

**HADRIAN**

Libretto by DANIEL MacIVOR

**ACT I - TIBUR**

*The private chambers of the Emperor Hadrian in Tibur, his sanctuary outside Rome.  
It is the dusk of the last night of Hadrian's life.*

**SCENE 1**

*Centre on the stage is an Egyptian-style sarcophagus in which Antinous' body lies. It has  
been a year in preparation and tomorrow the body is to be entombed.*

*Hadrian lies prostrate on the ground near the sarcophagus.*

*Hadrian's entourage has gathered nearby: his doctor HERMOGENES, old and with bad  
vision; his food taster FABIOUS, grown swollen and stiff with gout; LAVIA, the former  
handmaiden to his deceased wife, now far from being a maiden. Also present are Three  
Senators, one Nervous, one Sycophantic, one Superior.*

LAVIA:  
Hadrian

HERMOGENES:  
Hero.

FABIOUS:  
Prince.

HERMOGENES:  
He will not live the night I fear.

FABIOUS:  
Dreams the dance of the dying man.

LAVIA:  
Drunk with spirits.

HERMOGENES:

Sleeps no more.

FABIUS:

A hero's heart -

ALL:

- broken.

Broken.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

LAVIA:

Not this grief for his wife

my mistress Sabina.

How cruel he was to her,

now to her memory.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

FABIUS:

Here lies Antinous,

months passed since his death.

His body awaiting the tomb.

Some voices say he drowned.

Some he had been killed.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

THREE SENATORS:

Some voices say he drowned himself,

a sacrifice.

Some say something other.

Hadrian's simmering grief

now boils again.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

HERMOGENES:

His cup is over full.

Spirits bringing sorrow.

Sorrow bringing spirits,

both passed away and put away.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

LAVIA:

But no thought for his Rome?

His empire is flailing.

The Jews gain strength

each moment of his weakness.

HERMOGENES:

My medicine no cure.

His heart's heavy beating

heavy beating

a pulse of grief.

LAVIA:

He only has himself to blame.

The fool.

FABIUS and HERMOGENES:

(to LAVIA)

Peace girl.

LAVIA:

No peace,

Even here in Tibur.

FABIUS and HERMOGENES:

(to LAVIA)

Peace girl.

LAVIA:

Tibur

once glorious sanctuary,  
now eternal tomb  
for Hadrian's heart.  
Foolish heart.  
Foolish heart.  
Hadrian.

THREE SENATORS:  
Some voices say he drowned himself,  
a sacrifice.  
Some say something other.

HADRIAN:  
Antinous.  
Antinous.  
Antinous!

LAVIA:  
Hadrian.

HERMOGENES:  
Hero.

FABIUS:  
Prince.

HERMOGENES:  
He will not live the night I fear.

FABIUS:  
Dreams the dance of the dying man.

LAVIA:  
Drunk with spirits.

HERMOGENES:  
Sleeps no more.

FABIUS:

A hero's heart.

LAVIA, HERMOGENES and FABIUS:

Broken.

Broken.

Broken.

Broken.

Broken.

He will not live the night I fear.

THREE SENATORS:

The Empire holds its breath  
awaiting orders.

When will our Emperor rise?

ALL:

He will not live the night I fear.

*All exit except Hadrian.*

## SCENE 2

*Alone, Hadrian lies prone, sobbing.*

*From a great, deep distance something stirs, we hear it first, then Hadrian hears it.*

*The voice of the spirit of Plotina, wife of the emperor Trajan, and Hadrian's great supporter.*

PLOTINA: (O.S.)

*(Today is a day of anger*

*Today is a day of wrath)*

Hodie dies irae dies irae tuba mirum.

TRAJAN: (O.S.)

*(All things sound wiser when said in Latin)*

Omina dicta fortiora si dicta Latina.

HADRIAN:

Trajan are you with me?

Are you with me here?

Emperor  
who taught me all.  
And Plotina, Empress  
and ferocious guardian.  
Your voices given body  
would my madness disprove.  
Are you with me?  
Are you with me?

TRAJAN: (O.S.)  
I have never been far.  
And in death never closer.

HADRIAN:  
And Plotina too?

PLOTINA: (O.S.)  
Death is always near.

HADRIAN:  
Are you with me?  
Are you with me here?  
Was his sacrifice true?  
Was there treachery?  
Why do I die this death of longing?  
And why such weight from so much loss?  
Answer. Answer. Speak

*The voices are gone.*

HADRIAN:  
My physician!  
My physician at once!

### **SCENE 3**

*HERMOGENES enters, he is nervous.*

HADRIAN:

Am I your Emperor?

HERMOGENES:

Emperor eternal  
and I your slave.

HADRIAN:

Then do as I command.

HERMOGENES:

As I can I will.

HADRIAN:

Kill me.

HERMOGENES:

Kind Emperor -

HADRIAN:

Kill me.

HERMOGENES

I cannot.

HADRIAN:

You will kill me.

HERMOGENES:

Sooner would I kill myself.

HADRIAN:

You will end me.

You will kill me.

You will end me.

***Turbo, Hadrian's old friend and head of his military, enters with guards.***

TURBO:

Stop with this. Stop!

*(to HERMOGENES)*

You were not to pass.

HADRIAN:

*(to Hermogenes)*

Kill me.

End this.

HERMOGENES:

I will refuse my Emperor none but one command.

TURBO:

*(to Hadrian)*

Lift yourself Emperor.

HADRIAN:

Why? To what?

TURBO:

To me, your friend.

Quintis Marcius Turbo.

You armies I command,

I knew you a soldier.

HADRIAN:

And how now do you know me?

TURBO:

Emperor I know not these tears.

HADRIAN:

Then you know me not.

TURBO:

Lift yourself Emperor.

***Hadrian leans against the base of Antinous' sarcophagus.***

HADRIAN:

Turbo, I am dead.



TURBO:

Rise.

HADRIAN:

Kill me.

TURBO:

Your wife, Sabina,  
when one month marked her passing,  
you did not mourn so deeply.

HADRIAN:

My wife was wife alone.  
Not my heart.

***HERMOGENES picks up the dagger from the floor, he raises it to his ear.***

HERMOGENES:

My ears I would sever  
before hearing more.

HADRIAN:

*(to Hermogenes)*  
Bring the dagger here,  
this space was once my heart.

***HERMOGENES holds the dagger to his own heart.***

HERMOGENES:

Your request I cannot honour Prince  
for I am dead before.

***HERMOGENES drives the dagger into his own heart.  
He dies.***

TURBO:

*(to the guards)*  
Take the body out!

*The guards take Hermogenes out. Turbo follows. Hadrian is alone. He moves along the ground and runs his hands through the blood of Hermogenes pooled on the floor. He gazes at his bloody hands.*

**SCENE 4**

*Plotina appears, suddenly and close.*

PLOTINA:  
Hodie dies, dies irae.  
Arise.

*Trajan enters gently.*

HADRIAN:  
Plotina and Trajan  
Like Mother and Father to me.  
Trajan and Plotina,  
have I finally died?

PLOTINA  
Hadrian, rise  
These women's tears infect your reason.

TRAJAN:  
Soft Plotina.

PLOTINA:  
The Empire cries to you.  
Hadrian,  
raise yourself up.  
Arise.

TRAJAN:  
Soft Plotina  
Soft Plotina

PLOTINA:  
Arise!

HADRIAN:  
Soft Plotina soft.

HADRIAN:  
Do I see you here  
or am I lost?  
Has fate graced me  
with death?

TRAJAN:  
We are with you  
Not you with us.  
We take a body  
to save your own.

PLOTINA:  
*(spoken to Trajan)*  
You're looking well Trajan  
so long dead.

TRAJAN:  
*(spoken to PLOTINA)*  
And you Plotina too.  
The Underworld suits you.

HADRIAN:  
Antinous.  
Bring back my Antinous.  
Was the sacrifice true?

TRAJAN:  
We take your questions  
but no demands.

HADRIAN:  
Why do I die this death of longing?

TRAJAN:  
A heart is a heart.

HADRIAN:

Why such weight from so much loss?

TRAJAN:

These questions are what make you heavy.

*(indicating sarcophagus)*

Here is the body.

Now like any mortal let him die.

HADRIAN:

I will not let him die.

PLOTINA:

This is your madness.

HADRIAN:

Was there treachery?

PLOTINA:

Will you let him go?

TRAJAN:

*(to Plotina)*

Tell him Plotina.

PLOTINA:

*(to Trajan)*

If he let him die.

HADRIAN:

I will not let him die.

He may not live again.

But I will not let him die.

PLOTINA:

This is your madness.

And has always been so.

Turn your attention to the enemies near,

The Jews. The Nazarenes

who call for one God

and the end of our Empire.

***Hadrian grows more and more overwhelmed.***

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

PLOTINA:

Madness still!

TRAJAN:

Lost his heart.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

PLOTINA:

He was but a foolish boy.

TRAJAN:

*(to Plotina)*

Yet not a boy.

PLOTINA:

Yes a man.

More foolish Hadrian.

And reckless.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

TRAJAN:

*(to Plotina)*

Hadrian has lost his heart.

PLOTINA:

Rome was not built on a heart.

**SCENE 5**

***Turbo enters. Plotina and Trajan vanish. (They do not exit but they are no longer visible to Hadrian.)***

***Turbo goes to Hadrian's desk and places a document there.***

TURBO:

Hadrian rise.

Turn your thoughts to Rome.

Affairs of state await your order.

This document to be signed.

Untethered the Jews are emboldened.

Our demands gain no respect!

New cults arise.

Fanatics abound.

The Nazarenes.

Their Jesus the anointed One.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

There was treachery!

TURBO:

A sacrifice.

HADRIAN:

Tell me truth!

TURBO:

His body is here.

HADRIAN:

There was treachery!

TURBO:

There was death.

He gave his life,

a sacrifice, this simple boy.

HADRIAN:

You saw him

not as I did.  
The sun in the sky.

TURBO:  
Hadrian rise.  
What fills your eyes but the ground?  
Trajan himself would weep.

HADRIAN:  
Trajan? Have you seen him too?

TURBO:  
After twenty summers dead?  
Hadrian no.  
Lift yourself Hadrian.  
Here is the sky.

HADRIAN:  
Empty.  
Empty.

TURBO:  
No, there wakes the brightest star.  
Sirius.  
Sirius.  
Sirius.

***Hadrian lifts his eyes to the sky. He is filled with an inspiration.***

HADRIAN:  
The brightest star:  
Sirius!  
Antinous!

TURBO:  
*(spoken to Hadrian)*  
If I could heal you I would.

***Hadrian rises to his feet.***

HADRIAN:

I've found him a palace  
I've found him a palace  
Assemble the senators.

TURBO:

Emperor, they await your command.

*Turbo exits.*

SCENE 6

*Plotina and Trajan appear.*

*Turbo quickly returns with the Three Senators.*

TURBO:

The senators present themselves!

THE SENATORS:

Hadrian live long!

HADRIAN:

I am not dead yet.

THE SENATORS:

We have concerns we might address.  
The Jews and Nazarenes.  
Both need swift response.

HADRIAN:

Our one concern  
is thus:  
The temple I built  
to hold Antinous  
will live only  
in mortal time.  
Though his wondrous gaze  
makes warm  
cold marble  
and his name



on the lips  
of the dying and young,  
without eternal home  
where is such a god  
to live?

THE SENATORS:  
A god?

HADRIAN:  
I will feed your liver  
alive to swine!

THE SENATORS:  
Such a god!

HADRIAN:  
The star Sirius  
will now be  
Antinous.

PLOTINA AND TURBO:  
No.

HADRIAN:  
The sky shall be his dominion.

PLOTINA AND TURBO:  
No.

PLOTINA:  
The Empire crushed the Republic  
but a whispering war now  
brings breath to the vanquished,  
the barbarians call  
for one God.

TURBO:  
Those Jews once tamed  
now defy noble Rome

with their one God.

PLOTINA and TURBO:  
Turn your thoughts to Rome.

HADRIAN  
I command  
He will be the star Sirius  
Sirius will be called Antinous.

*The Senators confer briefly.*

THE SENATORS:  
Three is not a number  
for formal decree  
allow us tomorrow  
for assembly.

HADRIAN:  
I allow you tonight.

THE SENATORS:  
Later tonight!  
Hadrian live long!

*Senators depart.*  
*Turbo indicates the document on the desk.*

TURBO:  
Emperor? Friend?  
Your signature here?

HADRIAN:  
Leave me alone.

*Turbo departs.*

SCENE 7

*Plotina approaches Hadrian gently.*

PLOTINA:

You may see me cold  
A heart of ice  
But first I am a woman  
Daughter of Venus  
Sister of Eros  
First I loved my husband  
Then you like son and more  
Know I know  
Know I know of love.  
The story tells the story.  
The past will show its light  
Know I know  
Know I know of truth.

A heart may lose its sight  
behind a veil  
But truth will lift grief's mantle  
if you be willing.  
Rise up with courage  
See history's future  
The past will show its light  
The story tells the story.  
Know I know  
Know I know of grief.

So starless was the night  
that Egypt brought  
The moon was blinkered blind  
and dark dark acts were hid.  
Hidden.  
Antinous sought you  
Know I know  
Know I know of blood.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!  
Was murder upon him  
that darkest night?  
A blinker'd moon.

A starless sky.

PLOTINA:

Hadrian.

Upon your desk lies a paper decree  
to abolish Judea.

And with it those who will have one god,  
saving us and our pagan Universe.

It requires but your seal and signing.

Hadrian.

***Trajan appears.***

TRAJAN:

Soft Plotina soft.

Soft Plotina soft.

HADRIAN:

Antinous!

A blinker'd moon.

A starless sky.

PLOTINA:

*(to Trajan)*

Husband, remember me.

*(to Hadrian)*

Hadrian!

Your signature. For what price?

HADRIAN:

An answer to my question.

PLOTINA:

Your Antinous will live again on one  
condition thus:

You will then crush to dust  
these enemies of our Empire.

None will have one God.

And then the throne I gave you

here on earth  
will become  
will become eternal  
and then the throne I gave you  
and then the throne I gave you here  
will become  
will become  
eternal

TRAJAN:  
*(to Plotina)*  
How will Antinous live?  
Not here, today?

PLOTINA:  
*(to Trajan)*  
We will live the past again  
to bring the truth to light.

TRAJAN:  
For one night.

PLOTINA:  
No, two.

HADRIAN:  
My life for one hour to see him live again.

PLOTINA:  
And then the signature.  
The order given.

HADRIAN:  
Yes.

PLOTINA:  
A curse upon one God and  
all who would have him.  
His shadow casts out  
our eternal light.

Gods not of love and war  
and sea like we.  
The mortal-made God  
is God made mortal.  
These fools.  
These fools.  
Mortal man without us  
will face eternal night.  
Hadrian rise.  
Bring fury down  
upon them. These fools!

***Trajan raises his hand, time stops, Hadrian is frozen.***

TRAJAN:  
And what is gained with these two nights?

PLOTINA:  
First joy and then misery  
The best then worst.

TRAJAN:  
Your purpose with the worst?

PLOTINA:  
Truth will lift him up.

TRAJAN:  
Or finish him.

PLOTINA:  
Then finish him.

***Trajan drops his hand, time resumes.  
As Trajan exits the stage transforms.***

**ACT II - GREECE**

SCENE 1

*We are in Greece, seven years ago, the night Hadrian met Antinous.*

*This is the Spring celebration of Robigalia for Robigus, a god of planting.*

*Before our eyes Hadrian is revitalized, finely dressed, standing tall and healthy.*

*Hadrian is slightly disoriented, not sure if this is real or fantasy, past or present.*

*Plotina watches from nearby; as is the conceit, only Hadrian can see her.*

HADRIAN:

I know this night.

This fulsome moon,

ten thousand stars.

I know this night.

PLOTINA:

In Greece. Seven summers past,

now present.

HADRIAN:

My life returned

my breath my heart,

this vigor and valour.

I know this night.

I know this night.

This fulsome moon,

ten thousand stars.

I know this night.

PLOTINA:

Hadrian this night enjoy

For the next will be trial.

The truth

when shown

is seen eternal.

HADRIAN:

I know this night.

This fulsome moon,

ten thousand stars.  
I know this night.

PLOTINA:  
Hadrian this night enjoy  
For the next will be trial.

CHORUS (offstage):  
Brave Hadrian Brave.  
Hunter Soldier Prince.  
Brave Hadrian Brave.  
Hunter Soldier Prince.

*Sabina, Hadrian's wife enters.*

HADRIAN:  
My wife.

PLOTINA:  
Hadrian this night enjoy.

SABINA:  
Wife? Wife.  
Been years since you've called me such.  
Have you a fever?

HADRIAN:  
I might.  
Do you know this night?

SABINA:  
I do.

HADRIAN:  
So you know this night again?

PLOTINA:  
*(to Hadrian)*  
You have no skill for acting child.



SABINA:

Again and again.

Tonight is Robigalia.

A feast for farmers and dogs.

Save for the fleas and manure

a night the same,

a night as any other.

*Further celebrants enter, including the Chorus, Dincarchus a most senator who will host the celebration, Turbo along with Hadrian's entourage including Lavia, , Hermogenes, Fabius and the Three Senators all looking considerably younger and healthier.*

CHORUS:

Brave Hadrian Brave.

Hunter Soldier Prince.

HADRIAN:

I know this night.

This fulsome moon,

ten thousand stars.

I know this night.

Let me lose myself within.

CHORUS:

Brave Hadrian Brave.

Hunter Soldier Prince.

Most beloved of the gods.

*The entourage has gathered around Hadrian.*

## SCENE 2

*Hadrian steps forward and the crowd goes silent, awaiting his address.*

*Hadrian unsure of how to proceed looks to Plotina.*

PLOTINA:

Look not to me brave Prince,

Address your people.

There!

HADRIAN:

My Hellenic brothers and sisters,  
You honour me with praise.  
But praise to Greece.  
A home to my spirit  
A salve to my heart  
Praise to you and glorious Greece.

PLOTINA:

*(quietly to Hadrian)*

Brave Hadrian Brave.

DINARCHUS:

We celebrate you great Emperor:  
Most valiant, a soldier without compare,  
kind and merciful.  
The sharpest mind yet gentle still.  
The Empire you have glorified  
shining eternal  
reflects your  
strength,  
generosity,  
and wisdom.

PLOTINA:

*(aside)*

Brave Hadrian Brave.

HADRIAN:

Most noble Senator,  
an Empire is made not  
by one man but by each citizen's  
hand and heart.

DINARCHUS:

Great Emperor, thrice today we celebrate.  
First, your excellency's gracious visit.  
Second, the feast of Robigalia for  
our farmers and their land.  
Third and most importantly:  
we give thanks for your life.  
The gods' favour upon you

today in the hunt,  
When the boar charged you  
grace saw you spared.

SABINA:  
*(aside/Hadrian hears)*  
Grace of the gods or the valour of a supple  
youth?

PLOTINA:  
*(aside)*  
The simple woman has pluck!

DINARCHUS:  
Emperor presently we begin the prayer  
to your Robigus.

CHORUS:  
Robigalia! Robigalia!

DINARCHUS:  
But first we prepare  
our sacrifice, the ancient, holy sacrifice -

CHORUS:  
Robigalia! Robigalia!

DINARCHUS:  
- An unweaned dog.

***A puppy is brought forth and placed in the arms of Dinarchus.***

SABINA:  
A dog? A dog?

HADRIAN:  
A dog? A dog?  
As I remember it  
this year it was a lamb sacrificed.

SABINA:

*(to Hadrian)*

Is this year in your memory?

PLOTINA:

*(to Hadrian)*

You are a feeble actor and  
a soft-hearted lover of dogs.

HADRIAN:

*(to Plotina)*

Yes! This year it *shall* be a lamb.

CHORUS:

Brave Hadrian Brave.  
Hunter Soldier Prince.

DINARCHUS:

Bring forth a lamb.  
Bring forth a lamb.

***Hadrian hands off the puppy to Lavia.***

CHORUS:

Tis' now a lamb  
Tis' now a lamb  
Brave Hadrian Brave.  
Hunter Soldier Prince.  
Most beloved of the gods.

***The crowd disperses in search of a lamb.***

### **SCENE 3**

***Sabina and Hadrian speak privately.***

SABINA:

*(spoken)*

My pride for you grows  
in every corner of the Empire.  
Each speech reminds me more

of your virtue and my love for you.

HADRIAN:

*(spoken)*

Men speak mostly to hear themselves.

SABINA:

*(spoken)*

Will you take my hand?

HADRIAN:

Mine are too rough from the hunt today.

SABINA:

Will you sleep tonight?

HADRIAN:

I will sleep well.

SABINA:

I toss and turn 'til morning.

*(gently)*

Were you near you'd know.

HADRIAN:

Your girl can make a cup for that.

SABINA:

Tomorrow we are where?

HADRIAN:

West and North.

SABINA:

And Egypt when?

HADRIAN:

Six winters hence.

SABINA:

So long a time to wait,  
I will welcome its warmth.

HADRIAN:

*(gazing off)*

Enjoy this Spring about us -  
this glowing moon,  
ten thousand stars – now.

SABINA:

Our Spring departed long ago.

Will you have Egypt with me?  
Or will I have Egypt alone?  
Will I wait any longer?  
And for what am I waiting?  
Egypt.  
Where is your heart?  
Where is your heart?  
I'm your wife do you see?  
Will you look at me?  
Husband look at me!  
Will I wait any longer?  
And for what am I waiting?  
Egypt.  
Where is your heart?  
Where is your heart?  
Do I stand here before you?  
Have I spirit become?  
Do you see through me?  
Egypt.  
Where is your heart?  
Will you have Egypt with me?  
Or will I have Egypt alone?

***Hadrian remains staring at the sky.***

***Sabina departs.***

**SCENE 4**

*The celebrants begin preparations for the sacrifice.*

*Antinous appears.*

*He glows. He is beauty.*

*As Antinous enters Plotina and Trajan appear and members of the Celebration bring in the sacrificial lamb.*

CHORUS:

Mother Earth

Majesty

Potency

Favour

Kindness

Future

*Turbo enters approaching Hadrian.*

TURBO:

You seem not with us today.

For what, Emperor, do you long?

HADRIAN:

You see this youth counting stars, the hero of the hunt?

TURBO:

No hero greater than my Emperor.

HADRIAN:

He who felled the boar that charged me.

TURBO:

Oh, is this the boy?

HADRIAN:

Bring him here.

CHORUS:

Leave us that which Mother Earth bestows upon us.

And bestow upon me favour.

*Plotina raises her hand, time stops.*

*The Chorus holds a note; it becomes an ethereal sound.  
Trajan raises his hand. Antinous and Hadrian are drawn together.  
Antinous and Hadrian stand face to face.  
Plotina drops her hand, time resumes. Trajan and Plotina vanish.  
The Chorus continues its prayer.*

CHORUS:

That I may have your kindness and a future most full.  
This suppliant wise I implore and entreat.

TURBO:

What is your name boy?  
What is your name boy?

ANTINOUS:

Antinous.

HADRIAN

A boy yet  
not a boy.  
A beard soon comes,  
I almost feel it here.

*Hadrian touches Antinous' cheek.*

*A lyre player begins to play from the stage (the harpist provides the sound from the orchestra).  
There is electricity between Hadrian and Antinous. It's almost too much for Hadrian. Hadrian  
worries he will give the game away and removes his hand.*

TURBO:

There are many here more boy than he.

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*  
Today you were the hero of the hunt.

ANTINOUS:

Master, do you speak to me?

HADRIAN:

Master? You are no slave.



ANTINOUS:

But you are my Master.

I know you well.

HADRIAN:

And I you.

TURBO:

*(to Hadrian)*

You know this youth?

HADRIAN:

*(to Turbo)*

From the hunt of course.

ANTINOUS:

Master, no.

You are the stars

but I am dust.

TURBO:

Of course.

HADRIAN:

From the hunt of course.

*(to Antinous)*

My gaze beyond the hill,

the beast at my back.

Only you could see its eye,

his planned attack.

*Antinous turns away coyly, smiling.*

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*

Speak your name again.

TURBO:

*(to Hadrian)*

There are many here more boy than he.

ANTINOUS:

I am Antinous.

TURBO:

*(to Hadrian)*

There are many here more boy than he.

HADRIAN:

Antinous.

From this day, Antinous the Hunter.

TURBO:

This was hardly hunting, to save his Emperor.

HADRIAN:

Not hunting then what?

ANTINOUS:

Let us say love.

HADRIAN:

Let us say love.

From this day, Antinous the Lover

TURBO:

Any man would do the same.

HADRIAN:

*(to Turbo)*

My wife would have wine.

Bring it.

Now.

***Turbo reluctantly departs.***

ANTINOUS:

How close you look at me.

HADRIAN:  
Is this a dream?

ANTINOUS:  
Feel me, am I here?

***Hadrian places his hand on Antinous' cheek, drops it to his neck, and it lingers there.***

ANTINOUS:  
I am Antinous.

HADRIAN:  
My Master.

ANTINOUS:  
Now I am surely dreaming.

HADRIAN:  
I know this night.

ANTINOUS:  
*(dropping his head)*  
My Master.

HADRIAN:  
*(lifting Antinous face)*  
Will you have Egypt with me?

## **SCENE 5**

***The Celebrants stir as a hooded Sibyl is brought forward.  
Hadrian is worried the Sibyl will know his game.***

DINARCHUS:  
Oh Emperor our Hadrian  
In your honour a Sibyl  
the future foretells.

CHORUS:  
Oh Sibyl,

what failure befalls?  
What bounty awaits?  
Blindly see.  
Lose voice to say.  
Make future present.  
Present past.

***Coins are thrown at the Sibyl.***

SIBYL:  
*(to Hadrian)*  
Stand aside.

TURBO:  
You speak to the Emperor!

HADRIAN:  
The Emperor stands gladly aside.  
Honour to the Sibyl.

SIBYL:  
Stand aside all.

***The Sibyl is taken with a spirit.  
The Crowd reacts with alarm and interest.***

SIBYL:  
Air.  
Earth.  
Water.  
Water!  
Water!

HADRIAN:  
Fill her cup with water, boy.

***The Angelic Boy fetches water for the Sibyl.***

SIBYL:  
Air.

Earth.

Water.

*The Sibyl drinks the water down and casts aside the cup.*

*The Sibyl contorts violently with spirit.*

*The crowd reacts alarmed.*

*Fire bursts forth briefly.*

*The Crowd is spellbound.*

SIBYL:

Fire!

SABINA:

Ha ha!

What's in her cup?

I'll have hers.

*The Sybil is further taken with spirit.*

HADRIAN:

*(spoken)*

Stand aside!

SIBYL:

Let love let love not weaken  
the heart's the heart's resolve.

Rise up

The past will show it's light.

*The Sibyl speaks directly to Hadrian.*

Sacrifice.

Sacrifice.

Sacrifice

Sacrifice is no sacrifice

if sacrifice

for thee.

Six summers hence

will be a saviour

this hero from the hunt  
beloved of the gods.

Starless will be the night  
that Egypt brings.  
The moon blinkered blind  
The moon blinkered blind  
The moon blinkered blind  
Here the world will end.

***Fire bursts forth again. The crowd reacts alarmed and excited.***

TURBO:  
*(to guards)*  
This is some hex, have her out!

HADRIAN:  
*(to Turbo)*  
No!

SIBYL:  
Here the world will end.

***The Sibyl bows to Antinous.***

SIBYL:  
Sacrificial savior.  
Here the world will end.

TURBO:  
This is some hex, have her out!  
This talk of Egypt?  
Six summers?

HADRIAN:  
No!

TURBO:  
A saviour?

HADRIAN:

No!

TURBO:

Is she a Jew? Or a Nazarene?

HADRIAN:

No!

She speaks of the lamb.

Bring out the sacrifice!

CHORUS:

Bring out the sacrifice

*The Celebrants congregate for the slaughter of the lamb.*

### SCENE 6

*Dancers assemble and the heaviness of the Sibyl and her dark prophecy is broken.*

*The Celebrants and dancers create an altar for the sacrifice.*

*Hadrian takes Antinous aside, reveling in tonight.*

*Turbo and Sabina confer and the Chorus gathers in small groups, there is a growing sense of unrest.*

*(The following sections are layered and interwoven with each other.)*

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*

Tonight you join our entourage.

ANTINOUS:

In what role my Emperor?

HADRIAN:

You will count the stars.

ANTINOUS:

For you a task performed with ease.

HADRIAN:

Is this sorrow in your eyes?

ANTINOUS:

No, no sorrow here to see  
I am dreaming of a future.

HADRIAN:

Have no fear to leave your home.

CHORUS:

Bring out the sacrifice

ANTINOUS:

*(to Hadrian)*

This night with you  
From here unspools forever.

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*

Future now is future shared.

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

What is this talk of Saviour?

SABINA:

*(to Turbo)*

This simple boy is no Saviour.

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

The people are ready to spread any rumour.

SABINA:

*(to Turbo)*

The people are hungry for hope.

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*

Have no fear to leave your home.

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

This simple boy is no hope.



SABINA:

*(to Turbo)*

This simple boy concerns me.

TURBO:

On that we agree good woman.

SABINA:

*(to Turbo)*

On that we stand together.

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*

Future now is future shared.

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

What is this talk of saviour?

SABINA:

*(to Turbo)*

Could you smell her? She was drunk.

She was drunk.

What is this talk of saviour?

ANTINOUS:

*(to Hadrian)*

No more sorrow. Here tonight

I am dreaming of our future.

HADRIAN:

Though Emperor I will give you reign  
your own to have and hold.

ANTINOUS:

*(to Hadrian)*

This night

With you

From here unspools forever.

CHORUS:

Bring out the sacrifice

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

He develops more and more Greek  
tastes.

CHORUS:

Bring out the sacrifice

ANTINOUS:

*(to Hadrian)*

With you  
this night eternal.

HADRIAN:

*(to Antinous)*

Let me gentle take your hand.

ANTINOUS:

Gentle as you wish or as you will  
fate makes me yours forever.

HERMOGENES:

The fire though? The fire though? The fire came from where?

LAVIA:

Could you smell her? She was drunk.

FABIUS:

Perhaps we're all a little drunk.

HADRIAN/ANTINOUS:

Let me gentle take your hand.

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

What is this talk of Saviour?

SABINA:

*(to Turbo)*

This simple boy is no Saviour.

TURBO:

*(to Sabina)*

The people are ready to spread any rumour.

HADRIAN/ANTINOUS:  
Should you will or as you wish

CHORUS:  
The people are hungry  
hungry for hope.

TURBO:  
*(to Sabina)*  
This simple boy is no hope.

SABINA:  
*(to Turbo)*  
This simple boy concerns me.

TURBO:  
On that we agree good woman.

HADRIAN/ANTINOUS:  
Fate makes me yours and now

SABINA:  
*(to Turbo)*  
On that we stand together.

SENATORS:  
What is this talk of Saviour?  
What is this talk of Saviour?  
Saviour?  
Saviour?

LAVIA:  
Could you smell her? She was drunk.  
Could you smell her? She was drunk.  
Could you smell her? She was drunk.  
She was drunk.

CHORUS:  
The people are hungry  
hungry for hope.

HADRIAN/ANTINOUS:

Now and  
eternal  
eternal  
eternal

TURBO / SABINA:

He develops more and more Greek  
tastes.

CHORUS:

Bring out the sacrifice.

HADRIAN:

This night with you  
is forever.

*The dance begins.*

*Having reached a crescendo, the sacrifice is ready. The dancers circle the altar and the Celebrants begin their prayer.*

*The Celebrants cheer. The lamb is slaughtered. They begin to exit.*

*The hooded Sibyl is downstage center, holding a cup. She lifts her hand, time stops. All are frozen.*

*She takes off her hood.*

*It is Plotina.*

PLOTINA:

One night done and one to come!  
If treachery and truth should make you  
thirsty:  
drink!

*She drinks down the cup and tosses it aside.*

*Fire bursts forth brightly.*

*The crowd is unfrozen, and they slowly walk off praying quietly.*

INTERVAL

ACT III - EGYPT

SCENE 1

*We are out of time. A world between worlds.*

*We see Antinous.*

*He has transformed from a coy youth into fully grown man, a powerful, sexual being.*

*Hadrian appears.*

*They begin to make love. Tenderly at first, then with great passion. There is a sacredness here. An iconic love.*

*Slowly around them grows their location. A curtained bedchamber.*

*As their lovemaking climaxes it is clear that Antinous is the dominant sexual partner.*

*After some moments Hadrian rises from the bed.*

HADRIAN:

In Tibur

In Tibur

In Tibur

along the Appia

our fulfilled desire.

Our garden in bloom.

In Tibur

Soon, far away, safely

Our sanctuary.

Eternal embrace

My love

My heart

My star and earth

How near yet how far

There is no home for hiding there

No treachery

All known is all seen all known is all seen is all known is all seen is all known

You have my heart

You are my heart

Tonight you are with me ...

In Tibur ...  
Tonight this is our Tibur  
Tonight I'm yours.

***We are on Hadrian's barge on the Nile. Six years have passed.  
Dusk.***

***The bedchamber is a separate area from the open deck.  
The Court moves quietly across the deck. At one point Lavia leads a dog, the now fully grown  
puppy saved from the sacrifice.***

HADRIAN:  
I know this night.  
I know this night.

***On the bed, Antinous has drifted off to sleep.***

## SCENE 2

***From off we hear the Dark Chorus.***

DARK CHORUS:  
One God One God  
One God One God  
One God One God  
What comes?  
What comes?  
Time will  
Time will show.

***As he hears the rumbling of the Dark Chorus, Hadrian becomes aware that his body has aged.  
He feels cold, tired. Plotina and Trajan appear.***

HADRIAN:  
My body fails me once again.  
Sickness blows through my bones  
Death's shadow has smothered my health  
Yet  
Be there God or none  
Be there gods or one

This man is my God.  
My God is love.

***Hadrian turns to Plotina and Trajan.***

HADRIAN:  
Give me another night.

TRAJAN:  
A third night?

HADRIAN:  
No. Any night but this.

PLOTINA:  
There is no other night.

HADRIAN:  
Then change the past.

PLOTINA:  
No.  
But you may change the future.  
Soon Hadrian you will conquer Death  
sickness gone,  
you will know the eternal life of the gods.  
But only if mortals fear us as they must.

DARK CHORUS (off stage):  
Time will  
Time will  
Time will show.

HADRIAN:  
These dark voices,  
What is to come?  
My blood runs thin, so cold.

PLOTINA:

Take to bed now.  
You will learn the truth you long for.  
Then crush those would end us.

HADRIAN:  
Any night but this!

TRAJAN:  
*(to Plotina)*  
To live this night again  
might be too much for him to bear.

PLOTINA:  
Truth will be rewarded.

TRAJAN:  
And a truth that brings misery  
what might be its aim?

PLOTINA:  
Let us first to truth.

*Plotina lifts her hand, she and Trajan vanish.*

### SCENE 3

*Lavia, Fabius, Hermogenes along with the Three Senators: Nervous, Sycophantic, and Superior attempt to celebrate having arrived in Egypt after a six year journey. Everyone is looking older and worse for wear from travelling. They are exhausted and bored, and so indulge greatly in drink to make time bearable. They mostly lie about, but for toasting. Before them is a table and they eat from what remains of a dwindling feast.*

PRINCIPALS (LAVIA/FABIUS/HERMOGENES):  
To truth!

SENATORS:  
To Truth!

PRINCIPALS:  
To truth!



SENATORS:

To Truth!

PRINCIPALS/SENATORS:

To truth!

SENATORS:

The Jews must go!

PRINCIPALS:

Finally in Egypt!

To truth!

*(sung under SENATORS conversation)*

To truth!

To truth!

To truth!

To truth!

To truth!

SYCOPHANTIC SENATOR:

To say nothing of the Nazarenes.

NERVOUS SENATOR:

Are these a problem too?

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

Wake up Senator!

Their power grows with numbers.

SYCOPHANTIC SENATOR:

A foolish group.

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

A brutish group.

NERVOUS SENATOR:

These trying times!

PRINCIPALS:

Finally in Egypt!

To truth!

To truth!

HERMOGENES:

To truth!

LAVIA:

To truth!

PRINCIPALS:

To truth! To truth!

*A toast.*

SENATORS:

To truth!

The Jews must go!

To say nothing of the Nazarenes.

*A drink.*

LAVIA:

To Rome!

*A toast.*

ALL OTHERS:

To Rome!

*A drink.*

FABIUS:

To Freedom!

*A toast.*

ALL OTHERS:

To Freedom!

***A drink.***

LAVIA:

To all of these and more!

***A toast.***

ALL OTHERS:

More! More!

***A drink.***

ALL:

Finally Egypt!

Finally Egypt!

Egypt!

***A toast.***

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

Finally indeed, one more month  
and where would we be?

NERVOUS SENATOR:

Our Emperor ails it's clear,  
both body and mind.

SYCOPHANTIC SENATOR:

Symptoms of love they say.

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

No longer symptoms,  
the Empire is full in fever.

ALL:

Finally Egypt!

***A drink.***

HERMOGENES:  
Six summers later and  
I have lost my hair.

SENATORS:  
The Jews must go!

LAVIA:  
I've lost my appetite  
this paltry fare.

SENATORS:  
To say nothing of the Nazarenes!

FABIUS:  
And I'm the one who must taste it.  
Another year I'll lose my legs.

LAVIA:  
*(re Hermogenes)*  
He's lost his eyes.

HERMOGENES/FABIUS:  
*(to Lavia)*  
You've lost everything.

FABIUS:  
Twice!

LAVIA:  
*(to Fabius)*  
You stink.

HERMOGENES/FABIUS:  
Everything twice!

***A toast.***

ALL:

Everything twice.

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

The rowdy plebeians  
have the peace of ignorance  
the nuisance of the Jews  
disturbs them not.

NERVOUS SENATOR:

The blasphemous Jews,  
their One God an affront to us all.

SYCOPHANTIC SENATOR:

The longer they fester the more they infect.

HERMOGENES/FABIUS:

You've lost everything  
Twice!  
Twice!

LAVIA:

To freedom!

NERVOUS SENATOR:

The Jews must go!

SYCOPHANTIC/SUPERIOR SENATORS:

To say nothing of the Nazarenes!

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

Six years from Rome  
Six years too long  
We are in need of a leader.

NERVOUS SENATOR:

These trying times,  
my stomach turns.

SYCOPHANTIC SENATOR:

See the doctor for that.

SUPERIOR SENATOR:  
Or remove the disturbance.

NERVOUS SENATOR:  
The Jews must go!

*Hermogenes takes Lavia briefly aside.*

HERMOGENES:  
Girl, how is your mistress these nights?

LAVIA:  
Sleepless still.

HERMOGENES:  
Is she worried for her husband too?

LAVIA:  
Her worry is she has no husband.

HERMOGENES:  
And your worry is what?

LAVIA:  
My worry is we run out of wine.

*Fabius overhears:*

FABIUS:  
To wine!  
To wine!

*They toast.*

ALL:  
To wine!  
To wine!

***They drink.***

***Two dancers appear, a male and a female, they are the last remaining entertainers from this long journey. They try to entice the group to join them but their presence just creates melancholy.***

HERMOGENES:

Our mother Rome grows old without us  
will we know her face  
when we see her once again?

FABIUS:

I want for fields and solid ground.  
I took paradise for granted.

LAVIA:

All I see is what is not here  
All I hear is a voice in dreams.

ALL:

I miss Rome.  
I miss home.

LAVIA:

I miss men.

FABIUS:

Here's one for you.

***Fabius coaxes Lavia to dance with the male dancer.***

LAVIA:

I'm too sad to dance.  
I'm too sad.

HERMOGENES:

*(spoken)*

I miss my wife.

FABIUS:

*(spoken)*

So do I.

***Hermogenes chases Fabius around the deck. They become caught up in the dance for a moment.***

**SCENE 4**

***Antinous appears across the deck having risen from sleep.***

HERMOGENES:

Antinous!

SENATORS:

Antinous!

FABIUS:

*(to Antinous)*

Come join us!

LAVIA:

Despite myself he charms me so.

NERVOUS SENATOR:

He's become so grown.

HERMOGENES:

And such a man.

LAVIA:

He was always man.

FABIUS:

He's healthy.

HERMOGENES:

He's wise.

LAVIA *(spoken)*:



To Antinous.

***A toast.***

ALL OTHERS (*spoken*):

To Antinous!

***Antinous has taken up a position sitting on the edge of the barge, staring out to the water.  
Soon we see that Turbo is nearby but unseen by the rest.***

LAVIA:

There are no stars tonight,  
what do you count?

ANTINOUS:

The waves.

HERMOGENES:

Tell us again of our enemy.

ANTINOUS:

Who is our enemy?

FABIUS:

The lesson you told.

HERMOGENES:

Of our enemy we first ask, what?

ANTINOUS:

First we ask why.

HERMOGENES:

And second?

ANTINOUS:

And then we ask forgiveness.

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

*(aside)*

Good fortune he does not lead the army.

NERVOUS SENATOR:

What are your thoughts  
to our greater concerns?

ANTINOUS:

Which are these?

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

For one, the Jews.

ANTINOUS:

What concerns you with the Jews?

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

Their disrespect.

ANTINOUS:

You feel this yourself?

SYCOPHANTIC SENATOR:

*(spoken)*

The Empire feels it.  
Rome herself.

ANTINOUS:

Perhaps for the Jews  
their own state.

SUPERIOR SENATOR:

*(to Antinous)*

And who leads this state?  
You?  
Are you now a Jew?

ANTINOUS:

What sees the Jew  
within this starless sky?

Any more than you see?  
Any less than I?  
In this question lies  
the answer.  
We are each in all  
all in each  
I am the Jew and the Nazarene.  
I am need and comfort  
I am sword and scabbard.

Every breath and heartbeat.  
Peace and her child Plenty.  
Man and woman.

All one  
One circle  
Every breath and heartbeat  
Peace and her child Plenty  
Man and woman  
all one mind.  
all one heart.

NERVOUS SENATOR:  
He speaks the words our Emperor now speaks.

***Turbo steps forward, revealing that he has been listening.***

TURBO:  
Or does our Emperor now speak his words.

ANTINOUS:  
Our Emperor's words are his own.

TURBO:  
But who has his ear?

ANTINOUS:  
Our Emperor hears everything.  
Turbo do you disagree?

TURBO:

And what say you Antinous  
of the Nazarenes?  
What say you  
of their fine man?

ANTINOUS:

They say he walked on water.

TURBO:

False fabric they have woven.

*Antinous stands and sets to step off the barge.*

ANTINOUS:

I've often wondered would the water hold me  
if I, like a child, believed.

*Antinous holds out his hand to Turbo.*

*Sabina enters, watching.*

ANTINOUS:

Will you join me Turbo?

TURBO:

I have no claim to be saviour.

*After a moment.*

ANTINOUS:

And I no need of getting wet.

*Antinous sits. He looks back out to the water.*

TURBO:

Enjoy your games now, the weather may change.

ANTINOUS:

No games this night.  
This night the waves.

SABINA:

What is this conversation?

TURBO:

Our Antinous was about to perform a miracle.

SABINA:

Can he turn our wretched fare to food?

TURBO:

Perhaps he will, since he can turn master to slave.

*Hadrian enters.*

**SCENE 5**

ALL:

*(exclaimed)*

The Emperor!

Long live Hadrian!

*Hadrian is sick with dread.*

HADRIAN:

*(to Turbo)*

Is there some contention here?

TURBO:

Your health is our only concern.

HADRIAN:

Antinous, I need you now.

*Hadrian and Antinous embrace and depart,  
then all but Sabina and Turbo depart.*

SABINA:

Next he'll make my husband his wife.

TURBO:

That day has passed I fear.  
Antinous is the new Empress.

SABINA:

I cannot hear these words.  
My nights are sleepless as it is.

TURBO:

My nights I lie awake  
with these turning thoughts  
around the Nazarenes.  
First the Jews  
and now these.  
Our Emperor's word must come  
to make them fall in line.

SABINA:

These concerns are not mine.

TURBO:

They are the concerns of all the Empire.  
Will you stick to our plan?

SABINA:

Deceit is not in my nature.

TURBO :

It is a tool for every woman.

SABINA:

It sits not well with me.

TURBO:

What tools have you left?  
Love has failed you.  
There is hope in the Sibyl.

SABINA:

It sits not well with me.

TURBO:

Your husband fears magic. He will listen.

SABINA:

He is hardly a husband.

TURBO:

He can be yours again.

SABINA:

Is this truly so?

TURBO:

But he is ill, and he may die.

A sacrifice will save him.

Both our targets hit

with one arrow.

SABINA:

It sits not well with me.

TURBO:

Your husband fears magic.

The Sibyl will see to it.

He will listen.

SABINA:

What will be her prophecy?

TURBO:

Sacrifice

No sacrifice.

No sacrifice is sacrifice

If sacrifice

Antinous.

SABINA:

Yes.

TURBO:  
See to the Sibyl.

**SCENE 6**

***In the Emperor's bed chamber.  
Hermogenes tends to Hadrian as he lies in bed, ill. Antinous is nearby.***

ANTINOUS:  
His discomfort seems less.

HERMOGENES:  
You take good care. Keep his cup full.

ANTINOUS:  
I do, I will.

HERMOGENES:  
And these cloths keep cold.

ANTINOUS:  
The fever has abated.

HERMOGENES:  
For now. He must remain in bed.

HADRIAN:  
With my Antinous with me  
I would remain in fire.

HERMOGENES:  
You will bring back fire  
if you do not remain in bed.

***Turbo enters.***

TURBO:  
This chamber feels crowded.



ANTINOUS:

Now it does.

TURBO:

We must make room. The Sibyl comes.

HERMOGENES:

I have little faith in this sorcery.

TURBO:

*(to HERMOGENES, threatening)*

How is your swimming?

HERMOGENES:

I will leave

I will leave you room.

*(to Antinous)*

He must remain in bed.

***Hermogenes exits.***

***Lavia calls from off.***

LAVIA:

The Sibyl is come.

TURBO:

Bring her forth.

***Lavia leads the hooded Sibyl into the bed chamber.***

***The Sibyl waves Lavia away.***

LAVIA:

*(to Turbo, nervous)*

Will there be fire?

TURBO:

Only now in all your dreams.

***Lavia runs off, frightened.***

TURBO:

This Sibyl travelled days from mountains afar.  
She brings health with prophecy.

*The ceremony begins.*

*The Sibyl, like the first, is taken by a spirit.*

*As she speaks Plotina appears. In time Trajan appears, some distance away.*

SIBYL:

No sacrifice is sacrifice.  
Fierce but has no body.  
Well seen but made of air.  
Born in breath  
to die in fire.

ANTINOUS:

*(to Hadrian)*

She describes your illness.

SIBYL:

There is a cure!

ANTINOUS:

What cure?

SIBYL:

A sacrifice to save him!

HADRIAN:

*(rising)*

No!

PLOTINA:

*(stopping Hadrian)*

No.

ANTINOUS:

What sacrifice?

SIBYL:

*(to Hadrian)*

Sacrifice

No sacrifice.

No sacrifice is sacrifice if

if sacrifice for

for you, for you.

Sacrifice

No sacrifice

no sacrifice is sacrifice I sacrifice for

if sacrifice for

for you for you.

***Hadrian rises from his bed, as if out of his body, and approaches the Sibyl.***

***Plotina moves to stop him but Hadrian halts her with a gesture.***

HADRIAN:

*(spoken to the Sibyl)*

Where is your heart?

***Hadrian gently removes the Sibyl's hood and shows her to be Sabina. He steps away.***

***The world shifts and Sabina, suddenly alone, looks out, appealing to us.***

SABINA:

Do I stand here before you?

Have I spirit become?

Do you see through me?

***Hadrian moves to step toward Sabina. Plotina lifts her hand and the world resumes:***

***Hadrian falls back into his body, on to the bed.***

***Sabina's hood back in place, the Sibyl again.***

SIBYL:

*(to Antinous)*

Sacrifice

No sacrifice.

No sacrifice is sacrifice

if sacrifice

is you!

HADRIAN:

No!

*Hadrian moves to rise again.*

PLOTINA:

No!

*Plotina raises her hand, Hadrian collapses, in tears.*

ANTINOUS:

Leave him! Leave him!

He must rest!

Leave him now!

Leave him! Leave him!

He must rest!

Leave him now!

*Turbo takes the Sibyl out.*

*Antinous goes to Hadrian calming him.*

*Trajan watches from a distance, moved.*

HADRIAN and TRAJAN:

No Antinous.

Dear Antinous.

Spare Antinous.

Sweet Antinous.

No Antinous.

Not you.

Not you.

Not you.

Not you.

## SCENE 7

*Antinous tends gently, lovingly, to Hadrian.*

*Just outside the bedchamber we see that Sabina is watching and listening.*

HADRIAN:

Without you what am I?

ANTINOUS:

You are not without me, I am here.

HADRIAN:

Never leave me.

ANTINOUS:

I am here.

This is fire's heat,

let me wipe your brow.

*Antinous wipes Hadrian's brow.*

HADRIAN:

This is fire.

*Antinous wipes Hadrian's arms.*

ANTINOUS:

And your arms.

HADRIAN:

This thirst is the desert.

ANTINOUS:

Here, drink.

HADRIAN:

You my oasis.

My Tibur.

ANTINOUS:

I am yours.

HADRIAN:

I am yours.

You saved me the day we met,

and now again.

ANTINOUS:

I loved you even then.

HADRIAN:

You were the hero of the hunt.

ANTINOUS:

Your gaze beyond the hill,  
the beast at your back.

HADRIAN:

But now I can see its eye,  
its planned attack.  
How time has changed all,  
there is treachery here.

ANTINOUS:

There is fire here,  
Let me fill your cup.

HADRIAN:

Death.  
Death.  
Death feels near.

ANTINOUS:

Have no fear.

HADRIAN:

Come tend  
Come tend to  
Come tend to my body.

ANTINOUS:

I tend to your body.

HADRIAN:

Death feels near.

SABINA:

He loves.

He loves.

He loves.

HADRIAN:

Death feels near.

ANTINOUS:

Have no fear.

HADRIAN:

You tend

You tend to

You tend to my spirit.

ANTINOUS:

I tend to your spirit.

HADRIAN:

Death feels near.

SABINA:

He loves.

He loves.

He loves.

He loves.

HADRIAN:

But I am not here.

ANTINOUS:

Have no fear.

HADRIAN:

I am not here.

***All three are now for a moment in the world between worlds, in this night and the first.***

HADRIAN/ANTINOUS/SABINA:

I know this night.  
This fulsome moon.  
Ten thousand stars.  
I know this night.

I know this night.  
This blinker'd moon.  
This starless sky.  
I know this  
this -

SABINA:  
- night.

He loves.  
He loves.  
This man's chest  
not a prison  
but an altar.  
This man's heart  
once heavy  
now singing.  
This man's heart  
not cold  
but burning.  
This man's heart,  
always beating thus.

Distance lets the eye see  
what the ear has never heard.  
Love's music give a meaning  
to the hollow empty word.

*(spoken)*  
He loves.

***Unseen, Sabina departs.  
Hadrian drifts off to sleep.***

**SCENE 8**



***When Hadrian is sleeping, Antinous quietly departs.  
Plotina appears. She wakes the sleeping Hadrian.***

PLOTINA:

See all but not be seen,  
Hear all but not be heard.  
You may change nothing  
but you will know all.

***Antinous stands near the edge of the barge, looking out upon the water.  
He is alone. Plotina leads Hadrian to watch, they cannot be heard or seen.***

ANTINOUS:

No sacrifice is sacrifice  
if  
for you  
for you.  
My sacrifice  
no sacrifice if  
for you  
for you  
Let me  
Let me  
Let me die  
my love should live.

***Antinous is about to step off the barge.  
Sabina rushes in.***

SABINA:

Stop!  
I have come to reverse the game!

ANTINOUS:

What game?  
These have been games?

SABINA:

It was a trick

You see?  
I was the Sibyl.

ANTINOUS:  
Why games? Why this?

SABINA:  
I did not know my husband had a heart.  
But I have seen it now.  
I cannot let it die.

***Turbo steps out from the shadows.***

TURBO:  
*(to Sabina)*  
Why show yourself? He was about to jump.

SABINA:  
I end this trick.  
*(to Antinous)*  
Go to my husband.  
Bring him his heart.

***Turbo calls for guards.***

TURBO:  
*(spoken)*  
This woman is mad, take her out.

***Guards remove Sabina.***

SABINA:  
*(spoken)*  
Take him his heart.

TURBO:  
Never again!

***As Sabina is led out she looks back, knowing all is lost.***

TURBO:

*(to Antinous)*

Yes this has been sport  
and you are the quarry caught.

ANTINOUS:

Why are you my enemy?

TURBO:

Next will you ask my forgiveness?

ANTINOUS:

Do you love him?

Do you love him?

Do you love him more?

TURBO:

I do. For what he will become.

ANTINOUS:

And what will he become without me?

TURBO:

Oh that you had never been born.

*Turbo comes close to Antinous. He takes Antinous face in his hands.*

*Turbo kisses Antinous on the mouth. Then suddenly, with a quick snap, Turbo breaks Antinous' neck.*

*Antinous goes limp.*

*Turbo takes Antinous up into his arms.*

*Turbo delivers Antinous to the river.*

*Hadrian collapses to the floor.*

## ACT IV – TIBUR

*We find ourselves back in Tibur.*

### SCENE 1

***Hadrian still lies on the floor where he collapsed, weeping.***

HADRIAN:

I know this night.

This blinker'd moon.

This starless sky.

I know this night.

Freed or lost

a little soul.

In mourning.

Freed or lost

Freed or lost

a little soul.

In mourning.

The Nile now tears.

Now tears, the Nile.

Dear Antinous.

Sweet Antinous.

Sacrifice.

No sacrifice.

Sacrifice.

No sacrifice.

***Plotina and Trajan appear, unspeaking.***

***Trajan moves toward Hadrian, this seems to give Hadrian strength. He sits up somewhat.***

***Plotina stands near Hadrian's desk.***

HADRIAN:

And now the dream is done.

Her lost blossoms fallen

upon cold earth of truth.

I may never rise from this.

***Plotina holds the document that Hadrian must sign so he can see it.***

HADRIAN:

And all I have had,

All I have done,

My travels

My wall  
My Pantheon  
These titles,  
A soldier  
A hunter  
Philosopher diplomat  
will be reduced to nothing  
with the signing of this  
hateful lie.  
The end of Judea  
The birth of Palestina  
The Jews reduced to  
a memory of dust.  
I have never loved defeat  
not even for my enemy.  
But the cost of truth must be paid.  
This truth my final undoing.  
All I've had  
All I've done  
Only Antinous has mattered.  
Only Antinous, my heart.

***Hadrian picks up the dagger that had fallen to the floor in the first act.  
Hadrian rises and moves toward the desk. He places the dagger there.***

HADRIAN:  
Soldier, forward!

***A soldier steps quickly into the chamber.  
Hadrian signs the document.***

HADRIAN:  
Bring word to Turbo.  
Today is the end of the Jews  
their Judea  
and those who will have one God.  
On this day all finished.  
This day is not done  
til none remain.  
None

*(spoken)* None!  
Bring this to your Captain.

***Hadrian gives the Soldier the document. The soldier steps quickly away.  
From off we hear:***

DARK CHORUS:  
What is to come?  
One God.,  
One God.  
One God.

***Hadrian collapses into his chair.***

PLOTINA:  
Our deal is done!

TRAJAN:  
My Plotina.

PLOTINA:  
The gods will live eternally!

TRAJAN:  
Mortal concerns enslave you.

PLOTINA:  
I will not be forgotten.

TRAJAN:  
You say forgotten,  
I say free.

PLOTINA:  
Eternally!  
I will *not* be forgotten.

***Plotina and Trajan vanish.***

**SCENE 2**

***Turbo enters.***

TURBO:

You seem much more yourself.

HADRIAN:

Do I?

TURBO:

Your word has come down.

An end to Judea.

HADRIAN:

Yes.

TURBO:

Here's the fruit of vengeance.

HADRIAN:

Perhaps.

But from tiny seeds

Of fallen fruit

Do mighty Empires grow.

***The Herald, a boy, enters.***

HADRIAN:

Who is this boy?

HERALD :

I come a Herald.

TURBO:

Step forward then.

HERALD:

By senatorial decree

in unanimity

No longer is the brightest star

Star Sirius.

This first star we see

The strongest star

The brightest star

Star Sirius shall now be

Star Antinous.

HADRIAN:

No. There will be no star.

No star.

No.

Take that with you

and go.

***The Herald departs.***

HADRIAN:

I need no star.

I need no star.

And should his statues crumble

I need no stone

I need no star

No stone, no star

No stone, no star

Can one possess a breath,

the very air?

I have lived

And soon to die

Will see my love again

I need no star

Antinous shall be the air

Antinous shall be love.

And the gods shall be forgotten.

TURBO:

The gods forgotten? Never.

The end of Judea has seen to that.



***Plotina appears.***

HADRIAN:

From tiny seeds  
Of fallen fruit  
Do mighty Empires grow.

PLOTINA:

I will never be forgotten!

HADRIAN:

Yes, Plotina, you too will fade.

TURBO:

What is this madness?

HADRIAN:

There is no madness,  
truth, truth, only truth!  
I saw my wife.  
I saw Plotina, Trajan, Antinous.  
And I saw you.

TURBO:

You should rest.

HADRIAN:

My wife said  
Go to my husband.  
Go to my husband.

***Sabina enters as a goddess as both Turbo and Hadrian recall her words from Act III.***

HADRIAN:

Bring him his heart.  
Bring him his heart.

SABINA (*simultaneously with Hadrian*):

Bring him his heart.  
Bring him his heart.

HADRIAN:

You snapped his neck  
then gave him to the Nile  
as to a tomb.

TURBO:

It had to be done.

*With his last bit of strength Hadrian grabs the dagger from the desk then lunges at Turbo and lets forth a mighty yell.*

HADRIAN:

DIE!

*Hadrian lets forth a mighty yell, the dagger held aloft, ready to be driven into Turbo's heart. Turbo does not flinch, ready to take death.*

*The yell has brought forth the rest of the court, Lavia, Fabius, the Three Senators, and Guards into the chamber.*

*Hadrian pauses.*

*Hadrian lets his arm and the dagger drop to his side.*

*Hadrian grows weak. He collapses.*

TURBO:

Lift up the dagger  
show me that life in your eyes.

HADRIAN:

Why Turbo, why?

TURBO:

For you, Hadrian.  
Soon or so,  
you will be gone.  
Then will I.  
Then all we know.  
And what remains?  
The story told.  
For you, Hadrian.  
For you  
and Rome.

HADRIAN:

No man be god,  
no gods be god,  
There is no God  
who would let love die.  
There is no God  
who would let love die.

PLOTINA:

Is this my end?

TURBO:

We together built  
this Empire  
made from blood  
and stone.  
This is the story  
I will tell,  
for you.

PLOTINA:

Is this my end?  
No, it cannot be.

TURBO:

For you,  
As legacy  
the story made  
is told.

DARK CHORUS (*simultaneously*):

Time will  
Time will show.

PLOTINA (*simultaneously*):

Is this my end?  
Is this my end?  
Where will I live?  
What are these voices?

TURBO:

Hadrian's name  
will stand alone  
for rulers true.  
For you, Hadrian.  
For you.

TRAJAN:

One God comes.  
The future comes.  
An age is ending.  
The games are done.

HADRIAN:

In one way was I true.  
In one way was I true.

TURBO:

In one and all.

HADRIAN:

One way to be remembered.  
This final breath,  
my legacy:  
He loved.

*Hadrian dies.*

### SCENE 3

*The court is gripped with grief and depart. Plotina and Trajan raise Hadrian from death and begin to dress him as a god to move into the underworld.*

*Antinous enters in full Egyptian regalia.*

*Hadrian and Antinous are reunited. The gods gather and begin their recessional.*

*The Chorus continues growing closer.*

DARK CHORUS:

One God, one God,  
One God, one God.

What comes?  
What comes?  
Time will  
Time will show.

PLOTINA/TRAJAN/SABINA:  
But what of we?

*The Dark Chorus begins to appear on stage.*

DARK CHORUS:  
One God, One God  
One God, One God  
What comes? What comes?  
We stand upon this sacred ground  
We stand upon this sacred ground, sacred ground  
Time will, Time will show.  
Hold in our hearts our holy  
in our hearts our holy creed.

PLOTINA/TRAJAN/SABINA:  
But what of we?  
But what of we?  
We, we will not be forgotten.

TURBO (*simultaneously*):  
He loved, he loved.  
He loved, he loved.

HADRIAN:  
I loved, I loved.

SABINA/ANTINOUS:  
Brave Hadrian, Brave.

PLOTINA:  
We will not be forgotten.

TRAJAN:

We are free.

***Sabina removes Antinous' godly garb until he has become a neutral figure of transcendence.***

SABINA/ANTINOUS:

Brave Hadrian, Brave.

PLOTINA:

We will never be forgotten.

TRAJAN:

We are free.

HADRIAN:

I loved, I loved.

SABINA/PLOTINA/ANTINOUS:

Brave Hadrian, Brave.

***The Chorus moves apart and it becomes clear they are in fact three Chorus' divided.***

***One Jewish.***

***One Muslim.***

***One Christian.***

DARK CHORUS:

Our eyes upon a reverent goal,  
to see the face of God and live.

PLOTINA/TRAJAN/SABINA/ANTINOUS:

Brave Hadrian, Brave.

Brave Hadrian, Brave.

DARK CHORUS:

We give our lives to voice our truth:  
There is one God.

DARK CHORUS:

For truth we fight to death.  
There is one God.

DARK CHORUS:

To War!

To War!

To War!

TURBO:

He loved.

DARK CHORUS:

To War!

***FIN***