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*FERNEY EDITION of the WORKS OF*  
*VOLTAIRE*

*Limited to one hundred and ninety copies*

No. 18







J. M. Moreau le Jeune.

D. e. Lannay Sculp.

O, MY LORD! YOU ARE PALE  
AND BLOODY, AND FROZEN WITH HOR-  
ROR!

SÉMIRAMIS, ACT V



FERNEY EDITION

THE WORKS OF

# VOLTAIRE

A CONTEMPORARY VERSION

WITH NOTES, BY TOBIAS SMOLLETT, REVISED AND MODERNIZED  
NEW TRANSLATIONS BY WILLIAM F. FLEMING, AND AN  
INTRODUCTION BY OLIVER H. G. LEIGH

A CRITIQUE AND BIOGRAPHY

BY

THE RT. HON. JOHN MORLEY

*FORTY-TWO VOLUMES*

TWO HUNDRED DESIGNS, COMPRISING REPRODUCTIONS OF RARE OLD  
ENGRAYINGS, STEEL PLATES, PHOTOGRAVURES,  
AND CURIOUS FAC-SIMILES

VOLUME XVII

E. R. DUMONT

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THE DRAMATIC WORKS

OF

VOLTAIRE

IN FIVE VOLUMES

VOL. III



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# ALZIRE

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

DON GUZMAN, Governor of Peru.

DON ALVAREZ, { Father of Guzman, and late  
Governor.

ZAMOR, Sovereign of a Part of Potosi.

MONTEZUMA, Sovereign of another Part.

ALZIRE, Daughter of Montezuma.

EMIRA,

CEPHALE. } Attendants on Alzire.

SPANISH Officers.

AMERICANS.

---

### SCENE, LIMA.

---

In his preface to this play Voltaire says; "This tragedy, the fable of which is invented, and almost of a new species, was written with a view of showing how far superior the spirit of true religion is to the light of nature. The religion of a barbarian consists in offering up to his gods the blood of his enemies; a Christian badly instructed has seldom much more humanity: to be a strict observer of some unnecessary rites and ceremonies, and at the same time deficient in the most essential duties, to say certain prayers at particular times, and carefully to conceal his vices; this is his religion: that of a true Christian is to look upon all mankind as his brethren, to do them all the good in his power and pardon their offences: such is *Guzman* at the hour of death, and *Alvarez* during the whole course of his life; such a man was Henry IV., as I have described him, even with all his foibles: in every part of my writings I have endeavored to enforce that humanity which ought to be the distinguishing characteristic of a thinking being: the reader will always find in them (if I may venture to say so much of my own works) a desire to promote the happiness of all men, and an *abhorrence* of injustice and oppression: it is this, and this alone, which hath hitherto saved them from that obscurity to which their many imperfections would otherwise long since have condemned them."

# ALZIRE.

## ACT I. SCENE I.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN.

ALVAREZ.

At length, for so the council hath decreed,  
Guzman succeeds Alvarez; long, my son,  
Mayest thou preserve for heaven and for thy king  
This better half of our new conquered world,  
This fertile source of riches and of crimes!  
Joyful to thee I yield the post of honor,  
That suits but ill with feeble age like mine;  
In youth thy father trod the paths of glory;  
Alvarez first our winged castles bore  
To Mexico's astonished sons; he led  
Spain's gallant heroes to this golden shore:  
After a life spent in my country's service,  
Could I have formed these heroes into men,  
Could I have made them virtuous, mild, and good,  
I had been amply paid for all my toils:  
But who shall stop the haughty conqueror?  
Alas! my son, their cruelties obscure  
The lustre of their fame; I weep the fate  
Of these unhappy victors, raised by heaven  
To greatness but to be supremely wicked.  
O Guzman, I am verging to the grave,  
Let me but live to see thee govern here  
As justice shall direct thee, and I die  
With pleasure.

GUZMAN.

By thy great example fired,  
 With thee I fought and conquered for my country;  
 From thee must learn to rule: it is not mine  
 To give the wise and good Alvarez laws,  
 But to receive them from him.

ALVAREZ.

No; my son,  
 The sovereign power can never be divided:  
 Worn down with years and labor, I resign  
 All worldly pomp; it is enough for me  
 If yet my feeble voice be sometimes heard  
 To counsel and direct thee; trust me, Guzman,  
 Men are not creatures one would wish to rule:  
 To that almighty being, whom too long  
 I have neglected, would I consecrate  
 My poor remains of life; one boon alone,  
 As friend, I ask of thee, as father claim;  
 To give me up those slaves who by your order  
 Are here confined; this day, my son, should be  
 A day of pardon, marked by clemency,  
 And not by justice.

GUZMAN.

A request from you  
 Is a command; but think, my lord, I beg,  
 What dangers may ensue: a savage people,  
 But half subdued, and to the yoke of slavery  
 Bending reluctant, ready for revolt,  
 Should never be familiar with their conquerors,  
 Or dare to look on those they should be taught  
 To tremble at: unarmed with power and vengeance  
 They would despise us: these untutored Indians,  
 Fiery and bold, ill brook the galling rein

Of servitude, by chastisement alone  
 Made tame, and humble, pardoned once, they think  
 You fear them; power, in short, is lost by mildness;  
 Severity alone insures obedience.  
 The brave Castilian serves in honor's cause,  
 With cheerful resignation, 'tis his pride,  
 His glory; but inferior nations court  
 Oppression; force and only force constrains them:  
 Did not the gods of these barbarians drink  
 The blood of men, they would not be adored.

## ALVAREZ.

And can a Christian, as thou art, approve  
 These tyrant maxims, the detested offspring  
 Of narrow policy? are these the means  
 To win the wild barbarian to our faith?  
 Thinkest thou to rule them with an iron hand,  
 And serve a God of peace with war and slaughter?  
 Braved I for this the burning tropic's rage,  
 And all the terrors of a world unknown,  
 To see our country cursed, our faith disgraced?  
 God sent us here for other purposes,  
 Sent us to make his holy name revered,  
 His sacred laws beloved: whilst we, my son,  
 Unmindful of that faith which we profess,  
 The laws we teach, and all the tender ties  
 Of soft humanity, insatiate still  
 For blood and gold, instead of winning o'er  
 These savages by gentle means, destroy them.  
 All is confusion, death, and horror round us,  
 And nought have we of heaven but its thunder;  
 Our name indeed bears terror with it; Spain  
 Is feared, but hated too: we are the scourge  
 Of this new world, vain, covetous, unjust;  
 In short, I blush to own it, we alone

Are the barbarians here: the simple savage,  
 Though fierce by nature, is in courage equal,  
 In goodness our superior. O my Guzman,  
 Had he, like us, been prodigal of blood,  
 Had he not felt the throbs of tender pity,  
 Alvarez had not lived to speak his virtues:  
 Hast thou forgot that day, when by a crowd  
 Of desperate natives I was circled in  
 On every side, and all my faithful band  
 Of followers cut off; alone I stood,  
 And every moment looked for death, when, lo;  
 At mention of my name, they dropped their arms;  
 And straight a young American approached me,  
 Embraced my knees, and bathed them with his  
 tears;

And "is it you," he cried, "is it my friend?  
 Live, good Alvarez, virtue pure as thine  
 May be most useful to us; be a father  
 To the unhappy; let thy tyrant nation,  
 That would enslave us, learn from hence—to par-  
 don,

And own a savage capable of virtue."

I see you are moved; O hearken to the voice  
 Of mild humanity, by me she speaks,  
 By me addresses Guzman; O my son,  
 Canst thou expect the object of thy wishes,  
 The fair Alzire ever will crown thy hopes,  
 If thou art cruel? thinkest thou to cement  
 The dearest bonds of nature in the blood  
 Of her loved countrymen, or shall their groans  
 Be heard, and Guzman soften into mercy?

GUZMAN.

'Tis your command, my lord, and I submit;  
 They have their freedom, but on this condition,

For so our laws require, they must be Christians:  
 To quit their idols, and embrace our faith,  
 Alone can save them; we must bend by force  
 Their stubborn hearts, and drag them to the altar;  
 One king must be obeyed, one God adored.

ALVAREZ.

Hear me, my son, I wish, as much as Guzman,  
 That truth may fix her sacred empire here,  
 That neither heaven nor Spain henceforth may find  
 A foe on earth; but know, the heart oppressed  
 Is never conquered: I force none, yet I  
 Have conquered many; the true God, my son,  
 The God of Christians is a God of mercy.

GUZMAN.

You've conquered, sir, the father over his son  
 Is absolute; and you, my lord, would soften  
 The hardest heart, whilst virtue by Alvarez  
 In mildest accents pleads her powerful cause:  
 O since kind heaven to thee hath lent the art  
 Of soft persuasion, use it for thy son,  
 On thee alone depends the happiness  
 Of Guzman's life: the proud Alzire scorns  
 My proffered hand: I love her but too well,  
 Heaven knows how dearly! but I cannot stoop  
 Meanly to sooth a haughty woman's pride,  
 I cannot make myself a poor tame slave  
 To her imperious will; but thou hast power  
 O'er the fair tyrant's father; talk to him  
 For the last time; let him command his daughter  
 To take my hand, and make your Guzman happy;  
 And yet it hurts my soul to think Alvarez  
 Should stoop so low, and be a suppliant for me.

ALVAREZ.

Already I have spoke, and Montezuma  
 Hath seen his daughter; she will soon be thine.  
 I've been a friend to his unhappy race,  
 And soothed the sorrows of captivity:  
 Already he hath quitted his false gods;  
 Alzire too, a convert to our faith,  
 To this new world shines forth a bright example.  
 She only can unite the jarring nations,  
 And make us happy; thy long wished-for nuptials  
 Shall join two distant globes; these fierce bar-  
     barians,  
 Who now detest our laws, when they shall see  
 The daughter of their king in Guzman's arms,  
 Cheerful beneath thy easy yoke shall bend  
 Their willing hearts, and soon be all our own:  
 But Montezuma comes; away, my son,  
 Expect me with Alzire at the altar.

## SCENE II.

—

ALVAREZ, MONTEZUMA.

ALVAREZ.

At length, obedient to a father's will,  
 Alzire yields, I hope, to thy persuasion.

MONTEZUMA.

If yet my daughter trembles at the thought  
 Of wedding him who has destroyed her race,  
 Alvarez will forgive a woman's weakness;  
 For thou hast been a father to the wretched:  
 Thy gentle manners teach us to revere  
 That holy faith from whence they sprung; by thee  
 The will of heaven to this new world revealed,

Enlightened our dark minds ; what mighty Spain  
 Unconquered left, thy virtue has subdued :  
 Thy cruel countrymen's remorseless rage  
 Had rendered even thy God detestable,  
 But that in thee His great perfections shine,  
 His goodness, and His mercy ; in thy heart  
 We trace his image ; Montezuma's thine,  
 His daughter, and his house ; the good Alvarez  
 Shall have them all : Potosi and Peru,  
 With my Alzire, shall descend to Guzman :  
 Prepare the nuptial rites, adorn your temple,  
 And let your son be ready to receive her :  
 Methinks it is as if the immortal beings  
 Had deigned to visit earth, and mix with men.

ALVAREZ.

O Montezuma, let me live to see  
 This blest event, and I shall die content.  
 O God, whose gracious hand conducted us  
 To this new world, enlighten and preserve it ;  
 Propitious smile on these first holy vows  
 Made at thy altar here ! adieu, my friend,  
 To thee I owe my Guzman's happiness.

### SCENE III.

—

MONTEZUMA.

[*Alone.*

O thou true God, whose powerful arm destroyed  
 Those idle deities I once adored,  
 Watch o'er the poor remains of my sad life,  
 And sooth my sorrows ; I have lost my all,  
 All but Alzire, O protect her youth,  
 Watch o'er her steps, and guide her tender heart !

## SCENE IV.

MONTEZUMA, ALZIRE.

MONTEZUMA.

Daughter, the hour is come to make thyself  
 And the world happy, to command the conqueror,  
 And make the vanquished smile, restore thy country  
 To her lost honor, and to regal power  
 Rise from the bosom of adversity.  
 Alzire will obey, I know she will;  
 Dry up thy tears, a father must not see them.

ALZIRE.

I have no will but yours; yet, O my lord,  
 See my despair, and look into my soul.

MONTEZUMA.

No more of that; thy word is passed, Alzire,  
 And I depend on it.

ALZIRE.

'Twas extorted from me;  
 The cruel sacrifice: is this a time  
 To plight my faith, and think of nuptial joy,  
 This hapless day, when all I held most dear  
 Was ravished from me, when our wide-stretched  
     empire  
 And all her hosts, the children of the sun,  
 Inglorious fell beneath the cruel Guzman?  
 O 'twas a day marked by the hand of heaven  
 As most unfortunate.

MONTEZUMA.

Our days, Alzire,  
 Are happy or unhappy from ourselves,

And not from circumstance or accident,  
As superstition taught our ancestors  
To credit; think no more on it.

ALZIRE.

On this day  
My Zamor fell, our country's great avenger,  
My lover, chosen by thee, by thee, my father,  
To be Alzire's husband.

MONTEZUMA.

I have paid  
The debt of sorrow due to Zamor's ashes,  
And hold his memory dear; but death has cancelled  
Your mutual bonds; therefore no longer shed  
Those fruitless tears, but carry to the altar  
A free and cheerful heart; thy God commands,  
He calls thee to him; if thou art a Christian,  
Now hear his voice.

ALZIRE.

Alas! my lord, I know  
A father's power, and know my duty to him,  
'Tis to obey, to fall a sacrifice  
Before him; I have passed the utmost bounds  
Which nature ever prescribed; thy will alone  
Hath been my law, nor did I ever stain  
With disobedience my true faith, for thee  
I left my country's gods, and am a Christian:  
Alas! my father, why wouldst thou deceive me,  
Why tell me, the new deity I serve  
Would bring me peace, that his all-healing power  
Would ease my tortured heart? delusive promise!  
For O my lord, the deadly poison still  
Lurks in my veins, still Zamor's image dwells  
In his Alzire's heart, nor time nor death

Can e'er efface it: well I know Alvarez  
 Condemns that passion which he once approved:  
 But I will make him ample recompense  
 By my obedience:—wed me to the tyrant,  
 Give me to Guzman, 'tis a sacrifice  
 I owe my country; but remember, sir,  
 How dreadful 'tis, and tremble at the thought  
 Of such unnatural, such detested bonds,  
 Thou who condemnest me to these fatal nuptials,  
 Who bidst Alzire give her hand to Guzman,  
 And at the altar promise him a heart  
 Which is not hers to give.

MONTEZUMA.

What says my child?

O in the name of every tender tie  
 That binds thee to me, spare a wretched father!  
 Pity my age, and do not, by the woes  
 Which thou alone, Alzire, canst remove,  
 Let me entreat thee, O embitter not  
 The sad remainder of Alvarez's life!  
 Have I not ever strove to make thee happy,  
 And wilt thou not return it? O my daughter,  
 Let virtue guide thy steps in duty's path,  
 And lead thee on to bliss! thy country calls,  
 Wilt thou betray her? learn henceforth, Alzire,  
 To be the mistress of thyself.

ALZIRE.

And must I  
 Learn to dissemble then? ungrateful task!

## SCENE V.

—  
GUZMAN, ALZIRE.

GUZMAN.

These long delays, Alzire, are unkind,  
And, let me add, ungenerous, to the man  
Who lives but to oblige you: for thy sake  
I stopped the hand of justice; all those captives,  
Whose pardon you solicited, are free:  
But I should blush to think that Guzman owed  
Thy kind compliance to so poor a service;  
'Tis on thyself, and thy consenting heart,  
He founds his hopes, nor thought I ever till now  
My happiness could make Alzire wretched.

ALZIRE.

Wretched indeed! O grant, kind heaven, this day  
May not prove fatal to us both! you see  
I am abashed, confounded, left a prey  
To horror and despair: do not these eyes  
Alone betray the anguish of a mind  
Oppressed with grief? canst thou not read it there?  
I know thou canst: such is my nature, Guzman;  
Ne'er did Alzire's face belie her heart:  
Dissimulation and disguise, my lord,  
Are European arts, which I abhor.

GUZMAN.

I love thy frankness, but lament the cause;  
Zamor is still beloved, his memory lives  
Within thy breast, my rival even in death:  
This is too much, Alzire; duty, honor,  
Virtue forbid it: weep no more, it wounds  
My heart, and I am jealous of thy tears.

ALZIRE.

Jealous of him, my lord, who in the grave  
 Is mouldering now, my loved, lamented Zamor?  
 For I confess I loved him, we were bound  
 By mutual vows, and still I weep his fate:  
 If thou art a friend to constancy and truth,  
 Thou wilt not blame my passion, but approve it,  
 By this, and this alone, may Guzman gain  
 Alzire's heart.

## SCENE VI.

GUZMAN.

[*Alone.*]

Her pride astonishes,  
 And yet I know not how her freedom charms me:  
 There is a savage beauty in her heart  
 That suits the wildness of her native clime;  
 But softer manners may subdue her mind,  
 And bind her stubborn fierceness to the yoke  
 Of duty; Guzman now is lord of all,  
 And nought remains unconquered but Alzire:  
 Resolved by force or art to make her mine,  
 Our hands, if not our hearts, shall be united.

*End of the First Act.*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ZAMOR, AMERICANS.

ZAMOR.

My noble friends, and fellow-sufferers,  
 Whom dangers strengthen, and misfortunes make



Great Cacique, worthy of a better fate,  
 If 'tis decreed that thou must fall, at least  
 Thou shalt find friends prepared to perish with thee,  
 And own them not unworthy of their master.

ZAMOR.

After a glorious victory, my friends,  
 A glorious death is most to be desired;  
 But O, to die in vile obscurity,  
 To perish thus in ignominious bondage,  
 To leave our bleeding country thus enslaved  
 By European robbers, those assassins  
 Whose thirst for blood and gold, these proud  
                   usurpers,  
 Who would extort by every cruel art  
 Of punishment those riches which we hold  
 More cheap, more worthless than themselves, to  
                   leave  
 My loved Alzire, Zamor's dearer half,  
 To their licentious fury, O my friends,  
 'Tis worse than death: I tremble at the thought.

## SCENE II.

—

ALVAREZ, ZAMOR, AMERICANS.

ALVAREZ.

Live, and be free.

ZAMOR.

Good heavens, what do I hear?  
 O unexpected sound! what God art thou  
 In human shape? a Spaniard, and forgive!  
 It cannot be: art thou the ruler here?

ALVAREZ.

No, captive; I am only the protector  
Of innocence oppressed.

ZAMOR.

Thou good old man,  
What is thy office here?

ALVAREZ.

To aid the wretched.

ZAMOR.

What could inspire thee with a thought so noble?

ALVAREZ.

My gratitude, religion, and my God.

ZAMOR.

God and religion! what! these cruel tyrants,  
These ruffians, that still bathed in human blood  
Depopulate earth, and change the smiling face  
Of nature to a dreary desert, they  
Who worship avarice alone! their God  
Cannot be thine!

ALVAREZ.

It is the same, my son,  
But they offend him, they disgrace his name,  
And are indeed more guilty; they abuse  
Their new-got power: thou knowest their crime,  
but know

My duty too: twice hath the travelling sun  
Enlightened in his course our world and yours  
Since a brave Indian, who he was I know not,  
Stepped from amidst his fellow-savages,  
And saved me from their fury; from that moment  
I felt your sorrows, pitied your misfortunes,  
And held you as my brethren and my friends;

Could I but meet my kind deliverer,  
That gallant stranger, I should die in peace.

ZAMOR.

His age, his features, his transcendent virtue,  
All, all conspire to say it is Alvarez:  
Behold, and mark us well, canst thou distinguish  
The hand that saved thee?

ALVAREZ.

Gracious heaven! come near.  
O Providence! it is, it must be he,  
The wished-for object of my gratitude;  
He whom these eyes, grown dim with age, have  
sought  
So long in vain; my son, my benefactor,  
What shall I do to serve thee? thou shalt live  
With old Alvarez; he shall be thy father,  
Thy guardian and protector here: kind heaven  
In gracious pity hath prolonged my days,  
That I might pay the debt I owe to thee.

ZAMOR.

O if thy barbarous nation had possessed  
But half the virtues that adorn Alvarez,  
Our willing world had bowed submissive down  
Before them; but their souls are not like thine,  
For they delight in blood, whilst nature's self  
Abhorring shudders at their cruelty;  
Death were more welcome far than life with them:  
Urge me not therefore, good Alvarez, all  
I wish to know is this, have they destroyed  
My noble friend, the wretched Montezuma?  
Where's my Alzire's father? O my lord,  
Forgive these tears, the memory of past griefs  
Sits heavy on me.

ALVAREZ.

Let them flow my son,  
 'Tis the best mark of our humanity:  
 The heart that feels not for another's woe  
 Is fit for every crime: thy friend survives,  
 And full of years and honors lives with us  
 In happiness and peace.

ZAMOR.

Might I behold him?

ALVAREZ.

Yes; thou shalt see him soon: may his persuasion  
 Induce thee to think better of us all,  
 And follow his example!

ZAMOR.

Can he live  
 With Christians, Montezuma live with Christians?

ALVAREZ.

Have patience, son, and he shall tell thee all,  
 Touching our union, and the sacred bonds  
 That soon shall bind in cords of amity  
 Our world to thine—but I must to my son,  
 And let him know my happiness; I leave thee  
 But for a moment; fare thee well.

## SCENE III.

ZAMOR, AMERICANS.

ZAMOR.

At last

Heaven seems to smile on Zamor; I have found  
 Amongst these vile barbarians one just man,

Honest and true : Alvarez is a god,  
 Sent down from heaven to soften this rude world,  
 And bless mankind : he said he had a son,  
 That son shall be my brother and my friend,  
 If he is worthy of his noble father :  
 O glorious hope ! shall I again behold  
 Great Montezuma after three long years ?  
 Alzire too, my dear, my loved Alzire,  
 Shall I embrace thee, hast thou kept thy faith,  
 That first of virtues, to reward thy Zamor ?  
 The heart oppressed is ever diffident :  
 Another old man comes this way : my soul  
 It still perplexed.

## SCENE IV.

—  
 MONTEZUMA, ZAMOR, AMERICANS.

ZAMOR.

O noble Montezuma,  
 Do I once more embrace thee ? see thy Zamor  
 Snatched from the jaws of death ; he lives to save  
 And to defend his prince : behold thy friend,  
 Thy soldier, and thy son : O where's Alzire ?  
 Be quick, and tell me, let me know her fate,  
 My life depends on that.

MONTEZUMA.

Unhappy Cacique,  
 With grief sincere we have lamented thee ;  
 Thy fellow-soldiers to thy memory raised  
 The decent tomb, and every honor paid  
 Due to thy virtues : but thank heaven ! thou livest,  
 Henceforth may happier days await thee, Zamor !  
 But say, why camest thou hither ?

ZAMOR.

To avenge

My gods, myself, my father and Alzire.

MONTEZUMA.

What sayst thou?

ZAMOR.

Call to mind that dreadful day  
 When the fierce Spaniard, terrible in arms,  
 Rushed through our powerless hosts, o'erthrew our  
 bulwarks,  
 And laid our empire waste; his name was Guzman:  
 That name, thou well rememberest, was the signal  
 Given for destruction; at that name they snatched  
 The sweet Alzire, thy loved daughter, from me,  
 And bore her to captivity with thee  
 And all thy race; destroyed the holy altar,  
 Where I had hoped to make Alzire mine,  
 Then dragged me to the tyrant: shall I tell thee  
 What cruel torments that insatiate monster  
 Inflicted on me, to extort confession  
 Of hidden gold, the Christian's deity,  
 Which we despise and trample on? half-dead  
 They left me and retired: time, Montezuma,  
 Can never bury injuries like mine;  
 Thou seest me here, prepared for great revenge:  
 Some chosen friends, attached to Zamor's cause,  
 By equal wrongs provoked, with equal hate  
 Inspired, await me in the neighboring forest,  
 Resolved with me to conquer or to die.

MONTEZUMA.

O Zamor, whither would thy headlong passion  
 Transport thee? wherefore wouldst thou thus  
 pursue  
 That death which seems so willing to avoid thee?

What can thy friends do' for thee? their weak arms,  
 Their fish-bone spears, their sabres made of stone,  
 Their soldiers naked, and ill-disciplined,  
 Against these giants armed with mortal steel,  
 And launching their dread thunder bolts against  
 thee?

Swift as the winds, their fiery coursers bear them  
 To certain victory; the world is theirs,  
 And we, my Zamor, must submit.

ZAMOR.

Whilst life

Shall animate these veins, I never will:  
 No, Montezuma: their destructive thunder,  
 Their coats of steel, their fiery coursers taught  
 Like them to fight, and share their master's glory,  
 This might affright, and terrify a while  
 Our gaping savages, but I behold  
 This pompous scene unruffled: to subdue  
 Our haughty foe one thing alone's required,  
 And that is, not to fear them; novelty,  
 That conquers cowards, only has enslaved us:  
 Gold, that pernicious native of our soil,  
 Draws Europe hither, but defends us not  
 Against her; niggard nature has denied us  
 A nobler metal, her all-conquering steel,  
 And given it to barbarians; but kind heaven,  
 In lieu of this indulgence, hath bestowed  
 Virtues on us which Europe never knew.  
 I come to fight and conquer for Alzire.

MONTEZUMA.

Urge it no more, my Zamor, heaven declares  
 Against us, calm thy rage; the times are changed.

ZAMOR.

Changed, didst thou say, my lord? it cannot be,

If Montezuma's heart is 'still the same,  
 If my Alzire's faithful, if I live  
 Still in her memory.—Thou turnest aside  
 And weepst.

MONTEZUMA.

Unhappy Zamor!

ZAMOR.

Am I not  
 Thy son? our tyrants have not altered thee?  
 They cannot, sure they cannot have corrupted  
 An old man's heart, and made it false as theirs?

MONTEZUMA.

I am not guilty, Zamor, nor are all  
 These conquerors tyrants; some were sent by heaven  
 To guide our footsteps in the paths of truth,  
 To teach us arts unknown, immortal secrets,  
 The knowledge of mankind, the arts, my son,  
 To speak, to think, to live, and to be happy.

ZAMOR.

O horrid! canst thou praise these ruffians, whilst  
 Thy daughter, thy Alzire, is their slave?

MONTEZUMA.

Zamor, Alzire's free.

ZAMOR.

Ha! Montezuma,  
 Alzire free? forgive me, but remember,  
 She's mine, my lord, by every solemn tie;  
 You promised me, before the gods you promised,  
 To give her to me; they received our vows;  
 She is not perjured?

MONTEZUMA.

Call not on those gods,  
 For they are vain, and fancied idols all;  
 I have abjured them, and henceforth must worship  
 That power supreme which hath subdued them.

ZAMOR.

Ha!

The law of thy forefathers, thy religion,  
 Is that deserted?

MONTEZUMA.

I have found its weakness,  
 And left its vain chimeras: may the God  
 Of Gods convert thee, and inspire with truth  
 Thy unenlightened soul! unhappy Zamor,  
 Soon mayest thou know that Europe thou con-  
     demnest,  
 Her virtues, and her faith!

ZAMOR.

What mighty virtues  
 Has she to boast? thou art indeed a slave  
 If thou hast lost thy gods, thy faith, thy honor,  
 And broke thy sacred word: Alzire too,  
 Has she betrayed me? O take heed!

MONTEZUMA.

My heart  
 Reproaches me for nothing: fare thee well!  
 I bless my own good fate, and weep for thine.

ZAMOR.

If thou art false, thou hast cause to weep indeed:  
 Pity the torments which I feel for thee,  
 And for thy guilt; pity a heart distracted  
 By love and vengeance; let me find out Guzman

Let me behold Alzire, let me fall  
 Beneath her feet; O do not hide her from me:  
 Conduct me, urge me not thus to despair,  
 Put on a human heart, let thy lost virtue——

## SCENE V.

MONTEZUMA, ZAMOR, *Guards.*

GUARD.

*[To Montezuma.*

The ceremony waits, my lord.

MONTEZUMA.

I come.

ZAMOR.

Thou wilt not leave me? tell me, Montezuma,  
 What ceremony's this.

MONTEZUMA.

No more: away,  
 And leave this fatal place.

ZAMOR.

Though heaven itself  
 Forbade me, I would follow thee.

MONTEZUMA.

Forgive  
 My rude denial, Zamor, but you must not,  
 I say you must not—guards, prevent him—pagans  
 Must not profane our Christian altars; I  
 Command not here, but Guzman speaks by me:  
 You must obey: farewell.

## SCENE VI.

ZAMOR, AMERICANS.

ZAMOR.

What do I hear?

Guzman? O shameful treason! Montezuma  
 The slave of Guzman! where is virtue fled?  
 Alzire too, is my Alzire guilty?  
 Has she too drank corruption's poisonous bowl  
 From these vile Christians?—that destroyer Guzman

Rules here, it seems; what's to be done?

FIRST AMERICAN.

Permit me

To counsel you, my lord; the good old man  
 Who saved thee with his son will soon return,  
 He can deny you nothing; ask of him  
 Safe conduct to the city gates; that done,  
 We may return and join our noble friends  
 Against the foe: I doubt not of success:  
 We will not spare a man of them except  
 Alvarez, and his son: I've marked, my lord,  
 With most observant eye, their fosses, ramparts,  
 And brazen thunders, European arts  
 That fright not me: alas! our countrymen  
 Forge their own shameful chains, and tamely bend  
 Beneath these sons of pride; but soon, my lord,  
 When they shall see their great avenger here,  
 Then will they rise indignant, and destroy  
 This ignominious work of slavery:  
 Yes; on the bleeding bodies of our foes  
 We'll make a path to glory; on the heads

Of these vile Christians turn the fiery tempest,  
 And with their own destructive instruments  
 Of murder shake this all-usurping power,  
 Founded by pride on ignorance and fear.

ZAMOR.

O how I joy, ye great unfortunate,  
 To find your kindred breasts thus nobly beat  
 With sympathetic fury! let us punish  
 The haughty Guzman, let his blood atone  
 For our lost country's: O thou deity  
 Of injured mortals, sweet revenge, O come,  
 Assist thy servants, let but Guzman perish  
 And we are satisfied! but O my friends,  
 We talk of vengeance, yet are captives still,  
 Still groan beneath the yoke of shameful bondage:  
 Deserted by Alvarez, and betrayed  
 By Montezuma, all I love perhaps  
 Is in the power of him whom most I hate,  
 The only comfort left me is—to doubt.  
 But hark! what noise is that? the torches flame  
 On every side, and yield a double day:  
 This barbarous people's brazen thunder speaks,  
 Some horrid rites, or pompous sacrifice  
 Preparing; look around, and see if Zamor  
 Shall save his much-loved friends, or perish with  
 them.

*End of the Second Act.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

ALZIRE.

[*Alone.*

Ye manes of my dear departed Zamor,

Forgive me, O forgive the wife of Guzman!  
 The holy altar hath received our vows,  
 And they are sealed in heaven: pursue me not,  
 Indignant shade! O if Alzire's tears,  
 Her bitter anguish, her remorse, the pangs  
 Of her reluctant soul, can reach the dead,  
 If in a happier world thou still retainest  
 Thy generous noble spirit, thou wilt pardon  
 My weakness; 'twas a father's cruel will,  
 A people's happiness required it of me;  
 Could I refuse the dreadful sacrifice?  
 Thou art at peace, my Zamor, do not thus  
 Distract my soul, but leave me to my fate;  
 Alas! already it has cost me dear.

## SCENE II.

—

ALZIRE, EMIRA.

ALZIRE.

And shall I not behold my countrymen,  
 The loved companions of my infant years,  
 Those wretched captives, may I not enjoy  
 The mournful privilege to mix with theirs  
 My friendly tears, and mourn their cruel fate?

EMIRA.

O madam, we have cause indeed to weep,  
 To dread the wrath of Guzman, to lament  
 And tremble for our country; for the hour  
 Of slaughter and destruction is at hand:  
 Again I saw the bloody flag displayed,  
 The proud tribunal's met, and Montezuma  
 Is summoned to appear: all dreadful omens!  
 What will become of us?

ALZIRE.

Unpitying heaven!  
 I've been deceived, betrayed:—cruel O Guzman!  
 Was it for this I gave him at the altar  
 My long reluctant hand? that fatal bond  
 I shall repent of to my latest hour:  
 O under what malignant star, my father,  
 Madest thou these cruel, these detested nuptials?

## SCENE III.

—

ALZIRE, EMIRA, CEPHANES.

CEPHANES.

One of those slaves, whom this propitious day  
 Restored to freedom, begs admittance to you  
 In secret.

ALZIRE.

Let him enter; 'twill rejoice  
 My heart to see him; he and all his friends  
 Are welcome to Alzire: but why comes he  
 Alone?

CEPHANES.

Some secret labors in his breast,  
 Which you and only you, he says, must know.  
 'Twas he, it seems, whose heaven-directed arm  
 Saved the good father of thy valiant lord,  
 The noble Guzman.

EMIRA.

He has sought you long;  
 But Montezuma's private orders were,  
 He should not see you: melancholy sits

On his dark brow, as if he were intent  
On some great purpose.

CEPHANES.

Grief and anguish seem  
To rack his soul: at mention of your name  
He sighed, and wept, as if yet ignorant  
Of your new honors and the rank you bear.

ALZIRE.

Unworthy rank, and honors I despise!  
Perhaps the hero knows my wretched race,  
And is no stranger to Alzire's woes:  
Perhaps he knew my Zamor; who can tell  
But he might be a witness of his death,  
And comes to tell the melancholy tale?  
A dreadful duty! that would but renew  
A lover's pangs, and double my distress;  
But let him come: I know not why my heart  
Should flutter thus; this hateful palace ever  
Hath been a scene of sad disquietude  
And trouble to me: bid him enter.

SCENE IV.

ALZIRE, ZAMOR, EMIRA.

ZAMOR.

Yes;

It is Alzire: is she then restored?

ALZIRE.

Such were his features, voice, and motion: heaven!  
It cannot be: O Zamor!—O support me.

[*She faints.*]



NOI I LIVE FOR THEE,  
AND AT THY FEET RECLAIM THY PLIGHT-  
ED FAITH.

MOREAU, INV.; ROMANET. SC. ace ever





ZAMOR.

'Tis he.

ALZIRE.

Ha! Zamor at Alzire's feet?

'Tis all delusion.

ZAMOR.

No; I live for thee,  
 And at thy feet reclaim thy plighted faith;  
 O my Alzire, idol of my soul,  
 Wilt thou not hear me? where are all thy vows,  
 The sacred ties that bound us fast together?  
 Thou hast not broke them?

ALZIRE.

Thou dear fatal object  
 Of grief and joy, of rapture and despair,  
 In what a dreadful moment hast thou chose  
 To meet Alzire? every word thou utterest  
 But plunges a new dagger in my heart.

ZAMOR.

Thou weapest, yet lookest on Zamor!

ALZIRE.

'Tis too late:

ZAMOR.

I know you thought me dead: e'er since that hour  
 Of terror, when those European tyrants  
 Deprived me of my gods, my throne and thee,  
 I've been a poor unhappy wanderer.  
 Knowest thou, my love, that savage murderer,  
 Guzman,  
 With ignominious stripes, and cruel torture,  
 Insulted me? the husband of thy choice,  
 Thy once loved happy Zamor, fell a prey

To ruffians:—how it wounds thy tender heart!  
 Thou burnest with fierce resentment of my wrongs,  
 And thou wilt join with Zamor to avenge them:  
 Some guardian god, propitious to our loves,  
 Saved me from death, that we might meet again  
 In happiness: I hope Alzire's true:  
 Thou hast not left thy gods, betrayed thy country,  
 Thou art not grown a false perfidious Spaniard?  
 They tell me I shall meet with Guzman here,  
 I come to free thee from that proud barbarian:  
 Thou lovest me, my Alzire, and wilt give  
 The victim to my wrath.

ALZIRE.

Thou hast been wronged;  
 Revenge thyself and see thy victim—here.

ZAMOR.

What sayest thou?—ha! thy faith, thy vows—

ALZIRE.

But strike—I merit not life or thee. No more,

ZAMOR.

O cruel Montezuma! what thou toldest me  
 Was but too true.

ALZIRE.

And could he tell thee all;  
 Named he the wretch for whom I quitted Zamor?

ZAMOR.

He did not, durst not name him; that remains  
 For thee: O speak it: I shall be surprised  
 At nothing.

ALZIRE.

Hear then all my guilt.

ZAMOR.

Alzire!

ALZIRE.

That Guzman——

ZAMOR.

Gracious heaven!

ALZIRE.

Thy murderer,  
 Within this hour received my guilty hand;  
 He is—my husband.

ZAMOR.

Guzman!

ALZIRE.

Montezuma,  
 Alvarez—they betrayed my easy youth,  
 And urged me to the deed: the lost Alzire  
 Did at the Christian altar give up all  
 That she held dear on earth, her gods, her country,  
 Her—Zamor: O by those dear injured names  
 I beg thee, take this hated life.

ZAMOR.

Alzire,  
 Can it be true? is Guzman then thy husband?

ALZIRE.

To plead a father's undisputed right,  
 To say how long I struggled with my duty,  
 To number o'er the fruitless tears I shed  
 For three long years lamenting Zamor's death,  
 That still I loved thee, that I left in wrath  
 Those powerless gods that had deserted thee,  
 And from despair alone became a Christian,  
 Perhaps might mitigate Alzire's crime;

But I disdain it, I acknowledge all,  
 Confess my guilt, and sue for punishment.  
 Who shall absolve the wretch whom love condemns?  
 Take then a life that is not worth my care  
 Without thee; dost thou not abhor me, Zamor?

ZAMOR.

No: if thou lovest me still, thou are not guilty:  
 May I yet hope that Zamor has a place  
 In his Alzire's heart?

ALZIRE.

When old Alvarez  
 And Montezuma led me to the altar  
 I thought on Zamor, thought him then no more,  
 But revered, but adored his memory:  
 Our tyrants, our usurpers know I loved thee;  
 I told them all, told heaven and earth, nay told  
 My husband—and O take this last farewell,  
 I love thee still.

ZAMOR.

Is this then our last hour  
 Of happiness, and must we part so soon,  
 So lately met? O if the voice of love—

ALZIRE.

'Tis Guzman and his father.

#### SCENE V.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN, ZAMOR, ALZIRE, *Attendants.*

ALVAREZ.

[*To Guzman.*

Son, behold  
 With thy Alzire stands my great preserver,

My benefactor, my deliverer.

[To Zamor.

O noble youth, to thee I owe my life,  
Let me embrace thee, be my second son,  
And share the pleasures of this happy day  
With Guzman and Alvarez.

ZAMOR.

He thy son;  
Guzman then thy son, that proud barbarian?

ALZIRE.

Avert the terrors of this dreadful moment,  
Indulgent heaven!

ALVAREZ.

In what astonishment—

ZAMOR.

How could a father, brave and good, like thee  
Be cursed with such a son?

GUZMAN.

Insulting slave,  
Who gave thee license thus to spurn thy master?  
Thou knowest not who I am.

ZAMOR.

I know thee well;  
And thou among the wretches thou hast made  
Perhaps mayest one day meet the injured Zamor.

GUZMAN.

And art thou he?

ALVAREZ.

Ha! Zamor!

Alzire.

ZAMOR.

'Tis the same,  
 'Tis Zamor, whom thy cruel hand oppressed  
 With ignominious tortures, he whose eye  
 Thou dar'st not meet; thou tyrant ravisher,  
 Comest thou at last to rob me of my best  
 And dearest treasure? with thy ruthless sword  
 Make sure thy vengeance, and prevent the fate  
 Which thou deservest, ere Zamor, who preserved  
 The father, shall chastise the guilty son.

ALVAREZ.

*[To Guzman.*

What sayest thou, Guzman, canst thou answer this?

GUZMAN.

It were beneath me; punishment alone  
 Should answer insolence, and, but for thee,  
 Ere this he should have met with it.

*[Turning to Alzire.*

You, madam,  
 For your own honor might have more regard,  
 If not for mine, than thus to parley with  
 A traitor: come, no more of this, Alzire,  
 Thy tears offend me: husbands may be jealous;  
 Remember that and tremble.

ALZIRE.

*[To Guzman.*

Cruel Guzman!

My kind protector,

*[Turning to Alvarez.*

Good Alvarez, hear me:

And thou,

*[To Zamor.*

In better days my dearest hope,  
O look with pity on the lost Alzire!

[*Pointing to Zamor.*

Behold the husband whom my father chose ;  
Long ere this hapless country bowed the neck  
To European tyrants, Zamor fell,  
So fame reported, and with him Peru,  
Then first subdued: my wretched father, old  
And full of sorrows, to the Christian's God,  
Forsaken by his own, indignant fled ;  
The Christian altar saw Alzire's hand  
Given to her lover's murderer: thy new faith,  
Which yet I know not, may condemn Alzire,  
But virtue will forgive me when I add,  
That still I love thee, Zamor ; but my oath,  
My marriage vow, rash fatal marriage ! says  
I never must be thine—nor can I now  
Be Guzman's—false to both, ye both have cause  
To hate me: which of you will kindly end  
My wretched being? Guzman's hand, already  
Stained with the blood of my unhappy race,  
Were fittest to revenge the injured rights  
Of honor and of love ; be just for once,  
And strike the guilty.

GUZMAN.

Darest thou thus abuse  
The goodness thou deservest not? but remember  
'Twas thy request ; thy punishment is ready :  
My rival dies ;—away with him.

ALVAREZ.

Inhuman!

O stop, my son, consider what is due  
To him who saved thy father—ye are both

My children—let that tender name inspire  
 Your breasts with pity for an aged father:  
 At least—

## SCENE VI.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN, ALZIRE, ZAMOR.  
 DON ALONZO, a *Spanish officer*.

ALONZO.

My lord, the foe is at our gates;  
 On every side their brazen bucklers ring  
 With barbarous dissonance: aloud they cry,  
 Revenge, and Zamor, whilst with measured steps,  
 Solemn and slow, the close-wedged phalanx moves,  
 As if these savages had learned from us  
 The arts by which we conquered them.

GUZMAN.

Away:

Let us be gone; my presence soon shall teach  
 These slaves their duty—heroes of Castile,  
 Ye sons of victory, this new world was made  
 To wear your chains, to fear, and to obey you.

ZAMOR.

To fear and to obey? 'tis false, proud Guzman;  
 Ye are but mortals like ourselves, no more.

GUZMAN.

Guards, drag him hence.

ZAMOR.

[*To the Spaniards surrounding him.*

Ye dare not: are ye gods,  
 And must we worship deities thus bathed  
 In our own blood?

Alzire.

41

GUZMAN.

Obey me, slaves.

ALZIRE.

My lord!

ALVAREZ.

Remember, son, that Zamor saved thy father.

GUZMAN.

My lord, I shall remember your instructions,  
You taught me how to conquer, and I fly  
Once more to victory: farewell!

SCENE VII.

ALVAREZ, ALZIRE.

ALZIRE.

[*Kneeling.*

My lord,

Behold me at your feet, accept the homage  
Due to thy virtues! Guzman's injured honor  
Calls for revenge, Alzire was to blame;  
But I was bound to Zamor by the ties  
Of sacred love, long ere I knew thy son;  
We cannot give our hearts a second time:  
Zamor had mine, and ever must preserve it:  
O he is good and virtuous, for he saved  
Thy life, Alvarez—O forgive me!

ALVAREZ.

Rise

Alzire, I forgive and pity thee;  
Feel as a father and a friend thy sorrows,  
Lament thy Zamor's fate, and will protect him:

But let the solemn vow thou madest to Guzman  
 Be graved within thy heart ; thou are no longer  
 The mistress of thyself : remember well  
 Thou are my daughter—Guzman was most cruel,  
 I know he was, but still he is—thy husband :  
 Perhaps he may relent ; heaven grant he may !

ALZIRE.

Alas ! why art not thou my Zamor's father ?

*End of the Third Act.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN.

ALVAREZ.

Fortune, my son, has crowned thee with success,  
 Endeavor to deserve it ; do not stain  
 The laurel wreath with blood, but let fair mercy,  
 That adds new lustre to the conqueror's glory,  
 Inspire thy breast with pity ; be a man,  
 A Christian, and forgive : Alvarez asks thee  
 To pardon Zamor—shall a father plead  
 In vain ? O Guzman, shall I never soften  
 Thy savage manners, never teach my son  
 To conquer hearts ?

GUZMAN.

Alvarez has pierced mine  
 Most deeply ; ask my life, and it is yours,  
 But leave my honor, leave me my revenge ;  
 How can I pardon Zamor, when I know  
 Alzire loves him ?

ALVAREZ.

Therefore he deserves  
Thy pity more.

GUZMAN.

O to be pitied thus,  
And thus beloved, Guzman would die with pleasure.

ALVAREZ.

With all that fierce resentment, feelest thou too  
The pangs of jealousy?

GUZMAN.

And canst thou blame  
An injured husband? I have too much cause  
For jealousy, and yet thou pitiest not  
The unhappy Guzman.

ALVAREZ.

Thou art wild, impetuous,  
And bitter in thy wrath; Alzire's virtues  
Deserve a milder treatment; when opposed,  
Her open heart, rough as her native soil,  
Resists with stubborn firmness, but would yield  
To soft persuasion; gentle means, my son,  
Are ever the most powerful.

GUZMAN.

Must I soothe  
The pride of beauty, wear a brow serene,  
And cover my resentment, to expose  
My easy heart to new indignities?  
I should have thought that, jealous of my honor  
You would approve, and not condemn my rage:  
Is it not shame enough that I am wedded  
To a proud slave who hates me, braves my power,

And owns her heart is given to another?  
Whom yet, to make me more accursed, I love.

ALVAREZ.

Why blush at that? it is a lawful passion,  
Indulge, but keep it within proper bounds,  
For all excess is guilty—only promise  
You will determine nothing till I've seen her  
Once more.

GUZMAN.

A father's will must be obeyed;  
I will suspend my wrath, but urge me, sir,  
No further.

ALVAREZ.

All I want is time: farewell.

[*Exit.*

GUZMAN.

[*Alone.*

And have I lived to envy Zamor's fate,  
To envy a vile slave, who scarce deserves  
The name of man!—What do I see? Alzire!

## SCENE, II.

GUZMAN, ALZIRE, EMIRA.

ALZIRE.

'Tis I, my lord, 'tis the afflicted wife  
Of Guzman; she who honors, who reveres  
And yet has injured thee: I come, my lord,  
To throw me at your feet, to own my crime,  
And beg forgiveness: nought have I disguised,  
My open heart confessed its fatal passion  
For the unhappy Zamor; if he dies,

He dies because Alzire was sincere ;  
 But I shall more astonish thee, I come  
 To plead for him : I know that Guzman's proud,  
 Resentful, and severe, and yet I hope  
 He may be generous, 'tis a conqueror's pride,  
 His glory to forgive : an act like this  
 Would gain thee more than conquest can bestow,  
 Win every heart, perhaps even change Alzire's.  
 A fawning Spaniard might have promised more,  
 Have sighed, and wept, and softened thee with  
 tears,  
 Which I disdain ; the hand of nature formed  
 My plain untutored heart, if ought can move it,  
 'Tis generosity : let Guzman try  
 If it is made of penetrable mould.

GUZMAN.

If you're so fond of virtue, 'twould become you  
 To know and practise it, to study, madam,  
 Those manners you condemn, to learn your duty,  
 To treat yourself, your honor, and your fame  
 With more respect ; nor dare to name a rival  
 Whom I abhor, but wait in humble silence  
 Till I determine what shall be his fate ;  
 It is enough if I forgive Alzire :  
 This heart is not insensible ; but know,  
 Those who believe shall always find me cruel.

### SCENE III.

ALZIRE, EMIRA.

EMIRA.

He loves you still, and yet may be persuaded.

ALZIRE.

Ay, but he's jealous, that destroys my Zamor,  
 I lost his life by asking it; but say,  
 Emira, canst thou save him? shall he live,  
 Though far from his Alzire? didst thou try  
 That soldier?

EMIRA.

Yes; the grand corrupter, gold,  
 Has bought him to our interest; he is ready.

ALZIRE.

Thank heaven, that metal doth not always prove  
 The instrument of ill: but haste, Emira.

EMIRA.

Is Zamor then devoted to destruction?  
 Cannot Alvarez save him? have the council—

ALZIRE.

I have a thousand fears for him: alas!  
 These tyrants think the world was made for them,  
 That they were born the sovereigns of mankind,  
 That Zamor is a rebel and a slave:  
 Barbarians as they are—this cruel council—  
 But I'll prevent their murderous purposes:  
 That soldier, my Emira, how he lingers!

EMIRA.

Be not alarmed; night's friendly shade protects him,  
 And he will soon be here with Zamor; sleep  
 Hath closed the tyrant's eyes, and we are safe.

ALZIRE.

O let him lead me to the prison gate  
 That I may set him free.

EMIRA.

Behold, he comes:  
 But should ye be discovered, foul dishonor,  
 Disgrace, and infamy—

ALZIRE.

Attend on her  
 Who would betray the man she loves ; this shame  
 Thou talkest of is a European phantom,  
 Which fools mistake for virtue ! 'tis the love  
 Of glory not of justice, not the fear  
 Of vice but of reproach ; a shame unknown  
 In these untutored climes, where honor shines  
 In its own native light, and scorns the aid  
 Of such false lustre ; honor bids me save  
 A lover and a hero thus deserted.

## SCENE IV.

—  
 ALZIRE, ZAMOR, EMIRA, *a soldier.*

ALZIRE.

O Zamor, all is lost, thy punishment  
 Already is prepared, and thou art doomed  
 To instant death ; lose not a moment's time,  
 But haste away, this soldier will conduct thee :  
 Alas ! thou seest my grief and my despair,  
 O save my husband from the guilt of murder,  
 Save thy dear self, and leave me to my fate.

ZAMOR.

Thou bidst me live, I must obey Alzire :  
 But wilt thou follow the poor friendless Zamor ?

A desert and this heart are all I now  
Have left to offer ; once I had a throne.

ALZIRE.

What were a throne and empire without thee?  
Alas! my Zamor, to the gloomy desert  
My soul shall follow thee ; but I am dooméd  
To wander here alone, to drag a life  
Of bitterness and woe, to spend my hours  
In sad reflections on my wretched state,  
To be another's, and yet burn for thee :  
I bid farewell to Zamor and to joy ;  
Away, and leave me to my duty ; fain  
Would I preserve my honor, and my love,  
They both are sacred.

ZAMOR.

What's this idle honor,  
This European phantom, that deludes thee ;  
This Christian altar, those detested oaths  
Extorted from thee, this triumphant God ;  
What have they done to rob me of Alzire?

ALZIRE.

My sacred promise—

ZAMOR.

'Twas a guilty vow,  
And binds thee not ; perdition on thy oaths,  
And thy false God, whom I abhor ! farewell !

ALZIRE.

O stop, my Zamor.

ZAMOR.

Guzman is thy husband.

ALZIRE.

Do not upbraud but pity me.

ZAMOR.

On our past loves.

O think

ALZIRE.

I think but on thy danger.

ZAMOR.

Thou hast betrayed me.

ALZIRE.

No; I love thee still:

If 'tis a crime, I own, nay glory in it;  
 But hence, and leave me here to die alone;  
 Some dreadful purpose labors in thy breast:  
 How thy eyes roll! O Zamor—

ZAMOR.

'Tis resolved.

ALZIRE.

Where art thou going?

ZAMOR.

Glorious liberty,

I'll use thee nobly.

ALZIRE.

If thou diest remember

I perish with thee.

ZAMOR.

In this hour of terror

Thou talkest to me of love: but time is precious,  
 Conduct me, soldier; fare thee well.

## SCENE V.

—  
ALZIRE.

He's gone;

But where I know not: dreadful moment! Guzman,  
For thee I quitted Zamor: haste, Emira,  
Follow him, fly, return, and tell me all.  
Thinkest thou that soldier will be faithful to us?

*[Exit, Emira.]*

I know not why, but something tells me here,  
This day, for me, will be a day of horror.  
O God of Christians, thou all-conquering power,  
Whom yet I know not, O remove the cloud  
From my dark mind; if by my fatal passion  
I have offended thee, pour all thy vengeance  
On me, but spare my Zamor; O conduct  
His wandering footsteps through the dreary desert!  
Is Europe only worthy of thy care?  
Art thou the partial parent of one world,  
And tyrant o'er another? all deserve  
Thy equal love, the victor and the vanquished  
Are all the work of thy creating hand.

But hark! what dreadful cry is that? methought  
They called on Zamor—hark! again that noise!  
It comes this way: my Zamor's lost.

## SCENE VI.

—  
ALZIRE, EMIRA.

ALZIRE.

Emira,

I'm glad thou art come: what hast thou seen, what  
done?  
Where is he? speak, and ease my troubled soul.

EMIRA.

O it is past all hope ; he cannot live :  
 Conducted safely by the faithful soldier  
 He passed the guards, then darting from him rushed  
 Towards the palace ; trembling I pursued him,  
 Amidst the horrors of the silent night,  
 Almost to Guzman's chamber ; there he escaped me,  
 Though oft I called on him, oft looked in vain :  
 I heard a dreadful shriek, some cried aloud,  
 He's dead : the palace is in arms : fly, madam,  
 And save yourself.

ALZIRE.

Let us begone, and help

My Zamor.

EMIRA.

What can we do for him ?

ALZIRE.

Die.

## SCENE VII.

—

ALZIRE, EMIRA, DON ALONZO, *Guards.*

ALONZO.

I've orders, madam, to secure you.

ALZIRE.

Slave,

What meanest thou ? where's my Zamor ?

ALONZO.

That I know not :

Permit me to conduct you.

Alzire.

ALZIRE.

Cruel fate!

I must not die then? Zamor is no more,  
 And yet I live, a captive, and in chains:  
 O ignominious!—dost thou weep, barbarian?  
 I must indeed be wretched, if my woes  
 Can touch a heart like thine; I'll follow thee;  
 If death awaits me, I obey with pleasure.

*End of the Fourth Act.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

ALZIRE, *Guards.*

ALZIRE.

Prepare your tortures, you who call yourselves  
 The judges of mankind; why am I left  
 In dread suspense, uncertain of my fate?  
 To live, or die? if I but mention Zamor  
 The guards around me tremble, and look pale,  
 His very name affrights them.

SCENE II.

MONTEZUMA, ALZIRE.

ALZIRE.

Ha! my father!

MONTEZUMA.

O my Alzire, what a scene of woe  
 Hath thy imprudent fatal passion brought

Among us! we were pleading for thy Zamor,  
 The good Alvarez had well nigh prevailed,  
 When on a sudden an armed soldier rushed  
 With violence in, and bore down all before him;  
 'Twas Zamor's self; with fury in his aspect,  
 And wild distraction, on he sprang to Guzman,  
 Attacked, and plunged the dagger in his breast:  
 The blood that issued from your husband's wound  
 Gushed on your father: Zamor then resigned,  
 With calm submission at Alvarez's feet  
 Fell humble; "take," he cried, "this guilty sword,  
 Stained with thy Guzman's blood, I am revenged;  
 Now nature calls on thee to do thy duty,  
 As I have mine; strike here;" then bared his breast  
 To the expected blow: the good Alvarez  
 Sunk breathless in my arms; confusion followed  
 And cries and horror; Guzman's friends upraised  
 him,  
 Bound up his wounds, and tried by every art  
 Of medicine to preserve his life; the people  
 Accuse thee as accomplice in the deed,  
 And call for justice on thee.

ALZIRE.

And couldst thou—

MONTEZUMA.

O no; my heart suspects thee not, Alzire,  
 Thy soul I know is capable of error,  
 But not of guilt: alas! thou didst not see  
 The precipice before thee: Guzman dies  
 By Zamor's hand, thy husband by thy lover;  
 They will condemn thee to a shameful death,  
 But I will try if possible to move  
 The council in thy favor.

Alzire.

ALZIRE.

Do not sue  
 For me, my father, of these cruel tyrants,  
 Let but Alvarez live, and love me still,  
 I ask no more: Guzman's untimely fate  
 I must lament, because 'twas horrible,  
 Because, more dreadful still, he had deserved it:  
 Zamor avenged his wrongs, I cannot blame  
 Nor can I praise him for it; he must die;  
 Alzire wishes but to follow him.

ALVAREZ.

O heaven, assist me in this work of mercy!

## SCENE III.

ALZIRE.

Now end all gracious power, this wretched being!  
 Alas! Alzire, the new God thou servest  
 Withholds thy hand, and says thou must not finish  
 Thy hated life; the deities I left  
 Denied me not the privilege to die.  
 Is it a crime to hasten on, perhaps  
 A few short years, the universal doom  
 Appointed for us all? and must we drink  
 The bitter cup of sorrow to the dregs?  
 In this vile body is there aught so sacred  
 That the free spirit should not leave at will  
 Its homely mansion? this all-conquering nation,  
 Shall they depopulate earth, destroy my race,  
 Condemn Alzire, and I not be mistress  
 Of my own life? Barbarians! Zamor then  
 Must die in tortures.

## SCENE IV.

—

ZAMOR *in chains*, ALZIRE, *Guards*.

ZAMOR.

Yes, it is decreed:  
We both must die; beneath the specious name  
Of justice, the tribunal hath condemned us;  
Guzman yet lives, my erring hand had left  
Its work unfinished; the barbarian lives  
To glut his vengeance with Alzire's blood,  
To taste a tyrant's savage joy, and see us  
Perish together—to pronounce our doom  
Alvarez comes: I am the guilty cause;  
Thou diest for me, Alzire.

ALZIRE.

Then no more,  
For death is welcome if it comes with Zamor:  
O bless the happy hour that shall dissolve  
My ties to Guzman; I may love thee now  
Without a crime, without remorse; receive  
The heart that's due to thee, and thee alone:  
Yon dreadful scaffold, for our death prepared,  
Shall be the altar of my love; there, Zamor,  
I'll offer up my faith, and expiate there  
My crime of infidelity—the worst  
Of all our sentence is, that it must come  
From good Alvarez.

ZAMOR.

See, he's here; his cheeks  
Are bathed in tears.

ALZIRE.

Alas! who most deserves  
Compassion? this will be a dreadful parting.

## SCENE V.

ALZIRE, ZAMOR, ALVAREZ, *Guards.*

ZAMOR.

From you we both expect to hear our fate,  
Pronounce it, we are not afraid to die:  
Zamor deserves it, he has slain thy son,  
The son of good Alvarez, of my friend;  
But what, my lord, has this fair innocent,  
What has Alzire done? thou art not cruel,  
Proud, and revengeful, like thy countrymen,  
Distinguished by thy clemency, we loved  
Alvarez; wilt thou give up the fair title  
Of just and good, and bathe thee in the blood  
Of innocence?

ALZIRE.

Avenge thyself, avenge  
Thy son; but do not thus condemn the guiltless:  
I am the wife of Guzman, that alone  
Should tell thee, I would save, and not betray him,  
Even though I hated, I respected him,  
And swerved not from my faith, thou knowest I did  
not:  
Careless of what the slandering multitude  
May think, I rest my character on thee;  
Acquitted by Alvarez, for the rest  
'Tis equal all: if Zamor dies, Alzire  
Must go with him: I pity thee alone.

ALVAREZ.

Amazing scene of tenderness and horror!  
 That he should be the murderer of my son  
 Who was my kind deliverer! O Zamor,  
 To thee I owe a life which I abhor;  
 It was a fatal gift, and bought too dear:  
 I am a father, yet I am a man;  
 Spite of a parent's grief that cries aloud  
 For vengeance on thee, gratitude pleads strongly;  
 She will be heard:—and thou who wert my  
 daughter,  
 Whom yet I call by that dear tender name;  
 Think not I joy in the inhuman pleasure  
 Of fell revenge; I lose a friend, I lose  
 A daughter, and a son: the council dooms thee  
 To death, and bids a wretched father pass  
 The cruel sentence; I could not refuse  
 The dreadful task, and now am come, my children,  
 To save you both: it is in Zamor's power.

ZAMOR.

To save Alzire? say, what's to be done?

ALVAREZ.

Believe in Him who now inspires Alvarez;  
 One word will change your fate: the law decrees,  
 Whoe'er becomes a Christian meets forgiveness,  
 The God of pardon will himself o'ershade  
 Thy every crime, and take thee to his mercy;  
 Spain will protect and love thee as a brother;  
 Alzire shall be safe, ye both shall live;  
 I'll answer for her life as for thy own;  
 Zamor, to thee I speak; of thee I ask  
 Another life, I owe thee one already;  
 A father asks thee only to be happy,  
 To be a Christian, and to save Alzire.

ALZIRE.

What says my love? say, should we purchase life  
 So dearly? Shall I quit my gods for Guzman's,  
 And be a traitor? tell me, thou sage tyrant,  
 When I was master of thy fate, wouldst thou,  
 Had Zamor sued, have quitted thy own gods  
 For mine?

ALVAREZ.

I should have done as now I do,  
 Implored the almighty being to enlighten  
 A heart like thine, and make thee a true Christian.

ZAMOR.

O cruel contest! what am I to choose,  
 Or life or death, Alzire, or my gods,  
 Which must I leave? Alzire, 'tis thy cause,  
 Determine it; I think thou wouldst not bring  
 Dishonor on thy Zamor.

ALZIRE.

Hear me then:

Thou knowest that, to obey a father's will,  
 I gave another what to thee alone  
 I had devoted; I embraced his faith,  
 And worshipped Montezuma's God; perhaps  
 It was the error of my easy youth,  
 And thou wilt blame me for it; but methought  
 The law of Christians was the law of truth,  
 And therefore only did I make it mine  
 But to renounce those gods our heart adores;  
 That is no venial error, but a crime  
 Of deepest die; it is to give up both,  
 The God we worship, and the God we leave;  
 'Tis to be false to heaven, to the world,  
 And to ourselves: no, Zamor, if thou diest,

Die worthy of Alzire ; hear the voice  
Of conscience ; act as she alone directs thee.

ZAMOR.

Thou hast determined as I thought thou wouldst,  
Zamor shall die with honor.

ALVAREZ.

Then ye scorn  
Our proffered mercy : hark ! those mournful cries—

### SCENE VII.

ALVAREZ, GUZMAN, ZAMOR, AMERICANS, *soldiers*.

ZAMOR.

O save Alzire ; let me perish.

ALZIRE.

No :

I will be joined to Guzman, and to thee.

ALVAREZ.

My son is in the agonies of death ;  
O Guzman, hear me.

ZAMOR.

Look on Zamor, learn  
Of him to die.

GUZMAN.

[*To Zamor.*

Perhaps I may teach thee  
Another lesson : I have owed the world

A good example long, and now I mean  
To pay the debt.

[Turning to Alvarez.

My soul is on the wing,  
And ere she takes her flight but waits to see  
And imitate Alvarez; O my father,  
The mask is off, death has at last unveiled  
The hideous scene, and showed me to myself;  
New light breaks in on my astonished soul:  
O I have been a proud, ungrateful being,  
And trampled on my fellow-creatures: heaven  
Avenge earth: my life can never atone  
For half the blood I've shed: prosperity  
Had blinded Guzman, death's benignant hand  
Restores my sight; I thank the instrument  
Employed by heaven to make me what I am.  
A penitent: I yet am master here;  
And yet can pardon: Zamor, I forgive thee,  
Live and be free; but O remember how  
A Christian acted, how a Christian died.

[To Montezuma, who kneels to him.

Thou, Montezuma, and ye hapless victims  
Of my ambition, say my clemency  
Surpassed my guilt, and let your sovereigns know,  
That we were born your conquerors.

[To Zamor.

Observe  
The difference, Zamor, 'twixt thy God and mine:  
Thine teach thee to revenge an injury,  
Mine to forgive and pity thee.

ALVAREZ.

My son,  
Thy virtue's equal to thy courage.

ALZIRE.

Heaven!  
How wonderful a change! amazing goodness!

ZAMOR.

Thou wilt oblige me to repent.

GUZMAN.

Yes, Zamor,  
I will do more, thou shalt admire and love me:  
Guzman too long hath made Alzire wretched,  
I'll make her happy; with my dying hand  
I give her to thee, live and hate me not,  
Restore your country's ruined walls, and bless  
My memory.

*[To Alvarez.*

Alvarez, be once more  
A father to them, let the light of heaven  
Shine forth upon them; Zamor is thy son,  
Let him repair my loss.

ZAMOR.

Amazed, confounded,  
And motionless I stand; can Christians boast  
Of such exalted virtue? 'twas inspired  
By heaven; the Christian's law must be divine:  
Friendship, and faith, and constancy I knew  
Already; but this soars above them all:  
I must indeed admire and love thee, Guzman  
*[Falls at his feet.*

ALZIRE.

My lord, permit me to embrace thy knees:  
O I could die for Guzman; will you then  
Forgive my weakness?

## Alzire.

GUZMAN.

Yes: I pardon all,  
I cannot see thee weep and not forgive thee.  
Come near, my father, take my last farewell!

[Dies.]

ALVAREZ.

[To Montezuma.]

I see the hand of God in all our woes,  
And humbly bend myself before that power  
Who wounds to heal, and strikes but to forgive.

*End of the Fifth and Last Act.*

# ORESTES

•

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

ÆGISTHUS.

ORESTES, Son of Agamemnon and Clytemnæstra.

ELECTRA, } Sisters of Orestes.  
IPHISA, }

CLYTEMNÆSTRA, Wife of Ægisthus.

PYLADES, Friend of Orestes.

PAMMENES, an old Man, attached to the Family of  
Agamemnon.

DIMAS, an Officer of the Guards.

ATTENDANTS.

---

SCENE, the seashore, a wood, a temple, a palace  
and a tomb, on one side: on the other, Argos at a  
distance.

## ORESTES.

"*Orestes*" was produced in 1750, an experiment which intensely interested the literary world and the public. In his Dedicatory Letters to the Duchess of Maine, Voltaire has the following passage on the Greek drama :

"We should not, I acknowledge, endeavor to imitate what is weak and defective in the ancients: it is most probable that their faults were well known to their contemporaries. I am satisfied, Madam, that the wits of Athens condemned, as well as you, some of those repetitions, and some declamations with which Sophocles has loaded his "*Electra*:" they must have observed that he had not dived deep enough into the human heart. I will moreover fairly confess, that there are beauties peculiar not only to the Greek language, but to the climate, to manners and times, which it would be ridiculous to transplant hither. Therefore I have not copied exactly the "*Electra*" of Sophocles—much more I knew would be necessary; but I have taken, as well as I could, all the spirit and substance of it. The feast celebrated by *Ægisthus* and *Clytemnæstra*, which they called the feast of Agamemnon; the arrival of *Orestes* and *Pylades*; the urn which was supposed to contain the ashes of *Orestes*; the ring of *Agamemnon*; the character of *Electra*, and that of *Iphisa*, which is exactly the *Chrysothemis* of Sophocles; and above all, the remorse of *Clytemnæstra*; these I have copied from the Greek tragedy. When the messenger, who relates the fictitious story of the death

of *Orestes*, says to *Clytemnæstra*: 'I see, Madam, you are deeply affected by his death;' she replies, 'I am a mother, and must therefore be unhappy; a mother, though injured, cannot hate her own offspring:' she even endeavors to justify herself to *Electra*, with regard to the murder of *Agamemnon*, and laments her daughter. Euripides has carried *Clytemnæstra's* repentance still further. This, Madam, was what gained the applause of the most judicious and sensible people upon earth, and was approved by all good judges in our own nation. No character, in reality, can be more natural than that of a woman, criminal with regard to her husband, yet softened by her children; a woman, whose proud and fiery disposition is still open to pity and compassion, who resumes the fierceness of her character on receiving too severe reproaches, and at last sinks into submission and tears. The seeds of this character were in Sophocles and Euripides, and I have only unfolded them. Nothing but ignorance, and its natural attendant, presumption, can assert that the ancients have nothing worthy of our imitation: there is scarcely one real and essential beauty and perfection, for the foundation of which, at least, we are not indebted to them.

"I have taken particular care not to depart from that simplicity so strongly recommended by the Greeks, and so difficult to attain; the true mark of genius and invention, and the very essence of all theatrical merit. A foreign character, brought into "*Ædipus*" or "*Electra*," who should play a principal part and draw aside the attention of the audience, would be a monster in the eyes of all those who have any knowledge of the ancients, or of that nature which they have so finely painted. Art and genius

consist in finding everything within the subject, and never going out of it in search of additional ornaments: but how are we to imitate that truly tragic pomp and magnificence which we find in the verses of Sophocles, that natural elegance and purity of diction, without which the piece, howsoever well conducted in other respects, must after all be but a poor performance!

“I have at least given my countrymen some idea of a tragedy without love, without confidants, and without episodes: the few partisans of good taste acknowledge themselves obliged to me for it, though the rest of the world withhold their approbation for a time, but will come in at last, when the rage of party is over, the injustice of persecution at an end, and the clouds of ignorance dissipated. You, Madam, must preserve among us those glittering sparks of light which the ancients have transmitted to us; we owe everything to them: not an art was born among us: everything was transplanted: but the earth that bears these foreign fruits is worn out, and our ancient barbarism, by the help of false taste, would break out again in spite of all our culture and improvement: and the disciples of Athens and Rome become Goths and Vandals, corrupted with the manners of the *Sybarites*, without the kind favor and protection of persons of your rank. When nature has given them either genius, or the love of genius, they encourage this nation, which is better able to imitate than to invent; and which always looks up towards the great for those instructions and examples which it perpetually stands in need of. All that I wish for, Madam, is, that some genius may be found to finish what I have but just sketched out; to free the stage from that effeminacy and

affected which it is now sunk into; to render it respectable to the gravest characters; worthy of the few great masterpieces which we already have among us; worthy, in short, the approbation of a mind like yours, and all those who may hereafter endeavor to resemble you."



affected which it is now sunk into; to render it respectable to the gravest characters; worthy of the few great masterpieces which we already have among us; worthy, in short, the approbation of a mind like yours, and all those who may hereafter endeavor to resemble you."



I AM VERGING TO THE GRAVE;  
LET ME BUT LIVE TO SEE THEE GOVERN  
HERE  
AS JUSTICE SHALL DIRECT THEE, AND I  
DIE  
WITH PLEASURE.

ALZIRE, ACT I





## ORESTES.

### ACT I. SCENE 'I.

IPHISA, PAMMENES.

IPHISA.

Sayest thou, Pammenes? shall these hated walls,  
Where I so long have dragged a life of woe,  
Afford at least the melancholy comfort  
Of mingling sorrow with my dear Electra?  
And will Ægisthus bring her to the tomb  
Of Agamemnon, bring his daughter here,  
To be a witness of the horrid pomp,  
The sad solemnity, which on this day  
Annual returns, to celebrate their crimes,  
And make their guilt immortal?

PAMMENES.

O Iphisa,  
Thou honored daughter of my royal master,  
Like thee, confined within these lonely walls,  
The secrets of a vile abandoned court  
Do seldom reach Pammenes; but, 'tis rumored,  
The jealous tyrant brings Electra here,  
Fearful lest Argos, by her cries alarmed,  
Should rise to vengeance; every heart, he knows,  
Feels for the injured princess, therefore much  
He dreads her clamors; with a watchful eye  
Observes her conduct, treats her as a slave,  
And leads the captive to adorn his triumph.

IPHISA.

Good heaven! and must Electra be a slave!  
 Shall Agamemnon's blood be thus disgraced  
 By a barbarian? Will her cruel mother,  
 Will Clytemnæstra bear the vile reproach  
 That on herself recoils, and all her race?  
 Perhaps my sister is too fierce of soul,  
 She mingles too much pride and bitterness  
 Of keen resentment with her griefs; alas!  
 Weak are her arms against a tyrant's power:  
 What will her anger, what her pride avail her?  
 They only irritate a haughty foe,  
 And cannot serve our cause: my fate at least  
 Is milder, and this solitary state  
 Shields me from wrongs which must oppress  
     Electra.

Far from my father's foes, these pious hands  
 Can pay due offerings to his honored shade:  
 Far from his murderer, in this sad retreat  
 Freely I weep in peace, and curse Ægisthus:  
 I'm not condemned to see the tyrant here,  
 Save when the Sun unwillingly brings round  
 The fatal day that knit the dreadful tie,  
 When that inhuman monster shed the blood  
 Of Agamemnon, when base Clytemnæstra—

## SCENE II.

—

ELECTRA, IPHISA, PAMMENES.

IPHISA.

O my Electra! art thou here? my sister—

ELECTRA.

The day of horror is returned, Iphisa :  
 The dreadful rites, the guilty feast prepared,  
 Have brought me hither ; thy Electra comes,  
 Thy captive sister, comes a wretched slave,  
 To bear the tidings of their guilty joy.

IPHISA.

To see Electra is a blessing still,  
 It pours some joy into the bitter cup  
 Of sorrow, thus to mix my tears with thine.

ELECTRA.

Tears, my Iphisa ! I have shed enough  
 Of them already : O thou bleeding ghost  
 Of my dead father, ever-honored shade,  
 Is that the tribute which I owe to thee?  
I owe thee blood, and blood thou hast required ;  
 Amidst the pomp of this dire festival,  
 Dragged by Ægisthus here, I will collect  
 My scattered spirits, shake off these vile chains,  
 And be my own avenger : yes, Iphisa,  
 This feeble arm shall reach the tyrant's heart :  
 Did not the cruel Clytemnæstra shed  
 A husband's blood ? did I not see her lift  
 Her barbarous hand against him, and shall we  
 Suspend the blow, and let a murderer live ?  
 O vengeance, and thou, animating virtue,  
 That dost inspire me, art thou not as bold  
 As daring guilt ? we must revenge ourselves,  
 We must, Iphisa : fearest thou then to strike,  
 Fearest thou to die ? shall Clytemnæstra's daughter,  
 The blood of Atreus fear ? O rather lend  
 Thy aid, and join the desperate Electra !

IPHISA.

My dearest sister, moderate thy rage,  
 And calm thy troubled mind: against our foes  
 What can we bring but unavailing tears?  
 Who will assist us? who will lend us arms?  
 Or how shall we surprise a watchful king,  
 For guilt is ever fearful, by his guards  
 Surrounded? why, Electra, wilt thou court  
 Perpetual danger? should the tyrant hear  
 Thy loud complaints, I tremble for thy life.

ELECTRA.

Why let him hear them? I would have my grief  
 Sink to his heart, and poison all his joys:  
 Yes; I would have my cries ascend, to heaven,  
 And bring the thunder down; would have them raise  
 A hundred kings, who never yet have dared,  
 Unworthy cowards as they are, to avenge  
 Great Agamemnon: but I pardon thee,  
 And the vain terrors of thy fearful soul,  
 That shrinks at danger; for he favors you,  
 I know he does, and only crushes me  
 Beneath his iron yoke: thou hast not been,  
 Like me, a wretched persecuted slave;  
 Thou didst not see the impious parricide,  
 The horrid<sup>1</sup> feast, the dire solemnity,

✓ <sup>1</sup> Nothing could add more to the horror of the crime than such a circumstance. Clytemnæstra, not content with murdering her husband, instituted a solemn feast in commemoration of the happy event, and called it, with cruel raillery, "the supper of Agamemnon." Dinias, in his "History of Argos," informs us, it was on the thirteenth of the month Gamelion, which answers to the beginning of our January.

When Clytemnæstra—O the dreadful image  
 Is still before me, in this place, Iphisa,  
 Where now thou tremblest to declare thy wrongs,  
 There did these eyes behold our hapless father  
 Caught in the deadly snare: Pammenes heard  
 His dying groans, and ran with me to save him:  
 But when I came, what did I see! my mother  
 Plunging her ruthless dagger in his breast,  
 To rob him of the poor remains of life. ✓

[Turning to Pammenes.

Thou sawest me take Orestes in my arms, ✓  
 My dear Orestes; little knew he then  
 Of danger, but as near his murdered father  
 He stood, called out for aid to Clytemnæstra:  
 She, midst the horrors of the guilty scene,  
 Stopped for a moment short, and gave us time  
 Safe to convey the victim from Ægisthus.  
 Whether the tyrant has completed yet  
 The imperfect vengeance in Orestes' blood,  
 I know not: O my brother, dost thou live,  
 Or hast thou followed thy unhappy father?  
 Alas! I weep for him, and fear for thee.  
 These hands are loaded with inglorious chains,  
 And these sad eyes, forever bathed in tears,  
 See naught but guilt, oppression, and despair.

PAMMENES.

Ye dear remains of Atreus' honored race,  
 Whose splendor I have seen, whose woes I feel,  
 Permit a friend to fill your weeping souls  
 With cheerful hope, that ever waits propitious  
 To soothe affliction: call to mind what heaven  
 Long since hath promised, that its vengeful hand  
 Should one day lead Orestes to the place,  
 Where we preserved him; that Ægisthus there,

Even at yon tomb, and on the fatal day  
 Marked for his impious triumph o'er the dead,  
 Should pay the forfeit of his crime: the Gods  
 Can ne'er deceive; in darkness still they veil  
 Their secret purpose from the eyes of men,  
 And punishment with slow but certain steps,  
 Still follows guilt.

IPHISA.

But wherefore stays so long  
 Their tardy vengeance? I have languished here  
 In grief and anguish many a tedious hour;  
 Electra, still more wretched, is in chains:  
 Meantime the proud oppressor lives in peace,  
 And glories in his crimes.

ELECTRA.

Thou seest, Pammenes,  
 Ægisthus still renews his cruel triumph,  
 And celebrates the fatal nuptials; still  
 A wretched exile lives my dear Orestes,  
 Forgetful of his father, and Electra.

PAMMENES.

But mark the course of time: he touches now  
 The age when manly strength, with courage joined,  
 May aid your purpose; hope for his return,  
 And trust in heaven.

ELECTRA.

We will: thou son of wisdom,  
 Thou good old man, O thou hast darted forth  
 A ray of hope on my despairing soul!  
 If with unpitying eye the gods beheld  
 Our miseries here, and proud oppression, still  
 Unpunished, trampled on the tender feet  
 Of innocence, what hand would crown their altars

With incense and oblation! but kind heaven  
 Will give Orestes to a sister's arms,  
 And blast the tyrant: hear my voice, Orestes,  
 O hear thy country's, hear the cries of blood,  
 That call thee forth; come from thy dreary caves,  
 And pathless deserts, where misfortune long  
 Hath tried thy courage; leave thy savage prey,  
 And all the roaming monsters of the forest,  
 To chase the beasts of Argos, to destroy  
 The tyrants of the earth, the murderers  
 Of kings; O haste, and let me guide thy hand  
 Even to the traitor's breast.

IPHISA.

No more: repress  
 Thy griefs, Electra; see, thy mother comes.

ELECTRA.

And have I yet a mother?

### SCENE III.

—  
 CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ELECTRA, IPHISA.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Hence, and leave me;  
 You may retire, Pammenes; stay, my daughters.

IPHISA.

Alas! that sacred name dispels my fears.

ELECTRA.

And doubles mine.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Touching your fate, my children,  
 I came to lay a mother's heart before you.

Barren, thank heaven, hath been my second bed,  
 Nor brought a race of jealous foes to sow  
 Division here. Alas! my little race  
 Is almost run; the secret grief that long  
 Hath preyed on my sad heart will finish soon  
 A life of woe: spite of Ægisthus, still  
 I love my children; spite of all his rage,  
 Electra, thou who in thy infant years  
 So oft hast given me comfort, when the loss  
 Of Iphigenia, and her cruel father  
 Oppressed my soul; though now thy pride disdains  
 me,  
 And braves my power, thou art my daughter still;  
 Unworthy as thou art, there's still a place  
 In Clytemnæstra's heart for her Electra.

ELECTRA.

For me! O heaven, and am I yet beloved;  
 And dost thou feel for thy unhappy daughter?  
 O, if thou 'dost, behold her chains, behold  
 Yon tomb——

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Unkind Electra, thus to wake  
 The sad remembrance! thou hast plunged a dagger  
 Into thy mother's breast; but I deserve it.

ELECTRA.

Thou hast disarmed Electra, nature pleads  
 A mother's cause; I own myself to blame  
 For all the bitterness of sorrow poured  
 In dreadful execrations on thy head.  
 By thee delivered to the tyrant's power,  
 I would have torn thee from him; I lament,  
But cannot hate thee. O, if gracious heaven  
 Hath touched thy soul with wholesome penitence,  
 Obey its sacred will, and hear the voice

Of conscience, that commands thee to unloose  
 The horrid ties that bind thee to a wretch  
 Despised and hated; follow the great God  
 Who leads thy footsteps to the paths of virtue;  
 Call back your son, let him return to fill  
 The throne of his great ancestors, to scourge  
 A tyrant, to avenge his murdered father,  
 His sisters, and his mother: haste and send  
 For my Orestes.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Talk no more of that,  
 Electra, nor speak thus of my Ægisthus:  
 I grieve to see thee in these shameful bonds;  
 But know, a sovereign cannot tamely brook  
 Repeated insults, or embrace a foe:  
 You had provoked him to be cruel; I,  
 Who am but his first subject, oft have tried  
 To soothe his anger, but in vain: my words,  
 Instead of healing, but inflamed the wound:  
 Electra is indebted to herself  
 For all her deep-felt injuries; henceforth bend  
 To thy condition; let thy sister teach thee  
 That we must yield submissive to our fate,  
 If e'er we hope to change it. I could wish  
 To end my days in peace amongst my children;  
 But if thy rapid and imprudent zeal  
 Should bring Orestes here before the time,  
 His life might answer for it, and thy own,  
 If the king see him: though I pity thee,  
 Electra, yet I owe a husband more  
 Than a lost son, whom I have cause to fear.

ELECTRA.

O heaven, that monster! he thy husband, he!  
 And is it thus thou pitiest me? alas,

What will this poor, this light remorse avail thee,  
 This fleeting sorrow? was thy tenderness  
 But for a moment, dost thou threaten me,

[To Iphisa.

Is this, Iphisa, this a mother's love?

[To Clytemnæstra.

It seems thou threatenest my Orestes too;  
 Thou hast no cause to fear, nor I to hope  
 For him: alas! perhaps he is no more;  
 Perhaps Ægisthus, the detested tyrant,  
 He whom but now thou didst not blush to call  
 Thy husband, hath in secret ta'en his life.

IPHISA.

Believe me, Madam, when I call the gods  
 To witness, poor Electra and myself  
 Are strangers to the fate of dear Orestes;  
 Have pity then on your afflicted daughter,  
 Pity your helpless son and spare Electra:  
 She has been wronged; her tears and her reproaches  
Suit well her fate, and ought to be forgiven.

ELECTRA.

I must not hope it, must not even complain;  
 And if Orestes lives but in my thoughts  
 'Tis deemed a crime. I know Ægisthus well,  
 Know his fierce nature; if he fears my brother,  
 He'll soon destroy him.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Know, thy brother lives;  
 If he's in danger, 'tis from thy imprudence;  
 Therefore be humble, moderate thy transports,  
 Respect thy mother: thinkest thou I come here,  
 Elate with joy, to lead the splendid triumph?  
 O no, to me it is a day of sorrow;

Thou weepst in chains, and I upon a throne. —  
 I know the cruel vows thy hatred made  
 Against me: O, Electra! cease thy prayers,  
 The gods have heard thee but too well already:  
 Retire, and leave me.

## SCENE IV.

—  
CLYTEMNESTRA.

[*Alone.*]

How it shocks my soul

To see my children! O the guilty bed!  
 My fatal marriage, and long prosperous crimes,  
 Adultery and murder, horrid bonds!  
 How ye torment me now! my little dream  
 Of happiness is o'er, and conscience darts  
 Its sudden rays on my affrighted soul.  
 How can Ægisthus live so long in peace!  
 Fearless he leads me on to share with him  
 These cruel triumphs; but my spirits fail,  
 My strength forsakes me, and I tremble now  
 At every omen; fear my subjects, fear  
 All Argos, Greece, Electra, and Orestes.  
 How dreadful 'tis to hate the blood that flowed  
 Congenial with our own, to dread the names  
 Which mortals hold so sacred and so dear!  
 But injured nature, banished from my heart,  
 Indignant frowns, and to avenge herself  
 Now bids me tremble at the name of son.

## SCENE V.

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Cruel Ægisthus, wherefore wouldst thou lead me  
To this sad place, the seat of death and horror?

ÆGISTHUS.

Is then the solemn pomp, the feast of joy,  
The sweet remembrance of our prosperous days,  
Grown hateful to thee? is our marriage day  
A day of horror?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

No: but here, Ægisthus,  
There may be danger: my unhappy children  
Have filled this heart with anguish: poor Iphisa  
Weeps her hard lot; Electra is in chains;  
This fatal place reminds me of the blood  
We shed, reminds me of my dear Orestes,  
Of Agamemnon.

ÆGISTHUS.

Let Iphisa weep,  
And proud Electra rave; I bore too long  
Her bitter taunts, 'tis fit her haughtiness  
Should now be humbled; I'll not suffer her  
To stir up foul rebellion in my kingdom,  
To tell the factions that Orestes comes,  
And call down vengeance on me; every hour  
That hated name is echoed in my ear,  
I must not bear it.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Ha! what name was that?

Orestes! O, I shudder at the thought  
 Of his approach: an oracle long since  
 Declared, that here, even at the fatal tomb  
 Whither thou leadest, his parricidal hand  
 Should one day rise vindictive, and destroy us.  
 Why therefore wouldst thou tempt the gods, why  
 thus  
 Expose a life so dear to Clytemnæstra?

ÆGISTHUS.

Be not alarmed; Orestes ne'er shall hurt thee:  
 His be the danger; for I have sent forth  
 Some friends in search of him, and soon I hope  
 Shall see him in the toils; a wretched exile  
 From clime to clime he roams, and now it seems  
 In Epidaurus' gloomy forest hides  
 His ignominious head; but there perhaps  
 We have more friends than Clytemnæstra thinks of;  
 The king may serve us.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

But, my son——

ÆGISTHUS.

I know

He's fierce, implacable, revengeful; stung  
 By his misfortunes, all the blood of Atreus  
 Boils in his breast, and animates his rage.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Alas! my lord, his rage is but too just. |

ÆGISTHUS.

Be it our business then to make it vain;  
 Thou knowest I've sent my Plisthenes in secret  
 To Epidaurus.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

But for what?

ÆGISTHUS.

To fix

My throne in safety, and remove thy fears:  
 Yes, Plisthenes, my son, by thee adopted  
 Heir to my kingdom, knows too well how much  
 His interest must depend on the event  
 E'er to neglect his charge: he is thy son,  
 Think of no other: had Electra's heart  
 Submissive yielded to another's counsels,  
 She had been happy in my Plisthenes:  
 But she shall feel the power which she contemns,  
 She and her haughty brother, her Orestes,  
 He may be found perhaps.—You seem disturbed.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Alas! Ægisthus, must we sacrifice  
 More victims? must I purchase length of days  
 With added guilt? Thou knowest whose blood we  
 shed—  
 And must my son too perish, must I pay  
 So dear a price for life?

ÆGISTHUS.

Remember—

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

No:

First let me ask the sacred oracle—

ÆGISTHUS.

What canst thou hope from gods or oracles,  
 Were they consulted on the blissful day  
 That gave Ægisthus to his Clytemnæstra?

## CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Thou hast recalled a time when heaven, I fear,  
 Was much offended: love defies the gods,  
 But fear adores them; guilt weighs down my soul,  
 Do not oppress my feeble spirits; time,  
 That changes all, hath altered this proud heart;  
 The hand of heaven is on me, and subdues  
 The haughty rage that once inspired my breast;  
 Not that my tender friendship for Ægisthus  
 Can e'er decay, our interests are the same;  
 But to behold my daughter made a slave,  
 To think on my poor lost abandoned son,  
 To think that now, even now, perhaps he dies  
 By vile assassins, or, if living, lives  
 My foe, and hates the guilty Clytemnæstra,  
 Is it not dreadful? pity me, Ægisthus,  
I am a mother still /

## ÆGISTHUS.

Thou art my wife;  
 Thou art my queen; resume thy wonted courage,  
 And be thyself again; indulge no more  
 This foolish fondness for ungrateful children,  
 Who merit not thy love; consult alone  
 Ægisthus' safety, and thy own repose.

## CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Repose! the guilty mind can ne'er enjoy it.

*End of the First Act.*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORESTES.

Whither, my Pylades, hath cruel fate  
 Conducted us? alas! Orestes lives  
 But to increase the sorrows of his friend:  
 Our arms, our treasures, and our soldiers lost  
 In the rude storm; here on this desert coast,  
 No succor near, deserted and forlorn  
 We wander on, and naught but hope remains.  
 Where are we?

PYLADES.

That I know not; but since fate  
 Hath led us hither, let us not despair;  
 It is enough for me, Orestes lives:  
 Be confident; the barbarous Ægisthus  
 In vain pursued thy life, which heaven preserved  
 In Epidaurus, when thy arm subdued  
 The gallant Plisthenes: let naught alarm  
 Or terrify thy soul, but boldly urge  
 Thy way, protected by that guardian God  
 Who watches o'er the just, the great avenger,  
 Who hath already to thy valor given  
 The son, and promised that ere long the father  
 Shall follow him.

ORESTES.

Alas, my friend, that God  
 In anger now withdraws his powerful aid,  
 And frowns upon us, as thy cruel fate  
 Too plainly shows; a terrible example!  
 But say, within the rock didst thou conceal

The urn, which, to Mycenæ, horrid seat  
Of murder, by the gods command, we bear;  
That urn which holds the ashes of my foe,  
Of Plisthenes; with that we must deceive  
The tyrant.

PYLADES.

I have done it.

ORESTES.

Gracious heaven!

When shall we reap the fruits of our obedience?  
When will the wished-for day of vengeance come?  
Shall I again behold my native soil,  
The dear, the dreadful place where first I saw  
The light of day? Where shall I find my sister,  
The pride, the glory, of admiring Greece;  
That generous maid, whom all unite to praise,  
But none will dare to succor? She preserved  
My life; and, worthy of her noble father,  
Hath never bent beneath the oppressive hand  
Of power, but braved the fury of the storm.  
How many kings, how many heroes, fought  
For Menelaus! Agamemnon dies,  
And Greece forgets him, whilst his hapless son,  
Deserted, wanders o'er a faithless world,  
To seek some blest asylum for repose.  
Alas, without thy friendship I had been  
The most distressed, most abject of mankind:  
But heaven, in pity to my woes, hath sent  
My Pylades; it would not let me perish,  
But gave me to subdue my hated foe,  
And half avenge my father: say, my friend,  
What path will lead us to the tyrant's court?

PYLADES.

Behold that palace, and the towering height

Of yon proud temple, the dark grove overgrown  
 With cypress, and the tomb, rich images  
 Of mournful splendor all: and see! this way  
 Advancing, comes a venerable sage,  
 Of mildest aspect, and whose years, no doubt,  
 Have long experience of calamity;  
 His soul will melt at thy disastrous fate.

ORESTES.

Is every mortal born to suffer? hark!  
 He groans, my Pylades.

## SCENE II.

—  
 ORESTES, PYLADES, PAMMENES.

PYLADES.

Whoe'er thou art,  
 Stop, and inform us: we are strangers here.  
 Two poor unhappy friends, long time the sport  
 Of winds and waves, now on this unknown shore  
 Cast helpless, canst thou tell us if this place  
 Will be or fatal to us, or propitious?

PAMMENES.

I am a simple, plain old man, and here  
 Worship the gods, adore their justice, live  
 In humble fear of them, and exercise  
 The sacred rights of hospitality;  
 Ye both are welcome to my little cottage,  
 There to despise with me the pride of kings,  
 Their pomp and riches; come, my friends, for such  
 I ever hold the wretched.

ORESTES.

Generous stranger,  
 May gracious heaven inspire us with the means  
 To recompense thy goodness! but inform us  
 What place is this; who is your king?

PAMMENES.

Ægisthus:

I am his subject.

ORESTES.

Terrors, crimes, and vengeance!  
 O heaven, Ægisthus!

PYLADES.

Soft: do not betray us;

Be careful.

ORESTES.

Gods, Ægisthus! he who murdered——

PAMMENES.

The same.

ORESTES.

And Clytemnæstra, lives she still  
 After that fatal blow.

PAMMENES.

She reigns with him;

The rest is known too well.

ORESTES.

That tomb before us,

And yonder palace——

PAMMENES.

Is inhabited

Now by Ægisthus; built, I well remember,

By worthier hands, and for a better use.  
The tomb thou seest, forgive me if I weep  
At the remembrance, is the tomb of him  
I loved, my lord, my king—of Agamemnon.

ORESTES.

O 'tis too much! I sink beneath it.

PYLADES.

Hide

Thy tears, my friend.

*[To Orestes, who turns away from him.]*

PAMMENES.

You seem much moved, and fain  
Would stop the tide of grief: O give it way,  
Indulge thy sorrows, and lament the son  
Of gods, the noble conqueror of Troy;  
Whilst they insult his sacred memory here,  
Strangers shall weep the fate of Agamemnon.

ORESTES.

A stranger as I am, I cannot look  
With cold indifference on the noble race  
Of Atreus, 'tis a Grecian's duty ever  
To weep the fate of heroes, and I ought—  
But doth Electra live in Argos still?

PAMMENES.

She doth, she's here.

ORESTES.

I run, I fly to meet her.

PYLADES.

Ha! whither wouldst thou go! What! brave the gods  
Hazard thy precious life! forbear, my lord.

*[To Pammenes.]*

O, sir, conduct us to the neighboring temple,

There will we lay our gifts before the altar  
 In humble duty, and adore that God  
 Who ruled the waves, and saved us from destruc-  
 tion.

ORESTES.

Wilt thou conduct us to the sacred tomb  
 Where lie the ashes of a murdered hero?  
 There must I offer to his honored shade  
 A secret sacrifice.

PAMMENES.

O heavenly justice,  
 Thou sacrifice to him! amidst his foes!  
 O noble youth! my master had a son,  
 Who, in Electra's arms—but I forbear,  
 Ægisthus comes: away; I'll follow you.

ORESTES.

Ægisthus! ha!

PYLADES.

We must avoid his presence.

### SCENE III.

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA, PAMMENES.

ÆGISTHUS.

[*To Pammenes.*

Who are those strangers? one of them methought  
 Seemed, by his stately port and fair demeanor,  
 Of noble birth, a gloom of melancholy  
 Hangs on his brow: he struck me as he passed:  
 Is he our subject? knowest thou whence he came?

PAMMENES.

I only know they are unfortunate ;  
 Driven by the tempest on those rocks, they came  
 For shelter here ; as strangers I relieved them ;  
 It was my duty : if they tell me truth,  
 Greece is their country.

ÆGISTHUS.

Thou shalt answer for them  
 On peril of thy life.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Alas ! my lord,  
 Can these poor objects raise suspicion ?

ÆGISTHUS.

Yes :  
 The people murmur ; everything alarms me.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Such for these fifteen years hath been our fate,  
 To fear, and to be feared ; the bitter poison  
 To all my happiness.

ÆGISTHUS.

Away, Pammenes ;  
 Let me know who and whence they are ; why thus  
 They come so near the palace ; from what port  
 Their vessel sailed, and wherefore on the seas  
 Where I command : away, and bring me word.

## SCENE IV.

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

ÆGISTHUS.

Well, madam, to remove thy idle fears,  
 The interpreters of heaven it seems at length  
 Have been consulted; but in vain: their silence  
 Doubles thy grief, and heightens thy despair;  
 For to thyself, thy restless spirit ne'er  
 Will know repose; thou tremblest at the thought  
 Of thy son's death, yet fearest his dangerous life:  
 Consult no more thy doubtful oracles,  
 And hesitating priests, that brood in secret  
 O'er the dark bosom of futurity;  
 But hear Ægisthus, he shall give thee peace,  
 And satisfy thy soul: this hand determines,  
 This tongue pronounces Clytemnæstra's fate:  
 If thou wouldst live and reign, confide in me,  
 And me alone, and let me hear no more  
 Of your unworthy son; but for Electra,  
 She's to be feared, and we must think of her:  
 Perhaps her marriage with my Plisthenes  
 Might stop the mouth of faction, and appease  
 The discontented people: thou wouldst wish  
 To see the deadly hatred, that so long  
 Hath raged between us, softened into peace;  
 To see our interests and our hearts united:  
 Let it be so. Go thou, and talk with her;  
 But take good heed her pride refuses not  
 The proffered boon, that were an insult soon  
 She might repent of; but I hope with you,  
 That slavery hath bowed down her haughty spirit,

That this unhop'd for, unexpected change  
 From poverty and chains to rank and splendor,  
 Joined to a mother's kind authority,  
 And above all, to Ambition, will persuade her  
 To seize the golden minutes, and be wise:  
 But if she spurns the happiness that courts her,  
 Her insolence shall meet its due reward.  
 Your foolish fondness, and her father's name,  
 Have fed her pride too long; but let her dread,  
 If she submits not, a severer fate,  
 Chains heavier far, and endless banishment.

## SCENE V.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ELECTRA.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Come near, my daughter, and with milder looks  
 Behold thy mother: I have mourned in secret,  
 And wept with thee thy hard and cruel bondage,  
 Though not unmerited; for sure thy hatred  
 Was most unjust, Electra: as a queen,  
 I was offended; as a mother, grieved;  
 But I have gained your pardon, and your rights  
 Are all restored.

ELECTRA.

O madam, at your feet——

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

But I would still do more.

ELECTRA.

What more?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Support

Your race, restore the honored name of Pelops,  
And re-unite his long-divided children.

ELECTRA.

Ha! talkest thou of Orestes? speak, go on.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

I speak of thee, and hope at last Electra  
Will be Electra's friend: I know thy soul  
Aspires to empire, be thyself again,  
And let thy hopes transport thee to the throne  
Of Argos and Mycenæ; rise from chains  
And ignominious slavery to the throne  
Of thy great ancestors: Ægisthus yields  
To my entreaties, as a daughter yet  
He would embrace thee, to his Plisthenes  
Would join Electra; every hour the youth  
From Epidaurus is expected here;  
When he returns he weds you: look, my daughter,  
Towards the bright prospect of thy future glory,  
And bury all the past in deep oblivion.

ELECTRA:

Can I forget the past, or look with joy  
On that which is to come? O cruel fate,  
This is the worst indignity that e'er  
Electra bore: remember whence I sprang,  
Remember, I am Agamemnon's daughter,  
And wouldst thou bind me to his murderer's son?  
Give me my chains again, oppress my soul  
With all the horrors of base servitude;  
All that the tyrant e'er inflicted on me,  
Shame and reproach suit with my sad condition;  
I have supported them, and looked on death

Without a fear: a thousand times Ægisthus  
 Hath threatened me with death, but this is worse;  
 Thou art more cruel far to ask my vows,  
 My love, my honor; but I see your aim,  
 I know your purpose; poor Orestes slain,  
 His murderer trembles at a sister's claim,  
 And dreads my title to a father's throne:  
 The tyrant wants my hand to second him,  
 To seal his poor precarious rights with mine,  
 And make me an accomplice in his guilt:  
 O, if I have a right Ægisthus fears,  
 Let him erase my title in my blood,  
 And tear it from me: if another arm  
 Be needful to his purpose, lend him thine;  
 Strike here, and join Electra to her brother;  
 Strike here, and I shall know 'tis Clytemnæstra.

## CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

It is too much: ungrateful as thou art,  
 I pitied thee; but all my hopes are past:  
 What have I done, what would I do, to bend  
 Thy stubborn heart? tears, menaces, reproaches,  
 And love and tenderness, the throne itself,  
 Which but for me thou never couldst have hoped,  
 Prayers, punishment, and pardon, naught availed,  
 And now I yield thee to thy fate: farewell!  
 Thou sayest that thou shalt know me for thy mother,  
 For Clytemnæstra, by my cruelty:  
 I am thy mother, and I am thy queen,  
 Remember that; to Agamemnon's race  
 Naught do I owe but hatred and revenge;  
 I will not warm a serpent in my breast  
 To sting me: henceforth storm, complain, and weep,  
 I shall not heed the clamors of a slave:  
 I loved thee once, with grief I own I loved thee;  
 But from this hour remember Clytemnæstra

Is not thy mother, but Ægisthus' wife;  
 The bonds are broken that united us,  
 Electra broke them; nature hath disclaimed,  
 And I abjure them.

## SCENE VI.

—  
ELECTRA.[*Alone.*

Gracious heaven! is this  
 A mother's voice? O day the bitterest sure  
 That ever rose since my dear father's death!  
 I fear I said too much, but my full heart,  
 Spite of myself, would pour its venom forth:  
 She told me my Orestes was no more;  
 Could I bear that? O if a cruel mother  
 Has robbed me of my best, my dearest treasure,  
 Why should I court my worst of foes, why fawn  
 And cringe to her, to live a vile dependant  
 On her precarious bounties; to lift up  
 These withered hands to unrelenting heaven,  
 To see my father's bed and throne usurped  
 By this base spoiler, this inhuman tyrant,  
 Who robbed me of a mother's heart, and now  
 Hath taken Orestes from me?

## SCENE VII.

—  
ELECTRA, IPHISA.

IPHISA.

O Electra,

Complain no more.

Orestes.

ELECTRA.

Why not?

IPHISA.

Partake my joy.

ELECTRA.

Joy is a stranger to this heart, Iphisa,  
And ever shall be.

IPHISA.

Still there is hope.

ELECTRA.

Still must we weep: for if I may believe  
A mother, our dear brother, our Orestes,  
Is dead. O no,

IPHISA.

And if I may believe these eyes,  
He lives, he's here, Electra.

ELECTRA.

Can it be?

Good heaven! O do not trifle with a heart  
Like mine: Iphisa, didst thou say Orestes?

IPHISA.

I did.

ELECTRA.

Thou wouldst not with a flattering dream  
Deceive me, my Iphisa—but, go on,  
For hope and fear distract me.

IPHISA.

O my sister,  
Two strangers, cast by some benignant God

On these unhappy coasts, are just arrived,  
 And hither, by the care of good Pammenes,  
 Conducted; one of them——

ELECTRA.

I faint: die—

Well, one of them——

IPHISA.

I saw the noble youth:  
 O what a lustre sparkled in his eye!  
 His air, his mien, his every gesture bore  
 The perfect semblage of a demi-god;  
 Even as they paint the illustrious Grecian chief,  
 The conqueror of Troy; such majesty  
 And sweet deportment ne'er did I behold;  
 But with Pammenes he retired, and hid  
 His beauteous form from my desiring eyes:  
 Struck with the charming image, and amazed,  
 I ran to seek thee here, beneath the shade  
 Of this dark grove, to tell the pleasing tale:  
 But mark what followed—on the sacred tomb,  
 Where we so oft have mingled our sad tears,  
 I saw fresh garlands, saw the votive wreath,  
 The water sprinkled over it, and the hair  
 Doubtless of those whom I so late had seen,  
 The illustrious strangers: near to these was laid,  
 What most confirmed my hopes, a glittering sword,  
 That spoke methought the day of vengeance near:  
 Who but a son, a brother, and a hero,  
 Raised by the gods to save his falling country,  
 Would dare to brave the tyrant thus? 'Tis he,  
 Electra, heaven hath sent him to our aid,  
 The lightning glares upon us; and the thunder  
 Will soon be heard.

ELECTRA.

I must believe Iphisa,  
 And hope the best; but is it not a snare  
 Laid by the tyrant? Come: we'll know the truth,  
 Let us away—I must be satisfied.

IPHISA.

We must not search him in the dark retreat  
 Where he is hid. Pammenes says, his life  
 Would answer for it.

ELECTRA.

Ha! what dost thou say?  
 Alas! we are deceived, betrayed, Iphisa,  
 By cruel heaven: thus, after fifteen years,  
 Restored, Orestes would have run with joy  
 To the dear arms that saved him, would have  
     cheered  
 Electra's mournful heart, he ne'er had fled  
 From thee, Iphisa: O that sword thou sawest,  
 Which raised thy sanguine hope, alarms my fears;  
 A cruel mother would be well informed,  
 And in her eyes I read the barbarous joy  
 She felt within: O dart one ray of hope,  
 Ye vengeful gods, on my despairing soul!  
 Will not Pammenes yield to my entreaties?  
 He will; he must: away, I'll speak to him.

IPHISA.

Do not, Electra; think what cruel eyes  
 Watch o'er our steps, and mark our every action.  
 If he is come, we shall discover him  
 By our fond zeal, and hazard his sweet life:  
 If we're deceived, our search but irritates  
 The tyrant, and endangers good Pammenes:  
 But let us pay our duty at the tomb,

There we at least may weep without offence.  
 Who knows, Electra, but the noble stranger  
 May meet us in that blest asylum; there  
 That heaven, whose goodness thy impatient rage  
 Hath called in question, may yet hear my vows,  
 And give him to our wishes and our tears:  
 Let us be gone.

ELECTRA.

Thou hast revived my hopes:  
 But O, I die with grief, if thou deceivest me!

*End of the Second Act.*

ACT III. SCENE I.

—  
 ORESTES, PYLADES, PAMMENES.

*[A slave at the farther end of the stage carrying an urn and a sword.]*

PAMMENES.

Blest be the day that to our wishes thus  
 Restores the long-expected hope of Greece,  
 My royal master's son, the minister  
 Of heaven's high will, to execute swift vengeance  
 On Agamemnon's foes! The tyrant long  
 Hath dreaded, long foreseen the impending blow;  
 Conscious of guilt, in every face unknown  
 Still he beholds his master and his judge,  
 And still Orestes haunts his troubled soul:  
 Much he inquires concerning you, and longs  
 To see you both. I have a thousand fears,  
 A thousand hopes; heaven grant we may succeed!  
 Meantime I have obeyed your orders, sounded  
 The people's hearts, and strove to animate

Their zeal; inspired them with the distant hope  
 Of an avenger; soon or late the race  
 Of rightful kings must prosper: every heart  
 Glowed with warm transport at Orestes' name;  
 Awakened from her slumber, vengeance rises  
 With double vigor; my few faithful friends,  
 Who dwell in this lone desert with Pammenes,  
 Lift up their hands to heaven, and call on thee;  
 And yet I tremble to behold thee here  
 Unarmed and unassisted, lest some chance  
 Discover thee, and blast our hopes: the foe  
 Is barbarous, active, vigilant, and bold;  
 One fatal stroke may ruin all; whilst thou,  
 Against a tyrant seated on his throne,  
 Bringest nothing but Orestes, and his friend.

PYLADES.

And are not they sufficient? 'Tis the work  
 Of heaven that oft fulfils its own designs  
 By means most wonderful, that in the deep  
 O'erwhelmed our little all, and here alone  
 Hath left us to perform the sacrifice.  
 Sometimes it arms the sovereigns of the earth  
 With tenfold vengeance; sometimes, in contempt  
 Of human valor, strikes in awful silence;  
 Nature and friendship then assert the rights  
 Of heaven, and vindicate its power divine.

ORESTES.

Orestes asks no other aid, no arm  
 But thine, my Pylades.

PYLADES.

Take heed, my friend,  
 Quit not the paths of safety pointed out  
 By the just gods; remember thou art bound

By solemn oath to hide thee from Electra ;  
 Thy peace, thy happiness, thy kingdom, all  
 Depend upon it : O refrain thy transports,  
 Dissemble, and obey ; 'tis fit Electra  
 Should be deceived, even more than Clytemnæstra.

PAMMENES.

Thank heaven, that thus ordained it for thy safety.  
 Already hath Electra, bathed in tears,  
 And calling for her great avenger, filled  
 These solitary mansions with her cries ;  
 Importunate and bold, she sought me out,  
 And with imprudent warmth, demanded loud,  
 Where was her brother, where her dear Orestes :  
 Nature had whispered to her anxious heart  
 He was not far from his Electra : scarce  
 Could I withhold her eager steps.

ORESTES.

Ye gods!

Must I refrain? O insupportable!

PYLADES.

You hesitate ; O think, my dear Orestes,  
 Think on the menaces of angry heaven,  
 Think on its goodness that preserved thy life  
 From every danger ; if thou shouldst oppose  
 Its sacred will, eternal wrath awaits  
 To blast thy purpose ; tremble, son of Atreus  
 And Tantalus, remember what thy hapless race  
 Hath suffered, nor expect a milder doom.

ORESTES.

What power invincible presides unseen  
 O'er human actions, and directs our fate?  
 Is it a crime to listen to the voice  
 Of fond affection? O eternal justice,

✓ Thou deep abyss, unsearchable to man!  
 Shall not our weakness and our guilt by thee  
 Be still distinguished? shall the man who wanders  
 From virtue's paths unknowing, and who braves  
 Thy power, shall he who yields to nature's laws,  
 And he who breaks them, share an equal fate?  
 But shall the slave condemn his master? heaven  
 Gave us our being, and can owe us nothing:  
 ↙ Therefore no more: in silence I obey.  
 Give me the urn, the ring, and bloody sword,  
 Which thou hast hither brought, they shall be offered  
 Far from Electra's sight: let us be gone;  
 I'll see my sister when I have avenged her.

[Turning to Pammenes.

Go thou, Pammenes, and prepare the hearts  
 Of thy brave followers for the great event  
 Which Greece awaits, and I must execute:  
 Deceive Ægisthus, and my guilty mother;  
 Let them enjoy the transitory bliss,  
 The short-lived pleasure of Orestes' death,  
 If an unnatural mother can behold  
 With joy the ashes of a murdered son:  
 Here will I wait, and stop them as they pass.

## SCENE II.

—  
 ELECTRA and IPHISA on one side of the stage  
 ORESTES and PYLADES on the other, with a slave  
 carrying an urn and a sword.

ELECTRA.

[To Iphisa.

Hope disappointed is the worst of sorrows.  
 O my Iphisa, all thy flattering dreams

Are vanished, and Pammenes, with a word,  
Hath undeceived us; the fair day that shone  
So bright is clouded o'er, and darkness spreads  
On every side: alas! our wretched life  
Is but a round of never-ending woes.

ORESTES.

*[To Pylades.*

Two women, and in tears!

PYLADES.

Alas, my lord,  
Beneath a tyrant all things wear the face  
Of grief and misery.

ORESTES.

In Ægisthus' court  
Nothing should reign but sorrow.

IPHISA.

*[To Electra.*  
Look, Electra,

The strangers come this way.

ELECTRA.

Unhappy omen!  
They did pronounce Ægisthus' hated name.

IPHISA.

One is that hero whom I told thee of,  
The noble youth——

ELECTRA.

*[Looking at Orestes.*  
Alas! I too, like thee,  
Have been deceived.

*[Turning to Orestes.*

Who are ye, wretched strangers;  
And what hath led you to this fatal shore?

Orestes.

ORESTES.

We come to see the king who reigns in Argos,  
And take our orders from him.

ELECTRA.

Are ye Grecians,  
And call ye him a king, the murderer  
Of Agamemnon?

ORESTES.

He is sovereign here,  
And heaven commands us to respect his throne,  
Not to dispute his title.

ELECTRA.

Horrid maxim!  
And what have you to ask of this proud king,  
This bloody monster here?

ORESTES.

We come to bring him  
Some happy tidings.

ELECTRA.

Dreadful then to us  
They must be.

IPHISA.

[*Seeing the Urn.*  
Ha! an urn! O grief, O horror!

PYLADES.

Orestes——

ELECTRA.

O ye gods! Orestes dead!  
I faint, I die,

ORESTES.

What have we done, my friend!  
 They could not be mistaken, for their grief  
 Betrays them: O! my blood runs cold.—Fair prin-  
 cess,  
 Be comforted, and live.

ELECTRA.

Orestes dead?  
 And can I live? O no, barbarians, here  
 Complete your cruelty.

IPHISA.

Alas! you see.  
 The poor remains of Agamemnon; we  
 Are his unhappy daughters, the sad sisters  
 Of lost Orestes.

ORESTES.

O Electra! O  
 Iphisa! O where am I? cruel gods!

*[To the slave carrying the urn.*

Take from their sight those monuments of woe,  
 That fatal urn, which——

ELECTRA.

*[Running towards the urn.*

Wouldst thou take it from me?  
 Wouldst thou deprive me of the little all  
 That's left Electra by offended heaven?  
 O give it me.

*[She takes the urn, and embraces it.*

ORESTES.

Forbear; what wouldst thou do?

PYLADES.

Away: Ægisthus only must receive  
These precious relics.

ELECTRA.

Must I then behold  
My brother's ashes in a tyrant's hand,  
And are Orestes' murderers before me?

ORESTES.

Horrid reproach! it shocks my very soul:  
I can no longer——

ELECTRA.

Yet you weep with me:  
O, in the name of the avenging gods,  
If ye are guiltless, if your generous hands  
Collected his dear ashes——

ORESTES.

Gracious heaven!

ELECTRA.

If ye lament his death, O answer me:  
Who told you of his fate: art thou his friend?  
Speak, noble youth: both dumb! yet both afflicted:  
Even whilst your words plant daggers in my heart,  
Ye seem to pity me.

ORESTES.

It is too much;  
The gods have been obeyed enough already.

ELECTRA.

What sayest thou?

ORESTES.

Leave those poor remains.

ELECTRA.

O no:

I never will: alas! is every heart  
 Inflexible? I tell thee, cruel stranger,  
 I must not, cannot give thee back again  
 The fatal gift thy pity hath bestowed:  
 'Tis my Orestes; and I will embrace him:  
 Behold his dying sister.

ORESTES.

Cruel gods!

Where are your thunders now? O strike: Electra,  
 I can no longer——

ELECTRA.

Ha!

ORESTES.

I ought——

PYLADES.

O heaven!

ELECTRA.

Go on——

ORESTES.

Know then——

## SCENE III.

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES,  
 ELECTRA, IPHISA, PAMMENES, *Guards*.

ÆGISTHUS.

O glorious spectacle!  
 Fortune, I thank thee: Can it be, Pammenes?

My rival dead! it is, it must be true,  
Electra's grief confirms it.

ELECTRA.

Dreadful hour?

ORESTES.

To what am I reserved?

ÆGISTHUS.

Seize on the urn,  
And wrest it from her.

*[They take the urn from her.]*

ELECTRA.

O thou hast robbed me of the only good  
This life could e'er afford me, barbarous monster!  
O take Electra too, tear forth this heart  
And join me to Orestes; father, son,  
Sister, and brother, all thy wretched victims  
Unite to satiate thy revenge: now, tyrant,  
Enjoy thy happiness, enjoy thy crimes:  
And thou, inhuman mother, look with him  
On the delightful spectacle, it suits  
Thy nature, and is worthy of you both.

*[Iphisa leads her off.]*

#### SCENE IV.

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES,

*Guards.*

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Must I bear this?

ÆGISTHUS.

She shall be punished for it :  
 Let her complain to heaven, for heaven itself  
 Will justify Ægisthus ; it approves  
 Where it forbids not ; therefore I am guiltless,  
 And happy too : my throne stands firmly now,  
 My life's in safety ; but I must reward  
 The zeal and valor of these noble Grecians.

ORESTES.

It was our duty, royal sir, to lay  
 These proofs before you : take this sword, this ring,  
 You must remember it : 'twas Agamemnon's.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

And was it then by thee Orestes fell ?

ÆGISTHUS.

If thou hast served me, thine be the reward :  
 But, say, who art thou, of what race ?

ORESTES.

My name  
 Must not as yet be known ; perhaps hereafter  
 It may be : in the fields of Troy my father  
 Distinguished shone amongst the great avengers ✓  
 Of Menelaus ; in those days of glory  
 He fought, and fell : deserted and forlorn,  
 Left by a cruel mother, and pursued  
 By most inhuman foes, this friend alone  
 Supported me ; was fortune, father, all ;  
 With him I still have trod the paths of honor,  
 With him defied the malice of my fate :  
 Such is my story.

ÆGISTHUS.

But say where thy arm  
 Avenged me of this hated prince : inform me.

ORESTES.

'Twas a word that to the temple leads  
Of Epidaurus, near Achemor's tomb.

ÆGISTHUS.

The king had set a price upon his head :  
How came you not to ask for your reward?

ORESTES.

Because I hated infamy, and fought  
For vengeance, not for hire ; I did not mean  
To sell his blood ; a private motive raised  
This arm against him, as my friend well knows,  
And I revenged myself without the aid  
Of kings, nor shall I boast the victory :  
Forgive me, sir : I tremble ; for the widow  
Of Agamemnon's here ; perhaps I've served,  
Perhaps offended her ; I'll take my leave.

ÆGISTHUS.

Thou shalt not ; stay, I charge thee.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Let him go :

That urn, and the sad story he has told,  
Have filled my soul with horror : heaven, my lord,  
Protects your throne and life, be thankful for it,  
And leave a mother to indulge her sorrows.

ORESTES.

Madam, I thought that Agamemnon's son  
Was hateful to you.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

I must own I feared him.

ORESTES.

Feared him?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

I did indeed; for he was born  
To be most guilty.

ORESTES.

Guilty? and to whom?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

The wretched wanderer, thou knowest, was doomed  
To hate a mother, doomed to shed the blood  
From whence he sprang; such was his horrid fate:  
Perhaps he had fulfilled—and yet, his death,  
I know not why, affrights me, and I tremble  
To look on you who saved me from his vengeance.

ORESTES.

Alas! a son against a mother armed!  
O who could loose that sacred tie? perhaps  
He wished——

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

O heaven!

ÆGISTHUS.

What sayest thou? didst thou know him?

PYLADES.

He will discover all.

[*Aside.*[*To Ægisthus.*

He did, my lord,  
The wretched soon unite, and soon divide:  
At Delphi first we saw him.

ORESTES.

Yes: I know

His purpose well.

## Orestes.

ÆGISTHUS.

What was it?

ORESTES.

To murder thee.

ÆGISTHUS.

'I've seen his malice long, but I despised it.  
 Meantime Electra used Orestes' name  
 To spread division o'er my kingdom; she  
 Was my worst foe: thou hast avenged me of her,  
 Take thy reward, I yield her to thy power;  
 She shall be thine: the haughty maid, who spurned  
 The great alliance with Ægisthus' son;  
 Henceforth she is thy slave: the wretched race  
 Of Priam long beneath the conqueror's yoke  
 Submissive bowed, and dragged the servile chain;  
 And wherefore should not Agememnon's blood  
 Bend in its turn, and share an equal fate?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Would Clytemnæstra suffer that!

ÆGISTHUS.

Thou wouldst not  
 Defend thy worst of foes; proscribe Orestes,  
 Yet spare Electra.

[*To Orestes.*

Leave the urn with me.

ORESTES.

We will, my lord, and shall accept your offer.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

That were to carry our resentment further  
 Than justice warrants: let him hence, and bear  
 Some other recompense: we too must go:

Let us, my lord, I beg thee, let us quit  
 These horrid mansions of the dead, where naught  
 But dreadful images on every side  
 Surrounds me: O we never can prepare  
 The bloody feast between the father's tomb  
 And the son's ashes! How shall we invoke  
 The household gods, whom we have injured; how,  
 Amidst our cruel sports, give up the blood  
 Of Clytemnæstra to the murderer  
 Of her Orestes? O it must not be!  
 I tremble at the thought: my fears, Ægisthus,  
 Should waken thine: this stranger rives my heart;  
 His very sight is deadliest poison to me.  
 Away, my lord, and let me be concealed  
 From every eye; would it were possible  
 To hide me from myself!

[*Exit Clytemnæstra.*]

ÆGISTHUS.

[*To Orestes.*]

Stay thou, and wait  
 Till time befriend thee; nature for a moment  
 Is clamorous and loud, but soon as reason  
 Shall reassume its empire, interest then  
 Must plead thy cause, and she alone be heard.  
 Meantime remain with us, and celebrate  
 Our nuptial day:

[*To one of his attendants.*]

Haste you to Epidaurus,  
 And hither bring my son; let him confirm  
 The welcome tidings.

## SCENE V.

—

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORESTES.

Yes, Orestes comes  
To join the cruel pomp, and make thy feast  
A feast of blood.

PYLADES.

O how I trembled for thee!  
I feared thy love; I feared thy tenderness;  
And, more than all, thy honest rage, that burst  
In transports forth when thou beheldest the tyrant:  
I saw thee ready to insult him; saw  
Thy soul take fire at Agamemnon's name,  
And dreaded the sad consequence.

ORESTES.

My mother,  
O, Pylades, my mother pierced my heart.  
Didst thou not mark the workings of her soul  
Whilst I was speaking? O I felt them all!  
Scarce could my voice in faltering accents tell  
The melancholy tale, whilst Clytemnæstra  
Still gazed, and trembled still: a father's murder;  
A sister unrevenged; a tyrant yet  
Unpunished; and a mother to be taught  
Her interest and her duty; what a weight  
Of secret cares! great heaven complete thy work!  
Urge on the lingering moments that retard  
My vengeance; O, let me perform the task  
Of love, and hatred; let me mix the blood  
Of base Ægisthus with the vile remains

Of Plisthenes ; let sweet Electra see  
The cruel tyrant gasping at my feet,  
And know her dear deliverer in Orestes !

## SCENE VI.

—  
ORESTES, PYLADES, PAMMENES.

ORESTES.

What hast thou done, Pammenes, may we hope—

PAMMENES.

O my dear lord, never, since the fatal day  
When Agamemnon fell, did greater perils  
Threaten thy precious life.

ORESTES.

Ha ! what hath happened ?

PYLADES.

Still

Must I have cause to tremble for Orestes ?

PAMMENES.

This instant is arrived a messenger  
From Epidaurus, and ere this related  
The death of Plisthenes.

PYLADES.

Immortal gods !

ORESTES.

And knows he that Orestes slew his son ?

PAMMENES.

They speak of nothing but his death ; ere long  
Fresh tidings are expected ; and the news

Meantime concealed from Greece that she has lost  
 One of her tyrants; the king, still in doubt,  
 Shuts himself up with Clytemnæstra: this  
 I learned from one, who, to the royal blood  
 Still faithful, pines in loathsome servitude  
 Beneath the proud usurper.

ORESTES.

I have gathered  
 At least the first fair fruits of promised vengeance;  
 Grant me, ye gods, to reap a plenteous harvest!  
 Thinkest thou, my friend, they would uplift this arm  
 In vain, and only prosper to deceive me;  
 To my successful valor give the son,  
 And after yield me to the father's power?  
 Let us away: danger should make us bold;  
 Who fears not death is master of his foe;  
 I'll seize the moment of uncertainty,  
 Ere the full day of truth glares in upon him,  
 And points his rage.

PAMMENES.

Away: you must be known  
 To those few noble spirits who will die  
 To serve their prince; this secret place conceals  
 Some faithful friends, who may be still more useful,  
 Because unknown.

PYLADES.

Haste then; and if the tomb  
 Of thy dear father, if thy honored name  
 Joined to Electra's, if the wrath of heaven  
 Against usurpers; if the gracious gods  
 Who hither led thee, if they all should fail,  
 If this detested spot is doomed by fate  
 To be thy grave, O take a wretched life  
 To thee devoted, we will die together,

That comfort's left; for Pylades shall fall  
Close by thy side, and worthy of Orestes.

ORESTES.

Strike me, kind heaven! but O for pity save  
His matchless valor, and protect my friend!

*End of the Third Act.*

ACT IV. SCENE I.

ORESTES, PYLADES.

ORESTES.

Perhaps the vigilance of good Pammenes  
May for awhile remove the king's suspicions;  
And gracious heaven, in pity to our woes,  
Deceive Ægisthus to a fond belief,  
That the devoted race of Tantalus  
Is now no more; but, O my Pylades,  
The sword I offered at my father's tomb  
Is stolen by sacrilegious hands, that reach  
Even to the sacred mansions of the dead:  
If it be carried to the tyrant, all  
Will be discovered; let us haste, my friend,  
And seize him, ere it be too late.

PYLADES.

Pammenes

Is watchful o'er our interest; we must wait  
For him: when we have gathered the few friends  
That mean to serve us, be this tomb the place  
Of meeting for us all, Pammenes then  
Will join us here.

Orestes.

ORESTES.

O Pylades, O heaven!  
 This barbarous law that forces me to wound  
 A tender heart that lives but for Orestes!  
 And must I leave Electra to her sorrows?

PYLADES.

Yes: thou hast sworn it, therefore persevere;  
 Thou hast more cause to dread Electra now  
 Than all thy foes; she may destroy, but never  
 Can serve us, and the tyrant's eyes may soon  
 Be opened: O subdue, if possible,  
The pangs of nature, and conceal thy love:  
 We came not here to comfort thy Electra,  
 But to avenge her.

ORESTES.

See, my Pylades,  
 She comes this way, perhaps in search of me.

PYLADES.

Her every step is watched: you must not see her:  
 Begone; and doubt not, I'll observe her well;  
 The eyes of friendship seldom are deceived.

## SCENE II.

ELECTRA, IPHISA, PYLADES.

ELECTRA.

The villain hath escaped me; he avoids  
 My hated sight, and leaves me to my fate,  
 To fruitless rage, and unavailing tears,  
 Without the hope of vengeance: say, barbarian,  
 Thou vile accomplice in his crimes, where went

The murderer, my tyrant, my new lord,  
 (For so it seems Ægisthus has decreed)  
 Where is he gone?

PYLADES.

To do the will of heaven,  
 In dutiful obedience to the gods,  
 And well would it become the royal maid  
 To follow his example: fate ofttimes  
 Deceives the hearts of men, directs in secret,  
 And guides their wandering steps through paths  
 unknown;  
 Ofttimes it sinks us in the deep abyss  
 Of misery, and then raises us to joy;  
 Binds us in chains, or lifts us to a throne,  
 And gives us life midst horrors, tombs, and death.  
 Complain no more, but yield to thy new sorrows;  
 Be patient, and be happy: fare thee well.

### SCENE III.

ELECTRA, IPHISA.

ELECTRA.

He swells my rage to fury and despair:  
 Thinks he I'll tamely bear these cruel insults?  
 Could not a father's and a brother's death  
 Fill up the measure of Electra's woes;  
 But she must bend beneath the vile assassin ✓  
 Of her Orestes; be a common slave  
 To all the murderers of her hapless race?  
 Thou dreadful sword, wet with Orestes' blood,  
 Exposed in triumph at the sacred tomb,  
 Thou execrable trophy, for a moment  
 Thou didst deceive me, but thou hast insulted  
 The ashes of the dead; I'll make thee serve

A nobler purpose: though Ægisthus hides  
 His guilty head, and with the queen in secret  
 Plans future crimes, and meditates destruction,  
 Still we may find the murderer of Orestes:  
 I cannot bathe me in the blood of both  
 My tyrants, but on one at least my soul  
 Shall be revenged.

IPHISA.

I cannot blame the grief  
 Which I partake; but hear me, hear the voice  
 Of reason; every tongue speaks of Orestes;  
 They say, he lives, and the king's fears confirm it.  
 You saw Pammenes talking with this stranger  
 In secret, saw his ardent zeal to serve  
 And to attend him: thinkest thou, our best friend,  
 Our comforter, the good old man, would e'er  
 Associate with a murderer? never, never,  
 He could not be so base.

ELECTRA.

He may be false,  
 Or weak; old age is easily deceived:  
 We are betrayed by all; I know we are:  
 Did not the cruel stranger boast his deed?  
 Did not Ægisthus yield me up a victim?  
 Was not Electra made the price of guilt,  
 The murderer's reward? Orestes calls me  
 To join him in the tomb: now then, my sister,  
 If e'er thou lovest Electra, pity her  
 In her last moments; bloody they must be,  
 And terrible. Away; inform thyself  
 Touching Pammenes; see, if the assassin  
 Be with the queen: she flatters all my foes;  
 She heard unmoved the murder of her son,  
 And seemed, O gods! a mother seemed, to share

The guilty transport with her savage lord.  
 O that this sword could reach him in her arms,  
 And pierce the traitor's heart! I'll do it.

IPHISA.

No more: ✓

Indeed you wrong her; for the sight of him  
 Offends her: be not thus precipitate  
 And rash, Electra; I will to Pammenes,  
 And talk with him: or I am much deceived,  
 Or by their silence they but mean to hide  
 Some mystery from us: your imprudent warmth  
 (Yet who would not forgive it in the wretched?)  
 Perhaps alarms them, and they would conceal  
 From you their purpose; what it is, I know not:  
 Pammenes seems to shun you, let me go  
 And speak to him; but do not, my Electra,  
 Hazard a deed thou wilt too late repent of.

## SCENE IV.

—  
ELECTRA.

The subtle tyrants have gained o'er Pammenes;  
 Old age is weak and fearful: what can faith  
 Or friendship do against the hand of power?  
 Henceforth Electra to herself alone  
 Shall trust her vengeance: 'tis enough: these hands,  
 Armed with despair, shall act with double vigor.  
 Arise ye furies, leave your dark abode  
 For seats more guilty, and another hell,  
 Open your dreary caverns, and receive  
 Your victims; bring your flaming torches here,  
 Daughters of vengeance, arm yourselves and me;  
 Approach, with death and terror in your train;

Orestes, Agamemnon, and Electra  
 Invoke your aid : and lo ! they come, I see  
 Their glittering swords, and unappalled behold  
 them ;  
 They are not half so dreadful as Ægisthus :  
 The murderer comes ; and see, they throng around  
 him ;  
 Hell points him out, and yields him to my ven-  
 geance.

## SCENE V.

ELECTRA.

*[At the bottom of the stage.]*

ORESTES.

*[On the other side at a distance from her.]*

ORESTES.

Where am I ? hither they directed me :  
 O my dear country ! and thou, fatal spot  
 That gave me birth, thou great but guilty race  
 Of Tantalus, for ever shall thy blood  
 Be wretched ? horror here on every side  
 Surrounds me : wherefore am I punished thus ?  
 What have I done ? why must Orestes suffer  
 For his forefathers' crimes ?

ELECTRA.

*[Advancing a little from the bottom of the stage.]*

What power withholds me ?

I cannot lift my arm against him ; but  
 I will go on.

ORESTES.

Methought I heard a voice :  
 O my dear father, ever-honored shade,  
 Much injured Agamemnon, didst thou groan?

ELECTRA.

Just heaven! durst he pronounce that sacred name?  
 And see he weeps: can sighs and penitence  
 Find entrance here? but what is his remorse  
 To the dire horrors that Electra feels!

*[She comes forward.]*

He is alone; now strike—die, traitor—O  
 I cannot——

ORESTES.

Gods! Electra, art thou here,  
 Furious and trembling?

ELECTRA.

Sure thou art some god  
 Who thus unnervest me—thou has slain my  
 brother:  
 I would have taken thy life for it, but the sword  
 Dropped from my hand; thy genius hath prevailed;  
 I yield to thee, and must betray my brother.

ORESTES.

Betray him, no! O, why am I restrained?——

ELECTRA.

At sight of thee my resolution dies,  
 And all is changed: could it be thou who filled  
 My soul with terror?

ORESTES.

O, I would repay  
 Thy precious tears with hazard of my life!

Orestes.

ELECTRA.

Methought I heard thee speak of Agamemnon.  
 O gentle youth, deceive me not, but speak :  
 For I had well nigh done a desperate deed ;  
 O show me all the guilt of it ! explain  
 The mystery ; tell me who thou art.

ORESTES.

O sister

Of dear Orestes, fly from me, avoid me.

ELECTRA.

But wherefore ? speak.

ORESTES.

No more—I am—take heed

They see us not together.

ELECTRA.

Gracious heaven !

Thou fillest my heart with terror and with joy.

ORESTES.

O if thou lovest thy brother——

ELECTRA.

Love him ! yes :

And O in thee I hear a father's voice,  
 And see his features ; nature hath unveiled  
 The mystery : O be kind and speak for her,  
 Do not deny it ; say thou art my brother :  
 Thou art, I know thou art—my dear Orestes ;  
 How could a sister seek thy precious life ?

ORESTES.

*[Embracing her.*

Heaven threatens in vain, and nature will prevail :  
 Electra is more powerful than the gods.



## SCENE VI.

—

ELECTRA, ORESTES, PYLADES, PAMMENES.

ELECTRA.

Rejoice with me, my friends, for I have found  
My dear Orestes.

PYLADES.

*[To Orestes.*

Hast thou then revealed  
The dangerous secret? Couldst thou think—

ORESTES.

If heaven

Expects obedience, it must give us laws  
We can obey.

ELECTRA.

Canst thou reproach him thus  
Only for making poor Electra happy?  
Wouldst thou adopt the cruel sentiments  
Of persecuting foes, and hide Orestes  
From my embraces? what unjust decree  
What harsh commands—

PYLADES.

I meant to save him for thee,  
That he might live, and be thy great avenger.

PAMMENES.

Princess, thou knowest, in this detested place  
They watch thee nearly; every sigh is heard,  
And every motion carefully observed:  
Those private friends, whose humble state eludes  
The tyrants search, adore this noble youth,

And would have served him ; everything's prepared ;  
But thy imprudence now will hazard all.

ELECTRA.

Did not Ægisthus give me to a hand,  
Stained, as he thought, with my Orestes' blood?  
[*To Orestes.*]

Thou art my master ; I am bound to serve thee ;  
I will obey the tyrant ; his commands,  
For once, are welcome, and the prospect brightens  
On every side.

PAMMENES.

It may be clouded soon,  
Ægisthus is alarmed, and we have cause  
To tremble ; if he but suspects us, death  
Must be our portion, therefore let us part.

PYLADES.

[*To Pammenes.*]  
Hence, good Pammenes, bring our friends together,  
The hours are precious ; haste and finish soon  
Thy noble work ; 'tis time we should appear,  
And—like ourselves.

## SCENE VII.

—

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ELECTRA, ORESTES,  
PYLADES, *Guards.*

ÆGISTHUS.

Slaves, execute your office,  
And bear these traitors to the dungeon.

Orestes.

ORESTES.

Once

There ruled o'er Argos those who better knew  
The rights of hospitality.

PYLADES.

Ægisthus,

What is our crime? Inform us, and at least  
Respect this noble youth.

ÆGISTHUS.

Away with them;

Ye stand aghast, as if ye feared to touch  
His sacred person: hence, I say, take heed  
Ye disobey me not: guards, drag them off.

ELECTRA.

O stay, barbarian, stay; for heaven itself  
Pleads for their sacred lives—they tear them from  
me,  
O gods!

ÆGISTHUS.

Electra, tremble for thyself,  
Perfidious as thou art, and dread my wrath.

## SCENE VIII.

—  
ELECTRA, CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

ELECTRA.

O hear me, if thou art a mother, hear;  
Let me recall thy former tenderness,  
Forgive my guilty rage, the sad effect  
Of unexampled sorrows; to complain,  
Is still, the mournful privilege of grief:  
Pity these wretched strangers; heaven perhaps;

Whose dreadful vengeance thou so long hast feared,  
 May for their sakes forgive thy past offences ;  
 The pardon thou bestowest on them may plead  
 For thee : O save them, save them.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Why shouldst thou  
 Be thus solicitous? What interest prompts  
 Thy ardent zeal?

ELECTRA.

Thou seest, the gods protect them,  
 Who saved them from the Ocean's boisterous rage,  
 And brought them here : heaven gives them to thy  
     care,  
 And will require them at thy hands—to one,  
 O if they knewest him—but they both are wretched.  
 Are we in Argos, or at Tauris, where  
 The cruel priestess bids her altars smoke  
 With stranger's blood? What must I do to save him?  
 Command, and I obey : to Plisthenes  
 You'd have me wedded ; I submit, though death  
 Were far more welcome ; lead me to his bed.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

You mean to mock us : knowest thou not, he's dead?

ELECTRA.

Just heaven! and hath Ægisthus lost a son?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

I see the joy that sparkles in thy eyes ;  
 Thou art pleased to hear it.

ELECTRA.

No : I am too wretched  
 To be delighted with another's woe :  
 I pity the unhappy, nor would shed

The blood of innocence: O save the strangers!  
I ask no more.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Away: I understand thee,  
And know thee but too well; thou hast confirmed  
The king's suspicions, and revealed the secret:  
One of these strangers is—Orestes.

ELECTRA.

Well,  
Suppose it were; suppose that gracious heaven,  
In tender pity, had restored thy son—

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

O dreadful moment! how am I to act?

ELECTRA.

Is it a doubt, and canst thou hesitate?  
Thy son! O heaven! think on his past misfortunes,  
Think on his merits; but if still thy mind  
Is doubtful, all is lost: farewell Orestes.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

I'm not in doubt; I am resolved; even thou,  
With all thy fury, canst not change the love,  
The tenderness I bear him: I will guard,  
Save, and protect him—he may punish me,  
Perhaps he will; I tremble at his name;  
No matter—I'm a mother still, and love  
My children; thou mayst yet preserve thy hate.

ELECTRA.

No: I will fall submissive at thy feet,  
And thank thy bounty: now, indulgent heaven,  
Thy mercy shines superior to thy wrath;  
For thou hast given a mother to my vows,  
Changed her resentful heart, and saved Orestes.

*End of the Fourth Act.*

## ACT V. SCENE I.

—  
ELECTRA.

I am forbid to enter here ; oppressed  
 With fears, in vain I lift these hands to heaven :  
 Iphisa comes not ; but behold the gates  
 Are opened : ha ! she's here, I tremble.

## SCENE II.

—  
ELECTRA, IPHISA.

ELECTRA.

Say,

My dear Iphisa, what have I to hope,  
 Will Clytemnæstra dare to be a mother ?  
 Has she the power, has she the will to make us  
 Some poor amends for all the cruel evils  
 She has inflicted on us ? Could she e'er——  
 But she's a slave to guilt, and to Ægisthus :  
 I am prepared to hear the worst ; O speak,  
 Say, all is past, and we must die.

IPHISA.

I hope,

And yet I fear : Ægisthus hath received  
 Some dark suggestions, but is doubtful still,  
 Whether Orestes is his prisoner here,  
 And Clytemnæstra never named her son :  
 She seems to feel a mother's fondness for him,  
 And, pierced with anguish, trembles for his life :  
 She struggles with herself, and fears alike

To speak or to be silent ; strives to soothe  
The tyrant's rage, and save them from his ven-  
geance :

But should Orestes once be known, he dies.

ELECTRA.

O cruel thought ! perhaps when I implored  
My barbarous mother I destroyed Orestes ;  
Her grief will but enrage the fierce Ægisthus ;  
Nature is ever fatal here : I dread  
Her silence, and yet would not have her speak ;  
Danger is on every side : but say, Iphisa,  
What hath Pammenes done ?

IPHISA.

His feeble age  
Seems strengthened by misfortune, and our dangers  
But breathe new spirit o'er his ardent zeal  
To serve our cause ; he animates our friends  
With double vigor ; even the servile throng,  
That cringe around the tyrant's throne, begin  
To murmur at the name of great Orestes :  
Veterans, who served beneath the father, burn  
With honest ardor to support the son :  
Such power have justice and the sacred laws  
O'er mortal minds, howe'er by vice corrupted.

ELECTRA.

O that Electra could inflame their souls  
With glowing virtue, breathe her own fierce spirit  
Into their timid hearts, and animate  
Their cold resentment ! would I had but known,  
Ere he arrived on this detested shore,  
That my Orestes lived ! or that Pammenes  
Had further urged——

## SCENE III.

—

ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ELECTRA, IPHISA,  
*Guards.*

ÆGISTHUS.

Guards, seize that hoary traitor,  
And let him be confronted with those strangers  
Whom I have doomed to death ; he is their friend,  
And confidant, the accomplice in their crimes :  
How dreadful was the snare which they had laid !  
O, Clytemnæstra, 'tis the cursed Orestes,  
It must be he ; do not deceive thyself,  
Do not defend him : O, I see it all,  
It is too plain : alas ! this urn contains  
The ashes of my son : the murderers brought  
This fatal present to his weeping father.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA

Canst thou believe——

ÆGISTHUS.

I can ; I must rely  
On the sworn hatred 'twixt the unhappy children  
Of Atreus and Thyestes ; must believe  
The time, the place, the rage of fierce Electra,  
Iphisa's tears, your undeserved compassion,  
Your ill-timed pity for these base assassins ;  
Orestes lives, and I have lost my son ;  
But I have caught him in the toils ; whiche'er  
It be, for yet I know not, I'll be just,  
I'll sacrifice the murderer to my son,  
And to his mother.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Horrid sacrifice!

I must not see it.

ÆGISTHUS.

Horrible to thee?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

O yes; already blood enough hath flowed  
 In this sad scene of slaughter: O 'tis time  
 To end the woes of Pelops' hapless race:  
 If after all it should not be Orestes,  
 Wouldst thou, on dark suspicion's vague report,  
 Murder the innocent? and if it be  
 Indeed my son, my lord, I must defend him,  
 Must gain his pardon at thy hands, or perish.

ÆGISTHUS.

I cannot, dare not yield to thy request;  
 For thy own sake I dare not; thy fond pity  
 May be thy ruin; all that melts thy heart  
 To soft compassion, sharpens mine to rage  
 And fierce resentment: one of them I know  
 Must be Orestes, therefore both shall die;  
 I ought not even to hesitate a moment:  
 Guards, do your office.

IPHISA.

O, my lord, behold me  
 Low at your feet; must all our hapless race  
 Thus humbly bend, thus supplicate in vain?  
 Electra, kneel with me, embrace his knees,  
 Thy pride destroys us.

ELECTRA.

Can I stoop so low?  
 Shall I bring foul disgrace on thee, my brother,

And ignominy, and shame? it shocks my soul;  
But I will suffer all to save Orestes.

[Turning to Ægisthus. ✓

It thou wilt save him, here I promise thee,  
(Not to forget my father's murder, that  
I never can, but) in respectful silence  
To pay thee homage, still to live with thee  
A willing slave, let but my brother live.

ÆGISTHUS.

Thy brother dies, and thou shalt live a slave;  
My vengeance is complete: thy pride is humbled,  
And sues in vain.

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

Ægisthus, 'tis too much,  
To trample thus on the unhappy race  
Of him who was thy master once; away,  
Spite of thy rage, I will defend my son;  
Deaf as thou art to a fond sister's prayers,  
A mother's may prevail: O think, my lord,  
Think on thy happy state, above the reach  
Of adverse fortune no, Orestes ne'er  
Can hurt thee, and Electra bends submissive  
Beneath thy power, Iphisa at thy feet;  
Can nothing move thee? I have gone too far  
Already with thee in the paths of guilt,  
And offered up a dreadful sacrifice.  
Thinkest thou I'll yield thee up my purest blood  
To glut thy rage? Am I forever doomed  
To take a murderous husband to my arms?  
At Aulis one a lovely daughter slew,  
The other threatens to destroy my son  
Before my eyes, close to his father's tomb:  
O rather let this fatal diadem,  
Hateful to Greece, and to myself a load

have said that  
Oy. feelings -  
should be more  
dear about it  
are the prayer  
last words

Of misery, fall with me, and be no more  
 Remembered! O Ægisthus, well thou knowest,  
 I loved thee, 'tis amongst my blackest crimes,  
 And stands the foremost; but I love my children,  
 And will defend them; against thy arm upraised  
 To shed their blood will lift my vengeful hand,  
 And blast thy purpose: tremble, for thou knowest  
 me:

The bands are sacred that united us,  
 Thy interest is most dear to Clytemnæstra:  
 Remember still, Orestes is my son,  
 And fear his mother.

ELECTRA.

You surpass my hopes.

Surely a heart like thine could ne'er be guilty;  
 Go on, my honored mother, and avenge  
 Your children, and your husband.

ÆGISTHUS.

Slave, thou fillest  
 The measure of thy crimes: gods! shall Ægisthus  
 Withhold his vengeance for a woman's cries,  
 For Agamemnon's widow, and her children?  
 Unhappy queen! say, whom dost thou accuse?  
 Whom dost thou plead for? hear me and obey.  
 Away with them to instant death.

#### SCENE IV.

—  
 ÆGISTHUS, CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ELECTRA, IPHISA,  
 DYMAS.  
 DYMAS.

My lord?

ÆGISTHUS.

Thou seemest disordered: what has happened?  
Speak.

DYMAS.

Orestes is discovered.

IPHISA.

Ha! where is he?

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

My son!

ELECTRA.

My brother?

ÆGISTHUS.

Have you punished him  
As he deserves?

DYMAS.

My lord, as yet he lives.

ÆGISTHUS.

And wherefore were my orders disobeyed?

DYMAS.

His friend and fellow-captive, Pylades,  
Pointed him out, and to the soldiers showed  
Great Agamemnon's son; they seemed much moved;  
I dread the consequence.

ÆGISTHUS.

I must prevent it,  
For they shall die: who dares not to revenge me  
Shall feel my justice: Dymas, follow me:  
Stay thou and guard his sisters; I defy  
The blood of Agamemnon: from the father  
Of Plisthenes, and great Thyestes' son,  
What mortal, or what god, shall save Orestes?

## SCENE V.

—

CLYTEMNÆSTRA, ELECTRA, IPHISA.

IPHISA.

Fear not, but follow him ; Electra, speak,  
Exhort our friends, and animate their zeal.

ELECTRA.

*[To Clytemnæstra.*

O, in the name of powerful nature, now  
Complete thy noble work ; conduct us, fly——

CLYTEMNÆSTRA.

You must not hence, the guards will not permit it :  
Stay here, my children, and rely on me,  
On a fond mother, and a tender wife :  
I will perform the double task, and take  
Orestes and Ægisthus to my care.

## SCENE VI.

—

ELECTRA, IPHISA.

IPHISA.

Alas ! the avenging god pursues us still ;  
Though she defends Orestes, still Ægisthus  
Is at her heart ; perhaps the tender cries  
Of pity and remorse shall naught avail  
Against the tyrant ; he is proud, revengeful,  
Implacable, and furious ; who shall save  
If he condemns ? we must submit, and die.

## ELECTRA.

O that before my death I had not fallen  
 So low as to entreat him, to belie  
 My honest heart, and supplicate the tyrant!  
 Despair and horror sink me to the tomb  
 With infamy and shame; my vain endeavors  
 To save Orestes but urge on his fate.  
 Where are these boasted friends Pammenes talked  
 of,  
 Who, with fell rancor, and determined hate,  
 Pursued Ægisthus? Where those vengeful gods  
 Who hid Orestes from my sight, upraised  
 His righteous arm, and promised to support him?  
 Where are ye now, infernal goddesses,  
 Daughters of night, ye who so lately shook  
 Your dreadful torches here? all nature once  
 United seemed to guard and to protect us,  
 But all desert us now, all court Ægisthus,  
 And men and gods, and heaven and hell betray me.

## SCENE VII.

—  
 ELECTRA, PYLADES, IPHISA.

ELECTRA.

What sayest thou, Pylades? the deed is done?

PYLADES.

It is: Electra's free, and heaven obeyed.

ELECTRA.

How?

PYLADES.

Yes, Orestes reigns: he sent me hither.

IPHISA.

Just gods!

ELECTRA.

Orestes! is it possible!

I faint, I die with joy.

PYLADES.

Orestes lives,

And has avenged the blood of innocence.

ELECTRA.

What wondrous power hath wrought this strange  
event.

PYLADES.

His father's name, Electra's, and his own;  
His valor, and his virtue; our misfortunes,  
Justice, and pity; and the power that pleads  
In human hearts for wretchedness like thine.  
Pammenes, by the tyrant's order bound,  
Was led with us to death; in weeping crowds  
The people followed, and deplored our fate:  
I saw their rage was equal to their fears,  
But the guards watched them closely: then Orestes  
Cried, "Strike, ye slaves, and sacrifice the last  
Of Argos' kings; ye dare not." When he spoke,  
On his fair front such native majesty  
And royal lustre shone, we almost thought  
Great Agamemnon's spirit from the tomb  
Had risen, and came once more to bless mankind.  
I spoke, and friendship's happy voice prevailed;  
The people rose, the soldiers stood aghast,  
And dropped the uplifted falchions from their  
hands;  
The crowd encircled us, and desperate love,  
With friendship joined, fought nobly for Orestes;

The joyful people bore him off in triumph :  
 Ægisthus flew to seize his destined prey,  
 And in the slave he meant to punish, found  
 A conqueror : pleased I saw his humbled pride ;  
 His friends deserted, and his guards betrayed him :  
 The insulting people triumphed in his fall.  
 O glorious day ! O all discerning justice !  
 Ægisthus wears the chains that bound Orestes ;  
 The queen alone attends, protects, and saves him  
 From the mad crowd, that press tumultuous on,  
 Big with revenge, and thirsting for his blood ;  
 While Clytemnæstra holds him in her arms,  
 And shields him from their rage, implores Orestes  
 To save her husband : he respects her still,  
 Fulfils the duties of a son and brother :  
 Safe from the foe you will behold him soon  
 Triumphant here, a conqueror and a king.

IPHISA.

Let us away, to greet the loved Orestes,  
 And comfort our afflicted mother.

ELECTRA.

Gods!

What unexpected bliss ! O Pylades,  
 Thou best of friends, thou kind protector, haste,  
 Let us begone.

PYLADES.

*[To his attendants.*

Take off those shameful bonds ;

*[They take off her chains.*

Fall from her hands, ye chains, for they were made  
 To wield a sceptre.

## SCENE VIII.

—

ELECTRA, IPHISA, PYLADES, PAMMENES.

ELECTRA.

O Pammenes, where,  
Where is my Orestes, my deliverer?  
Why comes he not?

PAMMENES.

This is a dreadful moment,  
And full of terror, for his father's spirit  
Demands a sacrifice, and justice waits  
To pay it, so hath heaven decreed: this tomb  
Must be the altar where the victim's blood  
Shall soon be shed; that sacred duty done,  
He will attend thee; but thou must not see  
A sight so terrible: thou knowest the laws  
Of Argos suffer not thy spotless hands  
To join with her ere the appointed time.

IPHISA.

But say, Pammenes, what of Clytemnæstra,  
How acts she in this dreadful crisis?

PAMMENES.

Vainly  
She deprecates the wrath of fierce Orestes,  
And strives to save Ægisthus; kneels for pardon,  
And craves that boon she never will obtain:  
Meantime the furies, deaf to her entreaties,  
And thirsting for the cruel murderer's blood,  
Throng round Orestes, and demand his life.



Orestes.

ELECTRA.

O wretched brother!  
 Crimes punish crimes; forever be this day  
 Lamented by us!

## SCENE IX.

—  
ORESTES.[*Enters.*]

Open wide, thou earth,  
 And swallow me: O Clytemnæstra, Atreus,  
 And Tantalus, I come, I follow you  
 To Erebus, a partner in your crimes,  
 To share your tortures.

ELECTRA.

O what hast thou done?

ORESTES.

She strove to save him, and I smote them both——  
 I can no more——

ELECTRA.

She fell then by thy hand!  
 O dreadful stroke! and couldst thou——

ORESTES.

'Twas not I;

'Twas not Orestes; some malignant power  
 Guided my hand, the hateful instrument  
 Of heaven's eternal wrath: Orestes lives  
 But to be wretched; banished from my country,  
 When my dear father fell, my mother slain,  
 And by my hand; an exile from the world,  
 Bereft of parents, country, fortune, friends,

Now must I wander : all is lost to me :  
O thou bright orb, thou ever glorious sun,  
Shocked at our crimes, and Atreus's horrid feast,  
Thou didst withdraw thy beams, and yet thou shinest  
On me ! O wherefore in eternal night  
Dost thou not bury all ? O tyrant gods,  
Merciless powers, who punished me for guilt  
Yourselves commanded, O for what new crime  
Am I reserved ? speak—ye pronounce the name  
Of Tauris, there I'll seek the murderous priestess,  
Who offers blood alone to the angry gods,  
To gods less cruel, less unjust than you.

ELECTRA.

Stay, and conjure their justice and their hate.

PYLADES.

Where'er the gods may lead, thy Pylades  
Shall follow still, and friendship triumph o'er  
The woes of mortals, and the wrath of heaven.

*End of the Fifth and Last Act.*



SÉMIRAMIS

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

SÉMIRAMIS.

ARSACES, or NINIAS.

AZEMA, a Princess of the Family of Belus.

ASSUR, a Prince of the Family of Belus.

OROES, High Priest.

OTANES, a Favorite of Semiramis.

MITRANES, Friend of Arsaces.

CEDAR, Friend of Assur.

Guards, Magi, Slaves, Attendants.

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This was produced in 1748 and a burlesque upon it was played at Fontainebleau.

# SÉMIRAMIS.

## ACT I.

The scene represents a large peristyle, at the bottom of which is the palace of Sémiramis. Gardens with fine hanging terraces, raised above the palace: on the right hand the temple of the magi, and on the left a mausoleum adorned with obelisks.

## SCENE I.

ARSACES, MITRANES.

*[Two slaves at a distance carrying a coffer.]*

ARSACES.

Once more, Mitranes, thou beholdest thy friend,  
Who, in obedience to the royal mandate  
In secret sent, revisits Babylon;  
The seat of empire; how Sémiramis  
Imprints the image of her own great soul  
On every object! these stupendous piles,  
These deep enclosures, where Euphrates pours  
His tributary waves; the temple's pride,  
The hanging gardens, and the splendid tomb  
Of Ninus, wondrous monuments of art!  
And only less to be admired than she  
Who raised them! here, in all her splendid pomp,  
More honored than the monarchs of the East,  
Arsaces shall behold this glorious queen.

MITRANES.

O my Arsaces, credit not the voice  
Of Fame, she is deceitful oft, and vain;

Perhaps hereafter thou mayest weep with me,  
 And admiration on a nearer view  
 May turn to pity.

ARSACES.

Wherefore?

MITRANES.

Sunk in grief,  
 Sémiramis hath spread o'er every heart  
 The sorrows which she feels; sometimes she raves,  
 Filling the air with her distressful cries,  
 As if some vengeful God pursued her; sits  
 Silent and sad within these lonely vaults,  
 Sacred to night, to sorrow, and to death,  
 Which mortals dare not enter; where the ashes  
 Of Ninus, our late honored sovereign, lie:  
 There will she oft fall on her knees and weep:  
 With slow and fearful steps she glides along,  
 And beats her breast besprinkled with her tears:  
 Oft as she treads her solitary round,  
 Will she repeat the names of son and husband,  
 And call on heaven, which in its anger seems  
 To thwart her in the zenith of her glory.

ARSACES.

Whence can her sorrow flow?

MITRANES.

The effect is dreadful;  
 The cause unknown.

ARSACES.

How long hath she been thus  
 Oppressed, Mitranes?

MITRANES.

From the very time  
When first her orders came to bring Arsaces.

ARSACES.

Me, saidst thou?

MITRANES.

You, my lord: when Babylon  
Rejoicing met to celebrate thy conquests,  
And saw the banners thy victorious arm  
Had wrested from our vanquished foes; when first  
Euphrates brought to our delighted shore  
The lovely Azema, from Belus sprung,  
Whom thou hadst saved from Scythian ravishers,  
Even in that hour of triumph and success,  
Even in the bosom of prosperity,  
The heart of majesty was pierced with grief,  
And the throne lost its lustre.

ARSACES.

Azema

Was not to blame; she could not be the cause  
Of sorrow or distress; one look from her  
Would soothe the wrath of gods: but say, my friend,  
Sémiramis is still a sovereign here,  
Her heart is not forever sunk in grief?

MITRANES.

No: when her noble mind shakes off the burden,  
Resumes its strength, and shines in native lustre,  
Then we behold in her exalted soul  
Powers that excel whatever flattery's self  
Hath e'er bestowed on kings; but when she sinks  
Beneath this dreadful malady, loose flow  
The reins of empire, dropping from her hand;  
Then the proud satrap, fiery Assur, guides

The helm and makes the nations groan beneath him :  
 The fatal secret never yet hath reached  
 The walls of Babylon : 'abroad we still  
 Are envied, but, alas ! we mourn at home.

## ARSACES.

What lessons of instruction to weak mortals,  
 When happiness is mingled thus with woe !  
 I, too, am wretched, thus deprived of him  
 Whose piercing wisdom best could give me council,  
 And lead me through the mazes of a court.  
 O I have cause to weep : without a father,  
 Left as I am to all the dangerous passions  
 Of heedless youth, without a friendly guide,  
 What rocks encompass and what shoals affright me !

## MITRANES.

I weep with thee the loss of him we loved,  
 The good old man ; Phradates was my friend ;  
 Ninus esteemed and gave to him the care  
 Of Ninias, his dear son, our country's hope :  
 But O ! one fatal day destroyed them both,  
 Father and son : to voluntary exile  
 Devoted, long he lived : his banishment  
 Was fortunate to thee, and made thee great :  
 Close by his side, in honor's glorious field,  
 Arsaces fought, and conquered for his country :  
 Now, ranked with princes, thy exalted virtue  
 Claims its reward by merit all thy own.

## ARSACES.

I know not what may be my portion here :  
 Perhaps, distinguished on Arbazan's plains  
 With fair success, my name is not unknown :  
 On Oxus' banks to great Sémiramis,  
 When vanquished nations paid the homage due,

From her triumphant cars she dropped a ray  
 Of her own glory on Arsaces' head:  
 But oft the soldier, honored in the field,  
 In courts neglected lies, and is forgotten.  
 My father told me in his dying hour  
 The fortune of Arsaces here depended  
 Upon the common cause; then gave to me  
 These precious relics, which from every eye  
 He had preserved: I must deliver them  
 To the high priest, for he alone can judge,  
 And know their value: I must talk with him  
 In secret, touching my own fate, for he  
 Can best conduct me to Sémiramis.

## MITRANES.

He seldom sees the queen: in solitude  
 Obscure he lives: his holy ministry  
 Engrosses all his care; without ambition,  
 Fearless, and void of art: is always seen  
 Within the temple, never at the court:  
 Never affects the pride of rank and title,  
 Nor his tiara near the diadem  
 Immodest wears: the less he seeks for greatness,  
 The more is he admired, the more revered:  
 I have access to every avenue  
 Of his retirement in this sacred place,  
 And can this moment talk to him in secret;  
 Ere day's too far advanced I'll bring him hither.

## SCENE II.

—  
ARSACES.[*Alone.*

Immortal gods! for what am I reserved?  
 Make known your will: why did my dying father

Thus send me to the sanctuary, me  
 A soldier, bred amidst the din of arms?  
 A lover, too? How can Arsaces serve  
 The gods of the Chaldæans?—Ha! what voice  
 From yonder tomb in plaintive accents strikes  
 My frightened ear, and makes my hair to stand  
 On end with horror! Near this place I've heard  
 The spirit of Ninus dwells—again it shrieks—  
 It shocks my soul—Ye dark and dreary caves,  
 And thou, the shade of my illustrious master,  
 Thou voice of heaven, what wouldst thou with  
 Arsaces?

## SCENE III.

—  
 ARSACES, OROES, *the high priest, the magi attending  
 him*, MITRANES.

MITRANES.

[*Speaking to Oroes.*

He's here, my lord, and waits to give you up  
 Those precious relics.

ARSACES.

Most revered father,  
 Permit a soldier to approach your presence,  
 Pleased to fulfil a father's last command,  
 One whom you deigned to love; thus at your feet,  
 Obedient to his will, I here resign them.

OROES.

Welcome! thou brave and noble youth! that God  
 Who governs all, and not a father's will,  
 Guided thee here: Phradates was my friend;

Dear is his memory to me ; thou shalt know  
 Perhaps hereafter how I love his son :  
 Where are the gifts he sent me ?

ARSACES.

*[The slaves deliver the coffer to two of the magi,  
 who place it on an altar.]*

Here, my lord.

OROES.

*[Opening the coffer, bowing reverentially to it, and  
 seeming greatly affected.]*

Ye sacred relics ! do these eyes at length  
 Behold you ! O, I weep for joy to press  
 These monuments of woe, whilst tears recall  
 My solemn oath : Mitranes, let no ear  
 Profane disturb our holy mystery :  
 We would be private.

*[The magi retire.]*

Mark this seal, Arsaces :

'Tis that which to the laws of Ninus gave  
 Their public force, and kept the world in awe :  
 The letter, too, which with his dying hand  
 He wrote : Arsaces, view the wreath that crowned  
 His royal brows, and his victorious sword :  
 The vanquished Medes and Persians felt its power ;  
 It comes at last to vindicate its master,  
 And to revenge him ; useless instrument  
 Against base treachery, and destructive poison,  
 Whose mortal—

ARSACES.

Heaven ! what sayest thou ?

OROES.

The dread secret  
 Hath long been hid in darkness from the eyes

Of men within the sepulchre ; the shade  
Of Ninus, and offended heaven, long time  
Have raised their voice in vain, and called for ven-  
geance.

ARSACES.

It must be as thou sayest : for know, but now,  
Even on this spot, I heard most dreadful groans.

OROES.

It was the voice of Ninus.

ARSACES.

Twice the noise

Affrighted me.

OROES.

'Twas he : he calls for vengeance.

ARSACES.

He has a right to ask it : but on whom ?

OROES.

On the vile murderers, whose detested hands  
Had of the best of sovereigns robbed mankind ;  
No tracks are left behind of the base treason,  
But all with him lies buried in the tomb :  
With ease might they deceive the sons of men,  
But not the all-seeing eye of watchful heaven,  
Which pierces the deep night of human falsehood.

ARSACES.

O would to heaven this feeble hand had power  
To punish crimes like these ! I know not wherefore,  
But when I cast my eyes towards yon tomb,  
New horrors rise : O might I not consult  
That venerable shade, the inhabitant  
Of those dark mansions ?

OROES.

No; it is forbidden:  
 An oracle severe long since denounced  
 The wrath of heaven against who'er should press  
 Into this vale of tears, inhabited  
 By death and the avenging gods: await  
 With me, Arsaces, for the day of justice:  
 Soon will it come, and all shall be accomplished:  
 I can no more: sequestered from the world,  
 I pray in secret to offended heaven,  
 Which, as it wills, commissions me to speak,  
 Or close my lips in silence: I have said  
 All that I dare, and all I ought: be careful  
 Lest in these walls a word, or look, or gesture,  
 Betray the secret which the god by me  
 Hath trusted with thee; for on that depends  
 His glory, Asia's welfare, and thy life.

Approach, ye magi, hide these sacred relics  
 Beneath the altar.

*[The great gate of the palace opens, Assur appears  
 at a distance, surrounded by attendants and  
 guards on every side.]*

Ha! the palace opens:  
 The courtiers crowding to the queen: behold  
 The haughty Assur with his servile throng  
 Of flatterers round him! O almighty power!  
 On whom dost thou bestow thy bounties here?  
 O monster!

ARSACES.

Ha! what meanest thou?

OROES.

Fare thee well:  
 When night shall cast her sable mantle o'er

These guilty walls, I'll have more converse with  
 thee,  
 Before the gods: revere them, my Arsaces,  
 For know, brave youth, their eyes are fixed on thee.

## SCENE IV.

—  
 ARSACES, MITRANES, *in the front of the stage,*  
 ASSUR, CEDAR, *with attendants, on one side.*

ARSACES.

His words are dreadful; they affright my soul:  
 What horrid crimes! and what a court is here!  
 How little known! my royal master poisoned,  
 And Assur, but too well I see, suspected!

MITRANES.

Assur is sprung of royal race, and claims  
 The deference due to his authority:  
 He is the favorite of Sémiramis,  
 And thou, without a blush, mayest pay him homage.

ARSACES.

Homage to him!

ASSUR.

[*To Cedar.*

Ha! do my eyes deceive me,  
 Or is Arsaces here without my order?  
 Amazing insolence!

ARSACES.

What haughtiness!

ASSUR.

[*Advancing.*

Come hither, youth: what new engagements here  
 Have brought you from the camp?

ARSACES.

My duty, sir,

And the queen's orders.

ASSUR.

Did the queen send for you?

ARSACES.

She did.

ASSUR.

But, know you not, with her commands  
You should have asked for mine?

ARSACES.

I know not that,  
And should have thought the honor of her crown  
Debased by such a mean submission to thee:  
My lord, you must forgive a soldier's roughness,  
We are bad courtiers: bred up in the plains  
Of Arbazan and Scythia, I have served  
Your court, but am not much acquainted with it.

ASSUR.

Age, time, and place, perhaps, may teach you, sir.  
What would you with the queen? for know, young  
man,  
Assur alone can lead you to her presence.

ARSACES.

I come to ask my valor's best reward,  
The honor still to serve her.

ASSUR.

Thou wantest more,  
Presumptuous boy! I know thy bold pretences  
To Azema, but that thou wouldst conceal.

ARSACES.

Yes: I adore that lovely maid: her heart  
 Would I prefer to empire: my respect,  
 My tenderest love—

ASSUR.

No more: thou knowest not whom  
 Thou art insulting thus: what! join the race  
 Of a Sarmatian to the demigods  
 Of Tigris and Euphrates! mark me well:  
 In pity to thy youth I would advise thee  
 Ne'er, on thy peril, to Sémiramis  
 Impart thy insolent request; for know,  
 Rash boy, if thou shouldst dare to violate  
 The rights of Assur, 'twill not pass unpunished.

ARSACES.

I'll go this instant: thou hast given me courage:  
 Thus threatenings always terrify Arsaces:  
 Thou hast no right, whate'er thy power may be,  
 To affront a soldier who has served his queen,  
 The state, and thee: perhaps my warmth offends;  
 But thou art rasher than myself, to think  
 That I would bend beneath thy servile yoke,  
 Or tremble at thy power.

ASSUR.

Perhaps thou mayest;  
 I'll teach thee what a subject may expect  
 For insolence like this.

ARSACES.

We both may learn it.

## SCENE V.

SÉMIRAMIS, *at the farther end of the stage,  
leaning on her women.*

OTANES, ASSUR, ARSACES, MITRANES, *in the front.*

OTANES.

*[Advancing.*

My lord, the queen at present would be private:  
You must retire, and give her sorrows way:  
Withdraw, ye gods, the hand of vengeance from  
her!

ARSACES.

How I lament her fate!

ASSUR.

*[To one of his attendants.*

Let us begone,  
And study how we best may turn her griefs  
To our advantage.

*[Sémiramis comes forward, and is joined by  
Otanés.*

OTANES.

My royal mistress, be yourself again,  
And wake once more to joy and happiness.

SÉMIRAMIS.

O death! when wilt thou come with friendly shade  
To close these eyes that hate the light of day?  
Be shut, ye caves; horrible phantom, hence!  
Strike if thou wilt, but threaten me no more.  
Otanés, is Arsaces come?

OTANES.

Ere morn

Rose on the temple, madam, he was there.

SÉMIRAMIS.

That dreadful voice, from heaven or hell I know not,  
Which in the dead of night so shakes my soul,  
Told me, my sorrows, when Arsaces came,  
Would soon be o'er.

OTANES.

Rely then on the gods,

And let the cheerful ray of hope dispel  
This melancholy.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Is Arsaces here?

Methinks, when I but hear his name, my soul  
Is less disturbed, and guilt sits lighter on me!

OTANES.

O! quit, forever quit the sad remembrance:  
Let the bright days of great Sémiramis,  
Replete with glory, blot one moment out  
That broke the chain of thy ill-fated nuptials:  
Had Ninus driven thee from his throne and bed,  
All Babylon with thee had been destroyed;  
But happily for us, and for mankind,  
That wanted such distinguished virtues, you  
Prevented him; and fifteen years of toil,  
Spent in the service of thy country, lands  
Desert and waste made fertile by thy care,  
The savage tamed, and yielding to the laws,  
The useful arts, obedient to thy voice,  
Uprising still; the glorious monuments  
Of wealth and power, the wonder of mankind,

And the loud plaudit of a grateful people,  
 All plead thy cause before the throne of heaven ;  
 But if impartial justice hold the scale,  
 If vengeance is required for Ninus' death,  
 Why thus should Assur brave the angry gods,  
 And live in peace? He was more guilty far  
 Than thou wert, yet the ruthless hand that poured  
 The fatal draught never shakes with fear : he feels  
 No stings of conscience, no remorse affrights him.

## SÉMIRAMIS.

Our duties different, different is our fate :  
 Where ties are sacred, crimes are heavier far :  
 I was his wife, Otanes, and I stand  
 Without excuse ; my conscience is my judge  
 And my accuser : but I hoped the gods,  
 Offended at my crimes, had punished me  
 Enough, when they deprived me of my child ;  
 Hoped my successful toils, that made the earth  
 Respect my name, had soothed the wrath of heaven :  
 But months on months have passed in agony  
 Since this dire spectre hath appalled my soul :  
 My eyes forever see him, and my ears  
 Still hear his cries : I get me to the tomb,  
 But dare not enter : trembling I revere  
 His ashes, and invoke his honored shade,  
 Which only answers me in dismal groans.  
 Some dread event is nigh : perhaps the time  
 Is come to expiate the offence.

## OTANES.

But thinkest thou  
 The spirit of thy lord hath left indeed  
 The mansions of the dead, and stalks abroad?  
 Ofttimes the soul, by powerful fancy led,

Starts at a phantom of its own creation;  
 Still it beholds the objects it has made,  
 And everything we fear is present to us.

## SÉMIRAMIS.

O no! it was not the wild dream of fancy  
 By slumber wrought, I saw him but too well:  
 The stranger, Sleep, had long withheld from me  
 His sweet delusions; watchful as I stood,  
 And mused on my unhappy fate, a voice  
 Close to my bed, methought, cried out, "Arsaces!"  
 The name revived me: well thou knowest, long time  
 Assur has pierced this heart with deadly grief:  
 I shudder at his presence, and the blushes  
 That show my guilt increase my punishment,  
 Hate the reproachful witness of my shame,  
 And wish I could—but wherefore should I add  
 To crimes like mine fresh guilt? I sought Arsaces  
 To punish Assur, and the thought of him  
 Awhile relieved me! but in the sweet moment  
 Of consolation, sudden stood before me  
 That minister of death, all bathed in blood,  
 And in his hand a falchion: still I see,  
 Still hear him: comes he to defend, or punish?  
 'Twas at that very hour Arsaces came.  
 This day was fixed by heaven to end my sorrows,  
 But peace is yet a stranger to my soul,  
 And hope is lost in horror and despair:  
 The load of life is grown too heavy for me,  
 My throne is hateful, and my glories past  
 But add fresh weight to my calamities.  
 Long time I've hid my sorrows from the world  
 And blushed in secret, fearful to consult  
 That reverend sage whom Babylon adores:  
 I would not thus degrade the majesty

Of sovereign power, or let Sémiramis  
Betray her fears before a mortal's eye,  
But I have sent to Libya's sands in secret  
There to consult the oracle of Jove:  
As if removed from man, the God of truth  
Had hid in desert plains his will divine.  
Alas! Otanes, that dread power which dwells  
Within these lonely walls, hath long received  
My fears and adorations; at his altars  
My gifts were offered, and my incense rose;  
But gifts and incense never can atone  
For crimes like mine: to-day I shall receive  
Answers from Memphis.

## SCENE VI.

—

SÉMIRAMIS, OTANES, MITRANES.

MITRANES.

An Egyptian priest  
Is at the palace gate, and begs admittance.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Then will my woes be ended, or complete.  
Let us begone, and hide from Babylon  
Her queen's disgraceful sorrows: let Arsaces  
Be sent to me: soon may his presence calm  
This storm of grief, and soothe my troubled soul!

*End of the First Act.*

## ACT II. SCENE I.

—  
ARSACES, AZEMA.

AZEMA.

To thee, Arsaces, this great empire owes  
 Its lustre, I my liberty and life.  
 When vanquished Scythia, thirsting for revenge,  
 From its wild desert rushed indignant forth,  
 And bore down all before it; when my father,  
 Oppressed by numbers, fell, and left me there  
 A hapless slave; then, armed with thunder, thou,  
 Piercing their dark retreats, didst break my chains,  
 And give me ample vengeance on my foes.  
 Thou wert my gréat deliverer, Arsaces,  
 And in return I give thee all my heart;  
 I will be thine, and only thine; but O!  
 Our fatal passion will destroy us both:  
 Thy generous heart, too open and sincere,  
 Believed that gallant deeds, and fair renown  
 In arms, would gain thee honors in a court;  
 And, fearless of success, thou bringest with thee  
 A hero's fierceness and a lover's heart.  
 Assur is incensed: alas! thou dost not know him:  
 He is too powerful for us; he rules all  
 At Babylon; and much, I fear, abuses  
 His fatal influence o'er Sémiramis:  
 He is thy great inexorable—rival.

ARSACES.

Ha! does he love thee?

AZEMA.

No; that savage mind,  
 Subtle and dark, a foe to every virtue,



I saw the queen, and her humanity  
 Equalled the pride of Assur: when I fell  
 Prostrate before her, gently she upraised me,  
 And called me the support of Babylon:  
 With pride I heard the flattering voice of her  
 Whose name contending kings unite to honor:  
 The distance 'twixt her royal state and mine  
 Was lessened soon by mildest condescension;  
 It touched, it melted me; and, after thee,  
 To me she seemed, of all the human race,  
 Most nearly to resemble the divine.

## AZEMA.

If she protects us, Assur's threats are vain:  
 I heed them not.

## ARSACES.

Inspired by thee, I went,  
 Fearless and brave, to lay before the feet  
 Of my great mistress, that aspiring passion  
 Which Assur dreads, and Azema approves;  
 When lo, that very moment came a priest  
 From Egypt with Ammonian Jove's decree:  
 Trembling she opened quick the awful scroll,  
 First fixed her eyes on me, then sudden turned  
 Her face aside, and wept: stood fixed in grief  
 Like one distraught, then sighed, and vanished from  
 me.

They tell me, she is fallen into despair,  
 And hath of late been dreadfully pursued  
 By some avenging god: I pity her:  
 'Tis wonderful that after fifteen years,  
 Heaven, that so long defended, should at last  
 Oppress her thus: by what hath she offended  
 The angry gods, and wherefore are they changed?

## AZEMA.

We hear of naught but dreadful spectres, omens,  
 And vengeance from above: the queen of late  
 Lets loose the reins of empire: we had cause  
 To fear for Babylon, least subtle Assur,  
 Who knows her weakness, in this dangerous time,  
 Should seize the helm, and bury all in ruin:  
 But the queen came, and all was calm again;  
 All owned the power of her despotic sway.  
 If I have any knowledge of the court,  
 The queen hates Assur, but keeps fair with him,  
 And watches close; they're fearful of each other,  
 Would quarrel soon, but that some secret cause,  
 Some mutual interest, still prevents a rupture:  
 I saw her fire indignant at his name;  
 The blushes on her cheeks betrayed her thoughts,  
 And her heart seemed to glow with deep resentment:  
 But sudden changes happen in a court;  
 Return, and speak to her.

## ARSACES.

I will; but know not  
 Whether again I e'er shall gain admittance.

## AZEMA.

Thou hast my vows, my wishes, and my prayers  
 For thy success: I glory in my love,  
 And in my duty: let Sémiramis  
 Rule o'er the vanquished East, I envy her  
 Nor fame nor conquest; let the world be hers,  
 Arsaces mine: but Assur comes this way.

## ARSACES.

The traitor! how I shudder at his presence!  
 My soul abhors him.

## SCENE II.

—  
ASSUR, ARSACES, AZEMA.

ASSUR.

Your reception, sir,  
I find, was noble, such as kings have oft  
Solicited in vain: you saw the queen  
In secret, did she not reprove a conduct  
Injurious to my honor and her own?  
Did she not tell thee Azema's designed  
For Assur, not for thee? Long since her hand  
To Ninias given was for the blood of kings  
Alone reserved; and therefore is my right,  
As next to the throne: did she acquaint you, sir,  
Into what fatal snares your pride would lead you,  
That neither fame nor honors will excuse  
Your bold pretensions?

ARSACES.

I well know what's due  
To your high birth, and to the rank you bear,  
And should have paid it, though you had not thus  
Instructed me; but as a master here  
I own you not: your royal ancestors,  
From Belus sprung, perhaps may give you claim  
To Azema; the welfare of the state,  
Present and future, all, I own, conspire  
To raise your hopes of bliss, and make her yours:  
These are your claims, and I acknowledge them:  
But I have one that's worth them all: I love her:  
I might have added this, that I avenged  
And saved her, gave new lustre to the throne

Which she was born to fill, if I had chosen,  
 Like thee, to boast of my exploits before her.  
 But I must leave thee, to perform her orders.  
 Sémiramis and her I shall obey,  
 And them alone: a day perhaps may come  
 When thou shalt be our master: heaven sometimes  
 In anger sends us kings: but thou art deceived,  
 At least in one of thy ambitious views,  
 If amongst thy subjects thou hast ranked Arsaces.

ASSUR.

The measure's full: thou courtest thy own destruc-  
 tion.

### SCENE III.

—

ASSUR, AZEMA.

ASSUR.

I've borne his insolence too long already,  
 'Tis time we enter on a nobler subject,  
 And worthier thy attention.

AZEMA.

Can there be one?

But speak.

ASSUR.

Ere long all Asia shall attend  
 On our resolves, and low concerns like these  
 Must pass unheeded by: a world demands  
 Our mutual care: Sémiramis is now  
 The shadow of herself, her glory's past,  
 That star which shone with such transcendent  
 lustre,  
 Declining now, sends forth a feeble ray;

The people see and wonder at her fall,  
Whilst every tongue demands a——successor:  
That word sufficeth: you well know my right:  
'Tis not for love to deal forth sovereign power,  
And point out who shall rule in Babylon;  
Not that my soul, to beauty blind, would make  
A virtue of insensibility;  
But I should blush for thee and for myself,  
To see the welfare of a nation thus  
Dependent on a sigh: thoughts worthier both  
Must guide my fortune, and determine thine:  
Our ancestors the same, we should offend  
Their venerable shades, and lose the world  
By not uniting: I astonish you:  
These are harsh words for tender age like thine;  
But I address me to the kings and heroes  
From whom you sprung, to all those demigods  
Whom here you represent: too long trod down  
Beneath a woman's feet their ashes lay,  
Their glories she eclipsed, usurped their power,  
And fettered vanquished nations with her laws;  
But she is gone, and thou must now support  
The building she had raised: she had thy beauty,  
And thou must have her courage: let not love  
Or folly wrest the sceptre from thy hand,  
But grasp it close: you will not sacrifice  
To a Sarmatian's idle passion for you  
The name you ought to honor, and the throne  
You should ascend, of universal empire.

## AZEMA.

Let not Arsaces be the theme, my lord,  
Of your reproaches, but depend on me  
To vindicate the honor of my race,  
And to defend, whene'er occasion calls,

The rights of my loved ancestors ; I know  
 Their worth and virtues, but I know not one  
 Amongst the heroes which Assyria boasts  
 More great, more virtuous, more beloved, than he,  
 Than this Sarmatian, whom you thus disdain.  
 Do justice to his merit : for myself,  
 When I shall bend to Hymen's laws, the queen  
 Must guide my choice, and at her hands alone  
 Will I receive a master : for the crowd,  
 The babbling echo of one secret voice,  
 I heed it not ; nor know I if the people  
 Are tired of their obedience to a woman,  
 But still I see them bow the knee before her ;  
 And if they murmur, murmur in the dust :  
 The hand of heaven, they say, is raised against her :  
 I am a stranger to her guilt, but think  
 That heaven would never have made choice of thee  
 To tell its high commands, or minister  
 Its justice to mankind : Sémiramis  
 Is still a queen, and you who lord it here  
 Receive from her the laws which you dispense :  
 For me, I own her power, and hers alone :  
 My glory is to obey, be thine the same.

## SCENE IV.

—

ASSUR, CEDAR.

ASSUR.

Obey ! I blush to think how long already  
 I have obeyed : O insupportable !  
 But say, hast thou succeeded, are the seeds  
 Of hatred sown in secret through the realm ?

Will they spring up into a fruitful harvest  
Of discord, and rebellion?

CEDAR.

All is well :

The people, long deluded by the arts  
And dazzling glory of Sémiramis,  
At length have lost their idle veneration :  
No longer chained to silence, they demand  
A successor : each lover of his country  
Calls for a master, and looks up to thee.

ASSUR.

Heart-burning care! and ever-during shame!  
Still must my hopes, my fate depend on her?  
Was it for this that Ninus and his son  
Fell by my hand, that Assur might be still  
Only her first of slaves? So near the throne,  
To languish in illustrious servitude,  
And only be the second of mankind!  
The queen was satisfied with Ninus' death,  
But I went further, and pursued my blow :  
Ninias, in secret murdered by my order,  
Opened my passage to the throne ; but she  
Denied me entrance.—A long time in vain  
I soothed her pride with flattery on her charms ;  
Still hoped one day to gain upon her youth  
That happy influence which assiduous care  
And humble adoration seldom fail  
To win o'er artless minds that bend with ease :  
I little knew the firmness of her soul,  
Inflexible, and bold ; the world alone  
Could satisfy her pride : she seemed indeed  
Most worthy of it : spite of my resentment,  
I own she was, and yield the praise she merits.  
The reins of empire, that flowed loose before;

Strongly she held; appeased the murmuring crowd,  
Silenced their plaints, and quashed conspiring  
rebels;

Fought like a hero, like a monarch ruled:  
She led her army and her people captive,  
And spite of fame, with more than magic art,  
Chained down the minds of men: the universe  
Astonished stood, and trembled at her feet.  
In short, her beauty, woman's best support,  
Strengthened the laws which power and valor made;  
And when I strove to raise conspiracies  
My friends stood mute, and only could admire her.

At length the charm is broke: her power decays;  
Her genius droops; remorse, and idle fears,  
And fond credulity have bound her faith  
To lying oracles, which knavish priests  
Had taught to speak in Egypt's barren plain:  
She pours her daily incense at their altars,  
And wearies heaven with vows: Sémiramis  
Creeps on a level now with common mortals,  
And condescends to fear: I know her weakness:  
Know, till she falls, Assur can never rise:  
But I have raised the people's voice against her,  
And she must yield: this blow decides her fate:  
If she consents to give me Azema,  
She is no longer queen; if she refuses,  
The kingdom will revolt: on every side  
The snare is laid, and nothing now can save her.  
Yet, after all, perhaps I am deceived,  
And fortune, so long called for, comes at last  
But to betray me.

CEDAR.

If the queen is forced  
To name a successor, and yields the princess  
To Assur's bed, what can he have to fear,

When the divided branch of Asia's kings  
 Shall be united? all conspires to pave  
 Your way to empire.

ASSUR.

Azema is safe;  
 She must be mine; but wherefore send so far  
 For this Arsaces? she supports him too;  
 And when I would chastise his insolence,  
 Her interposing hand prevents me still:  
 A minister without the power, a prince  
 Without a subject, girt around with honors,  
 And yet a poor dependent, what is Assur?  
 All, all unite to persecute me now:  
 A peevish mistress, and a haughty rival,  
 Consulted priests that teach their gods to speak  
 Against me; with Sémiramis, who strives  
 To free herself, yet trembles at my presence:  
 But we shall see how far this proud ingrate  
 Will urge an angry rebel who defies her.

SCENE V.

—

ASSUR, OTANES, CEDAR.

OTANES.

My lord, the queen commands you to attend her  
 In secret, and alone.

ASSUR.

I shall obey  
 Her sacred orders, and with care perform  
 My sovereign's will.

## SCÈNE VI.

—  
ASSUR, CEDAR.

ASSUR.

Whence springs this sudden change?  
 These three months past she has avoided me,  
 Even as the object of her hatred: oft  
 When she beheld me she would cast her eyes  
 Down on the earth, as if she loathed the sight:  
 Whene'er we met, 'twas in a gaping crowd  
 Of hearers; when she spoke, her sighs and tears  
 Would interrupt our converse, or perchance  
 Silence was all the answer she would give me.  
 What can she want? What can she say to me?  
 But here she comes: 'tis she—wait you within.

[To Cedar.]

## SCENE VII.

—  
SÉMIRAMIS, ASSUR.

SÉMIRAMIS.

My lord, I come to ease a troubled heart  
 Of its long hidden woes, and pour it all  
 Before you: I have ruled o'er Asia long,  
 And not ingloriously: Babylon perhaps  
 May pay this tribute to my memory,  
 And say Sémiramis deserved to rank  
 Among the greatest of her kings: thy hands  
 Have helped me to support the weight of empire;  
 With absolute dominion have I ruled,  
 Adored by all, and crowned with victory

On every side: intoxicated long  
 With flattery's pleasing incense, I forgot  
 The crimes that raised me to this envied state;  
 Forgot the justice of high heaven: it comes;  
 It speaks to me: Sémiramis must yield:  
 This noble structure, which I fondly thought  
 Superior to the injuries of time,  
 Is tottering now, and shakes from its foundation;  
 Means must be found to strengthen and support it.

ASSUR.

The work is yours, and you must finish it:  
 Foresee the attacks of time, and stop his rapine:  
 Who shall obscure the lustre of thy days,  
 Or wherefore fearest thou heaven whilst earth obeys  
 thee?

SÉMIRAMIS.

Yonder the ashes of my husband lie;  
 Canst thou look there, and wonder at my fears?

ASSUR.

I cannot bear to hear the noisy crowd  
 Still talk of Ninus: wherefore should remembrance  
 Call back the thoughts of that inglorious reign?  
 Can they believe, that, after fifteen years,  
 His angry spirit still calls out for justice?  
 Ere now he would have taken due vengeance on us,  
 Had he the power: why from the peaceful realms  
 Of dark oblivion wouldst thou call the dead,  
 Or search for truth in lying oracles?  
 I am astonished too, but 'tis at thee,  
 And thy vain fears: to make the gods propitious,  
 We must be resolute: this idle phantom,  
 At once the child and parent of your fears,  
 Why should it thus alarm you? Prodigies

Never appear to those who dread them not:  
 Baits to allure the unthinking multitude,  
 By knaves invented, and by fools believed;  
 The great despise them: but if nobler views  
 Inspire thy soul to immortalize the blood  
 Of Belus, if the beautiful Azema  
 Claims her high rank.—

## SÉMIRAMIS.

Assur, on that I came  
 To speak with thee: our Babylon demands,  
 For such is Ammon's will, a successor:  
 Heaven and my people will be satisfied  
 When I shall take a partner to my throne:  
 Thou knowest, my pride could never condescend  
 To a divided sway; 'twas my resolve  
 To rule alone, while the impatient world  
 Urged me in vain; and when the people's voice,  
 Which now is echoed by the voice of heaven,  
 Still presses me, in the bloom of youth, to give  
 A sovereign to mankind, I still refused:  
 If I had yielded then to any claim,  
 It had been thine; you had a right to hope,  
 And to expect it; but you knew too well,  
 How much Sémiramis abhorred a master.  
 Without submitting to a tie so fatal,  
 I made thee then the second of mankind,  
 And only not my equal; 'twas enough,  
 I thought, to satisfy even thy ambition.  
 At length the gods make known their will divine,  
 And I obey them: hear the oracle:  
 "All shall again be well at Babylon,  
 When Hymen's torch a second time shall blaze  
 Propitious; then shalt thou, O cruel wife,  
 And wretched mother, then shall thou appease

The shade of Ninus." Thus the voice of heaven  
Declares its sacred will: I know thy arts;  
Know, thou hast formed a party in the state,  
And mean to oppose me with the royal blood  
From whence you sprung: from thee and Azema  
My successor, it seems, must rise; I know  
You look that way, and she perhaps aspires  
To equal honors; but, observe me well:  
I shall not suffer your united claims  
To rob me of my right: remember, sir,  
You know my will; 'tis constant, and as fate  
Irrevocable: thinkest thou now the God  
Whose arm is lifted o'er me hath deprived  
My soul of all its wonted strength and spirit,  
Or dost thou still behold Sémiramis,  
Who can support the honor of her throne?  
Know, Babylon ere long shall at my hands  
Receive a master: whether the high choice  
Shall fall on thee, or be another's lot,  
I'll take a sovereign as a sovereign ought:  
Bring me the magi and the princess here  
To join their voices with Sémiramis.  
To give away my freedom and my empire  
Is the first, greatest act of royal power,  
And therefore let it be performed with awe  
And silence due to my authority.  
Heaven hath appointed this great day to show  
Its mercy to me, and the gods at length  
Remit their anger; nothing can disarm it  
But my repentance; 'tis the only virtue:  
Trust me, it is, howe'er you may despise it,  
Remaining for the guilty: weak, I know,  
And fearful thou esteemest me; but henceforth  
Remember, Assur, guilt alone is weakness:  
Think not that fear can e'er disgrace a throne,

It has done good to kings, and might to thee;  
 I tell thee, statesman, to obey the gods,  
 And tremble at their power, is no abasement.

## SCENE VIII.

—  
ASSUR.[*Alone.*]

Astonishment! such language, such designs!  
 Or is it artifice, or weakness in her,  
 Or cowardice or courage? Does she mean,  
 By yielding thus, to prop her tottering power,  
 And by our union to defeat my purpose?  
 I must not think, it seems, of Azema,  
 Because, perhaps, I'm destined for herself.  
 It must be so. What all my cares in vain  
 Solicited, my flattery of her charms,  
 My deep intrigues, and our united crimes,  
 With all her fears, could never gain, at length  
 An idle dream, and a dark oracle  
 From Egypt have performed. What power un-  
 known  
 Decreases the fate of mortals? Great events  
 Hang on the slenderest thread: still I am doubtful:  
 I'll see Sémiramis again; she seemed  
 Too much in haste; such sudden resolutions  
 Betray an overanxious mind, and those  
 Who change with ease are either weak, or wicked.

*. End of the Second Act.*

## ACT III. SCENE I.

SÉMIRAMIS, OTANES.

*[The scene represents an apartment in the palace.]*

SÉMIRAMIS.

Who would have thought, Otanes, that the gods,  
 Offended as they were, at length should smile  
 Propitious thus, and threaten but to save!  
 Should drop the uplifted thunder from their hand,  
 And pardon me; should send Arsaces hither  
 To change my fate! for know it is their will  
 That I should wed, and by a second tie  
 Expiate the crimes of my first fatal nuptials.  
 They are the great disposers of our hearts,  
 And mine with pleasure yields to their decrees:  
 It even outruns their purposes: Arsaces,  
 I'm thine; for thou wert born to rule o'er me,  
 And o'er the world:

OTANES.

Arsaces! he!

SÉMIRAMIS.

Thou knowest,  
 In Scythia's plains, when I avenged the Persian,  
 And conquered Asia, this young hero fought  
 Beneath his father's banners, and, surrounded  
 With captives, brought to me the bloody spoils,  
 And, blushing, laid his victims at my feet.  
 When first I saw him, I could feel his heart,  
 As by some secret power, attracting mine  
 Insensibly towards him; all mankind,  
 Besides Arsaces, seemed not worth my notice.







Moreau inv.

Bancroft sc.



Assur grew jealous of him, and ever since  
Has fired with indignation at his name;  
Whilst his dear image still employed my thoughts,  
Before that voice which guides my every word  
And every action named him for my husband,  
Before the gods had pointed out Arsaces.

## OTANES.

It was indeed a noble conquest, thus  
To bend that haughty spirit which disdained  
The proffered homage of our Eastern monarchs,  
Who as her subjects, not as lovers, still  
Accepted kings! You who contemned those charms,  
That sovereign beauty, which extended wide  
Your universal empire; whilst your eyes  
Pierced every heart, you scarce would condescend  
To mark their power; and dost thou yield at last  
To love's imperious sway; to fears and horror  
Succeed the tender passions? Can it be?

## SÉMIRAMIS.

O, no; it is not love: I am not fallen  
So much beneath myself, as to bestow  
On beauty the reward that's due to virtue;  
I feel a nobler passion in my breast:  
Alas! such weakness would but ill become  
Sémiramis: unhappy as I am,  
For me to think of love, Otanes, how  
Couldst thou suppose it? Once I was a mother,  
But scarce had studied to deserve the name  
By my fond cares, when heaven in anger snatched  
My child away, and left me here alone  
A prey to anguish. I had nothing near me  
That I could love; and, midst my grandeur, felt  
An aching void within my soul. I fled  
The court, endeavored to avoid myself,

And sought relief in these proud monuments,  
 Amusing flatterers of a restless heart  
 That shunned reflection: rest was still a stranger,  
 And long remained so; but he comes once more,  
 I feel him now, and wonder at the power  
 That charmed him hither: 'twas Arsaces; he  
 Shall hold the place of husband and of son,  
 A conquered world, and all my glories past.  
 How much I owe to thee, celestial power,  
 Who thus propitious leadest me to the altar  
 So long abhorred; and hast thyself inspired  
 That passion which alone can make me happy!

OTANES.

But what will be the rage and grief of Assur?  
 Hast thou reflected on it, when he hears  
 Thy new resolves? He is not without hopes:  
 The people have already fixed thy choice  
 On him, and his resentment will not end  
 In mere complaints.

SÉMIRAMIS.

I never have deceived,  
 And therefore fear him not: these fifteen years,  
 Whate'er his views have been, I've taught him still  
 To rank but with my subjects, though the first  
 Amongst them; and set bounds to his ambition,  
 Which he hath never o'erleaped: I reigned alone;  
 And if this feeble hand so long could guide  
 The helm of power, and curb his haughtiness,  
 What can his courage or his cunning do  
 Against Arsaces and Sémiramis?  
 Yes: Ninus hath accepted my repentance,  
 And leaves the mansions of the dead to urge  
 Our happy union: his illustrious shade  
 Again would rage to see his murderer seize

His throne and bed: this calls him from the tomb,  
 And Ammon's oracles unite with him  
 To crown my bliss: no more the awful virtue  
 Of Oroes affrights me; I've sent for him  
 To be a witness of the great event,  
 And soon expect him here.

OTANES.

His honored name  
 And sacred character may give indeed  
 A sanction to your choice.

SÉMIRAMIS.

I know it will,  
 And establish my resolves.

OTANES.

Behold, he comes.

## SCENE II.

—  
 SÉMIRAMIS, OROES,

SÉMIRAMIS.

Great successor of Zoroaster, welcome:  
 To-day must Babylon receive a king;  
 Thy office is to crown him; is all ready  
 For the solemnity?

OROES.

The magi wait  
 Thy pleasure, and the nobles all attend:  
 To pay obedience to the sovereign power  
 Is all my duty, and I shall fulfil it:  
 I am not to judge kings, for that belongs  
 To heaven alone.

Sémiramis.

SÉMIRAMIS.

By this mysterious language,  
It seems you disapprove my purpose.

OROES.

Madam,  
I know it not, but wish it fair success.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Thou canst interpret heaven's high will : these signs  
Which I have seen, can they be fatal to me?  
A spectre, hath of late, perhaps some god,  
Appeared, and in the bosom of the earth  
Re-entered soon : what power hath thus broke down  
The eternal barrier that divides the light  
From darkness? wherefore should a mortal thus  
Rise from the tomb to visit me?

OROES.

Know, heaven  
Doth oft suspend its own eternal laws  
When justice bids, reversing death's decree;  
Thus to chastise the sovereigns of the earth,  
And terrify mankind.

SÉMIRAMIS.

The oracles  
Demand a sacrifice.

OROES.

It shall be offered.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Eternal justice, thou whose piercing eye  
Beholdest my naked heart, O fill it not  
Again with horror, bury in oblivion

My first unhappy nuptials!

Oroes, stay.

[*To Oroes, who is retiring.*

OROES.

[*Returning.*

I thought my presence might disturb you, madam.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Return, and answer me: this morning, say,  
Did not Arsaces offer at your altars  
Gifts to the gods?

OROES.

He did; and precious were they:  
Arsaces is the favorite of heaven.

SÉMIRAMIS.

I know he is, and I rejoice to hear it.  
Can I be wretched if I trust to him?

OROES.

He is the empire's best support; the gods  
Conducted him; his glory is their care.

SÉMIRAMIS.

With transport I accept the fair presage,  
Whilst hope and peace return to calm my breast.  
Away: again let purest incense rise  
Before your altars; let your magi come  
And sanctify the choice; bring down the smiles  
Of the assenting gods, and make us happy.  
Henceforth may Babylon with me revive,  
And shine amongst the nations of the earth  
With double splendor! Go thou, and prepare  
The solemn pomp.

## SCENE III.

—

SÉMIRAMIS, OTANES.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Heaven seconds my design,  
 And I am only the interpreter  
 Of its high will, to give the world a master:  
 Thus to receive a kingdom at my hand  
 Will strike him with astonishment: even now  
 How little thinks he of the approaching greatness!  
 How will proud Assur and his fawning crowd  
 Be humbled! But a word, and the whole earth  
 Falls at his feet; and, grateful as he is,  
 I know he will repay me: I shall wed him,  
 And for my portion carry him a world;  
 My glory's pure, and now I shall enjoy it.

## SCENE IV.

—

SÉMIRAMIS, OTANES, MITRANES.

AN OFFICER OF THE PALACE.

OTANES.

Arsaces begs admittance to your presence,  
 To lay his sorrows at your feet.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Arsaces!

What sorrows can Arsaces feel when I  
 Am near him, he who thus hath banished mine?  
 Quick, let him come: he knows not yet his power

O'er the fond heart of his Sémiramis:  
 O thou dread shade whose voice alarmed my soul,  
 Whose blood no more calls out for vengeance on me,  
 And you, the guardian gods of this great empire,  
 Of the Assyrians, Ninus, and my son,  
 Unite to bless Arsaces! Ha! the sight  
 Alarms me; whence can these strange terrors rise?

## SCENE V.

SÉMIRAMIS, ARSACES.

ARSACES.

O queen, I am devoted to thy service;  
 My life is thine; and when I shed this blood,  
 I am rewarded if it flows for thee.  
 My father had some small renown in arms;  
 I saw him perish bravely in the field,  
 And at the head of thy victorious bands;  
 He left his hapless son a fair example,  
 Perhaps but ill pursued: I'll not recall  
 The memory of my father's services,  
 'Twould ill become me; at your royal knees,  
 Though here I sue for favor and protection:  
 Pity the rashness of a guilty youth,  
 Who listened to the dictates of imprudence,  
 And even in serving feared he might offend you.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Offend me! thou, Arsaces! fear it not.

ARSACES.

To-day you give your kingdom and your hand:  
 My heart, I know, should on the great event  
 Keep secret all its fears, and humbly still

In silence, with depending monarchs, wait  
 To know our master ; but this Assur steps  
 So haughtily, and triumphs in his conquest,  
 We cannot brook his pride : the people call him  
 Already their new sovereign ; his high blood  
 And rank support him : may he prove himself  
 Worthy of both ! but I have still a soul  
 Too proud to bend beneath him, or adore  
 The power I had defied : his jealous heart  
 I know detests Arsaces : let me then  
 Retire in safety, far from him, and thee :  
 Permit me to revisit the dear climes  
 Where first I served my royal mistress, there  
 His tyranny can never reach : perhaps  
 I may hereafter—

SÉMIRAMIS.

Wilt thou leave me then,  
 And fearest thou Assur ?

ARSACES.

No : Arsaces fears  
 Naught but the anger of Sémiramis.  
 Perhaps thou knowest my fond ambition, then  
 I've cause indeed to tremble.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Hope the best,  
 And know that Assur ne'er shall be thy master.

ARSACES.

I own it shocked my soul to look on him  
 As Ninus' successor : but is he then  
 Designed for Azema ? forgive this bold  
 Presumptuous questioner : long since I know  
 She was to Ninias given, proud Assur sprung

From the same race, and claims her as his own :  
I am but a poor subject, yet I dare——

SÉMIRAMIS.

Such subjects are my kingdom's best support ;  
I know thee well ; thy noble soul, superior  
To vulgar minds, hath sought Sémiramis,  
Not for her fortunes, but herself ; thy eyes  
Are fixed on her true interest, and on thee  
I shall depend : Assur and Azema  
Shall never meet ; their union would be dangerous :  
But their designs are known, and by my care  
Will be prevented.

ARSACES.

Since my heart at length  
Is open to thee, and thou hast discovered——

AZEMA.

*[Enters suddenly, and throws herself at the feet of  
Sémiramis.]*

O queen, permit me thus——

SÉMIRAMIS.

Rise, Azema :

Where'er my choice may light, thou mayest depend  
On my protection, and shalt find respect  
Due to thy birth ; for, destined as thou wert  
To be the wife of my lamented son,  
I look upon thee with a mother's eye :

*[To them both.]*

Go, place yourselves with those whom I have called  
To witness my resolves, and mark my choice.

*[To Arsaces.]*

Be thou, my best protector, near the throne.

## SCENE VI.

The apartment of Sémiramis opens into a magnificent saloon richly ornamented; a number of officers in their proper habits on the steps of the throne, which is raised in the middle; the satraps on each side: the high priest enters with the magi, and places himself between Assur and Arsaces: the queen in the midst with Azema, and her attendants: guards at the lower end of the saloon.

## OROES.

Ye princes, magi, warriors, the support  
 Of Babylon, assembled by command  
 From great Sémiramis, the will of heaven  
 Soon shall ye know: the gods that guard our empire  
 Have fixed on this important hour to work  
 A great and mighty change; whoe'er the queen  
 Shall here appoint her sovereign and our own  
 It is our duty to obey; and here  
 I bring my tribute to the throne, my prayers  
 And wishes for the glory and the welfare  
 Of them, and of their kingdom: may these days  
 Of joy and gladness ne'er be changed to hours  
 Of grief and sorrow, nor these songs of mirth  
 To mournful plaints!

## AZEMA.

A king, my lords, will soon  
 Be named; whoe'er he be, the choice will injure  
 Myself alone; but Azema was born  
 And must remain a subject; I submit  
 To the queen's pleasure, and on her protection  
 Shall still depend; nor with the dark presage  
 Of future ills shall interrupt your joy:  
 But leave you my example of obedience.

## ASSUR.

Howe'er the queen may choose, and heaven deter-  
mine,

We must consult the public good alone;  
Let us then swear by this imperial throne,  
And great Sémiramis, to yield submissive,  
And without murmuring to obey her will.

## ARSACÈS.

I swear it; and this arm that fought for her,  
This heart obedient ever to her voice,  
Which next the voice of heaven I still revered,  
This blood which flowed with pleasure for her sake,  
Shall be devoted to that royal master  
Whom she appoints.

## HIGH PRIEST.

I wait the great award  
Of heaven and Sémiramis.

## SÉMIRAMIS.

Enough:

Each to his place, and now attend, my people.

*[She seats herself on the throne.]*

*[AZEMA, ASSUR, OROES (the high priest) and ARSACÈS  
take their places, and she proceeds.]*

If in that hand which custom and the laws  
Of an imperious husband had confined  
To homely cares, and to a distaff chained,  
I bore aloft the sceptre and the sword,  
Beyond my subjects' hope, nor sunk beneath  
The weight of empire, let me now extend  
To latest times its glory: 'tis my purpose  
This day to take a partner in the throne:

The gods must be obeyed, whose dread command  
 At length subdued my long unconquered heart :  
 They who deprived me of my son, perhaps  
 May one day raise an heir to Babylon  
 Worthy of empire, who shall follow me  
 Through all the thorny paths that I have trod,  
 Finish my work, and make my reign immortal.  
 I might have chosen a sovereign from the kings  
 That dwell around me, but they are all my foes,  
 Or tributary slaves : a foreign hand  
 Shall never yield this sceptre : my own subjects  
 Are better than the kings which they have con-  
 quered :

Belus was born a subject ; if he gained  
 The diadem, he owed it to the people,  
 And to himself : by rights like his I hold  
 The power supreme ; and, mistress of a kingdom  
 Larger than his, have bent beneath my yoke  
 The nations of the East, which Belus ne'er  
 Had seen or heard of : what he but attempted  
 Sémiramis performed ; for they who found  
 A kingdom, and they only, can preserve it.  
 You want a king who may be worthy of you,  
 Worthy of such an empire, shall I add  
 Worthy the hand that crowns him, and the heart  
 Which I shall give : I have consulted heaven,  
 My country's weal, the interest of mankind,  
 And choose a king to make the world more happy.  
 Adore the hero, see in him revived  
 The princes of my honored race ; observe him,  
 And know, this king, this hero, is—Arsaces.

*[She descends from the throne, and they all rise.]*

AZEMA.

Arsaces ! the perfidious——

ASSUR.

Rage and vengeance!

ARSACES.

Believe me, Azema——

OROES.

Just heaven! avert

These omens.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Thou who sanctifiest my choice,  
 Confirm it at the altar: see in him  
 Ninus and Ninias both restored.

*[It thunders, and the tomb shakes.*

O heaven!

What do I hear?

OROES.

Great gods, protect us now!

SÉMIRAMIS.

The thunder comes, in anger or in love  
 I know not: pardon, gracious gods! Arsaces  
 Must win them to forgiveness. Ha! what voice  
 Distracts me thus? and see, the tomb is open.  
 O heaven! I die.

*[The ghost of Ninus comes out of the tomb.*

ASSUR.

The shade of Ninus' self.

Gods! is it possible?

ARSACES.

What sayest thou? speak,  
 Thou god of terrors.

ASSUR.

O unfold thy tale.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Comest thou to pardon, or to punish me?  
 It is thy sceptre and thy bed which here  
 I have bestowed: speak, is he worthy of it?  
 Determine: I obey thee.

THE GHOST OF NINUS TO ARSACES,

Thou shalt reign,  
 Arsaces, but there are some dreadful crimes  
 Which thou must expiate: hie thee to the tomb,  
 And to my ashes offer sacrifice:  
 Serve me and Ninias: remember well  
 Thy father: listen to the pontiff.

ARSACES.

O!

Thou venerable shade, thou demigod,  
 Who dwellest within these walls, the sight of thee  
 Inspires but does not amaze Arsaces:  
 Yes, I will go, on peril of my life,  
 And meet thee in the tomb: but tell me, what  
 Must be the sacrifice? O speak! he's gone.  
 [*The ghost retires towards the entrance of the  
 mausoleum.*]

SÉMIRAMIS.

Thou honored spirit of my lord, permit me  
 Thus on my knees to pour my sorrows forth,  
 Permit me in the tomb to——

GHOST.

[*At the entrance of the tomb.*]

Stop: no farther:

Respect my ashes: when the time is come  
 I'll send for thee.

[*The ghost goes into the tomb, and the mausoleum  
 closes.*]

ASSUR.

Amazing!

SÉMIRAMIS.

Follow me,  
 My people, to the temple: be not thus  
 Dismayed: for know, the gentle shade of Ninus  
 Is not implacable; it loves your king,  
 And therefore will it spare Sémiramis:  
 Heaven that inspired my choice will now support it:  
 Haste then, and pray for me, and for Arsaces.

*End of the Third Act.*

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

Representing the porch of the temple.

ARSACES, AZEMA.

ARSACES.

Do not oppress me in this hour of grief,  
 And aggravate my sorrows; I have borne  
 Enough already: this dread oracle  
 Affrights me; prodigies on every side  
 Disturb the course of nature: heaven deprives me  
 Of all, if Azema is lost.

AZEMA.

No more,  
 False man, nor to the horrors of this day  
 Add the remembrance of thy perfidy;  
 No more the terrors of Sémiramis,  
 The walking spectre, and the opening grave,  
 Appal me now; of all the prodigies

Which I have seen, thy base inconstancy  
 Hath shocked me most : go on, appease the shade  
 Of Ninus, and begin the sacrifice  
 With Azema ; behold, and strike the victim.

ARSACES.

It is too much ; my heart was not prepared  
 Against this cruel stroke : thou knowest, my soul  
 Prefers thee to the empire of the world :  
 What was the object of that fame in arms  
 I held so dear, of all my victories ?  
 All my ambition hoped for was at last  
 To merit thee : Sémiramis, thou knowest,  
 Was dear to both ; thy tongue unites with mine  
 To praise her ; she was still the guardian god  
 That cherished and protected us ; as such  
 We both revered her with that pious zeal  
 And chaste regard which mortals bear to heaven :  
 Judge of my spotless faith by my surprise  
 At the queen's choice, and mark the precipice  
 It leads us to, thence learn our future fate.

AZEMA.

I know it.

ARSACES.

Learn, that neither thou nor empire  
 Were destined for Arsaces ; know, that son  
 Whom I must serve, the child of Ninus, he  
 Who must inherit here——

AZEMA.

Well ; what of him ?

ARSACES.

That Ninias, he who from his cradle lit  
 The torch of Hymen with thee, who was born  
 My rival and my master——

AZEMA.

Ninias!

ARSACES.

Lives;

And will be with us soon.

AZEMA.

Ha! then the queen——

ARSACES.

Even to this day deceived, laments his death.

AZEMA.

Ninias alive!

ARSACES.

It is a secret yet  
Within the temple, and she knows it not.

AZEMA.

But Ninias crowns thee, and his widow's thine.

ARSACES.

Ay, but his son was born for Azema;  
He is my king, so says the oracle,  
And I must serve him.

AZEMA.

But love claims his own,  
And will be heard in spite of all, Arsaces:  
His orders are not doubtful, or obscure.  
Love is my oracle, and that alone  
Shall be obeyed. Ninias, thou sayest, yet lives,  
Let him appear, and let Sémiramis  
Recall her plighted faith to him; let Ninus  
Rise from the tomb, to join the fatal knot  
Made in our infant years; let Ninias come,  
My king, thy master, and thy rival, fired

With all the love which once Arsaces had  
 For Azema, then see how I will slight  
 His proffered vows; then shalt thou see me scorn  
 The sceptre at my feet, and spurn a crown  
 Which is my due: where is he now? What secret,  
 What mystery veils him from us? Let him come;  
 But know, nor Ninias, nor Sémiramis,  
 No, nor the sacred spirit of his father  
 Risen from the tomb, nor all the powers of nature  
 Thrown in confusion, from my heart would wrest  
 The image of my perjured dear Arsaces:  
 Go, ask thy own, if it will dare to act  
 As mine hath done. What are those dreadful crimes  
 Which thou must expiate? if thou e'er shouldst  
 break

The sacred tie that binds us, if thou art false,  
 I know no crime, no treachery like thy own.

I see the sage interpreter of fate  
 This way advancing; love will never plead  
 Thy cause with heaven, if thou betrayest me: go,  
 From Ninus' hand receive thy doom; remember,  
 Thy fate depends on heaven, and mine on thee.

[Exit Azema.

ARSACES.

Arsaces still is thine: stay, cruel maid:  
 How mingled is our happiness and woe!  
 What strange events that contradict each other——

## SCENE II.

ARSACES, OROES, *the magi attending.*

OROES.

[To Arsaces.

Let us retire to yonder lonely walk;

I see you are much moved : prepare yourself  
For strokes more dreadful.

[*To the magi.*

Bring the royal wreath.

[*The magi bring the coffer.*

This letter, and this sacred sword, to thee,  
Arsaces, I deliver.

ARSACES.

Reverend father,  
Wilt thou not save me from the precipice  
That gapes before me? wilt thou not at length  
Uplift the veil, that from my eyes conceals  
My future fate?

OROES.

'Twill be removed, my son ;  
The hour is come, when in his dreary mansions,  
Ninus from thee expects a sacrifice  
That shall appease his angry spirit.

ARSACES.

What  
Can Ninus ask, what sacrifice from me?  
Must I be his avenger, when his son  
Still lives? Let Ninias come; he is my king,  
And I will serve him.

OROES.

'Tis his father's will,  
Thou must obey him : an hour hence, Arsaces,  
Be at his tomb, armed with this sacred sword,  
And with this wreath adorned, which Ninus wore,  
And which thyself did bring to me.

ARSACES.

The wreath

Of Ninus!

OROES.

'Tis his royal will that thus  
 Thou shouldst appear, to offer up the blood  
 That must be shed; the victim will be there:  
 Strike thou, and leave the rest to him, and heaven.

ARSACES.

If he requires my life, I'll give it him:  
 But where is Ninias? thou speakest naught of him:  
 Thou hast not told me how his father gives  
 To me his kingdom and his queen.

OROES.

To thee

His queen! O heaven, to thee Sémiramis  
 Be given! Arsaces, the important hour  
 Which I had promised thee is come, when thou  
 Shalt know thy fate, and this abandoned woman.

ARSACES.

Great gods!

OROES.

'Twas she who murdered Ninus.

ARSACES.

She,

Saidst thou, the queen?

OROES.

Assur, that foul disgrace  
 Of human nature, Assur gave the poison.

ARSACES.

I'm not surprised at Assur's cruelty,  
 But that a wife, a queen, and such a queen,

The pride of sovereigns, the delight of nations,  
 That she should e'er be guilty of a crime  
 So horrible! it passes all belief.  
 How can such virtues and such guilt as hers  
 Subsist together!

OROES.

How indeed! the question  
 Is worthy of thy noble heart: but now  
 'Twere needless to dissemble, every moment  
 Is big with some new secret, horrible  
 To nature, who already whispers to thee  
 Her soft complaints; thy generous heart, I see,  
 Spite of thyself, is shocked, and mourns within thee:  
 But wonder not that Ninus from the tomb  
 Indignant rises on this seat of guilt;  
 He comes to break the horrid nuptial tie,  
 Woven by the furies, and expose to light  
 Unpunished crimes; to save his son from incest:  
 He speaks to, he expects thee: know thy father,  
 For thou art Ninias, and the queen's thy mother.

ARSACES.

Thou hast o'erpowered me in one dreadful moment  
 With such repeated wonders, that I stand  
 Astonished, and the night of death surrounds me.  
 Am I his son, and can it be?

OROES.

Thou art:  
 Ninus, the morn before he died, foresaw  
 His end approaching; knew the deadly draught  
 Which he had drunk was ministered to thee  
 By the same hand, and, dying as thou wert,  
 Withdrew thee from this wicked court: for Assur  
 Had poisoned thee that he might wed thy mother,

Thought to exterminate the royal race,  
 And open thus his passage to the throne :  
 But whilst the kingdom mourned thy loss,  
     Phradates,  
 Our faithful friend, secreted and preserved thee ;  
 With skilful hand the precious herbs prepared,  
 O'er Persia spread by her benignant God,  
 Whose wondrous power drew forth the latent  
     venom  
 From thy parched limbs : his own son dying, you  
 Supplied his place, and still wert called Arsaces.  
 He waited patient for some lucky change,  
 But the great judge of kings had otherwise  
 Determined ; truth at length descends from heaven,  
 And vengeance rises from the tomb.

ARSACES.

O God !

Enough already hast thou tried thy servant,  
 Or must I yield that life which you restored ?  
 Yes : I was born midst grandeur, shame, and horror :  
 My mother—Ninus ! O what deadly purpose—  
 But if the traitor Assur was alone  
 To blame, if he——

OROES.

*[Giving him the letter.*

Behold this paper here,  
 Too faithful witness of her guilt, then say  
 If yet a doubt remains.

ARSACES.

Haste, give it me,  
 And clear them all, *[He reads.*  
 Ha ! "*Ninus to Phradates :*  
*I die by poison, guard my Ninias well,*  
*Defend him from his foes: my guilty wife——"*

## OROES.

Needest thou more proof? this witness came from thee.

He had not finished; death, thou seest, broke off  
The imperfect scroll, and stopped his feeble hand;  
Phradates hath unfolded all the rest,  
Read this, and learn the whole.

*[Gives him another paper.]*

It is enough  
That Ninus hath commanded thee, he guides  
Thy steps, and leads thee to the throne, but says  
He must have blood.

## ARSACES.

*[After reading the paper.]*

O day of miracles,  
And you, ye dreadful oracles from hell,  
Dark as the tomb which I must visit, how  
Shall I unveil your secret purposes,  
When he who is to make the sacrifice  
Knows not his victim! Who shall guide my choice?  
I tremble at it.

## OROES.

Tremble for the guilty.  
Amidst the horrors that oppress thy soul,  
The gods will guide thee; deem not thou thyself  
A common mortal, from the race of men  
Thou art distinguished, set apart by heaven,  
And noted by its signature divine,  
Walk thou secure, though night conceals thy fate,  
The gods of thy great ancestors employ thee  
But as their instrument. What right hast thou  
To litigate their power, and to oppose  
Thy masters? Saved from death, as thou hast been,  
Be thankful still; complain not, but adore.

## SCENE III.

—  
ARSACES, MITRANES.

ARSACES.

I cannot reconcile this strange event:  
Sémiramis my mother! can it be?

MITRANES.

*[Entering in haste.]*

My lord, the people in this hour of terror  
Demand their king: permit me first to hail thee  
The husband of Sémiramis, and lord  
Of Babylon: the queen is hasting hither  
In search of thee; I bless the happy hour  
That gave her to thee: ha! not answer me!  
Despair is in thy looks, thy lips are closed  
In dreadful silence, thou art pale with terror,  
And thy whole frame's disordered: what has  
passed?  
What have they said?

ARSACES.

I'll fly to Azema.

MITRANES.

Amazing! can it be Arsaces? fly  
A queen's embraces; scorn her proffered love;  
Insult her choice; the royal hand that spurned  
Kings for thy sake! thus are her hopes betrayed?

ARSACES.

Gods! 'tis Sémiramis herself; O Ninus,  
Now let thy tomb in its dark bosom hide  
Her crimes, and me!

## SCENE IV.

SÉMIRAMIS, ARSACES.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Arsaces, all is ready,  
 We want but thee, great master of the world,  
 Whose fate, like mine, depends on thee ; O haste,  
 And make our bliss complete ! with joy I see  
 Thy brows encircled with that sacred wreath :  
 The priest, I know, was by the gods commanded  
 To crown thee with it ; heaven and hell at once  
 Approve my choice, and by these signs confirm it :  
 Assur's seditious party, struck with awe  
 And holy reverence, tremble at my presence ;  
 Ninus, at length propitious, hath required  
 A sacrifice, O haste, and give it him,  
 That we may soon be blest : the people's hearts  
 Are all with us, and Assur's threats are vain.

ARSACES.

*[Walking about with great emotion.]*

Assur ! away ! in his perfidious blood  
 The parricide—we will revenge thee, Ninus.

SÉMIRAMIS.

What do I hear ? just heaven ! speakest thou of him,  
 Of Ninus ?

ARSACES.

*[Wildly.]*

Saidst thou not, his guilty hand

*[Coming to himself.]*

Had shed—to arm against his queen ! the slave,  
 That was enough to make me hate him.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Haste then,  
Receive my hand, and thus begin thy vengeance.

ARSACES.

My father!

SÉMIRAMIS.

Ha! what looks are those, Arsaces?  
Is this the soft submissive tender heart  
Which I expected from thee, when I gave  
My willing hand? That fearful prodigies,  
And spectres rising from their dark domain,  
Should leave the marks of horror on thy soul,  
Alarms me not, I feel them too, but less  
When I behold Arsaces: do not thus  
O'erspread this fairest dawn of happiness  
With sorrow's gloomy shade, but still appear  
Such as thou wert when trembling at my feet,  
Lest Assur e'er should be thy master; fear  
Nor him, nor Ninus and his angry shade;  
My dear Arsaces, thou art my support,  
My lord, my husband.

ARSACES.

[*Turning aside from her.*]

'Tis too much, O stop:  
Her guilt o'erwhelms me.

SÉMIRAMIS.

How his soul's disturbed!  
Alas! he wants that peace which he bestowed  
On me.

ARSACES.

Sémiramis—

SÉMIRAMIS.

What wouldst thou? speak.

ARSACES.

I cannot: leave me, leave me: hence! begone.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Amazing! leave thee! can I e'er forsake  
 Arsaces? O explain this mystery to me,  
 And ease my tortured soul: it makes us both  
 Unhappy:—ha! despair is in thy aspect;  
 Thou chillest my veins with horror, and thy eyes  
 Are dreadful; they affright me more than heaven  
 And hell united to oppose my vows:  
 Scarce can my trembling lips pronounce, I love thee:  
 Some power invisible now leads me on  
 Towards thee, now withholds me from thy arms,  
 And mingles, how I know not, tenderest love  
 With sentiments of horror and despair.

ARSACES.

Hate me, abhor me.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Canst thou bid me hate thee?

Cruel Arsaces, no: I still must trace  
 Thy footsteps, still my heart must follow thine:  
 What is that paper which thou lookest on thus  
 With horror, whilst thy eyes are bathed in tears,  
 Does that contain a reason for thy coldness?

ARSACES.

It does.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Then give it me.

ARSACES.

I must not: darest thou—

Sémiramis.

SÉMIRAMIS.

I'll have it.

ARSACES.

Leave to me that dreadful scroll,  
To thee 'twere fatal, I have use for it.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Whence came it?

ARSACES.

From the gods.

SÉMIRAMIS.

And wrote by whom?

ARSACES.

Wrote by my father.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Ha! what sayest thou?

ARSACES.

Tremble.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Give it me, let me know at once my fate.

ARSACES.

Urge it no more; there is death in every line.

SÉMIRAMIS.

No matter: clear my doubts, or I shall think  
That thou art guilty.

ARSACES.

Ye immortal powers  
That guide our steps, it is to your decrees  
That I submit.

SÉMIRAMIS.

For the last time, Arsaces,  
I here command thee, listen, and obey.

ARSACES.

[*Giving her the letter.*]

O may thy justice, heaven, be satisfied!  
And this the only punishment that e'er  
Shall be inflicted on her! now 'tis past,  
And thou wilt know too much.

[*She reads.*]

SÉMIRAMIS.

[*To Otanes.*]

What do I read?

Support me, or I die.

[*She faints.*]

ARSACES.

She sees it all.

SÉMIRAMIS.

[*Coming to herself, after a long silence.*]

Delay not, but fulfil thy destiny:  
Punish this guilty, this unhappy wretch,  
And in my blood wash out the deadly stain.  
Nature deceived is horrible to both,  
Avenge thy father, strike, and punish me.

ARSACES.

No: let the sacred character I bear,  
The name of son, preserve me from that crime!  
Much rather would I pierce the heart of him  
Who still reveres thee, the poor lost Arsaces.

SÉMIRAMIS.

[*Kneeling.*]

Be cruel as Sémiramis; she felt  
 No pity, therefore be the son of Ninus,  
 And take my life: thou wilt not; nay, thy tears  
 Even mix with mine: O Ninias, 'tis a day  
 Of horrors, yet there's pleasure in this pain.  
 Before thou givest me what I have deserved,  
 The stroke of death, let nature's voice be heard:  
 O let a guilty mother's tears bedew  
 That dear, that fatal hand.

ARSACES.

I am thy son,  
 'Tis not for thee, whate'er thy guilt, to fall  
 Thus at my feet: O rise, thy Ninias begs,  
 He loves thee still, still vows obedience to thee,  
 Respect and purest love: consider me  
 As a new subject, only more submissive,  
 More humble, than the rest; I hope, more dear.  
 Heaven that restores thy son is sure appeased:  
 The gods who pardon thee reserve their vengeance  
 For Assur; leave him to his fate.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Receive  
 My crown and sceptre, I have much disgraced them.

ARSACES.

Still, I beseech you, hold me ignorant  
 Of all, and let me with the world adore you.

SÉMIRAMIS.

O no: my guilt's too flagrant.

ARSACES.

But repentance

May blot it out.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Ninus hath given to thee  
The reins of empire, thou must not offend  
His vengeful spirit.

ARSACES.

O it will relent

At thy remorse, and soften at my tears.  
Otanés, in the name of heaven, preserve  
My mother, and conceal the horrid secret.

*End of the Fourth Act.*

## ACT V. SCENE I.

SÉMIRAMIS, OTANES.

OTANES.

O 'twas some god that smiled propitious on thee,  
Who thus prevented these abhorred nuptials ;  
Whilst nature shuddered at the approaching danger,  
Gave thee a son, and saved thee thus from incest.  
The oracles of Ammon, and the voice  
From hell, the shades of Ninus, all declared  
The day appointed for thy second marriage  
Should end thy sorrows, but they never said  
That marriage e'er should be accomplished : No :  
The nuptials were prepared : thou hast fulfilled  
Thy destiny : thy son reveres thee still :  
Mild is the justice of offended heaven,  
Which only asks a private sacrifice :  
This day Sémiramis shall still be happy.

## SÉMIRAMIS.

Alas! there is no happiness for me,  
 Otanes: Ninias smiles indeed upon me:  
 A mother's sorrows for a time will plead  
 More strongly with him than the blood of Ninus,  
 And my past crimes; but soon his tenderness  
 And filial love may change perhaps to wrath  
 And fierce resentment for a murdered father.

## OTANES.

What fearest thou from a son? what dire presage—

## SÉMIRAMIS.

Fear is the natural punishment of guilt,  
 And still attends it: this detested Assur,  
 Has he attempted aught, say, does he know  
 What passed of late, and who Arsaces is?

## OTANES.

The dreadful secret still remains unknown;  
 The shade of Ninus is by all revered;  
 But how to comprehend the oracle  
 They know not; how they must avenge his ashes;  
 How serve his son—the minds of men are struck  
 With wild astonishment, in silence now  
 They wait the hour when the self-opened tomb  
 Shall banish all their fears, and make them happy.  
 Meantime the soldiers are in arms, the people  
 Crowd to the altars; wretched Azema,  
 Trembling and pale, with terror in her looks,  
 Walks round the tomb, and lifts her hands to  
                   heaven;  
 Whilst Ninias stands astonished in the temple,  
 Prepared to strike his victim yet unknown:  
 The gloomy Assur meditates revenge,

Unites the remnants of his scattered party,  
And forms some dark design.

SÉMIRAMIS.

I have kept fair  
Too long already with him: seize the traitor,  
Otanés, bear him to my son in chains;  
Ninias shall soon appease eternal justice,  
At least with Assur's blood, my vile accomplice.  
Ninus, thou seest I am a mother still;  
Thou seest my heart, O take it, take it all,  
And may it rise a grateful sacrifice!  
Ha! who approaches with such hasty steps?  
How everything appals my fluttering soul!

SCENE II.

—

SÉMIRAMIS, AZEMA, OTANES.

AZEMA.

O Queen, forgive me if I come uncalled;  
But terrors worse than death have forced me thus  
To clasp thy knees, and beg thy royal mercy—

SÉMIRAMIS.

What wouldst thou, princess? speak.

AZEMA.

To snatch a hero  
From instant danger, stop a traitor's hand,  
And save Arsaces.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Ha! what hand? Arsaces!

AZEMA.

He is thy husband, Azema's betrayed,  
He lives for you alone; no matter—

SÉMIRAMIS.

My husband! gods! He

AZEMA.

The sacred tie that binds you—

SÉMIRAMIS.

The tie is dreadful, impious, and abhorred:  
Arsaces is—but speak, go on; I tremble:  
What dangers? haste, and tell me.

AZEMA.

Well thou knowest,  
Perhaps this very moment, whilst I ask  
Thy aid, perhaps—

SÉMIRAMIS.

Well, what?

AZEMA.

That demigod  
Whom we adore, demands the sacrifice  
Within the dreary labyrinths of the tomb:  
What are the crimes Arsaces must atone for  
I know not.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Crimes! just heaven!

AZEMA.

But impious Assur  
Hath sworn to violate that sacred place  
Which mortals dare not enter.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Ay! indeed!

Hath Assur sworn it?

AZEMA.

In the dead of night  
 The wily traitor had long since secured  
 A safe retreat, if e'er occasion called,  
 Within the secret windings of the tomb,  
 Where now he means to do the bloody deed,  
 To brave the powers of hell, and wrath of heaven;  
 With sacrilegious hand we would destroy  
 The generous Arsaces.

SÉMIRAMIS.

Heaven! what sayest thou?  
 By what detested means?

AZEMA.

Believe a heart  
 By love enlightened, and by love inspired:  
 I know the traitor's rank envenomed hatred,  
 Marked how the trembling faction by his zeal  
 Revived; I pried into their secret councils,  
 Pretended to unite his cause with mine,  
 And join our interests; I have looked into him,  
 Have wrested from his heart the fatal secret.  
 Boldly he marches on, and hopes to pass  
 Unpunished: well he knows that none dare enter  
 That holy place, not Orôes himself:  
 Thither he's gone: meantime his slaves report  
 Arsaces is the victim that must die  
 For Babylon, and Ninus in his blood  
 Shall satiate his revenge: the nobles meet,  
 The people murmur; Ninus, Assur, heaven,  
 Are all incensed: I tremble for Arsaces.

## SÉMIRAMIS.

My dearest Azema, heaven speaks by thee:  
 It is enough: I see what must be done.  
 Repose thyself with safety on a mother;  
 Daughter, our danger is the same; go thou,  
 Defend thy husband, I will save my son.

## AZEMA.

O heaven!

## SÉMIRAMIS.

I meant to wed him, but the gods  
 In mercy have forbade it: they inspire  
 A hapless mother now—but time is precious;  
 Go: leave me here, and in my name command  
 The nobles, priests, and people, to attend me.

*[Azema goes into the porch of the temple, and  
 Sémiramis advances toward the tomb.]*

Thou shade of Ninus, lo! I fly to avenge thee;  
 The hour is come when thou didst promise me  
 Admittance to thy tomb; I have obeyed thee,  
 Called by thy voice, behold me here to save  
 My son. Ye guards that wait around my throne  
 Approach: henceforth Arsaces is your king;  
 No more obedient to Sémiramis,  
 Observe his laws, to him the sovereign power  
 I here resign; be you his subject now,  
 And his defenders.

*[Guards appear, and range themselves on each side  
 at the further part of the stage.]*

Gracious heaven! protect me.

*[She goes into the tomb.]*

## SCENE III.

—  
AZEMA.

*[Returning from the porch of the temple to the front of the stage.]*

What can she purpose? O it is too late  
To save him now; I know not what to think:  
'Tis wondrous all; O 'tis a dreadful moment,  
Arsaces! Ninias! ye immortal powers  
Who guide our fate, O say, did you restore  
My loved Arsaces but to snatch him from me?

## SCENE IV.

—  
AZEMA, NINIAS.

AZEMA.

Ha! Ninias! can it be? Art thou indeed  
Great Ninus' son, my sovereign, and my husband?

NINIAS.

O! thou beholdest me, Azema, ashamed  
To know myself, sprung from the blood of gods,  
And shuddering at the thought: O! Azema,  
Remove my terrors, calm my troubled soul,  
Strengthen my arm upraised to avenge a father.

AZEMA.

Take heed how thou performest that dreadful office.

NINIAS.

He hath commanded, and I must obey.

AZEMA.

Ninus would never sacrifice his son:  
Impossible!

NINIAS.

What says my Azema?

AZEMA.

Ne'er shalt thou enter that abhorred place,  
For know, a traitor lies in wait for thee.

NINIAS.

Who shall withhold or terrify Arsaces?

AZEMA.

Thou art the victim to be offered there:  
With sacrilegious steps the impious Assur  
Profanes the sacred tomb, and rashly dares  
To violate its privilege divine:  
He waits thee there.

NINIAS.

Good heaven! then all is plain;

I'm satisfied: the victim is prepared;  
My father, poisoned by the wicked Assur,  
Demands the traitor's blood: instructed thus  
By Oroes, and conducted by the gods,  
Armed by the hand of Ninus' self, I go  
To punish the assassin: thither led  
By heaven's eternal justice, my weak hand  
Is but the instrument of power divine:  
The gods do all, and my astonished soul  
Yields to that voice which must decree my fate:  
Spite of ourselves, our ways are noted down,  
Marked, and determined: prodigies are spread  
Around the throne, and spirits called from hell  
To wander here: but fearless I obey,  
Believe, and trust in heaven.

AZEMA.

Whate'er the gods  
Have done but fills my soul with sad dismay:  
Ninus was loved by them; yet Ninus perished.

NINIAS.

But now they will avenge him: cease thy plaints.

AZEMA.

Oft have they chose the purest victim, oft  
Have shed the blood of innocence.

NINIAS.

No more;  
They will defend whom thus they have united:  
They by a father's voice exhorted us,  
Gave me a throne, a mother, and a wife.  
Soon shalt thou see me sprinkled with the blood  
Of the vile murderer; from the tomb those gods  
Shall lead me to the altar; I obey;  
It is enough: the rest be left to heavén.

## SCENE V.

AZEMA.

[*Alone.*]

O guard his footsteps in this fatal tomb!  
Ye powers inscrutable, whose blood must flow  
This day? I tremble for the event, and dread  
The hand of Assur, long inured to slaughter;  
Even on his father's ashes may he shed  
The blood of Ninias: O may the dark womb  
Of hell receive and swallow up his rage!  
Ye lightnings blast him! O illustrious shade  
Of Ninus, wherefore wouldst thou not permit



Whence the dim rays of light appeared : and yet  
 I own to thee, his deep heart-rending sighs,  
 The mournful sounds, imperfect as they were,  
 That reached my ears, his humble vows to heaven,  
 With that repentance which in his last hour  
 Seemed to possess his soul, the hallowed place,  
 The voice of pity, which, revenge once o'er,  
 Calls loudly on us, with I know not what  
 Of dark mysterious terror, shook my soul,  
 And made me leave the bleeding victim there.  
 What can this trouble, this strange horror mean  
 That dwells upon me, Azema? My heart  
 Is pure, ye gods, my hands are innocent,  
 Stained only with the blood you bid me shed ;  
 I've served the cause of heaven, and yet am  
 wretched.

AZEMA.

The dead are satisfied, and nature too :  
 Come let us quit this horrid place, and seek  
 Thy mother, she shall calm thy troubled mind :  
 Since Assur is no more——

### SCENE VII.

—  
 NINIAS, AZEMA, ASSUR.

*[Assur appears at a distance with Otanes, surrounded by guards.]*

AZEMA.

O heaven! he's there.

NINIAS.

Assur!

AZEMA.

O haste, ye ministers of heaven,  
Ye servants of the king, defend your master.

## SCENE VIII.

OROES, *the high priest, with the magi and people  
assembled*, OTANES, NINIAS, AZEMA, MITRANES,

ASSUR.

[*Disarmed.*]

OTANES.

They need not: by the queen's command I've seized  
The traitor, who attempted to profane  
Yon sacred monument, and enter there:  
I shall deliver him to thee:

NINIAS.

Alas!

What victim then hath Ninias sacrificed?

OROES.

Heaven is appeased, and vengeance now complete.  
Behold, ye people, your king's murderer.

[*Pointing to Assur.*]

Behold, ye people, your king's successor.

[*Pointing to Ninias.*]

'Tis Ninias, Babylon's lost prince, restored:  
He is your sovereign, know him, and obey.

ASSUR.

Thou Ninias!

OROES.

Ay; 'tis he: the guardian god,  
 Who saved him from thy rage, hath brought him  
 hither;  
 That god whose vengeance hath o'erthrown thee.

ASSUR.

Ha! did Sémiramis then give thee life?

NINIAS.

She did, and power withal to punish thee:  
 Guards take him hence, and rid me of a monster.  
 He was not worthy of my sword; to fall  
 By Ninias' hand had been a death too glorious.  
 The victim hath escaped me; let him die,  
 Even as he lived, with infamy: away.

ASSUR.

It is my heaviest punishment to see  
 Ninias my sovereign; but 'tis pleasure still  
 To leave thee more unhappy than myself;  
 [*Sémiramis appears at the foot of the tomb,  
 wounded, and almost dead, one of the magi  
 supporting her.*]

Look yonder, and behold what thou hast done.

[*Pointing to Sémiramis.*]

NINIAS.

Whom have I slain?

AZEMA.

Fly, my dear Ninias, fly  
 This fatal place.

MITRANES.

What hast thou done?

## Sémiramis.

OROES.

*[Placing himself between Ninias and the tomb.*

Away ;

And cleanse those bloody hands : give me the sword,  
That fatal instrument of wrath divine.

NINIAS.

No : let me plunge it to my heart.

*[He attempts to destroy himself, the guards inter-  
pose.*

OROES.

Disarm him.

SÉMIRAMIS.

*[Brought forward and seated on a sofa.*

Revenge me, O my son ; some base assassin  
Has slain thy mother.

NINIAS.

O unhappy hour ;

Unheard of guilt ! for know, that base assassin,  
That monster was—thy son : this hand hath pierced  
The breast that nourished and supported me :  
But soon thou shalt have vengeance, Ninias soon  
Shall follow thee.

SÉMIRAMIS.

I went into the tomb  
To save thee, Ninias ; thy unhappy mother—  
But from thy hands, I have received the fate  
I merited.

NINIAS.

This last, this fatal stroke,  
Sinks deep into my soul : but here I call  
Those gods to witness who conducted me,  
Those who misled my steps—

## SÉMIRAMIS.

No more, my son :  
 Freely I pardon thee, and only make  
 This last request, that those dear hands may close  
 My dying eyes.

[*He kneels.*

A mother begs it of thee :  
 Thy heart I know was stranger to the deed :  
 O would that I had been as innocent  
 When Ninus died ! but I have suffered for it.  
 Henceforth let mortals know, that there are crimes  
 Offended heaven never can forgive.  
 O Ninias, Azema, let your blessed union  
 Blot out my crimes ; come near your dying mother ;  
 Give me your hands ; long may ye live and reign  
 In happiness ! that hope still gives me comfort,  
 And mingles joy even with the pangs of death.  
 It comes, I feel it. O ! my children, think  
 On your Sémiramis, O do not hate  
 My memory,—O my son, my son—'tis past.

## OROES.

Her eyes are sunk in darkness : help the king  
 And guard his life. Learn from her sad example,  
 That heaven is witness to our secret crimes :  
 The higher is the criminal, remember,  
 The gods inflict the greater punishment ;  
 Kings, tremble on your thrones, and fear their jus-  
 tice.

*End of the Fifth and Last Act.*



CATILINE

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

CICERO,	SEPTIMUS,
CÆSAR,	CRASSUS,
CATILINE,	CLODIUS,
AURELIA,	CETHEGUS,
CATO,	LENTULUS-SURA,
LUCULLUS,	Conspirators,
MARTIAN,	Lictors.

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The SCENE represents, on one side, the palace of Aurelia ; on the other the temple of Tellus, where the senate assembled: At a distance, a gallery communicating to some private passages that lead from the palace of Aurelia to the vestibule of the temple.

In his preface to this play Voltaire says:

“The learned will not here meet with a faithful narrative of Catiline’s conspiracy: a tragedy, they very well know, is not a history, but they will see a true picture of the manners of those times: all that Cicero, Catiline, Cato and Cæsar do in this piece is not true, but their genius and character are faithfully represented: if we do not there discover the eloquence of Cicero, we shall at least find displayed all that courage and virtue which he showed in the hour of danger. In Catiline is described that contrast of fierceness and dissimulation which formed his real character; Cæsar is represented as growing into power, factious, and brave; that Cæsar who was born at once to be the glory and the scourge of Rome.”

# CATILINE.

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## ACT I. SCENE I.

---

CATILINE.

*[Soldiers at the bottom of the stage.]*

Yes, thou proud talker, thou vile instrument  
Of a deluded people, soon thy power  
Shall be no more; and thou whose savage virtue,  
Inflexibly severe, destroys the nation  
It means to save, imperious Cato, know  
Thy doom is passed, thou and the tyrant senate  
Must fall together; they who keep the world  
In bondage shall themselves be slaves; their chains  
Are forged already, and usurping Pompey  
Shall pay for dear bought honors with his blood.  
Cæsar, his haughty rival, shall oppose him,  
His equal Cæsar: he who, like myself,  
Was ever factious, shall assist my cause;  
The snare is laid, and Cæsar shall prepare  
The throne for Catiline; I'll make them all  
Subservient to my purpose: Cicero's self,  
The man whom most I hate, shall be my friend:  
My wife too may be useful, and may prove  
A step to greatness: fathers, husbands, all  
Those empty names mistaken mortals call  
Most sacred, hence, I give you to the winds:  
Ambition, I am thine.

## SCENE II.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS.

CATILINE.

Well, my Cethegus,  
 Whilst Rome and our designs are hid in night,  
 Say, hast thou called together our brave chiefs?

CETHEGUS.

Even here, my lord, beneath this portico,  
 Safe from the consul's prying eyes, and near  
 That impious scene where our proud tyrants sit,  
 Thy friends shall meet—already they have signed  
 The solemn compact, and are sworn to serve thee.  
 But how stands Cæsar, will he second us?

CATILINE.

He is a turbulent unruly spirit,  
 And acts but for himself.

CETHEGUS.

And yet without him  
 We never shall succeed.

CATILINE.

I've laid a snare  
 He cannot escape: my soldiers, in his name,  
 Shall seize Præneste—he's been long suspected.  
 This will confirm his guilt—the furious consul  
 Shall soon accuse him to the senate—Cæsar  
 Will hazard all to satiate his revenge.

I'll rouse this sleeping lion from his den,  
And make him roar for me.

## CETHEGUS.

But Nonnius still  
Rules in Præneste; he's a friend to Rome.  
In vain already thou hast tried to tempt  
His stubborn virtue—what must be his fate?

## CATILINE.

Thou knowest I love his daughter, though I hate  
Her surly father: long he strove in vain  
To thwart our mutual passion, and prevent  
Our private marriage, which at last the churl  
Unwillingly consented to: he feared  
To incur his angry party's high displeasure  
And the proud consul's—but I've made his pride  
Subservient to our purpose—he is bound  
By solemn oaths to keep our marriage still  
A secret: Sura only and Cethegus  
Are privy to it: this perhaps may serve  
More purposes than one: Aurelia's palace  
Conducts us to the temple; there I've placed  
My instruments of ruin, arms, and firebrands,  
To execute our great design: thy zeal  
To friendship much I owe, but more to love.  
Beneath the senate's sacred vault, beneath  
The roof of Nonnius will we sacrifice  
These tyrants—you, my friends, must to Præneste;  
You to the capitol; remember whom  
You serve, the oath that binds you, and the cause  
You are engaged in—thou, my loved Cethegus,  
Must watch o'er all, and guide the great machine.

## SCENE III.

—  
AURELIA, CATILINE.

AURELIA.

O Catiline, my lord, my husband, ease  
 My troubled heart, remove my doubts, my fears,  
 My horror, my despair—alas! what means  
 This dreadful preparation?—every step  
 I tread alarms me; why these soldiers, why  
 With arms and torches is my palace filled?  
 The days of Marius and of Sulla sure  
 Are now returned, and discord reigns amongst us:  
 Explain, my lord, this dreadful mystery:  
 Do not turn from me—by the sacred tie  
 That joins our hearts, by the dear babe thou lovest,  
 I talk not to thee of its mother's danger,  
 For thee alone I tremble: pity me,  
 Pity a wretched wife, and tell me all.

CATILINE.

Know then, my life, my fortune, and my fame,  
 Thy safety, and my own, the common cause,  
 Demand a conduct which thy fears condemn:  
 But if thou lovest me, let what'er thou seest  
 Be buried in thy breast: I mean to save  
 Rome's better part; the senate and the people  
 Are disunited—danger threatens the state  
 On every side; I've taken the best means  
 To make all well again.

AURELIA.

I hope thou hast;  
 But can we hide our hearts from those we love?

Canst thou deceive me? yet what thou hast said  
 Doubles my fears. Alas! thy looks are wild,  
 And full of horror. What will Nonnius say  
 When he shall see these dreadful preparations?  
 The voice of nature, and the tender names  
 Of father and brother oft have passed  
 Unheard and unregarded when the cause  
 Of Rome required it—well thou knowest our mar-  
 riage  
 Gave much offence, and when my angry father  
 Returning, shall behold these sad effects  
 Of our unhappy union, what, my lord,  
 Must I expect? O why wilt thou abuse  
 The power which love has given thee o'er a heart  
 Devoted to thy service?—thou hast gained  
 A party, but consider well my father,  
 Cato, and Cicero, and Rome, and heaven,  
 Are all thy foes: Nonnius perhaps may come  
 This very day on purpose to destroy thee.

CATILINE.

Be not afraid, I know he cannot.

AURELIA.

How?

CATILINE.

Whene'er he comes he must approve our purpose:  
 I am not left at liberty to tell thee  
 What we design, suffice it that his interest  
 And mine are one: I know when he shall find  
 The fair result, he then will join with me  
 To pull down the proud tyrants he obeys:  
 Trust me, Aurelia, what I do shall prove  
 The fertile spring of everlasting glory  
 And honor to you both—

AURELIA.

Alas! the honor  
I fear is doubtful, and the danger certain:  
What seekest thou? wherefore wouldst thou urge  
thy fate?

Is it not enough to rank among the first  
Of human kind, and rule the subject world?  
Why wouldst thou mount the giddy heights of  
power,

And court destruction? my foreboding heart  
Already sees, and trembles at thy danger.  
Are these the promised joys of flattering love?  
The peace I hoped for? I have lost it now  
For ever: O, my lord, when last these eyes  
Were in a short and broken slumber closed,  
Methought I saw in flames imperial Rome;  
Saw murders, deaths, and rivers stained with blood,  
My father massacred in open senate,  
And thee, my Catiline, amidst a band  
Of vile assassins, breathing forth thy soul  
In dreadful agonies: I rose, and fled  
From these sad images to find my lord,  
My guardian, my protector—thou art here,  
And I, alas! am but the more unhappy.

CATILINE.

Away—thy omens fright not Catiline;  
Complain not, but be resolute: I want  
Thy courage, not thy tears, when I am serving  
Thee and my country.

AURELIA.

Is it thus thou meanst  
To serve her? O, my lord, I know not what  
Thy purpose is, but were it fair and just  
Perhaps I might long since have been consulted;

Our mutual interest claimed it from a husband:  
 If thou dissemblest with me, I have cause  
 To doubt, and to be wretched—Cicero  
 Has long suspected thee, and Rome thou knowest  
 Adores him.

CATILINE.

Whom? my hated rival?

SCENE IV.

CATILINE, AURELIA, MARTIAN.

*One of the Conspirators.*

MARTIAN.

Sir,

The consul comes this way—by his command  
 The senate meet; he wishes first to see  
 And speak with you.

AURELIA.

I tremble at his name.

CATILINE.

Why tremble at the name of Cicero?  
 Let Nonnius fear and reverence him, disgrace  
 His rank and character by mean submission;  
 I pity the weak senator, but hoped  
 To find in thee a noble soul: not thus,  
 Remember, acted thy brave ancestors:  
 Gods! that a woman, and a Roman, sprung  
 From Nero's blood, should thus be void of pride  
 Or of ambition! noble minds are ne'er  
 Without them,

AURELIA.

Mine perhaps thou thinkest is mean  
 And timid; cruelty alone with thee  
 Is courage; thy reproach is most unkind;  
 But know me better; know that this fond wife,  
 Whom thou contemnest, who has not power to  
     change  
 Or soften thee, has more of Roman in her  
 Than thou canst boast; and, coward as she is,  
 Can teach thee how to die.

CATILINE.

How many cares  
 At once surround me!—Cicero comes—but him  
 I fear not: this Aurelia.—

## SCENE V.

—  
 CICERO, CATILINE, *Chief of the Lictors.*

CICERO.

[*To the Chief Lictor.*

Do as I

Command you—I'll try if I can sound  
 This faithless heart; leave me alone with him:  
 Sometimes a villain may be wrought by fear  
 To better counsel, and renounce his purpose.  
 Who's there? the proud plebeian, chosen by Rome  
 To be her master?

[*Turns to Cataline.*

Ere the senate meet,  
 Catiline, I come for the last time to hold  
 The friendly torch, and save thy wandering steps  
 From the dread precipice of guilt and ruin.

CATILINE.

Who, thou?

CICERO.

Yes, I.

CATILINE.

And is it thus thy hate

Pursues me?

CICERO.

Call it pity—but observe me.

The capitol is weary of thy plaints,  
 Thy factious cries, and bold impertinence;  
 Rome, and the senate have, it seems, debased  
 The consul's dignity by choosing me:  
 Thy pride we know expected it, but how  
 Hadst thou deserved it? was it by the name,  
 Or family, thy valor, or the pride  
 Of a loose prodigal in shows and feasts  
 And idle pomp; could these entitle thee  
 To such exalted honors? couldst thou hope  
 To be the great dispenser of the laws,  
 To guide the mistress of the world who rules  
 O'er prostrate kings? had Catiline been what  
 He ought to be, I might perhaps to him  
 Have yielded the contested palm.—Hereafter  
 Thou mayest support the state, but to be consul  
 'Tis fit thou first shouldst be—a citizen.  
 Thinkest thou by vile reflections on my birth,  
 My fortune, and my fame, to taint my honor,  
 Or weaken the firm basis of my power?  
 In our corrupted days it is not name,  
 Or family, that Rome has need of: no:  
 'Tis virtue; and the pride of Cicero  
 Hath ever been, that he should nothing owe  
 To his forefathers—my nobility  
 Springs from myself, and thine may end in thee.

## CATILINE.

It ill becomes a temporary power,  
Like thine, to boast of its authority.

## CICERO.

Had Cicero used that power as thou deservest,  
Thou wouldst not have been here to question it :  
Thou who hast stained our altars with pollution  
And sacrilegious rage, thy days are numbered  
But by thy crimes : thy merit is to dare,  
To strike at all, dissemble, and betray :  
Thou hast abused the precious gifts that heaven  
Bestowed on thee for other purposes :  
Sense, beauty, courage, and heroic warmth,  
All the fair ornaments of human nature,  
In thee are but the instruments of ill.  
My voice, which still is raised to scourge the wicked,  
And plead for the oppressed, hath spared thee yet ;  
Nor with the odious Verres ranked the name  
Of Catiline ; but long impunity  
Hath made thee shameless, and insensible  
Of all reproof—thou hast betrayed the state :  
At Rome, and in Etruria all is discord,  
And foul confusion ; Umbria is revolted ;  
Præneste staggers in her faith ; the soldiers  
Of barbarous Sulla, drenched in blood, come forth  
From their dark caves prepared for slaughter, armed  
By cruel Mallius ; all are leagued with thee ;  
Thy partisans declared, or secret friends,  
All are united in one guilty bond,  
And sworn to the destruction of their country :  
I know thee for their chief, for I have eyes  
On every side, and hands too, thou shalt find,  
That, spite of thee, shall vindicate the cause  
Of injured Rome ; thy guilty friends shall feel

My justice too: thou hast beheld me long  
 But as thy rival, now behold thy judge,  
 And thy accuser, who will force thee soon  
 To answer for thy actions by those laws  
 Which thou so oft hast trampled on unpunished,  
 Those laws which thou contemnest, and I revenge.

## CATILINE.

I've told you, sir, already, that your office  
 But ill excuses this indecent freedom:  
 But for that country's sake, whom both are bound  
 To serve, I pardon your unjust suspicions;  
 Nay, I do more, I honor your warm zeal;  
 Blind though it be, in such a cause 'tis just:  
 But do not thus reproach me for past errors,  
 For the wild follies of impetuous youth,  
 That soon are o'er; your senate is to blame,  
 I followed their example; pomp and pride,  
 Excess and luxury, the fruits of conquest,  
 Are the time's vices, not the native bent  
 Of Catiline's heart: I served the commonweal  
 In Asia as a soldier, as a judge  
 In Africa: spite of our domestic feuds,  
 Did I not make the name of Rome revered  
 Among the nations? I who have defended  
 Shall ne'er betray her.

## CICERO.

Sulla too and Marius  
 Both served their country well, and then destroyed  
 her.  
 Tyrants have all some specious show of virtue,  
 And ere they break their country's laws support  
 them.

CATILINE.

If you suspect each brave and gallant soldier,  
 Let Cæsar, Pompey, Crassus be accused:  
 Why fix on me amongst so many? why  
 Am I the only object of your fears?  
 Have I deserved it?

CICERO.

That you best can tell.  
 But wherefore deign I thus to answer you?

CATILINE.

The more I plead in my defence, the more  
 Will Cicero condemn me: if as friend  
 Thou talkest to me, thou but deceivest thyself,  
 I am thy foe; if as a citizen,  
 So too is Catiline; if as a consul,  
 A consul's not a master, he presides  
 But in the senate, I defy him there.

CICERO.

Thou durst not; for I there can punish guilt:  
 If thou art innocent, I will protect thee;  
 If not, I charge thee, be not seen in Rome.

CATILINE.

This is too much: I will no longer bear  
 Thy insults, though I scorn thy vague suspicions:  
 Yet know I think the worst affront that thou  
 Couldst put on Catiline, would be to protect him.

CICERO.

[*Alone.*

Insolent traitor! means he thus to prove  
 His innocence by false affected pride?  
 Perfidious wretch, I'm not to be deceived,  
 Nor shalt thou thus escape the watchful eye  
 Of vengeance.

## SCENE VI.

—

CICERO, CATO.

CICERO.

Well, my friend, hast thou prepared  
For Rome's defence?

CATO.

Your orders are obeyed;  
I have disposed the chiefs, and all are ready  
To march as you direct them; but I fear  
The people, nay the senate.

CICERO.

Ha! the senate?

CATO.

Ay—they are swollen with pride—and foul division  
Will soon enslave them.

CICERO.

Much indeed I fear  
Our vices will avenge the conquered world;  
Our liberty and virtue are no more;  
But Rome may still have hope whilst Cato lives.

CATO.

Alas! who serves his country often serves  
A most ungrateful mistress—even thy merit  
Offends the senate; with a jealous eye  
It views thy greatness.

CICERO.

Cato's approbation  
Is recompense enough; thy honest praise

Will more than balance their ingratitude;  
 On that and on posterity alone  
 I shall rely; let us perform our duty,  
 And leave the rest to heaven.

CATO.

How shall we stem  
 The torrent of corruption? when I see,  
 Even in this sacred temple, raised to virtue,  
 Infamous treason rise with shameless front:  
 Can we suppose that Manlius, that proud rebel,  
 Would dare advance his standard, and blow up  
 The flames of civil war, if greater powers  
 Did not support him, if some secret foe  
 Abetted not their vile conspiracy?  
 The leaders of the senate may betray us;  
 From Sulla's ashes may new tyrants rise:  
 My just suspicions light on Cæsar.

CICERO.

Mine

On Catiline; perfidious, sordid, rash,  
 And bold; he loves rebellion, and delights  
 In novelty; more dangerous than Cæsar;  
 I know him well; even now I parted from him:  
 What passed between us but confirms me more  
 In my suspicions; on his face I read  
 Rage and resentment, the determined pride  
 Of his fierce spirit, that no longer deigned  
 To hide its purpose, but stood forth, and owned  
 Its enmity to Rome.—I must discover  
 His bold compeers, perhaps I may prevent  
 His future crimes, and save my falling country.

CATO.

Catiline has friends, and much I fear the power  
 Of these united tyrants may prove fatal:

Our forces are in Asia, and at Rome  
 We are corrupted; but one upright man  
 May save the state.

CICERO.

If we unite, our country  
 Has naught to fear—in factions discord soon  
 Dissolves the tie: Cæsar perhaps may join them;  
 But, if I know him right, his noble soul  
 Will never stoop to serve a worthless tyrant;  
 He loves his country still, and hates a master;  
 Though soon the time will come when he shall strive  
 To be one; both are eager for applause,  
 And both ambitious: both are raised too high  
 To meet in friendship long; by their division  
 Rome may be saved; let us not tamely wait  
 To see our country's ruin, or behold  
 In shameful chains the masters of mankind.

*End of the First Act.*

ACT II. SCENE I.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS.

CETHEGUS.

At length the torch is lit to set on fire  
 Rome and the subject world; our army's nigh,  
 And all is ready for the great event.  
 Knowest thou meantime, my friend, what passes  
 here?

CATILINE.

I know the consul's prudence, so he calls  
 His cowardice, which deeply ruminates  
 On future ills: like an unskilful pilot

## Catiline.

He sets up every sail for every wind,  
 But knows not or which way the tempest comes,  
 Or whither it may drive him—for the senate,  
 I fear it not; that many-headed monster,  
 So proud of conquest and nobility,  
 Looks with an evil eye on Cicero;  
 I know it hates him, so does Cæsar; Crassus  
 Would gladly yield him up a sacrifice  
 To our resentment; on their jealousy  
 Depend my hopes—he's like a dying man,  
 With feeble arm he struggles for a while,  
 But soon shall sink beneath us and expire.

## CETHEGUS.

Envy I know attacks him, but his tongue  
 Can soften all; he leads the captive senate.

## CATILINE.

I brave him everywhere; despise his clamors,  
 And smile at his resentment: let him rail  
 To his last hour, and triumph in the shouts  
 Of his admirers, I have other cares  
 That sit more heavy on me.

## CETHEGUS.

What should stop  
 Thy rapid progress in the paths of glory  
 And happiness? Canst thou have aught to fear?

## CATILINE.

My numerous foes I heed not, 'tis my friends  
 I have most cause to dread; the jealousy  
 Of Lentulus, the aspiring soul of Cæsar,  
 And, above all, my wife.

CETHEGUS.

Shall Catiline  
 Be frightened at a woman's tears?—for shame,  
 Leave her to indulge her visionary fears:  
 I thought thou lovest her as a master should,  
 And madest her but the servile instrument  
 Of thy ambition.

CATILINE.

'Tis a dangerous one:  
 Rome and her child divide with me her love.  
 Curse on the name of Rome, that even beneath  
 The roof of Catiline those should dwell who love  
 Their country! But before the important hour  
 That must decide our fate, she shall be moved,  
 She and her son—be that thy care, Cethegus:  
 Our wives and children must not trouble us  
 In those distressful moments—but for Cæsar—

CETHEGUS.

What's to be done? if he refuse to join  
 Our cause, shall we proscribe him; shall the names  
 Of Cicero and of Cæsar be united?

CATILINE.

Let me consider—to cut Cæsar off—  
 That were a dreadful sacrifice; methinks  
 I cannot but admire him, and revere  
 In him the honor of the Roman name:  
 But where is Lentulus?

CETHEGUS.

O fear not him;  
 His pride we know will prompt him to believe  
 That thou with him wilt share the sovereign power.

## Catiline.

CATILINE.

Let him believe it still! the credulous fool!  
 Thou seest, Cethegus, with what subtlety  
 I'm forced to manage these imperious spirits;  
 Their rage, resentment, pride and jealousy:  
 Knowest thou he dares even to be Cæsar's rival?  
 To keep my friends within the pale of prudence  
 Will cost me much more trouble than the ruin  
 Of Cicero and Rome—to guide a party  
 Is of all tasks the hardest.—

CETHEGUS.

Lentulus

Is here, my lord.

## SCENE II.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS, LENTULUS-SURA.

SURA.

In spite of my remonstrance  
 You will rely on Cæsar, and confide  
 In him alone; Præneste's in his power,  
 And I must yield to him; but know I scorn it,  
 The blood of Scipio was not made to yield.

CATILINE.

I've joined with Cæsar, but depend not on him;  
 He may support our cause, or he may hurt it;  
 I use his name, but 'tis for your advantage.

SURA.

And what is there in Cæsar's name superior  
 To yours or mine? why must we meanly court  
 His favor? but because he's Pompey's rival

Rome makes a God of him.—I am thy friend;  
Sura and Catiline may defy them all,  
And without Cæsar make the world their own.

## CATILINE.

We may—thy conduct and approved valor  
Have ever been my best and surest hope;  
But Cæsar is beloved, respected, feared;  
The senate and the people all admire  
And court him; statesman, general, magistrate;  
In peace revered, and terrible in war;  
A thousand ways he charms the multitude;  
In short he will be necessary.—

## SURA.

Say

Destructive rather—if to-day he shines  
Our equal, by to-morrow he will prove  
Our rival, and ere long perhaps our master;  
Trust me, I know him well, and therefore think  
Our party has not a more dangerous foe:  
Perhaps his haughty soul may yield to thee,  
But play the tyrant o'er the rest; for me,  
I cannot, will not, brook it—I've devoted  
My honor and my fortunes to thy service;  
But I renounce my plighted faith, renounce  
Thee and thy cause, if Cæsar is preferred.

## CATILINE.

And so thou shalt—I'd sacrifice my life.  
Rather than e'er permit a haughty rival  
To soar above us—Cæsar is our tool,  
Our instrument; to-day I flatter him,  
To-morrow can bring down his pride, perhaps  
Do more—thou knowest our mutual happiness

And interest are my first and dearest care.

[*To Cethegus.*]

Away, and let Aurelia be prepared :

Go ; or her fond intruding love may ruin

Our deep laid schemes, and mar the great design :

Return some private way and meet me here,

I wait for Cæsar.

SURA.

Nothing's to be done,

I find, without him—but I'll wait the event.

CATILINE.

Farewell : remember I rely on thee

More than on Cæsar.—

CETHEGUS.

I shall execute

Your high command, and gather all our friends

Before the standard of great Catiline.

### SCENE III.

—

CATILINE, CÆSAR.

CATILINE.

Hail, godlike Cæsar, thou whom from the days

Of Sulla I have ranked amongst my best

And dearest friends, whose fortunes I foretold :

Born as thou art to be the first of Romans,

How suits it with thy pride to be the slave

Of a plebeian, who forever thwarts

And braves thee to thy face? I know thou hatest  
him ;

Thy piercing eye observes impatient Rome .

Contending for her freedom, will not Cæsar .

Assist his country to shake off her chains?  
 The cause is noble, and the fate of millions  
 Depends on this important crisis; thou  
 Wilt join us—lookest thou not with jealous eye  
 On Pompey still? dost thou not still abhor  
 The surly Cato? canst thou serve the gods  
 With half thy wonted zeal when the proud consul  
 Presides at the altar? wilt thy noble spirit  
 Bear these imperious rulers; soft Lucullus,  
 Sunk in the arms of luxury and sloth;  
 The greedy Crassus, grasping his large heaps  
 Of ill-got wealth, enough to purchase Rome  
 And all her venal sons? on every side  
 Or faction or corruption reigns; the world  
 Calls out on Cæsar; wilt thou hear her voice?  
 Wilt thou redress and save thy falling country?  
 Will Cæsar listen to his friend?

CÆSAR.

He will;  
 And if the senate do thee wrong, step forth  
 To plead thy cause; I never will betray thee;  
 But ask no more.

CATILINE.

Are these the utmost bounds  
 Of Cæsar's friendship, but to talk for him?

CÆSAR.

I've weighed the projects, and shall not oppose  
 them;  
 I may approve, but would not execute.

CATILINE.

I understand you, you are on that side  
 Which fortune favors, and would stand aloof

To mark the progress of our civil wars,  
And raise your fortunes on the common ruin.

CÆSAR.

No—I have nobler views; my hate of Cato,  
My jealousy of Pompey, the renown  
Of Cicero, conspire to make me wish  
I might surpass them all; fair glory calls,  
The banks of Seine, the Tagus, and the Rhine;  
I pant for honor, and for victory.

CATILINE.

If conquest is thy aim, begin with Rome;  
To-morrow we may reign the masters of her.

CÆSAR.

The enterprisè is great, perhaps too bold;  
But, to be open with thee, though 'tis worthy  
Of Catiline, it suits not Cæsar.

CATILINE.

How!

CÆSAR.

I do not choose to serve.

CATILINE.

To share with Cæsar  
Were no dishonor to the most ambitious.

CÆSAR.

But power supreme is not to be divided:  
I'll not be dragged at Catiline's chariot wheels  
To grace his triumph: as a friend I love thee;  
But know that friend shall never be—my master:  
Even Pompey shall not—Sulla, whom thy valor  
Hath nobly followed in the race of glory,  
Whose courage I admire, whose lawless rage

I ever shall abhor, enslaved proud Rome :  
 But he deserved the glorious prize, subdued  
 The Hellespont, and made Euphrates tremble :  
 Asia was conquered : Mithridates owned  
 His martial genius—but what noble deeds  
 Hast thou to boast ? what kings hast thou subdued ?  
 What seas has Catiline passed, what lands explored ?  
 Thou hast the seeds of greatness in thy nature ;  
 But to enslave thy country is above  
 Thy present powers, above the powers of Cæsar :  
 We have not strength, authority or name  
 For such an enterprise. Rome soon must fall :  
 But ere I will attempt to be her master,  
 I will extend her empire and her glory ;  
 And if I forge my country's chains, at least  
 Will cover them with laurels.

## CATILINE.

Mine, perhaps,  
 Is, after all, the shortest path to glory :  
 How did your boasted Sulla rise to empire ?  
 He had an army, so has Catiline ;  
 Raised by myself alone, and not, like his,  
 The gift of fortune ; he observed with care  
 The favorable hour, and well improved it :  
 I have done more ; have made the times and seasons  
 Subservient to me. Sulla was a king.  
 Wouldst thou be one ? wilt thou be Cicero's slave,  
 Or rule with Catiline ?

## CÆSAR.

Neither. To be free,  
 For I no longer will dissemble with you,  
 I esteem Cicero ; but love him not,  
 Nor fear him : though I love, I dread not thee.

Divide the senate if thou canst, pull down  
 The proud oppressors ; thou hast my consent ;  
 But hope no more, nor dare to think that Cæsar  
 Will ever be thy slave : I'll keep thy secret,  
 And be thy friend or foe, as thou deservest it.

## SCENE IV.

—

CATILINE.

If he supports us not, even let him fall  
 The victim of his folly : Sulla knew  
 And would have cut him off, but Sulla dared not :  
 I know he is my secret enemy,  
 As such I shall beware of him.

## SCENE V.

—

CATILINE, CETHEGUS, LENTULUS-SURA.

SURA.

What says  
 The mighty Cæsar ? is he friend or foe ?

CATILINE.

His barren friendship only offers me  
 A feeble aid ; but we can do without him :  
 Perhaps he may repent it ; and meantime  
 We've better pillars to support the fabric.  
 Behold, the heroes come.

## SCENE VI.

CATILINE, THE CONSPIRATORS.

CATILINE.

Hail, bold Statilius,  
Valiant Autronius, noble Piso, hail,  
Vargontes, and the rest of my brave friends,  
The first of men, the conquerors of kings,  
The great avengers of a world oppressed,  
This seat of empire soon shall be your own:  
The vanquished nations, which your valor gained,  
Were ravished from you by usurping tyrants;  
For the proud senate still your blood hath flowed;  
For them Tigranes, Mithridates fell;  
For them alone; and all your poor reward  
Was but to stand at distance, and adore  
Your haughty masters; but at length the hour  
Of vengeance is approaching: be prepared  
For no inglorious enterprise: I know  
Your souls would scorn a victory cheaply bought;  
But I will bring you noble conquests, full  
Of danger and of glory: seize, my friends,  
The golden opportunity: already  
I see your foes expiring at your feet.  
Rush on your prey, burn, plunder, and destroy;  
But, above all, let union guide your counsels:  
Even now Præneste falls: the brave remains  
Of Sulla's scattered forces march towards us:  
I shall command them, and Rome must be yours  
Petreius vanquished, I shall clear my way  
Even to the capitol: then you, my friends,  
Shall rise to empire, to a throne disgraced

By worthless Romans, and by you restored  
 To its true lustre: Curius and his band  
 Will open me the gates; but tell me, friend,  
 The gladiatorian cohorts, where are they?  
 Will those brave veterans join our cause?

LENTULUS-SURA.

They will:

Myself shall lead them in the dead of night,  
 And arm them in this secret place.

CATILINE.

Mount Cælius—

Is that secured?

STATILIUS.

I've bribed the sentinels,  
 And all is safe.

CATILINE.

You to mount Aventine  
 Repair, and soon as Mallius shall display  
 His colors, light your torches, spread destruction  
 On every side; let the proscribed perish.  
 Let Cicero—ye have sworn it—be my first  
 My darling victim: Cæsar too must die,  
 And Cato; these removed, the senate soon  
 Will tremble and obey: already fortune  
 Declares for us, and blinds them to their ruin:  
 Within their walls, and almost in their sight  
 We lay the snares of death, and mark them out  
 For sacrifice: remember not to take up arms  
 Before the appointed time: we must surprise  
 Ere we destroy: let Cicero and Rome  
 Perish together, and the lightning blast  
 Before the thunder's threatening voice alarms them.  
 Call not this deed a foul conspiracy;  
 'Tis a just war declared against the foes

Of Rome and all mankind ; reclaim your rights,  
The empire of the world, which base usurpers  
Had ravished from you.

[*To Cethegus and Lentulus-Sura.*

Haste, ye gallant leaders,  
Haste to the senate ; see your victims there :  
Hear your proud consul roar ; 'tis the last time  
That he shall triumph there—now, worthy Romans,  
Swear by this sword, that with the blood of tyrants  
Shall soon be stained, to perish, or to conquer,  
With Catiline.

MARTIAN.

By thee and by this sword  
We swear with thee to perish or to conquer.

ANOTHER CONSPIRATOR.

Perish the senate ! perish all who serve,  
All who defend them ! if there be amongst us  
A traitor, let him die.

CATILINE.

Away, this night  
Will finish all, and Rome shall be our own.

*End of the Second Act.*

### ACT III. SCENE I.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS, MARTIAN, SEPTIMUS.

CATILINE.

Are all things ready ? do our troops advance ?

MARTIAN.

Even so, my lord ; the faithful Mallius comes  
Prepared to circle these devoted walls ;

Our friends impatient brook not dull delay,  
 But urge each other to the bloody scene;  
 We wait but thy command; appoint the hour  
 When Rome must fall.

## CATILINE.

Soon as I quit the senate  
 Begin the sacrifice: let this great day  
 Be sacred to destruction: but meantime  
 Take special care the consul's busy friends  
 Do not observe our motions.

## CETHEGUS.

Were it not  
 Most prudent to destroy him in the senate?  
 He has alarmed the people, and foresees  
 Our every action.

## CATILINE.

Knows he the revolt  
 Of Mallius? knows he Catiline's deep designs?  
 Knows he an army is approaching for me?  
 Fear not, my friends, ours is no common cause,  
 'Tis fit the means should be proportioned to it:  
 When vulgar mortals, grovelling and obscure,  
 Form ill-digested schemes, and idle plans  
 Of future greatness, if one slender wheel  
 Is broke, it overthrows the whole machine:  
 But souls like ours, a firm and chosen band,  
 Plans deeply laid, the conquerors of kings,  
 The sons of Mars, united to support  
 And raise each other, these must be superior  
 To Cicero's art, or Cicero's vigilance:  
 We've naught to fear.

CETHEGUS.

But is Præneste ours  
In Cæsar's name?

CATILINE.

Ay ; that was my first stroke  
Of policy : the unsuspecting senate  
Will be deceived : I've whispered it abroad,  
That Nonnius hath conspired against the state,  
And half our credulous fools believe the tale.  
Ere he can clear his innocence, my army  
Will be in Rome, and all secured : away,  
Remove Aurelia : let no little cares  
Intrude to stop or hurt the great design.

## SCENE II.

AURELIA, CATILINE, CETHEGUS, ETC.

AURELIA.

*[A letter in her hand.]*

There, Catiline, read Aurelia's fate and thine,  
Thy crime and thy just sentence.

CATILINE.

What rash hand—  
Ha ! 'tis thy father's.

AURELIA.

Read it.

CATILINE.

*[Reads the letter.]*

“Death too long  
Hath spared me, and the child I loved too well  
Must finish my sad days : at length I suffer

For my own follies, and that hapless marriage  
Which I consented to; I know, the plots  
Of thy vile husband: Cæsar has betrayed us,  
And would have seized Præneste: thou partakest  
The treason: but repent, or perish with them."  
But how could Nonnius e'er discover that  
Which even the consul knows not?

CETHEGUS.

This may prove

Our ruin.

CATILINE.

[To Cethegus.

It may turn to our advantage.  
Aurelia, I must tell thee all: this day  
The world is armed in Catiline's defence:  
Say, in the hour of danger wilt thou serve  
A father or a husband?

AURELIA.

To be silent,  
And trouble thee no more, were the commands  
Which Catiline laid on his neglected wife,  
Spite of her fond entreaties, prayers, and tears:  
What hast thou further to desire?

CATILINE.

Away:

This moment, send that letter to the consul;  
I have my reasons; I would have him know,  
That Cæsar is as much to be suspected  
As I am: he's accused, and Catiline not  
So much as named: it is as I could wish.  
Take with thee our loved infant, and return not  
To bleeding Rome, till I am master there:  
Then thou shalt reign with me: our marriage yet

Is kept a secret: I'll not have it known,  
 'Till at the head of our victorious army  
 I shall proclaim it loud to Italy,  
 And to the world: then shall thy haughty father,  
 As our first subject, humbly bend before thee,  
 And sue to be forgiven: begone, Aurelia,  
 And leave me to my fate. I would not wish  
 Thou shouldst partake my dangers or my cares:  
 This night prepare to meet a conqueror.

AURELIA.

O Catiline, meanest thou to destroy thy country?  
 Is this the day appointed for destruction?

CATILINE.

To-day I purpose to chastise my foes;  
 All is prepared.

AURELIA.

Begin then with Aurelia;  
 For I had rather perish by thy hand,  
 Than live to share thy guilt.

CATILINE.

O let the tie  
 That binds us—

CETHEGUS.

Drive not thus to desperation  
 A husband and a friend, who trusts his all  
 To thee; thou art entered in the paths of glory,  
 And to retreat were fatal.

AURELIA.

Misery  
 And sure destruction were Aurelia's fate:

From that unhappy moment, when by thee  
 And thy vile counsels led, I gave my hand  
 To Catiline; despised, neglected, long;  
 Have I beheld, with eyes of detestation,  
 Your horrid plots: spite of myself you made me  
 A vile accomplice; but you know I loved,  
 And basely have imposed upon my weakness:  
 I blush to think how grossly you abused  
 A woman's fond credulity; but know  
 I'll no longer be guilty of a crime  
 Which I abhor: no longer serve a tyrant:  
 No, I renounce my vows, my faith to thee;  
 These hands shall rise against thee, thou vile traitor:  
 Henceforth I am thy foe. Strike, Catiline, strike;  
 Destroy me; carry into burning Rome,  
 For thy first victim, an expiring wife  
 Slain by thy hand; destroy the hapless infant,  
 Sad pledge of our detested nuptials: then,  
 Barbarian as thou art, complete thy guilt,  
 And in the blood of millions glut thy vengeance.

## CATILINE.

And is the gentle, kind Aurelia then  
 Amongst my foes? thus in the noblest war,  
 That e'er was waged for freedom and for empire,  
 When Pompey, Cæsar, Cato, are subdued,  
 My worst of enemies at last are found  
 In my own house; I am deserted there  
 For an unworthy father: threatened too.

## AURELIA.

I threaten guilt, and tremble for—a husband:  
 Even in my rage thou seest my tenderness;  
 Abuse it not, it is my only weakness:  
 But I would have thee fear—

## CATILINE.

That word, Aurelia,  
 Was never made for Catiline—but hear me:  
 I love thee; yet presume not on thy power,  
 Nor think I e'er will sacrifice my friends,  
 My noble cause, my interest, and my fame,  
 Glory and empire: no, it is enough  
 If I forgive and pity thee, but know—

## AURELIA.

The crown thy pride looks up to I despise:  
 I should behold it as the shameful mark  
 Of infamy: thou showest thy love for me  
 By pity and forgiveness; and I mine,  
 By holding back, if possible, thy hand  
 From guilt and error—therefore will I go—

## SCENE III.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS, LENTULUS-SURA, AURELIA, ETC.

## LENTULUS-SURA.

We are discovered, lost, undone; our friends  
 Betrayed, our plots unravelled all; Præneste  
 Not yielded to us; Nonnius is in Rome;  
 One of our spies is seized, and has confessed;  
 Nonnius in open senate will accuse  
 His son-in-law; he's gone to Cicero,  
 Who knows too much already.

## AURELIA.

Now behold  
 The fruits of guilt, and all thy great designs,  
 Thy boasted fortunes, empire, and the throne,  
 Which I despised: are thy eyes opened yet?

CATILINE.

*[After a long pause.]*

This is a blow I thought not of; but say,  
Wilt thou betray me?

AURELIA.

'Tis what thou deservest:  
My country claims, and heaven demands it of me;  
But I'll do more, I'll save both Rome and thee;  
And though I have not all thy rage, may boast  
Some of thy courage; love will make me brave:  
Long since I saw thy danger, Catiline:  
'Tis come, and now I will partake it with thee;  
I'll see my father, and obtain thy life,  
Or lose my own; I know he is forgiving,  
Gentle, and mild: I know he loves Aurelia,  
And will not urge too far a foe like thee,  
Desperate and brave; I'll talk to Cicero  
Who fears, and to the senate who adores thee;  
They will be glad to think thee innocent;  
Those whom we fear we readily forgive:  
But let sincerest penitence atone  
For thy past crimes: convicted guilt by that,  
And that alone, can hope for pardon; though  
I know it hurts thy pride, it must be done:  
At least I hope I shall procure thee time,  
Or to quit Rome, or to defend thyself:  
I'll not reproach thee; even when most guilty  
I loved, and in misfortune will not leave thee;  
But rather die to save thy life and glory.  
Farewell; let Catiline learn henceforth to trust me;  
I have deserved it.

CATILINE.

Sad alternative;  
It is most dreadful—but I yield to thee:

Remember that a husband's plea is stronger,  
 Much stronger than a father's: if I err,  
 The crime is thine.

AURELIA.

I'll take it all upon me;  
 Nay, even thy hatred, if it must be so;  
 I act for thee, and I'm satisfied.  
 Daughter, and wife, and Roman, every duty  
 Shall be performed; remember thine, and keep  
 Thy heart as pure and spotless as Aurelia's.

#### SCENE IV.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS, LENTULUS-SURA, FREEDMEN.

LENTULUS-SURA.

Is this the bold and fearless Catiline,  
 Or Nonnius' timid son; a woman's slave;  
 Appalled by phantoms? how thy great soul shrunk  
 Soon as Aurelia spoke!

CETHEGUS.

It cannot be;  
 Catiline will never change; his noble soul  
 By opposition grows but more resolved;  
 Præneste lost; the senate our accusers,  
 We may be conquerors still, and make them tremble  
 Whilst they condemn us; we have noble friends,  
 And will deserve them.

LENTULUS-SURA.

Ere the signal's given  
 We may be seized; thou knowest at dead of night,  
 Just as the senate part, we had agreed

To execute our purpose: what, my friends,  
Must be resolved on?

CETHEGUS.

*[To Catiline.]*

Catiline, thou art silent,  
And tremblest too.

CATILINE.

I tremble at the blow  
Which I shall strike; my fate demands it of me.

LENTULUS<sup>2</sup>SURA.

I've no dependence on Aurelia: all  
That we can hope for is to sell our lives  
As dearly as we can.

CATILINE.

I count the moments,  
And weigh each circumstance; Aurelia's tears  
And flattery will a while suspend our fate;  
Cicero on other business is detained,  
And all is safe; let me have arms and men,  
No matter who they are, or slaves or free,  
Assassins, robbers, if they will but fight,  
We'll have them: thou brave Septimus, and thou  
My dearest Martian, whose approved zeal  
I shall depend on, must observe Aurelia;  
And Nonnius; when they're parted, talk to him  
About his daughter; tell him of her danger,  
Draw him by artful means to the dark path  
That leads to the Tiber, seize the lucky moment,  
And hurl him—ha! who's this?

## SCENE V.

—  
CICERO, CATILINE, CETHEGUS, ETC.

CICERO.

Audacious traitor,  
Where art thou going? speak, Cethegus, who  
Assembled you?

CATILINE.

We'll tell thee in the senate.

CETHEGUS.

There we shall see if thou art authorized  
Thus to pursue us.

LENTULUS-SURA.

Or what right  
The son of Tullius has to question us.

CICERO.

At least I have a right to ask of these,  
Who brought them here: these are not like your-  
selves,  
Of senatorial rank; away with them.  
To prison.

CATILINE.

Darest thou thus on mere suspicion  
Confine a Roman; where's our liberty?

CICERO.

They are of thy council, that's sufficient cause;  
Tremble, thyself; lictors, obey.

• [*The lictors carry off Septimus and Martian.*]

CATILINE.

'Tis well:

Go on, proud consul, and abuse thy power,  
The time will come when thou shalt answer for it.

CICERO.

Instant I will examine them, hereafter  
Thus may I treat their masters; Nonnius knows  
All thy designs, Præneste's mine, and Rome  
Prepared for her defence; we soon shall see  
Which most prevails, or Catiline's artifice  
Or Cicero's vigilance: I do not preach  
Repentance and forgiveness to thee; no,  
I talk of punishment, thou mayest expect it:  
Come to the senate; follow if thou darest.

## SCENE VI.

CATILINE, CETHEGUS, LENTULUS-SURA.

CETHEGUS.

Must we at last then bend to Cicero,  
And own his hated power?

CATILINE,

To the last hour

I will defy him: still his curious soul  
Pries into all, but can discover nothing:  
Our friends will only lead him more astray,  
By holding out false lights that will misguide  
His wandering footsteps: in that fatal scroll  
Cæsar's accused; the senate is divided,  
And Manlius with his army's at the gate:  
You think that all is lost, but follow me,  
And mark the event; we shall be conquerors still.

LENTULUS-SURA.

Nonnius, I fear, will make it all too plain.

\* CATILINE.

But he and Cicero shall never meet;  
Depend on that; away, address the senate  
With confidence, and leave the rest to me:  
But whither am I going?

CETHEGUS.

Ha!

CATILINE.

Aurelia!

O gods! what shall I do with that proud heart?  
Remove her from me: if I see my wife,  
Bold as I am, I shall relapse: away.

*End of the Third Act.*

## ACT IV. SCENE I.

The Scene represents the place prepared for the reception of the Senate, with part of the gallery leading from Aurelia's palace to the temple of Tellus; a double row of benches in a circular form, with a raised seat for Cicero in the middle of it.

CETHEGUS, LENTULUS-SURA.

LENTULUS-SURA.

These reverend fathers are exceeding slow,  
I thought ere this they would have met; perhaps  
Uncertain yet, and trembling for their fate,  
They know not how to act.

CETHEGUS.

The oracle  
Of Rome, (for so he deems himself,) engaged  
In a continued round of toil, is busied  
In questioning his prisoner Septimus,  
Who will perplex him more; 'tis that retards  
Their meeting.

LENTULUS-SURA.

Would to heaven that we already  
Had taken up arms! I own I dread the senate.  
That reverence and attachment to the state,  
That sacred name of country, which awakes  
The sense of honor in each patriot breast;  
I like it not.

CETHEGUS.

'Tis nothing but a name,  
A word without a meaning; in the days  
Of our forefathers men respected it.  
Save a few stubborn stoics, none retain  
The memory of it; Cicero has raised  
Suspensions only; Cato's credit's lost;  
Cæsar is for us, what have we to fear?  
Defend yourselves, and Rome will be your own.

LENTULUS-SURA.

But what if Catiline, by an artful wife  
Seduced, at last should leave us; we have all  
Our weaknesses, and well thou knowest Aurelia  
Can lead him as she lists; he loves, esteems,  
And may be ruled by her.

CETHEGUS.

His love will yield  
To his ambition.

LENTULUS-SURA.

Thou beheldest him tremble.  
In short, my friend, when tender ties like these—

CETHEGUS.

[*Taking him aside.*

Cato approaches, let us listen to him.

[*Lentulus-Sura and Cethegus sit down at one corner of the Senate-house.*

## SCENE II.

CATO *enters the Senate with* LUCULLUS, CRASSUS,  
FAVONIUS, CLODIUS, MURENA, CÆSAR,  
CATULLUS, MARCELLUS, ETC.

CATO.

[*Observing the two conspirators.*

Lucullus, mark those dangerous men; behold them  
In secret conference; see, the blush of guilt  
Glow on their cheeks at sight of me; already  
Treason with bold and shameless front stalks forth  
Amongst us, and the senate still dissemble  
Their knowledge of it; Sulla's demon sure  
Hath breathed its baneful influence o'er the souls  
Of our blind rulers.

CETHEGUS.

Cato, thy rash censure  
May cost thee dear.

CATO.

[*Sits down, the other senators take their places.*

The gods of Rome sometimes  
Permit a traitor's crimes to pass unpunished;

They crushed our ancestors beneath the yoke  
 Of cruel tyrants; shall imperial Rome,  
 The mistress of the world, again submit  
 To slavery? no: the guilt she spared in Sulla,  
 In Catiline and Cethegus she may punish.

CÆSAR.

Cato, what meanest thou? thy outrageous virtue  
 Can serve no purpose but to make thee foes.

CATO.

[*To Cæsar.*

Cæsar is still the factious leader's friend,  
 The patron of corruption, and preserves  
 A soul unmoved whate'er his country suffers.

CÆSAR.

When danger calls, my country will not say  
 I am too calm, therefore complain not, Cato.

CATO.

I must complain, must weep the fate of Rome,  
 Deserted and betrayed: now where is Pompey?  
 Would he were here to save us!

CÆSAR.

Why not call

On Cæsar?

CATO.

Pompey loves his country.

CÆSAR.

That

Would I dispute with him.

## SCENE III.

CICERO.

*[Entering with precipitation, the senators rise.]*

Why waste ye thus in idle altercation,  
 The precious time when Rome is on the brink  
 Of ruin, whilst on you she calls for succor,  
 When the dread signal is already given?  
 Already is this land of freedom stained  
 With senatorial blood.

LUCULLUS.

O heavens!

CATO.

What sayest thou?

CICERO.

The equestrian cohort, formed by my command,  
 Were posted where they best might quell the foe;  
 Nonnius, my friend, that generous old man,  
 Who, amidst the crimes of this degenerate age,  
 Still uncorrupted, from Præneste came,  
 To guide us through this labyrinth of treason,  
 And lead our wandering steps to peace and safety,  
 When lo! two bloody ruffians rushed upon him,  
 And plunged their daggers in his faithful heart:  
 He fell: confusion followed, and wild uproar  
 Amongst the people: we pursued the traitors,  
 Spite of the multitude that thronged around them,  
 And night's dark shade to favor their escape:  
 One I have seized, and bound in chains; already  
 He has confessed that Catiline set him on,

## SCENE IV.

—  
CATILINE.

*[Standing up between Cato and Cæsar, Cethegus next to Cæsar, the Senate seated.]*

Yes, reverend fathers, know, the deed was mine;  
I slew your foes; 'twas Catiline who revenged  
His injured country, and destroyed a traitor.

CICERO.

Barbarian, thou?

CATO.

And darest thou boast of it?

CÆSAR.

Remember, fathers, we've no right to punish  
Before we hear him.

CETHEGUS.

Speak, defend thyself,  
And triumph o'er the malice of thy foes.

CICERO.

Romans, where are we?

CATILINE.

Amidst evil days  
And evil men, the horrors of foul discord  
And civil war; amidst determined foes,  
Whom I alone must conquer; Sulla's spirit  
Inspires once more the haughty sons of Rome:  
With grief I see expiring liberty,  
With grief behold this reverend senate torn

By discord, horrors spread on every side,  
 And Cicero pouring in the senate's ear  
 Unjust suspicions: Cicero talks for Rome,  
 But I avenge her: I have shown her cause  
 Is dearer far to me than e'er it was  
 To your proud consul. Nonnius was the soul,  
 The leader of this foul conspiracy:  
 It was a dangerous crisis; I stepped forth  
 And saved you all: thus by a soldier fell  
 The daring Spurius; thus was Gracchus slain  
 By the brave Scipio: who shall punish me  
 For acting like a Roman? which of you  
 Will dare accuse me?

CICERO.

I, who know thy crime;  
 I, who can prove it—bring those freedmen here,  
 Let them be heard. Fathers, behold the man  
 Who has destroyed a senator of Rome:  
 Will ye permit him thus to speak, to boast  
 Of his foul deed, and call his crime a virtue?

CATILINE.

And will ye, Romans, let this vile accuser  
 Thus persecute your fellow-citizens,  
 Your best, your noblest friends? but know from me  
 What Cicero could not tell you, and improve  
 The important secret to your best advantage:  
 In his own palace, know, this impious man,  
 This vile betrayer, Nonnius, had concealed  
 Arms, torches, all the instruments of death  
 Designed for our destruction: if Rome lives,  
 She lives by me, and to this arm you owe  
 Your safety: send and seize them, and then say  
 What's due to Catiline from his thankless country.

CICERO.

*[To the lictors.*

Go you to the palace, bring with you the daughter  
Of Nonnius—ha! thou tremblest.

CATILINE.

I? 'tis false:

Know, I despise this mean, this last resource  
Of disappointed malice—fathers, say,  
Have I not cleared myself? are you convinced!

CICERO.

I am, that thou art guilty: can ye think  
That good old man was ever capable  
Of such detested fraud? it was thy art,  
Thy cunning, miscreant, to conceal from me  
Thy treachery; therefore didst thou choose the  
palace  
Of Nonnius to secrete thy instruments  
Of vengeance; there thou wouldst have hid thy  
guilt:  
Perhaps thou hast seduced his wretched daughter:  
Alas! his family is not the first  
Where thou hast carried sorrows, crimes, and death;  
And now thou wouldst destroy thy country too;  
Yet boldly darest, instead of punishment,  
To call for approbation and reward.  
O thou abandoned traitor, murderer,  
Reviler, hypocrite; such titles suit  
Thy boasted services. O you, who once  
Stood forth the happy patrons of mankind,  
The sovereign judges of the world, at length  
Will you submit, to let a tyrant hold  
Dominion o'er you, will you shut your eyes  
And rush into the precipice? awake,

Revenge yourselves, or you partake his guilt :  
 This day or Rome or Catiline must perish :  
 Lose not a moment therefore, but determine :

CÆSAR.

Judgments too quickly made are oft unjust :  
 This is the cause of Rome, and therefore merits  
 Our strict attention : when our equals lag  
 Beneath the stroke of censure, we should act  
 With caution, and in them respect ourselves :  
 Too much severity suits none but tyrants.

CATO.

Too much indulgence here suits none but traitors.  
 What ! balance 'twixt a murderer and Rome !  
 Is it not Cicero speaks, and shall we doubt ?

CÆSAR.

These are suspicions only ; give us proof :  
 The arms once found, and Nonnius' guilt confirmed,  
 Catiline deserves our praise.

*[Turning to Catiline.]*

Thou knowest I'll keep  
 My word with thee in all things.

CICERO.

O my country !  
 O Rome ! O gods ! thus shall a hero plead  
 A traitor's cause ; art thou the senate's friend,  
 And canst be Catiline's ? henceforth Rome has  
 naught  
 To fear but from her own ungrateful sons.

CLODIUS.

Rome is in safety ; Cæsar loves his country,  
 And we should think with him.

CICERO.

It well becomes  
 A man like Clodius to unite with those  
 Who plan destruction, and delight in ruin :  
 But whereso'er I turn my eyes, they meet  
 With bold conspirators, or citizens  
 Cold and inactive in the cause of Rome :  
 Catiline, without or fear or danger, drives  
 The storm upon us ; he proscribes the senate ;  
 Already reaps in thought the bloody harvest ;  
 Marks out his victims, threatens, and commands ;  
 And when I point out the dread consequence,  
 Then Cæsar talks of senatorial rights,  
 And Clodius joins him : Cicero must be dumb :  
 Catiline has murdered Nonnius ; he who takes  
 Another's life should lose his own ; no rights,  
 No laws should plead for him : the first great care  
 Is to defend our country ; but, alas !  
 That country is no more.

## SCENE V.

THE SENATE, AURELIA.

AURELIA.

Ye great avengers  
 Of innocence oppressed, my only hope,  
 And thou, O consul, virtue's kind protector,  
 To thee my murdered father calls for vengeance :  
 O let me wash thy feet with tears—assist,  
     *[She falls at Cicero's feet; he raises her up.]*  
 Avenge me : tell me, if thou canst, who slew  
 My father.

CICERO.

There he stands.

*[Pointing to Catiline.]*

AURELIA.

O gods!

CICERO.

'Twas he  
Who did the deed, and boasts of it.

AURELIA.

Good heaven!

Can it be Catiline? did I hear aright?  
O bloody monster, didst thou murder him?

*[The Lictors support her.]*

CATILINE.

*[Turning to Cethegus, and fainting in his arms.]*  
This is a dreadful sight—support me—this  
Is punishment enough.

CETHEGUS.

Why droops my friend?  
Aurelia calls for vengeance: but if Catiline  
Has served his country, what has he to fear?

CATILINE.

*[Turning to Aurelia.]*

Aurelia, 'tis too true—my cruel duty—  
My country—think me not so base; Aurelia  
Thou knowest my love, my tenderness—but ties  
Of a more sacred nature, ties—

## SCENE VI.

THE SENATE, AURELIA, CHIEF OF THE LICTORS.

CHIEF OF THE LICTORS.

My lord,  
We've seized these arms.

CICERO.

At Nonnius?

CHIEF LICTOR.

His house  
Was the receptacle of all: our prisoners  
Accuse him as the chief conspirator.

AURELIA.

Malice and calumny! the lying slaves  
First take his life, and then destroy his fame:  
The wretch whose murderous hand—

CICERO.

Go on—

AURELIA.

For what have ye reserved me?

Just gods,

CICERO.

Speak: let truth  
In open day appear: but at the sight  
Of him you tremble; your dejected eyes,  
And sudden silence, show how much you dread  
The tyrant.

AURELIA.

I have been to blame; Aurelia  
Alone is guilty.

CATILINE.

No; thou art not.

AURELIA.

Hence,

Detested monster, I abhor thy pity,  
Disclaim all converse, all relation with thee:  
Alas! too late, I see my guilt; too late  
Confess my crimes; yés, reverend fathers; yes,  
Aurelia knew the traitor, and concealed him:  
I asked for aid, but merit punishment;  
My weakness may be fatal; Rome's in danger;  
The world this day may be subverted: thou,  
Thou traitor, ledst me to the dark abyss  
Of infamy; thou madest my tenderness  
Subservient to thy wicked purposes;  
Curse on the guilty hour that gave my heart  
To Catiline; to thee I have been faithful,  
But false to heaven, and to my country; false  
To my unhappy father: I betrayed,  
And I destroyed him.

*[Whilst Aurelia is speaking, Cicero seems deeply affected.]*

Ye avenging gods,  
Ye sacred walls, and thou much injured spirit  
Of my dear father, Romans, senators,  
Behold my husband, your inveterate foe.

*[Turning to Catiline.]*

Now, miscreant, mark, and imitate Aurelia.

*[Stabs herself.]*

CATILINE.

O wretched Catiline!

CATO.

O dreadful day!

CICERO.

[*Rising.*]

'Tis worthy of this guilty age.

AURELIA.

O consul!

There was a letter sent you—murder threatens  
On every side—take heed—alas!—I die.

[*Aurelia is carried off.*]

CICERO.

Let her have needful succor: Aufidus,  
Search for that paper—still are ye in doubt;  
Still will ye suffer this vile murderer  
To lord it o'er the senate, shall the deaths  
Of Nonnius and Aurelia pass unpunished?

CATILINE.

The guilt was thine: thy rancor and fell hatred  
Of Catiline urged him to the deed; ambition  
Inspired us both; thy happier fortune soared  
Above me, thou hast been the cause of all:  
I hate thee, Cicero, hate Rome itself  
For loving thee: long have I sought thy ruin,  
And I will seek it still: the wrongs I suffer  
Shall be revenged on thee; thy blood shall pay  
For mine; inconstant Rome, that now adores thee,  
Shall one day see with joy the mangled limbs  
Of her proud consul scattered o'er the senate:  
Remember Catiline has foretold thy fate;  
I hasten to accomplish it: farewell.

CICERO.

Guards, seize the traitor.

CETHEGUS.

Let them if they dare.

LENTULUS-SURA.

The senate is divided: we defy thee.

CATILINE.

The war then is declared: friends, follow me,  
 We must to battle: the uncertain senate  
 Will think on't, and determine at their leisure.

*[He goes out with some senators of his party.]*

CICERO.

Now, ye illustrious conquerors of the world,  
 Which will ye choose, or slavery or empire:  
 Where is the freedom, where the majesty  
 Of ancient Rome? where is her lustre now?  
 'Tis faded all: awake, my slumbering country;  
 Lucullus, Cæsar, and Murena, listen;  
 O listen to the voice of Rome; she calls  
 Aloud for help, demands some gallant leader  
 To fight for her; equality of rank  
 Must be reserved for happier times, the Gauls  
 Are here, Camillus must be found, we want  
 A chief, a warrior, a dictator; now  
 Name the most worthy, and I'll follow him.

## SCENE VII.

—

THE SENATE, CHIEF LICTOR.

CHIEF LICTOR.

My lord, I found this letter to Aurelia  
 From Nonnius: all our cares for her were vain.

CICERO.

*[Reading the letter.*

More dangers threatening! "Cæsar, who betrays us,  
Would seize Præneste," ha!

*[Turning to Cæsar.*

Art thou too, Cæsar,  
A vile accomplice? this completes our woes;  
And wilt thou bend beneath a tyrant?—read it.

CÆSAR.

I have: I am a Roman, ruin comes  
Upon us, danger is on every side;  
'Tis well: I must be gone: you have my answer.

CATO.

It was a doubtful one: most certainly  
He is their friend.

CICERO.

Away: let us defend  
The state against them all: O Senators!  
If Nonnius' death, if poor Aurelia's pangs,  
If bleeding Rome, if a subverted world  
Have power to stir up your resentment, rise,  
Fly to the capitol, defend your gods,  
Defend your country, punish Catiline.  
I'll not reproach you; though 'twas most unkind,  
To spurn at Cicero, and embrace a villain.  
But to avoid a tyrant, name your chief:  
You, who are friends to virtue, separate  
From traitors.

*[The Senators separate themselves from Cethegus  
and Lentulus-Sura.*

Now let us unite, my friends,  
Never let quarrels, jealousies, and strife,

Divide us; 'twas by them that Sulla triumphed.  
 For me, wherever danger calls, I go  
 Intrepid and inflexible: O gods!  
 Strengthen this arm, and animate this voice:  
 O grant me still to save ungrateful Rome!

*End of the Fourth Act.*

ACT V. SCENE I.

CATO, with part of the senate in arms.

CLODIUS.

[To Cato.

What! whilst the senate armed for its own safety  
 From busy faction's power can scarce preserve  
 These sacred walls; thus shall a proud plebeian  
 Insult us? shall a people, born to freedom,  
 Be treated like dependent slaves? by him,  
 Shall Rome's best friends, the conquerors of the  
 world,

Be put in chains? because he is a consul,  
 Shall he condemn his masters? Catiline's self  
 Were less despotic, and less dangerous:  
 With you I feel my country's wretchedness,  
 And weep her fate; but cannot, will not, see  
 The senate thus disgraced.

CATO.

Disgrace attends

On those alone who merit it—but know,  
 The blood of nobles, your patrician friends,  
 Debased by guilt, should rank below the meanest;  
 Those who betrayed us are condemned to death:

Cicero condemned them; he who saved your country,  
 The glorious consul, whom ye dare accuse,  
 Because he loved you but too well: yet fear  
 And tremble all, ungrateful as ye are  
 To join with traitors, for an equal fate  
 Shall soon o'erwhelm you; Catiline's at our gates.  
 What Cæsar hath determined yet we know not;  
 Whether he means to save, or to destroy  
 His country: Cicero bravely acts alone,  
 And hazards all for Rome, whilst you despise  
 Your best of friends, and treat him as a foe.

## CLODIUS.

Cato has more severity than courage,  
 And ever rigorous, hates not guilt so much  
 As he loves punishment: reproach us not,  
 Nor act the censor when we want a friend.  
 Whilst the destructive flames of war surround,  
 'Tis not a consul's edict can defend us.  
 What can your lictor and his fasces do,  
 Against a band of fierce conspirators?  
 You talk of dangers, and of Cæsar's power:  
 Who does not know that Cæsar is the friend  
 Of Catiline? you have pointed out the ills  
 That threaten Rome; it were a nobler task  
 To show us how we may remove them.

## CATO.

Yes;

And so I will: I would advise the senate  
 To be aware of Cæsar, and of—thee;  
 Nay, more—but see our father comes.

## SCENE II.

—

CICERO, CATO, *part of the senate.*

CATO.

[*To Cicero.*  
Behold

Great Cicero, the sons of thankless Rome :  
Approach and save us ; envy's self shall soon  
Fall at thy feet, in humble admiration  
Of such transcendent virtue.

CICERO.

Friends and Romans,  
The love of glory is my ruling passion,  
Fame is the fair reward of human toil,  
And I would wish to merit it from you :  
I have done little yet, perhaps hereafter  
I may do more to serve my country : Rome  
Was full of open and of secret foes ;  
Patricians, and plebeians, citizens  
And soldiers, all in wild confusion, seemed  
To thirst for blood : I saw the gathering storm  
That threatened universal ruin ; saw  
The bold conspirators tumultuous rise,  
And bear down all before them : at their head  
Were Sura and Cethegus ; them I seized,  
And gave to justice ; but the Hydra faction  
Hath many heads which still successive rise,  
And mock my labors : Catiline boldly pushed  
To the Quirinal gate ; by gallant deeds,  
Almost incredible, he kept the field,  
And forced a passage to his army ; Rome  
Beheld him with amazement ; Antony

In vain opposing Sulla's hardy veterans,  
 Was baffled and subdued; Petreius strove  
 To succor him, but with unequal force  
 And fruitless valor: thus on every side,  
 Surrounded by calamities, great Rome,  
 The mistress of the world, is on the brink  
 Of ruin; Cicero trembles for her fate.

CRASSUS.

What part hath Cæsar taken?

CICERO.

He hath behaved  
 As Cæsar must, with most undaunted courage,  
 Yet not as Rome could wish a zealous friend  
 Would act in her defence. I saw him quell  
 The rebel foe; yet after that, stir up  
 Seditious spirits, and by every art  
 Of smooth insinuation, work himself  
 Into the people's hearts. Amidst this scene  
 Of blood, methought a secret joy o'erspread  
 His glowing cheek; whilst his all-soothing voice  
 Courted applause, inviting Rome to be  
 His slave hereafter.

CATO.

I was ever fearful  
 Of Cæsar's power; he is not to be trusted.

### SCENE III.

THE SENATE, CÆSAR.

CÆSAR.

Well: am I still suspected in the senate?

Is Cato's stubborn virtue still my foe?  
Of what does he accuse me?

CATO.

As a friend  
To Catiline, the sworn enemy of Rome;  
You have protected him, and leagued with those  
It had become you better to chastise.

CÆSAR.

I would not stain my laurels with the blood  
Of such vile miscreants: Cæsar fights with none  
But warriors.

CATO,

What are these conspirators?

CÆSAR.

A dastard crowd, contemptible and vile:  
They fled like slaves before me; but the soldiers  
Of Sulla are a formidable band,  
And boast an able chief; from them indeed  
Rome hath some cause to fear; Petreius sinks  
Beneath his wounds, and Catiline marches onward;  
Our soldiers are alarmed: what says our consul?  
And what has he resolved?

CICERO.

I'll tell thee, Cæsar:  
Grant, heaven, we may succeed!—thou hast deserved  
Suspicion, but I'll give thee the fair means  
To clear thy honor, and avenge thy country.  
I know thee well, thy virtues and thy frailty;  
Know what thou canst, and what thou darest not  
do;  
Know Cæsar would command, but not betray,  
A noble friend, and a most dangerous foe:

Whilst I condemn I cannot but esteem thee.  
 Away: remember that the eyes of Rome,  
 And of the world, are on thee: go, support  
 Petreius, save the empire, and deserve  
 The love of Cato: we have men, but want  
 A general to conduct them; Cæsar best  
 Can lead them, and to him alone we trust  
 The safety and the glory of mankind.

CÆSAR.

Cicero on Cæsar safely may depend;  
 Farewell: I go to conquer or to die.

[*Exit.*

CATO.

You've touched him in the tenderest part; ambition  
 Will urge him on.

CICERO.

Great souls must ever thus  
 Be treated: I have bound him to the state  
 By this firm confidence; I know his valor  
 Will now support us: the ambitious still  
 Should be distinguished from the traitor; I  
 Shall make him virtuous if he is not so  
 Already. Courage, as directed, forms  
 The mighty hero, or the mighty villain;  
 And he who is renowned for guilt alone,  
 Had glory fired his breast, to him had been  
 The incense poured, to him the temple raised  
 For his exalted merit: Catiline's self,  
 By me conducted, had like Scipio shone:  
 Though many a Sulla is in Cæsar hid,  
 Yet doubt I not but Rome shall find in him  
 Her best support.

[*Turning to the chief of the Lictors, who enters  
 armed.*

Well: these conspirators,  
What have they done?

CHIEF LICTOR.

My lord, they met the fate  
They merited, but other foes rise up,  
Sprung from their blood; like Ætna's flames, that  
burst

From the parched entrails of the burning mount:  
Another Hannibal, but far more dreadful,  
Because amongst the guilty sons of Rome  
He finds his traitorous friends, is at our gates:  
A hundred voices roar for Catiline,  
Condemn your laws, and curse your tardy senate;  
Demand their ancient rights, and cry aloud  
For vengeance on the consul.

CLODIUS.

Well indeed  
They may, while Cicero tramples on the laws,  
And spurns his equals thus; perhaps the senate——

CICERO.

Clodius, no more; restrain thy envious tongue,  
Nor rashly blame the guiltless; my short power  
Will soon be wrested from me; whilst it lasts  
It shall not be controlled; you will have time  
Enough to vex and persecute hereafter;  
But whilst the state's in danger, Cicero claims  
The tribute of respect: I know too well  
This fickle world to hope for constancy  
And candor from it; foul ingratitude  
Is all that I expect; on false surmises  
Great Scipio was accused; he thanked the gods,  
And quitted Rome: I too will pay my vows  
To gracious heaven, but will not leave you; no;

My days are all devoted to my country,  
And all shall be expended in her service.

CATO.

Suppose I were to show myself in Rome,  
Perhaps my presence might disperse the crowd,  
And be a check on Cæsar, whom I own  
I much suspect: if fortune frowns upon us——

CICERO.

We cannot do without you in the senate;  
I've given my orders; Cæsar's in the field;  
Thy great example may be useful here,  
And Rome's expiring glory be restored  
By Cato's virtue—but behold he comes,  
And crowned with victory.

[*Cæsar enters; Cicero embraces him.*

Most noble Cæsar,  
Hast thou preserved the state?—

CÆSAR.

I hope so: now  
The consul will believe me—brave Petreius  
Has gained immortal glory: here we fought,  
Beneath this sacred rampart, in the sight  
Of our domestic gods that fired each soul  
With nobler rage: Metellus, and Muræna,  
With the brave Scipios showed in Rome's defence  
The same exalted courage that subdued  
Asia and Carthage; they have merited  
Most nobly of their country: touching Cæsar  
Let others speak: the desperate remains  
Of Sulla's army seemed to brave their fate,  
And in the agonies of death breathed forth  
Their curses on us: midst the general slaughter,  
The fiery Catiline long undaunted stood,

Fought through a host of circling foes, till spent  
With ceaseless toil, and covered o'er with wounds,  
Bravely he fell: I must admire the soldier,  
Though I detest the rebel: once I loved him,  
I own it; but let Cicero judge, if ever  
To friendship Cæsar sacrificed his honor.

CICERO.

Cæsar is all that Cicero could desire,  
All that he wished, and all he hoped to find him:  
Go on, brave youth, preserve thy noble spirit,  
And be thy country's friend; may heaven protect  
And guard thee: never may thy generous soul  
Be stained with vice, nor false ambition urge  
Thy spotless youth to quit the paths of virtue!

*End of the Fifth and Last Act.*



PANDORA

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

PROMETHEUS, a Son of Heaven and Earth, a  
Demi-God.

PANDORA.

JUPITER.

MERCURY.

NEMESIS.

NYMPHS.

TITANS.

CELESTIAL DEITIES.

INFERNAL DEITIES.

# PANDORA.

## ACT I.

The scene represents a fine country, with mountains at a distance.

### SCENE I.

PROMETHEUS, CHORUS OF NYMPHS, PANDORA.

*[At the farther end of the stage, lying down in an alcove.]*

PROMETHEUS.

In vain, Pandora, do I call on thee,  
My lovely work; alas! thou hearest me not,  
All stranger as thou art to thy own charms,  
And to Prometheus' love: the heart I formed  
Is still insensible; thy eyes are void  
Of motion; still the ruthless power of Jove  
Denies thee life, and drives me to despair:  
Whilst nature breathes around thee, and the birds  
In tender notes express their passion, thou  
Art still inanimate; death holds thee still  
Beneath his cruel empire.

### SCENE II.

PROMETHEUS, THE TITANS, ENCELADUS, TYPHON,  
ETC.

ENCELADUS AND TYPHON.

Child of Earth

And Heaven, thy cries have raised the forest;  
speak;  
Who amongst the gods hath wronged Prometheus?

PROMETHEUS.

*[Pointing to Pandora.*

Jove

Is jealous of my work divine; he fears  
 That altars will be raised to my Pandora;  
 He cannot bear to see the earth adorned  
 With such a peerless object; he denies  
 To grant her life, and makes my woes eternal.

TYPHON.

That proud usurper Jove did ne'er create  
 Our nobler souls; life, and its sacred flame,  
 Come not from him.

ENCELADUS.

*[Pointing to his brother Typhon.*

We are the sons of Night

And Tartarus:

To thee, eternal night, we pray,  
 Thou wert long before the day;  
 Let then to Janarus Olympus yield.

TYPHON.

Let the unrelenting Jove  
 Join the jealous gods above;  
 Life and all its blessings flow  
 From hell, and from the gods below.

PROMETHEUS AND THE TWO TITANS.

Come from the centre, gods of night profound,  
 And animate her beauty; let your power  
 Assist our bold emprise!

PROMETHEUS.

Your voice is heard,  
 The day looks pale, and the astonished earth

Shakes from its deep foundations: Erebus  
Appears before us.

[*The scene changing represents chaos; all the gods  
of hell come upon the stage.*]

CHORUS OF INFERNAL DEITIES.

Light is hateful to our eyes,  
Jove and heaven we despise;  
The guilty race, as yet unborn, must go  
With us to hell's profoundest depths below.

NEMESIS.

The waves of Lethe, and the flames of hell,  
Shall ravage all: speak, whom must Janarus  
In its dark womb embrace?

PROMETHEUS.

I love the earth,  
And would not hurt it: to that beauteous object  
[*Pointing to Pandora*]  
Have I given birth; but Jove denies it power  
To breathe, to think, to love, and to be happy.

THE THREE PARCÆ.

All our glory, and our joy,  
Is to hurt, and to destroy;  
Heaven alone can give it breath,  
We can nought bestow but death.

PROMETHEUS.

Away then, ye destroyers, ye are not  
The deities Prometheus shall adore;  
Hence to your gloomy seats, ye hateful powers,  
And leave the world in peace.

NEMESIS.

Tremble thou, for thou shalt prove  
 Soon the fatal power of love:  
 We will unchain the fiends of war,  
 And death's destructive gates unbar.

*[The infernal deities disappear, and the country resumes its verdure: the nymphs of the woods range themselves on each side of the stage.]*

PROMETHEUS.

*[To the Titans.]*

Why would ye call forth from their dark abyss  
 The foes of nature, to obscure the light  
 Of these fair regions?  
 From hell Pandora never shall receive  
 That flame divine which only heaven should  
 give.

ENCELADUS.

Since, good Prometheus, 'tis thy dear delight  
 To scatter blessings o'er this new abode,  
 Thou best deservest to be its master: haste  
 To yon blest regions, and snatch thence the flame  
 Celestial, form a soul, and be thyself  
 The great Creator.

PROMETHEUS.

Love's in heaven; he reigns  
 O'er all the gods: I'll throw his darts around,  
 And light up his fierce fires: he is my god,  
 And will assist Prometheus.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

Fly to the immortal realms above,  
 And penetrate the throne of Jove;

The world to thee shall altars raise,  
And millions celebrate thy praise.

*End of the First Act.*

## ACT II.

The scene represents the same country; Pandora inanimate reclining in the alcove; a flaming chariot descends from heaven.

PROMETHEUS, PANDORA, NYMPHS, TITANS, ETC.

A DRYAD.

Ye woodland nymphs, rise from your fair abode,  
And sing the praises of the demi-god;  
Who returns from above  
In the chariot of love?

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

Ye verdant lawns, and opening flowers,  
Ye springs which lavish nature's powers;  
Ye hills that bear the impending sky,  
Put on your fairest forms to meet his eye.

PROMETHEUS.

*[Descending from the chariot, with a torch in his hand.*

Ravished from heaven I bring to happier earth  
Love's sacred flame, more brilliant than the light  
Of glittering day, and to Jove's boasted thunder  
Superior.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

Go, thou enlivening, animating soul,  
Through nature's every work, pervade the  
whole;  
To earth, to water, and to air impart,

Thy vivid power, and breathe o'er every  
heart.

PROMETHEUS.

*[Coming near to Pandora.*

And may this precious flame inspire thy frame  
With life and motion! earth, assist my purpose!  
Rise, beauteous object, love commands thee; haste,  
Obey his voice; arise, and bless Prometheus!

*[Pandora rises, and comes forward.*

CHORUS.

She breathes, she lives; O love, how great thy  
power!

PANDORA.

Whence, and what am I? to what gracious powers  
Owe I my life and being?

*[A symphony is heard at a distance.*

Hark! my ears

Are ravished with enchanting sounds; my eyes  
With beauteous objects filled on every side:  
What wonders hath my kind creator spread  
Around me! O where is he? I have thought  
And reason to enlighten me: O earth,  
Thou art not my mother; some benignant god  
Produced me: yes, I feel him in my heart.

*[She sits down by the side of a fountain.*

What do I see! myself, in this fair fountain,  
That doth reflect the face of heaven? the more  
I see this image, sure the more I ought  
To thank the gods who made me.

NYMPHS AND TITANS.

*[Dancing round her.*

Fair Pandora,

Daughter of heaven, let thy charms inspire  
An equal flame, and fan the mutual fire.

PANDORA.

What lovely object that way draws my eyes?

[*To Prometheus.*]

Of all I see in these delightful mansions,  
Nought pleases like thyself; 'twas thou alone  
Who gavest me life, and I will live for thee.

PROMETHEUS.

Before those lovely eyes could see  
Their author, they enchanted me;  
Before that tongue could speak, Prometheus loved  
thee.

PANDORA.

Thou lovest me then, dear author of my life,  
And my heart owns its master; for to thee  
It flies with transport: have I said too much,  
Or not enough?

PROMETHEUS.

O thou canst never say  
Too much; thou speakest the language of pure love  
And nature: thus may lovers always speak!

DUET.

God of my heart, eternal power,  
Great love, enliven every hour;  
Thy reign begins, and may thy transports prove  
The reign of pleasure is the reign of love!

PROMETHEUS.

But hark! the thunder rolls; thick clouds of dark-  
ness,  
As envious of the earth's new happiness,  
Disturb our joys: what horrors throng around me!  
Hark! the earth shakes, and angry lightnings pierce

The vault of heaven: what power thus moves the  
world

From its foundations?

[*A car descends, on which are seated Mercury, Discord, Nemesis, etc.*]

MERCURY.

Some rash hand hath stolen  
The sacred fire from heaven: to expiate  
The dire offence, Pandora, thou must go  
Before the high tribunal of the gods.

PROMETHEUS.

O cruel tyrant!

PANDORA.

Dread commands!

MERCURY.

Obey:

Thou must to heaven.

PANDORA.

I was in heaven already,  
When I beheld the object of my love.

PROMETHEUS.

Have pity, cruel gods!

PROMETHEUS AND PANDORA.

Barbarians, stay.

MERCURY.

Haste, offenders, haste away,  
Jove commands, you must obey:  
Bear her, ye winds, to heaven's eternal mansions.

[*The car mounts and disappears.*]

PROMETHEUS.

The cruel tyrants, jealous of my bliss,

Have torn her from me ; she was the lovely work  
 Of my own hands : I have done more than Jove  
 Could ever do : Pandora's charming eyes,  
 Soon as they opened, told me that she loved :  
 Thou jealous god ! but thou shalt feel my wrath,  
 And I will brave thy power : for know, usurper,  
     Less dreadful far will all thy thunders prove,  
     Than bold Prometheus fired by hopeless love.

*End of the Second Act.*

ACT III.

The scene represents the palace of Jupiter.

JUPITER, MERCURY.

JUPITER.

O Mercury, I've seen this lovely object,  
 Earth's fair production ; heaven is in her eye,  
 The graces dwell around her, and my heart  
 Is sacrificed a victim to her charms.

MERCURY.

And she shall answer to thy love.

JUPITER.

O no :

Terror is mine, and power ; I reign supreme  
 O'er earth, and hell, and heaven ; but love alone  
 Can govern hearts : malicious, cruel fate,  
 When it divided this fair universe,  
 Bestowed the better part on mighty love.

MERCURY.

What fearest thou ? fair Pandora scarce hath seen  
 The light of day ; and thinkest thou that she loves ?

## Pandora.

JUPITER.

Love is a passion learned with ease; and what  
 Cannot Pandora do? she is a woman,  
 And handsome: but I will retire a moment,  
 Enchant her eyes, and captivate her heart:  
 Ye heavens! in vain, alas! ye shine, for nought  
 Have you so fair, so beauteous as Pandora.

[*He retires.*]

PANDORA.

Scarce have these eyes beheld the light of day,  
 Scarce have they looked on him I loved, when lo!  
 'Tis all snatched from me; death, they say, will come  
 And take me soon: O I have felt him sure  
 Already: is not death the sudden loss  
 Of those we love? O give me back, ye gods,  
 To earth, to that delightful grove where first  
 I saw my kind creator, when at once  
 I breathed and loved: O envied happiness!  
 [*The gods, with their several attributes, come upon  
 the stage.*]

CHORUS OF GODS.

Let heaven rejoice  
 At the glad voice  
 Of heaven's eternal king.

NEPTUNE.

Let the sea's bosom—

PLUTO.

And the depths of hell—

CHORUS OF GODS.

To distant worlds his endless praises tell.  
 Let heaven rejoice, etc.

PANDORA.

How all conspires to threaten and alarm me!  
 O how I hate and fear this dazzling splendor!  
 Another's merit how can I approve,  
 Or bear the praise of aught but him I love?

THE THREE GRACES.

Love's fair daughter, here remain,  
 Thou in right of him shalt reign;  
 Heaven thy chosen seat shall be,  
 Earth in vain shall wish for thee.

PANDORA.

All affrights me,  
 Nought delights me,  
 Alas! a desert had more charms for me.  
 Hence, ye idle visions; cease,  
 Discordant sounds,

*[A Symphony is heard.]*

And give me peace.

*[Jupiter comes forth out of a cloud.]*

JUPITER.

Thou art the best and fairest charm of nature,  
 Well worthy of eternity: from earth  
 Sprang thy weak body; but thy purer soul  
 Partakes of heaven's unalterable fire,  
 And thou wert born for gods alone: with Jove  
 Taste then the sweets of immortality.

PANDORA.

I scorn thy gift, and rather would be nothing,  
 From whence I sprang; thy immortality,  
 Without the lovely object I adore,  
 Is but eternal punishment.

## Pandora.

JUPITER.

Fair creature,  
 Thou knowest not I am master of the thunder:  
 Canst thou in heaven look back to earth?

PANDORA.

That earth  
 Is my abode; there first I learned to love.

JUPITER.

'Twas but the shadow of it, in a world  
 Unworthy of that noble flame, which here  
 Alone can burn unquenchable.

PANDORA.

Great Jove,  
 Content with glory and with splendor, leave  
 To earthly lovers happiness and joy:  
 Thou art a god; O hear my humble prayer!  
 A gracious god should make his creatures happy.

JUPITER.

Thou shalt be happy, and in thee I hope  
 For bliss supreme: ye powerful pleasures, you  
 Who dwell around me, now exert your charms,  
 Deceive her lovely eyes, and win her heart.

*[The Pleasures dance around her and sing.]*

CHORUS OF PLEASURES.

Thou with us shalt reign and love,  
 Thou alone art worthy Jove.

A SINGLE VOICE.

Nought has earth but shadows vain,  
 Of pleasures followed close by pain;  
 Soon her winged transports fly,  
 Soon her roses fade and die.

CHORUS.

Thou with us shalt reign and love,  
Thou alone art worthy Jove.

SINGLE VOICE.

Here the brisk and sportive hours  
Shall cull thee ever-blooming flowers;  
Time has no wings, he cannot fly,  
And love is joined to immortality.

CHORUS.

Thou with us shalt reign and love,  
Thou alone art worthy Jove.

PANDORA.

Ye tender pleasures, ye increase my flame,  
And ye increase my pain: if happiness  
Is yours to give, O bear it to my love.

JUPITER.

Is this the sad effect of all my care,  
To make a rival happy?

[*Enter Mercury.*]

MERCURY.

Assume thy lightnings, Jove, and blast thy foe;  
Prometheus is in arms, the Titans rage,  
And threaten heaven; mountain on mountain piled,  
They scale the skies; already they approach.

JUPITER.

Jove has the power to punish; let them come.

PANDORA.

And wilt thou punish? thou, who art the cause  
Of all his miseries; thou art a jealous tyrant:  
Go on, and love me; I shall hate thee more;  
Be that thy punishment.

Pandora.

JUPITER.

I must away :

Rive them, ye thunder-bolts.

PANDORA.

Have mercy, Jove!

JUPITER.

*[To Mercury.*

Conduct Pandora to a place of safety :

The happy world was wrapped in peace profound,  
A beauty comes, and nought is seen but ruin.*[He goes out.*

PANDORA.

*[Alone.*

O fatal charms! would I had ne'er been born!

Beauty and love, and every gift divine,

But make me wretched: if, all-powerful Love,

Thou didst create me, now relieve my sorrows;

Dry up my tears, bid war and slaughter cease,

And give to heaven and earth eternal peace.

*End of the Third Act.*

## ACT IV.

—

The scene represents the Titans armed, mountains at a distance, with giants throwing them on each other.

ENCELADUS.

Fear not, Prometheus, nature feels thy wrongs,

And joins with us in just revenge: behold

These pointed rocks, and shaggy mountains; soon

The jealous tyrants all shall sink beneath them.

PROMETHEUS.

Now, earth, defend thyself, and combat heaven:

Trumpets and drums, now shall ye first be heard:

March, Titans, follow me: the seat of gods  
Is your reward; be fair Pandora mine.

*[They march to the sound of trumpets.]*

CHORUS OF TITANS.

Arm, ye valiant Titans, arm,  
Spread around the dread alarm:  
Let proud immortals tremble on their thrones.

PROMETHEUS.

Their thunder answers to our trumpets' voice.  
*[Thunder is heard; a car descends, bearing the gods  
towards the mountains: Pandora is seated near  
Jupiter; Prometheus speaks.]*

Jove gives the dreadful signal; haste, begin  
The battle. *[The giants rise towards heaven.]*

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

Earth, and hell, and heaven confounded,  
All with terrors are surrounded;  
Cease, ye gods, and Titans, cease  
Your cruel wars, and give us peace.

TITANS.

Yield, cruel tyrants.

GODS.

Rebels, fly.

TITANS.

Yield, heaven, to earth.

GODS.

Die, rebels, die.

PANDORA.

O heaven! O earth! ye Titans, and ye gods,  
O cease your rage, all perish for Pandora:  
I have made the world unhappy.

TITANS.

Draw

Your arrows now.

GODS.

Strike, thunders.

TITANS.

Hurl down heaven.

GODS.

Destroy the earth.

BOTH.

Yield, cruel tyrants—rebels fly—

Yield, earth, to heaven—die, rebels, die.

*[A dead silence for a time; a bright cloud descends;  
Destiny appears, seated in the middle of it.]*

DESTINY.

Cease, hostile powers, attend to me,  
And hear the will of Destiny.

*[Silence ensues.]*

PROMETHEUS.

Unalterable being, power supreme,  
Speak thy irrevocable doom; attend,  
Ye tyrants, and obey.

CHORUS.

Speak, the gods must yield to thee;  
Speak, immortal Destiny.

DESTINY.

*[In the middle of the gods, who throng round him.]*  
Hear me, ye gods; another world this day  
Brings forth: meantime let every gift adorn

Pandora; and you, Titans, who 'gainst heaven  
Have raised rebellious war, receive your doom,  
Beneath these mountains sunk forever groan.

*[The rocks fall upon them; the chariot of the gods  
descends to earth; Pandora is restored to Prometheus.]*

JUPITER.

O fate, my empire yields to thee,  
Jove submits to destiny:  
Thou art obeyed; but from this hour let earth  
And heaven be disunited: Nemesis,  
Come forth.

*[Nemesis advances from the bottom of the stage,  
and Jupiter proceeds.]*

Nemesis, thy aid impart,  
Pierce the cruel beauty's heart;  
My vengeance let Pandora know,  
In the gifts that I bestow:  
Let heaven and earth henceforth be disunited.

*End of the Fourth Act.*

## ACT V.

—  
The scene represents a grove, with the ruins of rocks  
scattered about it.

PROMETHEUS, PANDORA.

PANDORA.

*[Holding a box in her hand.]*

And wilt thou leave me then? art thou subdued,  
Or art thou conqueror?

## Pandora.

PROMETHEUS.

Victory is mine :  
 If yet thou lovest me, love and destiny  
 Speak for Prometheus.

PANDORA.

Wilt thou leave me then?

PROMETHEUS.

The Titans are subdued : lament their fate :  
 I must assist them ; let us teach mankind  
 To succor the unhappy.

PANDORA.

Stay a moment :  
 Behold thy victory : let us open this,  
 It was the gift of Jove.

PROMETHEUS.

What wouldst thou do?  
 A rival's gift is dangerous ; 'tis some snare  
 The gods have laid.

PANDORA.

Thou canst not think it.

PROMETHEUS.

Hear  
 What I request of thee, and stay at least  
 Till I return.

PANDORA.

Thou biddest, and I obey :  
 I swear by love still to believe Prometheus.

PROMETHEUS.

Wilt thou then promise?

PANDORA.

By thyself I swear :  
All are obedient where they love.

PROMETHEUS.

Enough :  
I'm satisfied : and now, ye woodland nymphs,  
Begin your songs ; sing earth restored to bliss ;  
Let all be gay, for all was made for her.

FIRST NYMPH.

Come, fair Pandora, come and prove  
An age of gold, of innocence, and love ;  
And, like thy parent Nature, be immortal.

SECOND NYMPH.

No longer now shall earth affrighted mourn,  
By cruel war her tender bosom torn :  
Pleasures now on pleasures flow,  
Happiness succeeds to woe :  
The flowers their fragrant odors yield ;  
Who would wither the fair field ?  
The blest creation teems with mirth and joy,  
And nature's work what tyrant would destroy ?

THE CHORUS.

[Repeats.  
Come, fair Pandora, come and prove  
An age of gold, etc.

FIRST NYMPH.

See ! to Pandora Mercury appears,  
And ratifies great Nature's kind decree.  
[The nymphs retire : Pandora advances with Nem-  
esis, under the figure of Mercury.]

## Pandora.

NEMESIS.

Already I have told thee, base Prometheus  
Is jealous of thee, and exerts his power  
Like a harsh tyrant.

PANDORA.

O he is my lord,  
My king, my god, my lover, and my husband.

NEMESIS.

Why then forbid thee to behold the gift  
Of generous heaven?

PANDORA.

His fearful love's alarmed,  
And I would wish to have no will but his.

NEMESIS.

He asks too much, Pandora, nor hath done  
What thou deservest: he might have given thee  
                  beauties  
Which now thou hast not.

PANDORA.

He hath formed my heart  
Tender and kind; he charms and he adores me;  
What could he more?

NEMESIS.

Thy charms will perish.

PANDORA.

Ha!

Thou makest me tremble.

NEMESIS.

This mysterious box  
Will make thy charms immortal; thou wilt be









Forever beautiful, and forever happy:  
 Thy husband shall be subject to thy power,  
 And thou shalt reign unrivalled in his love.

PANDORA.

He is my only lord, and I would wish  
 To be immortal, but for my Prometheus.

NEMESIS.

Fain would I open thy fair eyes, and bless thee  
 With every good; would make thee please forever.

PANDORA.

But dost thou not abuse my innocence?  
 And canst thou be so cruel?

NEMESIS.

Who would hurt

Such beauty?

PANDORA.

I should die with grief, if e'er  
 I disoblige the sovereign of my heart.

NEMESIS.

O in the name of Nature, in the name  
 Of thy dear husband, listen to my voice!

PANDORA.

That name has conquered, and I will believe thee.  
*[She opens the box; darkness is spread over the  
 stage, and a voice heard from below.]*

Ha! what thick cloud thus o'er my senses spreads  
 Its fatal darkness? thou deceitful god!  
 O I am guilty, and I suffer for it.

NEMESIS.

I must away: Jove is revenged, and now  
I will return to hell.

[*Nemesis vanishes: Pandora faints away on the  
grass.*]

PROMETHEUS.

[*Advancing from the farther end of the stage.*

O fatal absence! dreadful change! what star  
Of evil influence thus deforms the face  
Of Nature? where's my dear Pandora? why  
Answers she not to my complaining voice?  
O my Pandora! but behold, from hell  
Let loose, the monsters rise, and rush upon us.

[*Furies and demons running on the stage.*

FURIES.

The time is come when we shall reign:  
Fear and grief, remorse and pain,  
From this great decisive hour,  
O'er the world shall spread their power;  
Death shall come, a bitter draught,  
By the Furies hither brought.

PROMETHEUS.

That cruel guest shall powers infernal bring?  
And must the earth lose her eternal spring?  
To time, and dire disease, and horrid vice,  
Shall mortals fall a helpless sacrifice?  
The nymphs lament our fate: Pandora, hear  
And answer to my griefs! she comes, but seems  
Insensible.

PANDORA.

I am not worthy of thee:  
I have destroyed mankind, deceived my husband,

And am alone the guilty cause of all :  
Strike: I deserve it.

PROMETHEUS.

Can I punish thee?

PANDORA.

Strike, and deprive me of that wretched life  
Thou didst bestow.

CHORUS OF NYMPHS.

Tenderest lover, dry her tears,  
She is full of lover's fears;  
She is woman, therefore frail,  
Let her beauty then prevail.

PROMETHEUS.

Hast thou then, spite of all thy solemn vows,  
Opened the fatal box?

PANDORA.

Some cruel god  
Betrayed me: fatal curiosity!  
The work was thine: O every evil sprung  
From that accursed gift: undone Pandora!

LOVE.

*[Descending from heaven.]*

Love still remains, and every good is thine:

*[Scene changes, and represents the palace of love.]*

*[Love proceeds.]*

For thee will I resist the power of fate;  
I gave to mortals being, and they ne'er  
Shall be unhappy whilst they worship me.

PANDORA.

Soul of my soul, thou comforter divine,  
 O punish Jove; inspire his vengeful heart  
 With double passion for the blessed Pandora.

PROMETHEUS and PANDORA.

Heaven shall pierce our hearts in vain  
 With every grief, and every pain;  
 With thee no pains torment, no pleasures cloy;  
 With thee to suffer is but to enjoy.

LOVE.

Lovely hope, on mortals wait;  
 Come, and gild their wretched state;  
 All thy flattering joys impart.  
 Haste, and live in every heart;  
 Howe'er deceitful thou mayest be,  
 Thou canst grant felicity,  
 And make them happy in futurity.

PANDORA.

Fate would make us wretched here,  
 But hope shall dry up every tear;  
 In sorrow he shall give us rest,  
 And make us even in anguish blest:  
 Love shall preserve us from the paths of vice,  
 And strew his flowers around the precipice.

*End of the Fifth and Last Act.*











