



Frank Dudley, Mary Woronov, and Harvey Tavel

A R E N A S O F L U T E T I A

a play by Ronald Tavel

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Characters:

The Hairy Christians:

Anne
Genes
Nightmary
Odalesque
Tabulah
Veras

Lutetia
Cleopatra

Admirable Byrd
Sebastian
Actaeon
William Tell

Note on pronunciations:

All underlined foreign words are correctly pronounced as they would be in that foreign language. Foreign words not underlined as usually Anglicized.

The names of all the characters have the standard English pronunciations: as, Lutetia (Loo-tee'-sha), Actaeon (Ac'-tee-on), Tabulah (Tab'-u-la), etc.

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"A R E N A S O F L U T E T I A"

ACT I.

(As the audience begins to enter, the HAIRY CHRISTIANS, a group of hippie girls, is seen slowly filing back and forth across the stage. They are dressed in loose fitting hippie costumes, wear flowers, have long straight unbound hair, and munch on sandwiches and cookies. Among them are TABULAH, an unusually tough looking woman, ANNE, who wears ear phones and chomps on a huge wad of gum, GENES, a slightly bent workhorse type, VERAS, a peppery number who has altered her loose-fitting costume to sexual advantage, ODALESQUE, a little Negro bundle of energy, and NIGHTMARY, an affected vampiress type, ugly as sin. Two life-sized neuter dummies, clothed as the rest, are attached to either side of NIGHTMARY and consequently move about with her, forming a trio. The HAIRY CHRISTIANS seem to be engaged in picketing or demonstrating of some sort for they all wear or carry signs and placards. These huge cardboard placards are actually advertisements for a play called Arenas of Lutetia and bear such information and teasers as are recited in the second sequence (by SEBASTIAN and ACTAION); they also feature representations of a beautiful, exotic woman, sometimes standing, sometimes temptingly recumbant, often with suggestions of a ruined coliseum, vaguely Roman, in the background. GENES pulls along a miniature float (secured atop a toy wagon) which is also an elaborate advertisement for the play. The float bears a representation of the exotic woman showering in a cascade of reddish liquid.

A chain of flats midway downstage stretches from wing to wing. It is painted upon to represent a vast coliseum with the ground tier of columned arches each about 5' x 5'. Two odd, extremely low wheelchairs, their seats only a foot from the floor, are placed very far downstage, one quite close to right wing, the other quite close to left wing. A huge tree is situated centerstage near left wing, just in front of the flats; in its top branches is an enormous bird nest. ADMIRABLE BYRD, a buzzard-like creature with goggles, winged arms, Indian

feather-headress tapering off from beneath a winged Mercury helmet, crescent-moon beak, exaggerated talons, pegged pants, etc., pokes his head up out of the nest from time to time and spies down on the filing parade with a magnifying glass and/or telescope. He heckles with catcalls and occasionally tosses small articles at them: paper cups, popcorn boxes, ice cream wrappers, theatre-seat stuffings, straws pulled from the nest, Easter eggs, cherry bombs, etc. The HAIRY CHRISTIANS respond by tossing flowers and cookies back at him and chanting louder.)

HAIRY C's: Arenas o' Loo-tit-sha! Arenas o' Loo-tit-sha!
 Seats now! Seats now for Arenas o' Loo-tit-sha!
 Good seats avail for all perps! Arenas o' Loo-tit-sha! seats now! Hare Krishna! Hare Krishna!
 etc., etc., etc.
 (chanting) Hairy Christian! Hairy Christian!
 Christian, Christian! Hairy, Hairy!
 Harry Pisher! Harry Pisher!
 Pisher, Pisher! Harry, Harry!
 etc., etc., etc.
 Seats now, small house: all seats is good, good
 seats fer Arenas o' Loo-tit-sha! Hare Krishna!
 etc., etc., etc.

BYRD: Squarkkkk!!! Wrrackkk!!! Squarkkkkk!! Beat it,
 ya lousy stand-ins! Git lost! Hit the road!
 Squarkkk! Buncha cheap replacements! Wrrackkk!
 Squarkkk! Buncha low-life studies! Squarkkk!!
 Wrrackkk! Post no bills! Squarkkk! Wrrackkk!!
 No soliciting! Go on relief! Sign up fer welfare!
 Git a haircut! Wrackkk! Buncha peacenik bushmen!!
 Squarkkk! Take a bath, wash yer ears! Wrrackkk!!
 etc., etc., etc.

(At curtain time SEBASTIAN and ACTAEON, marching abreast, cut smartly through the audience and step up onto the stage. Both are identically dressed in police uniforms and both are strikingly similar in appearance: good-looking, medium height, muscular, fair-haired. Each carries a nightstick in one hand and an ornately leathered book in the other. They move in on the marching women, causing an immediate confusion.)

BYRD: (focusing on SEBASTIAN and ACTAEON) Squarrkkk!!!
 Wrrackkk!! Coupla Madison Avenue types!

SEBASTIAN (together, authoritatively) No demonstrating with-
 & ACTAEON: out a license! Where's your license, girls?!

HAIRY C's: See the show, Officers? Great show! Seats now, etc.

VERAS: (baiting sexily) I got plenty o' license....

ODALESQUE: (baiting) Alms, alms for the poor!

SEBASTIAN (together) What for?- ya got two already. Beat it!
 & ACTAEON: Break it up or we'll run the lotta ya in!

BYRD: Let 'em have it, Officers, let 'em have it where it tells, where it shows! Great show! Wrrackkk!!

TABULAH: (rallying the others as the officers crowd them several steps back upstage) The old They-Shall-Not-Pass defense, ladies, let's lock limbs!

HAIRY C's: They-Shall-Not-Pass de fence! They-Shall-Not-Sass de sense! De sense! De sense!

(The HAIRY CHRISTIANS, deserting the float and most of their placards near the tree, lock arms lengthwise and back up in a straight line across the row of flats as if to block entrance to the coliseum. Each stiffens at the column of an arch with her arms stretched across the archway gripping her partner's. SEBASTIAN and ACTAEON pause, practically tripping on the signs.)

SEBASTIAN: Ground mines! Hold it---

ACTAEON: What do we do, Seb?

SEBASTIAN: Nothin' to touch off a riot---

ACTAEON: Or rush to the precinct kvetchin' about brutality...

TABULAH: (positioned in the center of the human chain) Think twice before manhandling, fellas!

BYRD: They'd only be manhandling fellas.

NIGHTMARY: Take care, boys, I got two bodyshards!

BYRD: Looks like a dead-lock.

SEBASTIAN: Stalefate, er, mate.

ACTAEON: At the least we've kept the status quo.

BYRD: Or status low. -Lights, please!

(The houselights click off and twin spots hit SEBASTIAN and ACTAEON who about-face sharply and step downstage together. They stand back to back for a tense second, then march apart as if about to duel. SEBASTIAN reaches the low wheelchair, downstage right, and squats in it, his knees rising to a humorous height; ACTAEON does the same in the wheelchair downstage left. Perfectly co-ordinated, they open their leathered books and proceed to read aloud from them with richly rhetorical, radio or TV trailer advertising voices:)

SEBASTIAN: Lutetia... Temptress of Terror! She traded her favors for death!

ACTAEON: Lutetia -- Sovereign of Savagery! Primitive Priestess in a Temple of Torture!

SEBASTIAN: Medea-Madonna... no man could tame, or resist!

ACTAEON: (actress' actual name), (actor's actual name), and (actor's actual name) in Sebastian Narbonne's Arenas of Lutetia.

SEBASTIAN: Story of the fabled ruins, ruled by a woman with a barbaric mind... and warm lips!

BYRD: (earning a spotlight which discovers him crossing himself fearfully and exclaiming in an exaggerated Italian accent) Santa Maria Majorna!!!

ACTAEON: Pagan Siren... Polyandrous Empress of an Orgiastia, flourishing with the lusty license of history's most decadent age!

SEBASTIAN: Some sought sex... some sanctity... Each man found what he wanted!

BYRD: Well, as long as it's educational.

ACTAEON: (stepping up from enthusiasm to hard-sell) Arenas of Lutetia!! See:- Lutetia's Basin of Blood - the greatest amassment of feminine pulchritude ever, luxuriously languishing in a pool of martyred holies!

SEBASTIAN: Arenas of Lutetia!! See:- White archeologists forced into intimacies with local beauties!

BYRD: "Forced"? - sounds British.

ACTAEON: Arenas of Lutetia!! See:- The mean, moody, magnetic goddess of a bloodthirsty Utopia despoil a myriad of admirers like so ma---

BYRD: What they mean is, the show's so bad it defies relief.

ACTAEON: Huh? Who the hell wrote that?

BYRD: They write the ad libs too? Coooo--cooooooooooo. (peering through the magnifying glass) Hmmm, jist a gruesome twosome off the citronella circuit tryin' to make it big in TV trailers...

SEBASTIAN; (quite irked) Cu-Cu, huh?

BYRD: Well, Ah ain't no fly-by-night a-pickin' the hair outta his teeth afore goin' straight. Whatchoo dyad a-doin' -- copy fer some pennyass production?

SEBASTIAN: It ain't pennyass, Max. It's epical - a classic epic.

ACTAEON: A salty saga.

BYRD: The Idiot and The Oddity promote a classy epic...

SEBASTIAN: (the cop) What kinda yardbird didja say ya was?

BYRD: (affecting affected indignation) I'm Winged Victory, not a yardbird! Mrs. Winged Victory to youse.

ACTAEON: Mrs.?

BYRD: Yeah, that's so's stick-up men misses the pernt. Hey, skip the teasers, will ya, n' git to the capsule comments. I go by the critics then go buy my tickets.

SEBASTIAN & ACTAEON: (both flipping hurriedly through their books) The capsule comments? -Be with ya in two shakes of a---

BYRD: (focusing his telescope on the audience) I'm with you two too to eleven. Hmmm, what a comic chorus out there tonight - buncha middleclass mothers....

ACTAEON: (reading) The N.Y. Times: Arenas of Lutetia:- "Horny, corny spectacle, pompously mounted."

SEBASTIAN: (reading) Women Daily Bare: Arenas of Lutetia:- "Catacomb claptrap: (actress' actual name) drives men to drivel in a Roman ruin. In a word, a Ruin."

ACTAEON: (reading) Mew: "A puny, punny vulgarity; trash, privately collected, publicly dumped."

SEBASTIAN: (reading) A-Pee: "Campy ultra-nonsense."

ACTAEON: (reading) The Bourse Literary Supplement: "Snappy, if needlessly clinical - er - cynical."

BYRD: Well, now, The (relishing the title, profound vowel, whistled "s") Bourse is highly ad-hered, so if they---

SEBASTIAN: (reading) New Corker: "Gags, guts, gore, and caveat emptor; witless, humorless, meaningless, and scabrous."

TABULAH: Scabrous??

BYRD: (edifying) From the movie of the same name.

ACTAEON: (reading) The Blue Republic: "Insipid sex epic."

SEBASTIAN: (reading) The Mundane Drama Review: "An orgy, neo-Nero; set your brain at zero."

BYRD: (shaking out a rope ladder and clambering over the rim of the nest) Blueboys, it done sound made to order! (pausing midway on the ladder) Why should the aged eagle spread his wings? (reaching the floor and flapping his wings en route to ACTAEON; the spot on SEBASTIAN blinks nervously and goes out; we now see that BYRD's trousers are exaggeratedly pegged in the worst taste of the early '50s: BYRD is given to pulling continuously at the seat of his trousers as if they were stuck in his rear aperture he has other compulsive gestures, as the nervous, self-

conscious quaking of his leg whenever he is seated; a bit of music accompanies his vaude-villain flight-dance; then, to ACTAEON, with immodest directness:) Ya built?

ACTAEON: (automatically) Fer extra mileage.

BYRD: Come on, kid, I'll take ya in.

ACTAEON: I can pay my way. Besides, as pro-motor for this piece I can get in---

BYRD: (the real dirty old man) But can I, Ganymede? Listen, I said I'll take ya in! (putting claws on ACTAEON, trying to pull him from the low wheelchair) Get off that, will ya, yer getting piles!

ACTAEON: Getting piles? - I'm makin' 'em! Hey, what are you, some kinda prevert or somethin'?

BYRD: Depends on yer route. In theatrical circles, I am known as Admirable Byrd, by appointment to Her Majesty Lutetia of Gaul, purveyor with Gaul.

ACTAEON: What gall!

BYRD: Well, the name of the country has been changed to protect the guilty. Look, this sit-shat, er, chit-chat is killin' the pace o' the piece: it's box-office poison. -On-hard! (knocking away his club with the telescope and then slamming ACTAEON's head with same) That, Mr. Sebastian, by-way of expedition!

ACTAEON: (passing out, with all the high drama of a classic death) And so begins our ex-perdition....

(On ACTAEON's "And so" the HAIRY CHRISTIANS hum up a chorus of "Hairy Drama, Hairy Drama, Drama, Drama, Hairy, Hairy," etc., etc.)

BYRD hurries to the flats and begins to shoo the girls off into both wings with such ad libs and responses as:

"Say, if it ain't Silvana Machalino, famed Eye-tralian movie star! -How's yer sista, Anna Purna?"

"Begone with ya now, Veras - Veras, is it?"

"Veras Cruise."

"Genes did ya say yer name was?" "Genes Tyranny," etc.

BYRD finds the opening in the flats (at their center) and folds half the flats into the right wing and half into the left. What is disclosed upstage center is another coliseum, much like the scene painted on the flats, but this one fully semicircular and about 8' in diameter. Busily humming, BYRD whips out a huge white diaper, returns to ACTAEON, and wraps it quickly about ACTAEON's rear, catching up both ends in his beak like the traditional stork carrying the baby:)

BYRD: (humming) Lullaby and good night,

We kick off the next flight;
With lusts so inbred,
Ain't it better you fled?
Diaper up, handsome guest,
And we'll wing toward thy quest.

Lullaby and good night,
Number seven's just right:
The Arts seven are;
Seven deadly Sins mar;
Seven Sacraments free
Seven days of the tree.

SEBASTIAN: (a spot finding him squatting as before) Hey, you there, Impress-ario, what's with the diaper?

BYRD: Simple:- this is the kinda show you go into a babe - (dragging ACTAEON toward the new coliseum) and come out a woman.

ACTAEON: (poking his head out of the diaper for a second, then dropping immediately back unconscious) More likely the kind ya go into a woman - and come out a babe!

(As BYRD drags his burden toward the coliseum the HAIRY CHRISTIANS steal silently back and position themselves, arms locked, around the structure, much as they had done before the flats. BYRD does a double take when he sees them: he is face to face with TABULAH.)

BYRD: What in the name of El Katy Durado---?!
(recouping his poise)
Knock, knock!

TABULAH: (hard voice, annoyed) Who's there?

BYRD: (suddenly half coy, half bored: a routine) Hymen.

TABULAH: Hymen who?

BYRD: (singing) Hymen the Nude for love,
Stuck up whenever bare, see?
Funny but---

TABULAH: Funny butt?? - I don't doubt it, especially if ya (indicating ACTAEON) jist dropped that.

BYRD: Sorry, Stone Wall Quacksin, but he ain't M'hammed. Besides, I'm too much the Tightass Andronicus to end in a family way. -This baby's Sebastian, and I brung him up for Lutetia.

TABULAH: (sudden horror) LUTETIA!! - the Temptriss of Terror?!

BYRD: Oh, cut the Pop Art put-on, will ya, Butch?

TABULAH: It ain't Pop - it's Flop: Flop Art.

- BYRD: (his left index shooting for her groin) Hmmm, seems to be a quack in the dyke. Wonder if I should knock, er, stop it up?...
- TABULAH: (very tough) Beat it, Buster---
- SEBASTIAN: Buster where?
- TABULAH: And call before ya come next time!
- BYRD: Ahhh, yer mudder shops on Avenue C!
(dragging ACTAEON toward a wallphone fixed on the tree)
Call-Girl comin' on like cherry-stone clam....
(snatching up the receiver, irked)
Operator, get me VD-4-2-4-69.
- ANNE: (positioned at right end of the coliseum, the earphones on her head; gum-chomping operator's nasal) Flop-House hello! Some sought sex, some sanctity, each man found what he wanted. This is a recorded---
- BYRD: (impatient) It's me, the Come-Blow-My-Beak Eagle Zeus!
- ANNE: (exact repetition) Flop-House, hello! Some sought sex, some---
- BYRD: Lemme in, will ya, I'm right downstairs. Got a bounced baby boy name o' Sebastian Narbonne for Lutetia o' Gaul
- ANNE: Sorry, Eagle, this is a recording: on the flip side The Stone Wall Quacksins sing These Stones Stoned Stand!
- HAIRY C's: (pounding stones and mallets together and singing with sensationally brassy discord; a Rock tune:)
These stones stand! Yeah! these stones leap
To their Veiling, heap on heap!
Though man's life ain't long at all,
Mythic walls will seldom fall!
- These stones hold! Yeah! these stones fight!
These stones when the Time is right---
- TABULAH: (pointing, with a vengeance, to ACTAEON) Ruff-ruff!!
Git that gorgeous pounda ground beef! Tear off his clothes! -Manon, let's go!
- HAIRY C's: (avalanching toward ACTAEON and stampeding over the bewildered BYRD in their ebullient abandon; singing:)
These stones need no goose to go
Git the Goof incognito!
- ACTAEON: (helplessly tossed, dazed, eyes rolling, his uniform being torn off) Such an anlage for inimicalness!
- BYRD: (on his back, TABULAH astride his legs) Whatchoo dogs, er, Ladies wid de Strept Throats doin' to de dear boy?
- TABULAH: Strippin' 'im down so's he kin make better time wit

Lutetia - Lutetia, known to intimates as Woman As Fate, so's sprightly Sebastian kin meet his fate, if I may so depress myself.

BYRD: Yeah, well how's about my cut first. I'm the muddle man in this butch-er shop, if I may so suppress myself.

TABULAH: We wouldn't give ya the sweat off our balls on a hot day in December!

BYRD: Indecent indignity naught but a chântfloozy sans portfolio could voice! No pay, and at my age!

ODALESQUE: (busy at ACTAEON's clothes) Yer age?

BYRD: Yeah, I've got one foot in the grave.

TABULAH: (testing his legs, still saddling them) Which one?

BYRD: Not my good one, I can tell ya that much!

(With sorority squeals of competition and delight, the HAIRY CHRISTIANS finish removing ACTAEON's uniform, dividing his shoes, trousers, jacket and cap among themselves. He is left in an animal-fur loin cloth and fuzzy wig, hunter's bracers, bands, and sandals which the women have dressed him in. He now resembles the mythological hunter Actaeon familiar in classical paintings. The women step back from their joyous work with fitters' pride.)

GENES: There! I ask you, is that a sight gag or is that a sight gag?

ACTAEON: A cat's ass it is!

GENES: Gee, I coulda sworn it was a sight gag....

TABULAH: (rallying call) Hairy Christians! - to the arena palace, peopling it with our lies, er, prize!!

HAIRY C's: TO THE PALACE! TO THE PALACE!

BYRD: The RKO Palace...

TABULAH: Only you are K.O.'d!
(fast jab to BYRD's chin, knocking him out)

ACTAEON: (admiring his new get-up) I could actually leave the theatre like this - incognito - no one would recognize me.

ODALESQUE: Or want to.

TABULAH: (to ACTAEON) Lutetia awaits - come on, let's hoof it!

(Music; soft bands of circular light. The HAIRY CHRISTIANS perform an elegant interpretive ballet with ACTAEON centered in the corps, the male danseur-noble as it were. The movement is energetic, long-lined, and dramatic though somewhat exotic in persuasion.)

HAIRY C's: (singing) The light we get is by error
 Though getting light is all our art.
 Why is-ness is, reiterate,
 And seek our weak points in the great
 To make a proxy marriage of their strength.

(As they dance the women part the coliseum (which is joined in its center), exposing a third coliseum within, exactly like its outer shell, merely a foot narrower in diameter. More dancing. Then they open out this third coliseum to expose a fourth, the narrowest of all. Finally, as the music and dancing reaches its climax, they swing open the fourth coliseum; all fall in kneeling positions. LUTETIA is revealed within, immobile and statuesque, as if the silent secret center of a carved Chinese Ball. She wears a form-fitting blue gown, vaguely Roman in style, with a slit from thigh to ankle that exposes her long shapely left leg; platform wedgies, bicep bands, shoulder-length earrings, massive hair dark and loose that falls almost to her ankles; she is awesome, dazzling, gives the impression of being a foot taller than anyone else on stage; the image projected is that of a mythological goddess, too perfectly beautiful, remote, unreal; she speaks in a thick exotic accent (a mixture Spanish-French) that occasionally borders on the incomprehensible. At her feet is a large bees cone; at her right side a gong is suspended, at her left a strip of fly paper. When LUTETIA is revealed, ACTAEON is situated close to SEBASTIAN's wheelchair; from this point until (and unless) indicated ACTAEON merely mouths all his lines while SEBASTIAN actually speaks for him, reading the lines from his book. No one appears to notice this, relating to ACTAEON as if the voice came from him. End music; ACTAEON's eyes are riveted to LUTETIA's enormous, perfectly globular bust.)

SEBASTIAN: Say, who's de brassiere?

TABULAH: Strap yer tongue, Yankee slob! She is Lutetia Parisiorum, Empress of Santorini-in-Gallia, of Thera, Therasia, and Aspronisi extant; immortal, immoral, imperishable, and immense; like Regretta Garbo she is privileged to wake from her sleep with lipstick perfectly applied!

SEBASTIAN: (ACTAEON trancing toward LUTETIA like a zombie beckoned by her bust) Quel Massif Central!

LUTETIA: (immobile) Bah fong goul!

SEBASTIAN: (ACTAEON awed) And it comes in pairs?!

LUTETIA: On some people.

SEBASTIAN: How much?

LUTETIA: A pound a pound.

BYRD: (reviving) Buy now, the Bourse's bound to swell.

ODALESQUE: Buy now, lay later.

SEBASTIAN: I will, con-sultants!

LUTETIA: Tabulah:- gif zis man a pound of animal quackers.
Eef zey are not fresh, he srow zem in your face!

TABULAH: (apprehensively handing ACTAEON a box of crackers)
Let him who is without thirst take the first piss...

SEBASTIAN: Oh, er, thanks, Tabulah. -Yer name's really Tabulah?

ANNE: (with dumbbell confidence) Tabulah Rasa.

SEBASTIAN: Tabulah Rasa?

VERAS: Yeah, she's called that 'cause ya can draw on her.

SEBASTIAN: Well I'll be sure to come to ass, er, class.

LUTETIA: (breathing deeply) Sebastian, can We host you further?

SEBASTIAN: (ACTAEON resuming his concentration) Er, more pointedl
perhaps. I didn't ask for crackers.

LUTETIA: Clarify!

SEBASTIAN: See, er, you're pretty well appointed....

LUTETIA: (whipping out her huge falsies and handing them to
ACTAEON) You're pretty well disappointed - yet here
on Santorini each man uncovers exactly what he seeks.

SEBASTIAN: Clarify.

ACTAEON: (himself; quietly to himself) But dese ain't real....

LUTETIA: (stepping regally out from the coliseums, her voice
assuming grace and authority) Welcome to the Arenas
of Lutetia, Praetorian Sebastian from Narbonne, O
handsomest hound of the Baskingvilles. To zese arenas
all men come, contend for within and find the answer
to zeir destinies, duplicative as the modes of zeir
contention and the answers to zeir destinies may be,
for We are efer patient. -Care for a quacker?
(pointing to, reminding him of the box in his hand)

SEBASTIAN: (himself; puzzled) Cracker where?

LUTETIA: (the royal impatience) Chew!

BYRD: (fluttering alongside ACTAEON to advise him) Refuse
nothing lest you learn it's all you have refused.

SEBASTIAN: Well, is it all or is it nothing I'd refuse?

TABULAH: (forcing BYRD back down) All's said, Sebastian.

ODALESQUE: (innocently) Yeah, could even ring down the curtain
right now. Or close up the coliseums....

SEBASTIAN: (as ACTAEON hesitantly opens the box) Guess they mean that's how the cookie stumbles....

LUTETIA: Chew! Ingest the yeast that raises all of yesteryear!

BYRD: (once again, under TABULAH) But be sure yer ingestion fattens you; ingesting, ya dig, too often merely dearly consumes.

SEBASTIAN: Hello:- a wafer cut in the shape of a fag, er, stag.... (total silence; great suspense; ACTAEON munches carefully, a sour expression coming over his face)

LUTETIA: What's that face for?

SEBASTIAN: What's it for? Ya gotta have somethin' between yer ears.

LUTETIA: (seizing the box from ACTAEON's hand and staring into it with dismay; screaming) Eeeeeeeek!! Tabulah Rasa, zere are worms in zis cookie box!

TABULAH: Why hound me? I don't charge extra for the worms.

LUTETIA: (slinging the box in TABULAH's face) Hippie-hippo! Bruce-dyke! I srow eet in your face! Would you haf the knell appointed translated by worms?!

TABULAH: (defiant defense) Afore you send him to 'em, ya mean? (quickly to BYRD, pushing the box at his beak) Pollywanna cracker?

BYRD: Why, don't you? Ah's chicken.

LUTETIA: (fuming, to TABULAH) -Drone on, drone, you faze me not! As bee but a drone, and you must be what you are!

SEBASTIAN: (himself; to himself) Wonder what that is....

ODALESQUE: (attracted to SEBASTIAN by his voice) Whatcha doin', Mayor Culpa, readin' comics over the hot air?

LUTETIA: (clearing her throat, recouping composure; reapproachin ACTAEON) Sebastian, dear, can We confenience you further? Direct you to the facilities, perhaps?

SEBASTIAN: That's thoughtful of you, but I must refuse. I really haven't used the toilet for days.

LUTETIA: You hafen't used the toilet for days?!

SEBASTIAN: (modestly) Well, I take walks.

BYRD: He lies, he lies in his teeth!

SEBASTIAN: (as ACTAEON yanks a sparkling bridge out of his mouth) I do not!!

ODALESQUE: He do not; but there be so many ways to tellin' the truth.

LUTETIA: (suddenly suspicious, suddenly no accent) You Catlick?

SEBASTIAN: Yes.

LUTETIA: Roman?

SEBASTIAN: No.

LUTETIA: What?

SEBASTIAN: Greek.

LUTETIA: Greek? With a name like Sebastian?

SEBASTIAN: Well, that's exfactly it: my name ain't Sebastian.

HAIRY C's: YOUR NAME AIN'T SEBASTIAN!! YOU'RE NOT SEBASTIAN?!

ACTAEON: (SEBASTIAN mouthing) Not by a long lob. My name is Actaeon.

HAIRY C's: MY NAME -- HIS NAME IS ACTAEON!!

LUTETIA: (storming across the stage, accent again) Dissemblance That leafs a nice confusion!
(toppling TABULAH over and yanking BYRD by the beak)
Get up, you geak! you flutter of fat and feathers!
-You haf erred by a quintessential nominative!!

BYRD: Well, as long as it was something funny...

VERAS: (as LUTETIA reaches for a whip) Uh-oh - heat's on!

SEBASTIAN: (himself) Think so, huh? Wait till the play starts.

LUTETIA: Bungling bird! Pollyanna Purna! Sidney Queenstreet!

BYRD: (fluttering off to flee the lash) But whad I do wrong?

LUTETIA: (laying on the whip with each nominative) You haf beaked off a pointless pilgrim! a veteran flop! flown to our front a useless Ulysses! an odious Odysseus! an Adam inaccurate! a desunked saint - Saint Sunked!!

NIGHTMARY: Tell 'im, Tempter!

GENES: Flog 'im one fer each of us!

LUTETIA: (pointing) Yon arch archer ees Actaeon - not Sebastian

BYRD: Well, I assumed---

LUTETIA: Assume nothing!

BYRD: But I thought---

LUTETIA: You're not paid to think!

BYRD: I ain't paid at all....

LUTETIA: (turning the whip on the women) Surrounded by pencil sharpeners, bootblacks, asskissers, busboys and yes-men - gooney birds, deisel dykes and stone-wall lipshits!

ANNE: (racing chaotically about) Da regal rage! Help, oh, help! Flee - girls, flee! She's come to blows!

VERAS: (moving more slowly) In dat position? - ya kiddin'?

SEBASTIAN: Hey, cool it, Empress:- if I ain't exactly whatcha had in mind, how's about letting me get back to my beat?

LUTETIA: Now that you know the sacred airway to Santorini! - and can bring a brace of yankee doodle dogs right to our door?! Don't be dumb! No man leafs Lutetia! (turning wildly about, her eye lighting again on BYRD)

BYRD: Gevalt!

LUTETIA: Doubtless it's all a deliberate plot on your---

BYRD: I don't understand---

LUTETIA: (screaming) Read the script and you will!

ODALESQUE: (reading over SEBASTIAN's shoulder) 'Scuse m' manners, Mayor. Anything in dere dat clarifies the plot?

SEBASTIAN: (himself) Everything does. It's a perspicuous piece.

ODALESQUE: Dat's news. I thought you wrote it.

SEBASTIAN: (himself) I did.

LUTETIA: (at the center of the coliseums, yanking bows and arrows from the huge beehive and tossing them out in every direction behind her; the HAIRY CHRISTIANS scamper for the weapons) Balletomanes! Amazons! Arm yourselves! Deal death to the actor Actaeon! The impious Imposter! -Tabulah, take him!

TABULAH: (armed, rushing at ACTAEON) Dis da part I dig da most!

ACTAEON: (backing away, hands raised; SEBASTIAN mouthing) Peace

VERAS: Of what?

ACTAEON: (wrestling with TABULAH; SEBASTIAN mouthing) Ya come on strong, butcha only a pussy don' know howda be pet..

(ACTAEON wrests a large bow from TABULAH and runs toward the tree, the HAIRY CHRISTIANS in hot pursuit. SEBASTIAN leaves his wheel-chair, hastens to a phone at the right edge of the coliseums, lift

the receiver and begins dialing in a panic. ACTAEON clammers midway up the rope ladder and, hanging onto a rung with one strong arm, battles the women, using the bow like a sword, as a dashing pirate of old. LUTETIA trances out, standing statuelike within the coliseums exactly as she did when first revealed. SEBASTIAN and ACTAEON speak for themselves from now till indicated

VERAS: (having a ball) He's in topless form, ain't he?

GENES: Musta played in plenty swishbucklers.

ODALESQUE: (singing) Don't let your paps get in the way,
Don't let your tired tits hold sway, etc.

SEBASTIAN: (desperate) Hello! Hello! Anybody there?!

ANNE: (calmly picking up the receiver on the tree while the battle rages all about her; dumb as usual) Flop-House, hello! Some sought sex, some sanctity, each man---

SEBASTIAN: Who's this?

ANNE: Anne.

SEBASTIAN: Anne who?

ANNE: Anne Droginnie.

SEBASTIAN: Put on Actaeon.

ANNE: No Pop Art put-ons, sir: this is Flop, Flop Art---

SEBASTIAN: Lemme talk to Actaeon, will ya?

ANNE: Yer barking up the wrong tree, sir! Ain't no such entity in Eden--- oh!---

ACTAEON: (grabbing the phone from ANNE and precariously bent over backwards to speak into it) -Yeah?

SEBASTIAN: Hello, Actaeon?

ACTAEON: (happy, normal enthusiasm) Hi, Seb!

SEBASTIAN: Listen I want ya to bend over backwards from now till--

ACTAEON: Whatever for?

SEBASTIAN: Cause if ya bend over forwards, I'll let ya have it right between the teamwork--- hello? hello?....

(ACTAEON slams down the phone in disgust and resumes kicking at the women, jabbing breasts, beating heads with the bow, etc., etc. SEBASTIAN begins to strip quickly and then redress himself in a Praetorian guard (or gladiator's) uniform, helmet, wig of leonine locks, etc., which he finds in the beehive next to LUTETIA.)

ACTAEON: (placing blows) Fake that, Plunder Woman! And that, flat! How's that, you Jeanne d'Arc freak!

GENES: Whad he say? Whad he say?

TABULAH: What is this, Deaf-House?

GENES: What?

BYRD: (near wing left, the unheard oracle) The struggle at the edge of the cliff will end in the arc of your plunge, my friend, for all the skyward expertise your hawkish half can soar of you shall nothing do the once that alimentary Mouth hath oped its nest for thee!

SEBASTIAN: (to LUTETIA, removing articles of the new uniform from the beehive) 'Scuse my plunderwear, M'am. (modestly turning his back to her in order to dress) Wonder what Miss America's doin' in a disorderly house like this...

NIGHTMARY: (mounting GENES' shoulders, balancing her dummies, the better to get at ACTAEON) Hold still, Gene Dark...

GENES: (like a child at a parade) Whadda ya see?? Nightmare, whadda ya see??

NIGHTMARY: (like an admonishing parent) Shut up! - there's nothin' to see.

ACTAEON: (climbing several rungs higher to be above striking range) Like climbin' the stairway to stardom...

VERAS: Hard to have him hung as he is, the flat, er, fleetfoot stag...

BYRD: (having found ACTAEON's book by the left wheelchair; going to him and tip-toeing up) Believe ya left some litracher in the john, sonny.

ACTAEON: (reaching down for the book) Oh, er, thanks, thanks Admirable Byrd, that's right admira---

TABULAH: (seizing the moment of ACTAEON's distraction to spear an arrow into his crotch) Ah-hah! I struck flush!

VERAS: (admiring) Left him sans portfolio, didja?

ACTAEON: (excruciated expression, hands grasping his wound) Thou hast struck out mine ascendancy!!

ANNE: (very dumb operator's accent) Jay-zoo! it's jist all so Abelard, sooo Abelard! -Give the kid his book.

SEBASTIAN: (emerging from the coliseums (as ACTAEON receives the book), clothed in his new Praetorian uniform, bearing an enormous net and lengthy spear; crying out with

great fury) TURN ABOUT AND DROP YER DRAWS, er, PAWS!!
 Don't draw! you heartless scissor-Toms! or I'll slice
 off yer udders and serve tossed-tit to the dogs!!
 -Where yis are! -Don't budge a boob!

TABULAH: (a clash of cymbals; the women turn to face him; then,
 after a second of stunned silence) The Come-down Kid!

ODALESQUE: Party-crasher! --Take the A train to come down?

GENES: (still shouldering NIGHTMARY) Will Killjoy!

NIGHTMARY: Cop! - what ain't filled his quota!

ANNE: (thinking it a dirty word) Rabelais!

VERAS: (silencing her ignorance) Shut up, will ya.

BYRD: (to the women) Y'all standin' around and posin' fer
 animal crackers? Move! - git his union card.

ODALESQUE: (no courage herself) Yeah.

VERAS: (not moving) Git his yard; find out who lent him.

TABULAH: (pause; then, tough, breasts protuding) See here,
 you - who ya frontin' for?

SEBASTIAN: (imperiously) Stand back, Bull! I am Sebastian Nar-
 bonne, Commander of the Praetorian Guard, a sapient mar-
 a Christian by faith, and the author of this play!

VERAS: Conflatulations!

ODALESQUE: Yeah, it reads like a flop!

ANNE: Cow-flop - and hard as hell to memorize the lines.

LUTETIA: (suddenly breathing hard, but not moving) Sebastian!!

BYRD: If yer Sebastian, who's the hanging ham?
 (indicating ACTAEON clinging to the ladder)

ACTAEON: (nearly doubled up in pain) Seb... your book---

SEBASTIAN: He is Actaeon, my brother. My twin brother.

BYRD: Identical-sin brother?

SEBASTIAN: Fraternal.

BYRD: I thought so. Good fer you. The dissemblance is close
 but not exact. You may be worth yer tumble.

TABULAH: (with tough authority) Whadda ya want from us?

SEBASTIAN: Like Kafka, I seek to be confirmed.

LUTETIA: But wiz a brotherly difference. The diffidence being that you think your verdict in advance and so write only after a gratuitous image here. "Laties - slay him!! It ees nearly dinner time.

TABULAH: Come on, men, defend yer table, liberty, property, and pursuit!

ANNE: (very Flatbush) But I'm tired already.

NIGHTMARY: Giddyap! Giddy-yap!

GENES: (moving forward under NIGHTMARY) Some class to you!

(As the HAIRY CHRISTIANS mass toward SEBASTIAN, he steps back and opens his net. They circle threateningly about the stage. The immobile LUTETIA follows the action with large, excited eyes.)

BYRD: (to ACTAEON) Fly away brother bug, ya house's on fire.

ACTAEON: (struggling up the ladder) Now... but I have cues... I'll alight... when least admired, most desiderated...

NIGHTMARY: Weeeeeeeeeeeeee, I'm the King of the Cowboys!

TABULAH: Yeah? What's yer name?

NIGHTMARY: Male Evans...

BYRD: (to ACTAEON now climbing into the nest) Sorry to have busted up ya terlet trainin' jist to bring ya home to roost. C'est fromage....
(looking into a Variety sheet, part of his trappings)
Well, ya can't pick 'em every time....

ACTAEON: (settling himself painfully) Forget it, man.

BYRD: (philosophic) Forget yer a man. Yeah, that'll be now.

SEBASTIAN: (swinging the net overhead) Good God, be with me now.. (letting fly the net over the amassed HAIRY CHRISTIANS) There's an understanding between gladiator and net to which the adversaries are often included...

ODALESQUE: (as the women are caught with a roar of dismay) A snar

VERAS: (furious) How dare---

GENES: (bewildered) Where?

TABULAH: (disgusted, shamed) Blind-House, too?

NIGHTMARY: (cascading from GENES' shoulders to the tumble within the net) My fiend Flicker's caught her heel in a hole!

GENES: (bottom girl in the heap of bodies; emphatically) I am an appalled hippie! Watch yer hands, Hippo, don'---...

ACTAEON: (holding up a small gored object, gazing about in the nest) Could hang up some balls 'n start a hock shop...

SEBASTIAN: (fresh from his triumph over the women, turning almost immediately on LUTETIA, his spear raised) Order my brother released and a plane to fly us back from whence we came, or I'll run you through and hot as the Moslem victor screw your still-warm corpse!!

LUTETIA: (smiling scornfully) Sebastian, you'd haf my head?

SEBASTIAN: (switch) No, but ya can help yerself to some of mine..

LUTETIA: Pardon?

SEBASTIAN: Never!! Erection is nine-tenths of the truth!
(a clash of cymbals and drums; he runs the spear into her chest; she takes hold of it with one hand, but remains otherwise unmoved; he sinks away awestruck)
Crappy... if heedlessly cynical....

LUTETIA: (yanking the spear out of her unharmed body and dumping it in the beehive) You seem to sanction no recall that I am the Empress Immortal, wizout birth, wizout death, impermeable at the least, impenetrable to thought or spear. -I'd better stash this frustrated phallus.

SEBASTIAN: (crushed, on his knees) Impenetrable to thought? Ain' it more important to be understood than even desired?

LUTETIA: (romantic music; stepping out securely from within the coliseums) For mortals perhaps; and not the best of---

SEBASTIAN: But representing immortality is death in the theatre of Realism.

LUTETIA: What audiences call "Realism" is a full-fledged lie:- actors pretending not to be acting. Yet the masses eagerly eat this lie, pushing aside the truth. Besides Lutetia needs no answers to constructs, queries whose only jurisdiction ees the brain.
(gradually very feminine; raising him by the chin)
But rise, lathered:- your playwriting talent intrigues me, you are urgent, and you seem amenable to mend.

SEBASTIAN: And you to men...

LUTETIA: (sudden switch; hunger pangs) Jeet?

SEBASTIAN: Joo?

LUTETIA: Not yet.

SEBASTIAN: Then let's.

LUTETIA: And parley your particular approach
To sole-centered material in a set-up
More consubstantive. -Admirable Byrd,

Unbind the Hairy Christians with dispatch.
 A talent scout failed may a bondsman hatch.
 -Ladies, prepare the banquet, up, make haste:
 We yet may win to husband what twins had won to waste.

(BYRD unknobs the net as LUTETIA and SEBASTIAN drift regally across the stage to avoid the prop-change. They pose amorously together as if for a movie advertisement. Once freed, the HAIRY CHRISTIANS singing snatches of their songs, rush to the coliseum flats folded to the right of the beehive, uproot them, and carry them several yards downstage center to build two structures: one a long table about a foot off the floor, the other a reclining couch (raised about 2'), placed behind the table and a bit to its left. Rushing back and forth, ODALESQUE bears sumptuous plates of food (from a neat arrangement along wing right) and places them on the table. VERAS removes the flypaper from above the beehive and suspends it above the table. In place of the removed coliseum flats, we now perceive a large transparent drape. The silhouette of two figures is apparent behind the drape, at this point unmarked by any of the characters who are now reclining themselves, Roman fashion, around the table. The figures are ACTAEON (unknown to the audience) and WILLIAM TELL (played by a Negro actor who during this scene is raised on buskins). TELL will function as and perform the ritual of the mythological giant Procrustes; ACTAEON is his victim: i.e., TELL will stretch ACTAEON along flats which he finds alternately too short or too long for ACTAEON's height. When the flat is too long TELL will stretch ACTAEON and appear to make him fit the length; when the flat is too short, TELL appears to be sawing off ACTAEON's ankles and head. The nature of this terrifying torture dawns on the audience only by slow degrees, and LUTETIA is engaged in constantly and variously blocking SEBASTIAN's view of it.)

ODALESQUE: (carrying a plate heaped with ears of corn) Presenting "Lutetia Borgia's Cattered Affair," a program of the greatest poet-tasters and pigs, recreating for your employment, their chicquest vomitorium.

LUTETIA: (guiding SEBASTIAN toward the couch) Let us lie here, upstaging the rabble, and not make common cause wiz their rapaciousness.

SEBASTIAN: (seating himself comfortably) Ain't always wise to situate too far from the hand-out.

LUTETIA: (brushing aside his finger that would goose her if she seated herself without looking first) Or too well to be efer keeping your hand out....

ODALESQUE: (with another plate) From the isle of Titicaca... (unable to resist the word's immodest implications) from the Atlantian fields of Theseusian maize and day-glo lucerne, here's liquor of maize or maguey for the pill-grim perplexed, cassavatree or tapioca for the proxy-polis, and banana or United Cute for the culturally deprived or Hairy Christians as some with wings, 'scuse me, Byrd, in the wings are give o'er to so label them....

LUTETIA: (languishing; purring with regal semi-concern) My people are divited: some get off on the coca plant, whilst others make eet on the betel nut, yet more on the sora liquors sucked from ears of corn, and others still by raising corn in their ears and lunching little that's extracurricular.

BYRD: (end romantic harps; seated at right head of the table, tensely quivering his ankle) Even da chorus earns a exposition in dis piece of resistance. Deir America!

ODALESQUE: (to VERAS haughtily seated) Whadda ya want, Cruise?

VERAS: (indignant) Veras Cruise!

ODALESQUE: Veras Cruise.

VERAS: Oh, something light.

ODALESQUE: -Fried feathers?

BYRD: (jumping, a wreck) Bite cher tongue!

ODALESQUE: (pointing to GENES, malicious) Somethin' dark - Genes Dark, maybe?

LUTETIA: (to ODALESQUE) Slaf! -gif me dat menu.

ODALESQUE: (rebellious) I am not a slave! Ah'm a odalesque - Miss Odalesque. Ah give the orders around here.

LUTETIA: Gif me dat menu and you'll be able to gif them! (snatching the menu from ODALESQUE; to SEBASTIAN) Here, pick something out.

SEBASTIAN: (his hand working away under his loin cloth) I am.

LUTETIA: What?

SEBASTIAN: Crabs?...

ODALESQUE: Ya want me Ah should start fussin' wid caucasians? Ah thought tonight was hairy, a, dairy---

LUTETIA: (her temper overriding her glamour) Idiot! Anybum caught inconfeniencing de alien will be summarily subjetted to indignities! -You know that - brink crabs

ODALESQUE: (bowing exotically) We concede to the convention. (sloshing downright to where SEBASTIAN left his book)

NIGHTMARY: (her finger on GENES' thigh) Seny in great gonna say "Grace"?

GENES: You order, Madam Nightmary.

NIGHTMARY: (non-committal) Grace.

ANNE: (shoveling food with one paw, exhibiting a pair of slippers with the other; too Flatbush) I copped dese paper slippas offa Japan airlines - cute, ain't dey? 'N if my feet was size tree idda awmosta bin worthwhile.

ODALESQUE: (leafing through the book as if through a cook book) Caucasians, caucasians... See-A-You-See-A... Dis one o' dem mix-till-blended, cook-till-done jobs. Big help

GENES: (turning up her nose) Sumthin' smells around here.

TABULAH: (slurping a corn) Every dog smells his own.

GENES: And the food tastes like shit!

TABULAH: Yer mouth tastes like shit so whadda ya expect from the food ya shove in it?

ACTAEON: (as TELL stretches him to fit a long plank) Don't stretch the point! God! no! no! Any end but this!

TABULAH: (thinking GENES spoke) Now look, Lean, dat sad it ain'

BYRD: If ya grabbed a bite before ya came here, no.

ACTAEON: Wouldst make a tall tale of a man true, er, through enough as is? Procrustes, I implore... oh... AAAHHHHH

VERAS: Didst hear a susurration deaving in the dark upstage?

TABULAH: (as the gougers at the table turn to observe the gruesome silhouette; thick brogue) Ah now! could it be that bit o' scene-stealin' thatcher after referrin' to?

ODALESQUE: (reading from the book, absorbed) Lift with pincers, bind back offensive claws, cut to desired length...

VERAS: (as all stare at the silhouette) Hell, if dat dhere ain't as corny as the whimbolism of Tennessee Williams.

BYRD: As corny, but not fairly as clear.

LUTETIA: You two there! -behind the air-ass: -clarify!

SEBASTIAN: My script would have some---

TELL: (darkly) O Mistress of Allness, th---

NIGHTMARY: (suddenly spotting how ANNE has all along been scraping away at her foot with a stone; crying out in alarm and drawing everyone's attention to ANNE) Hey, you cock-eyed cocksucker! Whadda ya tink yer doin' wid dat?!

ANNE: (startled; defensive) Nut-in. It's a pamastone; leeme alone, heh? I got my footsize downta bout 5 aready.

ODALESQUE: (reading) Do not ever kill before cooking or all the

innate whole-someness will be...---

- VERAS: (offering a consolation glass to ANNE) Here, dear, have some snow crap orange juice instead.
- ANNE: (peeking into the rim; apologeticly) It's no crap.
- TABULAH: (nearly retching at the bad pun; socking ANNE) Oh, boy come on, will ya? Dat's anuff to make me retch, wretch
- ANNE: (the upset causing her to belch loudly) Bbllaaaa....
- BYRD: (ecstatic) Oh! if only you meant it!
- NIGHTMARY: (her friend, trying to help her) Anne, Annalah, don't aggravate Tabulah, she's cranky as Christmas right now.
- ANNE: (very timid, very dumb) Cranky?
- BYRD: (as TELL is heard cranking up a plank) As in crank.
- ACTAEON: AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!! I can't make the grade! Mercy, Procrustes, mercy... AAAAAHHHHHHHHHHHHH!!!
- ANNE: (the bloody cry scaring up another belch) Eeehhhaaaa..
- BYRD: Conflagulations!
- TABULAH: (to ANNE, insane) GRUNT! what'll people - what'll people thinka ya father?!
- ANNE: (thoroughly terrified, bending backwards away from TABULAH) Ya mean once me mudder niggers out who he is?
- GENES: (one-track mind) Sumthin' smells around here.
- TABULAH: (doubled fury, smashing dishes) So, -leave the room!
- ODALESQUE: (still reading) After the caucasian's outer shell has been carefully displaced, remove the breathing gills, carefully keeping the intestinal tube clean, then, care cleaning up the scum, always carefully cleaning up th--
- TABULAH: (her fists clenched amidst the disorder of food and plates she herself has created; to ODALESQUE) Eat shit, kitchen-clit! I don't see you cleaning up!
- ODALESQUE: Ah make no mess.
- LUTETIA: (lovelocked, reclining) The dead alone make no mess.
- TABULAH: A word to the worm's indifferent!
- ODALESQUE: (dropping the book, sloshing to the table) Which means everythin' said here! Ah don' see why Ah should clean up the trough you sows've wallowed in. Ain't it enough Ah have to brew the stew you
(rising to rage)
chew, you Hard Damn---

VERAS: (ever self-concerned) Whadda ya supposed to eat of dis

ODALESQUE: (screaming) What's on the plate, Madame!

BYRD: (the peacemaker) Now, sow, now, Miss Arabesque, when in Rome do as the Romans do.

LUTETIA: (calmly) When in Rome do better than the Romans do.

NIGHTMARY: 'Scuse me, Anne Droginnie, can I borrow your dressing?

ANNE: (absolutely paranoid; Flatbush meek) Ya want I should go home in my slip?

NIGHTMARY: (heavy Brooklyn accent) Gosh, Anne, I was only asking for the vin-nay-gre and er-rill.

ANNE: (at the point of tears) Derision! Derision!
(then, sobbing hysterically)
Derision any more!
(immediately, industriously, resuming scraping her foot

GENES: (at last, illuminated) Ahhh! Nothing so succulent as one's own foist; so repulsive, as another's...

TABULAH: (exhausted, sweet sigh of triumph) Finally got through to her! Like pullin' teeth.

ACTAEON: (as TELL extracts ACTAEON's bridge and tosses it from behind the drape onto the table) How will I commune?

TELL: (darkly) By air. Commune - don't consume.

BYRD: Or commute. --In this business, ya gotta repeat a lot.

TABULAH: (picking up the bridge) Mellow drama! - if dis ain't da most literal-minded play I ever audited!

BYRD: (having sipped from the consolation glass with exaggerated distaste; to ODALESQUE, who has finally seated herself catty-corner to him and just on the point of relaxing) -All right, baby, this is a stick-up!

ODALESQUE: (nearly jumping through the ceiling with fright) What?

BYRD: (the Great Lecher) If ya look over the counter ya'll see my stick is up!

ACTAEON: (shrieking) Not the saw!! Not the old saw!!

BYRD: (trying to retract his offense, offering ODALESQUE the glass) Oh, here, here, have some pre-Columbian coffee.

TABULAH: (rampaging up in all her formidable fury, BYRD being the last straw) You men!! You muckrapers! You lousy lechers! Tabulah Rasa has had more of you than she can shove on up in front of and behind the arras!! Mer let one in and you let the whole United Hates in!

(collisioning to the arras with the women in a tackle at her heels, and yanking it down; a thunder of drums) So disis how yis carry on soon as our backs is returned!

(The downed drape discloses ACTAEON, utterly disheveled, writhing, sweating, and gored, stretched across a plank closely resembling the banquet table but a foot too short for his length; WILLIAM TEL in the black hood, mask, and tights of the classic executioner, is about to disjoint his legs at the point where they dangle over the plank. TELL is holding an awesome saw gleaming blood and gripping ACTAEON's left leg. The apparition, bombarded with flickering lights and aggressive, vulturing shadows, is raised on a several foot platform and this height abetted by trick spots swells the tableau to twice its actual size. LUTETIA and SEBASTIAN break from their embrace. The whole cast is jarred out of character by this scene en scene and reacts with disgruntling as if they were all a crowd at a cheap, run-down wax museum:)

GENES: What a sight for saw eyes.

ANNE: This they call entertainment?

VERAS: It hounds and astounds the untutored, filling them with pity and error.

NIGHTMARY: 'E'da been better off bankin' on the long scenic tour, stead of a short cut like this.

ODALESQUE: Jist a long walk on a short plank, eh, Hactaeon?

ACTAEON: That's the wrong and short of it.

SEBASTIAN: Actaeon! Didn't I warn you to wait in the wings?

BYRD: He was weight on my wings. Is the first act over?

TABULAH: Saints Deservus! Procrustes bent on sawing off his leg.

GENES: (munching popcorn) Pretty grizzly, eh what?

TABULAH: (blasé) True, but it can only happen twice in a lifetime. Hey, go easy on the sound defects...

(A blast of music that renews the play's tone and mood. Most of the cast snaps back into character, but a few women are lazy.)

SEBASTIAN: (springing from the couch and exploding into the crush around the tableau) PITY!! Procrustes the Stretcher!!

TELL: (ominous, booming cry) He am I not, Sebastian Narbonne

SEBASTIAN: (struggling toward TELL over the tangle of women) Don' fake or falsify your post in the administry of conformity! Wouldst cut mine brother down to size?! I'll suction yer bum-gut out and ring it around yer scrot---

ANNE: He'll kick ya so hard you'll land in Canarsie.

- VERAS: (feeling SEBASTIAN's calve) I'm sure: calves like a caribou! Grab some, girls, it's a God-send!
- LUTETIA: (growing to her towering height amid the chaos, drawing her massive hair about her like a cloak) A rotten race with the young amongst them not the least offensive!
- (LUTETIA completely covers her face and her body with her hair, apparitioning into a pillar of sexual veil: an ear-splitting concussion of sounds rushes into the vacuum of her transformation, an explosion of fire and light that tosses SEBASTIAN, BYRD, and the women several yards back downstage. Heavy smoke clouds the tableau from view and when it dissipates the torture scene is gone. The women, driven to madness by the pressure of the confused event on their uncontrolled tempers, now frenzy about to "defile" the banquet table: amid shrieks and cat fights they scatter the food, appear to urinate, defecate, and menstruate in the plates, drag BYRD along the floor, this way and that, through the offal and spilling containers. Bizarre noises strike and deafen the set.)
- HAIRY C's: (variously, uncertain) Here's piss in the polis! Dung for the rungs of arithmetic! Minstrel flow to inunsate the out-lying provinces! Harry Pischer! etc., etc.,....
- ANNE: (in the center of the mayhem, scraping at her foot with the stone) Got 'em down to near size wh-footer by now..
- BYRD: (dragged, defiled, and deplumed) Dollars to doughnuts the turnover in the role of Byrd is astrological....
- LUTETIA: (pacing downstage, wringing her hands, on the brink of being thrown out of character) This ees matter much too strong for contemporary tastes...
(turning to the cast, screaming, no accent)
I am going to have to ask that all the women and children present leave the stage!
- TABULAH: Ho-ho! No one aboard fits that description, Director.
- LUTETIA: Over-rehearsed understudies! Gather your garbage! get off the set! pick up your severance pay in the dressing room! and darken no more the bolted door of this thoroughly ruined production!!
- (LUTETIA returns to character, stretching out her arms as if/and casting a spell on the HAIRY CHRISTIANS. They abort their riot and, stiffly zombified, clean up as much of the mess as 30 seconds or so permit; bearing it off through every exit. BYRD sweeps up. LUTETIA hypnotizes SEBASTIAN to his feet during all this.)
- LUTETIA: Let's hope tomorrow's performance goes smoother than th
- BYRD: (still dazed) They look like alotta Zombies Off-Broadway... Really fired 'em, didja?
- LUTETIA: Betcher basted bottom I did! That's what I get for hiring hippies as extras.
- VERAS: (indignant) We are not hippies. We're freedom fighter

LUTETIA: Fighting for the freedom to let nazism prevail.
(to BYRD)
Janitor, hurry with that. Intimacies follow could ill afford the inhibiting crane of your luster's periscope.

BYRD: (sweeping) In other turds, don't expect any kind of recompense for doin' the dirty work....

LUTETIA: (clicking into her vamp nature; strolling arm in arm with SEBASTIAN) Sebastian, I haf you on my list.

SEBASTIAN: (sitting on the couch before her) What list?

LUTETIA: (standing, seductively trellising his locks on her fingers) I write down efrone I efer offer my body to.

SEBASTIAN: Sure ya got enough paper in the palace?

LUTETIA: (admonishing) Sssssh! -die kinder! -Hairy Christians: begone! Get ye to a parlor house, to a water closet.

HAIRY C's: (vanishing) Sooooooooo long,
(appropriately naughty measuring gestures)
country cozened. Best of luck in Twin, er, Sin City.
Hairy Drama, Harry Fischer, Drama Mama, etc., etc., etc

BYRD: Oh, lark! this is where Miss L. gets sweet nothings whispered in her ear!
(as LUTETIA sits on the couch, he seats himself on the other side of her and whispers continuously in her ear)
"Yer nothing," "Yer nothing," "Yer nothing," etc., etc.

SEBASTIAN: (suddenly the bashful bumkin of the seated trio, hands dangling between his awkward legs) Gosh, Miss Lou Tit-sa, I ain't never cottoned to a gal so much in all---

LUTETIA: (the woman of the world) Don't haf ants in your pants.

SEBASTIAN: Dey's crabs.

LUTETIA: Fear not: at the precise cue you shall behold me whole, redealed in all my nakedness.

SEBASTIAN: (the proud, rhetorical Praetorian again) -And if I am dead when that day comes?

LUTETIA: Then you will rise again to enjoy the pleasures!

BYRD: Oh, he'll rise again. -Yer nothing, yer nothing, etc.

SEBASTIAN: Rise again? --As one yoked to the sins of all, like Nightmary's dummies, and pelted to death to purge them!

LUTETIA: A naif beleef that one may remunerate for the sins of all. Normally the all must pay for the sins of one.

BYRD: The Ecu-demeanical Counsel I didn't sit here to listen to. Yer nothing, yer nothing, yer nothing, etc., etc.

LUTETIA: But such a pride follows par force your foolish Yankee frenzy for permanence. Ah, yes, I know you well.

SEBASTIAN: Oh, yeah?

LUTETIA: To a "T". A capital "T" for Time. You wack-off life awaiting an exactness that isn't. You bore me. I temper time, take it now; ergo, I am always.

SEBASTIAN: Listen, Leggy, I ain't no Henny James to deed. I'll have you know I'm already famous.

LUTETIA: So you are famous. It's nice to know someone famous.

SEBASTIAN: Yeah, it happens to the best of us.

LUTETIA: For what?

SEBASTIAN: In my case, being a dramatist. Why, I've written a hundred pieces for the stage, a bare one of which this happens to be.

LUTETIA: (impressed) My, my, a hundred pieces for the stage! (dreamily) You'd tink by the low of averages at least one of them would be good.

SEBASTIAN: Exigence! Time is on my side. Jist wait'll this one hits Europe. It'll be back with badges.

BYRD: So will I; and obscene buttons to boot. Yer nothing---

LUTETIA: (reaching for her whip) I'll pluck your peak, bird of lay! Get out of my ear ~~ant get out of here!~~

BYRD: (fluttering wildly) Wrrackkk! Rak! Ya nutin! Squarrkk!

SEBASTIAN: (as BYRD riding the broom, "wrrackks" around in circles to flee the whip, then exits wing right) Up-up & a lay

LUTETIA: (parading to rewin his attention) Christian, I take a privates interest in theatre... and its makings...

SEBASTIAN: (interested) A angel, are ya?

LUTETIA: If you've truck with such nominatives.

SEBASTIAN: If I've what?

LUTETIA: Now I coot stage any number of your oeuvres right here.

SEBASTIAN: Here, in Santorini-in-Gallia?

LUTETIA: Why not? The location's marfell-us. Why, we haf people coming in here off the streets.

SEBASTIAN: Whadja expect 'em to do? - drop through the ceiling?

LUTETIA: Must you be contemptuous of all in theatre safe yourself

SEBASTIAN: The writer writes to his contempt: every not himself in a play-house performs in his proxy, wishing to become him, however personalizing the production to blot his penmanship. Translators envy the author who they are not, and secretly wish him ill.

LUTETIA: (opportunistic) How winsomely you put on your plea. -Marry me, ant I'll put on one of your plays.

SEBASTIAN: Yer putting on this one already. How can one be more put upon to come by a mounting?! - if I had to marry every poota who wanted to put on a play of mine, they'd have me up fer bigga-than-me!

LUTETIA: Then starf!

SEBASTIAN: (musing, distant) Course, I could turn Arenas of Lutetia into a "semi" - "semi's" are big this year: semi-documentaries, semi-commercial, semi-underground, semi-pornographic - yeah, "semi's" bring in the bread.

LUTETIA: Is Lutetia to take it then, Christian, that efen a cockatrice can not hoax you from your habits?

SEBASTIAN: (quickly, surprisingly paranoid) What habits? I have no habits. I've got the man inside. The Man with the Man Inside - yes, mam, that's me.

LUTETIA: Ant to what do you attribute your achievement of the Man Inside?

SEBASTIAN: (theatrically, melodramatically sentimental) To my mother - who stressed above all, frugality.

LUTETIA: (ditto) Quel sentiment!

SEBASTIAN: (catching her and forcing her toward the couch) Cut da small rap, baby, what time ya get outta dis nut house?

LUTETIA: (arched brow) I get out elefen. But when you get out, Christian, I haf no idea. Ibid., no man leafs Lutetia.

SEBASTIAN: (pinning her to the couch; the stud) Think so?

LUTETIA: Wiz authorization, for I haf come from behind the pleats of time, and speak, recalling its hem's stitch.

SEBASTIAN: Got any more clichés?

LUTETIA: (hurt) That was my first original line! Ant yet, the heart in lovf lovfeth the cliché.

SEBASTIAN: In love?! - a horse's hot piss you are! -Which acourse (covering her violently) don't widen the litta slice in yer melon I'll spoon---

ACTAEON: (back in the nest again, having bent out backwards and lifted the ~~phone's receiver~~) Operator, BA-1-4-69-2.

LUTETIA: (a phone by the couch ringing) Don't answer!

SEBASTIAN: (his excitement choking out the triple negative) In this business, when the phone rings, you don't don't not answer it. --Bleak House - hello!

ACTAEON: Yes?

SEBASTIAN: What?!

ACTAEON: (reading from the book) You, er, they got a mummy in there. Maybe 7. The 7 bows, er, bows of Jacob---

SEBASTIAN: Dummy! That ain't what I asked you to ask.

ACTAEON: (as SEBASTIAN's fingers find LUTETIA's rear) What ther

SEBASTIAN: Where the Continental Divide is.

ACTAEON: Yes?

SEBASTIAN: (very annoyed) Yes!

ACTAEON: Jist a minute.

SEBASTIAN: But wait, now I don't---

ACTAEON: Yes?

SEBASTIAN: Yes?

ACTAEON: Yes??

SEBASTIAN: Yes???

ACTAEON: (reading) Right there. She's the Cont---

SEBASTIAN: (angry) I know! Look, don't horn in on this, too! (slamming down the receiver, a dog in heat)
Him I need! --Now, to rezoom, how in was I---

LUTETIA: (as his fingers resume their search) You playwrong!

SEBASTIAN: Oops, sorry, just using the servants' enterance.

LUTETIA: Open other end.

SEBASTIAN: But that ain't in the blocking. And you're the Direc--

LUTETIA: Block-head!

SEBASTIAN: What in hell you want from me? I only write the lines.

LUTETIA: (in a dither) What are you doing?

SEBASTIAN: Don't ask - just learn.

LUTETIA: (resisting his efforts to twist her onto her stomach)
May I be so forward as to inquire the purpose of---

SEBASTIAN: The purpose of this "play" is to raise a standard to which all twins to come may repair. The thing is in the hand of God, and so isn't free t---

ACTAEON: (reading) --Who said, "Get thee behind me, O S---

SEBASTIAN: (losing ground) Lutetia, don't take it personally.

LUTETIA: What other way is there to take it??

SEBASTIAN: Disclose your price! No jewel would be too costly---

LUTETIA: My drawer with jewels is surfeit. So's my drawers.

SEBASTIAN: (reenforcing) How I know: turnaround 'n I'll promote y

LUTETIA: (her hand planted cruelly in his face, kicking) How came your tastes to venery preposterous?

SEBASTIAN: I'm my brother's keeper. Please, Kitten, won't you---

LUTETIA: Certainly - providing we can both purr together.

SEBASTIAN: Er, wouldn't it seem funny if we both purred together?

LUTETIA: Seem funny? Who'd be listening? -Ant don't buss me, either: if eet fails to excite, what then will I haf??

SEBASTIAN: (with reheated and Absolute determination) -My sucklin thy pap as chlorophyll the sun of life!---
(ripping her gown and desperately kissing her nipple)

LUTETIA: (in shocked, catatonic dismay) I find you, like your vehicle, very self-indulgent!

SEBASTIAN: (crazed, as if dying of thirst; gasping with unearthly ebullience; drool racing down his scratched chin) If one can not indulge himself, whom then can one indulge?

(Suddenly, CLEOPATRA, a member of the audience, a very withered and palseyed old lady, carried away by the scene, quakes and struggles up from her seat to bravo the action in an ancient voice)

CLEOPATRA: Sock it to 'em, Sonny! sock it to 'em right now!!

SEBASTIAN: (his teeth sunk in LUTETIA's knees, pinning her arms to her thighs, totally insane) Lutetia Parisiorum -- tantalizing! tempestuous! who are of all women the most beautiful, of all mammals the most mammalian! -- Speak! - wilt Thou wed the Praetorian scribe Sebastian mere man and of Christians the humblest?

LUTETIA: Anytime, Goldyhocks sh---

- SEBASTIAN: (astounded, collapsing) You will!?!
- LUTETIA: (readjusting her disordered hair and gown) Er, why not? Long as the nuptial barter matches the protocol of our marriage law, such as eet is in Santorine.
- SEBASTIAN: What protocol?
- LUTETIA: That you renounce your Christian religion and denounce your brother Actaeon.
- SEBASTIAN: (a second shock, re-floored) What?!
- LUTETIA: The former ees a supersensory insult extraneous to the earth efer, whilst the latter ees unefer earth itself, so far as you're unlearned.
- SEBASTIAN: Renounce my faith?
- LUTETIA: Ant convert to credence in me. -You must convert:- eet's expected. Wiz Taylor ant Maritwin Monroe were not aboff such inconfenience: who are you to hesitate where stars like that rushed in?
- SEBASTIAN: Forsake my twin, my only brother?
- LUTETIA: Ant circumcise, er, scribe a whole where now you only half. Know you woman willingly wifed to a hemihusband?
- SEBASTIAN: But I would lay down my life for Actaeon and have all--
- LUTETIA: Haf nothing! You SHALL lay down your half-life for him, unless you cut off his head---
- SEBASTIAN: (as in "that's old hat") It's been done.
- LUTETIA: -in the manner to be inscribed.
- SEBASTIAN: (rage) Primitive! predatory siren! of an Orpheusless--
- LUTETIA: In return for all of which I shall open up Santorini-in-Gallia as the front tier from which the clear rill of Being spills and shallows your pedestrian sandals on soil so uncertain life discharges time, and time, the mischievous plodder, sinkcrophates its heels in a slough of LeP age's mucilage.
- SEBASTIAN: (handing her distant ecstasy a handkerchief) Here - here's a hanky - take care of your mucilage.
- LUTETIA: (swiping the handkerchief with incredulous anger) Is this then your answer?!
- SEBASTIAN: (giving her the middle finger) No -pivot and rotate is
- LUTETIA: (dropping the handkerchief over his finger) How dare--

SEBASTIAN: Baby, you've got fuck-appeal, but that nuts I ain't. Decry my family's faith and murder my brother---

LUTETIA: You haf no grounds upon which to refuse!!

SEBASTIAN: (allowing the handkerchief to slip to the floor) Honey I have no grounds. Ma grandpa was landed, though.

LUTETIA: You sidewind when your sole finite essence hangs on t--

SEBASTIAN: Can you suggest a simplicity more suitable, being offered, as I am, the shitty end of the shovestick?

LUTETIA: What other end is there?

SEBASTIAN: Presplicely!

LUTETIA: (straining to calm herself) But, Sebastian, you fail to grasp the dissensions of the option profert your pointless fate: what will you do when you get olt?

SEBASTIAN: Die, like everybody else. Why -you got some new idea?

LUTETIA: See aboff.

SEBASTIAN: I mean for a Christian. And the above, Beautiful, definitely was not.

LUTETIA: (very soft, trying to embrace him) Sebastian, I may n be Able to cook as well as a bacheolor, but I can---

SEBASTIAN: --Then who needs you?

LUTETIA: (cringing away) Not you, obviously!

SEBASTIAN: Obviously! So let's terminate this too disasterous dichotomy of intention, shall we?

LUTETIA: (very hard) Terminate eet is what I haf efry intentio: of doing!!
(hastening to the gong above the beehive, then turning aside and rushing to the couch-phone instead; lifting the receiver and gritting into it with malicious force William Tell!! William Tell - to your Empress reenter

SEBASTIAN: (as the gong, untouched, resounds profoundly; hands to his offended ears) William Tell - who he?

LUTETIA: Tell is the Arch Bitchup of Gaul and will know how to read to death the scrapple of your in-bred twin!

(WILLIAM TELL emanates at the back of the theatre in an ignition of hurricane flashes and evil shading; he is garbed as before but augmented with a black flowing cape, Medieval hat with feather, heavy bow, sheath of arrows, and a golden coil of rope. He strid halfway through the audience, then stops, tailed by a protest demonstration line of the HAIRY CHRISTIANS, all armed with bow and arrows as well as protest placards. TABULAH leads the line

hefting a poster that reads:

BANK on
THE
BOMB!

with the "BAN THE BOMB" letters elegantly printed in red and the "k on" letters penciled in as if by a vandal. ODALESQUE bears a sign reading "BAN THIS BOMB". VERAS carries a smallish placard in the shape of a Valentine heart which reads, "BANK IN ME", and has sentimental flowered arrows piercing the design.)

HAIRY C's: Hi, there, Romantic Lead, how ya makin' her? etc., etc.

LUTETIA: Sophistmores! Don't bite the hand that feeds you!

TABULAH: (to the women) Shup up, huh, I wanna hear this.

LUTETIA: Arch Bitchup, how was it/shall it with the historical Praetorian Guard who turned his steps from the ground of Truth and took to Christianity?

TELL: (forbodingly) I will tell.

SEBASTIAN: Me, Jane.

LUTETIA: (quickly) -We know that! How shall Act One end?

TELL: (dark, echoing voice) Martyr him! It is in the psychopathology of sabateurs to hold always that they are martyrs. Put on his stupidity to our service by bringing his belief to life.

SEBASTIAN: To death, you mean! What's this about my "stupidity"?

LUTETIA: Efer slow to acknowledge an intelligence smaller than hers is she can ill afford to so expeditiously promote her own loneliness.

TELL: (stepping onto the stage and laying brutal hands on SEBASTIAN; to the HAIRY CHRISTIANS) Take him to the tree!

SEBASTIAN: (struggling) For what?! Now fate a---

TELL: For folie en famille. The Original American Sin.

SEBASTIAN: (the women dragging him toward the tree) For not raising Cain to a brother unable?! Lutetia---

LUTETIA: Dispatch him on the upstage side of the tree as on the dark, other side of Mars, will you Tell? The sight of so much life leafing a man might madden his audience to Dionysian retribution.

SEBASTIAN: (pitifully) But, Lutetia, my heart's on the right side!

LUTETIA: You'd haf lived stronger if eet were on the actor's

(pointing to the tree)
left, like efrybody else's.

SEBASTIAN: (dragged behind the tree and hidden from view of the audience) Lutetia! relent! Mock the irrevocable!!

LUTETIA: (gathering up her gown, moving toward the coliseums)
How can I? Do you? I am the image of Unsaid Eferlast-
ingness in Atlantis, Paris, Machu Picchu, and Santorini
in-Gallia, the labyrinthian center of the Arenas of
Lutetia and I must be what I am. Efen blood of the
most ephemeral, efen yours, will out.

(The strange silence of the HAIRY CHRISTIANS is painfully notice-
able, morbid and lugubrious. They draw back from the tree to near
right wing, forming an execution squad 45 degree angled to the
backdrop. TELL positions himself in front of the line, fits his
arrow and readies his bow first. The women follow suit. ACTAEON,
popping about in the nest, watches all this; but when the bows
are raised he covers his eyes and sinks out of sight. LUTETIA is
now in the center of the coliseums, resuming her immobile stance.)

LUTETIA: (an eery, inhuman sound) This audience of your play
participates in you, O Praetorian Sebastian Narbonne,
and swells your martyrdom to a hecatomb....

(The HAIRY CHRISTIANS burst into a shrill acappella as red and
yellow flashes blind the clarity of the backdrop. Then weird,
chaotic music counterpoints their sound. TELL and the women let
fly their arrows at the back side of the tree; the deafening noise
barely permits SEBASTIAN's gasp to be heard. TELL runs to the
tree and knots one end of his rope around its right side branches.
He catches up the other end under his arm pits and begins to pull
the tree slowly about as if working a heavy circular grind. The
HAIRY CHRISTIANS scurry fearfully into the coliseum around the
unbreathing LUTETIA. There is total silence now except for the
creaking of the tree as it turns inch by inch on its ball-bearings.
The women, with little-animal gestures, bring together all the
coliseums from within, one after the other, finally shutting the
fourth and locking themselves up inside its full semisphere. At
that moment TELL completes turning the tree half about and we see
SEBASTIAN, several feet above the roots, crucified against the
uneven bark, with his hands bound behind him and seven arrows
stuck in his bleeding flesh.)

End of ACT I.

ACT II.

(Phantasmagoric, darkly silent stage. Slowly a yellow spot opens on SEBASTIAN crucified on the tree. His body is humid, hard with gore. A sound of "l's" seems to buzz about his head; his features wince, his head lifts slowly as if picked at by the sound. Tears are jolted down his cheeks and dilated nostrils. His hair is pasted to his brow and shoulders. He whispers, "Lutetia... Lutetia..." The seven arrows in his body sequin in the yellow light; the minature float and placards discarded in Act I still clutter at the roots of the tree.

Then a spot hits downstage right revealing the two low wheelchairs now placed together. In the wheelchair nearest wing right is seated a Mummy completely wound in mummy cloth and holding the two police uniforms in her lap. The Mummy is CLEOPATRA but this is not apparent to the audience. In the other wheelchair is a dotty old Negro man in contemporary old man's clothes. He is WILLIAM TELL and the audience can recognize this. A bit to the left and downstage of the pair is a rectangular construction, a little puppet stage, with two puppets, one caucasian, one Negro. If the theatre stage has no levels this set-up is now partially collapsed so as not to obstruct view of the wheelchairs: i.e., its "stage" is on the floor of the theatre stage. The Mummy and the Old Man appear to be an audience restlessly impatient for a play to begin.

CLEOPATRA: That's pointless paradox. -Stupidity is certainly more detestable than ignorance, because stupidity can not be altered.

TELL: True, it's a God-send.

CLEOPATRA: So what?

TELL: Sew yer winding, but at least it's not posturing, not sidewinding, if I may so bless and assess myself.

CLEOPATRA: (unimpressed, unconvinced; after a pause, abstractly) Will, I'd have given my right arm to've been born a boy. It's a man's world!

TELL: Can't much tell whatcha was born. -Borne offa museum.

CLEOPATRA: You neither, yer so cold! Cold as a corpse.

(A spaced but steady dripping noise becomes audible, accompanied by a dripping of water from the seat of TELL's wheelchair onto the floor. TELL stirs guiltily, clears his throat, then attempts some quick chatter to cover the embarrassing sound:)

TELL: Wonder what the name of this show is. What does the affiche say?

CLEOPATRA: (reading her program) Not much. "The Premature Ejaculation," subtitled "An Essay in Primeval - er - Subliminology," by Sebastian Narbonne, without apologies for those whose names are omitted.

TELL: Well, they stole all my ideas before I was born.

CLEOPATRA: Borne off. Hush, dear, the program infers as much. Besides, this play provides an exciting peek into undergarment goings-on. You could use some excitement.

TELL: And it's free.

CLEOPATRA: Paying is cheaper.

TELL: (pause; then loud to cover the dripping) Whatsit about

CLEOPATRA: Corsican brothers, crusty, lusty, 'n coarse, the twin sons of Poseidon, who become the joint rulers of Atlantis and rival for the love of a single sex goddess.

TELL: (suddenly lustful) 'N by 'n by, balls! she becomes pregnant.

CLEOPATRA: (annoyed at his interest; self righteous) Send her home to her parents! After all, they brung her up that way.

TELL: It has nothing to do with you; I don't think; it might.

CLEOPATRA: True; it's in the periphery of these new dangled pieces that hocus pocus should be brung to bare.

TELL: (pause) Well, the New York Times came out for it.

CLEOPATRA: I should think they would have come out anyway, dear. The opening of a play is not such a big thing to them.

TELL: (pause) Still, most of the other yellow dailies found it a hodgepodge of anachronisms loosely concatenated by a tedium of bad puns.

CLEOPATRA: (pause; thinking hard) Ever notice, Wille, how some reviewers seem to think "bad" and "pun" are a single word?

TELL: Yeah - there's an understanding between the artist and the public from which the critic is often excluded. The Bible, adumbrating critics, says and I quote:- "Judge not that ye be not judged." And as a toenote to that I sight add: "so what?"

CLEOPATRA: So what?

TELL: Well, that's what I'm telling you:- "so what." But, still, there are things.

- CLEOPATRA: Toby Sure. One of them being that artists at home are premature. And to joint any distemper, bowel movement, institution, establishment, or El Durado - whether madical, plunderground, ridiculous, or avant marred, is to be a toy at home.
- TELL: (bored) At any grate, live and let live. Ya see, wher you live yourself you let others live more also.
- CLEOPATRA: I couldn't agree with you more also, Wille zum Willen!
- TELL: (astonished; then, hearing the dripping now louder than before, replying that much louder) Not very appropriately retired for an Opening, are ya? Don't have too many openings in yer wraps.
- CLEOPATRA: (indignant) Really! I shouldn't think a gentleman would notice one way or the other.
- TELL: Will for the Sake of Will always notices the unusable. Just what are you sitting around in mummy winding for?
- CLEOPATRA: (rallying to defend herself) It's all I've got to bare (but suddenly aware of the dripping and staring at TELL who wrings his wrists in agitated humiliation, shifts awkwardly, tremblingly; she nods her Mummy-head during a long, excruciating silence, to indicate accusation, insult, and disbelief; continuous loud drip of the wate steady, rhythmic, relentless; then, at long last:) Have you had this checked into?
- TELL: Recently. I was investigated by the CIA.
- CLEOPATRA: (meaning the dripping noise) Sounds terrible!
- TELL: Not really. It's a status symbol.
(more dripping; more unbearable silence; finally:)
Er, you're an authentic Egyptian dummy, er, mummy, huh?
- CLEOPATRA: How divine-ing of you, Tom, I mean, Tell.
- TELL: Mummies are supposed to be dead.
- CLEOPATRA: Some just have encephalitis.
- TELL: Which, I stake it, is your trouble.
- CLEOPATRA: No, I'm dead. My trouble is I'm peripathetic!
(roaring at her own gag, slapping TELL's knee; vaudevil.
- TELL: (unimpressed; after her laughter lowers) Whadja die of
- CLEOPATRA: Old age - as most unusables must. Also aggravation.
(long silence; she seems to be thinking)
What're you?
- TELL: I'm a timid coprophagist. Also a salesman.

CLEOPATRA: A salesman?

TELL: Yes, that frees me to arrange my time - to - a - suit -
a - your time, your schedule.
(painful, humiliated wait)
Your habits.

CLEOPATRA: (stiffly, staring straight-ahead) I have no come-back.

TELL: (long pause; the drip echoes even louder; at wits' end
to outshout the knell) -Is there a pun on "mummy"?

CLEOPATRA: Naturally.

TELL: Who's are you?

CLEOPATRA: Everybody's. This play's allegoric, ain't it?

TELL: Even so, for plotting purposes, yer supposed to be
somebody in particular's mummy.

CLEOPATRA: Naa - I ain't particular. Mummyhood's a state of mind.

TELL: Shoulda thought it was a mindless state.

CLEOPATRA: No, I mind, I mind very much. -Poor Tom, Tom da Turkey

TELL: (trying to ignore her baiting him) Ya could be mines.

CLEOPATRA: Could be. Poor Punkle Tom. Half-heart hill humper!
(leaning over, ferociously antagonizing)
Poor Calm! Poor Black Tom the peewee-in-his-pants
two faced Timid Coprophagist!! Want two cops' drag?

TELL: (standing in anger and confusion) Dog donnit! Worms!
waste! Fly-jeweled cake of crap! Not so timid I can'
git at yer blueblood bigot-tree fer myself!!
(grabbing at the mummy-winding about her head)

CLEOPATRA: (being unwound) Don't wrap da wrappers, ya procrusty
odor-lesk! Yer pits stink ya sick sex maniac -Eeeekkk

TELL: (spinning her dizzyingly about as a spinning-top off
its string) Merry-go-hound, Mary-go-hound, jist wanna
see what's under yer mummywhite lying fallow facade!

CLEOPATRA: Fallen arched archeologist! - now! dig what you've
(her mummy-cloth shedded, standing there in a tacky
Egyptian-type gown, a bent and withered old hag)
exhumed, churned up, and loosed upon the list of
characters! I hope you're ratisfied!

TELL: (stepping back) -My God, ya look like somebody's bubb;

CLEOPATRA: I am not somebody's bubby!! I'm Cleopatra!

TELL: Cleopatra? - with a sorry quarry like that? Yer face

could catch a month o' piss! Why you need flying buttresses just to bring yer boobs up to par---

CLEOPATRA: No matter! dermis desiccator of the dead! I am too Cleopatra, femme fatale et éternale, ambitious, delicious Queen done in by a basket of flower-children concealing a lethal viper!

SEBASTIAN: Viper where?

CLEOPATRA: (pointing with imperious fury to the tree) See how success goes to his mouth! -but he shall yet suffer saws to ascertain how he be not so happily martyred after all! Saint Sebastian, is it?! -Come on, Wille, let's rig this dummy show ourselves!

TELL: Ourselves?

CLEOPATRA: Sure - like we done all dem Scarey Christian crow-test lines! How's this one-after-death indifferent? Move! where's yer spunk, Punkle Tom?

TELL: Too right! - dem affiche blanks is us:- dawn of day!- we's on the medium air....

(CLEOPATRA, tossing aside the two police uniforms she has managed to keep her grip on until now, rushes with TELL down to the puppet stage construction. BYRD flies in from the audience to help them lift it, join its stilts, etc. BYRD works from the orchestra pit and doesn't step on stage during this scene. After a few seconds of inept aid, CLEOPATRA turns about, as if she's forgotten something, and hobbles toward the tree-telephone, leaving TELL and BYRD, in propman's overalls, to work on the construction.)

TELL: I don't need yer help, Diva Dove.

BYRD: That's what you think. Can't get to heaven on Cleo's bra, Egyptian paps ain't sucked that far.

CLEOPATRA: (en route to the phone; hobbling determination) I'll learn you paps, er, saps howdda roost yer cancellee... (swooping up the receiver with unexpected force) Is Wille zum Wille there?.... Could you stake a message for him?.... He has theatre reservations for tonight, wille you tell him that there wille be no performance tosight because he is coming. If he wills there to be a performance this evening, he should not come.... Denke; take Care.

TELL: (working on the construction; to BYRD) Are you one of dem union stipulations? I don't figger you in dis pla;

BYRD: (as TELL's back is turned, grabbing the two puppets and stuffing them in his overalls; producing two dummies, miniature duplicates of NIGHTMARY's dummies, one white one black, and inserting them in place of the puppets) I'm handy. Also, handy to have around. Also, I got somethin' on you, William Tell.

TELL: What?

BYRD: Well, yer my understudy, ain'tcha?

CLEOPATRA: (clapping her hands at the sight of the completed puppet stage) What a work of handywrafft! Bail on! What could be sicker than a puppet show? Pure switchphrenia!

TELL: Not at all. We're presenting a dream play.

CLEOPATRA: (behind the construction, taking control of the white dummy) But dreams are rituals of sexuals' curiosity.

TELL: (controlling the black dummy) So what? This one's called, "The Mummy Doesn't Make It", or "Jacob: the Apple of his Cry," by Nefarious Sagittarius Narbonne.

CLEOPATRA: Whose dream is this?

BYRD: Sebastian's. Let's go, you two, get with it!

CLEOPATRA: (manipulating her dummy from now until indicated; a sigh, then drawing a deep breath) I don't have the strength in my hands to manip-- to beat you, Sebastian. But wait, just wait till your father comes home!

TELL: (visibly annoyed) Aww, use a whip.

CLEOPATRA: You take off your strap to 'em. It's a man's world.

TELL: (manipulating his dummy from now until indicated) I had no such definition at the time of their childhood. The fact only emerged in the natural violent course of things. Some can really get there, a few do, others can't. I always imagined that Sebastian would grow up, that he would grow up to be a---

CLEOPATRA: I wanted him I wished him to I hoped he would I believe he could really I knew he I thought he really would like to be/do I pictured that he really pictured he'd I'd have plans I planned for his going to I always really had faith in I found that from a very early age he was declined to well I imagined at least that he would thank/think me think me think me I remember when he came I expected I big I things I from I him III him I I I I I I know more about this him I I hope that he but I wished I want I wanted I should have wanted could have wished but then I rethought at least really a I hoped comprehensive commentator on the latest news developments I wanted when we sat down to supper every evening at sex over the I could imagine editorial board or a boxer of the London Times New Times York I and La Prens Dispatched Washington Poster since thirty-six kids've grown me I up president of the United Fates then how I about Emperor of the Universe I well I think not me far-fetched I got rockets going to Venus once was a young I fell out and dreamt about Venus woke me up

Emperor Temper of the Universe Not so I big I think fa:
out fetched I away our family always knew I knew I hope
I always I listen I imagined I that I he he I I I I!---

TELL: New York's a systematic derangement of the defenses, e:
senses.

BYRD: New York's a systematic derangement of the censors...

CLEOPATRA: (her breath failing; satisfied; heavy Brooklyn accent)
In short, a natural disaster befell da people!

TELL: (new tone; inspired) I am a spanking new adult!

CLEOPATRA: (flatly) That so, Sambo? Whatcher name?

TELL: Sebastian.

CLEOPATRA: (surprised) Sebastian, eh?
(very southern, vicious)
You black on one side, white on the other!!

TELL: Hear how the laughter breaks up over the bootlights
like breakers across a beach toward washers who do not
wish to wet their feet! The color of Being's most
certainly blue. What's your name?

CLEOPATRA: Sebastian.

BYRD: Aye, there's the switchphrenia now!

CLEOPATRA: Or Actaeon.

TELL: Clarify!

CLEOPATRA: It came to me shopping at A & S's. Actaeon and Sebas-
tian. He/they is/are a backlash of complexions.

BYRD: Une fève et c'était fendue.

CLEOPATRA: Now yer cookin' with riskco! -Understudy 'im, Tom!

TELL: -Or Uncle Hen's perverted rice. Ya know, lady, fer
Cleopatra yer about as aptly cast as Hack Palance in
"The Life of Lord Byron."

CLEOPATRA: I ain't Cleopatra, I'm Actaeon now.

BYRD: She's better suited to Actaeon, being balless as it---

CLEOPATRA: And you, I mean, your dummy, er, puppet, is Sebastian.

TELL: All right, Mummy, that's as good a go light as any:-GO

CLEOPATRA: Wanna make babies?

TELL: The Mummy Doesn't--- I beg your hardon!

CLEOPATRA: I said:- "Wanna make babies? wanna bang?"

TELL: We can discuss that, Miss Dregeneration, in the dressing room! Yer supposed to be manipulating Actaeon now.

CLEOPATRA: I am. And I just had him say, "Wanna play with me? - wanna make babies? - wanna bang??"

TELL: To Sebas--- ??

(ACTAEON suddenly leaps up from inside the nest; he appears to be an Albino now, i.e., his skin and hair is devoid of pigmentation.)

ACTAEON: (furious) Now just a libel suit, Mummy:- ya oughta consult dis script before ya reiterate dat dhere line!

CLEOPATRA: (to ACTAEON) No need, Mr Fade-out, I got it down pat! (quickly, forcefully, slamming her fist on TELL's crotch) Wanna make me!! Sebastian??

TELL: (doubling up with pain) With what?

CLEOPATRA: (scornfully) You twins are all alike!

ACTAEON: I take reception!

TELL: (finally, in his great distress) You take Sebastian!!

CLEOPATRA: And he---

TELL: (clutching it) And I take you!!

CLEOPATRA: (dropping her dummy, rushing chaotically about, shrieking with ecstatic depravity) I'm a Annē Ma figure! Annē Ma figure! Debauched Dummies of Nightmare! Fleetsoot! Bambi! Pop went Bambi's mother! Pop went diesel dyke! (singing insanely) Sing a song of tri-o
From Byrdie's "Crucifixion!"

ACTAEON: (scrambling down the ladder) Soul Rot Rock from the sick center of Motherdwell's drippings! Vestigial Vesuvius in the vacated crater of privacy! Readers of Freud the Fraud so long you relish your ~~wreck~~ mouths more than they their mouthing of you to wreck!! Vermin (reaching the crazed duo, raising his bow over them)

CLEOPATRA: Slay us not, the egg and worm of all you'll ever be!

TELL: (dropping his dummy, biting ACTAEON's knees) Upstart come-down rat-brat! Dis audience don' wanna hear from you - dey's here to forget dheir troubles!---

ACTAEON: -And the bombardment of Jamey Joyce brothers so many sittings before their malice-aforethought privacy-violating-house-planted insemination tubes that make and mate their filthy feathers to your nest!!! (his stomach sickened and soured, turning from them to stamp on the dummies and smash up the puppet stage construction with repeated blows of his heavy bow)

Lie flat you molted dermi of death, flat as the floor
 they squat and pass us to! and you go down, go down!
 you box of bad bread, you pan of their panning peers!
 you cardhoard skeleton in a make-believe closet! You
 wood of hollow wind! You lie! You cheat! You play!!

TELL: (delirious) And play's the thing!!

CLEOPATRA: (bounding into the demolition heap) Oh is it ever!
 (picking up the police uniforms; screaming insanely)
 I have NO regrets! I HAVE NO REGRETS! -Eeeeeekkk!!

ACTAEON: (beating CLEOPATRA and TELL off stage into the audience)
 Retired madams never do! Ditto their pimps!

TELL: (under the blows) Eeeeow! Ahhhhh! Bring up kids!
 (halting abruptly, falling out of character to chat with
 and complain to members of the audience)
 There's plenty nice plays, wholesome plays I coulda be
 in! Family entertainment, ya know what I mean? things
 ya can understand. Crap like this, to pay---

BYRD: (now an usher) If it's so lousy ya don't have to stay

CLEOPATRA: (brushing herself off, complaining to a woman in the
 audience) Now you know why zey vill nicht kein gelt.

TELL: (grumbling, seeking to exit from the audience toward
 the dressing rooms) It's cause I'm Black, that's all.
 Can't get a decent gig no-how... Went to every damn
 audition listed this season... Excuse me, man....

BYRD: Madam, if yer gonna stay you'll have to take seats.

CLEOPATRA: (calling out, vulgarly, to TELL) Hey, (actor's actual
 name), where ya goin'? I wanna see the rest of the
 show. We're here already. Come on, siddown. -Usher?

BYRD: (taking her tickets) These are comps. You union?

CLEOPATRA: Sure; so's he. Come on, I brought sandwiches. Sit.

BYRD: (using a flashlight, causing an unnecessary disturbance)
 Take these seats. -Sorry for the inconvenience, sir,
 must seat all latecomers now. No one will be admitted
 during the last sensoryational ten minutes. -Comfy?

TELL: Thanks, Mercury, you can go now. What's to nahsh?

(As CLEOPATRA and TELL are being seated, ACTAEON, recomposing
 himself, wanders back toward the stage. BYRD exits in the direc-
 tion of the theatre entrance. There are no lights on stage now
 except for a milk-blue spot that frames SEBASTIAN's head. He
 gazes upward with the slightest movement as a holy picture come
 imperceptibly to life under the hallucination of a lengthily fixe
 study. Perspiration beads his eyes; his voice is harsh-whispered

SEBASTIAN: This is the ache that tastes. Of arrows in the sinuse

after icy drink, of salt that wet-points the remembrance of a family lunch, of stopped blood in the egg forbade by a heritage our savoring chatters with: For I keep guard over her sleep, to stir, her, gently touching her wrist, when she is restless; but she, Lutetia, dreams only to be startled into wakefulness, she dreams, longs to be brought into being here, to be presented to the actual stage so absolutely that she can step off from it, walk through the aisles along a human audience and out onto the lamplit street, disclosed, dis clothed, yearns to clearly emerge, longs, longs very profoundly, and I, and you Actaeon, or I, or both, are her means, not an exhuming but a first birth, skin of the original kempt, meriting and re-earned, a lady as if and as new was before, a lady who never was before, and an entire credible eschatology sewn to her pureblue train whose arriving gambles, like Adam with the apple, on the polled possibility of her success.

ACTAEON: (tentatively; fearfully) Sebastian...? Sebastian....?

SEBASTIAN: (stirring slightly) Ah.... ...What year is it?

ACTAEON: 288. Why, what year was it when ya went to sleep?

SEBASTIAN: (gazing down at ACTAEON) 288?

ACTAEON: Or thereabouts; the exact date of your martyrdom is uncertain. It's circa.

SEBASTIAN: With good cause:- salvation would be simple then. But just when you've got everything figgered out, ah me! there's always a different way.

ACTAEON: (picking up SEBASTIAN's book downstage right and comparing it with his, calmly, as if in a study) Didja dig the old gal - the silent scream, er, screen queen?

SEBASTIAN: The one tryin' to boost a skidding movie career by ballyhooing her belated stage appearance?

CLEOPATRA: (indignant) That ain't true! The thee-a-ter was always my real forté - and it was my first love, too! Why, I was born backstage, deceived in the wings I was, and've been on and off it since Teddy took the Philipines.

SEBASTIAN: And Cook the Sandwich Isles!

TELL: (munching his sandwich) Hush, Mummy, don't steer, stea - I mean make the scene. Ain't the Old Hudson here.

CLEOPATRA: (elbowing TELL; contemptuous) Huh! Passive petsy! (putting withered fingers onto his sandwich) How's he taste?

ACTAEON: (tickled) God! but she stuck out like a unzipped fly.

TELL: (to himself) Or men's wear in the fifties.

ACTAEON: I tell ya, Seb, that tacky tinseled bitch should be recorded on film. I dug it - peppery paps, all in all!

SEBASTIAN: Why? to exploit her - to exploit even her?

ACTAEON: To preserve her - preserve her for posteriority.

TELL: (to CLEOPATRA) But you was preserved, wasn't you Mummy

SEBASTIAN: Don't you Mad-Ave historians believe in letting anythin die, just die in its time, pass away?

ACTAEON: (arched brow) You don't.

SEBASTIAN: Well, it ain't from lacka tryin', for Chrissake, (looking over the 7 arrows stuck in his flesh) or bad aim neither, if I may denture to be so told.

ACTAEON: Jist what are you doing up there, if I may be so in dis cheat to bask?

SEBASTIAN: Hanging. I'm hanging in the fright direction.

CLEOPATRA: But youse unfortunately off work early, eh, Sonny boy?

SEBASTIAN: Don't pay her critic-complex the ignorance of your art appraisal, Actaeon. She's dead, I wrote it, dead as nails, dead doornails. Come ta---

CLEOPATRA: (vicious) How's yer nails?

SEBASTIAN: Obviously, they've got built-in obsolescence. The arrows too. "As you do not. Actaeon, my descent please

CLEOPATRA: And dump him where the long ones lie, will ya, Acty?

TELL: (bored; yawning) And lie and lie.

SEBASTIAN: They lie not if I can believe the liberties taken with my own script. They sit bolt uprighteous and make bad audiences at the play of their progeny!

CLEOPATRA: See, Wille dear, how the boys play so nice together?...

ACTAEON: (to BYRD peeking out of right wing) Admirable Byrd, can I have some Ralphie Vaughn Villiams, please?

TELL: Leave the boys alone now, Cleo. Be fooled, a, ruled by me. I'm from the lazy-fair school of directing myself.

(Lush, holy music as would score a descension scene in films; at the tree, ACTAEON adjusts the ladder so he can climb abreast of SEBASTIAN; the atmosphere has an off-beat poetry of its own:)

ACTAEON: Do you know what you're missing?

SEBASTIAN: If I did I wouldn't be missing it.

ACTAEON: Not necessarily. Faith requires more than good faith.

SEBASTIAN: (being carefully unbound) You find me wanting?

ACTAEON: To fear God. Else you'd be His emblem, wouldn't you, and this tree His best nest outside of time?

SEBASTIAN: I take it you take it my still having lines outlines my not having held up.

ACTAEON: You have held up. Held up the final curtain, too.

SEBASTIAN: Then life's not worth the price of admission?

ACTAEON: Well, ya may not be canonized by the Catlicks, but yer sure to be lionized by the wasps.

(ACTAEON cautiously cradles SEBASTIAN in his arms, carries him down from the tree and gently places him on the floor. SEBASTIAN seems unconscious. ACTAEON kneels over him and begins removing the arrows from his body, reciting two sentences with each arrow he extracts; they are framed in a blue spot with a white corona.)

ACTAEON: This is for that which they the parents most certainly know. And what God knows.
This for that other than what they know that they must think. And for what God thinks.
This for that they must think whatever it is aids them to exist. And for what God thinks if He thinks to exist.
And this is that which I being them know they most certainly know. And what God knows.
This for I know that other than what they know that they must think. And what God must think if He thinks.
And this for that I must always aid them to think whatever it is aids them to exist. And aids God to exist.
And this last for -- for --....

(ACTAEON finds it impossible to extricate the seventh arrow which is lodged in the cove of SEBASTIAN's thigh. SEBASTIAN, awakening performs this final horror himself, reciting with bitterness:)

SEBASTIAN: For that the first six are stupidity? - the God send?

(ACTAEON, moving away during SEBASTIAN's pulling of the last arrow discovers the handkerchief that SEBASTIAN dropped in Act I; dipping it in the pool of water under TELL's wheelchair, he returns to SEBASTIAN to wash some of the blood from his wounds. SEBASTIAN stares about the stage in wonder. He indiscreetly discourages ACTAEON's administrations, inching a bit apart from him.)

SEBASTIAN: Actaeon, Actaeon, do you know, I really believe that I could happily nest here the rest of my life!

ACTAEON: Plannin' to drop dead in a year?

SEBASTIAN: Don't sidewind, serpent. Nothing can kill me.

ACTAEON: We seen that. But what's the appeal? The premises of

any proposition dixiting a settling here---

SEBASTIAN: I'm thoroughly acquainted with the premises!

ACTAEON: Then why don't you quit them?

SEBASTIAN: Endure-ado! In the search of just what does your sense of odessey serve?

ACTAEON: Frankly, a quick get-away. While the gettin's good.

SEBASTIAN: It's gettin' good here. And as you plunge father into love, love enchants even the peripteries of this space!

ACTAEON: (arched brow) Oh? What do you think of her?

SEBASTIAN: Well, she was fine.

ACTAEON: I didn't ask for your intimacies.

SEBASTIAN: I find her more beautiful than words can express.

ACTAEON: Only words are more beautiful than words can express.
(singing) Oh, she was queen of the quasi-exotic role
When exoticism placed fiftyeth on the
popularity pole!---

SEBASTIAN: (ignoring him; abstractly) Where would you be I ask myself one thousand inexactitudes of the day? This stage is home, that Indes sought by---

ACTAEON: So what are ya tryin' to tell me? -Ya wanna marry the shicksah?

SEBASTIAN: Oh, man, who cracks yer eggs and she don't scramble 'em? She's a myth. Myth Lutetia!

ACTAEON: Didn't know ya lisped. Jist looked like Mee-us Americ to me...

SEBASTIAN: Would I dare better peeking out the Seven Cities of Gold like a paleface polecat Spaniard?

ACTAEON: We concede to the concession. They disappointed Mr. Coronado so I can well imagine what to respect from yo

SEBASTIAN: Exactly, Paleface... Paleface....
(seeming to notice ACTAEON's colorlessness now for the first time; holding him, looking him up and down with disbelief as he speaks)
But Lutetia is a woman impeccably pigmented to a real man's color, she enlivens latencies in historicity and quickens thought to thoughts that make us think we thi because ideas excite us as sex does; she constantly subforms, vacating your lech, to trail back through th bin of sorrows inside the oldest adventure to absorb that flat, taciturn silhouette at the base of the brai there, that is always there: a woman, grand matrix, an other.

ACTAEON: (snapping out of SEBASTIAN's grasp) Aaah, yer mudder takes in wash! There's more to existence than the mixed better-fors a sex goddess in the press release on a troupe of traveling dykes!

SEBASTIAN: Existence is a lecture delivered at the excavation of Lutetia - or whatever name she goes by given a particular man.

ACTAEON: (rubbing his sore arm) I ain't sold.

SEBASTIAN: But are obnoxious enough to think it's incumbent upon me to sell!

ACTAEON: Now, Seb, I didn't s---

SEBASTIAN: I am so one hundred per cent bored, gored, and therefore with the supposed answeredness of things! - you hear me, Actaeon? Having to requite all comers, the challenges of fun and gall, to posit, deposit, and remit. I object! - I'm accountable to no character and to no construct, deny it who builds -and fool he is t--

ACTAEON: Funny defences comin' from the guy what wrote this play Er, you did write this play?

SEBASTIAN: (as if for the thousandth time) YES! I wrote this play and it contains only such conclusions as a well-bred person need not redden to be ignorant of!

ACTAEON: Am I well bred?

SEBASTIAN: Thoroughbred!

CLEOPATRA: (clapping, jumping; a fan) Atta-toy!

TELL: Miss, if you can't sit still I'll call the manager.

ACTAEON: The thoroughly bred Doubting Tom re communion with archetypical types now notifies you (and himself) to serve notice while we still got our union cards. Come. Byrd'll take the tale to the manager.

CLEOPATRA: (to TELL) I got jist as much right to be here as you do, (actor's actual name). Jist remember that.

SEBASTIAN: (thrown out of character by the interruptions) But then again, I am known as a controversial playwright..

TELL: (the smart-alec) What does that mean?

SEBASTIAN: That intelligent, educated critics and audiences like me and that unintelligent, uneducated ones don't.

CLEOPATRA: (full response of disapproval) Hhhiiiiissssssssss...

TELL: You ain't only cunt-reversal, son, youse notorious.

CLEOPATRA: Yeah!

TELL: Howda ya feel about bein' notorious?

SEBASTIAN: Well, there're easier ways of making a living.

CLEOPATRA: But few of making a friend.

ACTAEON: If Lutetia's all that hot how come she ain't hot fer me

SEBASTIAN: Because you don't believe she is. And like all seven-
outs hypersensitive to rejection, you make yourself
ever so available for just that.

ACTAEON: (amazed) That ain't ever so!

SEBASTIAN: Oh, please, you're the type that stands on the sidewalk
and watches people eat through restaurant windows.

CLEOPATRA: Sebastian! how could you talk to your twin that way?

SEBASTIAN: (resuming character; examining ACTAEON closely)
Besides, yer a albino. Tu t'abruti la haut, mon cher?
(pointing up to the nest)

ACTAEON: The loftiest peaks are hatted with snow.

SEBASTIAN: Ah-ha! So I'm to take it, then, it's yer elevation t-

ACTAEON: (finally worked-up) Take it up! And take it's more
likely to be neglect from which I've paled, and take i
that I've been taken and taken for granted too d---

SEBASTIAN: Nothin's good! on stage or off. If I see you often you
have no privacy, no left to lead, and if I lead you to
yourself it's termed neglecting you, termed having time
for every jakes' jacobin and not for you!

CLEOPATRA: They're doin' this jist to kill us, Will'am, jist to
kill us! I can't watch!

TELL: (embracing her) Tut, Tut, Mummy, it's only a play.

SEBASTIAN: You know, Actaeon, I'm getting just so pissed on under
the table having you always around!

ACTAEON: I don't believe that.

SEBASTIAN: It's sick!

ACTAEON: I don't believe that.

SEBASTIAN: (turning in full fury) You don't believe you got ball

ACTAEON: (dead-pan) I don't. Lost 'em in Act I.

SEBASTIAN: (astounded) WHAT??

ACTAEON: You oughta know, Corsican Kid. Arrow seven pierced y--

SEBASTIAN: But I've - my - I mean - your, your - didn't you---

ACTAEON: I ain't no Hydra what can grow a pair in their place.

SEBASTIAN: But haven't you heal---

ACTAEON: (singing) No, Venerable, August, I never did couperate
Some have it that's just why I'm great!

(SEBASTIAN, stunned, depleted, wanders several steps, sits center on the edge of the proscenium; ACTAEON follows to console him.)

CLEOPATRA: (biting her clenched fist; bitterly) Oh, God, Oh God, wish there was something I could do for them, God....

TELL: Now, now, you did everything possible, not necessarily for them, but then again who's impeccable? Hanky?....

SEBASTIAN: (with dry tears) I regret everything, Actaeon, every thing.

ACTAEON: (placing two fingers on SEBASTIAN's wrist) We know.

SEBASTIAN: I erred. There are three of us. Sebastian, Actaeon, and Lutetia. Three roots in the certain soil.

ACTAEON: What shall we, the two, the three, do?

SEBASTIAN: We don't know. How can she extend her timelessness when it apparents only from that she is not yet?

ACTAEON: I'll renounce religion if that'll help; drop all faith if you allow me...

SEBASTIAN: How can I, Actaeon? - I've not renounced my faith.

ACTAEON: But you were the target of the tree and weren't martyre were not consecrated - live, somewhat the less for it.

SEBASTIAN: Even so. Or, perhaps, for just so. The facts of meaninglessness are all the icon we are actually ever invited to worship at.

ACTAEON: I can't remember how to save you. And I read this a hundred times before deciding to be in it.

SEBASTIAN: How would you? for I should save you, that being the temporal order of things, and can not recall how. -So, then, so much for martyrdoms: now for the temptation!

ACTAEON: Your plot seems cyclical.

SEBASTIAN: But cricket. History, not I, wrote it that way. See Proteus' "Lives of the Saints." That's where I got this play from. -Come on, chin up! - last call!
(shouting into the wings)
Music! Singing! Action! Full company on stage please

(Ice-blue and green lights; a polar sun effect high over the stage; an inundation of quasi-sailing, quasi-processional music; a gigantic float is pulled forward from right wing by ODALESQUE and GENES and pushed from behind by BYRD. The float is an enormous bluish and white iceberg that towers toward a pinnacle which is, once again, a circular coliseum, about 7' high and 3 wide. This coliseum differs in that it is a complete cylinder. On the highest point on the iceberg, at the base of the coliseum, is LUTETIA, recumbent and seemingly frozen, cloaked from head to toe in a fire-red, sill hooded cape; the slit of the cape discloses a shapely knee, a long tapering calve, a foot clasped in a brilliantly red wedgie. Just below LUTETIA lies TABULAH, flanked by ANNE, VERAS, and NIGHTMARE with her dummies. TABULAH is outfitted as a mammoth walrus with headpiece sporting two splendid ivory tusks, apparently her pride and joy. All the HAIRY CHRISTIANS are got up as smaller, more modest female walruses, with walrus headpieces, flappers on all fours, etc. BYRD is attired as a penguin, tucks over his pegged pants, bow tie and starched collar, webbed feet, penguin beaked head, etc.; he is covered with obscene buttons and slogans as, "One Will Get You Two," "Two In One Lay," "Drop In Once, Pull Out Twice," "Two In One Shot," etc. As the float (bearing here and there little mottoes and signposts reading "Arenas of Lutetia" as well as representations of the totality that it is) is pulled on stage, BYRD and the HAIRY CHRISTIANS burst into raucous song:)

HAIRY C's (singing) We's drifting toward icy Antartica,
& BYRD: The vast last unopened area!
To ruinous sleep fell Gallia,
While Santorine's a sinking site
Drowning clear pre-Incan light!
So look south, float! to snowy Antartica!
Hidden Antartica! Etcetera!
The Final Prolegomena
To Actuality! Utopia! Etcetera!

(The float halts midway between centerstage and right wing, far upstage. ODALESQUE and GENES, tickled to quit their task, crawl up the iceberg to moon at TABULAH's flappers and teats. BYRD, still pulling compulsively at the crack in his seat, etc., circles about for some seconds on tiny webbed toes, then flaps his stiff penguin wings, makes squeaking sounds, and hops up, with the difficulty that a penguin would have, onto the rear of the iceberg. He waves, as from a parade float, to SEBASTIAN and ACTAEON:)

BYRD: (as a carnival barker) Boys, these buttons certify me as a bird of standing with the avant good. You can take the Byrd at his word, a liberal of impeckable intentions, white on one side and black on the other!

SEBASTIAN (together) A bird of ill-omen is he
& ACTAEON: Quits the air to swim in the sea!

BYRD: Ye twain do unconscionably define me, sans pro-vocatio sans antecedent, my poorly paired plucked puppets, my dyad bedumbed!

ACTAEON: Plucked perhaps,

SEBASTIAN: Viciouscerated never!

TABULAH: (wallowing with importance in the center of her squashed sycophants) Hi, there, Twinnies; what's da latest dirt

ODALESQUE: (compulsively) Byrd's shirt!

TABULAH: (kicking ODALESQUE) Quit dis cast! -Claim pregnancy.

BYRD: (hopping off the float) Exemplary gentlemen, allow me to assail you of the advantages of my acquaintandship:- I am Admirable Byrd, penquin par excellence, en route t revelation in the frozen food department of Antartica.

SEBASTIAN: Penquin par excellence? - I thought you was a condor.

BYRD: I ain't! but shall tweak with absolute condor nathelless Yon Macy's-made marvel beareth the luscious and leggy Lutetia, Empress of Antartica, dominion of ice ruled by a woman with a heart of ice 'neath a bosom burning with the flame of Prometheus, the codpiece liver oiled man!

VERAS: Oily over her dry ice... fake care, fellas...

BYRD: Directly below the tempestuous tyrantess find Miss Tabulah Rasa, a Walrus Dyke, contentedly ensounded by her hungry Harem of Cows!

TABULAH: How dumb! Dey ain't cows! Dey's my huskies, mushable 'n edipal, only way to travel in the meatless Arty Zone

ACTAEON: They don't look like dogs.

TABULAH: Dey ain't, dhere huskies. Don't judge a cow by udders.

GENES: If I so much as udders a word---

TABULAH: (double-wacking GENES with her flappers) -Yer as good as a flapper tryin' to kiss her ass goodbye!

GENES: Hey, Tusks, what was dat for??

TABULAH: Dat was for nothing!

ODALESQUE: (flopping off the float and squirming, walrus-like, toward the twins) Ah-ha! dat dhere's what you think!

GENES: (cranking her head up to TABULAH) Oh, yeah?

TABULAH: Yeah! -Jist wait till ya moo something!

BYRD: Gentleman, Gentleman, identically tombed, a, wombed, I give you the greatest amassment of feminine pulchritud ever, in the eponymous Arenas of Lutetia which their irritable, a, iterative itinerancy disseminates!

ANNE: (dumb) Eponymous?

NIGHTMARY: (the know-it-all) From the movie of the same name.

ODALESQUE: (extending her flappers) Listen, contending Twins, the U.S. elections are, what?, a year* away?

SEBASTIAN: Assuming they take place.

VERAS: (sarcastic) Yuk, yuk.

SEBASTIAN: (snapping, to VERAS) That's O.K., baby, I got a thousand of 'em where that one came from -- every day!

ODALESQUE: And they let you do the script-writing?

SEBASTIAN: Sometimes it's more interesting to take a bone from a dog than a million from a millionaire.

ODALESQUE: Sometimes more necessary.

GENES: (turning up her nose) Somethin's fonky around here....

BYRD: (exploding at the disruptions of his bit; to ODALESQUE) Widow Irene, I thought I told you to wait on the ekberg

ODALESQUE: Hell, Ah bin waitin' on her all mah life...

GENES: (knitted brow) Sumthin' smells fonky,...

TABULAH: Had yer costume cleaned lately?

ODALESQUE: (aiding BYRD to pull out the crack in his seat; antagonizing in the extreme) Who pegs yer pants, Byrd?

BYRD: (resuming his hard-sell over the HAIRY CHRISTIANS! great determination to delay him) My onerous outcomes of a single screw, do not be distracted by these metaphors couched in naughtiness from the momentous stake of your fakes, a, fates: -Look ye, and see how the glacier's steep-sides glint in the dipping sun like the sheen of Diocletian spears, so elegant, so lesbopolitan, that an usher's flashlight freezes into photograph, as Arctic ice the food---

LUTETIA: (suddenly coming to life, melting into a sitting position on the iceberg) Byrd, your brochure is less than admirable and studiedly inexplicit. It is meaning less with them, center-aside, and hides what they behold here

BYRD: But, Empress, I am the route, all records move true me.

LUTETIA: And make a fitfull filing cabinet. But I am She whom all your dossiers depict.
(standing, gloriously)
For I am the Aphrodite Erycina, legendary Enchantress of Atlantis, made not from the seed of Uranos, initial and primeval God, but from his genitalia themselves, his very penis and scrotum, mutilated and tossed in the sea from out of whose amebic foam I then arose, a dawn in September sailing a scallop shell to sundry shores

* (alter to suit exact time)

or blinking glacier toward the Southern Pole.

SEBASTIAN: (uncontrollably moved) Lutetia! Erycina! I have turned this page in the script to write a poem for you---

LUTETIA: Write nothing more until you create me as recurrent as twinned Venus, planet diurnal, planet nocturnal, for am I not as early as Cleopatra on the page of men's minds, as eager as Eloise and patience as Penelope, more exploitable as a Borgia-sister than Actaeon as a brother could ever be?

SEBASTIAN: I take you as my exemplar -- I anticipate you as entitled I shall become, and---

LUTETIA: And never allow me to be. Oh, no, Sebastian, you but affirm the validity of all your concepts the better to rob them of their causal implications.

SEBASTIAN: I - I - am an exemplary gentleman...

LUTETIA: I affirm! Exemplary to those who twin your malcontent with how you are. In your world, as those you pair, you can not earn a dream of sleep.

SEBASTIAN: (distraught, defensive) It matters not a straw!

LUTETIA: You'll go to hell for saying that.

ANNE: (wringing her hands, cowering under LUTETIA, frightened) Wall to walrus, things couldn't be worse!

SEBASTIAN: One need not know what he's doing, only how to do it.

LUTETIA: You play with your play. Words are allies. Why put them in the enemies' service?

ACTAEON: He does his best!

LUTETIA: That is something I must not admit. Sebastian, I ride the bedding of the Atlantic to Antarctica now, for that is the last uncovered area and every space else, excavated, is too snowed over tonight to uncover anything. Will you come with me? If not, I am no woman, merely Diana, a caryatid supporting the base of the brain; and you, a monument to manner and an imagined life. -Will you come with me?

SEBASTIAN: (stiffening, as if in a fit) The offer is gratuitous.

LUTETIA: Never! - gratuitous is in the pejorative.

VERAS: (stimulated) Is she...??

TABULAH: I advise you to consent, Mr. Glad-he-ate-er. Rejection of the Empress is irreverance without impunity.

ACTAEON: (from now until indicated, SEBASTIAN acts and mouths

his lines while ACTAEON speaks them for him) All irreverence is without impunity; but in an age rowing rapidly toward annihilation, who is without irreverence is without honesty.

- BYRD: Honesty will net the artist few admirers.
- ACTAEON: He hasn't the right to admirers - only the non-alienable right to being understood.
- TABULAH: How can we be understood, shuttling, as you have us do, between illogic and ill logic?
- ACTAEON: By getting off at prelogic.
- VERAS: (excited) So that's how you've been getting off!
- ACTAEON: For how you freeze it there is finally what is said.
- LUTETIA: (vibrantly transforming, a voluptuousness trembling her gestures and swelling into her lifted eyes) I'm getting off this Karyai covering now --Walruses, abet me! (the HAIRY CHRISTIANS stand to help her remove her cape) Look! Sebastian, not its twin, but that self-same cloak of flames the Medea-Madonna saw her rival bridaled in.
- ACTAEON: And galloped to ghosttown, a rider beyond arrival! No no, I dis-charge all copyrights to any idea of you! (himself; turning, amazed, to SEBASTIAN) You abandon her to public domain?
- LUTETIA: Not all: he decreates me, he consumes my domain.
- ANNE: (undoing LUTETIA's cape) Who's yer rival, Empress?
- LUTETIA: A man, Anne, a brother,---
- SEBASTIAN: (ACTAEON mouthing the lines as he attempts, quaking, to fix an arrow in his bow) --Rivalled by a mother, by a father! A roundelay of rivalry, a high piled coil, ever sitting, ever choked around its suffering! What an impervious human chain packages the coliseums, infinite enough though their number to thwart must be!!

(LUTETIA lets the cape slip completely from her as several HAIRY CHRISTIANS open the coliseum atop the iceberg. LUTETIA appears to be naked beneath the massive unbound hair tapering nearly to her ankles; but her body is actually covered with thin foam rubber so that her breasts are perfectly formed, pointed outward and still, her groin smooth and blank: nude, she appears more unreal than ever, an ivory statue larger, more precise than life. The cylinder revealed by the parting of the coliseum front is an installation shower with its faucet embedded in a porous top so that liquid may splash down from all areas. The floor of the shower is paved with hound or wolf-like masks, headpieces, claws, etc. The shower's sides are 7 mirrors affording complete views of LUTETIA's body, necessarily complex, elusive, bewildering in the multiplication of its images. The whole cast, including the women, are sexually excited.)

BYRD: (his old lecherous self) That's ingenuity for ya!

ANNE: (dumb as ever) Ingin nudity?

TABULAH: (all her irrepressible butchness) Ugh, Paleface - mit a pair of boobs dat jist don't quit!

BYRD: (renewed salesman enthusiasm) Get the picture, boys?

SEBASTIAN (together) Indistinctly.
& ACTAEON:

ODALESQUE: Four eyes would.

ACTAEON: Facing seven mirrors!

NIGHTMARE: (as GENES reaches compulsively at LUTETIA) Hey, Genes, stop that! Dhere a mix-up in yo genes or sumthin'?

BYRD: (embracing SEBASTIAN's shoulders, steadying him from his trembling) Be practical, man, your play is nearly over! Salvation's got through compromise - but not always of yourself. Sometimes it's preferable - and simpler - to compromise the universe. Take 'er all in. A man must be mad to resist the body's beautiful!

ACTAEON: (SEBASTIAN still mouthing) Your Satan's raven! Madnes is a man's pulling the stunt he has no control over.

TABULAH: (prying herself from LUTETIA's dazzling beauty; clumsily compensating) Ain't me:- me, I'm a lot less mad and a lot more presenta-, er, pretty now.

ODALESQUE: Beer still goes through ya like beer, Butch!

(LUTETIA is in the center of the shower, beckoning mysteriously to SEBASTIAN like a figure uncertain in memory. The HAIRY CHRISTIANs down on all fours like walruses, form a link and shift and sway together as they sing, resembling chorus cuties around a burlesque queen. ACTAEON, mesmerized by the sight, moves toward it.)

HAIRY C's: (singing) Have a good time in the Big Time, my friend
Time's whole now but time soon ends:
It's gulf distends -
Yer drowned with bends!
Have a good time in the Big Time, my friend

(ACTAEON, utterly bewitched by LUTETIA's nakedness, loses all his control and rushes hysterically across the stage, despite SEBASTIAN's enormous effort to block his way. As soon as ACTAEON begins shrieking, LUTETIA, undoing ice cubes that decorate her hair, tosses them onto the unsuspecting women: an explosion, literally under their all-fours, jars them from their singing act; fumes rise, target lights blind their faces; they abort their song and, throwing off their walrus headpieces, masks, flappers, etc., grab the hound and wolf-like costume pieces lining the shower floor and begin fixing these on their faces, heads, and hands.)

- ACTAEON: (himself to end; fighting and shrieking) To get over there! To get over there! No, here! no, no, I won't pause - oh, more than poising to be had in this life-- To get OVER THERE! Jacob's bowed seven times! to Job's seven nights! Free me! FREE ME! Sebastian, at last---
- SEBASTIAN: (himself to end) Actaeon, wait---
- BYRD: (trapped in the scuffle in-between the two, battered, aflutter) Actaeon the Archer, it's not you whom she---
- ACTAEON: But not here! not here, over there -dig me? To get over there!! Stake yourself to status doe! -Fall, Crow!! (driving through SEBASTIAN and BYRD and scrambling up the iceberg toward the shower, tearing his hands and knees on the jagged points in the ice)
- LUTETIA: (chanting) The caryatid Diana is surprised in her bath her lifeless stone purity violated ad nauseum, is breached yet, oh! yet once more, re-profaned on the outmoded turntable of circumstance, O faithful hairy Christian hounds, - and by Actaeon the Archer, his very eyes and rusty needle of lust!
- VERAS: (dripping sexdeath) He wants to buss and futter her!
- TABULAH: (cruelly insane) Unpatch his pieces with yer fangs!
- LUTETIA: (calling above the crowd of women to TELL sitting in the audience) Procrustes! - to thy Mistress' aid!
- ANNE: (terrifyingly, the first, as all the HAIRY CHRISTIANS fall upon ACTAEON) Rake raw his hind! mount his horns
- TABULAH: Thorn-up his hide on his own horns! Kill! kill him!
- ODALESQUE: Claw his maw! Let his blood flood! Lap, lap his lungs
- NIGHTMARE: Rip his jaw from his cheek! Maul his gall! Bite into the drystring of his dangle!
- GENES: Make six meals of one! Dismember his member!
- VERAS: Ain't got none, 'member?
- SEBASTIAN: (restrained by TELL who reaches him in several bounds across the stage; as the women re-chant their lines, raging and murdering ACTAEON, his arms outstretched toward LUTETIA) Diane! Lutèce!! Give back my brother
- LUTETIA: (stone-like, lifeless) What fails is always given back
- SEBASTIAN (screaming, weeping together, as life goes out of ACTAEON) & ACTAEON: ON) Yis is all, all cocksuckers!!!

(The HAIRY CHRISTIANS lift ACTAEON's body and, climbing higher on the iceberg, place it on top of the shower, his mauled, blooded arms and legs dangling over the edges. TABULAH turns on the silv

faucets; LUTETIA raises her arms spreading her garment of hair, and a blood-red cascade begins to pour down on her. She circles stiffly, slowly about under it, as if/or on a revolving pedestal.

BYRD: (ecstatic; a narrator/barker) See Lutetia's Basin of Blood!! The Goddess of Love rinse her ivory limbs in the life lines of the man who died for sight of her! Watermarks of destiny stain the primitive priestess in a temple of terror! -And now, the Ladies with the Strept Throats will vocalize for your edification, whimsey, and reflection! Take it from the top, gentle lassies...

(The HAIRY CHRISTIANS, shedding their hound costumes and the remains of their walrus outfits, emerge as vestal virgins in a song and circling dance about the blood shower; TELL slowly releases SEBASTIAN who clutches onto the tree for support. During the singing TELL mounts the glacier toward the shower. BYRD finds a place at the left end of the float; there he adjusts his tucks.)

HAIRY C's: (singing) O mad pun which might disclose
The madness of our lives
But only deeper dives
Through two sides of itself:
We found his play in that!
We love to play with that!
There is, twin authors claim,
A fixed and single name
Could make Foremost appear.
For twice an hour we
Imagined such we'd hear
In the speech was spoken next.
We should reread that text
Sebastian wrote for us
And student-like have spent
Last season writing poems
To turn our roles toward homes
In man's simplicity.

(The music whelms to a climactic pitch, then evens slightly, the dancing continues around LUTETIA's revolving form, the blood-red cascade continues to splash over her. TELL, lifting LUTETIA's discarded cape, holds it ready. SEBASTIAN stumbles downstage left looking for CLEOPATRA in the audience; his voice trembles with anger and hopelessness. CLEOPATRA leaves her seat and treads her way toward the stage, carrying the police uniforms.)

SEBASTIAN: She trades her favors for death! Am I nothing but her metaphor, a self ever toward Lutetia, and my portion that is Actaeon pre-acted for in futility? -Lutetia! you Roman Pomana nuded to autumnal tyrantess, a harvest of lethal fruits - you fornicate with corpses!!!

LUTETIA: (stepping from the shower as TABULAH turns off the faucets) That you've embalmed:- Have you learnt, Sebastian, how you have really neither, - me nor your twin?

TELL: (fixing the cape around LUTETIA's shoulders) And now,

my Mistress, shall we take off?

VERAS: Take off what?

LUTETIA: (smiling) Thank you, Procrustes; here's only empty house and tired maintenance men to tidy up.
(to the HAIRY CHRISTIANS)
Christians, half of you go to Greece, half of you to the Himalyas, the rest of you follow me.

BYRD: Well, there's one more show winding up...

(The HAIRY CHRISTIANS scurry for position: ODALESQUE and GENES take up ropes and oars at the right end of the float; the others stand kneel, or recline about LUTETIA and TELL who are both standing as if posing for a movie still, she leaning against his strong embrace. BYRD, now reasonably neat and calmly resigned, begins to push from the left end of the float. The float starts to move off into right wing. CLEOPATRA, on stage, braces SEBASTIAN's shoulders; he has sunk to his knees, downstage left, his weakened arms stretched toward the departing float. The music steps up in volume.)

CLEOPATRA: Goodbye, William, stay faithful....

SEBASTIAN: Lutetia!!

LUTETIA: (turning her face slightly to look back at SEBASTIAN)
Men are always something less than their destinies.

SEBASTIAN: (crying aloud) Lutetia!! Lutetia!!!

LUTETIA: (lowering her eyes; slowly, each syllable emphatic)
Sebastian, you are excused.....

(The music now engulfs the theatre with deafening, disconcerting operatic lushness; the lights lower on the float disappearing into the wing; then they dim on SEBASTIAN, doubled over on his knees with CLEOPATRA's arms encircling his neck.)

End of ACT II.

10/28/67