried.

Florus – Ye shall and would buy time till my wrath hath past. Now, therefore, deliver them up or I Shall give my soldiers orders to arrest 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. Stay 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. Stole 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!

[Shouts and acclamations from crowd]

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 cutpurse thief? Who will obey him in this matter, who?

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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]
And give you thanks for bidding us welcome. Here are our refreshments. Please, help yourselves.

Mathaias: Thou art most gracious; we return the compliment. We are glad to see thee, lady. We trust thy journey was safe and uneventful. 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 to be borne.

Mathaias: What news whilst we were gone? Has all been well?

Agrippa: 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... most barbarous of late. Above three thousand were cut down by soldiers on Florus' orders, and hundreds crucified.

Bernice: I was not aware that women, children and elders were among those whom you crucified.

Agrippa: The sword, like pestilence, doth not distinguish 'twixt age and sex, but doth consume alike all whom it chance to meet in its dread path. The bitterness of war is like the scorching heat of the desert, sweet like love and soft like women, men would not soon persuaded from it be. I trow thou art not ignorant of this.

Bernice: 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... holdings and interests in this place. This day's events were necessary to destroy those that would raise insurrection.

Agrippa: I did not know the Roman senate hadst declared against Rome. M' lord, I do beseech thee, have mercy. Your grace, I pray thee, have mercy.

Mathaias: Florus sought gold from the sacred treasure, Feigning Caesar did require money. Diverse of our people railed upon him; some took up alms as if Florus were poor. When we did not deliver them to him, they crucified those that they caught who were crucified. What could provoke so great a massacre?
These soldiers' hatred for our nation hath occasioned manifold disturbances and bear much blame in bringing us near to war. When died my father, they saw an opportunity to send the soldiers to Pontus in punishment for their insolent acts. But he did not 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. This is an evil that we cannot neglect. For ye cannot be ignorant that war will come if our course be not corrected. Indeed, I fear it is already too late.

Why can not Florus be amended, lord? If ambassadors be sent to Caesar, surely he will correct or remove Florus. If he doth not, then we must take another course.

We have near Caesar Poppea Sabina. Might not we Caesar's wife approach for help? These submit not from effeminacy of mind nor yet for frailty of body nor nakedness of land, but from respect for their nations have toward the Roman army. These are maintained by twelve-hundred troops. The Germans, though they be fierce and wild than untamed beasts, and have mountains and rivers like to walls about them, are now held in subjection by eight thousand men. And the Danube, their boundary is northward. And, as if these were not enough, they searched for yet another habitable world, 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. For ye now suffer but the infringement of your ancestral rights and liberties. If this be the case, then be thy ships not lost? 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. The Danube is their boundary northward.
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 rebuke? 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.

Florus – What news, centurion, hast thou today?

Centurion – The nation of the Jews are up in arms; They have revolted and prepare for war.

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, Askalon, 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... 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]

Lucellus – My father, will he live?

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 Maiden 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 Eutychus we found near dead;

A sword wound in his side and a contusion Upon his head and face where he didst fall.

I’st Member – Eutychus! Nay, it cannot be; he disappeared months ago and hath not been seen.

2d Member – Eutychus, didst say? Didst hear that all? The young man Eutychus 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.
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.
1st Member: Lucellus, there is news from Jerusalem.
Lucellus: Indeed, I had not heard; what news?
Leader: — The land is in revolt. The days of wrath and vengeance are now come. What news of the church and the brethren?
Lucellus: Of Esau's swinish seed that they are thus? We are the people's lawful governors. Does the report of the church and the brethren reach thee?
Leader: — What blindness doth best this hour to view? What blindness doth the seed of Esau thus? What blindness doth best this hour to view? We are the people's lawful governors. Does the report of the church and the brethren reach thee?
Lucellus: One thing I know, the seed of Esau thus. What blindness doth best this hour to view? We are the people's lawful governors. Does the report of the church and the brethren reach thee?
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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 Caiphas, is slain. With high priests and council members not a few. M’ kord, 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; 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]

Josephus, Wars, IV, v, 1-3.

Scene VIII

A room in Rome

Enter Lucellus and Maiden

Lucellus – Come, we must look in upon the young man. 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]

Lucellus – 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 thee.

Eutychus – Mine eyes, I cannot see.

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

Lucellus – We found thee collapsed outside on the street.

Eutychus – 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]

Josephus, Wars, IV, v, 1-3.

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.

Phaon – Alack the day; Fate hath decreed mine end! A corpse beside the road didst startle mine horse And mine hood fell from my head as he passed by. Thou shalt die like a dog, cut down in the streets; Thy corpse cast out naked, food for wild beasts; Doth nature also hate and torment me?

Phaon – Thou wouldst be torn to pieces; art thou mad? Awake, Nero, thou dost dream idle dreams; The end is come, is come.

Josephus, Wars, IV, v, 1-3.

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]

Josephus, Wars, IV, v, 1-3.
Nero – I sink, I sink; o help! Earth ope it's 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 stick in this deep mud.

Nero – I thirst; have we some water?

Phaon – This marsh is foul and its waters sink. 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 Poppea moved me to murder! Yester night I dreamed that Octavia Came from the realm in fever 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. Do not 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 [ly ing 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?

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

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

Scene XI

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 to 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.

Centurion – None yet, m’ lord.

– Ah, I didst hear a signal that someone flourished without messenger.

– M’ lord, word from the battle lines.

– Alack, m’ lord, the day is lost!

– Forty-thousand slain; nay, it cannot be. Tis a complete rout; our troops have all fled. The roads are clogged with dead; forty-thousand have fallen down slain.

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 the battle and the day’s events.

Centurion – There are fresh troops in abundance, my lord. All is not lost; do not lose heart. Though the loss be great we’ve only begun. We shall have four times as many as there are now.

– 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.

And fane would bring this war to prompt conclusion. Therefore let soldiers gird their glistening swords; let swords drip with blood. Make 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 II

Otho’s tent, a field near Bedriacum

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

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 wane thereof. Their whole advantage, therefore, is in haste. Our forces have not yet attained full strength and daily grow 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.

[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?
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 - Auxillaries 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 debouches 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 his rival he should be ousted 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 - We shall assemble Rome and the Senate And surrender the imperial power 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 - 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.

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 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 - 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 war. My term of office is ended. The sun is set on Otho; the day is done. For the sake of Rome I'll have run. Come dagger, thy point a last office fill; Upon thee shall I fall and this body kill.

[Exeunt with family]

Vitellius - This news thou dost bring is both bad and good. Maintaining loyalty unto their oaths.

Vitellius - The day belongs unto the Flavians. 2d Senator - Indeed; but note how the soldiers complain. They seem unwilling to concede defeat.

Vitellius - The day belongs unto the Flavians. We should to Sabinus' house and salute The family of the next emperor.

2d Senator - The day belongs unto the Flavians. We should to Sabinus' house and salute The family of the next emperor.

Vitellius - 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, Otho hath slain himself And the senate declared thee emperor.

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. [Exeunt]

Scene VI

Enter Vitellius with wife and children, citizens, senate, consul, and soldiers assembled.

Vitellius - The legions 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. [Exeunt]

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.
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 city, and there was caught by the soldiers, and was cast upon the Gemonian stairs.

Vitellius—Vespasian’s brother murdered in cold blood, who didst no part take in our civil war. Reduce his fame to dust, and let his name fall to the ground; for he was a traitor to his country.

[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 in the windows.

Wife—Why, what to such great choler 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...
Eutychus. I mean in mine head I compose poems. Something to break up the monotony.

Eutychus. Alright. This one is in the Latin tongue. It is nothing, just something to kill the time.

Amor eiorum tempestas ubi mixta sunt elementa
Terra, ventus, ignis et aqua.

Lucellus. It hath a ring; but how doth it translate?

Eutychus. He is the wind Earth, wind, fire and water.

Lucellus. And thou didst make this for a girl?

Eutychus. Too painful. As I didst say, she is now dead.

Lucellus. I see. I am sorry for thee.

Eutychus. To see again; how glorious the maiden lived. Alas, but she is gone.

Lucellus. Doth she have something to do with thee?

Eutychus. To tell him this, father?

Lucellus. I go to tell him presently. Come hence. But say no word while I do tell him this.

Lucellus. Nay, but it is, else thou wouldst not hide it so. Give it me.

Maiden. Oh, I see; a love poem is it not?

Lucellus. Ay, father, it is.

Lucellus. Well now, give me thy words of love. Doth write without eyes and paper or ink? [Signals Maiden to leave; exit Maiden]

Maiden. Thou hast told him this, father?

Maiden. To no one, father; I spoke with myself.

Lucellus. What hast thou there? What is it thou dost read?

Maiden. Softly she cometh whom my heart doth love.

Maiden. Ah, I see; a love poem is it not?

Maiden. With no one, father. I spoke with myself.

Maiden. What if thou couldst read?

Lucellus. What kind of poem?

Maiden. The tender agonies of love are sweet.

Maiden. Enter Lucellus

Lucellus. Good my lord, is a poem. A piece of melon? Nay, not melon, sure. For melon is green. Thus, my mouth is red, like the plum, but my tongue is green like melon. Red and green; nay, I do not much like that.

Maiden. I am hers; she is mine; our hearts are one.

Maiden. I found this poem from my love; softest she cometh whom my heart doth love.

Lucellus. What kind of poem was that?

Maiden. Not a poem, my lord. I fear that thou knowest the meaning of a poem.

Maiden. Didst thou see wither flew the one I love? I will pursue her unto the earth’s end. I see her now, I call to her, see her turn; Her smile makes my breast swell and heart leap. Why are thine eyes glassy with tears, my love? "My tears are tears of joyousness and love."

Lucellus. Is not the tongue coloured like cantaloupe? I suppose my tongue hath been green sometimes when I didst eat something bad or been ill, but I would not have him write it in a poem. Certain is he meant cantaloupe.

Maiden. Indeed, I am certain of it.

Lucellus. Enter Lucellus

Lucellus. Thy words are sweet and honeyed words of love.

Maiden. He is the wind Earth, wind, fire and water.

Maiden. What kind of poem was that?

Lucellus. To see again; how glorious the maiden lived. Alas, but she is gone.

Lucellus. I am hers; she is mine; our hearts are one.

Lucellus. Whence didst heav’n place in man’s breast this insatiable need?

Maiden. Enter Lucellus

Lucellus. Dost write without eyes and paper or ink?

Maiden. Wherefore didst heav’n place in man’s breast this insatiable need?

Maiden. The tender agonies of love are sweet.

Maiden. With no one, father. I spoke with myself.

Lucellus. What hast thou there? What is it thou dost read?

Maiden. What kind of poem was that?

Lucellus. Good my lord, is a poem. A poem of such sweet and honeyed words.

Maiden. He is the wind Earth, wind, fire and water.

Maiden. What news of the world; canst thou tell me of the outside? I yearn something to learn beyond this room.

Lucellus. Vespasian doth remain in Egypt still Consolidating power and control. Domitian acts in his behalf in Rome, As do his commanders in the late war. He hath . . .

Maiden. i found this poem from my love; softest she cometh whom my heart doth love.

Lucellus. What kind of poem was that?

Maiden. The tender agonies of love are sweet.

Maiden. What news of the world; canst thou tell me of the outside? I yearn something to learn beyond this room.
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?

Larcius 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, Such that there want crosses for the bodies And room for the crosses.

Scene IV

Enter Captain

Titus – Yes, what is it?

Captain – There is escaped to us one Maneus, 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 Maneus; Maneus prostrates himself before Titus.]

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

Maneus – God be gracious to thee who hast made thee the head of Rome and lord of all the earth. Forth from the gate that I had charge wast borne One hundred and fifteen thousand dead, And now there are not less than six hundred thousand dead.

Tiberius Alexander – Six hundred thousand dead! Can it be so?

Maneus – Ay, good my lord, I warrant thee tis true. And these be those only carried without; Many thousands more there are dead within, Mostly the poor who have none to bury them, Laid up inside houses like mausoleums, So that the whole city is filled with death.

Titus – The conditions, what of those, man, tell us.

Maneus – There is no crime that is not practiced there. The seditious are turned into despots; They kill whom they will without fear or care. They note anyone that can pay; They employ the butchers and bakers And fill up the cities with human flesh. Ten thousand murders did they perpetrate Afore the famine, which now their work doeth, Devouring whole families at once.

Nowhere doth food appear but it is seized And fighting doth break out to get one morsel. The robbers roam about searching men's homes. Many are no more than ten years old, 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!

Maneus – Nay, but in truth, it's true, truly. They rob both strangers and citizens, And what they rob is carried off with their lives. In the streets they sell to one another, And all of them are caught and crucified.

And then the people, they will not eat The food that is put forth. They eat instead of it 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.

Maneus – I give thee thank, m' lord.

Titus – [To captain] See that he is escorted safely hence.  [Exit with captain]

Scene V

South-west of Jerusalem, overlooking the Valley of Hinnom

Enter Titus, commanders, etc.

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 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 seethe with hideous death?

Sextus Cerealis – Come, lord, away; this is no place for man.

Tiberius Alexander – They call it the valley of Hinnom; 'Tis there the dead are cast, and so called, "Calamace," in their tongue.

Titus – Ye gods above that mortal men give breath, What place is this that doth seethe with hideous death?

Sextus Cerealis – Come, lord, away; this is no place for man.

Tiberius Alexander – They call it the valley of Hinnom; 'Tis there the dead are cast, and so called, "Calamace," in their tongue.

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Titus – Ye gods above that mortal men give breath, What place is this that doth seethe with hideous death?

Sextus Cerealis – Come, lord, away; this is no place for man.  [Exeunt]

Notes:

43 Josephus, Wars, V, xi, 1.

44 Josephus, Wars, V, xiii, 7.

45 Josephus, Wars V, x, 1-3.

46 Isa. 30: 31-33; 37:36.
For the great crimes committed in this place.

Titus – Has heaven said that? Then let it be done. I will. The high places be brought down and the valleys fill between. Each stone must be removed and none remain.

The walls the Jews raise throughout the world Would abruptly cease if it were destroyed.

Titus – Yes, say on; what is it.

Messenger – M' lord, fierce fighting hath occupied the temple.

Titus – Then Providence hath already decreed what we in counsel didst think to decide.

Messenger – M' lord there's more.

Say on.

Messenger – There came a Jew defecting unto our side, Who told that their lawgiver didst foretell, And Jewish prophets long ago declare, That this temple and city should thus be burned, Its stones removed, and plowed like to a field. The Tower Antonia

Titus – How goes the battle? What progress?

Enter Titus, with principal commanders, et alia

Tiberius Alexander – The whole city is ours, saving the temple and upper city. The inner temple walls and our rams were brought, And battered the walls, but shewed no progress.

Titus – Good; we shall make assault tomorrow.

The Tower Antonia

Larcius 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 temple we must make a breach in it, 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.

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...almost compelled to bring it down. For if it stand, their rebellious temper Will soon break out again and come to war.

Titus – Can hell hold horrors greater than this? Virgil describeth it as a great cavern, Debouching noxious fumes to heaven's vault, Whose vapors kill all birds that fly through, And terrors hold for damned men in Tartarus.

For the great crimes committed in this place.  

[Exeunt]

[Scene VII]

Larcius Lepidus – Pray, lord, let us depart How often didst we offer terms of peace That were rejected and were scorned and mocked, Saying they had God for their assistance. Yet am I disappointed with myself And am unhappy of the one I lost, For I did not play the fool and err greatly.

Titus – Have fire brought and let this place be burned, Lest pestilence break out among our host. The gods for our assistance I do pray, Nor 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 VIII

Jerusalem

[Exeunt]

Scene IX

Rome, home of Lucellus

Enter Lucellus and Eutychus

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? Eutychus – At one time this was true, but now no more.

Lucellus – The wonderful light is back 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.

Titus – The eyes provide the poet inspiration.
Eutychus – Mine eyes are yet somewhat blurry; tell me,  
Thy face, do not I know thee from somewhere?

Enter Maiden

Forsworn 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.

Eutychus – Nay, she is dead; I saw and kissed  
her corse, And this her spirit is, returned hence from Elysium, I know not how.

Lucellus – Her corse thou didst behold and touch?

Eutychus – Yea, in the vault, beneath a shroud, I saw it.

Lucellus – Didst thou remove the shroud?

Eutychus – Nay, I durst not presume –

Maiden – Eutychus.

Eutychus – Deceivest thou mine ears, o lying specter?

Maiden – Eutychus; it is I, Eliza.

Eutychus – Nay, I believe not; what proof canst thou give?

Maiden – Here is the poem thou didst write for me  
In thine own hand.

Eutychus – Do not approach; put it o’er there.

Maiden – There; read and see that it is I myself.

Eutychus – 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?

Maiden – Ah, Eutychus.

Eutychus – Ay, m’ love?

Maiden – What colour is a melon?

Eutychus – A melon? Why they have orange flesh, of course.  
Why dost thou ask?

And washed my wound and dressed by bandages?  
Was it thou, Love, that silent vigil kept?

Maiden – It was; and these salt tears did off time flow  
For fear of losing thee, body and soul.  
But now not 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.

Eutychus – Indeed, let us go. [Exit Lucellus]

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