

Racine

Berenice

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Characters

Titus, *Emperor of Rome.*

Berenice, *Queen of Palestine.*

Antiochus, *King of Commagene.*

Paulinus, *a close friend of Titus.*

Arsaces, *a close friend of Antiochus.*

Phenice, *a close friend of Berenice.*

Rutilius, *a Roman.*

Followers of Titus.

The scene is in Rome, in a small chamber between Titus' apartments and those of Berenice.

Act I Scene I (*Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Antiochus

Stay now, Arsaces, I realise
the palace here is new to your eyes.
Often, this chamber, proud and solitary,
proves of Titus' secrets the repository.
Here he sometimes hides himself from court,
seeking to tell the queen his loving thought.
To his apartment this doorway leads,
the other towards the queen's proceeds.
Go to her; beg her not to take offence
should I request a private audience.

Arsaces

Offence my lord, you, a friend so loyal
to her interests, so assiduously thoughtful?
You, the Antiochus, her lover once,
whom the East counts among its royal sons?
Does her being Titus' intended queen
establish such a distance then, between?

Antiochus

Go, then; make this matter your sole care
ask if I might speak with her alone there.

Exit Arsaces.

Act I Scene II (*Antiochus*)

Antiochus

Oh, Antiochus, forever the same man, who
cannot without trembling say 'I love you'?
Why, I tremble already, and my heart afire
now fears the moment it so long desired.
Berenice, before, robbed me of all sense,
and imposed on me this lasting silence.
I have been mute for five years, till now,
hiding my love behind friendship's vow.
Will she be kinder here than in Palestine
now Titus grants her rank above mine?
He marries her. Is this the moment then,
to approach her, to speak my love again?
What good can come of so bold a plea?
Since I must go, let me go, not displease.
I'll leave, depart, and far from every eye,
relinquish her gaze there; forget, or die.

Pause.

Must I suffer forever a torment she ignores?
Shed tears forever that the heart devours?
What, dread her anger even in losing her?
Fair queen, why should you show displeasure?
Do I come asking you to relinquish power?
To love me? Alas, I come to you at this hour
to say that, after long hoping that my rival
would chance to meet some fatal obstacle
to his marriage, nonetheless it must now be,
and prove a sad example of long constancy.
After five years of hope and love unrequited,
I go, still faithful, yet with all hope blighted.
Rather than feeling anger she should pity me.
Let me speak with her: enough of misery.
What can a lover, all hope lost, still fear,
being resolved now never to see her near?

Act I Scene III (*Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Antiochus

Arsaces, may I enter?

Arsaces

I have seen the queen;
though now with difficulty can she be seen,
pierced the fresh waves of admirers round her,
drawn to her side by her imminent grandeur.
Titus, after eight hours of austere mourning
for Vespasian his father, forgoes his grieving,
and the lover now returns to love's concerns,
for if we credit, lord, what the court discerns,
tonight the happy Berenice we may address
by the title not of queen but that of empress.

Antiochus

Alas!

Arsaces

What? How can this news trouble you?

Antiochus

So I cannot speak with her alone, is that true?

Arsaces

You will see her, lord: to Berenice it's known
that you wish to see her, here, and quite alone.
The queen deigned to inform me with a glance
that she agrees to the request that you advance.
And doubtless she waits for a favourable hour,
to escape the eyes of those who press about her.

Antiochus

Let that suffice. And have you forgot no part
of those other commands so dear to my heart?

Arsaces

Lord, you know how prompt my obedience.
At Ostia are vessels, armed with diligence,
and ready in an instant to quit the harbour,
their departure only waiting on your order.
But who will you send to Commagene?

Antiochus

Arsaces, I wait till I have seen the queen.

Arsaces

Who, then?

Antiochus

I.

Arsaces

You?

Antiochus

On my departure,
Arsaces, I leave Rome, and I leave forever.

Arsaces

I am surprised indeed, and with justice.
What? After waiting on Queen Berenice
so long, my lord, far from your own land,
for three years in Rome, close and at hand;
now, when that queen, assured of conquest,
expects you to witness, as a wedding guest,
how the amorous Titus, by marrying anew,
prepares a glorious light that reflects on you...

Antiochus

Arsaces, leave her to enjoy her good fortune,
and cease from sounding an annoying tune.

Arsaces

I hear, my lord; a new-found dignity, no less,
renders the queen disdainful of your kindness.
Enmity succeeds to a friendship now betrayed.

Antiochus

No, I have never hated her less than today.

Arsaces

What then? Has the emperor anticipating new heights of greatness now cooled towards you? Does some presentiment of fresh indifference drive you far from Rome, to evade his presence?

Antiochus

Titus has never proved himself cold towards me, I would be wrong to complain.

Arsaces

Then, why flee?

What caprice renders you your own worst enemy? Heaven raises to the throne one who, formerly, has witnessed how you fight, loves you beside, has seen you pursue death or glory at his side, he whose valour, seconded by your aid there, despatched beneath the yoke rebellious Judea. He remembers the illustrious and painful day which saw the end of a siege so long in play. The enemy quiet, behind their triple rampart, free of danger, smiling at our ineffectual art, our powerless assaults menacing them in vain, you alone, lord, you, approaching yet again, bringing death among them, scaling the wall, near brought upon yourself your own funeral: Titus embraced you, supported on my arm, and the winning side grieved for your harm. Now is the time, my lord, you should await reward for all the blood we saw shed of late. Should you desire to visit your lands again, wearied by living where you cannot reign, must the Euphrates see you lacking honour? Wait till Caesar sends you there once more, triumphant, with all the imperial blessings, that witness Roman friendship among kings.

Can nothing, my lord, alter your intention?
You'll not reply?

Antiochus

What would you have me say then?
I wait on Berenice, the moment she shall assign.

Arsaces

What then, my lord?

Antiochus

Her fate will determine mine.

Arsaces

But how?

Antiochus

I wait for what her marriage teaches.
If her heart then accords with her public speeches,
if it is true she is raised to the throne of Caesar,
if Titus has spoken, weds her, I must leave her.

Arsaces

But what renders this marriage sad to you, at best?

Antiochus

When we are gone I'll acquaint you with the rest.

Arsaces

What troubles, lord, for the spirit, must ensue?

Antiochus

The queen! Farewell; do all I have asked of you.

Act I Scene IV (*Berenice, Antiochus, Phenice*)

Berenice

At last I may escape the importunate attentions
of this crowd of friends good fortune fashions;
weary of those shows of affection on their part,
seeking a friend who might speak from the heart.
One should not pretend: a justified impatience,
accuses you of some degree of sad negligence.
What! That Antiochus, I say, whose kindness
claimed all Rome, and the Orient, for witness;
he whom I saw always, to me a constant boon,
following with calm tread my varying fortune;
today when the heavens above seem to portend
an honour I seek to share with you, my friend;
that same Antiochus, hides himself from view
leaves me to the mercy of the strange and new?

Antiochus

Is it true, then, Madame? As rumour has it,
marriage will follow on this long courtship?

Berenice

Sir, I would confide in you my past fears.
For days my eyes have been bathed in tears.
The mourning Titus imposed on the court
set love aside even in private and, in short,
he no longer had for me the burning ardour
of the days he spent with me, ever the lover.
Silent now, full of care, the tears in his eyes,
nothing was left for me but sad goodbyes.
Judge of my grief, whose ardour, so extreme,
I told you often, loved only himself in him,
I who, far from the honours he now accrues
would still choose his heart, seek his virtues.

Antiochus

Has he found again that first tenderness?

Berenice

Of last night's actions you too were witness,
when the Senate endorsed his religious vow,
setting his father with the gods, deified now.
His piety, content with this due devotion,
gives room to his love, and its emotion.
And at this very time, without telling me,
he addresses the Senate in full assembly.
There he swells the borders of Palestine,
there Syria and Arabia he joins to mine.
And if I believe the voices of his friends,
with the promises he frequently extends,
he will crown, as queen of all, Berenice
to add to her many titles that of empress.
He is coming to bring the news himself.

Antiochus

Then I am come to wish you a last farewell.

Berenice

What do you say? Farewell? What language!
Prince you are troubled; your altered visage!

Antiochus

Madame, I must leave.

Berenice

What? May I not know
the reason...

Antiochus (*aside*)

You must not see her again; go.

Berenice

Afraid? Yet you have said too much for silence.
What mystery lies behind this diffidence?

Antiochus

Merely remember that your command is mine,
that you are listening to me for one last time.
If, to the heights of power and glory raised,

you recall the scenes of your childhood days,
Madame, you will remember there my heart
received from your eyes that first fatal dart.
I loved. I won the aid of Agrippa your father.
He spoke of me to you. And, without anger
it may be, you knew the tribute of my sighs.
Titus, sadly for me, came, pleased your eyes.
For there before you in his splendour stands
one bearing Rome's vengeance in his hands.
Judea grows pale. Sad Antiochus must retreat,
counting himself first of those to know defeat.
And then, the harsh interpreters of my pain,
your lips my own lips' silence did ordain.
Long I contended. My eyes spoke for me.
My sighs and tears pursued you endlessly.
At last your very virtue swayed the balance,
you would impose on me exile or silence,
I must promise, and even swear the same.
But since, at the moment, I dared your name;
when you tore from me that unjust promise
my heart still swore to love you nonetheless.

Berenice

Ah! What are you saying?

Antiochus

Five years of silence,
Madame, and towards deeper silence I advance.
I accompanied my fortunate rival to the wars;
I hoped to shed blood, not tears, in his cause,
or, at least, my name, borne by a thousand deeds,
might reach your ears, though my voice recedes.
Heaven seemed to promise an end to my pain.
You'd weep my death, alas, but all proved vain.
Those were idle dangers! How great my error!
My rashness was surpassed by Titus' valour.
His courage must answer to my every feat.
Though attentive to the empire, so complete,
the darling of the universe, now loved by you,

he seemed to bring all danger on himself too;
while, without hope, despised, weary of life,
his unhappy rival proved second in that strife.
I see your heart now applauds me in secret.
I see, given this, I am heard with less regret.
And that attentive to this tale, sorry at best,
in Titus' honour, you will forgive the rest.
At last, after that siege both long and fierce,
did he not tame those rebels pale and worse,
worn by flame, and hunger, and inner fury?
And leaving those ramparts ruined, buried,
you arrived with him, Madame, in Rome.
How sad the Eastern desert now my home!
I remained a while wandering, by Caesarea,
a happy place, where I once knew you near.
I asked after you in all your unhappy going;
I sought, in tears, the traces of your passing.
And then, succumbing to my melancholy,
despair turned my sad steps towards Italy.
Fate saw the last of her injuries now ensue,
Titus, embracing me, led me here to you.
A veil of friendship deceived both, I saw,
my love became the confidante to yours.
Yet always hope came to ease my pain:
your sighs traversed Rome, Vespasian;
after so many combats Titus might falter.
Vespasian is dead, and Titus the master.
What is there not to flee? I may now aspire
only to view the course of his new empire.
My fate's accomplished. Your glory's near.
Others, not I, as witnesses shall appear,
to add their happiness to yours, instead;
as for me, who have only tears to shed,
the faithful victim of unrequited love,
unhappy, yet happily without reproof,
able to meet those eyes that made me so,
more in love than ever I have been, I go.

Berenice

Sir, I cannot believe that on this day, here,

that must unite my fate to that of Caesar,
any mortal could, and with such impunity,
declare himself to be in love with me.
But silence is my witness we are friends,
I will forget, for its sake, your offence.
I'll not deem myself insulted by your views,
I do more: with regret I accept your adieus.
Heaven knows, given the honours I accept,
I waited on you to witness my happiness.
I honour your virtues, as do the rest of us;
Titus cherishes you, as you admire Titus.
A hundred times sweet it is to discover
this likeness to Titus' virtues in another.

Antiochus

And that is what I flee. I escape, too late,
these cruel meetings where I yet hesitate.
I flee Titus. I flee the sound of my defeat,
his name, your lips each moment repeat.
What shall I say? Those eyes too, I flee,
that viewing me always never look at me.
Adieu. I go, heart filled with your dear image,
to await, in loving you, the death envisaged.
Above all, fear not, lest some blind madness
fill the world with news of my unhappiness:
I seek in the news of my death one sole gift,
that it bring you the memory that I yet lived.
Adieu.

Act I Scene V (*Berenice, Phenice*)

Phenice

How I pity him. Such fidelity,
Madame, should merit a greater prosperity.
Do you not pity him?

Berenice

Such prompt retreat
leaves, I must avow, its hidden well of grief.

Phenice

I would detain him.

Berenice

What, be my own enemy?
I should rather erase every lingering memory.
You'd have me encourage a senseless ardour?

Phenice

Titus has not yet displayed his intent further.
Rome views you, Madame, with jealous eyes.
The harshness of its laws: all that so terrifies.
To marry a Roman, then Roman you must be;
Rome hates all kings, and Berenice is royalty.

Berenice

There is no longer time to hesitate, Phenice.
Titus loves me; all is his, he has but to speak:
he will see that the Senate pays me homage,
and the people with flowers crown his image.
Can you not still see that night of splendour?
Are not his eyes alight with his own grandeur?
The torches, fires, the night aflame about me,
the eagles, lamps, the people, the great army,
the host of kings, consuls, senators, no less,
who all from my love acquire their brightness:
that gold, that purple, all that adorns his glory,
those laurels yet bearing witness to victory;
all those eyes gathered here from every place,

their avid gaze focussed now on his sole face;
that majestic stride, and that gentle presence...
Heavens! With what respect and subservience
every heart in secret assured him of its loyalty!
Say: could you see him and not be one with me,
in thinking that, whatever rank saw his birth,
on seeing him, all knew their master on earth?
But, Phenice, what of that charming memory,
when the whole of Rome, this hour, we see,
sends up prayers for Titus, and with sacrifice
celebrates this new beginning, in its delight.
Why do we linger? Let us offer vows, again,
to the heavens above us, for his happy reign.
And at once, not waiting and not waited for,
I'll return to seek him, and in our discourse,
say all that, in hearts content with each other,
a love inspires, events conspired to smother.

End of Act I

Act II Scene I (*Titus, Paulinus, their followers*)

Titus

Has no one seen the King of Commagene;
does he not know I await him?

Paulinus

I saw the queen:
the prince had visited her in her chamber,
but he had left not long before I came there.

Titus

Enough. What was she about, Queen Berenice?

Paulinus

Sir, at that moment, sensible of your kindness,
the queen was praying for your every happiness.
She has left, Sire.

Titus

A princess far too amiable!
Alas!

Paulinus

Why, on her account, are you so troubled?
Almost the whole Orient will lie in her compass.
You pity her?

Titus

Paulinus, let all the others leave us.

Act II Scene II (*Titus, Paulinus*)

Titus

Rome, as yet still uncertain of my strategy,
is waiting to learn of this queen's destiny,
Paulinus: the secrets of her heart, and mine,
are the subject of conversation, at this time.
The hour approaches when I must testify.

What do the people say of the queen and I?
Say: what hear you?

Paulinus

On every side, I merely
hear talk of your virtues, and her beauty.

Titus

What do they say of all my sighing for her?
What is hoped of a love so true and tender?

Paulinus

You may do as you please: love, or desist;
the court will always be party to your wish.

Titus

I too have seen that court, in its sincerity,
endlessly eager to appease supremacy,
approve of Nero's crimes in all their horror;
I've seen them swear their oaths in anger.
I'll not take the idolatrous for judges, ever,
Paulinus: I now propose a nobler theatre;
and, without giving ear to those flatterers,
I'll sound their hearts by what yours utters.
You are sworn to me. Both respect and fear,
stem the passage of complaint to my ear;
to hear more clearly, Paulinus, and to see,
you must lend your ears, your eyes, to me;
I'll set that price on my private friendship:
I'd have you the courtiers' hearts interpret,
so that, from out the flatterers, your sincerity
might always bring me fact, in all its verity.
Speak then. What has Berenice now to fear?
Will Rome will be kind to her, or prove severe?
Can it be thought that, raised to Caesar's throne,
Rome will not make so fair a queen its own?

Paulinus

Certain, my lord, be it reason or caprice,

Rome does not wish for her as empress.
They say she is charming, that such beauty
is born to demand of you all sovereignty.
They even declare she has a Roman heart:
a thousand virtues, yet plays a queen's part.
Rome, since a certain law was executed,
will not allow Rome's blood to be diluted;
will never accept the illegitimate offspring
of a marriage made contrary to its ruling.
Besides, you know, in banishing its kings,
Rome has attached to all such royal things,
once noble, sacred, its deep opprobrium;
and though, to the Caesars, loyal to a man,
that hatred, my lord, a relic of their pride,
with their freedom in their hearts abides.
Julius, the first to subdue Rome militarily,
outside the law, infringing on her liberty,
was on fire for Cleopatra, yet never wed,
leaving her sighing, in the East, instead.
Mark Antony, who loved her to idolatry,
forgetful of his glory, and of his country,
never dared to name her as his bride.
Rome went to seek him there, at her side,
and did not lay aside armed vengefulness
till it had destroyed a lover and a mistress.
Since then, Nero, before him Caligula,
monsters whose names I regret to utter,
who scarcely deserved a human form,
trampling underfoot the laws of Rome,
fearing that sole law, never, in its name,
set light to so reviled a marriage flame.
You demand that I speak the truth here.
You saw the freedman Pallas' brother,
Felix, in the East: the fires still wane,
husband, lord, of two queens in name;
and if I must obey you to the very end,
to Berenice their shared blood extends.
Think you, without loss of all respect,
to introduce a queen to Caesar's bed,
while the Orient admits a branded slave

free of our fetters, to its queens' enclave?
Such is the Romans' view of your love,
and it may be, before night dims above,
the Senate, voicing all the empire's plea,
will repeat these words you hear from me;
that both Rome and Senate bow the knee,
demand a choice worthy of you, and she.
Your reply then, lord, you may announce.

Titus

Alas! What a love they ask me to renounce.

Paulinus

It is an ardent love, one must confess it so.

Titus

A thousand times more ardent than you know,
Paulinus. It has been my necessary pleasure
to see her every day, to love her at leisure.
More; I will keep no secret from your eyes;
I have thanked the gods, for her, a hundred times;
for choosing my father in the depths of Idumea;
granting command of the army, the East, there;
rousing our forces then, through all our lands,
bringing a blood-stained Rome peace at his hands.
I have even desired to take my father's place,
I, Paulinus, who, if a less harsh fate, of its grace,
had seen fit to prolong his life, would, at this,
have sacrificed my life a hundred times for his.
All that (how badly a lover knows his desire!)
in the hope of thus raising Berenice higher,
to win for a single day her love and loyalty,
witness the universe at her feet, beside me.
Despite all my love, Paulinus, all that endears,
despite a thousand vows supported by my tears,
now that to crown her lies within my power,
and I love her more than ever, at this hour,
when the happy marriage of our two destinies
might repay five years of vows with victory,
O Heavens! Paulinus, how can I tell her?

Paulinus

What, my lord?

Titus

That I abandon her forever.
My heart cannot bring itself to surrender.
If I have made you speak so I might hear,
I wished your zeal might serve in private
to confound a love impervious to regret.
Berenice has long outweighed victory;
if I must now choose the side of glory,
in quenching such love, know I will pay,
my heart will bleed for longer than a day.
I loved, I sighed, in so profound a peace
some other seemed in my imperial place.
Master of my destiny, free in my sighs,
I myself kept sole track of passion's ties.
But scarce had my father risen to the skies,
scarce had my hand sadly closed his eyes,
than I was disabused of my loving error:
I felt the burden placed on my shoulders;
far from belonging to my love, I knew
I must soon renounce my very self, rue
that the god's choice, proving contrary,
now grants the world my days of liberty.
Rome today will witness my decision.
Shameful to me, ominous for the one
I love, if my first action were to tread
law underfoot, seek happiness instead!
Resolved to enact this bitter sacrifice,
I wished to tell the unhappy Berenice,
But how? For eight days, many an hour
I wished to open this discourse of ours;
at the first word my stammering tongue
froze in my mouth, many a moment long.
I hoped at least my anxiety, my sadness,
might express to her our mutual distress;
but, unsuspecting, sensitive to my fears,
she but offered her hand to stem my tears,

foreseeing no more from what she heard
than the end of a love she has so deserved.
Only this morning I regained my fortitude.
I must see her, go break the sorrowful news.
I wait for Antiochus; to commend again
to him this precious gift I cannot retain.
I wish him to accompany her to the East.
Tomorrow her stay in Rome must cease.
Soon she will hear it from these lips of mine,
I go now to speak to her, for one last time.

Paulinus

I expected no less from that love of glory,
everywhere associating you with victory.
Judea defeated, and its ruined towers
eternal monuments to that noble ardour,
were token enough for me that your intent
was not to destroy your own achievement,
that the heroic conqueror of many nations
sooner or later would restrain his passion.

Titus

Beneath its fine titles how cruel glory proves!
How readily my sad eyes would seek her love,
if it were simply necessary to confront death!
Why, of that ardour shown with every breath
Berenice, long ago in my heart, stirred the flame.
It's not unknown to you that the noise of fame
has not always accompanied me as is thought.
My youth, raised as I was within Nero's court,
was by bad example misled, Paulinus; leisure
allowed me to follow the easy path of pleasure.
Berenice pleased me. What will hearts not suffer
to please the one they love, and thereby conquer?
I prodigal of my blood, all yielded in their fear,
I returned triumphant. But my blood and tears
proved insufficient as yet to win her promises:
I took upon me a thousand wretches' happiness;
to every place my kindness seemed to extend,
happy, and happier than you can comprehend,

if I might appear to her eyes, she now satisfied,
charged with a thousand hearts won to my side!
I owe all to her, Paulinus. Cruel recompense!
All that I owe her is achieved at her expense.
Her reward for all that courage and that glory,
is that I tell her: 'Depart, no longer see me.'

Paulinus

What, my lord! With all the gifts you shower
on her, that to the Euphrates extend her power,
all those honours that so astound the multitude,
do you fear she'll condemn you for ingratitude?
Berenice wins command of a hundred nations.

Titus

For so great a grief such is small compensation!
I know Berenice, and such is not her design,
her heart has never asked for more than mine.
I loved her, I pleased her. And since that day
(fatal, alas, or fortunate, both should I say?)
having no object but love, in loving, in short,
a stranger in Rome, unknown to all the court,
she spends her time, no more ambitiously
than in seeing me for an hour, or awaiting me.
Again, if it sometimes seems I have neglected
to appear at some moment when I am expected,
I soon see her drenched once more with tears.
To dry them, my hand is occupied for years.
All that love binds us with most powerfully,
her sweet reproaches, joy reborn ceaselessly,
an artless desire to please, fear ever renewed,
all glory, beauty, virtue, I find in her attitude.
I have seen her every day, for five whole years,
and think it the first time, each time she appears.
No more thought, Paulinus; the more I reflect,
the more I may waver in my intended object.
What news, O heavens, this that I must deliver!
A blow indeed! Let us go, and think no further.
I know my duty; it is for me, now, to obey,
and not reflect on whether I'll survive the day.

Enter Rutilius

Act II Scene III (*Titus, Paulinus, Rutilius*)

Rutilius

Berenice, my lord, requests an audience.

Titus

Oh! Paulinus!

Paulinus

Already you change your stance?
Let this but remind you of your noble projects.
Now is the moment.

Titus

Well, let us see her. Let her come, state her object.

Act II Scene IV (*Berenice, Titus, Paulinus, Phenice*)

Berenice

Be not offended if my zealous indiscretion
interrupts the privacy of your conversation.
While all your court, round me assembled,
resounds to such gifts as make me tremble,
is it just, my lord, that I alone should remain
without word, or show of feeling, once again?
But, my lord (for I know this sincere friend
is party to the mysteries our hearts defend),
your mourning's done; nothing delays you,
you're alone at last, and yet I do not see you!
I hear that you offer me fresh diadems,
yet from your own lips I hear naught of them.
Alas, more of peace my lord, and less of glory.
Can you not tell the Senate your heart's story?
Ah! Titus (for love is freed from the constraint
of every title, that to fear and awe appertain)
What does your love concern itself with, so?

Is it only fresh nations that you dare bestow?
Since when have you believed I seek glory?
A sigh, a glance, a word bestowed on me,
forms all the ambition of a heart like mine.
See me more often, keep these gifts so fine.
Are all your moments devoted to the empire?
That heart, after eight days, speaks no desire?
Let a word from you raise my feeble spirit!
Or had you spoken of me before my visit,
my name involved in your private discourse,
Sire? Was I at least present in your thought?

Titus

Doubt it not, Madame, let the gods be witness
Berenice is before my eyes at every instant.
Neither time nor absence, I swear once more,
can rob you of this heart that can but adore.

Berenice

Ah! Your vows to me speak of eternal flame,
and yet so coldly you declare the same?
Why attest to the power of the gods above,
do you need words to conquer my mistrust?
My heart does not seek you, only to deny;
I would believe yours, with a single sigh.

Titus

Madame!

Berenice

Yes, my lord? Without an answer,
you turn your eyes away, and seem to shudder!
Do you offer me no more than a hidden glance?
Is your father's death your care, at this instant?
Can nothing dispel this sorrow that devours?

Titus

If but the gods had prolonged my father's hours,
how happy I should be!

Berenice

My lord, such regret
is the true witness to your piety. And yet,
your tears have honoured him sufficiently,
you owe Rome your concern, your glory.
In my own interest, I dare speak my mind.
Berenice has consoled you at other times;
and you have heard my words with pleasure.
Over what ills, of my anxiety the measure,
have I, for a word, not shed tears for you!
You mourn a father! Alas, a grief, it is true!
And I (at the memory I tremble, once more)
they would have torn me from all that I adore;
I, whom you ever see in trouble and torment
when you leave me, even for a single moment;
I who would die the day they would keep me
from you...

Titus

Madame, what is this you tell me?
To what hour do you refer? Oh, for pity, desist!
It is too much, to show the ungrateful kindness.

Berenice

Ungrateful, my lord! How could you be so?
It may be that my kindness wearies you though?

Titus

No, Madame. I must address you, and never
has my heart been scorched by such fever.
But...

Berenice

Go on.

Titus

Alas!

Berenice

Speak.

Titus

Rome...the empire...

Berenice

Well?

Titus

Paulinus, I cannot speak; we must retire.

Act II Scene V (*Berenice, Phenice*)

Berenice

What! To leave so soon, and yet say nothing?
Alas, dear Phenice, what a mournful meeting!
What does he desire, what means this silence?

Phenice

Like you, the more I think on it the less its sense.
Does anything offer itself to your memory
that may have set him against you recently?
Think, consider!

Berenice

Alas, in this, believe me,
the more I review the past, in its entirety,
from the hour I met him, to this mournful hour,
the more I might be accused of excess ardour.
But you heard us. There is no need for silence.
Have I done anything to cause offence?
Think. Have I returned his gifts, do you believe,
too forcefully, or criticised his show of grief...
Is it that he dreads Rome's hatred yet unseen,
and fears, perhaps, to wed a reigning queen?
If that were true...no, a hundred times and more
he has upheld my love against their harsh law;
oh, if he might but explain this discourtesy:
I can no longer breathe, such my anxiety.
I, could I live, Phenice, and believe that he

rejects me, or that I offended carelessly?
Let us reflect now. For, when I consider,
I think I perceive the origin of this matter,
Phenice; he has discovered all that passed,
Antiochus' love for me troubles him, alas.
He awaits, they say, the king of Commagene.
Look no deeper for what provoked this scene.
Surely that sadness that so alarmed me,
is but a slight suspicion, banished easily.
Yet I'll not boast of so trivial a victory,
Titus. If, without tarnishing your glory,
the gods might send a rival far greater,
to tempt my loyalty, empires on offer,
sceptres uncounted, all to buy my love,
and you had nothing but your soul to give;
then, dear Titus, your victory realised,
you would see how your heart is prized.
Come, Phenice. A word puts him at ease.
Be reassured, my heart, I still can please.
It is too soon to count myself unhappy;
If Titus is jealous, then Titus loves me.

End of Act II

Act III Scene I (*Titus, Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Titus

So, prince, you are leaving? What reason might
demand your swift departure, or rather flight?
Prior to your going, would you hide from me?
Can it be you'd quit Rome as my enemy?
What will the court, I, Rome, the empire say?
But, as your friend, can I not make you stay?
What do you complain of? That, unwittingly,
among a crowd of kings you are lost to me?
While my father lived my heart was open to you:
and that was the only gift I had to give you;
yet now my hand gives freely, as my heart,
fleeing my kindness, you choose to depart.
Think you that, forgetful of the past, of late,
my sole concern is with my present state,
and that all my friends here, crowds indeed,
are so many strangers I no longer need?
You yourself, who seek to hide from view,
Prince, more than ever, I have need of you.

Antiochus

I, my lord?

Titus

You.

Antiochus

What could you hope for now
from an unhappy prince, my lord, except his vow?

Titus

Prince, I do not forget that my great victory
owes to your deeds the best part of its glory,
that Rome, among its captives without number,
saw many whom Antiochus' chains encumber,
that on the Capitol she viewed, in fine array,

Judea's spoils, your hands amassed that day.
I expect from you no blood-stained exploits,
I only ask to borrow, for a while, your voice.
I know that Berenice, indebted to your care,
believes herself to own true friendship there.
In Rome she sees, and listens to Antiochus,
you make one heart, and one soul, with us.
In the name of our friendship, true and fine
employ the power you have, as it were mine:
See her on my behalf.

Antiochus

Appear to her eyes?

The queen has already heard my last goodbyes.

Titus

Prince, for me now, you must speak to her anew.

Antiochus

Oh, speak yourself, my lord! She adores you.
Why deprive yourself, at such a moment now,
of your pleasure in making her so fair a vow?
She awaits you lord, filled with impatience,
I answer, in leaving, for her true obedience;
She told me: let this marriage take its course.
You have only to see her, and she is yours.

Titus

Oh, if so sweet a vow had power to please me!
How happy I would be if that were my duty!
My happiness waited on this day, to prosper,
and yet today, prince, I must abandon her.

Antiochus

Abandon her, my lord? You?

Titus

Such is my destiny.

There can be no marriage between her and me;
I flattered myself with that sweet hope in vain:

Tomorrow, she must leave with you again.

Antiochus

What do I hear? O heaven!

Titus

Pity my irksome power:
Master of the world, I rule hers, and the hour.
I can make kings, dispose of them in a day;
yet cannot dispose of the heart where I may.
Rome, always opposed to kings, disdains
to countenance a queenly beauty's reign.
Descent from a hundred kings, her royalty,
tarnishes her in their eyes, dishonours me.
My heart, set free, without fear of blame,
might burn, at its will, in obscure flames;
Rome, with delight, would see me wed
to the least worthy beauty here, instead.
Even Julius yielded to opinion's flow.
Tomorrow then, should the queen not go,
tomorrow she will hear the crowd, in fury,
demanding she leave at once, and openly.
To save my name from harm, her memory,
since we must yield, then let us yield nobly.
The absence for days of my voice and glance
may have foretold this sad news in advance.
And even now, anxious, and concerned,
she waits for me to explain myself to her.
Of a forbidden love, go, ease the torment,
spare my heart the pain of enlightenment.
Go, explain to her my distress, my silence,
and let her allow me to evade her presence.
Be the sole witness of my tears and hers;
bear to her my farewells, hers rehearse;
let us both avoid a disastrous spectacle,
consuming all love left, in its debacle.
If the hope she lives and reigns in my heart
can sweeten the news that we must part,
swear to her Prince, that forever faithful,
grieving at heart, and in a deeper exile,

bearing to the tomb my lover's name,
one long banishment will be my reign,
should heaven, in our parting of the ways,
afflict me also with such length of days.
Prince, by merely her friendship blessed,
do not abandon her, in her distress.
Let the Orient have you both in sight;
let this become a triumph, not a flight;
let such true friendship form eternal ties;
ensure my name is still before her eyes.
To ensure your lands adjoin each other,
the Euphrates of each will form the border.
I know the Senate, praising your name,
with united voice will confirm the same.
I will add Cilicia to your Commagene,
Farewell. Quit not my princess, my queen,
all that formed the true desire of my heart,
all I shall love, till my last sighs depart.

Exit Titus

Act III Scene II (*Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Arsaces

Thus the gods prepare to grant you justice.
You will go, my lord, but with Berenice.
Far from taking her, they deliver her to you.

Antiochus

Arsaces, grant me time to breathe. It is true,
that the change is great, my surprise extreme.
Titus trusts to my hands she of whom I dream!
Dare I believe, you gods, what I have heard?
And dare I rejoice, if I believe his words?

Arsaces

As for myself, my lord, what must I believe?
What obstacle is here to make you grieve?
Did you deceive me, forsaking her eyes,
when, still moved by your last goodbyes,

having dared to tell her all, still trembling,
your heart spoke to me of its new daring?
You fled a marriage that so disturbed you.
That tie thwarted, what can perturb you?
Pursue sweet joy, to which love invites.

Antiochus

Arsaces, you see me charged with her flight:
I'll delight in meeting with her, many a time,
her very eyes will accustom themselves to mine,
and her heart perhaps perceive the difference
between Titus' coldness and my perseverance.
Here, Titus overwhelms me with his grandeur,
in Rome, all are eclipsed by his splendour;
yet though the Orient preserves his memory,
Berenice will find there traces of my glory.

Arsaces

Your prayers are answered by his decision.

Antiochus

Oh, how we both delight in self-deception!

Arsaces

What deception?

Antiochus

Might I still please her then?
Might Berenice no longer reject my attentions?
Might Berenice ease my sadness by a word?
Think you, that amidst the pain she's incurred,
with the whole world now indifferent to her,
she yet might let me shed some tears for her,
or humble herself enough to receive from me
the assistance she might think a loving duty?

Arsaces

Who better than you to counter her disgrace?
Fortune, my lord, shows her its other face;
Titus abandons her,

Antiochus

Alas! Such an alteration,
in me, can only lead, to more frustration,
seeing how deep her love is from her tears.
I'll hear her sighs, I'll pity her. It appears
that, as the fruits of love, my bitter duty
will be to harvest tears not shed for me.

Arsaces

Why must your self-inflicted wounds prove endless?
Did every a brave heart show such feebleness?
Open your eyes, my lord, and let us muse
on the many reasons Berenice has to love you.
Since Titus no longer seeks to offer her his love,
think how essential marriage with you may prove.

Antiochus

Essential?

Arsaces

Grant her a few days to grieve,
let her tears run their course, and I believe
all will speak for you, anger, wish for vengeance,
Titus' absence, passage of time, your presence;
three kingdoms her strength cannot rule alone,
your neighbouring lands striving to form one:
mutual interest, reason, friendship, bind you.

Antiochus

You grant me life, Arsaces, I breathe anew:
I accept so sweet a prophecy with delight.
Why do we linger? Let us act as is right.
Let us go to Berenice, say, as commanded,
as if from Titus, how she is left abandoned...
Yet wait. What is this? Is it I then, Arsaces,
who am charged with causing her distress?
Be it love, honesty, my courage is eclipsed.
Must the tender Berenice hear from my lips
that he rejects her? Who would have dreamed

such words might ever be spoken, my queen?

Arsaces

Her anger will fall on Titus, entirely,
my lord: you speak at his request only.

Antiochus

No we'll not see her. We'll respect her grief;
others will bear the news, such is my belief.
Is it not hard enough she must face whatever
scorn it is to which Titus now condemns her,
without the ill-fated source of her displeasure,
his only rival, here, to confirm the measure?
Once more, let us depart; not, with this news,
incur, ourselves, whatever hatred now ensues.

Arsaces

Oh, she is here, my lord; decide your course.

Antiochus

O heavens!

Act III Scene III (*Berenice, Antiochus, Arsaces, Phenice*)

Berenice

What, you are not yet gone, my lord?

Antiochus

Madame, I see your eyes play the deceiver,
and truly the one you search for is Caesar.
Yet blame only him if, despite my goodbyes,
it is my importunate presence fills your eyes.
Perhaps at this moment I would be at Ostia
if he had not decreed I must stay at court here.

Berenice

He looks for you alone; he evades us always.

Antiochus

To speak with you is why he demands I stay.

Berenice

With me, Prince?

Antiochus

Yes, Madame.

Berenice

And what would he have you say?

Antiochus

Words a thousand others might better relay.

Berenice

What words, my lord?

Antiochus

Spare me your resentment.

Others, at this time, far from remaining silent, triumphant perhaps, and filled with confidence, would yield with pleasure to your impatience, but I, always trembling, I, as you well know, to whom your peace is dearer than my own, who your displeasure, rather, would prefer, now fear your sorrow more than your anger. Before the day's end you will understand me. Farewell, Madame.

Berenice

O heavens! What words! Oh, remain beside me, Prince, all too deeply I hide my pain from you. You see before you a queen distraught, it's true, who, heart-stricken, simply requests a word. You fear, you say, to harm my peace, disturb my calm; yet your cruel refusal brings pain, excites my grief, my anger, my disdain. If to you my peace seems a precious prize, if I myself were ever dear to your eyes, ease the trouble in which you find my soul: What did Titus tell you?

Antiochus

Madame, let me go...

Berenice

What! You fear so little to disobey me?

Antiochus

I have but to speak, and you would hate me.

Berenice

I wish you would speak.

Antiochus

Heavens, such violence!

Madame, again, you should bless my silence.

Berenice

Prince, answer my request, in full measure,
or be certain, henceforth, of my displeasure.

Antiochus

At this, Madame, I cannot keep it from you.
Now since you wish it I must tell you, true,
but be under no illusion; what I must utter
you, perhaps, have never dared to consider.
I know your heart: so now prepare to face
my wounding it in the most tender place.
Titus commanded me...

Berenice

What?

Antiochus

...that I should say,
that the two of you must part, today.

Berenice

Part from each other? Titus from Berenice?

Antiochus

Before you, I must at least do him justice.
All that love and despair could generate
in a heart sensitive and kind, I here relate
I found in him. He wept. You, he adores.
Yet, though he loves, what of Rome's laws?
Rome is suspicious of a reigning queen.
You must part; tomorrow, leave unseen.

Berenice

Must part! Alas, Phenice!

Phenice

Now, you must show
your greatness of soul, Madame, this blow
is harsh, indeed; it must confound you now.

Berenice

Titus abandons me, after so many vows!
He swore to me...this, no, I cannot believe.
He does not part from me, but from his glory.
He being innocent they seek to destroy me.
This net is spread to part us, Titus loves me.
Titus would never bring about my death.
Let me see him: I'll speak to him, no less.
Come, let us go.

Antiochus

What? You see me here, and yet...

Berenice

You wished for it too much to feign regret.
No, I'll not believe. But, whether it be true
or not, take care my eyes no longer see you.

(To Phenice)

Phenice, do not abandon me in this state.
Alas! I'll endeavour to disbelieve my fate.

(Exit Berenice and Phenice)

Act III Scene IV (*Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Antiochus

Do I deceive myself? Have I understood her?
That I should take care, I, never to see her?
I will take care. And would be gone this day,
If Titus, despite myself, had not said stay.
We must leave, Arsaces, let us be going.
She thinks me sad, her hatred is a blessing.
You have seen me anxious and distraught,
parting from her jealous, in love, fraught;
yet now, Arsaces, now she gives offence,
I part from her perhaps with indifference?

Arsaces

Less than ever, my lord, should you go.

Antiochus

I, to stay here, while she disdains me so?
Am I responsible for Titus' coldness?
Am I to be punished who am guiltless?
What an injustice this, what indignity;
here I stand, and she doubts my sincerity!
She loves Titus, she said, and I betrayed her,
What ingratitude to scorn me as the traitor!
At such a time, when, fatally it appears,
I placed before her eyes my rival's tears,
when, to console her, I made him seem,
loving and loyal, more than he is I mean.

Arsaces

What pains you take, my lord, to harm yourself.
Grant this torrent the time to spend itself;
in eight days, in a month, the thing passes.
Only delay.

Antiochus

No, I must leave now, Arsaces.
I know I would sympathise with her sorrow;
my peace, my glory, say: depart tomorrow.

Let us leave now, far off evade her cruelty,
and, for a while, say naught of her to me.
However enough of the day still remains:
I'll to my palace, await you. Go, take pains,
see that sorrow has not hurt her to excess,
be certain she lives, even though in distress.

End of Act III

Act IV Scene I (*Berenice, alone*)

Berenice

Phenice is not come? How slow these moments
seem, compared with swift emotions!
I shiver, roam, languish, demoralised;
my strength abandons me, at rest I die.
Phenice is not come? That she delays,
troubles my heart with tidings of dismay!
Phenice will have no reply to give me,
Titus, ungrateful Titus, denies my plea;
He flees; he steals away from my just anger.

Act IV Scene II (*Berenice, Phenice*)

Berenice

Well, dear Phenice, have you seen the emperor?
What said he? Will he come?

Phenice

I saw him, yes,
and pictured for his eyes your soul's distress.
I saw those eyes shed tears he would retain.

Berenice

Does he come to me?

Phenice

Doubt not, he will again.
But will you appear in such wild disarray?
Recover yourself, Madame; be calm, I pray.
Let me restore those veils all out of place,
and those stray hairs, that conceal your face.
Let me repair those traces of your tears.

Berenice

No, leave them, Phenice, lest he appear.
Alas! What do these vain things matter?
If him my truth, my tears, the sighs I utter,
and, as my tears show, my evident pain

and near approach to death, cannot regain,
tell me what such superfluous acts are for,
and all this feeble splendour he ignores?

Phenice

Why burden him with these unjust reproaches?
I hear faint sounds, the emperor approaches.
Come, flee the others; let us now return;
alone, await this meeting for which you yearn.

(they exit, enter Titus and Paulinus)

Act IV Scene III (Titus, Paulinus, their followers)

Titus

Paulinus, go, calm the queen's disquietude:
I will see her. I need a moment's solitude.
All leave me.

Paulinus

You gods! How I dread this encounter!
Heaven save his glory and the State's honour.
I'll go see the queen.

(Exit Paulinus)

Act IV Scene IV (Titus, alone)

Titus

Well, Titus, what is this you do?
Berenice awaits. What insanity drives you?
Are you determined, your farewells ready,
your heart prepared for heights of cruelty?
For, in this combat, it is not pure courage
you require, but rather to act the savage!
Can I sustain that gaze, whose gentle art
knows how to find the paths to my heart?
When I see those eyes, filled with her fears,
fixed on mine, defeating me with her tears,
will I possess the power to recall sad duty;

say 'I no longer wish to see you'; deeply
wound the heart that loves me? I adore her.
And why wound it, obeying my own order?
Has Rome not still to speak of its desire?
Are cries around the palace mounting higher?
Is the State dangling above some precipice
and I to save it, by such a sacrifice as this?
All are mute, I alone am swift to rehearse
these ills I own the power to reverse.
Who knows, given so virtuous a woman:
might Rome not accept her as a Roman?
Rome by its choice might justify mine.
Yet, no, its choice is not ours to define.
Let Rome weigh its law in the balance
against her love, tears, and perseverance:
Rome will support us...Oh, open those eyes!
What air do you breathe? Are you not apprised
of a hatred of kings imbibed at the breast,
unmoved by love, or fear, or all the rest?
Rome judged your queen by exiling its kings.
Have you not heard from birth that very thing?
Did you not hear, as well, the voice of glory
announcing your duty to you, in the army?
When you, with Berenice, saw Rome again,
did you not hear Rome's judgement then?
How often must Rome voice her desire?
Coward! Make love, renounce the empire!
Go hide yourself among some distant race;
yield to hearts more worthy of your place.
Are such the deeds of greatness, of glory
that in men's hearts recall our memory?
For eight days I have reigned, and to this hour
I have done all for love, yet what for honour?
What tale of that precious time can I give?
Where are the happy days I hoped to live?
Whose tears have I dried? What eyes express
within their orbs the fruits of my kindness?
Does the world find its destiny now changed?
Can I know the length of life for me ordained?
Of all those days, so long anticipated,

how many have I not simply wasted!
No more delay, do as honour now requires,
break the sole link....

Act IV Scene V (*Titus, Berenice*)

(Berenice, entering)

Berenice

...let me act as I desire!
In vain all your counsels hold me here,
I must see him. Ah, Sire, you appear!
Well? Is it true that Titus abandons me?
That we must part, you rule our destiny!

Titus

Do not kill, Madame, a prince in distress.
We must not give way here to tenderness.
Cruel enough the pain that stirs, devours,
without your tears to rob me of my powers.
Rather recall that heart that, so frequently,
found me attentive to the voice of duty.
Now the time has come. Let love be silent.
With the eye of glory, reason, rest content,
to view my duty in all its harsh severity.
Set yourself aside now, prove a help to me;
strengthen my heart, counter its weakness,
stem the tears that, falling, prove endless;
or if we cannot control them, then at least
let thoughts of glory support us in our grief,
let all the world now comprehend, unseen,
these tears of an emperor, and a queen.
Now, finally, my Princess, we must part.

Berenice

Oh, cruel! Is it now you wound my heart?
What have you done? And yet I believed
I was loved. Indeed, my soul, long pleased
with your dear presence, only lived for you.
Where were your laws, when first I told you?

What have you brought me to, what excess?
Did you not say: 'Oh, unfortunate Princess,
what are your hopes? Do not be deceived,
give not a heart that cannot be received.'
Did you receive it, only to return it so,
when it depends on your heart alone?
Twenty times, all conspired against us.
Was that not the opportunity to part us?
A host of reasons for my death were there;
I could have readily accused your father,
the senate, the people, all things Roman,
all the world, rather than your dear hand.
Their hatred, long declared towards me,
had long prepared me for such misery.
Then I would not have thought you so cruel,
as now, when I dreamed our love immortal,
with your heart freed to further its desires,
Rome silent, and your father with his sires,
when all the world had granted you its due,
when I had nothing left to fear but you.

Titus

And I alone could my own self destroy.
Once I could live, and my heart employ.
Then I refused to look towards the future,
or seek what it might one day dissever,
I wished my vows to prove invincible;
never reflected, dreamed the impossible.
How was I to know? I had hoped to die
without our ever uttering our goodbyes.
The very obstacles increased love's fire.
The empire spoke, but glory, not desire,
had not, as yet, played its essential part,
swaying, as it must, an emperor's heart.
I know the sorrow that such acts accrue,
I know I must learn to live forgoing you,
and that my heart parts from itself again,
yet living is not the issue, I must reign.

Berenice

Well reign, cruel emperor! Bow down to glory:
I'll not dispute. I waited for you, purely
to hear the very mouth that spoke forever
of love that would bind our lives together,
that mouth, in confessing its disloyalty,
itself ordain my absence for all eternity.
I wished to hear your lips declare it true,
I'll hear no more; forever now, adieu...
Forever! Sire! Do you not feel the dread
a lover feels when that cruel word is said?
In a month, a year, how we must suffer too,
when land and sea distance me from you?
The day will dawn, and the day will cease,
without Titus ever seeing Berenice,
without Titus ever being seen by her.
But what misplaced anxiety, what error!
Consoled by my departure from his presence,
will he deign to count those days of absence,
those days so brief for him, so long for me?

Titus

Madame, there will not be many such, I see.
I hope that soon sad Rumour will have proved
what you will then confess, that you were loved.
You'll see that Titus could not, without dying...

Berenice

Ah, Sire, if that is true, why then this sighing?
I can no longer speak of marriage, true,
since Rome condemns me not to see you.
But why do you envy me the air you breathe?

Titus

Do as you wish Madame, ah, do not leave.
I'll not resist. Yet I know my own weakness.
It means endless struggle, fear of tenderness,
endless alertness to avoid retracing, too,
my steps that your charm directs towards you.
Why! My heart, beside itself in an instant,
recalls that it loves you, at this very moment.

Berenice

Well, sir, well, and what might happen then?
Are the Romans ready to wage war again?

Titus

Who knows how they'll view the very rumour?
If they speak out, if cry succeeds to murmur,
must blood not be shed to justify my choice?
While if they are silent, seeming to rejoice,
to what do you expose me? What must I pay
to requite all their indulgence some fine day?
What would they not dare to demand of me?
Am I to uphold a law I cannot keep?

Berenice

You would set Berenice's tears at nothing!

Titus

At nothing! Oh, the injustice of the thing!

Berenice

For an unjust law, you can change tomorrow,
you must doom yourself then to eternal sorrow?
Rome has its rights, Sire, have you not yours?
Are its interests more sacred than than ours?
Tell me, speak.

Titus

Alas, how you distress me!

Berenice

You are the emperor, Sire, and yet you weep!

Titus

Yes Madame, it is true, I weep, I sigh,
I shudder. Yet, in accepting the empire, I
have sworn to maintain the laws of Rome.
I must maintain them. Already it is known
Rome has demanded loyalty of my peers.
Retrace Rome to its origins, it appears
its leaders always performed their duty.
One, keeping faith, returned to the enemy,
seeking death, the sentence ordained there;
Another proscribed his victorious brother;
Another, with dry, almost indifferent eyes,
at his own command, saw his two sons die.
Always, alas, their country and its glory
in Roman hearts, won the day utterly.
I know the unhappy Titus, in quitting you,
outdoes their severity, their ancient virtue,
that all's surpassed by my act of loyalty,
but Madame, do you think me unworthy
of leaving posterity this notable example
that all their efforts will find hard to equal?

Berenice

No, I think all seems easy to barbarity;
to kill me, well within your capability.
Regarding your feelings, my mind is clear.
I will no longer talk of remaining here.
What? Would I desire, shamed and despised,
to face the scorn of those who hate, deride?
I wished you to force a refusal, as you see.
It's done, and you need have no fear of me.
Do not expect me to speak of injuries,
or call heaven as witness to your perjuries;
no, if heaven is moved still by my fears,
I pray that death obliterates my tears.
If I am to swear a vow against injustice,
and if, in dying, the sorrowful Berenice,
wishes to seek vengeance, for her part

she'll wreak it on your thankless heart.
I know so great a love cannot be effaced.
that my present grief, past acts of grace,
my blood, which I would shed here too,
are enemies enough to bestow on you.
And, unrepentant regarding such intent,
I'll leave the task of vengeance to them.
Farewell.

(exit Berenice)

Act IV Scene VI (*Titus, Paulinus*)

Paulinus

With what intent, my lord, did she go?
Is she disposed to leave this realm, or no?

Titus

Paulinus, I am lost. I can act no further.
She seeks to die. We must pursue her.
Swiftly, to her aid.

Paulinus

Have you not orders served,
that all her actions now must be observed?
Her women, gathered with her, at this time,
will drive such sad thoughts from her mind.
No, fear nothing. The matter runs its course,
Sire; the worst is done, the victory is yours.
I know you could not hear her without pity,
nor could I resist, though seeing her only.
But reflect further, think, in your distress,
what glory must succeed unhappiness,
what plaudits the world prepares for you,
what future joy...

Titus

Ah no, I am but a brute!
I hate myself. That Nero, whom all detest,
never spurred his cruelty to such excess.

I could not endure it if Berenice were lost,
Come now, and let Rome wonder, as it must.

Paulinus

My lord?

Titus

I am nigh out of my wits.
Excess of grief has overcome my spirits.

Paulinus

Do not disturb the course of your action:
already your farewells provoke reaction;
Rome, that sighed, triumphs, and today,
the temples all resound with your praise;
Rome now lauds your virtues to the sky,
with laurels crowns your statues on high.

Titus

Oh Rome! Oh Berenice! O gods above!
Why am I emperor? Why am I in love?

Act IV Scene VII (*Titus, Antiochus, Paulinus. Arsaces*)

Antiochus

What have you done, my lord? Fair Berenice
may well be dying, embraced by her Phenice.
She pays no heed to tears, advice, reason;
she cries out for a weapon or for poison.
You alone can overcome her wish to die.
You are named, and she's recalled to life.
Her eyes turn endlessly in your direction,
seeming to ask for you in her affliction.
I cannot bear the spectacle, it wounds me.
Why delay? Go, show yourself and swiftly.
Preserve this virtue, this grace, this beauty.
Or renounce, my lord, all your humanity.
Speak the word.

Titus

Ah, what word, indeed?
Do I know at this moment if I breathe?

(enter Rutilius)

Act IV Scene VIII (*Titus, Antiochus, Paulinus, Arsaces, Rutilius*)

Rutilius

My lord, the tribunes, senate, consulate,
come to petition you, in the name of the State.
A vast crowd following, filled with impatience,
wait for you to grace them with your presence.

Titus

I hear, you gods: all fears you would allay
in this heart you see designed to go astray.

Paulinus

Come, Sire, let us attend them, and be seen,
let us hear the senate.

Antiochus

Oh, hasten to the queen.

Paulinus

What? Would you, Sire, with this indignity,
trample on all the empire in its majesty?
Rome...

Titus

Enough, Paulinus, we will hear them.
Prince, I cannot escape my duty to them.
Go. See the queen. I hope, knowing I return,
she will not doubt the love with which I burn.

End of Act IV

Act V Scene I (*Arsaces, alone*)

Where can I find this all too faithful prince?
Heaven direct me, and support me, since
I, with its aid, in a moment, may reveal
a happiness he could scarcely hope to feel!

Act V Scene II (*Antiochus, Arsaces*)

(enter Antiochus)

Arsaces

Ah, what happy fate brings you to this place,
my lord?

Antiochus

If my return seems, to you, an act of grace,
Arsaces, you may thank despair alone.

Arsaces

The queen departs.

Antiochus

She does?

Arsaces

By evening, will be gone.
Her orders are all given. She suffers, I believe,
deeply, Titus simply abandons her to grieve.
A frustrated kindness has replaced her anger:
Berenice renounces Rome, and the emperor;
would even depart before Rome, knowing
of her situation, takes pleasure in her going.
She writes to Caesar.

Antiochus

Heavens, who would have thought it?
And Titus?

Arsaces

He has not appeared, not a single visit.
The people stop, surround him, in delight,
applauding the titles granted him of right;
and those titles, the respect, the compliments,
become, for our Titus, as many commitments,
binding him, my lord, with honourable ties,
despite the queen's perpetual tears and sighs,
that direct his irresolute wishes to his duty.
It's done. Perhaps he denies her completely.

Antiochus

A reason to hope, Arsaces, I will confess.
Yet fate plagues me, with such harshness,
I have so often seen my projects falter,
that I hear, with dread, the words you utter;
and my heart, filled with unwelcome fear,
feels even hope may draw ill-fortune near.
But what is this? Titus now approaches.
What does he wish?

Act V Scene III (*Titus, Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Titus (*entering*)

Stay, no one follow us.
Prince, I come at last to discharge my promise.
Berenice fills my mind, the torment's endless.
I come, heart pierced by the tears both resign,
to calm an unhappiness less cruel than mine.
Come, Prince, come; for the last time, prove,
by witnessing it yourself, that indeed I love.

(exit Titus)

Act V Scene IV (*Antiochus, Arsaces*)

Antiochus

Well, Arsaces, here's the hope you bring me,
you witness now the triumph that attends me!
Berenice parts from him, hurt to the core!
Titus has quit her, never to see her more!

What have I done, you gods, what strife
have you destined for my unhappy life?
All my days are but an endless journey
from fear to hope, from hope to tragedy.
And yet I breathe! Titus! Berenice!
No longer mock my tears! Cruel deities!

Act V Scene V (*Titus, Berenice, Phenice*)

Berenice

No, I will hear nothing. I am resolute, myself:
I wish to leave. Why do you show yourself?
Why come to add bitterness now to despair?
Are you not content? For this, I cannot care.

Titus

Grace me by listening.

Berenice

The time is past.

Titus

One lone
word, Madame.

Berenice

No.

Titus

How she disturbs my soul!
My princess, why this sudden change of heart?

Berenice

It's done. Tomorrow, you wish that I depart;
I have resolved to leave in a short while, and I,
I go.

Titus

Stay.

Berenice

The ingratitude! Why must I?
To listen to the noise of an injurious people,
who cry my misfortunes from the citadel?
Do you not hear it then, their cruel spite,
while I alone shed tears, to their delight?
What offence, what crime makes me their foe?
Alas! What have I done but love you so?

Titus

Will you listen, Madame, to a senseless few?

Berenice

There is nothing here but misery in view.
All these rooms created with such care,
long the witness of my love, and where
all things seemed to respond with yours,
where our names entwined said: he adores,
now, offering themselves to my sad eyes,
are mere imposters, I no longer prize.
Come, Phenice.

Titus

Oh heavens! You are unjust!

Berenice

Return, return to your senate, as you must.
They will applaud you for your cruelty.
Is it with pleasure you hear their flattery?
Are you content quite, with all your glory?
Have you promised to forget my memory?
But to expiate our love, that will not do,
surely you've promised to hate me too?

Titus

No, I have promised nothing. Hate you, no!
Could I forget this Berenice whom I forego!
Oh gods! That, at such a time, cruel derision
must pain my heart with unjust suspicion.
Know me, Madame, and of these five years

renouncing sight of you seemed necessary;
envisaging the approach to our sad goodbye,
the fears, struggles, tears, reproaches, I
prepared my soul for every inward pain
that the greatest of ills might entertain.
Yet, of whatever I feared in my heart,
I had foreseen only the smallest part:
I thought my virtue less ready to succumb,
and am ashamed at what I have become.
I viewed all Rome assembled before me,
the Senate spoke, but my soul, uneasy,
listened without hearing, left them only
as a reward for their enthusiasm an icy
silence. Rome is unsure if you will go,
as yet, and for myself I scarcely know
whether I am the emperor, and a Roman.
I come to you not knowing my intention:
My love dictated it, perhaps I came
to find myself and know myself again.
What do I find? I see death in your eyes;
I see you will depart to seek that prize.
It is too much. My pain, at this sad sight,
now, in a last excess, achieves its height.
I feel all the unhappiness I could feel,
yet I see an answer to it, a last appeal.
Don't think that tired of this confusion,
I might dry your tears by joyful union.
In this plight to which you reduce me,
I am still pursued by inexorable glory,
ever presenting to my astonished soul
an empire incompatible with that goal,
saying that after the steps I have taken
no thought of marriage must reawaken.
Yes, Madame, less than ever, I tell you,
am I prepared to yield an empire for you,
follow you and, contented in my chains,
go sigh at the world's end, in your train.
Even you would blush at such cowardice,
you'd regret to see, in your wake, like this,
an unworthy man, without empire or court,

a sad show of love's frailties, in short.
To escape all this to which my soul is prey,
there is, as you well know, a nobler way;
that is the road Madame, that I must go,
following many a Roman, many a hero.
When many ills exhausted their fortitude,
they all described themselves as pursued
relentlessly by fate, seeming to then insist,
like to some secret order: cease to resist.
If your tears, much longer, wound my eye,
if I see you, still, firmly resolved to die,
if I must fear for your life every moment,
if you do not swear to respect my intent,
Madame, other tears must prepare to fall.
In the state in which I am I could do all,
and my hand, then, before your very eyes,
might stain with blood our last goodbyes.

Berenice

Alas!

Titus

There's nothing of which I am not capable.
For my survival, you prove now responsible.
Consider, Madame, if I am dear to you...

Act V Scene VII (*Titus, Berenice, Antiochus*)

(enter Antiochus)

Titus

Come Prince, come, I have been asking for you.
Be witness here to my unending weakness.
See if this be love with too little tenderness.
Judge us.

Antiochus

Sire, it is so. I know how you have loved.
And you, in turn, Sire, know that I have proved

worthy to be honoured with your esteem, and I,
I swear to you, without shadow of a lie,
have contested all with your dear friends;
have contested all, even at the blade's end.
Despite my protests, both entrusted to me,
the queen, her love, you yours, Sire, equally.
The queen, who hears, may disavow this:
she always saw me ardent in your praise,
keen to repay, with care, your confidence.
You think you owe me some recompense;
yet can you believe, now all proves fatal,
so faithful a friend was in truth your rival?

Titus

My rival!

Antiochus

Now, all pretence must cease;
Yes, Sire, I have always adored Berenice.
A hundred times I fought not to love her;
I could not forget; my own self-murderer.
The visible signs of your heart's alteration,
restored some brief shadow of expectation,
a hope the queen's tears then extinguished.
Bathed in tears, it was you she requested;
I came myself to summon you to her, Sire,
you came, you love, and are loved entire.
You have yielded, of that I had no doubt.
One last time, I teased the problem out,
asked of myself one last act of courage,
I sought to recall pure reason to the stage,
found myself in love, ever more deeply.
Death alone breaks such ties completely:
only by self-destruction shall it be done;
I seek my death. To tell you this, I come.
Yes, Madame, I brought him back to you.
I do not repent, my aim indeed proved true.
May heaven shower joy upon your reign,
and bring a thousand blessings in its train!
Or if heaven still seeks to bring fresh sorrows,

may the gods be content to see those blows,
which might have threatened your prosperity,
fall on a life I sacrifice to yours entirely.

Berenice (*rising*)

Enough! You Princes, both too generous,
who to some mad extremity now drive us.
Whether I look at you, or gaze deeper,
I see, on all sides, visions of disaster.
Tears I see; hear voices speaking low
of pain and horror, blood about to flow!

(*to Titus*)

You know my heart, Sire, and I can say
I never wished for power, in any way:
Rome's grandeur, the purple others prize,
has never proved attractive to my eyes.
I loved, Sire, wanted to be loved no less;
this day, I will admit, I was distressed:
I thought your love had run its course.
I know my error; you love me far more.
Your heart was troubled; I saw your tears.
Berenice, Sire, is scarcely worth such fears,
nor that, through love, these Roman lands,
at a time when Titus has achieved his plans,
while tasting the first fruits of this new day,
should in a moment see all snatched away.
I believe for five years past, until now,
you have been assured of my truest vow.
That is not all; at this late hour, I wish,
with one last effort, to surpass the rest:
I'll live; I'll follow your every command.
Farewell, Sire, reign: I depart this land.

(*to Antiochus*)

Prince, after that goodbye, you will approve
my speech: I cannot leave the man I love

then listen, far from Rome, to other vows.
Live, and be yet more generous to me now.
Let your conduct be ruled by his and mine.
I love, I go; he loves, yet he remains behind.
Far from my eyes bear your sighs and tears.
Let us prove an example, for future years,
of the most tender, most ill-fated affection,
in all the history of the sad heart's affliction.
All's ready. They await. The past is past.

(to Titus)

For the last time, farewell, my lord.

Antiochus

Alas!

The End of Racine's *Berenice*

