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THE WIFE AND THE SWORD.

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY-
DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

By DR. ALBERT CARR.

The plot of this drama is based upon certain events recorded in Roman history, and said to have transpired about 400 B.C. In the construction of this drama such license was taken with this history as seemed essential to consistent narrative and unity of plot. The civilized Romans called the Gauls, *the barbarians*. The struggle of the noble against selfish pride and barbarism is the theme of our story.

HILL CITY S. D.

1909.





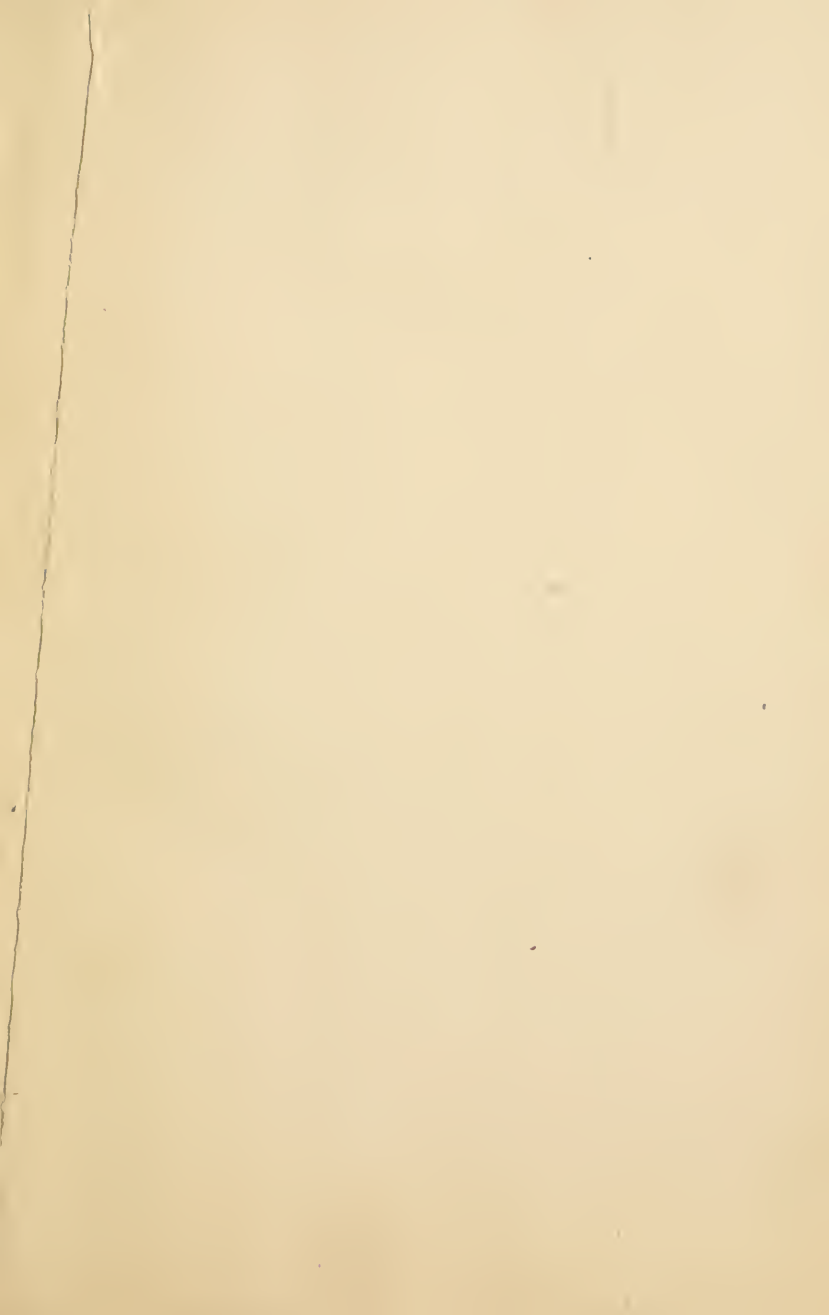
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THE WIFE AND THE SWORD.

AN HISTORICAL TRAGEDY-
DRAMA IN FIVE ACTS.

By **DR. ALBERT CARR.**

Author of the following published
dramas: *The Irish Prince*; *The
Shining Mystery*; *The Bed-
rock Flame*; *The Miner's
Dream.*

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CAST OF CHARACTERS.

CAMILLIUS. Consul general of the Roman army.

PAPIRIUS. An aged Roman senator

MANLIUS. A wealthy and distinguished Roman commander.

COSUS. A Roman patrician. Proud and cruel. Formerly, dictator.

SULPICIUS. A rich patrician money-lender.

BRENNUS. Chief of the Gauls.

MUCIUS. A Roman centurion.

COMINIUS. A brave young Roman.

OFFICER. Roman officer of the guard.

1 SOLDIER. }
2 SOLDIER. } Wounded Roman soldiers.

FOREMAN. Of the citizen's jury.

PATRICIAN, Leader of patrician jury,

1 CITIZEN. }
2 CITIZEN. } Roman citizens.
3 CITIZEN. }

MARCELLA, Wife of Manlius and granddaughter of Papius,

LAURINDA. Daughter of Mucius. Beloved of Cominius.

Aged senators. Patrician nobles, Roman officers and soldiers. Gaulish warriors. Roman citizens and rabble.

THE WIFE AND THE SWORD.

ACT I.

SCENE I. *The house of Manlius in Rome.*

Enter COSUS and SULPICIUS, L.

Sulpicius. Thou shouldst be dictator, now, Cosus. Rome needs the discipline of thy firm hand.

Cosus. I should be, and would be, Sulpicius, had my friends been less confident. Manlius secretly stirred the people against me, and old Papirius quietly opposed me in the senate. I was defeated, and Camillius made consul.

Sulpicius. Papirius is Marcella's grandfather.

Cosus. It was through her, that Manlius was brought into the conspiracy against me.

Sulpicius. It is four months since Marcella became his wife.

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Cosus. And six, since she rejected thee. There is the commander's house. There, he is passing his nuptial year with his young wife,—Marcella.

Sulpicius. This marriage quite unmanned me.

Cosus. Think not of it!

Sulpicius. 'Tis easier said than done. I love Marcella still.

Cosus. Forget her. Erase her from thy mind. Hath Camillius been heard from?

Sulpicius. The last report received from him by the senate, he and his army were marching north along the Tiber. It is rumored, the Gauls are advancing towards our borders.

Cosus. Then, Camillius is advancing to intercept them.

Sulpicius. That is the supposition.

Cosus. [*Aside.*] If they meet, there will be a battle. Camillius may never return.

Sulpicius. I have been privately informed, that Manlius hath been ordered to join Camillius with the four remaining cohorts. That will leave the city defenseless.

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COSUS. When does the commander depart?

SULPICIUS. Today.

COSUS. Good! When he is gone, thou canst resume thy siege. It is often easier to corrupt a matron, than to win a maid.

SULPICIUS. If money will buy her, I'll bid high.

COSUS. The influence of this clique must be overcome. We will connive together, Sulpicius, and secretly undermine their power. The first to be brought to dishonor; and, then destroyed, must be Manlius.

SULPICIUS. But Marcella:—What of her?

COSUS. When her husband is no more; she'll turn to thee. I must be made dictator.

SULPICIUS. And dictator thou shalt be, if money and patrician power can make thee. Come with me to the senate-house. There, we will meet some of the younger senators, and touch them lightly with our purposes.

COSUS. Well advised. I will go with thee. [*Exeunt COSUS and SULPICIUS, R*]

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*Enter MANLIUS and MARCELLA
from house.*

Manlius. My star grows brighter, as
my sword grows keener.

Marcella. Ay, Manlius, but one fell
blow will stay it's upward course and
take thee from me.

Manlius. Fear not, Marcella! Victory
hath ever stood exultant by my side.
Eight Roman citizens have I saved from
flood, fire, and steel. Thirty times have
I fought in single combat, and borne my
adversaries shield and weapon from the
field. And, on my body are the scars
of many close encounters with my
country's foes. In all this stress, Victory
hath stood fast my friend and brought
me off in safety. My time is up. I
must depart. My love is thine; my life,
my country's.

Marcella. Must thou go, today?

Manlius. Today, Marcella. Only that
Roman, who holds his country first, is
worthy of a Roman wife.

Marcella. But love is love, dear, and
difficult to constrain. [*Murmur of voices
off. R*] Hark, what's that!

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Manlius. It sounds like the mutterings of a mob. [*Voices heard louder, R.*] There is some disturbance in the city. [*Long blast of trumpets off, R.*] Listen, Marcella, it is the call to arms! That call is never sounded within the walls of Rome, except the enemy be at her gates.

MUCIUS runs on, R.

Mucius. The Gauls are upon us. The citizens are arming and the soldiers are assembling at the gates. They are calling for thee to command them.

Manlius. Have the barbarians been seen?

Mucius. Ay, from the walls.

Manlius. Farewell, Marcella. Come, Mucius. This will bear no delay.

[Manlius draws sword. Exeunt Manlius and Mucius, R. Marcella gazes earnestly after them.]

SCENE II. *A street in Rome.*

Enter COMINIUS, L. LAURINDA clinging to him.

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Laurinda. As thou lovest me, Cominius, forsake me not.

Cominius. Calm thyself, Laurinda.

Laurinda. How terrible for a woman to fall into the hands of those wild barbarians! Oh! Cominius, when the gates begin to yield, leave all and come to me, or I will kill myself.

Cominius. I promise thee, by the veil of Vesta. So, for the present, farewell. Thy father, Mucius, awaits me at the gates.

Laurinda. Forget me not, Cominius.

Cominius. I will not fail thee. [*Exit, R.*]

Laurinda. [*R. Looking after Cominius.*] May the gods defend us from those brutal barbarians,—greedy of wine and merciless to women. The very thought of them fills me with an agony of terror.

*Enter PAPIRIUS and MARCELLA,
L.*

Marcella. I fear, grandfather, our army has been defeated.

Papirius. I am a Roman senator, granddaughter, and can entertain no fears. If Rome falls, I fall with it. [*Sees LAU-*

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RINDA.] Here is thy young plebeian friend, Laurinda, the daughter of the centurion, Mucius.

Laurinda. (*Bowing.*) Good father, PAPIRIUS, may the gods preserve thee! [*Crosses to MARCELLA.*] My dear lady! [*Kisses MARCELLA'S hand.*] I shall remain with thee.

Marcella. Thank thee, Laurinda, I need thy comfort and companionship. I am much distressed.

Papirius. I must hasten to the senate-house. Fear not, granddaughter: Rome is, still, Rome. [*Exit, R.*]

Marcella. Manlius is with thy father. I am beset with fears, Laurinda. Come, we will slowly follow along towards the gates. [*Exeunt MARCELLA and LAURINDA, R.*]

SCENE III. *The principle gates of Rome,—inside. Sentinels pacing on the wall. Soldiers und armed citizens on both sides of the gates.*

Enter MANLIUS, L. followed by MUCIUS, and soldiers. Citizens shout: "Hail, brave Manlius." MUCIUS goes to gates, Guards

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open gates cautiously and he passes out.

Manlius. Soldiers and citizens the Gauls have approached our walls and hurled defiance at our city. Camillius must be notified. I will undertake the mission, and go at once. [*Citizens cheer. Guards open gates. Enter MUCIUS followed by two Roman soldiers, bleeding and torn. Guards close gates*] Whence come these bleeding soldiers?

Mucius. Let them speak for themselves.

1 Soldier. [*With effort.*] I come from the army marching north along the Tiber's bank. The Gauls fell suddenly upon us, and we were every where routed.

2 Soldier. [*With effort.*] In this battle, it was first defeat, then rout, and then massacre. But few are left of our defeated legions to tell the story of this day's carnage.

Manlius. Is Camillius slain?

1 Soldier. No. He, with a remnant of the army, escaped to Veii.

Manlius. Let these brave soldiers be cared for and their wounds dressed.

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[*Citizens assist 1&2 soldiers off L.*] Soldiers and citizens. the army upon which we depended for defence, has been defeated and scattered. It is no longer a question of defence, but of safety, safety to our wives and children. They must retire from the city, and hasten up the Tiber to Veii. For myself, I shall remain in Rome to drive the barbarian hence, or perish in her streets. [*Shouts: "To Veii! To Veii!" People hurry off L.*] Soldiers, those of you who are young, without families, and are willing to stay, step to the right. The others may go with their families to Veii.

Mucius. [*Stepping to right.*] I shall remain with the commander.

[*Soldiers separate. Some step to the right; others cross stage, and exeunt, L. Manlius stands, RC.*]

Enter MARCELLA, L. followed by LAURINDA. They pause, L

[*Mucius crosses to Laurinda*

Marcella. [*Advancing towards Manlius.*] Oh! Manlius, stay not here. To

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stay will not save Rome.

Manlius. [*Looking to front; in position of a soldier; sword point down; immovable, like a statue.*] To stay will not save Rome, but it will maintain the honor of the Roman name,

Marcella. This is a forlorn hope, Manlius, in which one must die, but for the name of dying bravely. If it were possible,—if it were probable,—What am I saying!—

Manlius. Thou art talking as a wife, not as the daughter of a Roman general, who died a Roman death.

Marcella. [*Advances to MANLIUS and winds arms round his neck. He does not move.*] Manlius, my brave lord, pity my weakness in this trying hour. Between my woman's love and thy soldier's honor, I see two ways; one leads to a happy fireside with bright-faced children playing about my feet and thee, dear, sitting by my side; the other leads to the grave, — [*Breaks down. Sobs and cries on MANLIUS's breast. He does not move.*] a dark, cold grave,—and I—J—alone, —the opening flower of our love—crushed,—and wet with— with— my sad tears.

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Manlius. [*Still immovable, but with self repression.*] My resolution hangs but by a thread. Another tear, another sob, and I will cast my sword down upon the ground, and follow thee to Veii.

Marcella. [*Starting back from him, with low scream and arms extended.*] No, no, Manlius! Stay, and I will go! At once, at once! [*Stands for a moment, C. Staggered.* MANLIUS does not move, but shows strain of contending emotions severely repressed.] I scarce can see. The day is turning into night. Come, Laurinda, lead me hence, lest I do cry or sob again. [*LAURINDA advances to MARCELLA, MUCIUS, with bowed head, crosses to soldiers.* LAURINDA leads MARCELLA towards L. MARCELLA turns at L, gazes at MANLIUS, and then—] Mine is a woman's love: thine is a soldier's honor. Which is the worthier, time and the gods will tell. [*LAURINDA leads MARCELLA off L.*]

Manlius. [*Looking up.*] Ye gods, if I do err in this, mark well the bitter agony of my heart. A woman's love is poison to a soldier's courage. [*Raises sword extended.*] How bright and keen the blade of my good sword! For the

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first time, it trembles in my holding. How oft hast thou and I, moved hilt and hand, midst roaring tumult and raging strife. How close to parting, how close to shame, we were a moment ago! Another tear, another sob, would have swept thee from my grasp.

Enter aged senators, L. led by

PAPIRIUS

Papirius. Come, Manlius. Come, Mucius, and my brave young Roman soldiers, lead us to the senate-house.

Manlius. Stay not, venerable Papirius.

Papirius. We aged senators have solemnly sworn unto the gods, we all adore, not to desert the city. If Rome falls, we fall with it.

Manlius. To the senate-house. Mucius.

Mucius. In column! [*Soldiers fall in, in column of twos at head of aged senators.*] To the senate-house, march!

[*Exeunt L. Mucius, followed by soldiers and aged senators, and Manlius in rear.*]

CURTAIN.

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ACT II.

SCENE I. *Before the senate-house.*
Wild discordant shouts and yells off R. Aged senators seated in ivory chairs on porch of senate-house at head of steps. Papirius is seated center with ivory scepter in hand.

Enter MANLIUS, L. PAPIRIUS
rises and descends steps to meet him.

Manlius. [*Bowing low.*] The barbarians surround the city. [*Yells and heavy battering off, R.*] They are battering the gates.

Papirius. Where are the soldiers?

Manlius. In the citidel on the Capitoline hill. The hill is high and its walls abrupt. The citidel can be reached only by the secret path. I have come to lead thee and thy venerable companions to this secure retreat.

Papirius. Nay, Manlius, we will abide here,—here at the senate-house, where we have ruled and been honored by

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the people. [*Terrific yells and battering off L.*]

Manlius. The barbarians will kill you.

Papirius. We will trust to the gods, and our gray beards.

Manlius. I pray thee, come.

Papirius. [*Going*] Farewell! Thou knowest better than to urge me.

[*Papirius ascends steps and resumes seat. Manlius walks L, turns, looks up at senators, and bows low. Senators rise, look towards him, and then sit down. Yells and battering off R. Manlius exits L. Yells and battering continuous off R. Loud crashing as of falling gates. Roar of voices, tumult and clashing iron. Barbarians rush on stage. R., stop suddenly, and stare at senators with awe. A Barbarian advances slowly and superstitiously up steps. Stops near Papirius. Gazes rever-*

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ently at Papirius, and then strokes senator's gray beard. Papirius rises and strikes barbarian on head with scepter. Barbarian falls and rolls down steps. Barbarians yell, rush up steps and massacre senators. After massacre, barbarians rush off L, shouting and yelling. Red glare thrown on stage in imitation of sunset: then darkness of approaching night.

SCENE II. *In the citidel on the Capitoline Hill. Time night. Lights down.*

Enter MUCIUS, L.

Mucius. The Gauls howl like a pack of famished wolves in the city below. Drunk with wine, they stagger through the streets plundering and burning. Here on the hill and in this citidel we are secure, and can hold out until our food supply is exhausted. Then we

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must fight or starve.

Enter MANLIUS, L.

Manlius. The night is very dark. See that the guards be doubled, Mucius, until the moon rises. [*Crosses to R.*]

Mucius. I will attend to it. [*Salutes, and exits L.*]

Manlius. Had I a legion of our war-tried veterans, I would attack the Gauls at once. [*Walks up and down.*] Oh, why this delay! Not a word have I heard from Veii. What can they be doing!

Enter MUCIUS and COMINIUS, L.

Cominius. Hail! brave Manlius, I come from Veii.

Manlius. What, Cominius! How didst thou reach the hill?

Cominius. As the night settled I stole through the Gaulish lines.

Manlius. Didst thou ascend by the secret path.?

Cominius. Nay, I climbed up the side of the hill by digging holes for my feet with my dagger, and clinging to whatever my hands could grasp. I

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feared to come by the secret way, lest I discover it to the enemy. I must depart before the moon rises.

Manlius. Bringest thou a message?

Cominius. Ay, here it is. [*Offers sealed packet.* MANLIUS *extends hand.*]

It is from thy wife.

Manlius. [*Withdrawing hand.*] Hast thou no other? None from the consul, Camillius?

Cominius. Yea, he bid me tell thee, to hold the citidel until he came. He is recruiting and reorganizing the army. He has received but little encouragement from the senators. They regard him with indifference.

Manlius. The senators at Veii are young. The elder senators were massacred by the barbarians,

Cominius. Papirius, too?

Manlius. All, Cominius. A soldier lingering back when we ascended the hill saw them cut down. They would remain.

Cominius. This news will grieve thy wife, and much discourage Camillius. Cosus is now the power at Veii, The

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senators give to him a ready ear. He hath declared, that we are not able, at the present time, to give successful battle to the Gauls.

Manlius. What, then, doth he suggest?

Cominius. To pay the Gauls a thousand pounds by weight in gold to lift their standards and depart.

Manlius. This is merely gossip!

Cominius. Nay. it was thy wife who told me.

Manlius. And who told her?

Cominius. Sulpicius. She is oft, of late, with Sulpicius.

Manlius. With Sulpicius! No?

Cominius. It seems, he hath much befriended thy good lady since the exodus to Veii.

Manlius. Well, what of Cosus?

Cominius. He hath recommended Sulpicius to the senators as the proper person to transact the business with the Gauls. Sulpicius is a man of business understanding, is rich, and hath much ready gold.

Manlius. Then the removal of the

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Gauls from our territory is to be made a business transaction?

Cominius. It so appears,

Manlius. What saith my wife of this proposal?

Cominius. She thinks it most expedient. In it she sees thy safety. Her love for thee hath quite distracted her.

Manlius. How doth she know, that I am alive? No word hath been sent from here since the day the people left.

Cominius. She believes thou art alive, but fears thy bravery will take thee from her. She trembles at the name of war.

Manlius. I tremble for Rome. May the gods deliver us from the vagaries of a woman's mind.

Cominius. Here is the packet from thy wife. [*Offers packet.*] It contains a letter.

Manlius. [*Not taking it.*] Tell Camillus, I await him; that our food-supply is nearly exhausted: that the Gauls are plundering and burning in the city.

Cominius. What shall I tell the senators?

Manlius. Tell them, I am alive, and

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with my soldiers in the citidel on the Capitoline Hill.

Cominius. What shall I tell thy wife?

Manlius. Tell her, I will follow my sword, ay, though the sky rains tears.

Cominius. Here is the packet. [*Offers him packet.*]

Manlius. [*Not noticing packet.*] It is approaching midnight. The moon rises shortly after midnight.

Cominius. Then I must go. [*Puts packet in breast.*] Good night, commander.

Manlius. Good night, Cominius.

Mucius. I will go with thee, Cominius. to the edge of the hill. [*MUCIUS and COMINIUS exeunt L.*]

Manlius. Cosus recommends it, and my wife favors it. Rome with all her honors, all her glories, all her heroes to be made the subject of a business transaction! Bartered for as they barter for pigs and sheep in the market. It shall not be! [*Exit, R.*]

SCENE III. *The summit of the Capitoline Hill. Wall of the citidel with arched opening, R. Pile of*

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*shields near wall, R. Tarpeian rock
L. Ridge of rocks across stage,
rear. Rear scene, blue sky. Stage
dark.*

*Enter MANLIUS in long cloak
from citidel, R.*

Manlius. Is the day of Roman patriotism and Roman heroism passing away! Hath the Roman soldier become a dog! A dog to guard the property of the rich, and watch the goods that vulgar traffic piles up! The very thought of it stirs me to the finger tips and awakes in me an unutterable detestation. [*Crosses to L. Moon rises.*] Here is the Tarpeian rock. From it the Roman traitor is hurled. And here is the unmarked grave of Tarpeia, the Roman maiden who once betrayed this citidel to the enemy. From her the rock was named. What a dark spot! How the soul of the patriot shrinks from it! [*Crosses to, R, sits down and reclines on shields.*] My wife—Well, what of her! She is beautiful and of pure patrician blood. The Roman spirit is in her, but

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love hath made phant her Roman mind,
and now it bends to every weak emotion.
I love her, yea, but I will not yield.
Better die for my manhood, than live
for my wife's fears. [*Sleeps. Moon crosses horizon and goes down. Cackle of geese off, RR. MANLIUS rouses up and looks around. Geese cackle again. MANLIUS springs to his feet, throws off cloak. picks up shield, and looks rear.*]
The geese are cackling in the temple of Juno.
Something disturbs them. Can it be—
[*Head of Gaul rises above ridge of rocks, rear. MANLIUS rushes to rear and up rocks. Dashes shield in Gaul's face. Gaul falls from ridge to rear, and disappears with a yell. He is answered with yells from below and rear of ridge.*]
The Gauls! The Gauls! [*Enter MUCIUS from citidel, followed by soldiers. They rush to rear and up ridge. They hurl rocks down on Gauls from ridge.*]
Enough, brave comrades, the Gauls are repulsed.
[*It begins to dawn. Trumpet heard from rear of ridge.*] That is a Roman note.
[*Gazes rear and then points downwardly to rear.*] Look, Mucius, is not that a body of Roman citizens

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advancing towards the Forum?

Mucius. [*Looking.*] It is. I recognize Sulpicius by his gait. He hath a stride. There is a citizen with a trumpet, another with a white flag, and others bearing sacks on their shoulders.

Manlius. There is gold in those sacks, Mucius. 'The yellow scab of Roman shame! I can restrain myself no longer! I am going below. I'll stop this cowardly bussiness transaction or write mine epitaph upon my sword. Follow me, who will, by the secret path. [*Trumpeter sounds. Standard-bearer steps to Manlius's side.*] To the Forum! [*Exeunt* MANLIUS, *trumpeter, and standard-bearer. L.*]

Mucius. In column! To the Forum, march! [*Soldiers fall in, in column of twos, and led by MUCIUS, hurry off, L.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT III.

SCENE I. *The secret path.*

*Enter MARCELLA and LAURINDA,
R. followed by COSUS.*

COSUS. We have escaped detection. The barbarians are in the Forum awaiting Sulpicius and the gold. Here is the entrance to the secret path. Follow it, and it will lead you to the citidel on the hill. The commander is there.

MARCELLA. I thank thee, noble Cosus, for thy guidance and protection.

COSUS. [I am honored by the service I have rendered thee, noble lady. *[Bows, exits, R.]*

MARCELLA. [*Drawing dagger from breast.*] If the barbarians capture us, we have our daggers, Laurinda. [*Returns dagger to breast.*]

LAURINDA. Yea, we will kill ourselves. Hark, lady! I hear the measured tread of soldiers, [*Looking, L.*] It is soldiers,—Roman soldiers. They are descending from the hill.

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Enter MANLIUS trumpeter and standard-bearer, L.

Marcella. Manlius, beloved—[MANLIUS does not notice her. Crosses to R. followed by trumpeter and standard-bearer.] Stay, Manlius—Speak but a word of welcome, and then pass on. [Exeunt MANLIUS, trumpeter and standard-bearer, R. Enter MUCIUS and soldiers, L. They cross stage hurriedly and exeunt, R.] Oh! Laurinda, my brave lord, hath spurned me. Come, we will follow him. Neither shame nor death shall keep me from him. [They exeunt R.]

SCENE II. *The Roman Forum.*
BRENNUS chief of the Gauls seated in a large red chair, rear and C. Gauls right and left of chair.

Brennus. (*Rising.*) Bring on the scales to weigh the Roman gold. [Gauls bring in scales from R, and set them down right C.] Put in the weights. [Gauls put weights in left scale.] Now, let the Roman approach. [Brennus sits down.]

[A Gaul steps to R. and motions

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with his sword. Enter Sulpicius followed by a citizen bearing a white flag, and a citizen trumpeter, and other citizens bearing sacks on their shoulders. Citizens drop sacks down right of scales.

Sulpicius. [*Advancing to BRENNUS.*]

Brennus, great chief of the Gauls—

Brennus. Bow Roman, or begone.

Sulpicius. [*Bowing.*] Great chief, I am the Roman commissioner.

Brennus. Bringest thou the tribute.

Sulpicius. I have brought the gold.

Brennus. Then put it in the scale. There is no need for speech. The gold speaks for itself. We understand it better than your Roman words.

[Sulpicius motions to citizens. They take gold bars from sacks and put them in right scale. They cease when the scales balance.]

Sulpicius. There is more gold in the scales than the agreement calls for.

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Brennus. [*Rising.*] The scales balance.

Sulpicius. The scales balance, great chief, but I fear thy weights—

Brennus. What of my weights! You fear my sword more than you fear my weights. (*Casts sword into left scale.*) To the victor belongs the spoils! Put in your gold. Be quick, or I may change my mind. Woe unto you, if I take my sword from the scales before they balance! (*Sulpicius motions. Citizens hurriedly put gold into right scale until the scales balance.* BRENNUS takes sword from scales. Enter MANLIUS, trumpeter, standard-bearer, MUCIUS and soldiers. L.) The tribute is paid.

Manlius. What tribute?

Brennus. [*Turning, and seeing soldiers.*] The Roman tribute to the Gaul. It is paid. We are ready to depart.

Manlius. When did Rome pay tribute!

Brennus. Now, even now. [*Points to gold.*] There is the gold, [*Points to Sulpicius.*] and, there the Roman commissioner, that paid it.

Sulpicius. [*Advancing towards MANLIUS.*] Proud commander, I was chosen

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by the Roman senators to conclude this treaty,

Manlius. And I was chosen by the Roman gods to defeat it.

[Mucius strikes Sulpicius with shield and knocks him down. Sulpicius rises, grabs up remaining sack of gold, and exits, L. followed by citizens. Trumpet sounds off R. Great excitement among Gauls.]

Brennus. That is a Roman trumpet!

COMINIUS runs on L.

Cominius. Camillius hath come!

Manlius. Then charge, Romans! For Rome and Victory!

[Shouting off R. with trumpet sounds. Manlius and Roman soldiers charge Gauls. They fight. Romans drive Gauls off R. Manlius and Brennus remain. They engage in a fierce combat. Brennus, left: Manlius, right. Brennus knocks

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Manlius's sword out of his hand. Enter Marcella, L. dagger in hand. Brennus, back to her. She steals towards him. He crowds Manlius to his knees. Is about to thrust him through with sword. Marcella stabs Brennus in back with dagger. Brennus drops sword, turns, staggers to L. falls, dies.

Marcella. [*Dropping dagger.*] The gods have decided, Manlius. My love hath saved thy honor.

Manlius. When I lost my sword, I lost my honor. Thou hast saved my dishonored life.

Marcella. Manlius. Manlius, why so cruel! Man fights with the sword, but the weapon of the gods is love.

[*Cry heard from off R: "The Gauls flee! Victory for the Romans!"*]

Manlius. [*Rising, picks up sword.*] Take thou my sword: from this day 'tis thine, not mine. [*MARCELLA takes sword*]

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I am thy prisoner. [*Takes her in his arms.*] The prisoner of my brave young Roman wife.

Marcella. My happiness is too great. I fear the gods will make me pay for it's excess.

CURTAIN.

ACT IV.

SCENE I. *A street leading to the Forum.*

Enter SULPICIUS, L. followed by OFFICER OF THE GUARD and MUCIUS between two soldiers.

Sulpicius. Bring him along, officer! [To MUCIUS.] I loaned thee this money, centurion, two years ago. So far, I have received no return for my kindness, but the blow thou struckest me, in the Forum, with thy shield.

Mucius. The debt is small.

Sulpicius. Yea, it is small, but it seems still too large for thee to pay.

Mucius. Good sir, bethink thee, I am an officer of the legion—

Sulpicius. Tut, tut! that does not pay the debt.

Mucius. I am much in debt. Plundered of all I had by the barbarians, and my house burned, I had to build and buy again. To do this, I had to borrow money. Pray give me time, and I will pay thee all I owe thee, and half

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as much in interest.

Sulpicius. Not another moment. Pay the debt at once, or I will bid thee in. I need an old man to hoe my garden.

Mucius. [*With dejection.*] Hoe thy garden!

Enter LAURINDA and COMINIUS, L.

Laurinda. Oh! father, what doth this mean?

Mucius. I owe a debt, I cannot pay. Under our Roman law, I will be condemned and sold into slavery.

Sulpicius. Lead on, officer. To prison with him.

Cominius. Here comes Manlius, the friend of the people.

Enter, MANLIUS L, followed by Roman rabble.

Manlius. Stay you, who lead that brave centurion, a prisoner, through the streets. [*Soldiers pause.*] Why this indignity to a Roman officer?

Sulpicius. He owes me money, and will not pay.

Mucius. I cannot pay.

Manlius. What is the debt? Tell me,

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and I will pay it. [*Rabble cheer.*]

1 Citizen. Noble Manlius!

2 Citizen. Brave Manlius!

3 Citizen. Good Manlius!

Sulpicius. [*To MANLIUS.*] Art thou the patron of the rabble?

Manlius. I have solemnly declared: that while my money lasts, no Roman citizen shall be sold for debt. Should poverty make a man a slave? The law is most unjust.

Sulpicius. 'Tis hoped, thy money will last.

Manlius. A few more words from thee, and my patience may prove less enduring—than my money. What is the debt?

Sulpicius. [*Aside.*] There is no other way. I must accept the money. [*To MANLIUS.*] Here is the bond.

Manlius. [*Takes bond and looks at it.*] Here is thy money.

Sulpicius. [*Taking money.*] Release the prisoner.

[*Officer and soldiers release Mucius, and march off, R. Rabble cheer. Laurinda throws arms around father's neck.*]

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Cominius. [*Grasping MUCIUS'S hand.*]
Would, I could have paid thy debt!

Manlius. [*Embracing MUCIUS.*] My
brave old friend!

Sulpicius. Some men make friends,
but, it seems, Manlius buys them.
[*Strides off R. Rabble hoot him.*]

Manlius. Take this purse, Mucius,
and pay all thy debts, I should have
thought of this before. Nay, the money
is thine. As thou holdest me in thy
friendship, refuse it not.

Mucius. [*Taking purse.*] My good
commander! Thou art more Roman,
than our Roman law.

Manlius. Happiness be thine, Mucius!
[*Exeunt MANLIUS, L. followed by rabble
shouting :“Noble Manlius! Brave Manli-
us! Good Manlius!”*]

Mucius. Since thy mother's death,
Laurinda, I have watched o'er thee with
double care. I have but one desire left.
Thy happiness. Cominius, thou hast
asked me for her. She loves thee. Take
her, and with her my home and all I
have. The door of the house is open.
Lift her over it's threshold, and she is
thine,—my daughter and thy wife.

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Cominius. Laurinda!

Laurinda. Cominius!

[*They embrace.*]

Cominius. Come.

Cominius and Laurinda walk towards L, Cominius with arm around her. Mucius follows. Exeunt omnes, L.

SCENE II. *A room in Cosus's house.*

Enter COSUS, R.

Rabble passing outside, L. shout: "Noble Manlius! Brave Manlius! Good Manlius!"

COSUS. [*Contemptuously.*] Noble Manlius! Brave Manlius! Good Manlius! [*Crosses to L. and looks off, L.*] The rabble follow him through the streets, kissing his hands, and shouting his praises. He, moved by an appetite of insatiable vanity, licks up this slaver as a hungry dog licks the grease from a kitchen platter. [*Advances to C.*] King Manlius! It is certain that to this title he doth aspire. To seek to be made king is treason under our law. I have started the rumor among the patricians, that

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the commander is conspiring and conniving with this treasonable purpose. Sulpicius hath secretly warned the senate against him, and suggested that I be made dictator.

Enter Sulpicius, L.

Sulpicius. Hail! noble Cosus, the power is thine. The senate hath appointed thee dictator.

Cosus. This is most opportune, Camillius is with the army in the West, punishing the Gauls. We must take advantage of his absence, and strike without hesitation. How soon, thinkest thou, the senate will notify me of my appointment?

Sulpicius. Immediately.

Cosus. Then the work will soon begin.

Sulpicius. I have begun already. I arrested that old centurion, Mucius, for debt. The rabble all but assaulted me as I led him through the streets.

Cosus. Didst make him thy slave?

Sulpicius. Nay; king Manlius came and paid his debt.

Cosus. That pleased the rabble.

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Sulpicius. Pleased them! They shouted and cheered, and applauded him with their hands and mouths as though all the comfort and happiness of their cheap lives depended upon him.

Cosus. How did this lord of the rabble take it?

Sulpicius. He strutted about like a god come down from the sky.

Cosus. [*Fiercely.*] I'll send him down from the Tarpeian rock in a most ungodly manner! I will order his arrest the instant I am notified by the senate of my appointment. But first, Sulpicius, thou shalt make the charge to me in writing, that thou believest, this fellow Manlius is seeking the favor of the common people and conniving with certain other people with purpose to make himself king. The words, certain other people, is a covert reference to the clique, chief among which is Camillius.

Sulpicius. I will make the charge most willingly.

Cosus. We must look well to the jury.

Sulpicius. I'll take care of that.

Cosus. He must be found guilty. Come, we will go and prepare the indict-

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ment, and arrange the method of our procedure. [*Exeunt omnes, R.*]

SCENE III. *Before the house of Manlius in Rome.*

Enter MANLIUS *and* MARCELLA, *R.*

Manlius. The sword deserted me, and Victory fled, but thou didst abide, and struck the blow that saved me.

Marcella. Thy nature speaks for something better, dear, than blood and strife.

Manlius. That there is something better, I have learnt from thee.

Marcella. The people love thee Manlius. As their friend, thou mayst lead them on, along the path of peace to truth and justice.

Manlius. I have felt this urging in my secret thoughts. It seems, at times, the gods speak in my mind. But will the people understand?

Marcella. Sincerity will beget in them a faith, in thee a confidence, which will bind you both unto the hoped for end. I see, love,—but, Oh, so dimly!—in the vague far future, a reality of goodness.

Manlius. I see it too, Marcella. A charity and a faith, so kind and true,

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that one might wish to die and sleep and not wake up to life again until that blessed day had come.

Marcella. What pleasure to hear thee speak these gentle words, and mark thy gentle ways, now freed from pride's cold purposes and the soldier's boast.

Manhus. [*Taking her in his arms.*] Dear wife, we'll walk together in the path of peace. I'll be a quiet citizen, devoted in my love to thee; pruning my vines, and watching my fruit trees grow.

Marcella. My cup with happiness is brimming o'er. There is no evil left to mar the peaceful progress of our love. Each hour will bring some brighter hope, each day some newer joy. In this, I bless the gods as they've blessed me.

*Enter OFFICER OF THE GUARD
and soldiers, R.*

Officer. I arrest thee commander by order of the dictator.

Manlius. The dictator! Who is the dictator?

Officer. Cosus. He awaits thy presence in the Place of Judgment. [*Advancing to MANLIUS.*] Back, lady! [*To MANLIUS.*] Wilt thou come, or shall

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I have to take thee?

Manlius. No violence. I will come. Permit me but a moment with my wife. [MANLIUS and MARCELLA converse apart, L. Kisses her. Then, aside.] Would Camillus were here! [Advancing to OFFICER.] I am ready. [Soldiers surround MANLIUS.]

Officer. To the Place of Judgment, march! [Exeunt OFFICER, R. followed by MANLIUS surrounded by soldiers.]

[*Marcella looks distractedly after Manlius, and bursts into tears.*]

CURTAIN.

ACT V.

SCENE I. *The PLACE OF JUDGMENT in Rome, A large stone chair with sculptored wolf heads on arms, R. Row of plain stone benches left of stone chair. Stone chair and benches on raised stone foundation. COSUS discovered seated in stone chair. Citizens jury is seated on stone benches. Group of patrician nobles to right of Cosus. Group of soldiers, R. Enter SULPICIUS, R. Bows low to Cosus. Cosus nods to Sulpicius. Sulpicius remains at R. Enter rabble, L. and remain L. Rabble fall back. Enter OFFICER OF THE GUARD, L. followed by MANLIUS surrounded by soldiers. Officer bows low to Cosus. He responds with a nod. Officer, Manlius, and soldiers stand L. of jury. Enter MUCIUS, COMINIUS and LAURINDA, L. They stand, back, to left of Manlius. Enter citizens, L. pulling and pushing on a small car with Manlius's garlands*

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and trophies displayed on it. They place car forward and to left of jury, and retire to left rear.

Enter MARCELLA, L. with Manlius's sword. She lays sword down right of car, turns and advances towards Manlius.

Officer. [*Getting between MANLIUS and MARCELLA.*] He is a prisoner.

[*Rabble hiss. Marcella retires to Laurinda.*]

Cosus. Commander, thou hast been charged by Sulpicius with seeking the favor of the common people and conniving with certain other people with purpose to make thyself king. It is well known that thou art vain-glorious and ambitious of all honor; that thou art the friend of the base-born and seditious; that thou seekest the favor of the common people by paying their debts, visiting their homes, making presents to their wives, and petting their children. What hast thou to say to the charge against thee?

Manlius. Not guilty.

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Cosus, What hast thou to offer in support of this plea?

Manlius. Not much shall I attempt to say in my defence. [*Points to oak leaf garlands on car.*] There are eight oak leaf garlands awarded for the saving of eight Roman lives. [*Points to trophies on car.*] There are thirty shields and thirty weapons, trophies of thirty victories won in single-combat. And here, (*tearing open tunic at breast,*) upon my breast are the scars of many battles fought for Rome. No traitor's heart can beat beneath these scars! These are my witnesses. Their voiceless testimony, I submit in my defense.

Cosus. Is thy plea concluded?

Manlius. It is. The gods must speak for me now.

Cosus. Hast thou no witnesses, no further testimony to offer?

Manlius. None.

[Mucius and citizens step forth.]

Mucius. Citizens of the jury, the commander, who is in jeopardy before you, paid our debts, and saved us from

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slavery. We beseech you as Romans to regard his kindness to us, who are Roman citizens.

[Mucius and citizens retire to former places.]

Cosus. Sulpicius, hast thou aught to say?

Sulpicius. Nothing, noble Cosus, only to reiterate the charge, I have made against the commander.

Cosus. Hast thou any witnesses to present?

Sulpicius. Not any.

[Citizen jurors whisper.]

Cosus. Is the jury ready to render a verdict?

[Jury stands up.]

Citizen Foreman. It is.

Cosus. What is the verdict of the jury?

Citizen Foreman. Not guilty.

[Jury remains standing, Rabble cheer and yell. Citizens push car off, L. Manlius's]

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sword is left. Cosus converses apart with Sulpicius and patricians. Marcella rushes to Manlius and throws arms around his neck. Mucius and Cominius grasp Manlius's hand. Rabble close in around Manlius and Marcella. Great rejoicing and satisfaction expressed by Manlius's friends. Cosus returns to his seat.

Officer. [*Raising sword.*] Silence!
The dictator sits in judgment.

[*Soldiers thrust everybody back from Manlius.*

Cosus. [*Rising and speaking with severity.*] Citizens of the jury your verdict was rendered without consideration. I believe you were bribed. Begone, or I will command the soldiers to drive you from our presence.

[*Citizen jury hurry off 'L. Rabble hiss, then groan.*

1 Citizen. No one bribed the jury.

2 Citizen. He is not guilty.

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3 Citizen. There is conspiracy against him.

Cosus. [*In great rage.*] Officer, clear the Place of Judgment of that noisy and seditious rabble. [*Officer and soldiers drive rabble off L.*] Sulpicius, you will select a jury from these patrician noblemen. I will render judgment according to their finding. [*Cosus sits. Sulpicius fills jury seats with patricians. Bows to Cosus and retires to R.*] Noble patricians, you have heard the indictment and the plea. Are you ready to render a verdict?

Patricians. [*Rising.*] We are.

Cosus. What is your verdict?

Patricians. Guilty, Treason! Very guilty.

[*Marcella bursts into tears and sinks into Laurinda's arms.*]

Officer. Put on his chains.

[*Soldiers put chains on Manlius.*]

Cosus. Stand the prisoner before the judgment seat. [*Officer leads Manlius before judgment seat. Cosus rises.*]

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Thou unworthy Roman! Thou vain-glorious, praise-loving conspirator! Thou traitor!

Manlius. [*Starting towards Cosus*]
I, a traitor!

[*Soldiers seize Manlius roughly and restrain him.*]

Cosus. Ay, a traitor. A most dangerous traitor! A traitor with a patrician mind, and plebeian heart. Thus do I pass sentence upon thee. Thou shalt be taken to the top of the Capitoline Hill, and hurled from the Tarpeian rock.

Officer. When shall the sentence be executed, noble dictator?

Cosus. Now!!! (*Pointing up to left and rear.*) Yonder is the Tarpeian rock, (*Points to MANLIUS.*) and there is the traitor. Away with him!

[*Cosus comes down from judgment seat.*]

Marcella. [*Advancing to MANLIUS with effort.*] Love—love—love—

[*Soldiers get between Manlius and Marcella.*]

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Manlius. [*To COSUS, pitifully.*] Wont you let my wife come to me,—my poor young wife?

COSUS. [*Advancing towards MANLIUS.*] No!!! Thou hast no wife. Thou hast no friends. Thou hast no country. Thou art a traitor. Get thee to thy grave.

MARCELLA. Manlius!

Manlius. Farewell, my love; may the gods guard thee.

[*Officer and soldiers hurry Manlius towards, L.*]

MARCELLA. [*Just as MANLIUS is about to pass off L. Marcella rushes after him, and cries:*] Manlius! Manlius! [*Officer thrusts MARCELLA back, MANLIUS is led Off L. by Officer and soldiers. He is followed by MUCIUS, COMINIUS: and LAURINDA. MARCELLA rushes towards COSUS with clenched hands.*] This is the cruelest sorrow ever felt: the cruelest blow that power ever struck. It cannot be! COSUS, thou art not in earnest. This is some martial joke to try the courage of my noble lord. Is it not, good COSUS? [*Laughs wildly.*] Just a

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soldier's test,—the last and most severe?

Cosus. This is no martial joke. Thy husband is a traitor, and will die a traitor's death.

Marcella. A traitor, no! He loved his country better than he loved his wife. He fought and bled for it, and asked for nothing but to fight and bleed again. [*To patrician jury.*] You know he is not guilty. Why have you condemned him to this shameful death? When you kill him, you kill me. I cannot live when he is gone. Would you kill me,—a little, helpless woman, all made up of love and tears? [*To Cosus.*] Good Cosus, call them back. No? Then I will go to him. [*Patricians interpose.*] You'll neither let him come to me, nor let me go to him. Cosus, noble Cosus, recall thy sentence. Be merciful to me. Save him! [*Looks up and off to left rear.*] Look! he is standing upon the rock. And now he waves his shackled hands. Cosus, Cosus, hold up thy hand, signifying pardon. Quick! Quick! I can hardly speak! Hold up thy hand before my heart stops beating, and my pleadings with it. [*Looks up and off to left and rear.*] He has leaped.—He descends

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through the air. He—[*Gives long, piercing scream, turns and seizes Cosus at throat.*] Thou hast done this! Thou poisonous, conspiring patrician wretch!

Cosus. Take thy hands from my throat, or I will do thee harm.

[*They struggle. Marcella's hair comes down.*]

Marcella. [*Throwing cosus from her, and glaring at him.*] Thou hast done me harm already, thou heart of stone! Thou hast murdered my beloved. For this the Furies will lash thee with whips of fiery scorpions to thy grave, and the feeble echoes of my falling tears will haunt thy soul in Hades.

Cosus. Rail on,—thy traitorous husband is dead. [*Turns from MARCELLA as if to depart, R. MARCELLA quickly picks up MANLIUS sword, and thrusts COSUS through chest from behind.*] I—I—help! [*Reels, falls, dies.*]

Marcella. Good sword, we have avenged our noble lord. [*Kisses sword. Drops hilt of sword to ground, and holds blade as if about to fall on it's point.*] Dear sword take me to my love.

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Sulpicius. See!—she is about to fall upon the point of the sword. [*Rushes to MARCELLA.*] Do it not, sweet Marcella! Live for my sake.

Marcella. [*Dropping sword and towering.*] Live for thy sake! Thou viper hearted hypocrite! Thou ugly faced satyr!

[*Marcella strikes Sulpicius in face. Sulpicius retires in confusion to right front.*

Enter MUCIUS, COMINIUS and LAURINDA, L. *They express sadness. They advance to MARCELLA. Enter citizens and rabble, L.*

[*Trumpets sound off R.*

Cominius. Camillius hath returned!

[*Patricians slip off right rear. Sulpicius looking about for some point of escape. Marcella picks up sword.*

Enter CAMILLIUS, R. *followed by soldier bearing consul's helmet. Next, trumpeter and standard-*

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bearer. Then, enter Roman officers and soldiers R.

Mucius. Hail, noble Camillius!

Camillius. Greetings, good Mucius. [*Sees MARCELLA.*] Ah, my lady, Marcella! What dost thou with a sword? Where is my friend, thy noble husband, the commander?

Marcella. [*Dropping head on LAURINDA'S shoulder. Speaks with sobs.*] My lord is dead.

Camillius. Manlius dead! [*Looks down,—sees COSUS.*] That is Cosus. He is dead! Who killed Cosus?

Marcella, I did.

Camillius. Thou!

Marcella. He killed Manlius.

Camillius. I am bewildered! Hath Rome gone mad! Command my legions to enter the city. [*An officer salutes and exits, R.*] I am supreme in Rome. Explain, Mucius. What hath happened?

Mucius. Cosus was appointed dictator by the senate. Sulpicius charged Manlius with seeking the favor of the common people and conniving with certain other people with purpose to

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make himself king. Manlius was arrested on this charge, and brought before Cosus. The citizen jury acquitted him. But Cosus ordered another jury. The second jury was patrician. This jury found Manlius guilty, and Cosus condemned him to the traitor's death. His body is lying at the foot of the Capitoline Hill.

Camillius. Cosus was the traitor. But I did not think him quite so vile. He judicially murdered one of the noblest, truest Romans that ever lived. [Sees SULPICIOUS.] Is not that Sulpicius, yonder?

Mucius. It is, noble Camillius.

[Sulpicius moves towards L, cringing and cowering. Rabble attacks him and, with a yell of rage, maul him off, L.]

Mucius. [Aside.] The common people will settle with Sulpicius, now,

Camillius. [To MARCELLA.] Give me that sword. It doth not grace thy hand,

Marcella. *[Giving Camillius sword.]*

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It is Manlius's sword. It is time for me to go. [*Draws dagger. Is about to stab herself.*]

Camillius. [*Taking dagger from her, gently.*] Daughter of my friend, take not thy life! [*Throws dagger rear.*] On the field of battle, thy noble father saved my life. But, in the act, he lost his own. I am old. I have no wife; no child. [*Lifting up right hand.*] I swear by the gods to be a father to thee, and to shield thee from all harm. Thou didst but kill the man that killed thy husband. Cosus was a traitor to the senate and the people. This, I am prepared to prove. Be patient, daughter, and think no more of death. The gods may give to thee a posthumous comfort. Thou canst not live for Manlius, for he is dead; but thou canst live for Manlius's child and thine. Yea, live to tell it of it's father's glory and it's father's wrongs.

Marcella. I will live. Give me the sword. [*Camillius gives her sword.*] I am his wife, and this is his sword. I loved him: the sword avenged him.

Camillius. The wife and the sword!

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How oft by Roman firesides, with sighs
and tears, will thy sad story be told.

Marcella. He is lying at the foot of
the hill. Come, let us go to him.

*[Camillius puts right arm
around Marcella,*

Camillius. Poor child! To look upon
his shattered form, I fear—

Marcella. Fear not, the gods go with
me in my sorrow.

*[All fall in behind Camillius
and Marcella. Mucius. Lau-
rinda, and Cominius, first;
next, helmet-bearer; next,
trumpeter and standard-
bearer; next, officers and
soldiers. Cortege moves slowly
off L, Marcella sobbing and
crying on Camillius's shoulder.*

CURTAIN.

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