

Antony and Cleopatra:
Infinite Lives

by
J. Michael DeAngelis
&
Pete Barry

with original text by William Shakespeare

Music by Rebecca Kotcher

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FringeNYC Rehearsal Script

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CHARACTERS

at the museum:

NASSIMA

KITT

ELMEGREEN

OLIVIA

GAMAL

the Players:

KATHARINE (CLEOPATRA)

DAN (ANTONY)

AMELIA (ENOBARBUS)

REBECCA (CHARMIAN)

SAM (IRAS)

BARRY (OCTAVIUS)

also:

DOLLABELLA

OCTAVIA

SOOTHSAYER

LEPIDUS

MARDIAN

FAROUK

CANIDIUS

SCARUS

GAURD



Note on text: dialogue in [brackets] is spoken in Arabic.

The Time: Autumn 2011

The Place: The Egyptian wing of a university's archaeology museum

The stage is set in the Egyptian wing of the museum; a long hallway with stone columns at the sides and rear, and center, the great sphinx.

As the audience enters the museum, they are welcomed by DR. LAWRENCE ELMEGREEN, a curator at the museum and principal fund raiser. After the audience is all seated, he steps on stage and addresses them.

ELMEGREEN

Good evening. Good evening, everyone. I'd like to thank you all for coming. I know that in these tough economic times, you have your choice of museums to patronize and we are very thankful that you've chosen us. I'd like to take this opportunity to remind you that tickets are now on sale for our annual New Year's Eve gala. This year's party will be "A New Year, A New Egypt" - the capstone of our year long refurbishment of this Egyptian wing.

We take our duty as a museum and an academic institution very seriously. Many of you may have been tempted by the Science Institute's Game of Thrones themed exhibit "Winter is Coming - Weather in Westeros" or the Natural History Museum's "The Pre-Historic World of Harry Potter: Magic, Muggles and Dinosaurs." It is with no small amount of pride that this museum has not resorted to cheap tricks since our ill-fated 1989 exhibit: "It Belongs In a Museum! - The Historical and Archeological Inaccuracies of Indiana Jones." Now, that's not to say we don't like to have a little fun every once in a while. Which is why I'm pleased to introduce to you tonight, Mr. Kitt Marsh, the OBIE award winning director who has agreed to collaborate with us on a museum first - a fully staged production of William Shakespeare's Antony & Cleopatra here in the Egyptian wing. He's here tonight to give us a preview and I ask that you join me in giving him a very warm welcome, Kitt Marsh everybody!

KITT MARSH enters. Elmegreen applauds wildly, stepping aside.

KITT

Ah. Thanks, everyone. I'm not great at making speeches, so, uh. In Poland (of all places) one of their dukes or kings or regents - whatever they have over there - was a theater lover and fashioned a Roman amphitheater in the royal gardens, complete with a moat that surrounded the stage. He staged this play, complete with a depiction of the massive sea battle, with burning barges sailing on the moat. Well, Dr. Elmegreen says I can't stage a battle in the Koi pond, but we do have this Sphinx. And I think that's pretty good. So, anyway, enjoy the opening scene of William Shakespeare's Antony & Cleopatra.

Kitt exits. A flourish of trumpets. Shakespeare's Act One, Scene One begins. Enter ANTONY and CLEOPATRA with their trains.

CLEOPATRA

If it be love indeed, tell me how much

ANTONY

There's beggary in the love that can be reckon'd

CLEOPATRA

I'll set a bourn how far to be beloved.

ANTONY

Then must thou needs find out new heaven, new earth.

Enter a GUARD

GUARD

News, my good lord, from Rome.

ANTONY

Grates me: the sum.

CLEOPATRA

Nay, hear them, Antony.

Fulvia perchance is angry, or, who knows
If the scare-bearded Caesar have not sent
His powerful mandate to you, 'Do this, or this,
Take in that kingdom, and enfranchise that,
Perform 't, or else we damn thee.'

ANTONY

How now, my love!

CLEOPATRA

Perchance! Nay and most like:
You must not stay here longer, your dismissal
Is come from Casear, therefore here it, Antony.
Where's Fulvia's process? Caesar's I would say? Both?
Call in the messengers. As I am Egypt's queen,
Thou blushest, Antony, and that blood of thine
Is Caesar's homager: else so thy cheek pays shame
When shrill-tongued Fulvia scolds. The messengers!

ANTONY

Let Rome in Tiber melt, and the wide arc
Of the ranged empire fall! Here is my space
Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man: the nobleness of life
Is to do thus, when such a mutual pair

(They embrace)

And such a twain can do't, in which I bind,
On pain of punishment, the world to weat
We stand up peerless.

CLEOPATRA

Excellent falsehood!
Why did he marry Fulvia, and not love her?
I'll seem the fool. I am not, Antony
Will be himself.

ANTONY

But stirr'd by Cleopatra.
Now, for the love of Love, and her soft hours,
Let's not confound the time with conference harsh:
There's not a minute of our lives should stretch
Without some pleasure now. What sport tonight?

CLEOPATRA

Hear the ambassadors.

ANTONY

Fie, wrangling queen!
Whom every thing becomes, to chide, to laugh,
To weep, whose every passion fully strives
To make itself, in thee, fair and admired!
No messenger, but thine, and all alone
Tonight we'll wander through the streets and note
The qualities of people. Come, my queen.
Last night you did desire it: speak not to us.

Elmegreen comes back on, applauding.

ELMEGREEN

Weren't they just fabulous? That's just a sample of the full production, which you will be able to see in just a few weeks time, right here in this very room.

Now, if you would care to join me on the lower level, select cast members will do a meet and greet in the gift shop, which is open late this evening for all your shopping needs.

He exits into the audience. Cleopatra (Catherine) speaks out of the side of her mouth.

CLEOPATRA (KATHERINE)

Dan, sweetie?

DAN

Yes, Katherine, my love?

CLEOPATRA (KATHERINE)

If you don't shave that woolly mammoth off your face, I'm going to break into your apartment with a straight razor while you sleep.

Kitt and NASSIMA enter.

KITT

Thank God that's over. Katherine, Dan, what's going on? You guys had the sexual chemistry of two coma patients up there.

NASSIMA

Ignore him, he's in a mood. It was great.

KATHARINE

If you want passion, will you please tell him that he has to shave his beard? It's like having to kiss a brillo pad.

ANTONY (DAN)

Kissed a lot of brillo pads lately?

KATHARINE

Laugh it up, fuzball.

OLIVIA enters. Tension immediately fills the room.

OLIVIA

Kitt Marsh, you have put me in some impossible situations before, but this is too much. The acoustics in this room are going to kill us. By the time you get to the last scene, the people in the back row will still be hearing the echoes from one-one. There's no stage lighting, I can't hang anything near the exhibits, every time I put something down somebody tells me it's a fire hazard... and your budget won't buy us much more than cardboard and duct tape.

KITT

Olivia, I've seen you work miracles with cardboard and duct tape. The things you can whip up...

OLIVIA

Don't start with the smooth talk unless you're trying to get back together. In that case, you know EXACTLY what I can whip up.

KITT

And...of course you remember my fiancée, Nassima.

OLIVIA

Oh. Yes.

NASSIMA

Hello.

OLIVIA

I can't believe you're not an actress. I thought you only dated actresses now.

KITT

She's a PhD. She's in charge of restoring this entire Egyptian wing. She's the reason we have a show here. And we're not dating, we're getting married.

NASSIMA

Well. Almost. I have quite a lot of work to do before that's official.

OLIVIA

Getting married?

NASSIMA

Sorry, no, being a PhD.

KITT

You know, Liv was with me right at the start - back from my college days. My direction, her designs.

OLIVIA

Back when it was more politics and less Ptolemy. Oh the trouble we used to get into.

NASSIMA

Really?

AMELIA (Enobarbus) enters, much to Kitt's relief.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

Kitt, I'm sorry to interrupt.

KITT

Please, interrupt. Unless this is about your part.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

It's about my part.

KITT

We have been over this!

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

Why do I always have to play a guy? Enobarbus? Are you shitting me?

KITT

It's a great part!

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

Do I look like a general in the army of the Roman Empire?

KITT

You're little...but you're tough.

CLEOPATRA (KATHERINE)

At least you don't have to wear this death-trap of a dress.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

At least you're wearing a dress! Seven shows I have done for this man and not once - not once have I been cast as a woman.

KITT

And you get the most famous speech in the whole play. "The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne, burn'd on the water, the poop was beaten gold."

ANTONY (DAN)

(Giggles) Golden poop. Sorry, it gets me every time.

KITT

Everybody, stop! Katharine - you're wearing the dress. Dan, stop laughing at poop. Amelia, you're a man. Sorry. Last time. This play has a warehouse full of parts for men and we don't have enough guys to start a flag football team.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

Last time?

KITT

Do this, and next go 'round, you're Lady Macbeth.

OLIVIA

Don't tell me. We're doing Macbeth in the Scottish wing.

KATHARINE

Don't say that name!

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

You heard him. You all heard him! That's a binding contract for me to be Lady Macbeth!

KATHARINE

Oh my God, stop it.

ANTONY (DAN)

If you played Lady Macbeth, you'd kiss me with this beard, right? Macbeth is Scottish, he'd have a beard!

KATHARINE

Again!! What is wrong with you people! You are cursing us all!

NASSIMA

What do you mean?

KATHARINE

You NEVER say the name of the Scottish play in a theater.

KITT

It's a museum.

KATHARINE

It doesn't matter! It's terrible luck! The only way to reverse it is to go outside the theater and recite the "to be or not to be" speech.

KITT

I thought you had to spit and run around the building.

KATHARINE

We'll do both. The way rehearsals are going, we need all the good luck we can get. All of you - outside. Now. Let's go. You're doing laps. And monologues.

Katharine ushers out everyone but Kitt and Nassima.

KITT

Theater people. Now - I think you were about to tell me how wrong I was about the scene.

NASSIMA

No.

KITT

See, this is the part where, as my loving and supportive future wife, you tell me I've staged a brilliant show.

NASSIMA

We both know you haven't. At least not by your usual standards. But it's not bad, Kitt. It looks spectacular. I just know that it's not your usual...fire. So what? Sometimes politics doesn't enter into it. Take it from me, Cleopatra isn't anything but opulence and romance. Go with it.

KITT

This is what I get for selling out. It's like one arm tied behind my back. I can't use my usual bag of tricks, he's cornered me with this traditional crap. And on top of it all, I gotta do this play.

NASSIMA

What? You don't even like the play?

KITT

No.

NASSIMA

It's Shakespeare! That's what you do.

KITT

You can't like everything. You ever read Two Noble Kinsmen?

NASSIMA

What's wrong with Antony and Cleopatra?

KITT

It's blah-blah-blah, this battle happened, that battle happened. Can we see the battle? No, but let me tell you about this battle. The audience doesn't care. It's happening somewhere else. Maybe it was exciting in Elizabethan England, but in America, our motto is out of sight out of mind. But it doesn't even matter. Shakespeare doesn't really care about the politics. It's all welded to the back of a love story between two idiots, who couldn't-

NASSIMA

Idiots?

KITT

What, you're gonna defend these two?

NASSIMA

I'll defend Cleopatra.

KITT

Why, because she's Egyptian? She makes terrible choices, she backstabs her man, who, frankly, is a lousy guy.

NASSIMA

You don't like stories about Egyptian women who fall for lousy Western men?

KITT

I'm gonna stop right now before I make any more problems for myself.

NASSIMA

Mmhm.

He kisses her and walks off, shouting:

KITT

OLIVIA! GET BACK IN HERE, I THINK AMELIA SHOULD HAVE A BEARD TOO!

GAMAL appears in the corner. As Nassima turns to go:

GAMAL

Nassima.

She sees him. Shock.

NASSIMA

Oh my God Gamal. [Arabic: What are you doing here?]

GAMAL

[I'm just passing through. I had to see you.]

NASSIMA

[Why? What's the matter?]

GAMAL

It's Youssef. Youssef is dead.

Gamal weeps.

The scene changes.

Enter Antony and Enobarbus. Antony reads a note.

ANTONY

Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS

Sir?

ANTONY

Fulvia is dead.

ENOBARBUS

Fulvia!

ANTONY

Dead.

ENOBARBUS

Why, sir, give the gods a thankful sacrifice. When it pleaseth their deities to take the wife of a man from him, it shows to the man the tailors of the earth; comforting therein, that when old robes worn out, there are members to make new. If there were no more women but Fulvia, then you had indeed a cut, and the case to be lamented: this grief is crowned with consolation, your old smock brings forth a new petticoat and indeed the tears live in an onion that should water this sorrow.

ANTONY

The business she hath broached in the state cannot endure my absence.

ENOBARBUS

And the business you have broached here cannot be without you, especially that of Cleopatra's, which wholly depends on your abode.

ANTONY

No more light answers. Let our officers
Have notice what we purpose. I shall break
The cause of our expedience to the queen,
And get her leave to part. For not alone
The death of Fulvia, with more urgent touches,
Do strongly speak to us, but the letter too
Of many contriving friends in Rome
Petition us at home. Say, our pleasure
To such who place is under us, requires
Our quick remove from hence.

ENOBARBUS

I shall do't.

They exit. Enter Cleopatra with her train - Charmian, and
Iras.

CLEOPATRA

Where is he?

CHARMIAN

I did not see him since.

CLEOPATRA

See where he is, who's with him, what he does.
I did not send you if you find him sad,
Say I am dancing, if in mirth, report
That I am sudden sick: quick, and return.

IRAS

Yes, my queen.

Iras exits.

CHARMIAN

Madam, methinks, if you did love him dearly,
You do not hold the method to enforce
The like from him.

CLEOPATRA

What should I do, I do not?

CHARMIAN

In each thing give him way, cross him nothing.

CLEOPATRA

Thou teachest like a fool, the way to lose him.

CHARMIAN

Tempt him not so too far, I wish, forbear.

In time we hate that which we often fear..

But here comes Antony.

Enter Antony.

CLEOPATRA

I am sick and sullen.

ANTONY

I am very sorry to give breathing to my purpose -

CLEOPATRA

Help me away, dear Charmian, I shall fall:

It cannot be thus long, the sides of nature will not sustain it.

ANTONY

Now, my dearest queen --

CLEOPATRA

Pray you, stand further from me.

ANTONY

What's the matter?

CLEOPATRA

I know, by that same eye, there's some good news.

What says the married woman? You may go:

Would she had never given you leave to come!

Let her not say 'tis I that keep you here:

I have no power upon you, hers you are.

ANTONY

Hear me, queen:
 The strong necessity of time commands
 Our services awhile, but my full heart
 Remains in use with you. My more particular,
 And that which most you should save my going,
 Is Fulvia's death.

CLEOPATRA

Can Fulvia die?

ANTONY

She's dead, my queen:
 Look here, and at thy sovereign leisure read
 The garboils she awaked; at the last, best:
 See when and where she died.

CLEOPATRA

O most false love!
 Where be the sacred vials thou shouldst fill
 With sorrowful water? Now I see, I see,
 In Fulvia's death, how mine received shall be.

ANTONY

Quarrel no more, but be prepared to know
 The purposes I bear; which are, or cease,
 As you shall give the advice. By the fire
 That quickens Nilus' slime, I go from hence
 Thy soldier, servant; making peace or war
 As thou affect'st.

CLEOPATRA

Cut my lace, Charmian, come;
 But let it be: I am quickly ill, and well,
 So Antony loves.

ANTONY

My precious queen, forbear;
 And give true evidence to his love, which stands
 An honourable trial.

CLEOPATRA

So Fulvia told me.
 I prithee, turn aside and weep for her,
 Then bid adieu to me, and say the tears

Belong to Egypt: good now, play one scene
Of excellent dissembling; and let it look
Life perfect honour.

ANTONY

You'll heat my blood: no more.

CLEOPATRA

You can do better yet; but this is meetly.

ANTONY

Now, by my sword,--

CLEOPATRA

And target. Still he mends;
But this is not the best. Look, prithee, Charmian,
How this Herculean Roman does become
The carriage of his chafe.

ANTONY

I'll leave you, lady.

CLEOPATRA

Courteous lord, one word.
Sir, you and I must part, but that's not it:
Sir, you and I have loved, but there's not it;
That you know well: something it is I would,
O, my oblivion is a very Antony,
And I am all forgotten.

ANTONY

But that your royalty
Holds idleness your subject, I should take you
For idleness itself.

CLEOPATRA

'Tis sweating labour
To bear such idleness so near the heart
As Cleopatra this. But, sir, forgive me;
Since my becomings kill me, when they do not
Eye well to you: your honour calls you hence;
Therefore be deaf to my unpitied folly.
And all the gods go with you! upon your sword

Sit laurel victory! and smooth success
Be strew'd before your feet!

ANTONY

Let us go. Come;
Our separation so abides, and flies,
That thou, residing here, go'st yet with me,
And I, hence fleeting, here remain with thee. Away!

Exeunt.

Nassima and Gamal stand across from each other, red-eyed. A short silence.

NASSIMA

When are you leaving?

GAMAL

Soon. I want you to come with me.

NASSIMA

No, Gamal. I don't ever want to go back there.

GAMAL

Nassima, for once in your life-

Elmegreen enters.

ELMEGREEN

Nassima, is that you?

GAMAL

I'm sorry, I don't mean to disturb anyone.

ELMEGREEN

No, it's all right, are you part of the show?

GAMAL

The show?

NASSIMA

This is my brother. Doctor Gamal El-Kahir, this is Dr. Lawrence Elmegreen.

ELMEGREEN

Oh, well, hey! Pleased to meet you! I've heard so much about you.

NASSIMA

Have you?

ELMEGREEN

No, not really. I say that to everyone because I forget half of what anybody tells me.

GAMAL

A pleasure to make your acquaintance, Doctor.

ELMEGREEN

And yours, Doctor. I'm joking, actually. Not about being pleased to meet you, of course. I'm delighted. But I do remember Nassima saying you were a field researcher at...Alexandria National?

GAMAL

Egyptian National. Cairo.

ELMEGREEN

Cairo. My stars. Not the best place to be lately. I heard there was a fire. Looting?

GAMAL

Yes.

ELMEGREEN

It must be crazy over there.

GAMAL

Yes. The neighborhood was filled with looters. Not just locals. Foreigners are jumping the borders, hoping to carry away artifacts.

NASSIMA

Who would plunge themselves into Tahrir Square, chance being locked up in a military dungeon somewhere, just to snatch a some mummy?

GAMAL

[Who would shoot an innocent man? Who would shoot Youssef?]

Elmegreen looks awkwardly at the tense situation.

NASSIMA

One of our old schoolmates was killed.

ELMEGREEN

No. Not when the building was attacked?

GAMAL

No. He was with demonstrators outside the Ministry of Defense. They shot rubber bullets, they hit him in the head.

ELMEGREEN

I'm so sorry. Nassima, I'm sorry, you were, were you, I'm sure you were close.

NASSIMA

We were in school together. I haven't seen him in a while.

ELMEGREEN

Well that's just awful. I'm very sorry, Dr. Kahir.

GAMAL

Thank you. As I said, I was just passing through. I'm on business until the end of the month, I wanted to see Nassima.

NASSIMA

I was just telling my brother there is such a thing as e-mail. Phones, even.

GAMAL

And I was about to say that in Cairo, you don't necessarily want to send e-mails or make phone calls that raise red flags about men killed by the government.

NASSIMA

You think they don't have you linked to Youssef already?

GAMAL

The trip was coming, it was easy enough to wait.

NASSIMA

This happened a month ago.

GAMAL

And it's not as if you were coming back for the funeral.

Moment of awkward silence.

ELMEGREEN

Well, anyway I suppose I had better get back to work. Are you staying in town, Doctor?

GAMAL

For a few days. Then I'll go to Washington.

ELMEGREEN

Smithsonian?

GAMAL

Yes, but also to see some private interests. We're seeking funds to save a project.

ELMEGREEN

Oh. If you don't mind me asking, what project?

GAMAL

Ah. Well. We're trying to be discreet about it.

ELMEGREEN

I understand, I understand. Actually, I don't understand. You need money, but you don't want people to know you need money?

GAMAL

It's not the money, really. It's the political climate.

NASSIMA

Are they threatening the museum?

GAMAL

Are "they" threatening it? Everything threatens it. Protesters, rioters, riot squads, looters. The neighborhood is a war zone. Every day, we worry about another fire. Or bullets.

(pause)

You heard about the fire?

ELMEGREEN

Yes, of course, it was terrible. So much needless destruction. Irreplaceable items. The entire...what was the dig again?

GAMAL

Wadi Shait 614.

ELMEGREEN

Oh my, yes. I just thought that was devastating. That was a real treasure...and it just...burned.

GAMAL

It wasn't burned.

NASSIMA

[What are you talking about?]

ELMEGREEN

Wadi Shait 614 was destroyed in the fire. It was on CNN.

GAMAL

There was a fire and looting, all of that is true. Youssef and I, and a few of my colleagues were hold up in the museum. It had become too dangerous to walk the streets - especially for those of us who had been visible protestors like Youssef. We had mistakenly thought the museum would be a perfectly safe place. It had always been before...we often used our workroom in the museum as somewhere we could talk freely amongst ourselves. In there, away from the chaos on the street, the evening was passing rather enjoyably. We were playing cards while Youssef and Sallah argued over who was worse - Mourbarak or Sadat. It was Sallah who heard it first...shouts from above...and then the alarm. By the time we had rushed upstairs, the main exhibit all was already filled with smoke. Angry people smashed their way into display cases, ripped tapestries off the wall. I could barely think - but Youssef remained clear headed. He pulled us back to the workroom, where 614 was being cleaned and cataloged. The items upstairs were already a loss - but we could save 614. We could get it out of the museum and perhaps out of Egypt. We packed everything we could carry into a crate.

ELMEGREEN

You just walked out with it?

GAMAL

We took advantage of the natural cover of the chaos. We pulled hoods over our head and pretended to be like the other commons looters. The next day, we reported to work and added the 614 dig to the list of stolen or destroyed items.

NASSIMA

You lied? To the press? My God, if Father could hear this....

ELMEGREEN

Your brother is a hero, Nassima. Tell me, do you have 614 with you here now?

GAMAL

No. Youssef was the one with the contacts that could have helped us. Now he's dead. I don't have the means to transport it on my own. It is buried under the floorboards of a graduate student's house.

NASSIMA

What will you do?

GAMAL

We are looking for money to move it to a safe location. I confess, we don't have much of a plan. But we must do something before it is discovered, either by looters, thieves, or the military establishment, who would most likely confiscate and destroy it.

ELMEGREEN

We'll take it.

Nassima and Gamal look sharply at Elmegreen.

NASSIMA

Doctor Elmegreen, this is far more complicated than my brother's romantic tale is making it out to be, I'm sure.

ELMEGREEN

I don't see the problem. I do all the procurement, you do the paperwork. Just like any other purchase. We'll find the money in the budget, and we'll have it shipped here.

NASSIMA

Can you get it through customs?

ELMEGREEN

Cairo's not going to screw with a private American museum. And if we have to grease a few palms, so be it. Archeology 101, money talks and priceless artifacts walk.

GAMAL

This is...would you truly be able to do this thing?

ELMEGREEN

Save an irreplaceable set of artifacts? Absolutely. Now, we might not have a lot of money...

GAMAL

We are willing to forego the usual leasing arrangements. If you can cover the costs of shipping, and insurance, we would lend it to you until such time that Cairo is stable .

ELMEGREEN

They're shutting down here, you want to go get a drink?

GAMAL

Thank you. I do not drink.

ELMEGREEN

Late dinner? My treat.

GAMAL

Yes, thank you, I can't express my gratitude, Doctor.

ELMEGREEN

Let's talk about it. Nassima, you'll join us?

NASSIMA

I'd like to. I have to close up shop. Clean up after K...the show. I said I'd take care of it.

ELMEGREEN

Catch up with us. Is Kitt around?

NASSIMA

I think he went out with the cast and crew.

ELMEGREEN

Doctor, if you just flew in, is this the first time you'll meet Nassima's fiancée?

GAMAL

Her. Fiancée?

(short recovery)

Yes. Yes it will be a big first meeting.

NASSIMA

Gamal-

ELMEGREEN

Great! We'll get a reservation, Nassima, call us when you're done, we'll save you a seat.

NASSIMA

You don't have to-

GAMAL

No, please, catch up with us. I'd love to hear all about how your fiancée is doing.

ELMEGREEN

Great! Call my cell.

Elmegreen goes. Just before he follows:

GAMAL

I'm glad you're as communicative as ever, Nassima.

NASSIMA

It just happened, Gamal.

GAMAL

And there is such a thing as e-mail.

He leaves. Nassima stews.

NASSIMA

Damn you, Gamal..

She exits. Antony, Octavius, Lepidus, Enobarbus, and Dollabella enter.

OCTAVIUS

Welcome to Rome.

ANTONY

Thank you.

OCTAVIUS

Sit.

ANTONY

Sit, sir.

OCTAVIUS

Nay, then.

ANTONY

I learn, you take things ill which are not so,
Or being, concern you not.

OCTAVIUS

I must be laugh'd at,
If, or for nothing or a little, I
Should say myself offended, and with you
Chiefly i' the world; more laugh'd at, that I should
Once name you derogately, when to sound your name
It not concern'd me.

ANTONY

My being in Egypt, Caesar,
What was't to you?

OCTAVIUS

No more than my residing here at Rome
Might be to you in Egypt: yet, if you there
Did practise on my state, your being in Egypt
Might be my question.

ANTONY

How intend you, practised?

OCTAVIUS

You may be pleased to catch at mine intent
By what did here befall me. Your wife and brother
Made wars upon me; and their contestation
Was theme for you, you were the word of war.

ANTONY

You do mistake your business; my brother never
Did urge me in his act: I did inquire it;
And have my learning from some true reports,
That drew their swords with you. Did he not rather
Discredit my authority with yours;
And make the wars alike against my stomach,
Having alike your cause? Of this my letters
Before did satisfy you. If you'll patch a quarrel,
As matter whole you have not to make it with,
It must not be with this.

OCTAVIUS

You praise yourself
By laying defects of judgment to me; but
You patch'd up your excuses.

ANTONY

Not so, not so;
I know you could not lack, I am certain on't,
Very necessity of this thought, that I,
Your partner in the cause 'gainst which he fought,
Could not with graceful eyes attend those wars
Which fronted mine own peace. As for my wife,
I would you had her spirit in such another:
The third o' the world is yours; which with a snaffle
You may pace easy, but not such a wife.

ENOBARBUS

Would we had all such wives, that the men might go
to wars with the women!

ANTONY

So much uncurbable, her garboils, Caesar
Made out of her impatience, which not wanted
Shrewdness of policy too, I grieving grant
Did you too much disquiet: for that you must
But say, I could not help it.

OCTAVIUS

I wrote to you
When rioting in Alexandria; you
Did pocket up my letters, and with taunts
Did gibe my missive out of audience.

ANTONY

Sir,
He fell upon me ere admitted: then
Three kings I had newly feasted, and did want
Of what I was i' the morning: but next day
I told him of myself; which was as much
As to have ask'd him pardon. Let this fellow
Be nothing of our strife; if we contend,
Out of our question wipe him.

OCTAVIUS

You have broken
The article of your oath; which you shall never
Have tongue to charge me with.

LEPIDUS

Soft, Caesar!

ANTONY

No,
Lepidus, let him speak:
The honour is sacred which he talks on now,
Supposing that I lack'd it. But, on, Caesar;
The article of my oath.

OCTAVIUS

To lend me arms and aid when I required them;
The which you both denied.

ANTONY

Neglected, rather;
And then when poison'd hours had bound me up
From mine own knowledge. As nearly as I may,
I'll play the penitent to you: but mine honesty
Shall not make poor my greatness, nor my power
Work without it. Truth is, that Fulvia,
To have me out of Egypt, made wars here;
For which myself, the ignorant motive, do
So far ask pardon as befits mine honour
To stoop in such a case.

LEPIDUS

'Tis noble spoken.

DOLLABELLA

If it might please you, to enforce no further
The griefs between ye: to forget them quite
Were to remember that the present need
Speaks to atone you.

LEPIDUS

Worthily spoken, Dollabella.

ENOBARBUS

Or, if you borrow one another's love for the instant, you may, when you hear no more
words of Pompey, return it again: you shall have time to wrangle in when you have
nothing else to do.

ANTONY

Thou art a soldier only: speak no more.

ENOBARBUS

That truth should be silent I had almost forgot.

ANTONY

You wrong this presence; therefore speak no more.

ENOBARBUS

Go to, then; your considerate stone.

OCTAVIUS

I do not much dislike the matter, but
The manner of his speech; for't cannot be
We shall remain in friendship, our conditions
So differing in their acts. Yet if I knew
What hoop should hold us stanch, from edge to edge
O' the world I would pursue it.

KITT (O.S.)

OK, OK, enough. ENOUGH!

All stop. Kitt enters with Olivia and Katharine. He paces.
He flips through his notes.

KITT

Set for the next scene.

OCTAVIUS (BARRY)

Is it me? Should I be angrier? I felt like maybe I could have been angrier. I'll be angrier.

KITT

It was fine. Set for the next scene.

Looks of disbelief and uncertainty. Everyone moseys off.

OLIVIA

Couldn't we have gone straight through?

KITT

Are you the director?

OLIVIA

Not the last time I checked.

KITT

Let me check who is. Oh, look at that, I am. Top of two-three.

KATHARINE

I'm not in that.

KITT

Then roll a joint.

She huffs and turns to leave. Nassima enters.

NASSIMA

Kitt?

KITT

Hey, babe. Wait, Katharine, hold it.

KATHARINE

What?

KITT

Give me four-seven. The grieving scene.

KATHARINE

Now?

KITT

Yeah.

KATHARINE

We're doing two-three.

KITT

Interesting. And I want to hear four-seven.

KATHARINE

Why?

KITT

Because I want to see if I can pull any arc out of this Elizabethan drivel. Please. Indulge me.

KATHARINE

The crown o' the earth doth melt. My lord!
 O, wither'd is the garland of the war,
 The soldier's pole is fall'n: young boys and girls
 Are level now with men; the odds is gone,
 And there is nothing left remarkable
 Beneath the visiting moon.

Nassima listens carefully to this speech.

KITT

Thank you. That didn't hurt, did it?

KATHARINE

Any notes?

KITT

Just one. MACBETH MACBETH MACBETH MACBETH-

KATHARINE

STOP IT STOP IT STOP IT!

She flees. Kitt laughs.

OLIVIA

You are awfully tense. Maybe you're the one who needs a joint. You never used to say no to a little relaxation in the middle of rehearsal. Outside for a quick puff...or we could go wrap everything in the Iranian exhibit in green. People shouldn't forget what happened over there either.

NASSIMA

Excuse me.

KITT

What is it babe?

NASSIMA

Can we talk?

KITT

Sure, of course. Olivia, go...sew something.

Olivia steps aside, annoyed.

NASSIMA

The thing is, my brother's here.

KITT

Your brother.

NASSIMA

Yes.

KITT

The brother from Egypt?

NASSIMA

Yes.

KITT

The brother from Egypt you never speak to?

NASSIMA

Yes.

KITT

Huh.

NASSIMA

Well, he's here, he got in last night. And he went out, and I haven't seen him today, but he just called me, and he's coming. And he's probably going to kill you.

KITT

Oh. Good. Why's that?

NASSIMA

Because I didn't tell him about you. Because I didn't expect he would really ever find out until we were married. As I don't expect to go back to Egypt, ever.

KITT

And he's mad you didn't tell him.

NASSIMA

Yes. But he'll be madder that you're, ah...

KITT

White?

NASSIMA

Christian.

KITT

I'm not Christian.

NASSIMA

You're not Muslim.

KITT

I didn't realize it was either/or.

NASSIMA

In fact, you probably shouldn't mention your religion at all.

KITT

I don't have a religion.

NASSIMA

That's exactly why.

KITT

You're telling me that your brother is coming here, to kill me, because I'm an atheist?

NASSIMA

I'm telling you that my brother is an emotionally unpredictable sexist male, who has expected that his baby sister would marry an upstanding Muslim family man since the age of four. He's angry that I didn't tell him, he's furious that you're an American, and he may very well blossom into the Incredible Hulk if he finds out that not only do you not believe in the one true God, but, in fact, in no God at all.

The other actors gather around, waiting for their scene, but also engaged in the voyeurism of Kitt and Nassima's squabble.

KITT

Now listen. I love you. That's the only thing that matters. I understand you didn't want to tell your family. Fine. That's your prerogative. My family's full of crazy people.

NASSIMA

He's not crazy.

KITT

But I don't change who I am for anybody. I am who I am, sweetheart, and if your brother doesn't like it, too bad. (To the actors) Let's go.

The actors assemble and the scene changes to Shakespeare. Antony, Enobarbus, Lepidus, Octavius, Dollabella and Octavia.

DOLLABELLA

Give me leave, Caesar--

OCTAVIUS

Speak, Dollabella.

DOLLABELLA

Thou hast a sister by the mother's side,
Admired Octavia: great Mark Antony
Is now a widower..

OCTAVIUS

Say not so, Dollabella:
If Cleopatra heard you, your reproof
Were well deserved of rashness.

ANTONY

I am not married, Caesar: let me hear
Dollabella further speak.

DOLLABELLA

To hold you in perpetual amity,
To make you brothers, and to knit your hearts
With an unslipping knot, take Antony
Octavia to his wife; whose beauty claims
No worse a husband than the best of men;
Whose virtue and whose general graces speak
That which none else can utter. By this marriage,
All little jealousies, which now seem great,
And all great fears, which now import their dangers,
Would then be nothing: truths would be tales,
Where no half tales be truths: her love to both,
Draw after her. Pardon what I have spoke;
For 'tis a studied, not a present thought,
By duty ruminated.

ANTONY

Will Caesar speak?

OCTAVIUS

There is my hand.
A sister I bequeath you, whom no brother
Did ever love so dearly: let her live
To join our kingdoms and our hearts; and never
Fly off our loves again!

Octavius puts Antony and Octavia hand in hand

LEPIDUS

Happily, amen!

ANTONY

The world and my great office will sometimes
Divide me from your bosom.

OCTAVIA

All which time
Before the Gods my knee shall bow my prayers
To them for you.

ANTONY

Good night, sir. My Octavia.
Read not my blemishes in the world's report:
I have not kept my square; but that to come
Shall all be done by the rule. Good night, dear lady.

OCTAVIA

Good night.

Exeunt all but Antony. The SOOTHSAYER enters.

ANTONY

Now, Soothsayer. You do wish yourself in Egypt?

SOOTHSAYER

Would that I had never come from thence, nor you Thither.

ANTONY

Say to me,
Whose fortunes shall rise higher, Caesar's or mine?

SOOTHSAYER

Caesar's.
Therefore, O Antony, stay not by his side:
Thy demon, that's thy spirit which keeps thee, is
Noble, courageous high, unmatchable,
Where Caesar's is not, but, near him, thy angel
Becomes a fear, as being o'erpower'd: therefore
Make space enough between you.

ANTONY

Speak this no more.

SOOTHSAYER

To none by thee, no more, but when to thee.
 If thou dost play with him at any game,
 Thou art sure to lose; and, of that natural luck,
 He beats thee 'gainst the odds.

Exeunt. Enter Cleopatra, Iras, Charmian. Charmian sings
 a love sonnet.

CHARMIAN (SINGING)

Weary with toil, I haste me to my bed,
 The dear repose for limbs with travel tired;
 But then begins a journey in my head,
 To work my mind, when body's work's expired:
 For then my thoughts, from far where I abide,
 Intend a zealous pilgrimage to thee,
 And keep my drooping eyelids open wide,
 Looking on darkness which the blind do see

CLEOPATRA

Give me some music; music, moody food
 Of that trade in love.

Charmian continues the song.

CHARMIAN (SINGING)

Save that my soul's imaginary sight
 Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
 Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
 Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.

Music continues underneath:

CLEOPATRA

Let's to billiards: come, Charmian.

CHARMIAN

My arm is sore; best play with Iras.

CLEOPATRA

Come, will you play?

IRAS

As well as I can, madam.

CLEOPATRA

I'll none now.
 Give me mine angle; we'll to the river: there,
 My music laying far off, I will betray
 Tawny-fin'd fishes; my bend hook shall pierce
 Their slimy jaws; and, as I draw them up,
 I'll think them everyone an Antony,
 And say 'Ah, ah! You're caught!'"

CHARMIAN

'Twas a merry when
 You wager'd on your angling, when your diver
 Did hang a salt-fish on his hook, which he
 With fervency drew up.

CLEOPATRA

That time, -- O times! --
 I laugh'd him out of patience; and that night
 I laugh'd him into patience; and next morn,
 Ere the ninth hour, I drunk him to his bed;
 Then put my tires and mantles on him, whilst
 I wore his sword Philippan.

CHARMIAN

(singing)

Save that my soul's imaginary sight
 Presents thy shadow to my sightless view,
 Which, like a jewel hung in ghastly night,
 Makes black night beauteous and her old face new.

Charmian finishes the song. Enter Mardian.

CLEOPATRA

O, from Italy
 Ram thou thy fruitful tiding in mine ears,
 That long time have been barren.

MARDIAN

Madam, madam --

CLEOPATRA

Antonius dead!--If thou say so, villain,
Thou kill'st thy mistress: but well and free,
If thou so yield him, there is gold, and here
My bluest veins to kiss; a hand that kings
Have lipp'd, and trembled kissing.

MARDIAN

He's married, madam.

Cleopatra draws a knife.

CLEOPATRA

Rogue, thou hast lived too long!

MARDIAN

Nay, then I'll run!

CHARMIAN

Good madam, keep yourself within yourself:
The messenger is innocent.

CLEOPATRA

Is he married?
I cannot hate thee worser than I do,
If thou again say "Yes".

MARDIAN

He's married, madam.

CLEOPATRA

The gods confound thee! Dost thou hold there still?

MARDIAN

Should I lie, madam?

CLEOPATRA

O, I would thou didst.
Go, get thee hence! He is married?

MARDIAN

I crave your highness' pardon.

CLEOPATRA

He is married?

MARDIAN

Take no offence that I would not offend you:
To punish me for what you make me do.
Seems much unequal: he's married to Octavia.

Cleopatra rages at Mardian again, coming at her with the
knife. Mardian flees.

IRAS

Good your highness, patience.

CLEOPATRA

In praising Antony, I have dispraised Caesar.

IRAS

Many times, madam.

CLEOPATRA

I am paid for't now.
Lead me from hence:
I faint: O Iras, Charmian! 'tis no matter.
Lead me to my chamber.

Exeunt. As they go, Katharine (Cleopatra) trips.

KATHARINE

Ouch! Watch out!

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

Sorry, sorry. That was my fault. I don't know how to carry you and the guitar off at the
same time.

Enter Olivia and Kitt.

OLIVIA

Are you alright, sweetie?

KATHARINE

I think so. It wasn't her fault, it's this damn dress.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

I think I could help her off if I could get rid of the guitar earlier. Or maybe Iras could take
it.

IRAS (SAM)

Why do have a guitar anyway? That doesn't make any sense. We're supposed to be in ancient Egypt.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

Maybe Olivia can build me a lute. Is that right? Did they have lutes?

KATHARINE

This damn show is cursed. Half the ancient Egyptian artifacts have mummy's spell on them and everyone is running around shouting Mac...the Scottish play. Cursed.

Gamal slips on unnoticed.

OLIVIA

(Looking at Cleopatra's dress) I'd believe it, you put a giant hole in this gown and I don't have any more of this material. Go change out of this so I can fix it.

Katharine exits.

IRAS (SAM)

There's a mummy's curse?

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

You know, sometimes I feel like this sphinx is staring at me. It's giving me the creeps.

KITT

LISTEN UP! There. Is. No. Curse. There's no such thing. This Sphinx is a hunk of rock. There is no reason to believe in witchcraft, or curses, or magic, or ghosts, or God, or Jesus Christ, or Islam, or any superstitious nonsense of any kind. THIS IS A SUPERSTITION-FREE ZONE. Check your crazy supernatural belief systems at the door! IS THAT UNDERSTOOD?

Silence.

Then, AN ENORMOUS CRASH and SCREAM from off stage.

Everyone turns and stares, frozen.

Except for Gamal, who rushes off toward the sound.

KITT

What the hell was that?

Moans of pain - a woman's - continue. Gamal walks back on.

GAMAL

I think your Cleopatra just broke her leg.

Everyone rushes off to help or gawk.

The Soothsayer approaches.

SOOTHSAYER

In nature's infinite book of secrecy
A little I can read.
You shall be yet far fairer than you are.
You shall be more loving than beloved.
You have seen and proved a fairer former fortune
Than that which is to approach.
I have said.

She goes.

Kitt, Gamal, and Nassima. All glum. Nobody looks at each other. Gamal fiddles with a prop sword.

GAMAL

You know, this sword is broken.

KITT

That's on purpose. It's a visual metaphor.

GAMAL

Oh. For what?

KITT

For this entire production.

Silence.

NASSIMA

Kitt's not used to doing Shakespeare straight.

GAMAL

What do you mean?

NASSIMA

He likes to motivate his productions politically. That's his specialty.

GAMAL

Oh, interesting. What would you do with, say, Hamlet?

KITT

I turned Hamlet into a gay porn star.

GAMAL

Ha ha!

(beat as Kitt and Nassima look at him)

Really?

KITT

Yeah.

GAMAL

And...did the text support that?

KITT

(shrugs)

Obviously.

More silence.

NASSIMA

Gamal's also quite active politically back in Egypt, you know, Kitt.

GAMAL

I wouldn't say, "quite". We're all forced to participate now.

KITT

Why's that?

GAMAL

You have heard of the revolt in Egypt.

KITT

I might've seen it on the news.

NASSIMA

(before Gamal can get angry)

He's joking, he's joking. He's just bitter because he's lost his Cleopatra.

KITT

I haven't lost anybody. She'll go out on crutches if she wants to work with me again.

GAMAL

A powerful threat.

KITT

I'm serious. People know who I am in the underground.

GAMAL

(laughing)

"The underground".

KITT

What?

NASSIMA

He's talking about political theater. He's heavily involved with the Occupy movement across this country, and there's a lot of theater going on at the Occupied locations. He actually has a lot of connections.

KITT

Unless you're in the union.

GAMAL

You Occupied Wall Street?

KITT

Yeah, I did a whole production down there. That was the one that got me kicked out of the union.

NASSIMA

It was the straw that broke the camel's back. He kept staging protest shows without permits...

GAMAL

What show did you produce for Occupy Wall Street?

KITT

Timon of Athens.

GAMAL

I'm not familiar with it.

KITT

It's prescient, baby. All about greed and government crony capitalism. Timon throws his money around like there's no tomorrow, and when he spends himself into the poorhouse, suddenly his one percenter friends who sucked down all his wine and cheese for years are all "having hardships" or "on vacation" or "mysteriously broke".

GAMAL

How did you do this? The production.

KITT

In the park.

GAMAL

Central Park?

KITT

Zuccoti Park.

GAMAL

Isn't it small?

KITT

And filthy. And when Timon went to live in the cave, we made the cave he was living in the bull outside the Exchange. The police finally dragged him out of there, and he spouted Shakespeare in handcuffs all the way to the patrol car.

GAMAL

He was arrested?

KITT

Sure. I told him to do it. We all got arrested down there. It was great! What?

GAMAL

You don't seem the type.

KITT

What "type"?

NASSIMA

He's the type.

GAMAL

You're a real revolutionary. Theater without a licence! Nontraditional Shakespeare.

NASSIMA

That's not exactly-

GAMAL

You must be a dangerous man to the establishment.

KITT

They know who I am. I'm at the meetings.

GAMAL

Certainly. You must meet quite frequently! To discuss radically transforming Shakespeare with metaphors!

NASSIMA

Gamal-

GAMAL

You people are like a bunch of walking clocks.

KITT

"You people"?

GAMAL

Americans! Meetings, analysis. Always with the head, never the heart. An Egyptian leads from the stomach. The gut. That's how a man acts.

NASSIMA

Maybe we could-

KITT

Didn'tcha hear? That's how we do things in the West. It's called science. That's why we invent microprocessors, and you guys are living in caves.

NASSIMA

Oh, God.

GAMAL

Yes, of course, because we've accomplished nothing. We only built vast monuments thousands of years ago. Look around you! Look at this room! This is what we've done...art, science, architecture, the alphabet!

KITT

Yeah, when you gonna invent democracy, Gamal? Cause we're changing things while you're dicking around with Islamic extremism-

GAMAL

Yes, yes.

KITT

Don't dismiss me.

GAMAL

How could I? The Little General. Fresh from the front lines.

KITT

What, our revolution's not good enough?

GAMAL

No.

KITT

And why not?

GAMAL

Because you are getting pepper sprayed and we are getting shot.

KITT

I didn't realize this was a pissing contest.

GAMAL

We are fighting for our freedom! You are fighting for XBoxes! My friends are jailed daily for speaking out, for walking in the wrong neighborhoods! Your new friends are having a camp-out in New York!

KITT

We get arrested, too, you know.

GAMAL

For how long? Because if the answer is not "indefinitely, without trial", then you have no idea what you are talking about! You are fighting because you are uncomfortable! We are fighting because we are being silenced and killed!

KITT

Well maybe you should stand up for something before you have to resort to setting yourself on fire.

Gamal stands. Kitt follows suit. They move to fight.

NASSIMA

SHUT UP, BOTH OF YOU!

They stop and look at her.

NASSIMA

What the hell was I thinking? That you two would somehow rise above your egos and bond? As brothers? I must be insane. You know what? Go ahead and kill each other. Be my guest. Don't get blood on the exhibits.

She storms off. Kitt and Gamal shuffle about.

GAMAL

Do you love her?

KITT

Yes. Do you?

GAMAL

Of course.

KITT

Then what do we do?

GAMAL

Let's never speak to each other again.

KITT

Done and done.

GAMAL

Good. Because I really didn't want to sit through your show.

KITT

Honestly, neither do I.

Gamal puts on his coat and prepares to leave.

GAMAL

I don't want to see some mocked-up version of Cleopatra.

KITT

Well, OK, I'm not gonna defend this show, but come on. Sure Shakespeare takes liberties with history. It's drama! It's not about historical fact. It's about Truth, with a capital T.

GAMAL

It's propaganda.

KITT

What?

GAMAL

When you use historical context, to promote your own sense of truth, and alter the facts to suit your message, that's propaganda. I know. Hosni Mubarek used such principles quite effectively.

KITT

I'm just putting on a show.

GAMAL

And you are using a text written using Roman sources, from a Roman perspective, to present to an audience whose monarchy directly linked itself back to the Roman Empire. The Romans saw Cleopatra as a woman of power, and their poets had to destroy her for posterity. And those stories worked their way into your collective Western mythology like sewage into groundwater. So you will put up your play. A play that undermines the history and the suffering of my country for - what? The greatest love story ever told? Elizabeth Taylor? Your Cleopatra - is she Egyptian?

KITT

(pause)

She's a white chick from Paramus.

GAMAL

And you call yourself a portrayer of truth. You claim to have fought against such lies in your own financial system, you know how hard it is to dislodge the lie once it takes root. Will you now seriously embrace a historical smear campaign without even questioning it?

Long silence.

KITT

That was really good.

GAMAL

What are you talking about?

KITT

Shut up for a minute.

GAMAL

Excuse me?

Long pause.

KITT

This is the hook. I could turn this whole thing upside-down. To hell with what the producers want. We could make this about the REAL Egypt.

GAMAL

I don't...how do you mean?

KITT

Put it this way: do you want to spread the word about your Egyptian revolution?

GAMAL

Yes.

KITT

Tell me everything you know about Egypt.

GAMAL

You want to know about Cleopatra?

KITT

I know all about Cleopatra. Tell me about the revolution. This guy Mubarak has been around for like thirty years, right? Where's all this protesting coming from?

GAMAL

All right. Let's see how we can explain this so you can easily understand. This may be a bit oversimplified; "broad strokes".

KITT

Grain of salt, got it.

King Farouk trundles on stage, beaming at the audience, his loyal subjects.

GAMAL

First, there was King Farouk.

FAROUK

Ha ha!

GAMAL

Backed by the fist of the Egyptian army, he lived a life of indulgence and debauchery.

FAROUK

Hee hee!

GAMAL

In 1936, he collaborated with British occupiers, and when his new friends demanded a larger Egyptian army for their exploits, the military academies were forced to open their enrollment for the first time to the middle-classes. The army was suddenly full of young officers enamored of national pride and anti-imperialism.

FAROUK

Ho...ho?

GAMAL

Then came the first Revolution.

FAROUK

(Holding his neck, strained smile.)

Yeee!

GAMAL

Farouk was treated to a lovely vacation in Europe for the rest of his life.

FAROUK

Ciao!

He puts on a pair of sunglasses, blows a kiss to the audience and exits.

GAMAL

The new military leaders, these young middle-class nationalists, seized control for the good of the people, for the stability of the nation. These were the Free Officers.

Antony, Lepidus, and Octavius enter in Roman uniform. They stand at parade rest, facing the wing. The members of the Triumvirate pivot forward with loud stomps.

Kitt moves to Lepidus. He removes his Roman garb as Gamal places a military jacket on him. They do the same for each of the triumvirs.

GAMAL

The first of these men to lead was General Mohamed Naguib.

LEPIDUS

(as Naguib)

Tis not a time
For private stomaching.
Noble friends,
That which combined us was most great, and let not
A leaner action rend us.

KITT

Not a tough guy, huh?

GAMAL

He led for four years, but suffered most of all: he was a stooge.

OCTAVIUS

(as Nasser)

He his high authority abused
And did deserve his change.

GAMAL

He actually believed that the military should eventually step down in favor of democracy.
This was not in the plan.

ANTONY

(as Sadat)

Having made use of him in the wars, presently denied him, would not let him partake in the
glory of his action. So the poor third is up, till death enlarge his confine.

GAMAL

Another man called the shots behind the curtains, and when Naguib was arrested amidst
questionable scandal, the true General emerged.

OCTAVIUS

He calls me boy; and chides, as he had power
To beat me out of Egypt; my messenger
He hath whipp'd with rods; dares me to personal combat,
Let the old ruffian know

I have many other ways to die; meantime I
Laugh at his challenge.

Gamal escorts Lepidus off stage and brings forth
Octavius.

GAMAL

Gamal Abdel Nasser arguably transformed Egypt from a third-world ancient kingdom into a modern, dynamic country. He immediately seized control of the banks, the construction industry, the labor force. Egypt was modern, but the people had been completely under his thumb.

Enter Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA

Eternity was in our lips and eyes,
Bliss in our brows bent: none of our parts so poor
But was a race of heaven. They are so still,
Or thou, the greatest soldier of the world,
Art turned the greatest liar.

OCTAVIUS

You praise yourself
By laying defects of judgment to me; but
You patch'd up your excuses.

CLEOPATRA

I would I had thy inches: thou shouldst know
There were a heart in Egypt.

Gamal escorts Octavius off and brings forth Antony.

GAMAL

His successor, Anwar Sadat, is regarded as the second great modern Egyptian leader.

ANTONY

Here is my space.
Kingdoms are clay: our dungy earth alike
Feeds beast as man:
We stand up peerless.

GAMAL

Nasser seized private property and banned political parties: Sadat ends these practices. Nasser embraced the Soviet Union; Sadat cut them off and dealt with Henry Kissinger. Nasser and Mubarek disdained the decadence of the monarchy's palaces, Sadat owned fifteen Rolls Royces.

CLEOPATRA

So half my Egypt were submerged and made
A cistern for scaled snakes! Go, get thee hence!
Hadst thou Narcissus in thy face, to me
Thou wouldst appear most ugly.

Antony (Sadat) shoots her a withering look.

GAMAL

Sadat's policies are inspires great hope in some Egyptians and deep resentment by others. The pan-Arbaists are most displeased with Sadat's tenuous peace treaty with Israel. Sadat arrests thousands of people. He becomes paranoid.

CLEOPATRA

The triple pillar of the world transform'd
Into a strumpet's fool: behold and see.
I am full sorry
That he approves the common liar.

A dark figure steps on stage. He holds a sword.

ANTONY

Sometimes we see a cloud that's dragonish;
A vapour sometime like a bear or lion,
A tower'd citadel, a pendent rock,
A forked mountain, or blue promontory
With trees upon't, that nod unto the world,
And mock our eyes with air: thou hast seen these signs;
They are black vesper's pageants.

The figure drives the sword into Antony, who drops.

GAMAL

In 1981, he is assassinated by a group of religious fanatics. He left in his place a strong successor, Hosni Mubarak, who uses the people's resentment of Sadat to strengthen the government's stranglehold on the country.

Cleopatra kneels before the dark figure, broken.

CLEOPATRA

All strange and terrible events are welcome,
But comforts we despise; our size of sorrow,
Proportion'd to our cause, must be as great
As that which makes it.

GAMAL

For the Egyptian people, history has a way of repeating itself.

The figure reveals himself. It is Octavius (now Mubarak).

OCTAVIUS

Be of good cheer;
You're fall'n into a princely hand, fear nothing.

Octavius exits, taking Cleopatra hostage with him.

Kitt is trying to contain his excitement.

GAMAL

And that's where we've been for thirty years. Held prisoner.

KITT

Which are you? A Nasser man? Or a Sadat man?

GAMAL

They were the same. They were military men, who overthrew a dictatorship, and established a regime. They wanted to use their power for the good of Egypt, for the might of Egypt, for the peace and stability of Egypt. And they certainly couldn't let Egyptians stand in their way.

KITT

And you're trying to tell me that Shakespeare was out of touch with history? Seems to me Shakespeare was right on the money. Seems to me not much has changed.

GAMAL

Perhaps not. However, the cycle has to be broken. If the current revolution is to truly work, we can not allow the military to seize control again.

KITT

Otherwise, it's just back to Farouk all over again. (Beat) Or Octavius Caesar.

GAMAL

Right before I left Egypt, I stood shoulder to shoulder with my brothers in the streets, calling for a people's revolution.

As we were shot at, stoned and smoked bombed, I saw a man raise a sign in the air, high above his head. You will like what it said. “To be...or not to be. But we WILL be.”

KITT

Shit. I wish we were doing Hamlet. That would be my fucking poster.

Nassima enters.

NASSIMA

You didn't kill each other.

KITT

Who, us? We're brothers of the Revolution.

GAMAL

[Brothers!]

Antony, Octavius, and Octavia return, in modern dress.

OCTAVIUS

You take from me a great part of myself;
Use me well in 'it. Sister, prove such a wife
As my thoughts make thee, and as my farthest band
Shall pass on thy approval. Most noble Antony,
Let not the piece of virtue, which is set
Betwixt us as the cement of our love,
To keep it builded, be the ram to batter
The fortress of it; for better might we
Have loved without this mean, if on both parts
This be not cherish'd.

ANTONY

Make me not offended
In your distrust.

OCTAVIUS

I have said.

ANTONY

You shall not find,
Though you be therein curious, the least cause
For what you seem to fear: so, the gods keep you,
And make the hearts of Romans serve your ends!
We will here part.

OCTAVIUS

Farewell, my dearest sister, fare thee well:
The elements be kind to thee, and make
They spirits all of comfort! Fare thee well.

OCTAVIA

My noble brother!

ANTONY

The April's in her eyes: it is love's spring,
And these the showers to bring it on. Be cheerful.

OCTAVIA

Sir, look well to my husband's house.

She bows low before Octavius.

Gamal and Kitt hover over ELMEGREEN. Nassima sits
apart, watching.

ELMEGREEN

Aaaaahhhhhmmmmmm I don't know.

KITT

The show's in shambles, Lawrence. We need this. (beat) Larry...

ELMEGREEN

It's pretty late in the game to change things, isn't it? You said yourself, Katharine could
just go on with crutches.

GAMAL

But this idea is very exciting. Lawrence.

ELMEGREEN

It's very risky. The trustees agreed to lay out the money, Kitt, for a traditional Antony and
Cleopatra.

KITT

I know-

ELMEGREEN

It was a risk for me, they knew about your production history. What am I supposed to tell them?

GAMAL

It's a very small event, though, Doctor Elmegreen. Do the trustees care about that much money?

ELMEGREEN

You haven't met them.

KITT

I'll give the money back.

NASSIMA

You have to pay your actors, Kitt.

KITT

I'll pay em out of my own pocket.

ELMEGREEN

But you're still getting the space for free. Other events could go in your time slot, and make money.

KITT

So now you're counting hypothetical money against me?

GAMAL

Doctor, listen. The 614 is not a done deal yet.

ELMEGREEN

What are you saying?

GAMAL

No no no no no, don't misunderstand me. I want to trade the artifacts. But my colleagues at home aren't convinced yet. But if I tell them you're putting on a play about the Egyptian revolution, they will want to show their appreciation.

ELMEGREEN

I see.

GAMAL

And add that transaction into the mix, surely the trustees will see the value then?

Pause.

ELMEGREEN

OK. OK, I could get on board with this.

Kitt and Gamal high-five each other.

ELMEGREEN

We can't pay you any more.

KITT

The less money, the better.

ELMEGREEN

You've got two weeks to get this together.

KITT

This is the kind of pressure I thrive under.

NASSIMA

Aren't you forgetting something?

ELMEGREEN

What?

NASSIMA

Your Cleopatra has a broken leg.

KITT

Oh, Katharine's done, anyway. I need an Egyptian woman to play Cleopatra.

NASSIMA

Oh, sure. Where are you going to find one?

All three men look at Nassima.

NASSIMA

No.

KITT

Baby doll.

Nasi. GAMAL

Absolutely not. NASSIMA

She does have a lot of day-to-day work to do. ELMEGREEN

I will gladly take up the slack for her. GAMAL

Gamal! NASSIMA

What? I can do paperwork. Shipping and receiving. I'd love to help. GAMAL

I can't do this! NASSIMA

Sure you can. KITT

I'm not an actress! NASSIMA

You're great on the day tours! ELMEGREEN

You were in a Shakespearean play in high school. GAMAL

I had no lines! NASSIMA

Then this is a step up. KITT

It's SHAKESPEARE. Do you know how hard it is to memorize Shakespeare? The biggest part in the play? In two weeks? NASSIMA

I've seen you memorize tables full of artifacts by numerical tag. This is just English. KITT

NASSIMA

Which isn't even my first language.

KITT

Then we'll translate it to Arabic!

GAMAL

That's a great idea.

ELMEGREEN

Then nobody will know whether she's missing a line or not.

KITT

It's genius!

NASSIMA

It's insane! I'm not doing it.

ELMEGREEN

I think you should, Nassima.

NASSIMA

I'm not doing it.

KITT

You have to.

NASSIMA

I don't.

KITT

Baby. It has to be you.

(singing)

It has to be you.

NASSIMA

Please don't sing.

GAMAL

It has to be you.

KITT AND GAMAL

(singing)

It has to be you.

ELMEGREEN

I'm your boss. You have to do it.

The men all get down on their knees around Nassima.

NASSIMA

No, don't do this. Get up.

ELMEGREEN AND KITT AND
GAMAL

(singing)

I wandered around
And finally found
The somebody whoooooo-

NASSIMA

Nononononononononononono-
KITT

ELMGREEN AND GAMAL

Scoobadeedooooo...

It has to be you...

NASSIMA

ALL RIGHT FINE I'LL DO IT.

The men get up and congratulate each other.

KITT

Rehearsals start tomorrow at nine AM sharp.

ELMEGREEN

I feel good about this.

GAMAL

It's meant to be.

The men leave. Just before Kitt goes:

NASSIMA

Baby. You know you're a real asshole of a director, right?

KITT

Yup. And?

NASSIMA

Am I going to hate you by the time this is over?

KITT

Everybody loves me and hates me at the same time, baby. I'm used to it.

He goes. Nassima sighs.

Nassima dreams.

NASSIMA

Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me: now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:
Um. Um.
Yare? Yare? What is a yare? Is that a fruit?

Silence.

NASSIMA

I haven't memorized these lines at all.
How many days are left until the show?

KITT

This is opening night. You're on stage right now.

NASSIMA

What? I thought I had two weeks!

KITT

Every actor has this nightmare. Just go with it. Don't be so skittish.

Kitt leaves. ELMEGREEN enters.

NASSIMA

What?

ELMEGREEN

Ladies! Gentlemen! Tonight's a treat.
Our own Nassima will perform for you,
She's juicy, terrified, practic'ly naked
For the first time since high school! She's the best!

Feel free to throw your children at the stage!
 (Don't screw this up Nassima, or you're fired.)
 Enjoy the show! Refreshments in the back!

He goes.

NASSIMA

This dream's in iambic pentameter?

She stops, thinks, silently counts out what she just said on her fingers, and startles herself.

NASSIMA

Oh, come on!

Nassima turns to the audience. She flounders.

NASSIMA

Um. Hi everybody. Sorry, I know you all paid for this. No worries. Kitt? What do I do up here?

KITT

Just do something.

NASSIMA

What?

KITT

Why don't you die? That's what's supposed to happen.

Charmian and Iras enter, bearing asps.

NASSIMA

Die?

Charmian and Iras hand Nassima the asps, then turn upstage and kneel, backs to the audience.

Gamal huddles over a bucket of gasoline, shivering, hair wet.

NASSIMA

Gamal?

Gamal springs to his feet, insane.

GAMAL

Kolena Khaled Said! Kolena Khaled Said! [If you don't see me, I'll burn myself! How do you expect me to make a living? This is for Bouazizi! The Sheikhs have invaded Al Azhar!] Democracy! Democracy! Even if everyone betrays us, we will know that God is with us!

He runs off. The sound of fire and a man screaming.

The screaming grows louder. Charmian and Iras rise, laughing. They circle around Nassima, who cowers and slumps over onto the floor. Charmian and Iras exit.

Olivia enters.

OLIVIA

What the hell are you doing with my asps?

Nassima stirs. She is unsure of what's happened.

NASSIMA

I...I...I was rehearsing? I fell asleep.

OLIVIA

You better hold it together. We've got less than a week now. I can't lose another Cleopatra. Here, I need your John Hancock on this purchase order for all the new costume pieces.

She hands Nassima a pen and a piece of paper, which Nassima signs.

OLIVIA

Look at this. I gotta fix this asp now. Don't touch the fucking props outside of rehearsal, ok?

Olivia goes off. Gamal enters with a clipboard and folder. Nassima runs to hug him.

NASSIMA

Gamal!!

GAMAL

You need some sleep.

NASSIMA

Your hair is wet.

GAMAL

It is raining.

NASSIMA

It's just. I had a terrible dream about you.

GAMAL

And my hair was wet?

NASSIMA

It was...never mind. Are these the sale papers from Cairo? I need to review them right away.

GAMAL

Please, Nassima, stop working. I'll take care of it.

NASSIMA

I'm trying to procrastinate. All right? I'm terrified.

She takes the folder from him.

GAMAL

You'll be wonderful.

NASSIMA

Why on earth did you take an interest in this show?

GAMAL

I figured if the director is going to be family, I should learn to appreciate Shakespeare.

NASSIMA

Right. If you two hadn't hatched up this Egyptian revolution version of Shakespeare, you'd hate him. You probably still hate him, anyway.

GAMAL

No, actually. I have to admit, I actually like him. We have a lot in common, you know. He attacks the establishment. He's very passionate. I know I made fun of his protests, but he did get arrested for standing up to the police.

NASSIMA

(laughing)

He wasn't arrested.

GAMAL

He wasn't?

NASSIMA

Well, they put him in handcuffs. But he talked his way out of it, they let him go. He didn't go to jail.

GAMAL

Oh. He said his Timon went to jail.

NASSIMA

Oh, Timon went to jail. Some of the extras went to jail. Olivia, that girl, he used to be involved with her. She went to jail. He has a way of getting his friends to go to jail for him. I don't consider it one of his better qualities.

GAMAL

Well. I won't hold it too much against him.

NASSIMA

Of course not. You're brothers in the revolution now.

(She holds up a paper.)

Gamal, you did this all wrong.

GAMAL

Why are you looking over that? I told you, I will take care of it.

NASSIMA

Because I need to sign off on it before anything happens. It's my job to collect the information for the trustees.

GAMAL

I can do it!

NASSIMA

You've already screwed it up. This account isn't Cairo's number.

GAMAL

Fine, fine, I will check it.

NASSIMA

It looks like a private account. Whose account is this?

GAMAL

The transaction is complex because of all the red tape, Nassima, give me the folder, I'll take care of it.

NASSIMA

I have to double check your work.

GAMAL

MY WORK IS FINE NASSIMA GIVE IT TO ME!

He grabs it. The papers spill everywhere. A pause.

NASSIMA

Gamal, is there really a Wadi Shait 614? Does it actually exist?

GAMAL

Well obviously it exists, there is paperwork on it.

NASSIMA

And several newspaper stories saying it burned up. And a private account number that seems to go nowhere.

GAMAL

You are overworked.

NASSIMA

Because you insisted I take part in a play. And then you started doing my job. Handling this transaction. What, exactly, is going on here, Gamal?

GAMAL

I want you to come back to Egypt with me.

NASSIMA

You're astonishing.

GAMAL

I need you to come back. This is important.

NASSIMA

I'm not signing these papers. And you're not getting me to go back with you. I have a life here.

GAMAL

I think Kitt should come, too.

NASSIMA

Ha!

GAMAL

I'm serious.

NASSIMA

You're trying to rob this museum.

GAMAL

If I were. It would be money well spent. Because back home? We need help. We need lawyers and weapons and manpower to use against the people who are trying to hold onto power. We need money. We are being herded like cattle. I had two graduate students, both women, arrested, stripped naked in prison, and subjected to purity tests. Do you understand?

NASSIMA

You think I don't know what's going on at home? These nightmares are nothing new. I've had nightmares for years. That I'll have to go back there. And now you, what, you've come to drag me back there?

GAMAL

Yes! Because we need people to fight! Not to sit in an office and catalogue bones! To fight for your country! Have you abandoned your country? Your family? Your brother? Come with me.

Nassima shakes her head, tearing up.

NASSIMA

These papers are not in proper order. I won't tell Doctor Elmegreen about this. And you will not touch this file again. And if there are no artifacts, Gamal, so help me, you'd better go back right now.

She leaves with the folder. Gamal sits in silence. A cough.
It's Olivia.

GAMAL

Is someone there? Who's there? Oh. Hello. How long were you...I'm not sure if what you heard was-

OLIVIA

Are you trying to steal money to fight in the Egyptian revolution?

GAMAL

I. Of course not.

OLIVIA

Oh. Because if you were, count me in.

GAMAL

What?

OLIVIA

I'll go to Egypt with you. I might even get Kitt to go. And as for those papers, your sister's signed off on all kinds of props for the play. I hand her the forms, she signs. Now that she's busy with acting in the show, I don't think she even reads them anymore. What's one more paper in a stack? Thing is, of course, she's probably not going to want to come to Egypt after she knows you've cheated her. Works out well for me, of course. I get Kitt and Kitt gets back to doing something important. REALLY important this time, not just ragging on Donald Trump wannabes. So. I think you have some *props* that need approval? (She takes Gamal's clipboard) See you tomorrow, Doctor.

GAMAL

Yes. Yes, tomorrow.

They exit separately.

End Act I.

THE
PORCH
ROOM

ACT II.

The entire ensemble mills about on stage, dressed as contemporary Egyptian protesters. Amused murmurs amongst themselves about the costumes.

Charmian (Rebecca) enters, guitar in hand, Iras (Sam) behind her. After a moment, Katharine enters, in her Cleopatra costume.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

Katharine, oh my goodness, are you okay?

KATHARINE

I'm going on. The doctor says I only need the crutches for a few days...why are you all dressed like you belong in a refugee camp?

IRAS (SAM)

Kitt's restaging the show. It's a nightmare! It's like a documentary on Egypt or something.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

Gamal has been telling me about what's been going on over there. It's serious stuff. I hadn't given it much thought beyond watching it on the news. Maybe this a chance to do something...important.

KATHARINE

Fine. Whatever. Where's the new Cleopatra costume?

IRAS (SAM)

On Nassima. He's promoted his fiancée to leading lady. Whatever! At least the clothes are more comfortable.

Enobarbus (Amelia) trundles on, in full military garb - heavy jacket, boots, hat. She glares at them.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

Not one word.

Kitt enters with Olivia, who approaches Enobarbus (Amelia).

OLIVIA

Hello, solider. Buy me a drink? Ten cents a dance.

Amelia stomps over to Kitt.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

You owe me. Lady Mac... (KATHARINE SHRIEKS. SHE RECONSIDERS.) Lady M.

KITT

Yes, sir.

Kitt salutes Amelia, who gives him the finger.

KITT

OK, break is over. Let's see the bacchanal scene.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

I guess that's me.

KATHARINE

I gotta see this. I'll be watching from the wings. Break a....well, never mind.

Everyone takes their places. Kitt stands aside with Olivia and Gamal. Rebecca comes forth strumming her guitar.

CHARMIAN (SINGING)

Come thou monarch of the vine!
Plumpy Bacchus with pine eyne!
In thy fats our cares be drowned,
With thy grapes our hairs be crowned.
Cup us till the world go round,
Cup us till the world go round!

The song repeats, building and building, the entire company joining in as it reaches a frenzied climax.

The song ends.

Nassima enters, dressed in her contemporary Cleopatra costume.

KITT

Baby! You look incredible. You ready?

NASSIMA

Not even close.

KITT

Hit it.

Nassima stands and commands the room. Enobarbus approaches her.

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

I will be even with thee, doubt it not.

ENOBARBUS

But why, why, why?

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

Thou hast forsoked my being in these wars,
And say'st it is not fit.

ENOBARBUS

Well, is it, is it?

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

If not denounced against us, why should not we
Be there in person?

ENOBARBUS

(aside)

Well, I could reply:

If we should serve with horse and mares together,
The horse were merely lost; the mares would bear
A soldier and his horse.

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

What is't you say?

ENOBARBUS

Your presence needs must puzzle Antony;
Take from his heart, take from his brain, from's time,
What should not then be spared. He is already
Traded for levity; and 'tis said in Rome
That Photinus an eunuch and your maids
Manage this war.

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

Sink Rome, and their tongues rot
That speak against us! A charge we bear i' the war,
And, as the president of my kingdom, will
Appear there for a man. Speak not against it:
I will not stay behind.

ENOBARBUS

Nay, I have done.
Here comes the emperor.

Enter MARK ANTONY (as SADAT) and CANIDIUS
(as an Egyptian officer).

ANTONY

Is it not strange, Canidius,
That from Tarentum and Brundisium
He could so quickly cut the Ionian sea,
And take in Toryne? You have heard on't, sweet?

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

Celerity is never more admired
Than by the negligent.

ANTONY

A good rebuke,
Which might have well becomeed the best of men,
To taunt at slackness. Canidius, we
Will fight with him by sea.

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

By sea! what else?

CANIDIUS

Why will my lord do so?

ANTONY

For that he dares us to't.

ENOBARBUS

So hath my lord dared him to single fight.

CANIDIUS

Ay, and to wage this battle at Pharsalia.
Where Caesar fought with Pompey: but these offers,
Which serve not for his vantage, be shakes off;
And so should you.

ENOBARBUS

Your ships are not well mann'd;
Your mariners are muleters, reapers, people
Ingross'd by swift impress; in Caesar's fleet
Are those that often have 'gainst Pompey fought:
Their ships are yare; yours, heavy: no disgrace
Shall fall you for refusing him at sea,
Being prepared for land.

ANTONY

By sea, by sea.

The protestors cheer. The Egyptian military boos.

ENOBARBUS

Most worthy sir, you therein throw away
The absolute soldiership you have by land;
Distract your army, which doth most consist
Of war-mark'd footmen; leave unexecuted
Your own renowned knowledge; quite forego
The way which promises assurance; and
Give up yourself merely to chance and hazard,
From firm security.

ANTONY

I'll fight at sea.

The protesters cheer.

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

I have sixty sails, Caesar none better.

Louder cheers.

ANTONY

Our overplus of shipping will we burn;
And, with the rest full-mann'd, from the head of Actium
Beat the approaching Caesar. But if we fail,
We then can do't at land.
Well, well: away!

Antony and Cleopatra embrace.

Two flags - Egyptian and Israeli - wave across the backdrop. The Egyptian covers the Israeli.

Gamal breaks into applause. Kitt turns to him and basks.

KITT

Huh? Huh?

GAMAL

That was very, very good.

KITT

I know, right?

GAMAL

Nassima, I can't believe it.

NASSIMA

I can't believe I remembered all those lines. I need a drink.

GAMAL

I honestly didn't think it would be this good. It's moving.

NASSIMA

Can I ask a question?

KITT

Go for it.

NASSIMA

So. Are we fighting Nasser, or Israel? Because. I can't figure it out.

KITT

Trust me, from out here the metaphor is totally clear.

NASSIMA

But. From up here. Not so much.

GAMAL

No, he's right, Nasi, it looks amazing.

KITT

Look, I know, I know you guys are taking a real leap of faith here. This isn't linear, flat character acting, this is demanding, metaphorical, metaphysical, metamorphic theater we're putting on. Your character may not make sense as a human being. That's because each of you is greater than a human being now. You're a living symbol. And the people in the audience, it's gonna be like they got socked in the face.

NASSIMA

I hope they get their money's worth.

OLIVIA

This isn't just theater anymore. This is a movement. We are going to wake America up to what's been happening to our brothers and sisters in Egypt, the same way we woke them up to the oppression of Wall Street. You were there with us, Barry. You and me, we got arrested in the park together.

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

(Aside) Yeah, for peeing on the sidewalk.

OLIVIA

Did everyone understand what we were doing with Timon of Athens? No. But the important thing is they saw us doing it! And they'll see us here! And if we have to, we'll go all the way to Tahir Square and do it in front of the armed guards!

GAMAL

It's powerful. It really is. Trust us. Trust an Egyptian.

The actors seem mollified. They disperse.

GAMAL

Nassima, really. You were fantastic.

NASSIMA

Thank you. I'm very nervous about this.

GAMAL

You don't look it.

NASSIMA

I'm just inscrutable. It's part of Cleopatra's mysterious allure. Now I'm going to pee, a lot.

She walks off.

GAMAL

She's really turning into an American.

KITT

I'll take that as a compliment.

GAMAL

Kitt, listen. I'm probably going home soon-

KITT

You'll stay for the show, right?

GAMAL

Oh, yes, yes, but I have business to attend to.

KITT

Well, look, buddy, I know we got off to a rocky start, but if you can make it back for the wedding-

While they are talking, Olivia slips in.

GAMAL

About that. I was wondering if you'd consider something very radical.

KITT

About the show? I'm all ears, hit me.

GAMAL

No, not the show. You know I wanted Nassima to come back to Egypt.

KITT

I know, but look-

GAMAL

I want you both to come back to Egypt.

KITT

Seriously?

GAMAL

It makes sense. Your union is giving you a terrible time, making it impossible for you to make a living. Nassima will come home, you could be married in Egypt. And you would find friends. You would be welcomed there.

KITT

What the hell would I do in Egypt?

OLIVIA

You'd be a revolutionary.

KITT

(just noticing her)

Pull up a chair, Liv, it must be hard to eavesdrop from over there.

GAMAL

She's right, my friend.

KITT

How would I be a revolutionary?

GAMAL

With this! You have a talent! Believe me, people would love this in Egypt. And you wouldn't be fighting for xBoxes anymore. You'd be fighting an oppressive system, you'd be fighting for human rights. You'd be listened to. You'd be valued.

OLIVIA

Kitt, this is what we used to talk about! Real revolution. If Occupy showed us anything it's that nothing is going to change here. People get angry for a week, maybe a month...and then they get hungry for McDonalds and go get a Big Mac and then they're back to being drones. Not in Egypt.

GAMAL

It's true. Look at our history, we revolt all the time.

OLIVIA

They actually took to the streets...and they're winning. Let's help them find their voice. Let's help them fight.

Silence.

KITT

I'm really hating myself right now. Because you're right. I could really stand up for something. And I don't think I can.

GAMAL

Yes, you can. Take a leap of faith.

OLIVIA

Kitt, I know it's a big step, but it's exactly what we used to talk about-

KITT

Then you should go, Liv. Take the production, be my proxy. I think it's what you want. It's just bad timing for me. A year ago, I'd say let's do this.

GAMAL

What's wrong, then?

KITT

Nassima will not go back there.

OLIVIA

Well, if that's all-

GAMAL

I know, but if you went, she might change her mind.

KITT

She has a point, Gamal. Look, if I go there, if Olivia goes there, something goes wrong, they kick us out, they send us home. If Nassima goes back, something goes wrong, she's stuck. And you're her brother. I don't know who you are back there, but something tells me the guys who shot your friend don't like you.

GAMAL

Someone must be willing to make a sacrifice.

KITT

And believe me, I respect that. I can't even say how much I respect you for what you do. But she's gotta make up her own mind.

(silence.)

But I can ask her. I can try to convince her.

GAMAL

That's all I ask.

KITT

And if she says no, that's that. Lawrence!

Elmegreen enters. Kitt goes to him. Aside, to each other:

GAMAL

He will come.

OLIVIA

No. I've never seen him like this.

GAMAL

How so?

OLIVIA

He's never put anyone before himself.

Across the stage:

ELMEGREEN

This is unbelievable.

KITT

Good, or...?

ELMEGREEN

Good! Very good! The flags, and the posters - the props alone are giving me chills. Where's Nassima?

NASSIMA

Here!

Nassima runs on. Elmegreen slaps one arm around Kitt, and one around Nassima. He grins at everyone, jovial and in rare form.

Across, Enobarbus enters with Canidus and Scarus.

ELMEGREEN

This looks fantastic. Everyone's so interested in this production, I tell my colleagues, and they're dying to know how it's going. So am I, frankly. How is it going?

GAMAL

Wonderfully.

ELMEGREEN

I don't mean to interrupt rehearsal.

KITT

We're on break. We have ten minutes.

ELMEGREEN

And what are you doing here, Doctor? You're working for me, now!

GAMAL

Yes, sir.

ELMEGREEN

At ease. I know, you're here to admire your future brother-in-law's genius. So, does this monumental production convince you he's good enough for your sister?

GAMAL

You know, despite my initial reservations, I believe Mr. Marsh is an exemplary individual who will stand up for what he believes in.

NASSIMA

Thank you, Gamal.

KITT

Yeah, thanks. That's the nicest way I ever heard someone say "you make a crappy first impression."

Everyone laughs, although Olivia seems a little lost in thought. Pointedly, to Gamal:

OLIVIA

Hey, Gamal, speaking of first impressions, did Nassima tell you how she met Kitt? It's a great story.

GAMAL

Uh, no. She didn't.

Across the stage, a scene begins. The two sides of the stage continue in parallel.

SCARUS

She's a most triumphant lady, if report be square to her.

ENOBARBUS

When she first met Mark Antony, she pursed up his heart, upon the river of Cydnus.

CANIDIUS

There she appeared indeed; or my reporter devised well for her.

ENOBARBUS

I will tell you.

Across:

OLIVIA

A friend of a friend gets Kitt for a production of Measure for Measure. And as usual, he spins it his way. So this time his theme is...

KITT

Women in politics.

OLIVIA

And because of the theme, they get a grant from a national women's endowment for theater. Which is great, except, well, Kitt is, how shall we say this...not regarded in theater circles as a feminist.

GAMAL

Oh?

KITT

I have a reputation for being more...

ELMEGREEN

Masculine?

NASSIMA

Chauvinistic.

OLIVIA

Promiscuous.

NASSIMA

Oh, right.

GAMAL

Oh, really?

KITT

A totally undeserved reputation, might I add.

OLIVIA

Uh huh.

KITT

The show was a feminist diatribe!

OLIVIA

It really was. But they knew him. He was a pariah to this organization who had funded the show. So, to avoid any unpleasantness, he didn't put his name on any of the marketing. He wasn't on the program. Nobody except the actors and crew knew who was directing the show.

NASSIMA

He was a mystery director.

KITT

Well, not even "he". Everyone assumed the director was a woman.

OLIVIA

So they have a reception after the opening performance, and everyone gets invited - audience, cast, crew, and reps from the women's endowment. And Kitt goes -

KITT

And I get all these dirty looks from the reps.

OLIVIA

- and nobody know he has anything to do with the show. And of course, in the audience -

NASSIMA

- is me.

Across:

ENOBARBUS

The barge she sat in, like a burnish'd throne,
 Burn'd on the water: the poop was beaten gold;
 Purple the sails, and so perfum'd that
 The winds were love-sick with them; the oars were silver, Which to the tune of flutes kept
 stroke, and made
 The water which they beat to follow faster,
 As amorous of their strokes. For her own person,
 It beggar'd all description: she did lie
 In her pavilion--cloth-of-gold of tissue--
 O'er-picturing that Venus where we see
 The fancy outwork nature: on each side her
 Stood pretty dimpled boys, like smiling Cupids,
 With divers-colour'd fans, whose wind did seem

To glow the delicate cheeks which they did cool,
And what they undid did.

CANIDIUS

O, rare for Antony!

Across:

KITT

So here's this gorgeous chick-

OLIVIA

- wait, wait, wait. Yes, she's gorgeous. Yes, she's totally dressed to kill -

NASSIMA

I didn't know people wore jeans and sneakers to these shows.

OLIVIA

- but, here's the thing, she's talking about the show.

NASSIMA

Which I've only just seen for the first time.

OLIVIA

And she's not only *raving* about it, but she's defending the principles behind the production - women's rights and all that - and she's doing it so vigorously that she's drawing a good sized crowd.

GAMAL

This is not a surprise at all. You should have seen her in school.

Across:

ENOBARBUS

The city cast
Her people out upon her; and Antony,
Enthroned i' the market-place, did sit alone,
Whistling to the air; which, but for vacancy,
Had gone to gaze on Cleopatra too,
And made a gap in nature.

CANIDIUS

Rare Egyptian!

Across:

OLIVIA

So Kitt sees this, and he's fascinated by this woman, who's commanding all this attention, is actually defending his play better than he could do it -

KITT

It's true.

OLIVIA

- and he notices that everyone in the place is watching this woman, the *reps* are all watching her, and he suddenly realizes - *they think she's the mystery director.*

ELMEGREEN

Oh no!

KITT

I was pretty pissed off.

OLIVIA

So Kitt, of course, can't handle anybody else taking the credit, so he goes up and starts arguing with her. He starts actually arguing *against the arguments he made in his own show.*

KITT

Reinforcing their belief that I really am a chauvinist pig.

Across:

ENOBARBUS

Upon her landing, Antony sent to her,
Invited her to supper: she replied,
It should be better he became her guest;
Which she entreated: our courteous Antony,
Whom ne'er the word of 'No' woman heard speak,
Being barber'd ten times o'er, goes to the feast,
And for his ordinary pays his heart
For what his eyes eat only.

SCARUS

Royal wench!

Across:

OLIVIA

And he and she are suddenly locked in this heated battle of wits over the show, him attacking it relentlessly, her defending it brilliantly, and everyone in the place is holding their breath, waiting to see which of these two political Shakespearean savants is going to come out on top.

Across:

CANIDIUS

She made great Caesar lay his sword to bed:
His plough'd her, and she cropp'd.

ENOBARBUS

I saw her once
Hop forty paces through the public street,
And having lost her breath, she spoke, and panted,
That she did make defect perfection,
And, breathless, pour breathe forth.

Across:

OLIVIA

Until finally, Kitt can't take it any more, and he says, really? She says, yeah! And he says, Well, how about this, babe, I'M THE DIRECTOR, AND I SAY THIS SHOW SUCKS!

Kitt, Nassima, Gamal, and Elmegreen roll with laughter.

NASSIMA

And I was so flabbergasted that I asked him to dinner.

Across:

SCARUS

Now Antony must leave her utterly.

ENOBARBUS

Never, he will not:
Age cannot wither her, nor custom stale
Her infinite variety: other women cloy
The appetites they feed but she makes hungry
Where most she satisfies, for vilest things
Become themselves in her: that holy priests
Bless her when she is riggish.

SCARUS

If beauty, wisdom, modesty, can settle
The heart of Antony, Octavia is
A blessed lottery to him.

A short lull.

KITT

I love that story. Anyway. All right, I guess we better get back to-

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

Kitt! Kitt!

Charmian (Rebecca) rushes on, half-excited, half-alarmed.

KITT

The hell's the matter?

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

We just saw it on CNN. There's another big military crackdown in Cairo.

GAMAL

What?

NASSIMA

Oh my God.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

They're shooting people in Tahrir Square.

The sounds of a news report. Kitt, Nassima, Olivia and Gamal stand together at one side, facing front, watching the news.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Central Cairo, a battlefield. Shortly after one o'clock in the morning, police moved in...

On the other side: war.

Enter Octavius, and Lepidus, with his army, marching.

OCTAVIUS

General!

LEPIDUS

My lord?

OCTAVIUS

Strike not by land; keep whole: provoke not battle,
Till we have done at sea. Do not exceed
The prescript of this scroll: our fortune lies
Upon this jump.

At another part of the plain, enter Mark Antony and
Enobarbus.

ANTONY

Set we our squadrons on yond side o' the hill,
In eye of Caesar's battle; from which place
We may the number of the ships behold,
And so proceed accordingly.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Scenes the capital had not seen in recent memory. The one thing these pictures can't relay, the choking tear gas filled air. This was the scene just a few hours earlier, a sea of defiant protestors chanting their anger into the night.

Another part of the plain.

Canidus marches with his land army one way over the stage; and Lepidus, the other way. After their going in, is heard the noise of a sea-fight.

Alarum.

ENOBARBUS

Naught, naught all, naught! I can behold no longer:
The Antoniad, the Egyptian admiral,
With all their sixty, fly and turn the rudder:
To see't mine eyes are blasted.

Enter SCARUS.

SCARUS

Gods and goddesses,
All the whole synod of them!

ENOBARBUS

What's thy passion!

SCARUS

The greater cantle of the world is lost
With very ignorance; we have kiss'd away
Kingdoms and provinces.

ENOBARBUS

How appears the fight?

SCARUS

On our side like the token'd pestilence,
Where death is sure. Yon ribaudred nag of Egypt,--
Whom leprosy o'ertake!--i' the midst o' the fight,
When vantage like a pair of twins appear'd,
Both as the same, or rather ours the elder,
The breeze upon her, like a cow in June,
Hoists sails and flies.

ENOBARBUS

That I beheld:
Mine eyes did sicken at the sight, and could not
Endure a further view.

SCARUS

She once being loof'd,
The noble ruin of her magic, Antony,
Claps on his sea-wing, and, like a doting mallard,
Leaving the fight in height, flies after her:
I never saw an action of such shame;
Experience, manhood, honour, ne'er before
Did violate so itself.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

Sporadic confrontations have erupted throughout the day, resulting in deaths and injuries.

MAN ON NEWS (V.O.)

They shot at us! They shot at us! Who are we, the enemy? Am I an enemy of the state? I came here to ask for rights. To ask for a home. For a dignified life. For a regime in power for thirty years to go away.

ENOBARBUS

Alack, alack!

Enter CANIDIUS.

CANIDIUS

Our fortune on the sea is out of breath,
And sinks most lamentably. Had our general
Been what he knew himself, it had gone well:
O, he has given example for our flight,
Most grossly, by his own!

ENOBARBUS

Ay, are you thereabouts?
Why, then, good night indeed.

CANIDIUS

Toward Peloponnesus are they fled.

SCARUS

'Tis easy to't; and there I will attend
What further comes.

CANIDIUS

To Caesar will I render
My legions and my horse: six kings already
Show me the way of yielding.

ENOBARBUS

I'll yet follow
The wounded chance of Antony, though my reason
Sits in the wind against me.

Exeunt.

NEWS REPORTER (V.O.)

As a traditionally apathetic populous made history, a usually lenient police force decided not to break with tradition after all.

The sounds of violence. As it fades out, the cries of a woman: "We are Egyptians. We love Egypt!"

All exit except Nassima and Gamal. They touch forehead-to-forehead.

I'm so frightened for you.

NASSIMA

I know. I'll be careful.

GAMAL

[I love you.]

NASSIMA

[Peace be upon you, sister.]

GAMAL

[Peace be upon you.]

NASSIMA

He goes. She weeps.

Kitt enters.

Nasi.

KITT

Nassima is startled. Kitt is holding two airline tickets. Nassima stares at the tickets in shock.

Let's go. As soon as the show is over.

KITT

How you could possibly think I would consider this?

NASSIMA

I thought with Gamal going...

KITT

How many times have we talked about this?

NASSIMA

Well, it's not like we've discussed it. You've talked about it, sure.

KITT

Were you listening?

NASSIMA

I. I think so.

KITT

NASSIMA

And what has changed?

KITT

Your brother. That changed. He's going back into this craziness and he wants you there.

NASSIMA

He was there before. Now he's going back. Nothing's different.

KITT

I just thought we could get married with your family there. Your brother.

NASSIMA

How would that happen?

KITT

How? I don't know, I just-

NASSIMA

You think because my brother sweeps in here for a week, that I suddenly feel the need to reunite with my family?

Olivia enters, but stands aside.

KITT

You don't want to go back, I get it. You think it's awful there....

NASSIMA

It's not "I think" anything. It is an uncontested fact that women are being raped in Cairo, clothes torn from their bodies. An American reporter was stripped and beaten in the middle of a crowd.

KITT

That's why we should go. We should fight for the country!

NASSIMA

Can you even hear yourself talk? Fight? Putting on a show is NOT fighting.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry, Kitt-

KITT

Olivia, please, give us a minute, here. I understand that-

NASSIMA

Apparently you don't.

KITT

The violence will pass. We'll get married -

NASSIMA

Will you convert to Islam?

KITT

What? No. Why? You don't want me to convert.

NASSIMA

It doesn't matter what I want. It's apostasy for a Muslim woman to marry a non-Muslim man. Egyptian courts have forcibly divorced people. And Gamal knows it. That's why he wants you in Egypt.

KITT

Oh, right. Because it couldn't possibly be that he actually thinks my work is worth something!

NASSIMA

It doesn't matter what Gamal thinks, or what you think. You know why I'm not going back? Because I like it here. Don't you like it here?

KITT

It's fine.

NASSIMA

You stupid, spoiled boy. It's not fine. It's the most luxurious society in the history of the world. Egypt is a tottering police state. You have no idea what it's like there. You've put together this ridiculous play about Egyptian history and now you think you're an expert? We're not going. End of discussion.

She walks out.

KITT

Jesus Christ. What?

OLIVIA

I need the notes for the costumes.

KITT

I'll get them. Sorry.

OLIVIA

No problem. You OK?

KITT

Yeah.

OLIVIA

I just want you to know, I think she's wrong. You should go to Egypt. We should all go. I want us to go.

KITT

You heard her. We go there, we can't get married.

OLIVIA

Do you think Gamal was lying to you? Playing you?

KITT

I don't know.

OLIVIA

He didn't seem like he was lying to me. He sounded like he believed in you. And that's a lot more than what I heard coming from Nassima.

KITT

Careful.

OLIVIA

Our entire relationship has been about changing people's lives with our art. And what she just said sounded pretty much like she thinks that's bullshit. You're bullshit. You're just an angry, naive artist, who can't get a day job.

KITT

She's scared. OK? She's just being honest. That's all I ever asked from her.

Beat.

OLIVIA

Honest, huh? She doesn't seem like she has a problem with dishonesty.

KITT

What the hell does that mean?

OLIVIA

I overheard them talking. Her and Gamal.

KITT

About?

OLIVIA

You know. Their little plan. About stealing the money from the museum.

Kitt laughs.

KITT

What? Stealing what money?

OLIVIA

Oh. I assumed she would have told you. There's some big deal going on with these artifacts Gamal's selling to the museum.

KITT

The key word being SELLING, Liv. Look, I know it can't be easy getting over me, but jealousy doesn't look good on you.

OLIVIA

There are no artifacts. It's a con. Gamal was going to have Nassima sign the authorization papers and then it sounded like he might be using the money to help the revolution in Egypt. She didn't tell you?

Silence.

KITT

You misheard them.

OLIVIA

I really didn't-

KITT

You MISHEARD THEM. Got it? Because there is no possible universe in which she would not tell me about something like that. And then lie repeatedly to my face. That doesn't make any sense at all.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry. I just...maybe you don't know her as well as you think you do.

KITT

You know what, I'll catch you at rehearsal. Right now, I gotta be alone.

OLIVIA

When did you become such a Boy Scout?

KITT

Go.

OLIVIA

I'm sorry.

She goes. Kitt closes his eyes and steadies himself.

Enter Antony.

KITT

All is lost;
This foul Egyptian hath betrayed me:

ANTONY

My fleet hath yielded to the foe; and yonder
They cast their caps up and carouse together
Like friends long lost. Triple-turn'd whore!
'tis thou
Hast sold me to this novice; and my heart
Makes only wars on thee. Bid them all fly;
For when I am revenged upon my charm,
I have done all. Bid them all fly; begone.
O sun, thy uprise shall I see no more:
Fortune and Antony part here; even here
Do we shake hands. All come to this? The hearts
That spaniel'd me at heels, to whom I gave
Their wishes, do discandy, melt their sweets
On blossoming Caesar; and this pine is bark'd,
That overtopp'd them all. Betray'd I am:
O this false soul of Egypt! this grave charm,--
Whose eye beck'd forth my wars, and call'd them home;
Whose bosom was my crownet, my chief end,--
Like a right gipsy, hath, at fast and loose,
Beguiled me to the very heart of loss.

Enter Nassima (Cleopatra) with Iras and Mardian. She and Antony play together; Kitt continues looking another way, in his own world.

ANTONY

Ah, thou spell! Avaunt!

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

Why is my lord enraged against his love?

ANTONY

Vanish, or I shall give thee thy deserving,
And blemish Caesar's triumph. Let him take thee,
And hoist thee up to the shouting plebeians:
Follow his chariot, like the greatest spot
Of all thy sex; most monster-like, be shown
For poor'st diminutives, for doits; and let
Patient Octavia plough thy visage up
With her prepared nails.

Octavius, Lepidus and Dollabella enter with Egyptian soldiers. Nassima looks from one to the other as they tighten their circle around her, eventually completely shutting her inside. They begin beating her.

ANTONY

'Tis well thou'rt gone,
If it be well to live; but better 'twere
Thou fell'st into my fury, for one death
Might have prevented many. Eros, ho!
The shirt of Nessus is upon me: teach me,
Alcides, thou mine ancestor, thy rage:
Let me lodge Lichas on the horns o' the moon;
And with those hands, that grasp'd the heaviest club,
Subdue my worthiest self. The witch shall die:
To the young Roman boy she hath sold me, and I fall
Under this plot; she dies for't. Eros, ho!

The soldiers move away. Nassima (Cleopatra) is left on the floor, beaten, in tears.

Enter Charmian.

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

Help me, my women! O, he is more mad
Than Telamon for his shield; the boar of Thessaly
Was never so emboss'd.

IRAS

Royal mistress!

CHARMIAN

To the monument!
There lock yourself, and send him word you are dead.
The soul and body rive not more in parting
Than greatness going off.

IRAS

Mistress! Mistress!

NASSIMA (CLEOPATRA)

To the monument!
Mardian, go tell him I have slain myself;
Say, that the last I spoke was 'Antony,'
And word it, prithee, piteously: hence, Mardian,
And bring me how he takes my death.
To the monument!

Beat. They all wait. Kitt snaps back to reality.

KITT

OK, great. Let's skip ahead a little bit.

Everyone breaks character. Nassima gets up with the help of Charmian and Iras. She seems a bit shaken. Kitt buries himself in notes, not looking at her.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

Are you OK?

NASSIMA

Fine. It's just tough to get through, that scene.

IRAS (SAM)

I think you're doing amazing stuff. It's like real genuine emotion, like you really look like you've been beaten to a pulp. And it's not just the makeup.

CHARMIAN (REBECCA)

See? You're a real actress now. You're doing a great job.

NASSIMA

Thanks. Any notes, Kitt?

KITT

Mm. You really got these lines down quick. Have you been working this week?

NASSIMA

You mean at my actual job? No. I haven't touched a relic or a pen in days.

KITT

All right. Set up for five two.

NASSIMA

Great. Now I can really make a fool of myself.

As everyone mills about. Elmegreen enters. Kitt notices and watches carefully. Olivia also stops to watch.

NASSIMA

Hello, Lawrence. Come to see me flub more lines?

ELMEGREEN

(coldly)

Hello, Nassima.

NASSIMA

Everything all right?

ELMEGREEN

This rehearsal is canceled. Nassima, please get changed and step outside.

The crowd slowly begins to stop and listen.

KITT

There a problem, Lawrence?

NASSIMA

What's wrong?

ELMEGREEN

Is there something you want to tell me, Nassima?

NASSIMA

I. No. I don't know what you could mean.

ELMEGREEN

About the Wadi Shait purchase?

Silence.

NASSIMA

What happened?

ELMEGREEN

Well, again, perhaps you'd like to tell me.

NASSIMA

Well. Is this because it's not happening?

ELMEGREEN

No, this is because it did happen.

NASSIMA

It did?

ELMEGREEN

You see, since Gamal left, I've picked up the slack myself. I found it curious that the account we sent the money to is not Cairo National's. And it seems there never were any artifacts.

NASSIMA

Yes. I see. Well, yes, I had suspicions, that's why-

ELMEGREEN

Is that why you signed off on it?

NASSIMA

What? What are you talking about? Who said I signed off on them?

Elmgreen hands her a pile of slips.

ELMEGREEN

Is that your signature, Nassima?

KITT

Thought you hadn't done any work this week.

She looks. She shakes her head, baffled, enraged.

NASSIMA

I didn't sign these. I didn't! I didn't sign these.

KITT

That's not your signature?

NASSIMA

It is, but...

KITT

But you didn't sign them.

NASSIMA

I didn't!

Kitt advances, he grabs her wrist.

ELMEGREEN

Mister Marsh-

KITT

Don't you even think about lying to me. Cause it sure looks like you and your brother used me as a dupe, and my show as some kind of front to embezzle money!

NASSIMA

(over him)

What are you doing? Stop it! I'm not lying! Stop yelling at me let me go DON'T TOUCH ME!

He lets her go.

NASSIMA

What is wrong with you? I didn't sign those papers. He must have forged my signature.

KITT

Oh, sure.

NASSIMA

Yes, I suspected what he was up to and I called him on it. I WARNED him. He obviously went behind my back. I didn't know the sale had happened. I thought the deal was dead.

ELMEGREEN

Even if you're telling the truth, you knew your brother was trying to steal money.

NASSIMA

I suspected it.

ELMEGREEN
Did you tell anybody?

Beat.

NASSIMA
He hadn't done anything.

ELMGREEN
He hadn't done anything *yet*.

KITT
Did you think, for a minute, to tell me about it?

NASSIMA
No.

KITT
(to ELMEGREEN)
Are you pressing charges against her?

ELMEGREEN
If she's telling the truth, I suppose not. Not if she cooperates. But I don't see how this production can continue.

OLIVIA
You're canceling the show?

ELMEGREEN
Oh no. I've already got to explain to the trustees how I let nearly half a million dollars get taken from underneath my nose. I don't think canceling out biggest promotional event of the year is a good idea. But I'm getting what I paid for this time. No protests, no modern dress, no half-assed political commentary. Go back to the way things were before this madness started.

KITT
If that's what you want, then run the show.

(to Olivia.)
You're in charge.

He leaves. Nassima shakes with fury.

ELMEGREEN

I trusted you. I can't hold you accountable for your brother's deception, but...he robbed us. You could have stopped him. Without that trust, I don't think I can continue to let you work here.

NASSIMA

I can track the accounts he used. At least I can help recover the money.

ELMEGREEN

I appreciate that, but I think we'll manage on our own.

He starts to go. Nassima shakes her head.

NASSIMA

You really feel you're the innocent victim, here, don't you?

ELMEGREEN

Well, yes, I am, Nassima. The museum is.

(She laughs, bitterly.)

Nassima, your brother stole half a million dollars from the museum.

NASSIMA

How much was the lot worth?

ELMEGREEN

It's not worth anything, there is no lot.

NASSIMA

How much would the lot have been worth, if it had existed?

ELMEGREEN

I don't see what that has to do with-

NASSIMA

If the lot hadn't burned up, it would have been a unique three-thousand piece find from the Early Dynastic Period. And you got it for a shipping fee? Before this "fire" Cairo probably would have charged what, thirty million, to loan this out?

ELMEGREEN

Maybe. But we don't have thirty million. I was helping-

NASSIMA

You were getting thirty million dollars worth of artifacts for next to nothing. Because the seller was embroiled in a civil uprising.

A world premiere exhibit like that would have brought in visitors from around the globe to this museum. The ticket sales alone would have filled our coffers for years to come. There was blood on those items, and you were willing to take advantage of that blood. That's called war profiteering.

ELMEGREEN

All right, that's enough. You had suspicions and you didn't report them. That's grounds for termination.

NASSIMA

Don't waste your breath. I quit.

She leaves. Elmegreen looks around.

ELMEGREEN

Get the old costumes back on. I want this production to sparkle.

OLIVIA

You just fired our Cleopatra.

ELMEGREEN

Get Katharine back. She knows the lines, she knows the old blocking. If her foot still hurts, she can do it on crutches or in a chair or whatever.

OLIVIA

All right, I'll call her.

ELMEGREEN

Fine. I'll let you get back to rehearsal.

OLIVIA

Thanks. With all the shit we'll have to do now, at least the show is going to SPARKLE.

ELMEGREEN

Excuse me? What's that supposed to mean?

OLIVIA

Nothing, I'm just saying-

ELMEGREEN

(to everyone)

This is a respectable institution. We make our money from patronage and donations. And we use that money to support the community and artistic endeavors like this one.

So if anyone here has a problem as to where the money that funds this show comes from, there's the door. Any problems with that?

Silence. Elmegreen leaves. Olivia tries to recover her composure.

OLIVIA

Why don't we...fuck this.

She storms off. Most of the others disperse, except Octavius (Barry) and Enobarbus (Amelia), who stand silently, distressed.

OCTAVIUS (BARRY)

Amelia, are we war profiteers?

ENOBARBUS (AMELIA)

No, Barry. We're not making any profit.

They go.

The sounds of revolution. Gamal enters, carrying a protest sign.

GAMAL

Veni, vidi, vici. So said Caesar.
 The law of life, natural selection:
 Thou shalt kill or be thou killed. All these
 Pass into hist'ry - prey and predator,
 Stone and sculptor, organism, king,
 General and military regime.
 And these men too will fall, and at our hands
 Will relinquish our destinies and lands
 Their statues cropped by those who stood and cried
 Who came, who fought, who would not be denied.

Gunshots. Gamal drops. He lies against the sphinx, beaten and bloodied.

GAMAL

Nassima. Nassima. Forgive me.

Suddenly, Nassima appears as Cleopatra, resplendent in all her beauty.

GAMAL (CONT'D)

Nassima?

NASSIMA

Antony.

GAMAL

Nassima, my sister. What have I done? I am dying. Egypt is dying.

NASSIMA

Come, come, Antony. We must draw you up.

GAMAL

Nassima! I see you! You are beautiful. Am I dead? Do I see you now in the next life? You are beautiful.

NASSIMA

Rise, my lord.

She lifts him up.

GAMAL

I am dying, Egypt, dying; only
I here importune death awhile, until
Of many thousand kisses the poor last
I lay upon thy lips.

NASSIMA

Here's sport indeed!—How heavy weighs my lord!
Our strength is all gone into heaviness;
That makes the weight: had I great Juno's power,
The strong-wing'd Mercury should fetch thee up,
And set thee by Jove's side. Yet come a little,—
Wishers were ever fools,—O come, come;

GAMAL

Forgive me, Nassima.

NASSIMA

And welcome, welcome! die where thou hast liv'd:
Quicken with kissing: had my lips that power,
Thus would I wear them out.

GAMAL

I am dying, Egypt. Dying.

NASSIMA

A heavy sight.

On the other side of the stage, CLEOPATRA (Katharine).
MARC ANTONY, CHARMIAN and IRAS enter.
Gamal and Antony speak in alternating lines.

GAMAL

The miserable change now at my end
Lament nor sorrow at; but please your thoughts

ANTONY

but please your thoughts
In feeding them with those my former fortunes
Wherein I lived, the greatest prince o' the world,
The noblest; and do now not basely die,
Not cowardly put off my helmet to
My countryman,--a Roman by a Roman
Valiantly vanquish'd. Now my spirit is going;

GAMAL

I can no more.

ANTONY

I can no more.

Marc Antony dies.

GAMAL

Do not forget me, my sister. Do not forget Egypt.

Gamal dies. "Nassima" kisses him on the head and lays
him to rest peacefully.

On the other side of the stage, Cleopatra faints.

CHARMIAN

O, quietness, lady!

IRAS

She is dead too, our sovereign.

CHARMIAN

Peace, peace, Iras!

CLEOPATRA

What, what! good cheer! Why, how now, Charmian!
 My noble girls! Ah, women, women, look,
 Our lamp is spent, it's out! Good sirs, take heart:
 We'll bury him; and then, what's brave, what's noble,
 Let's do it after the high Roman fashion,
 And make death proud to take us. Come, away:
 This case of that huge spirit now is cold:
 Ah, women, women! come; we have no friend
 But resolution, and the briefest end.

Exeunt; those above bearing off Antony's body.

Olivia enters, as if watching from backstage. Kitt staggers
 in behind her.

OLIVIA

Kitt? I wasn't sure you'd show up. What's wrong? Kitt?

KITT

You think Gamal really wanted me to come to Egypt?

OLIVIA

Yeah. I do.

KITT

Even though he lied about the money?

OLIVIA

He was probably protecting you, Kitt. You didn't need to be involved. He thinks you and he are two of a kind. He really does believe in you, in your work.

KITT

He's dead.

OLIVIA

What?

KITT

He got shot by the police. His friends posted it on Twitter. I just saw.

OLIVIA

Oh my God.

KITT

He was right, Liv. It's not fun and games over there. It's serious. And they need serious people. This isn't camping out, this is people's lives we're talking about. So I gotta know, if we're gonna do this thing, take the show to Egypt. Are you ready to face down bullets, to get your hands dirty? Or is that too far outside your comfort zone?

OLIVIA

I'm ready. I've been ready. Let's go.

KITT

Let's go.

OLIVIA

Is, um. I guess Nassima's not going?

KITT

No, I don't think so.

OLIVIA

That's probably for the best.

KITT

I don't know why. She was just as much involved as he was. She's just too afraid to go back.

OLIVIA

She wasn't involved.

KITT

What?

OLIVIA

I stuck the transfer orders in a stack of costume receipts. She didn't even know what she was signing.

KITT

You did?

OLIVIA

Yeah. See? I'm ready. I'm already in. I'm invested. Let's go.

Silence.

KITT

You fucking lied to me.

OLIVIA

I didn't lie. I told you I overheard their conversation and I did.

KITT

And then you left out the part where you framed my finance!

OLIVIA

I was just doing exactly what Gamal did!

KITT

If Elmegreen had pressed charges, she could have been deported.

OLIVIA

Then we'd all go to Egypt together. What would you want with someone who won't lift a finger to help her own people anyway? Or her own brother?

KITT

You're a total psycho. If anybody found out about this, you know, it wouldn't be an overnight in a jail cell. It'd be prison.

OLIVIA

So go tell Elmegreen. Leave me for the police. Wouldn't be the first time.

Silence. Kitt can't find any words.

He leaves. Enter Enobarbus. As Olivia watches him, she begins to cry.

ENOBARBUS

Be witness to me, O thou blessed moon,
 When revolted shall upon record
 Bear hateful memory, poor Enobarbus did
 Before thy face repent!
 O sovereign mistress of true melancholy,
 The poisonous damp of night disponge me,
 That life, a very rebel to my will,
 May hang no longer on me: throw my heart
 Against the flint and hardness of my fault:
 Which, being dried with grief, will break to powder,
 And finish all foul thoughts. O Antony,
 Nobler than my revolt is infamous,
 Forgive me in thine own particular;
 But let the world rank me in register
 A master-leaver and a fugitive:
 O Antony! O Antony!

Enobarbus dies.

Enter CLEOPATRA, CHARMIAN (with asp) and IRAS
(with robe and crown).

CLEOPATRA

Hast thou the pretty worm of Nilus there,
That kills and pains not?

CHARMIAN

Truly, I have him: but I would not be the party that should desire you to touch him, for his biting is immortal; those that do die of it do seldom or never recover.

CLEOPATRA

Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me: now no more
The juice of Egypt's grape shall moist this lip:
Yare, yare, good Iras; quick. Methinks I hear
Antony call; I see him rouse himself
To praise my noble act; I hear him mock
The luck of Caesar, which the gods give men
To excuse their after wrath: husband, I come:
Now to that name my courage prove my title!
I am fire and air; my other elements
I give to baser life. So; have you done?
Come then, and take the last warmth of my lips.
Farewell, kind Charmian; Iras, long farewell.

(Kisses them. IRAS falls and dies)

Have I the aspic in my lips? Dost fall?
If thou and nature can so gently part,
The stroke of death is as a lover's pinch,
Which hurts, and is desired. Dost thou lie still?
If thus thou vanishest, thou tell'st the world
It is not worth leave-taking.

CHARMIAN

Dissolve, thick cloud, and rain; that I may say,
The gods themselves do weep!

CLEOPATRA

(To an asp, which she applies to her breast)
With thy sharp teeth this knot intricate

Of life at once untie: poor venomous fool
 Be angry, and dispatch. O, couldst thou speak,
 That I might hear thee call great Caesar ass
 Unpoliced!

CHARMIAN

O eastern star!

CLEOPATRA

Peace, peace!
 Dost thou not see my baby at my breast,
 That sucks the nurse asleep?

CHARMIAN

O, break! O, break!

CLEOPATRA

As sweet as balm, as soft as air, as gentle,--
 O Antony!--Nay, I will take thee too.

(Applying another asp to her arm)

What should I stay-

CHARMIAN

In this vile world? So, fare thee well.
 Now boast thee, death, in thy possession lies
 A lass unparallel'd. Downy windows, close;
 And golden Phoebus never beheld
 Of eyes again so royal! Your crown's awry;
 I'll mend it, and then play.

She dies.

Dolabella enters with Octavius and his train.

DOLABELLA

O sir, you are too sure an augurer;
 That you did fear is done.

OCTAVIUS

Take her up to bed:
 And bear her women from the monument:
 She shall be buried by her Antony:
 No grave upon the earth shall clip in it
 A pair so famous. High events as these
 Strike those that make them; and their story is
 No less in pity than his glory which
 Brought them to be lamented. Our army shall
 In solemn show attend this funeral;
 And then to Rome. Come, Dolabella, see
 High order in this great solemnity.

Exeunt, baring the bodies. The sound of applause.

Nassima enters. She picks up the crown that has been
 accidentally left on the stage. After a moment, Elmegreen
 enters with a bottle of champagne.

ELMEGREEN

Nassima. I thought I saw you in the back of the house.

NASSIMA

I had nowhere else to be.

ELMEGREEN

Mm. Well, I don't think it's a good idea for you to be here while we're still investigating
 the extent of your brother's crimes.

NASSIMA

My brother is dead. Killed by military police not two days after he left.

ELMEGREEN

My God. Terrible. I don't know what to say. I suppose there's no chance of recovering
 the money now.

Nassima slaps him.

NASSIMA

[Don't ever speak of my brother again!]

ELMEGREEN

Nassima! I'm sorry for your loss. But I was just trying to help. To protect your country's
 heritage before it was burned in a riot. You should go. If you want to come back here, I
 suggest you buy a ticket. All I was ever trying to do was help.

He exits. Nassima cries. Kitt enters, Nassima's back to him.

KITT

Excuse me, have you seen a crown....

Nassima turns around. Surprise.

KITT

Nasi.

She starts to leave. He catches her.

KITT

Hey hey hey. Please. Let's talk.

NASSIMA

I can't. Please, let me go.

KITT

I'm so sorry, Nassima. About your brother. About everything. I know you've been through hell here. I wish I could wipe out the last three weeks. Wipe em out of the history books, you know?

Long silence. Nassima takes off her engagement ring and hands it to Kitt.

KITT

That's yours. I want you to have it. I want you...I want you. OK? I want you. That's just the truth.

NASSIMA

(bitterly)

The truth. I try make sense of all those things you said to me, your accusations. I try to fit that picture of you into the story of our lives together, but it's like my memory has been erased. I know we were happy, and then we were here.

KITT

We were happy. We overcame so much to be together. Two people from completely different worlds and it didn't matter. We were so in love. You changed my life.

NASSIMA

Stop romanticizing things, Kitt. Huh. “Romanticized”. A thing made romantic, made *Roman*. You should have put that in the play.

KITT

I’m DONE WITH THIS FUCKING PLAY. I just want our lives back. I just want the old times back.

NASSIMA

I don’t. They’re all rotten.

KITT

Then forget them. Let’s start from now. Let’s forget everything that went before.

He kisses her.

NASSIMA

I can’t.

KITT

Don’t do this. Those things I said, that was one little instant. I’m a good guy, Nassima. I love you.

NASSIMA

I don’t love you and I don’t remember why I ever did. (She hands him the ring) I don’t want this.

Kitt exits.

NASSIMA

[God help me. I don’t know what to do.]

(She looks at the crown)

What would you have done?

Cleopatra appears.

CLEOPATRA

I? I’d kill them all.

NASSIMA

(smiling grimly)

That is clearly not an option.

CLEOPATRA

No? Nothing has changed. Romans, Greeks, enemies within, let them walk across Egypt. So if we can't kill them, there's always another option.

She puts a dagger in Nassima's hands.

NASSIMA

NO.

CLEOPATRA

Your brother. Your lover. Your country. Gone! Your own story rewritten, casting you as a thief...or a fool. End the story on your terms. Die here and be remembered for a death with meaning. For your country.

NASSIMA

You killed yourself. To stop them from making a joke out of you. But you failed. It didn't stop poems and plays and movies from being written about you and still no one knows who you were.

CLEOPATRA

What could I have done?

NASSIMA

You could have fought.

CLEOPATRA

Easy for you to say. Here, thousands of miles from any actual fighting.

NASSIMA

I'm nobody! You had power!

CLEOPATRA

And why? Why should a million men serve one woman, unless they believe that she is righteous on her throne, a goddess incarnate? They believed the bedtime stories, and so they served me. You must control the narrative. Call it what you will. Slander it. "Pageantry", "fraud", "politics", "marketing", "acting". Without those stories, who was I? The many faced queen of red and black. Osirus. Aset. Isis. Take your pick And breathe the name. It's sand upon the tongue: Say Isis. Isis. Egypt's secret name. And I, her vassal, goddess in this flesh, Have one foot down in heaven, one in Greece. A half-and-half. Both foreigner and face Of Egypt. You will never know me, girl. For Egypt sees this face, they do not know;

And Ant'ny loves this face, he does not know;
 And Caesar strikes this face, he does not know;
 And Plutarch draws this face, he does not know;
 And Shakespeare twists this face, he does not know;
 Mubarek takes this face, he does not know;
 And I a mirror have; I do not know.
 How can one see oneself? Not know me yet?

Pause.

NASSIMA

You are a sad little girl.

CLEOPATRA

I don't believe anyone has ever said that about me.

NASSIMA

Not everything is about maintaining your image.

CLEOPATRA

Yes. It is. You get one life to live, one life in the next world, but infinite lives over the course of history.

NASSIMA

All I ask is honesty from people. And I am honest in return.

CLEOPATRA

Don't make me laugh. That story about how you and your lover met. Is that true?

NASSIMA

Yes.

CLEOPATRA

All true? Or was it embellished ever so slightly? Did people really think you were the director? Or has it been told so many times now as an amusing cocktail yarn that even you can't remember the truth? Your posture. Your attitude. The hours you spend on your Facebook profile, presenting your perfect self to the internet? Why not take the dagger, and leave some tangible, real life behind? Otherwise, who writes your story? Kitt?

NASSIMA

I don't want to write my story. I want to write Gamal's.

CLEOPATRA

Tell it to your own liking?

NASSIMA

If I don't tell my version, then everyone here will only remember that he robbed them. The military leaders in Egypt will only label him an enemy of the state. But I can make him a hero. A man who would do anything for the people of Egypt. A man who died to advance the cause of freedom. You died for your own freedom. He died for everyone's.

CLEOPATRA

And you'll sing his praises on Twitter. How noble.

NASSIMA

Stop it.

CLEOPATRA

A great and powerful blog! Tremble, Mubarak! While real women and men are lying dead in the streets, you'll force the regime to its knees with your keyboard!

NASSIMA

I'm not killing myself!

CLEOPATRA

Because you're scared. And weak. And far too comfortable. While others are dying, becoming the narrative.

NASSIMA

There's got to be some middle ground. Between meaninglessness and death.

CLEOPATRA

Of course.

Cleopatra takes out Kitt's pair of airline tickets.

CLEOPATRA

You can choose to fight.

Taking the crown from her, Cleopatra puts the airline tickets in Nassima's trembling hand. Then she hands her the dagger.

CLEOPATRA

The choice is yours.

She places the crown on Nassima's head.

CLEOPATRA

Your crown's awry;
I'll mend it; and then play.

Cleopatra turns and exits, leaving Nassima staring at the dagger and the tickets.

As the lights fade, a radio broadcast of various voices: first, an announcement of Mubarak's resignation, then about security forces relinquishing control, the democratic elections, Muhammed Morsi's ascent to office. And then:

RADIO (V.O.)

"From Cairo, July 1st, 2013. At least four people are dead across Egypt, including a 14-year-old boy, after antigovernment protesters ransacked Muslim Brotherhood offices on Friday and tens of thousands of supporters and opponents of President Mohamed Morsi..."

"at least four other Brotherhood offices were attacked, including by people using firearms and gasoline bombs..."

"...One survivor of a violent sexual assault, Dalia Abdelwahab, told Amnesty International: "I will not stay quiet. All women in Egypt need to wake up.... Otherwise, such violence will continue..."

Lights out.

End of the play.

Weary With Toil

Rebecca Kotcher

Freely ♩ = 100

mp Dm $\overset{3}{\text{—}}$ Am // Dm Am // Dm Am F B \flat A //

We-ary with toil, I haste me to my bed; the dear re-pose - for limbs with tra-vel tired; But

T
A
B

D *espress.* Bm G A D

mf Then - be - gins A jour - ney in my head, To work my

10

Bm G A D Bm *cresc.*

mind - when bo - dy's works ex - pired. For then my thoughts, From

20

G A D *cresc.* Bm G

far where I a - bide - In - tend - In - tend - a pil - grim - age to

30

mp G A G Bm

mp thee. - And keep, and keep my eye-lids o-pen wide, Look-ing on dark-ness that the blind

40

C#m A D Bm *cresc.* G A

do see - Save that my soul's - Im - a - gin-a-ry sight -

49

D *f* Bm G A *mp* D *cresc.*

- pre - sents thy sh - a - dow to my sight - less view, Which, like a

59

Bm *mf* G A D *f* Bm

jewel - hung in gha-st-ly night, Makes black night beau - te-ous -

70

G A D Bm G D

and her old face new.

80

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

COME THOU MONARCH OF THE VINE

REBECCA KOTCHER

MARCH TEMPO ♩ = 90

G EM AM Bm G C G D G

D G C G D G G EM AM D⁷

9 1. COME THOU MON-ARCH OF THE VINE, PLUM-PY BAC-CHUS WITH PI-NE EYNE. IN THY

G EM AM D G EM AM Bm

18 FATS OUR CARES BE DROWN'D, WITH THY GRAPES OUR HAIRS BE CROWN'D. CUP US 'TILL THE WORLD GO 'ROUND,

G C G D G D G EM AM Bm G

26 CUP US 'TILL THE WORLD GO 'ROUND. CUP US 'TILL THE WORLD GO 'ROUND, CUP US

C G D G

36 'TILL THE WORLD GO 'ROUND.