

APOCALYPSO!

A Revelation of a Musical

Book and Lyrics by

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Music and Lyrics by

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Newport, Maine

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APOCALYPSO!

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CHARACTERS 3f, 3m 14 non-gender specific. No specific ethnic background is required in the portrayal of these characters. Doubling of characters is at the discretion of the producer.

Two Stagehands — Freddie & Jamie (may play other characters later, like Goldberg an the Slaves)

Heath(Heather) — the Stage Manager

Tony(Toni) — the accompanist

Mr. Dragon — the Director (M)

John Boanerges — a Son of Thunder (M)

Terra Welkin -- angelic (F)

Priscilla — (Plays) Domitia — Empress (F)

Epaphroditus(Epaphrodita) — servant to Domitian

Babs — a mystery (F)

Larry — (Plays) Domitian — Emperor of Rome (M)

Goldberg — a manager

The Chrestiani — the band

Thomas, the drummer

James, the Organ

Matthew, bassist

Peter, Rhythm Guitar

John, Lead Guitar

Lugubrious — a slave

Glutious — a slave

Extemporaneous — a slave

Guard — well, a guard

Gabriel — the Apocalyptic Angel

A Revelation of a Musical!

Sounds like NO Bible story you've ever heard before!

A group of theatre-folk gather to enact The Book of Revelation as a musical. What they come up with is shocking, sultry, funny, warm, and quite unique.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT ONE

- #1 The Show Of Shows — Company
- #2 Ride A White Horse — John Boanerges
- #3 My Day In The Sun — Terra Welkin
- #4 The Show of Shows (reprise) — Company
- #5 DRAGON 's Soliloquy — Mr. Dragon
- #6 Maybe Tonight — Babs & Domitian
- #7 666 — John Boanerges and the Crestiani
- #8 In The Streets of Old Roma — Epaphroditus
- #9 The Rustle of a Star — Terra Welkin
- #10 The Sky's The Limit — Peter
- #11 All Kindsa Carryin'On in Babylon — Babs
- #12 I Am Domitian — Domitian and Slaves

ACT TWO

- #13 Johnny Thunder — Terra Welkin
- #14 On Patmos — John and Slaves
- #14a The Sky's The Limit — Dixieland instrumental
- #15 The Four Horsemen — Domitia, Epaphroditus, and Four Horsemen
- #16 Armageddon (The Wrath of the Lord) — John Boanerges
- #17 Apocalypso! Babs & John Boanerges
- #18 Babylon The Great — Gsbriel
- #19 You Are My Light — Terra Welkin & John Boanerges
- #20 All Things New — Gabriel, John Boanerges, Terra Welkin, and Company

There are orchestrations available for this show:

14 players

Flute

Oboe

Clarinet

Trumpet

Drumset

Bass,
Snare,
Crash, Ride, Hi-Hat
WB, Tri,
3 Toms

Percussion

Xylophone
Tympani
Bells
Steel Drums (Treble)

Guitar 1 (Lead)

Guitar 2 (Rhythm)

Piano

Keyboard 2

Organ (Jazz)
DMX Piano sound
Celeste

Violin

Viola

Cello

Bass

ACT ONE

A bare stage.

Curtains open, revealing back wall. BEFORE the play begins, FREDDIE and JAIME ENTER, wheeling a small upright piano to downstage left. FREDDIE begins to play "Chopsticks", gets a few bars into it, then JAIME nudges him, and they exit.

THE PLAY BEGINS: HEATH ENTERS, carrying a clipboard which he regards intently. He speaks, as if to someone right behind him.

HEATH

Okay, Tony, they've got your piano--
(Stops, looks behind him. Calls off-stage.)
Tony!

ENTER TONY, the ACCOMPANIST, on the run.

TONY

Sorry--

HEATH

There's your piano. Go warm up. And remember. No fancy stuff. Just play the notes. You're not the one auditioning.

TONY

Yeah. I know.
(He's at the piano now, running his fingers up and down, stopping on one note. Hits the note again, frowning. To HEATH.)
Hey, when's the last time this thing was tuned?

HEATH

You're not giving a recital. You're accompanying anyone who happens to remember to bring their music.
(Turns to audience)

All right, we'll be starting the auditions in just a few minutes. On behalf of Wormwood Productions, I'd like to thank you all for coming. We've got some handouts about the show you'll be auditioning for.

(Yells off.)

Freddie! Okay!

FREDDIE ENTERS, carrying the programs to the show APOCALYPSO! which he begins to pass out to the audience members, being helped by JAIME, if necessary. TONY has finished his warm-up exercises by now and goes into a vamp of the first number, "**The Show of Shows**" underscoring the following:

HEATH

As you can see, the title of the show is Babylon!, a musical--book, lyrics, and music by Mr. Dragon --who, by the way, is also the director and choreographer, so be nice to him. The cast calls for nine hundred fifty-eight billion men, women, and children, so there's a good chance you'll all get a part. The auditions are to single out the leading players--the stars. Time commitment is rather extensive: a guaranteed run of at least seven thousand years with a possible extension to include all Eternity if we're successful out of town. There will be no understudies. If something happens to you and you can't go on, you're out. Each of you gets only one chance to cut the mustard. If you don't play your part the right way--which is to say exactly as Mr. Dragon has written it, with no variations whatsoever--you'll be dropped from the show permanently. So, come on up on stage and take your places in the wings.

HEATH EXITS, as MUSIC UP, with TONY continuing on piano. The ACTORS come up from the audience, down the aisles, singing the opening number:

MUSIC IN

#1 "THE SHOW OF SHOWS"

THE ACTORS

THE SHOW OF SHOWS IS NOW!
THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME!
I'M GLAD I'M HERE TODAY!
THE SHOW OF SHOWS!

A LIFETIME OF CHANCES...
THE SONGS AND THE DANCES...
A WONDERFUL STORY...
THE FAME AND THE GLORY; WHO KNOWS?
WHO KNOWS
WHAT PARTS WE WILL PLAY?

They consult their handouts, as
if checking off the available
parts.

KINGS AND QUEENS,
PRINCESSES, PRINCES.
SQUIRES AND FOOLS AND KNAVES.
PRESIDENTS AND
POPE AND LAWYERS.
LORDS AND MASTERS, SERFS AND SLAVES!

They are all on stage by this
point, milling about, eyeing the
handouts.

THE SHOW OF SHOWS
A DREAM COMING TRUE HERE.
THERE'S MUCH TO PURSUE HERE.
WITH TONY SECURED
WE'VE A LONG RUN ASSURED.
WE WON'T CLOSE
THE SHOW OF SHOWS!

DANCE SEQUENCE, during which
THEY give their pix and bios to
HEATH, and dance off, finally to
come back in at the chorus:

COPS AND CROOKS!
AND SAINTS AND SINNERS!

THOSE BEYOND THE PALE!
SINGLE SOULS AND
HUSBANDS, WIVES

ALL MAKE THIS A CONSUMMATE TALE!
THE SHOW OF SHOWS!
A LIFETIME OF CHANCES...
THE SONGS AND THE DANCES...

A WONDERFUL STORY...
THE FAME AND THE GLORY; WHO KNOWS?
THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME!
THE SHOW OF SHOWS!

THE SHOW OF SHOWS, OF SHOWS, OF SHOWS,
OF SHOWS, OF SHOWS, OF SHOWS, OF SHOWS, OF SHOWS!
THE SHOW OF SHOWS!

HEATH ENTERS. MUSIC is down to
TONY vamping the last few bars.

HEATH
You warmed up, maestro?

TONY
(Hitting the G-sharp key)
The G-sharp key is still a bit flat.

HEATH
(In exasperation.)
Put the guy in front of a keyboard and he thinks he's
Itzhak Perlman.

TONY
Perlman plays the violin.

HEATH
(Ditto, throwing his hands up.)
Oh, for God's sake!

At that precise line, DRAGON
ENTERS. HEATH , upon seeing him,
is suddenly very obsequious.
Simultaneously with DRAGON's
entrance, TONY hits a low,

rumbling, demoniacal chord, then stops at a remonstrative look from HEATH.

HEATH

Mr. Dragon! We're just about ready. Freddie, bring Mr. Dragon a chair! Where would you like to sit, Mr. Dragon?

DRAGON

Down.

FREDDIE ENTERS with a chair, just as DRAGON starts to sit. HEATH takes the chair from him and places it under DRAGON just in the nick of time. DRAGON pulls out a cigar. Before he's got it halfway to his lips, HEATH is there with a light.

So, who's first?

HEATH hands DRAGON the pile of forms that he collected from the ACTORS, points at the top of the stack.

John Boanerges.

And JOHN ENTERS, gives His music to TONY.

DRAGON

"Boanerges. That's Greek, isn't it, for "Son of Thunder." Tell me a little about yourself, John, Son of Thunder.

JOHN

I'm the son of Zebedee, brother of James. I used to be a fisherman.

DRAGON

Why'd you give it up?

JOHN

For this!

DRAGON

This? What's so great about "this?"

JOHN

You know the answer to that. You're in the biz.

DRAGON

Why do you want to be in this show?

JOHN

It has great possibilities for a man of my talents.

DRAGON

And just what are your talents?

JOHN

I thought you'd never ask.

Nods to TONY, who plays, as JOHN
sings:

MUSIC IN

#2 "TO RIDE A WHITE HORSE"

EV'RY NOW AND THEN,
SOMETHING DEEP INSIDE,
YEARNNS TO BREAK FREE.

AND I WONDER WHEN--
WHEN I'LL TAKE THAT RIDE,
AND WHERE THAT RIDE WILL TAKE ME!

TO RIDE! TO RIDE A WHITE HORSE!
A CROWN UPON MY HEAD
AND MY BOW IN HAND!
ASTRIDE! ASTRIDE MY NOBLE STEED,
I FILL HEARTS WITH DREAD
AS I CONQUER THE LAND!

THEY SHALL TASTE THE FIRE OF MY LIGHTNING SWORD
MY EYES LIKE BLAZING FLAME!
AND WITH ROD OF IRON I DEFEND THE WORD

AND NO MAN KNOWS MY NAME!

TO RIDE! TO RIDE A WHITE HORSE!
A CROWN UPON MY HEAD
AND MY BOW IN HAND!
ASTRIDE! ASTRIDE MY NOBLE STEED,
I FILL HEARTS WITH DREAD
AS I CONQUER THE LAND!
THEN I STOP AND THINK:
WHAT CAN CONQUERING DO?
DOES IT MAKE YOU RICH OR WISE?
AND I ANSWER QUICK:
OH, NO, YOU FOOL!

SO WHEN WILL YOU REALIZE?
THAT TO RIDE
ASTRIDE A WHITE HORSE
MEANS SOMETHING MORE
THAN ALL THE GLORIES OF THE WORLD!

AND WITH PRIDE
OH, I'D TELL ALL WHO'D HEED
THIS EARTH WILL SURELY
FALL AND HEAVEN STAND UNFURLED!
WHEN I RIDE
WHEN I RIDE
WHEN I RIDE
I RIDE
I RIDE
I RIDE!

MUSIC OUT. JOHN is looking
DRAGON squarely in the eyes. A
pause.

TONY

I like it.

(Picks up music, starts to give it back to
JOHN.)

That song really says somethin', you know what I mean?

Notices the two men locked on
each other. Hands JOHN the music
and quickly turns to the piano,

as if trying to escape the
daggers flying between DRAGON
and JOHN.

DRAGON

I hate white. Next.

JOHN EXITS right, watching
DRAGON all the way off. A pause.
DRAGON consults his list again.

Terra Welkin.

TERRA ENTERS. She is gloriously
beautiful--pure, angelic, a
definite contrast to the way
we'll see her later. As DRAGON
looks at her, his expression
tells much more than his words.
He is smitten by this lovely
creature.

Tell me about Terra Welkin.

TERRA

What's there to say? In the beginning, I was without
form and void. Now I'm here.

DRAGON

What are your plans?

TERRA

Plans? I want someday, to be able to stand perfectly
still and be quiet enough to hear the rustle of a
star.

DRAGON

Have you prepared a number for us?

TERRA

(nervous)

Uh--yes.

(Gives music to Tony.)

This is it.

(Tony gives her a few notes.)

I'm ready.

MUSIC IN

#3 "MY DAY IN THE SUN"

STANDING AROUND LOOKING AT MY
SHADOW ON THE GROUND
WA--WA--WONDERIN' WHY I AM CRYIN'.

THEN TURNING AROUND
GAZING AT THE SUN
SO BIG AND ROUND, KNOW--OW--OWIN'

SOME DAY THAT I'LL GO FLYIN
MY DAY IN THE SUN WILL COME I KNOW IT!
NO ONE HAD BETTER ASK ME TO FOREGO IT!
IT'S TIME TO SHINE AND THAT'S WHAT I'M GONNA DO!

MY DAY IN THE SUN WILL COME I SWEAR IT!
I DON'T HESITATE
TO DECLARE IT!

THE SUN WILL COME AND I WILL SHARE IT
WITH YOU!
WITH YOU!

MUSIC OUT. A pause. TERRA looks
around, shifts uneasily.

(speaks)

Anything else you want to know?

TONY

Yeah. What's your phone number?

DRAGON stands, puts his arm
around TERRA.

DRAGON

Tony, please! Terra's not so prosaic as to succumb to
such blatant innuendo, are you Terra, my lovely?

TERRA shakes her head in
bewilderment, as DRAGON moves
downstage with her.

DRAGON

Terra, I like you very much. And let me be very
forthright with you. I have become--deeply smitten by

your comeliness. It has brought out the more fatherly instincts in me. I have decided to gather you under my wings, as it were, much as a mother hen may gather her chicks. I will nurture you; I will be your mentor. Stay by me and I will make you the star you deserve to be. Under my expert tutelage, you shall have your day in the sun.

(Over his shoulder)

Next.

TERRA

(meekly)

Whatever you say, Mr. Dragon.

She starts to sit off stage.

DRAGON

No, no.

(Pats nearby chair)

Next to me. We'll be through with the auditions in just a moment.

(She sits.)

All right, people, let's get on with it.

MUSIC IN.

#4 "THE SHOW OF SHOWS (REPRISE)"

The ACTORS use this as a final audition piece, each one singing a verse and then moving off-stage, handing music to TONY, then singing a verse, grabbing music and dancing off, while remaining on stage. DRAGON takes their forms, marks on them, gives them to TERRA.

ACTOR ONE

THE SHOW OF SHOWS
I WONDER WHAT I'LL DO!
YOU SAID THERE'S A PART FOR ME!

ACTRESS ONE

THE SHOW OF SHOWS

I'LL PLAY THE PART FOR YOU
I'M REALLY GOOD--JUST WAIT AND SEE!

ACTOR TWO
JUST LOOK AT THIS

ACTOR THREE
HOW' AM I DOIN'?
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THAT?

Two lines of music with ACTORS
TWO and THREE dancing in front
of each other.

ACTOR ONE
SO HAVE YOU EVER SEEN TAP LIKE THAT?

ACTRESS TWO (Later, PRISCILLA)
THE SHOW OF SHOWS
DON'T YOU JUST LOVE ME?
WILL I DO IT NUDE? HAH! YOU BET!

ACTRESS THREE
THE SHOW OF SHOWS
WHAT DO YOU THINK OF ME?
YOU AIN'T SEEN NOTHING, NOT YET!

ACTOR THREE
WHAT A GREAT SCRIPT!

ACTOR ONE
I JUST LOVE THE MUSIC!

ACTRESS TWO
"TO BE OR NOT TO BE!"

ACTRESS ONE
EXPERIENCE? NONE.
BUT I'M A FAST LEARNER.
I KNOW THIS PART IS FOR ME!

ALL THE ACTORS
THE SHOW OF SHOWS!
THE CHANCE OF A LIFE! IM
GLAD THAT I CAME HERE TODAY!

THE SHOW OF SHOWS!
THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME!
WHO KNOWS? WHO KNOWS? WHO KNOWS?
WHAT PARTS WE WILL PLAY?

SEGUE TO MUSIC

#5 "DRAGON'S SOLILOQUY"

DRAGON stands, and, in answer to their question:

DRAGON

I do.

LIGHTS OUT. A SPOT UPCENTER. As each character's name is called during the following number, that character steps into the light. When they are done being introduced, they move out of the light. DOMITIAN moves into the light.

DRAGON
(sings)

DOMITIAN! EMPEROR OF ROME
THE POW'R IN NINETY-SIX... A.D
ALL COW'R FOR CRUEL AND HEARTLESS...IS HE!

DOMITIAN moves out. DOMITIA moves into the light.

DOMITIA! EMPEROR'S NEW WIFE-A BEAUTY! THIRTY-SIX--

She sticks out her bosom.

HER AGE.

She collapses.

ALL DUTY LOST! WHO CAN WITHSTAND HER RAGE.

DOMITIA moves out. EPAPHRODITUS moves into the light.

EPAPHRODITUS SO OBSEQUIOUS!
IT'S ENOUGH ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WANT TO STICK YOUR FINGERS

DOWN YOUR THROAT!
WATCH HIS LITTLE DANCE,
AND GIVE HIM HALF A CHANCE
AND...

(Draws his finger across his
throat.)

THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE!

LIGHTS OUT on EPAPHRODITUS as
DRAGON continues. LIGHTS UP on
DOMITIAN, DOMITIA, and
EPAPHRODITUS, all frozen.

THEY'RE ALL IN MY POWER!
THIS IS MY TIME!
HE AND ALL BELONG TO ME!
THEY'RE GIVEN ME TO NURTURE,
I DO WITH THEM WHAT I WILL

I TEACH THEM LIFE CAN HURT YOU,
WITH EACH NEW VIRTUE
YOU LEARN HOW TO LIE,
HOW TO CHEAT,
HOW TO KILL.
IF I SAY JUMP,
THEY SAY HOW HIGH?
THEY NEVER THINK TO QUESTION WHY!

YOU SEE THIS THIS WORLD IS MINE!
THIS PEOPLE? MINE!
THEY'RE AT MY BECK and CALL!

Points at audience.

YOU! YOU! YOU! YOU!
YOU ALL BELONG TO ME!

MUSIC OUT. LIGHTS UP entire
stage.

DRAGON
(speaks)
Let's not waste any time.
(To HEATH)
Heath, pass out the scripts and music.

HEATH

Yes sir, Mr. Dragon. Okay, kids, each of you take a script from this box.

HEATH slides a box out from behind the piano. Each ACTOR takes a script. JOHN and TERRA reach for the same script. Their eyes meet. She looks back at DRAGON , who blows a cloud of smoke.

DRAGON

When you're quite ready, I shall explain this first scene.

(HEATH sets up chairs, etc. DRAGON gestures to include the world)

These are the palace and grounds of Domitian, Emperor of Rome, who reigned between 51 and 96 A.D. He was preceded in his rule by such illustrious gentlemen as Nero, Vespatian--Larry, pay attention, this concerns you.

LARRY, the actor playing DOMITIAN, looks up from his script.

DRAGON

You're in your room, getting ready for dinner. Your wife, of course, has her own room. This conjugal arrangement allows you total freedom to have an affair with the servant "Babs," who surprises you in your room...

BABS ENTERS; we have never seen her before. Action among some of the ACTORS indicates they haven't either.

Very good, Babs. Just go on.

DOMITIAN reacts as if seeing her reflection in the mirror. He whirls on her.

DOMITIAN

I thought I told you--!

BABS

Do you like this?

Poses seductively.

DOMITIAN

(As he moves toward her.)

You know I do.

(Moving to kiss her. She steps aside teasingly.)

Oh, don't tease me so. You know how it enflames my lust!

BABS

Yes, I know.

DOMITIAN

Then why do it?

BABS

Because enflamed lust is the best kind.

DOMITIAN

(Reluctantly gaining control of himself.)

Then it must smolder for now. I'm due in the triclinium any minute now.

BABS

To share a meal with that vacuous sack of bones you call a wife.

DOMITIAN

An emperor must do many unpleasant things to rule. I sup with Domitia.

(Moves to kiss BABS again, but pulls away at the last minute.)

No, I mustn't. Or I will never go.

MUSIC IN.

#6 "MAYBE TONIGHT"

BABS

Titus Flavius Domitianus Augustus is showing remarkable self-control.

DOMITIAN

"Showing" is correct. Inside, I'm seething with reckless abandon. But supper will be getting cold. Cold! Ha! I'll tell you what's not getting cold.

BABS

(sings)

DOMITIAN, I TIRE OF THIS FAMILIAR SCENE.
A WOMAN NEEDS MORE THAN ANY DREAM COULD MEAN.
SO GO HAVE YOUR SUPPER, BUT WHEN YOU'RE THROUGH,
COME BACK TO ME, AND SEE WHAT WE WILL DO.

MAY-BE, MAYBE TONI-IGHT!
BA-BY, WE MIGHT TONI-IGHT!
WHEN THE SHADOWS START TO FALL.
YOU MIGHT FIND YOU HAVE IT ALL.
WE'LL RETIRE UNDER COVER OF NI-IGHT!

WA-TCH ME, WATCH ME IGNI-ITE!
DY-Y, DY-Y-NAMI-ITE!
I'LL BE YOURS ALONE TO USE!
YOU CAN LIGHT THE SHORTEST FUSE!
SET ME ON FIRE THEN STEP BACK FROM THE LIGHT!

'CAUSE I'M BURNIN' OH SO BRIGHT FOR YOU!
I'M RIGHT FOR YOU! A LIGHT FOR YOU!
'CAUSE I'M YEARNIN' TONIGHT FOR YOU!
BA-BY -- MAYBE TONIGHT!

(BABS does a dance to tease
DOMITIAN, coming back with:)

MAY-BE, MAYBE TONI-IGHT!
BA-BY, WE MIGHT TONI-IGHT!

WHEN THE SHADOWS START TO FALL.
YOU MIGHT FIND YOU HAVE IT ALL.
WE'LL RETIRE UNDER COVER OF NI-IGHT!

WA-TCH ME, WATCH ME IGNI-ITE!
DY-Y, DY-Y-NAMI-ITE!
I'LL BE YOURS ALONE TO USE!
YOU CAN LIGHT THE SHORTEST FUSE!
SET ME ON FIRE THEN STEP BACK FROM THE LIGHT!

'CAUSE I'M BURNIN' OH SO BRIGHT FOR YOU!
I'M RIGHT FOR YOU! A LIGHT FOR YOU!
'CAUSE I'M YEARNIN' TONIGHT FOR YOU!
BA-BY -- MAYBE TONIGHT!
BA-BY -- MAYBE TONIGHT!!

MUSIC continues as she moves
toward door. A tag. She speaks:

See ya later, Sugar.

EXITS. MUSIC OUT. The ACTORS
applaud, cheer, LARRY fingers
his collar, mimicking a man
burning up. This elicits
laughter. DRAGON raises his
hand. Abrupt silence.

DRAGON moves to a chair, center
stage.

DRAGON

Larry, this is the triclinium, the dining room.
(to HEATH)
Heath, two more chairs.

HEATH brings them over, being
helped by one of the STAGEHANDS.
The chairs are set in a row
slanting upstage left. DRAGON
picks up one chair, moves it
upstage left perpendicular to
the other two.

The Emperor always sits at the head of the table.

A remonstrative look at HEATH,
who shrugs.

Larry.

LARRY sits. DRAGON moves to

chair closest to LARRY. Seated next to him is his wife, Domitia. DOMITIA comes not forth.

Andy, who's playing Domitia?

HEATH consults his clipboard.

HEATH

Priscilla Crowley!

PRISCILLA looks up from talking with another cast member.

PRISCILLA

Oh! That's me!

HEATH gestures her to the chair. She stops midway to return and get her script, then sits. DRAGON seems bothered by her attitude.

DRAGON

His wife, Domitia.

PRISCILLA

(To LARRY)

Hi, Honey.

(Cracking her gum)

Nice to meet ya.

LARRY

The pleasure's all yours, I'm sure.

DRAGON

So, here we are, having a nice quiet dinner with a typically degenerate Roman family of 96 A.D.

(Slight laughter, quickly dying.)

Go on.

DOMITIAN and DOMITIA begin an argument.

DOMITIA

I insist that you do something!

DOMITIAN

I have more important things to do--

DOMOTIA

I will not stand for it any longer!

DOMITIAN

--than to jump at your every whim!

DOMITIA

You have bound my hands--

DOMITIAN

I should like to bind your mouth!

DOMITIA

I don't understand this! A simple request and you hit the ceiling!

DOMITIAN

A simple request? I would hardly call a consignment of fifty legionnaires to accompany you to your mother's a "simple request."

DOMITIA

There are roving bands of barbarians--Goths--out there! They could rape and torture me!

DOMTIAN

Oh, you'd love that, wouldn't you?

(She moves to strike him, but he catches her hand.)

Why can't the old broad live in Rome like all other decent people?

DOMITIA

She likes New Jersey--

(Stops. As PRISCILLA, turns to DRAGON.)

New Jersey?

DRAGON

Sorry. At the time I hadn't come up with Corsica. It should be "Corsica." Take it back from Domitian's cue.

DOMITIA

She likes Corsica.

DOMITIAN

I need every man I've got just to keep the Jews in tow. They're an intolerable lot, you know.

DOMITIA

This weekend is their morbid celebration called Passover. They're quite calm during that time, with all their pagan rituals. Can you believe some of the things they do? Smearing lamb's blood on the door sills? Give me a good clean gladiator bout anytime. Anyway, you can spare the men and you know it!

DOMITIAN

All right! Take the whole damn legion if you want! I rule millions, yet in my own household, I am a doormat.

DRAGON

The Prime Minister now enters and says...

The ACTOR playing EPAPHRODITUS hurriedly opens his script and moves into the scene.

EPAPHRODITUS

Excuse me, Domineus et Deus Noster.

DOMITIAN

What is it, Epaphroditus?

EPAPHRODITUS

Your Godliness, surely you remember that traveling troupe of performers to whom you gave permission to entertain in the palace?

DOMITIAN

Yes. The Chrestiani, they called themselves, wasn't it?

EPAPHRODITUS

Yes, Your Supreme Godliness. They have arrived.

DOMITIAN

Today, was it? It completely slipped my mind. Tell them to go away. I'm not--interested

GOLDBERG, the Manager, enters.
The actor playing Goldberg has had time to gerry-rig a costume consisting of a plaid toga and polyester coat. As a character, GOLDBERG has all the subtlety of a used-car salesman.

GOLDBERG

Pardon me, Dom, my boy, but I couldn't help overhearing you just now. You can't really mean that? We've come all this way just to entertain you.

DOMITIAN

(To EPAPHRODITUS)

What is this?

EPAPHRODITUS

Their manager.

GOLDBERG

Agent, mentor, and prognosticator, Zachariah Z. Goldberg. But you can call me Z.Z. My card.

(Gives pantomimed card to DOMITIAN.)

EPAPHRODITUS takes the card, showing his shock at GOLDBERG's effrontery.)

And, pardon my effrontery, but I'm sure once you understand exactly who we are, you'll let us perform. No mere band of troubadours, we. Not on your life! The Chrestiani have had a long and illustrious career. In fact, Rolling Stone just rated us...

(He withdraws an imaginary newspaper clipping from his pocket.)

...and I quote: "a good group."

(EPAPHRODITUS tries to steal a glance at the clipping, but GOLDBERG quickly hides it.)

So, let me introduce you to do my boys, Dom.

(Claps his hands and the CRESTIANI ENTER.
As GOLDBERG introduces them, each member takes a bow.)

First, we have Thomas on the drums. Then there's James on the electric organ. Matthew on bass. PETER, rhythm guitar and backup vocals. And, finally, John, our lead guitarist and vocalist. So, without further ado, may we commence?

MUSIC IN

#7 "SIX SIXTY-SIX"

JOHN
(sings)

ONCE THERE WAS A BEAST
WHO CAME UP FROM THE SAND
AND HE HAD TWO HORNS LIKE A LAMB.
YES, HE DID. YES, HE DID.
AND WHEN HE SPOKE
OH WHEN HE SPOKE HE SPOKE,
OH YES HE SPOKE JUST LIKE A --

(MUSIC changes.)

DRAGON!

AND WHEN HE PERFORMS SIGNS AND MIRACLES
CALLING DOWN THE FLAMES FROM THE WEARY SKY!
IMAGE OF THE BEAST BRANDED IN THE CLOUDS,
FEARED BY FAR TOO FEW, WORSHIPPED BY MEN!
THOSE WHO DON'T BOW DOWN -- DIE!

Add CHRESTIANI:

AND HE STAMPS THEM ALL,
BOTH GREAT AND SMALL, ALL!
WITH A DRAGON'S MARK ON HEAD AND HAND,
AND YOU CANNOT BUY AND YOU CANNOT SELL
IF YOU DON'T KNOW THE SAME, HIS NAME!

THE NUMBER OF THE BEAST
IS THE NUMBER OF THE MAN
THE NUMBER OF THE MAN IS THIS:
SIX SIXTY-SIX SIX SIXTY-SIX! 6-6-6!
SIX SIXTY-SIX! SIX SIXTY-SIX! 6-6-6!

SIX SIXTY-SIX! SIX SIXTY-SIX! 6-6-6!
SIX SIXTY, SIX SIXTY, SIX SIXTY-SIX!

(BABS ENTERS, stands looking at JOHN.)

AND IF THERE'S ANY WONDER
JUST WHO THIS BEAST MIGHT BE
OR WHAT THIS LITTLE SONG IS ABOUT
I'LL TAKE THE TASK IN HAND
EXPLAIN AS BEST AS I CAN!
REMOVE ALL VESTIGES OF DOUBT.

(JOHN begins a choreographed game of charades. The CHRESTIANI supply the answers, each answer given by one of them.)

"SIX-SIX-SIX!

THE CHRESTIANI

TYRANT! DESPOT! OLIGARCH!
FUHRER! WARLORD! MONARCH!
A NAME THAT SOUNDS JUST LIKE "PERDITION"!
I'VE GOT IT! DOMITIAN!

(DOMITIAN stands in anger.)

SIX SIXTY-SIX! SIX SIXTY-SIX! 6-6-6!
SIX SIXTY-SIX! SIX SIXTY-SIX! SIX SIXTY-SIX!
SIX SIXTY-SIX! 6-6-6!

JOHN

(Speaks)

You better think about it, Big D; for your days on this earth are numbered. A number like:

THE CHRESTIANI

SIX-SIX-SIX!

They end big, posed, waiting to hear what DOMITIAN thinks of their number. GOLDBERG is not so patient, sidles up to DOMITIAN.

GOLDBERG

Well, Dom, Ol boy, whaddya think? Aren't these kids
just outa sight?

DOMITIAN is livid. EPAPHRODITUS
is fanning himself, taken aback
by this blasphemous performance.
DOMITIA, still seated, is
laughing behind her kerchief.
BABS has moved further into the
scene. Her stance indicates her
fascination with JOHN. JOHN sees
BABS, begins to feel
uncomfortable under her
obviously sensual stare.
GOLDBERG seems to finally get
the message. He moves away from
DOMITIAN to the Chrestiani.

GOLDBERG

(to JOHN)

I don't think he likes us.

DOMITIAN

Out! All of you--OUT! Put them in irons! Feed them to
the lions. Make them watch re-runs of "Gilligan's
Island!"

GOLDBERG

No! No! Anything but that!

Dropping out of character,
GOLDBERG and the Chrestiani move
off, sitting on chairs upstage
left. EPAPHRODITUS follows to
"see that they're imprisoned."
BABS EXITS. DOMITIA bursts out
laughing.

DOMITIAN

What's so funny?

DOMITIA

Y--you!

DOMITIAN

You enjoy seeing me humiliated, don't you?

DOMITIA

Yes!

EPAPHRODITUS ENTERS, kneels.

EPAPHRODITUS

The Chrestiani are imprisoned, 0 Domineus et Deus Noster.

DOMITIAN

Huh? Oh, yeah.

DOMITIA

I am afraid, Epaphroditus that "Our Lord and God" is a little bit miffed!

DOMITIAN

I am no longer hungry!

And DOMITIAN EXITS in a huff.
EPAPHRODITUS rises from his knees, checks to see that DOMITIAN is really gone, and joins DOMITIA in her laughter.

EPAPHRODITUS

Did you see his expression?

DOMITIA

I thought sure as hell he was going to burst a blood vessel!

EPAPHRODITUS

His face almost matched the color of his tunic!

Their laughter is quite uncontrollable now. EPAPHRODITUS stumbles over to DOMITIAN's chair, falls into it. The laughter fades; EPAPHRODITUS reaches out, caressing the chair, the table.

DOMITIA

Yes, it's almost yours.

EPAPHRODITUS

How soon?

DOMITIA

This weekend I'm going to Corsica, to visit my mother, accompanied by fifty Legionnaires. One day out of Rome, I will return on a pretext--you, the other freedmen, and myself, will meet at our pre-determined locale, and we will dispatch of "Our Lord and God."

EPAPHRODITUS

My lady, is it wise for you to return? We can do the deed most successfully.

DOMITIA

As I know. But, my love, I have long awaited this day. I wish to be the first to strike a blow!

EPAPHRODITUS

Oh, but you're wicked!

DOMITIA

Thank you.

EPAPHRODITUS

That's why I love you so.

(They kiss.)

Domitian is a fool, to let you slip from his grasp.

DOMITIA

Tell me again about how you helped stab Nero.

EPAPHRODITUS

Why do you delight in such a morbid story?

DOMITIA

It gives me inspiration for the deed we are contemplating. Not to mention that I find it an incredible turn-on.

MUSIC IN.

#8 "THE STREETS OF OLD ROMA"

EPAPHRODITUS

(sings)

IN THE STREETS OF OLD ROMA
THERE'S THE SWEETEST AROMA
INDISCREET WHEN THE DEGRADATION'S DONE!
THE PRIDE OF THE NATION.
SOLONS, SPEAKING STRAIGHT FROM THEIR COLONS
ALL CRIED, "THE BLAME RESTS JUST ON ONE!"

LATEST POLL HAD SAID: "TAKE NERO
RATE THE MAN FROM TEN TO ZERO."
NERO'S RATINGS WERE SO LOW
THAT THEY CRIED: "HE'S GOT TO GO!"

IN THE STREETS OF THE CITY -
PEOPLE GREET YOU SO PRETTY
IT'S A TREAT
AS CORRUPTION FILLS THE AIR;
IMMORAL ERUPTION REEKING,
ALL THE PEOPLE WERE SHRIEKING.
A SIGHT SO FAIR, BEYOND REPAIR!

WELL, OL' NERO DIDN'T TWIDDLE.
HE TOOK UP HIS TRUSTY FIDDLE
AND HE HEADED OUT OF TOWN
WHILE OL' ROMA, SHE BURNT DOWN.

IN A VILLA HE'S SWEATING
ON A HILL O' FORGETTING
ONLY PILL HE COULD TAKE WAS MAKE AN END;
THE END OF THE DAGGER HE GAVE ME.
IT WAS THEN HE CRIED, "SAVE ME!"
I TRIED, BUT ROME WAS NOT MY FRIEND!

YOU'RE NO LONGER ROMA'S NERO
YOU WERE NEVER ROMA'S HERO!
ALWAYS SOUGHT TO DO YOU IN
WITH THAT CURS-ED VIOLIN.
IT'S BETTER YOU HAD MENINGITIS

THAN EVER CROSS EPAPHRODITUS!
YOU SHOULD HAVE LEARNED THE MANDOLIN.

MUSIC OUT.

DOMITIA

Will I see you later tonight?

EPAPHRODITUS

But what about--?

DOMITIA

"Our Lord and God" will be sleeping in his own room.

They EXIT the scene but sit on stage. On the other side of the stage, DOMITIAN ENTERS, humming the tune to MAYBE TONIGHT.

DRAGON

(Simultaneously with above action)

We now return to Domitian's chamber.

DOMITIAN

(Under his breath.)

"Maybe tonight, Baby tonight...You can have me...Under cover of night"

The contemplation of his upcoming adultery has turned him into a giddy teenager. DOMITIAN stands preening himself before the same imaginary mirror as in the first scene. BABS almost appears out of nowhere, standing upstage of DOMITIAN. She slinks over to him, putting her arms around him from behind, nuzzling his neck.

BABS

Whatever you're contemplating for the Christians, save the one they call John.

DOMITIAN

All right.

(As LARRY, turns to DRAGON.)

That's it? That's the scene?

DRAGON

I'll admit it's short, but the point is made. Babs likes John. This scene precipitates his eventual downfall.

JOHN

My downfall?

DRAGON

Yes, look at page 62. That's where she seduces you.

JOHN

I'm not sure I like that.

DRAGON

What?

JOHN

That's inconsistent with the character as you've portrayed him.

DRAGON

He's only had one scene.

JOHN

I read ahead during the other scenes. John seems to symbolize the goodness, the purity of the human race. He never shows any attitude but the most beatific throughout. And yet, on page 62, you have him giving into Babs' seduction. It's inconsistent.

DRAGON

(About to explode.)

Yes. Perhaps. But I'm the playwright. And the Director. That's the way I wrote him. That's the way he will be played.

The two men stand there staring at one another. DRAGON seems like he could reach out and slug JOHN, but blows a cloud of smoke in JOHN's face. JOHN neither flinches nor coughs.

DRAGON

Heath.

(Who's immediately at DRAGON's side.)

Take ten.

HEATH

All right, kids, take ten. Please don't leave the theatre. There's coffee and donuts in the greenroom.

This last bit of information seems to please the majority of the cast, as they run off-stage immediately. A few stragglers follow behind. TERRA EXITS also. HEATH has finally ushered the last of the ACTORS off, except JOHN, whose eyes are still riveted on DRAGON.

DRAGON

Take ten, Mister Boanerges.

(A pause. JOHN pulls away, EXITS.)

I don't like him.

DRAGON replaces his cigar, noticing it has gone out. Snaps his fingers and HEATH is there with a light.

HEATH

Neither do I, Mister Dragon.

DRAGON

He's too self-willed.

HEATH

That's true, Mister Dragon.

DRAGON

I despise actors who think for themselves. They have no right. Left alone, they would irrevocably botch things up. They must be made to fit into the mold. The stage is a chessboard and the actors are pawns. I move the pawns. Can you imagine the utter chaos if chess-pieces could move wherever they chose.

HEATH

Yes sir, Mister Dragon!

DRAGON

Must you always say yes to everything I say?

HEATH

Yes sir, Mister DRAGON.

DRAGON

Oh, if only all actors could be like you, Heath.

HEATH

Yes sir, Mister DRAGON.

DRAGON

(As he moves off.)

I'm going to my office for a little liquid refreshment. Come along and open the bottle for me.

HEATH

Yes sir, Mister DRAGON.

As they go off, TERRA enters, looks around, sees that she's alone, sits at the piano and accompanies herself on:

MUSIC IN

#9 "THE RUSTLE OF A STAR."

TERRA

(sings)

LISTEN, CAN YOU HEAR IT?
THE RUSTLE OF A STAR,
THE RUSTLE OF A STAR,
SO NEAR AND YET SO FAR AWAY.

HEY, THERE, CAN YOU SEE IT?
THE SHINING OF THE SUN?
IT WELCOMES EVERYONE EACH DAY.

JOHN enters, just stands there listening.

STILL, NOW. CAN YOU FEEL IT?
THE DANCING OF THE WIND,
THE DANCING OF THE WIND,
AS IF IT WOULD HAVE SINNED TO SAY:

HEY, THERE, CAN YOU FEEL IT?
THE WHISPER OF A BREEZE?
IT TOUCHES ALL IT SEES EACH DAY.

SOMEDAY, I HOPE TO PRANCE UPON A CLOUD
ALWAYS SHIELDED FROM THE RAIN.
ONE DAY, I WANT TO DANCE AND SING ALOUD--
NEVER BE AFRAID AGAIN.

DO YOU EVER WONDER
WHAT LIVES BEHIND YOUR EYES?
WHAT LIVES BEHIND YOUR EYES?
JUST SOMETHING ELSE THAT DIES AWAY.

HEY, THERE, DO YOU KNOW IT?
THAT SPIRIT WILL LIVE ON,
DEFEATING BABYLON EACH DAY!

MUSIC OUT.

JOHN

(To TERRA)

You're really good, you know that?

TERRA is shocked and embarrassed to see him. She puts the lid down on the piano and turns away. JOHN crosses over to her, sits on the other side of the bench.

JOHN

I didn't see you in the green room, so I brought you a donut. But I see you already have one.

(A pause.)

Coffee's getting cold.

(No response. JOHN takes a bite of his donut. A pause.)

You know, I meant what I said. You really are good. I don't know why DRAGON didn't cast you. Unless he has things in mind for you other than taking a part in this play.

TERRA

(Not convincingly)

Don't say that! Mister DRAGON is kind and helpful.

JOHN

And someone to do all your thinking for you?

(TERRA flashes an angry glance at JOHN, who continues, undaunted)

Is that what you want? Someone to take you by the hand and lead you through life? You said in your audition that you want to hear the rustle of a star. Do you honestly think that will ever happen if you blindly follow Dragon?

TERRA

Mister Dragon seems to be so sure of himself. He can lead me to that star if anyone can.

JOHN

You're wrong, Terra. I've looked long into that man's eyes. And he's not what he seems. On the outside, he may come across as Mister Control, as if there's nothing he can't handle. But deep down, behind all that bravado, that guy is scared to death. I don't know what about. Scared the play will be a flop, maybe. I don't know. But he's scared.

TERRA

No! Not Mister Dragon! Not--not him, too.

TERRA EXITS. JOHN sits there, trying to make some sense out of what just happened. After a beat, he turns to the piano, plays a chord.

JOHN

(sings)

LISTEN...

(Another chord)

CAN YOU HEAR IT?

A final chord, and he turns,
takes a bite of his donut, finds
his appetite is gone, picks up
the donuts and starts to walk
off-stage. DRAGON ENTERS. JOHN
quickly hides behind the piano.

DRAGON

Heath! Come out here!

He paces nervously until HEATH
ENTERS. DRAGON grabs him by the
arm and pulls him extreme
downstage right.

DRAGON

Heath! I just ran into Lamb!

HEATH

Mister Lamb? The producer?

DRAGON

No, the janitor, Heath. He stopped me in the hallway
outside my office.

HEATH

The janitor stopped you in the hall?

DRAGON

No. Lamb! Lamb! J. C. Lamb! The Big Guy!

HEATH

Hmm. Musta been while I was in the can.

DRAGON

He never calls ahead, never lets me know if he's
coming. He's always appearing--suddenly--like a thief
in the night. And, Heath --he was angry about the
change I made in the script!

HEATH

What did he say?

DRAGON

Well, you know Mister Lamb gets when he's mad. He looks you right in the eye and lightning flashes in his pupils, and when he speaks, it's like the rushing of many waters, and his tongue, like a two-edged sword, "Don't change the script, Dragon! Abide by the script exactly as written."

HEATH

Then what?

DRAGON

That's all. Then he left.

HEATH

I don't know, Mister Dragon. Maybe you'd better change the part back to the way it was. After all, you may be directing this thing, but Mister Lamb did write the play.

DRAGON

Shhh! Those idiot actors don't know that. I want to keep that a secret from them. Especially from Babs.

HEATH

Mister Dragon, I don't remember seeing her come on with the others--

DRAGON

Be quiet, you fool! She's my ace in the hole. She's going to help me get even with Lamb! You know what I think, Heath? Lamb's jealous! Ever since he kicked me out of the Producer's Guild because I managed to talk one-third of the tech people into striking with me. He's jealous and he's getting back at me by forcing me to direct this play by his rules! Well, I'm not going to stand for it, Lamb!

HEATH

(Ducking, expecting the worst.)

Mister Dragon!

DRAGON

Don't worry, Heath! I'll change the stupid script back the way it was, but wait--just wait! Until the end. He'll see. I'll show Lamb he can't push me around! All

right, let's get everybody back on stage. We've got a lot of work to do before midnight. All right, everybody! Work!

HEATH goes to center stage,
claps hands.

HEATH

Going to center stage, clapping his hands.) Break's over. Let's get back to work.

The CAST sloughs back on, some still with half-eaten donuts or half-drunk cups of coffee. Some others are busy memorizing lines, others are going over dance steps, etc. Nearly all are dressed in jury-rigged costumes, street clothes still showing under the togas. JOHN stands up from behind the piano. As soon as the ACTORS see DRAGON, they become quiet.

DRAGON

Now, where were we?

HEATH

Babs, the servant had just asked Domitian to spare John in his persecutions of the Chrestiani, which precipitates John's downfall.

DRAGON

(Casting an evil glance at JOHN.)

Oh, yes. How could I forget?

(Clears his throat.)

During the break period, I gave Mister Boanerges' suggestion some thought. And I am forced to agree with him; John giving into Babs is inconsistent with his character. When we arrive at that scene, we will do-- this version.

DRAGON snaps his fingers. HEATH pulls out the original scene from the bottom of his

clipboard, and hands it to JOHN.

JOHN

(Thumbing through the scene)

My, but you certainly type fast.

DRAGON

(Ignoring the remark.)

So let us begin where we left off.

As he speaks, the characters referred to take their places on stage.

DRAGON (Cont'd)

Domitian, in his chambers, prepares for a veritable feast of erotica.

BABS ENTERS. DOMITIAN turns to face her.

DOMITIAN

Exquisite, as always!

BABS

And you--anxious as always.

DOMITIAN

(Holding out his arms.)

Come to me.

BABS

Come and get me.

DOMITIAN loves these cat and mouse games. He slowly moves toward her. She stays always several steps in front of him.

DOMITIAN

After Domitia leaves on her trip, we will have no interruptions. You shall have me all to yourself.

DOMITIA and EPAPHRODITUS move

into the scene, which alternates
with DOMITIAN's and BABS' scene.

EPAPHRODITUS

What I find absolutely amazing is that he doesn't
suspect.

DOMITIA

Domitian doesn't suspect because he is a god. And gods
cannot be harmed.

EPAPHRODITUS

Does that make you a goddess?

DOMITIA

Oh, I suppose so.

DOMITIAN

(in answer to something Babs just told him)
What was that?

BABS

Whatever your plans for the Chrestiani, save the one
called John.

DOMITIAN

Why?

BABS

He seems ... different than the rest of them. I
think--with the proper training--that he could be an
efficient servant to you. He's so strong. So virile!

DOMITIAN

But letting a Christian live? Such tolerance would
cause grandfather Nero to rise from his grave and
haunt me.

BABS

Just one? You may torture him if you begin to tire of
him. Please?

She's moved very close to him by
now.

DOMITIA

But all this talk of gods and goddesses bores me. Tell me again about Nero.

EPAPHRODITUS

(Loosening the belt on his "tunic")

My pleasure!

BABS

Please!

DOMITIAN

Oh, all right.

DRAGON

Lights out. Next day. Throne room.

As the actors take their places. Ta-ta-ta-tah! The trumpets announce the entrance of the Emperor Domitian, followed by his wife, Domitia.

ENTER DOMITIAN and DOMITIA, followed by EPAPHRODITUS and JOHN as a slave. DOMITIAN seats DOMITIA, then addresses ~is "subjects"--the rest of the ACTORS and the audience.

DOMITIAN

(Hurrying through this as though bored with all the pomp and circumstance of being an emperor.)

My loyal subjects, your divine goddess Domitia will be leaving to spend a coupla days with her mother in Corsica. To protect her against the hordes of lawless barbarians that exist without the holy protection of Rome, I have insisted she bring along fifty Roman legionnaires. She'll be back in a week or two. Just thought you might like to know.

DRAGON

And the crowd roars its praise!

Gestures for ACTORS to do the roaring. DOMITIAN and DOMITIA

sit regally, waving at the masses, beatific smiles on their faces. Not losing their smiles once, they continue sotto voce.

DOMITIAN

There, you bitch! You've gotten the farewell you requested!

DOMITIA

No thanks to you, you slimy bastard of a husband.

DOMITIAN

Are you satisfied?

DOMITIA

No.

DOMITIAN

What?

DOMITIA

When do you plan to execute the Chrestiani? Seeing their suffering would be a perfect send-off to my journey.

DOMITIAN

Later this afternoon. I'll save you a seat as close as possible to the fire.

Reluctantly sighs, stands, holding up his hands. The crowd dies down.

DOMITIAN

And to bless the divine goddess on her journey, there will be a wonderful celebration at the coliseum, complete with beautiful girls, juggling acts, and a half-dozen immolations. Tickets are available at all Ticketron outlets, or at the door.

Crowd roars up again, then dies down, as directed by DRAGON, during which DOMITIAN and DOMITIA EXIT, followed by

EPAPHRODITUS and JOHN. JOHN lags behind. When the others have gone, JOHN hurries to the other side of the stage, where he immediately begins to run frantically in a circle.

DRAGON

In desperation, John runs to warn his friends deep in the darkest dungeon of the palace.

The CHRESTIANI mill out onto the stage as JOHN EXITS, running.

MATTHEW

What I'd like to know is: why does John get better treatment than we do?

PETER

Being a slave to Domitian is better treatment?

MATTHEW

You've seen how he's dressed, haven't you? In all the finery of Rome. And I bet he's eating pretty well, too!

PETER

Are you insinuating he might have sold out?

MATTHEW

It seems that way to me!

PETER

Then let me set you straight, right now. I know John. And he's still as loyal to the group as any of us, if not more so.

MATTHEW

Yeah. Well, maybe.

PETER

You've never really liked John, have you?

MATTHEW

He's always seemed a bit of a mystic to me, don't you

think?

PETER

He just looks at things differently, that's all.

JAMES

Well, I've always liked John.

MATTHEW

Mystic or not, he's up there and we're down here!

JAMES

Mister Goldberg, what's going to happen to us?

GOLDBERG

Hey, James, lighten up! They're just havin' us wait a few minutes while they prepare a great big welcome feast.

JAMES

You really think so?

PETER

Don't lie to him, Goldberg. You heard what Domitian said: "Feed them to the lions!" If there's a feast being prepared, we'll be the main course.

JAMES

But I don't understand. Wasn't the act good?

GOLDBERG

Of course the act was good! It's the greatest act in the world!

PETER

Domitian... well, he just wasn't ready for it.

JAMES

Peter, do you think he'll really do that? Feed us to the lions?

PETER

Only if he's in a good mood. If he's not ...

THOMAS

I'm beginning to wonder if I'm in the right line of work. Being a publican wasn't so bad, considering...

PETER

Hey, what's happening to everybody? Have you forgotten why we all got into this in the first place? We all knew it would be tough. It was what's coming after that made it all worthwhile. Remember what he told us when we signed on?

THOMAS

Yes.

PETER

Matthew, do you remember?

MATTHEW

Of course, I do.

JANES

How could I ever forget?

GOLDBERG

I remember, too.

MUSIC IN.

#10 "THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!"

PETER

I'll never forget those words as long as I live.
(PETER sings:)

EVERYONE RECEIVES
A PORTION OF LIFE'S BEAUTIES
IN DIFFERING AMOUNTS, THAT'S TRUE,
AND EACH WITH DIFFERENT DUTIES.

NO ONE HAS THEM ALL
AND VERY FEW HAVE MANY
AND YOU'RE ONLY LIEING
IF YOU SAY YOU DON'T HAVE ANY.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!
JUST REACH INSIDE YOUR HEART AND TAKE WHAT'S IN IT!
THEN OPEN UP YOUR HAND
AND LET IT FLY AWAY
THE SKY'S
THE LIMIT!

SO NOTHING'S STOPPING YOU
FROM TAKING YOUR SMALL TREASURE
AND USING IT TO FILL YOUR LIFE WITH HAPPINESS AND PLEASURE.
AND IF YOU LOSE IT ALL
OR THINK THAT YOU CAN'T TAKE IT!
AS LONG AS YOU CAN DREAM A DREAM THAT'S ALL YOU NEED TO
MAKE IT!

PETER is joined by the rest of
the CHRESTIANI.

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!
JUST REACH INSIDE YOUR HEART AND TAKE WHAT'S IN IT!
THEN OPEN UP YOUR HAND
AND LET IT FLY AWAY!
THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!

THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!
JUST REACH INSIDE YOUR HEART AND TAKE WHAT'S IN IT!
THEN OPEN UP YOUR HAND
AND LET IT FLY AWAY!
THE SKY'S
THE LIMIT!

MUSIC OUT. JOHN ENTERS on the
run.

JOHN

Z.Z.! Everybody! You've got to get out of here! The
Emperor wants to set you on fire in the coliseum.

GOLDBERG

I knew we shoulda rehearsed more--

JOHN

There's no time for that! You've got to get out of
here!

MATTHEW

Got any suggestions?

JOHN

I don't know. I'll find a key someplace.

He starts to run off just as
BABS and TWO GUARDS ENTERS. BABS
waves an imaginary key.

BABS

Is this what you're looking for?

JOHN reaches for the key but
BABS stuffs it down her
cleavage.

JOHN

Give me that key.

BABS

You know where it is.

JOHN

I couldn't ...

BABS

Why not? It might be fun. I'll send these goons away
and you and I can be alone.

JOHN

(Looking heavenward.)

God forgive me, but I must.

Lunges for her. She dodges
aside, laughing.

BABS

That's more like it. Oh, I'll make it easy. You can
have the key. If I can have you.

JOHN

(Turning reluctantly to his friends.)

I ... I'm sorry ...

GOLDBERG

That's all right, kid. We understand.

BABS.

No, you don't understand. None of you understands.

(to JOHN)

I'm offering you a first-class, all expense paid trip to Babylon. And you're turning it down!

(laughs)

It would be funny if it weren't so sad. Other men have killed to get what I'm willing to give you. No, you don't understand.

MUSIC IN.

#11 "ALL KINDSA CARRYIN' ON IN BABYLON"

You don't understand at all.

(She sings)

THERE'S ALL KINDSA CARRYIN' ON
HERE IN BABYLON
WE PLAY ALL DAY
AND THEN PARTY 'TIL DAWN!
OH, THERE'S ALL KINDSA CARRYIN', CARRYIN' ON
IN BABYLON!

THE GUARDS join her in backup vocals.

YOU CAN'T DO NOTHIN' WRONG
HERE IN BABYLON
PULL THE STOPS
AND TURN THE POWER ON!
OH, YOU CAN'T DO NOTHIN', NOTHIN' WRONG
IN BABYLON!

WE GOT EVERYTHIN'
YOUR HEART COULD NEED!
EV'RY KIND OF SNORT,
EV'RY KIND OF WEED!
DANCIN', ROMANCIN', AND BOOZE--
TO MAKE YOUR EYE-BALLS BLEED!

BABS

i've GOT EVERY LITTLE THIN'
A NATURAL MAN COULD DESIRE!
WE GOT--

GUARDS

BROADS GUARANTEED!
TO SET YOUR PANTS ON FIRE!

BABS AND GUARDS

NO MATTER HOW HIGH YOU ARE,
WE CAN GET YOU HIGHER,
IN BABYLON!

They dance. At a point in the dance, the GUARDS have JOHN by both arms as BABS moves into him. Her finger in his chest, she speaks, while very close to his face. MUSIC UNDER.

BABS

John, this may interest you to know that, while the rest of the world is going down the toilet, Babylon's gross national product was up nearly twenty-five percent last year at this time, and it's getting higher all the time. It's a great place to live.

JOHN

Yeah, if you carry a gun and know karate!

THE GUARDS throw JOHN to the ground and join with BABS in song.

BABS AND GUARDS

ANYTHIN' YOU WANT ANYTIME OF DAY!
YOU SAY YOU WANT SEX?
YOU WANT IT STRAIGHT OR GAY?
IF YOU CAN NAME YOUR GAME, BABY,
WE KNOW HOW TO PLAY!

BABS

(speaking.)

Come on and play, John.

BABS AND GUARDS

THERE'S ALL KINDSA CARRYIN' ON
HERE IN BABYLON
WE PLAY ALL DAY
AND THEN PARTY TILL DAWN!
OH, THERE'S ALL KINDSA CARRYIN', CARRYIN' ON IN BABYLON!

BABS

(speaks)

And you don't have to go very far to get there, JOHN, honey. We make house calls. I have room service. Your room. Tonight, after everyone in the palace has gone to sleep. Just you and me.

JOHN

No thanks. I've got tickets for Disneyland.

MUSIC OUT.

BABS

(Suddenly livid.)

Guards! Seize this man and bring him before Domitian!

GUARDS grab an acquiescent JOHN and EXIT. BABS turns to the CHRESTIANI.

BABS

And as for you, don't forget to bring your marshmallows to the party this afternoon.

And BABS EXITS. At a signal from DRAGON , everybody but the CHRESTIANI does a fanfare. Then DOMITIA and DOMITIAN ENTER, followed by EPAPHRODITUS, BABS, and JOHN in chains being held by the GUARDS. At another location on the stage, the CHRESTIANI align themselves as though they are all on crosses.

DOMITIAN

(Sitting, after DOMITIA. He points to his feet. The GUARDS throw JOHN at DOMITIAN's

feet.)

And you, traitor? This is how you return my good favor to you--by organizing a rebellion? As punishment, you will watch as all your fellow Chrestiani are impaled and set ablaze. You will lie helpless watching their bodies simmer, then sizzle, then blacken and swell until their charred flesh pops open, and their roasted innards come oozing out in great pink lumps.

JOHN

You--filth!

DOMITIAN

Then lest you suppose that your death should soon follow, I will banish you to one of my prison islands. There, the memory of what you will see today will live in your mind forever--torture sublime enough for one such as you.

Claps his hands.

JOHN

(Starting to rise.)

No--!

DOMITIAN

(His well-placed foot on JOHN's neck sends the latter again to the floor.)

YES!

JOHN

You can't--!

DOMITIAN

I can't? Did you hear that, Epaphroditus? I can't. My dear John, oh, but you're wrong! If there's anyone who can, it is I. I can do anything in this entire world I so desire. Because...

During this number, the TWO STAGEHANDS set up some flash-pots at the feet of the CHRESTIANI.

MUSIC IN

#12 "I AM DOMITIAN"

(DOMITIAN sings)

A TRULY GREAT POLITICIAN
AND BY MY OWN ADMISSION
AN EVIL, WICKED, MEAN, AND NASTY GUY!

HOW I HATE ALL SEDITION
AND I HATE EVERY CHRISTIAN
I DETEST THEM, JUST ARREST THEM!
YOU ASK ME WHY?
I'LL TELL YOU WHY!

I-YIE-YIE-YIE I AM DOMITIAN
THAT'S ALL THE WHY I NEED
TO EXPLA-A-A-A-AIN MY PREDILECTION:
LET CRUELTY DO THE DEED.
EMANCIPATION
FOR ANY NATION
IS NO WAY TO SUCCEED!
SAYS I-YIE-YIE-YIE-YIE
I'M DOMITIAN
THE MASTER POLITICIAN!

(speaks)

Sometimes I scare myself, Epaphroditus.

EPAPHRODITUS

Occasionally you frighten me as well.

(sings)

BEFORE MY GOD DOMITIAN,
I BOW WITH GREAT CONTRITION,
AND OFFER MY HUMBLE DEPOSITION,
TO A KINDLY, GRACIOUS, POTENT DIETY!

YOU SEE MY ADORATION'S
BECOME MY LIFE'S VOCATION.
THE PROHIBITION OF DISSENT
IS NOW MY ONE AND ONLY ROYAL REGENCY.

OTHERS

WE-EE-EE-EE WORSHIP DOMITIAN,
FOR DIFFERENT REASONS, BUT IT
IS QUI-YIE-ITE THE SAME:

THIS ADORATION.

DOMITIAN

SO, YOU CAN LEARN TO SHUT IT!
REVELATION IN ANY NATION IS ONLY SCUTTLEBUTT.
'CAUSE I-YIE-YIE-YIE-I
I'M DOMITIAN
THE MASTER POLITICIAN!

NERO! HE WAS A ZERO!
CAESAR? THAT OLD GEEZER!
HEROD? A REAL AIRHEAD.
AND CLAUDIUS? HOW ODIOUS?

I AM THE GREATEST EMPEROR WHO EVER WAS
THE SOV'REIGN EMPEROR OF ALL, BECAUSE
I-YIE-YIE-YIE I AM DOMITIAN.
AM DOMITIAN,
THE MASTER POLITICIAN!
DOMITIAN!
WITH NOT A TOUCH OF TITIAN!
THE UNDISPUTED, PRACTICED, PYROTECHNICIAN!
(speaks)
Light the Christians!

MUSIC OUT as the GUARDS bring
their torches to their subjects.
The pre-arranged flash-pots
ignite, all breakout in blood-
curdling screams that continue
through the SUDDEN BLACKOUT.
DRAGON's ROAR drowns out the
CHRESTIANI.

DRAGON'S VOICE

Heath, what the hell happened to the lights?

HEATH

Freddie, what the hell happened to the lights?

FRED'S VOICE

(from the control booth)

We blew a breaker switch, Mister Heath --

DRAGON

Heath, let's get some light down here!

HEATH

Freddie, let's get some light down here!

FREDDIE

Yes sir, Mister Heath, but it's gonna take five, maybe ten minutes.

DRAGON

Okay , everybody, take ten. Heath will guide you all to the greenroom. Please work on your lines, etc. We will start rehearsal again as soon as the problem with the lights is fixed.

HEATH

Follow me, everybody.

HEATH turns on a flashlight and starts off-stage. All the ACTORS follow him. Ad lib ghost sounds and laughter, until stage is empty.

END OF ACT ONE

30 pages in ACT TWO of APOCALYPSO!