

THE VESUVIUS PROPHECIES:
DEUS EX MACHINA

by
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CAST OF CHARACTERS

ADAM RUBY, 40s-50s, American eschatologist, also plays:

QUINTUS, 40s-50s, Roman ghost

SARAH RUBY, 20s, ADAM'S daughter, archeologist, also plays:

EOS, 20s, Roman ghost

LEEANNE AUERBACH, 40s-50s, ADAM'S wife, archeologist, also plays:

DAPHNE, 40s-50s, Roman ghost

GOKHAN SEKBAN, 20s, Greek/Turkish theatre director, SARAH'S
boyfriend, also plays:

JOSHUA, 20s, ADAM'S son

FELIX VARRO, 30s-40s, American folklorist

The action takes place in the archeological excavation of a private Roman theatre on the slope of Mount Vesuvius, the back of a truck, and in the Museo Archeologico in Naples.

SETTING: The ruined theatre is the primary realistic setting. Other locations can be suggested by lighting, sound, etc.

ADAM RUBY, 40s-50s, appears isolated in light, agitated but academic, trying to hold it together.

ADAM

I don't have visions. I'm a scholar. I cite my sources, and they are...terrestrial. I'm not an apocalyptic born-again--I renounced God at my bar mitzvah. Those who seek the end times are irrational, marginalized, oppressed, dangerous. They kill culture, destroy civilizations, mutilate mutual memory to hasten Armageddon, the end of empire. I research their madness--I don't live it. Postpone the apocalypse, not invite it. Yes, indeed, the images are filed in my brain--academic papers, archived accounts, Medieval frescoes--but cool, dry, contained. Not flinging themselves at me, flooding my consciousness, a fiery Dionysian assault on an ordered Apollonian mind. I am not one of them.

There is a roar like a hurricane and earthquake combined, and EOS, 20s, appears isolated in hot, turbulent light. She wears ancient Roman clothing and raises her arms in welcome. The unearthly roar rumbles louder and louder, with the light coalescing into a rosy glow that envelopes her. ADAM watches in horror.

EOS

(With almost erotic joy.)

Voluntas dei fiat. Mundus perditus est!

ADAM

Sarah!

EOS

Veni, Jesu!

ADAM

Sarah--what--?!

EOS

Vim in me effunde amoris!

EOS

Deus ex machina! Deus ex machina!

EOS disappears along with the roar and rosy light.

ADAM

I could *not* have seen it, even in a dream. That's not who I am. That's not who Sarah is, not any more! Time proceeds--or is at least perceived by human beings--in a linear fashion. It doesn't circle back, repeat, swirl around itself in a maelstrom of past, present and future, sucking us all down into a singularity. The world will certainly end. But not yet. First I have to save her. I have to get them back!

Lights out on ADAM and up on an archeological site, a ruined Roman theatre, with excavations in progress staked out with string. On one of the lower levels of the ancient audience seating, a sheet covers a lumpy object slightly larger than a prone human being. Seated or standing nearby, looking at the object, are SARAH RUBY, 20s, an archeologist, her Greek/Turkish boyfriend GOKHAN SEKBAN, 20s, and FELIX VARRO, 30s-40s.

GOKHAN
(Slight Turkish accent.)
She's the senior archeologist!

SARAH
She's my mother!

GOKHAN
How she presents--!

SARAH
My work! I found it!

GOKHAN
(To FELIX.)
I'm terribly sorry!

GOKHAN
Please! She's thinking about the future of the project--!

SARAH
Duh! Not my future, my career! It could be major--

GOKHAN
She'll give you full credit, she said--

SARAH
(To FELIX.)
This is all for you, you know. The sheet, the suspense, all this--drama!

FELIX
You're doing your part there.

GOKHAN
It could be a big deal.

SARAH
My big deal! She always does this. I hate her! My first dig!

FELIX
I'm excited. Ever since you found the herm--

SARAH
I cleaned the dirt out of the inscription--!

SARAH
She wouldn't have found the
Varro name!

FELIX
Otherwise a) we wouldn't have
given you the grant and b)
you're a hero. Really. I
couldn't be more grateful.

GOKHAN
So, Sarah, please just--*yeterincesi* [enough]!

SARAH
No, it's not enough, I've quietly behaved myself all my life!

LEEANNE, 40s-50s, appears. She is
dressed slightly more elegantly than
one expects of an archeologist on a
dig, practical but very put-together,
including a light coat or jacket that
covers her shirt. She's carrying a
bag.

LEEANNE
That is so not true. Now shut the fuck up in front of our
guest.

(To FELIX.)
Welcome to our professional and familial rivalry.

SARAH
Rivalry!? Hello! Theft!

FELIX
No concerns. I've got family
dynamics of my own.

LEEANNE
I couldn't be prouder of what Sarah's discovered. Our
emphasis--our opportunity--

SARAH
Your emphasis--!

LEEANNE
--At this villa--

GOKHAN
Sarah, don't be embarrassing.

LEEANNE
--Is to sift through the
artifacts of daily life from
first century Rome.

LEEANNE
Because it's situated higher on the slope of Vesuvius than
anyone expected to find a villa, we only discovered it three
years ago. We've made great progress, so before we unveil
what may be the most significant find of the site--if not in
all of Campania--

SARAH
Like more significant than
Pompeii, Herculaneum, entire
cities--?

LEEANNE
I wanted to welcome you to
what we've begun calling the
Varro Villa--

GOKHAN
We're trying to make an
important presentation!

LEEANNE
Gokhan, I can't control her,
but could you, please,
goddammit?

GOKHAN grabs SARAH'S head and kisses
her. She fights him, but he holds her
in the kiss for a moment before she
pushes him away and glowers silently,
arms folded. LEEANNE continues without
a pause while this goes on.

LEEANNE
And to celebrate the thrilling things we are finding. So,
first, I have something for everyone.

She opens her jacket to reveal her t-
shirt, which says "Varro Vesuvius
Expedition [current year]".

FELIX
Wow.

LEEANNE
Just for fun.
(Passes out t-shirts from the
bag.)
I have a few different sizes in case these don't fit, and you
can take them back to your family. We don't all have to wear
them, of course, but I thought, in honor of your support--

FELIX
It's so--Royal Geographic Society.

SARAH
Gross, mom.

GOKHAN
I needed a new t-shirt.

LEEANNE
I can hardly wait to show you, but before I do--Sarah, are
you subdued?

SARAH
Don't worry, I won't interrupt your--little performance--
whatever--again.

LEEANNE
(Pointing.)
We found--Sarah found--right here in the theatre--a cavity.

When they started excavating Pompeii in the 18th century, they discovered hollows in the hardened ash full of human bones. In 1863 Giuseppe Fiorelli figured out he could fill them with plaster and make casts of the people in their death poses--

LEEANNE	SARAH
--Down to details of their clothing, even facial expressions--	Rather than letting them rest in peace--

GOKHAN

Like the dog chained up at the fuller's.

SARAH	FELIX
Poor thing--he stretched his chain as far as it would go--	What dog?

SARAH	GOKHAN
--Climbed to the top of the pumice--	The famous dog of Pompeii.

GOKHAN gets on the ground and mimics the tortured death pose of the dog.

SARAH	GOKHAN
--And died in agony--all twisted up.	Like this.

FELIX

What's a fuller?

SARAH

They bleached and thickened cloth by processing it in stale urine.

LEEANNE

Can we be done talking about dogs and piss, please? We've made some remarkable discoveries here, including this--

LEEANNE pulls a sheet from an ancient pedestal with a visible inscription: Quintus Terentius Varro.

LEEANNE

--Unfinished herm inscribed with the name Quintus Terentius Varro--no bust on top--still looking for that--but until now none of the cavities, no people.

LEEANNE	SARAH
Which meant whoever was living here escaped the eruption, remarkable in itself as they were so close to the caldera.	When we made this cast, we had to break up the hard ash around the body.

SARAH

We've destroyed the integrity of the negative space.

LEEANNE

Somehow, dear, you always find the integrity of the negative space.

FELIX

So it is--somebody?

LEEANNE

Well, that's what's so odd about it--

ADAM appears carrying a backpack or small suitcase, sees SARAH and rushes to hug her.

ADAM

Sarah, you're all right!

SARAH

Papa! Oh, my God!

(Fighting him off.)

No, stop it! Get away! Don't touch me!

LEEANNE

Adam, why in the world--?

SARAH

Please! What are you doing here?

ADAM

(Hurt.)

I had--I dunno--a dream--a feeling something happened to you. But you're fine!

SARAH

I'm not fine. I'm--like--totally upset.

LEEANNE

She's not fine. She's a whiny pain in the ass.

ADAM

I'm so relieved just to see you. Both of you.

Silence.

GOKHAN

What was the dream?

ADAM sees GOKHAN.

ADAM

What? Who--?

LEEANNE

No, Adam, I know, but--don't--

SARAH

This is my boyfriend!

!

GOKHAN
I'm Gokhan.

SARAH
My *erkek arkadash*
[boyfriend].

GOKHAN
That means "boyfriend."

ADAM
I'm still dreaming--

ADAM
(Crying.)
I thought--for a moment--

ADAM
--A miracle--

LEEANNE
We can talk about it later,
Adam.

ADAM
Your boyfriend?

SARAH
It's a miracle for me to have a boyfriend? In fact--

SARAH
--We might as well tell you--

GOKHAN
(Gesturing silence to
SARAH)
Are you all right, sir?

SARAH
You're not wanted here, Papa. Nothing happened to me, so you
can go home.

ADAM
I tried to call, email, but--

LEEANNE
We don't get reception up here.

FELIX
(Checking his cell
phone.)
Brilliant! No reception?

GOKHAN
Awesome! Peace, quiet and an
ancient theatre!

SARAH
Please go back to LA, Papa.

LEEANNE
Adam, it's disruptive. I have no objection, but as you can
imagine, Sarah's enough of a pill without you--

SARAH
I'm not a pill!

LEEANNE
And being away from you is
kind of what I need, too--

FELIX
Adam...Ruby?

ADAM notices FELIX for the first time,
tries to pull himself together.

ADAM

Indeed.

FELIX

(Shaking ADAM'S hand.)

I took your Apocalypse as Resistance seminar--you wouldn't remember--

ADAM

I'm sorry, I'm not--

FELIX

Felix Varro. I got my
Folklore degree from Loyola
thanks to you--

ADAM

Don't thank me--what can you do with a Folklore degree?

FELIX

Nothing. I mean, I've
written a few books, but
nothing important.

ADAM

Sorry again--that was
rude. I'm not--myself--

LEEANNE

He's a very respected authority on ghost stories and he's
researching a new book on Catholic saints--

GOKHAN

Saints are folklore?

LEEANNE

And he's entirely funding our
expedition this summer.

ADAM

Ah.

FELIX

The class was fantastic. And your book: *Anti-Imperial
Theologies and Jewish Identity*--

LEEANNE

Adam, I was just about to show Felix an astonishing discovery
your daughter made. You're welcome to stay--

SARAH

No, he's not.

LEEANNE

At least for the
presentation.

ADAM

I mostly--just--wanted to make sure Sarah was all right.

(To SARAH.)

I thought maybe you'd done something to yourself--

SARAH

Papa, please go!

LEEANNE

Please, Adam! Leave it the
fuck alone.

ADAM

I'd like to stay. Please.

(Silence)

What did she discover?

GOKHAN AND FELIX

It's amazing!

They look at each other.

SARAH

Could we get this retarded presentation over with so he can go?

LEEANNE

(Going to the draped object.)

Adam, you remember the plaster bodies at Pompeii?

ADAM

(Getting out a blue and gold
UCLA notebook.)

Good grief! I left so fast I came without a pen--

FELIX gives ADAM a pen.

ADAM

It calms me down when I
take notes, especially
today.

LEEANNE

This one's confusing, might
be more than one body--some
people clutched each other as
the pyroclastic surge bore
down on them--

FELIX

Was it a pyroclastic surge here, or just pumice and ash?

ADAM takes notes.

SARAH

Can we skip the bullshit theatrics?

LEEANNE

Sarah, language! No pumice, just ash. And these people were
probably killed long before first pyroclastic flow--

FELIX

Was it the heat?

SARAH

They don't look cooked.
Probably gasses ejected
laterally at the outset,
hydrogen sulfide, methane,
carbon monoxide--

LEEANNE

They--at least we think it's
they--they look--well, I want
to warn you there are some
aspects of this cast that are
more disturbing than others
they've found.

FELIX
How disturbing?

SARAH
There's a face!

LEEANNE
It's more like viewing a modern body in a funeral home than studying an ancient artifact.

FELIX
Representing a whole civilization--

LEEANNE
Most people nowadays tend to think the Pompeians somehow deserved their fate--fat, rich Romans in a decadent resort community, but this fellow--

ADAM
It's a man?

SARAH
Goddamnit, just look!

SARAH whips the sheet off the plaster cast. It's strangely shaped, with a head clearly preserved at one end and a great deal of bulk in the middle.

LEEANNE
Sarah--oh!--you can be so wretched!

They gather closer, respectful or even intimidated, but intensely curious. ADAM is especially mesmerized.

FELIX
He is fat!

ADAM
No, there are two of them. Too many legs.

GOKHAN
But only one head.

SARAH
Pretty sure it's two people clutching each other, but one has the face in the other's chest.

ADAM
His chest.

FELIX
Yes, that's definitely a man's face. Beautiful.

ADAM

Peaceful. A two-thousand year embrace.

GOKHAN

(Taking a picture with his
phone.)

Doesn't look like he died in agony.

LEEANNE

No horror, no pain.

SARAH

Gokhan, don't take a picture!

GOKHAN

Why not? Everyone will want to see this.

ADAM touches the cast almost
reverently.

SARAH

It's disrespectful!

ADAM

Leeanne, this is more
beautiful than any sculpture.

GOKHAN

They'll put him on view like all the others, won't they?

SARAH

I have an ethical problem
with the display of human
remains.

ADAM

It's like love--frozen--

FELIX

These aren't human remains exactly, just a cast--

SARAH

The bones are inside, along with anything else hard enough to
survive.

ADAM

Leeanne, what *do* you intend to do with them?

LEEANNE

To the lab in Naples--

GOKHAN

You could make a lot of money
with this.

SARAH

That would be very wrong. Exploitation of a tragedy.

ADAM

I agree.

GOKHAN

Millions of people would come from around the world to see
this face, to imagine who he was. Maybe an actor, performing
an ancient tragedy at the moment of the eruption--he was
lying right here in the orchestra--

GOKHAN
--A play by Seneca or
Sophocles--

SARAH
(To ADAM and FELIX.)
Gokhan studied classics at
Brown and directing at
Northwestern.

GOKHAN
That's why I came, because this is a theatre--

SARAH
And also for me.

GOKHAN
We're standing on theatre
history!

GOKHAN
Think of this heroic actor, this Roman Thespis--standing up
to a volcano, to nature, to God--the ultimate critic!--and
playing his scene to the last! The show must go on!

Everyone is a little embarrassed by
GOKHAN'S passion.

LEEANNE
(Pointing to herm)
More likely he's Quintus Terentius Varro.

ADAM
(Writing it down.)
Who's that?

FELIX
The owner of the villa.

ADAM
Quintus Terentius Varro.

FELIX
And probably my ancestor.
(Off ADAM'S look.)
My last name's Varro, goes all the way back to Rome.

ADAM
You're sending them to a lab?

LEEANNE
In Naples. They'll make a copy or two of the whole cast--

SARAH
Exploitation. Disrespect.

LEEANNE
--Then open it up to
stabilize the bones and
anything else that might be
inside--jewelry, clothing--

FELIX
Wouldn't cloth have decayed like the flesh?

SARAH
Some organic materials survived, like the papyrus from the
Villa of the Papyri in Herculaneum--

ADAM
The model for the Getty Villa- --They're carbonized but can
- be treated so they're
legible.

GOKHAN
You can see in them in the Museo Archeologico and the
Biblioteca Nazionale in Naples.

FELIX
Have you found anything else belonging to the Varro family?

GOKHAN
Let me show you!

SARAH
Wow, that's a little
proprietary.

GOKHAN gets a box of artifacts and puts
on white gloves. SARAH puts on gloves
as well.

LEEANNE
Household artifacts, mostly. Kitchen implements, furniture,
some beautiful frescoes of scenes from Greek plays--

Gloves on, GOKHAN carefully lifts a
gold chalice from its foam support
inside the box.

GOKHAN
These cups--one in the orchestra and one back stage--

SARAH
Nothing super important in and of itself--

FELIX
The chalice from the palace--

ADAM
Leeanne, where are you all
sleeping?

SARAH carefully takes the cup and puts
it back in the box as GOKHAN takes out
a knife, similarly protected in foam.

GOKHAN
And this knife.

LEEANNE
Inside the villa in sleeping
bags.

FELIX
What's it made of?

LEEANNE
The roof is mostly intact.

GOKHAN AND SARAH
Lead.

FELIX
A lead knife. Isn't that too soft?

ADAM
It's too late for me to get back to Naples tonight--

SARAH
Most Roman knives were iron or bronze.

GOKHAN
Exactly!

GOKHAN
I think it's a stage knife! Looks real, but too soft to hurt anybody.

LEEANNE
Adam, it would be extraordinarily awkward if you stayed.

GOKHAN carefully puts the knife back in the box.

SARAH
What? No!

LEEANNE
There are cheap *pensiones* in Naples--

LEEANNE
We only stay on site to guard against looters--

SARAH
And because you don't trust the government--or the *Camorra*--just by our presence we risk contaminating the site--

ADAM
I'll leave in the morning.

SARAH
Of course mother doesn't conform to standard practices--
-

LEEANNE
Adam, I've forgiven you, but I can't forget, as much as I want to. I need more time.

SARAH
Forget forgiving! I can't even look at him.

ADAM
I'm grieving as well--

SARAH
I'm not grieving!

LEEANNE
We're trying to balance the rational with the irrational.

SARAH
I'm not irrational! I'm furious! It was bad enough working here under mother's dictatorship, but now that you're here--!

LEEANNE
Irrationality is a human need, but--

VOICE

(Off.)

Essere tranquillo! Sto cercando di dormire! [Be quiet! I'm trying to sleep!]

FELIX

Who's that?

LEEANNE

(Calling.)

Sono cose di famiglia! [Just a family thing!]

SARAH

Representative of the local
Camorra--

LEEANNE

Ci sarà tranquillo! [We'll be
quiet!]

GOKHAN

Mafia.

SARAH

Mom pays them to "protect" us
and the site--

VOICE

*Vi sono anche molte persone
non esiste!* [You have too
many people there!]

FELIX

Protection money?

ADAM

You're bribing them?

LEEANNE

Uno di loro è in partenza.
[One of them is leaving.]

LEEANNE

I have to be nice or I'll get a horse head in my sleeping
bag. Let's keep it down.

GOKHAN

Sarah, why don't we--?

SARAH

Tell them?

GOKHAN

No, I meant we should go--

SARAH

Of course we should tell
them!

SARAH

Gokhan and I are getting married.

Silence for a moment.

FELIX

Um...congratulations.

ADAM
How long have you known each other?

LEEANNE
No, you're not. You're a nice boy, Gokhan, but over my dead body.

SARAH
And I'm converting to Islam!

ADAM
Converting?

LEEANNE
From what? You're not religious in the slightest.

ADAM
Except for that awful--

SARAH
(To LEEANNE.)
You took me to Lutheran church--

LEEANNE
Kicking and screaming for Christmas and Easter--

SARAH
(To ADAM.)
And you took me to temple--

ADAM
For cultural reasons only.

LEEANNE
You had neither confirmation nor a bat mitzvah.

SARAH
I'm Jewtheran!

LEEANNE
A little bit of both and committed to neither.

SARAH
Which is why I'm converting. I need to be committed.

LEEANNE
I'll say.

ADAM
Sarah, you know extremism doesn't suit you--

SARAH
Lutheranism is weak, watered down--

ADAM
That terrible born-again phase when you were fifteen--

LEEANNE
I'm not going through another obsession with you--

FELIX
(To GOKHAN.)
Are you Muslim?

GOKHAN

Sorta semi-Sunni. I'm half Greek, half Turkish.

ADAM

Does it matter to you whether Sarah is Muslim?

LEEANNE

They're not getting married!

SARAH

It matters to me!

GOKHAN

Sarah, *sus!* *Sus!* [shut up]

SARAH

I will not *sus!*

(To LEEANNE.)

I reject your wimpy God!

(To ADAM.)

And you don't believe in anything! You never have!

SARAH runs off.

GOKHAN

Um...I better...I think I love her, if that makes any difference.

They all stare at him a moment, then he disappears after SARAH.

FELIX

Are all archeologists so emotional, if I may inquire?

LEEANNE

(Emotionally.)

No! Adam, you had to know this would happen. She's still--

FELIX

Seriously, shouldn't she be medicated?

ADAM

She was when she was a teenager.

LEEANNE

She was the kindest child-- thoughtful, tender-hearted, rescued animals--a blind cat--

ADAM

Remember that three-legged greyhound?

LEEANNE

--You're not seeing her at her best--

ADAM

We had a family--

LEEANNE

(A warning)
Adam--don't--

ADAM

--Tragedy. I think we can call it that.

ADAM

And Sarah processes differently. Always a little self-critical--

FELIX

Self-critical?

ADAM

--But this is worse--like when she and Joshua were fifteen--

LEEANNE

Adam, that's private! Felix, I'm sorry. You've been so generous, and you just got here. I wanted you to be excited about our work, proud of your support--

FELIX

I am!

ADAM

And you've stumbled into our dysfunction.

LEEANNE

It's more serious than dysfunction, dear, but not something Felix wants to be involved in.

ADAM

Involved? He's paying for it.

LEEANNE

Please, Adam.

ADAM

This whole project is for Sarah, isn't it?

LEEANNE

No! I'm sorry. Inappropriate!

FELIX

No problem. I get it.

(Trying to change the subject)

This is so amazing you're here. Your class about apocalyptic traditions showed me anything could be folklore: ghost stories, legends, even history itself, especially when a) transmitted orally or b) biased toward the conquerors.

LEEANNE

I can't believe Loyola let you teach that class.

ADAM

That was before I turned it into a blasphemous book--

LEEANNE

He's at UCLA now, a secular school--

FELIX

You were a great teacher-- super-organized and logical-- just a little--

FELIX

--Overly passionate about the end times--if you'll pardon me--

ADAM

A teacher should be passionate!

FELIX

--Almost erotically attracted to the apocalypse.

LEEANNE

Precise syllabus, batshit ideas.

ADAM

You actually read my book?

FELIX

I loved the idea that the end of the world in the Revelation

to John was based on contemporary descriptions of the eruption of Vesuvius.

ADAM
I've come under fire for that lately--

FELIX
And that eschatological writing proliferated--

LEEANNE
For good reason--more speculation than evidence--

FELIX
--In oppressed cultures, like Judea occupied by Rome. Anything lately?

ADAM
As a matter of fact--

LEEANNE
You're kidding. Did someone actually--?

ADAM
Self-published now that university presses won't touch me--

LEEANNE
Self-published, of course.

ADAM
--And I'm having a devil of a
time with the online
marketing company--

FELIX
What's this one?

ADAM
Both post-apocalyptic and historic: what happens to empires
after they crumble?

LEEANNE
If a civilization falls and no one hears, does it make a
sound?

FELIX
What empires? Greek, Roman?

ADAM
British, Byzantine, Ottoman--

FELIX
American?

ADAM
I'm hardly the Oracle of Apollo. But.

LEEANNE
Sabotaging tenure again, Adam? UCLA's your last chance.

FELIX
Pardon me, Dr. Auerbach, but what did Adam do that makes you
and Sarah so nasty to him?

(Silence.)
It's none of my business, I know, but you seem determined to
suck me into it with your snarky remarks.

LEEANNE
Adam...

ADAM
Go ahead. I'm anxious to hear how you characterize it after
five months.

LEEANNE
Adam took a foolish risk and talked our son into--

ADAM
He volunteered, he insisted--!

LEEANNE
You insisted on going. Joshua only followed.

FELIX

You have a son?

LEEANNE

(After a moment.)

Had. He and Sarah were very close.

FELIX

Ah. I'm sorry. I don't have children yet, but...excuse me.

FELIX leaves.

LEEANNE

Adam, please don't fuck this up. Felix and his family's foundation could support our work for the next 20 years. Sarah needs a project--it's the only thing holding her together.

ADAM

You spoil her.

LEEANNE

We only have one child left, Adam.

ADAM

I know. That's why I'm here. I want my family back.

LEEANNE

I'm not coming back. At least not while it's still dry enough here to continue the dig.

ADAM

I know--it's more basic than that--

LEEANNE

Being here reminds me of Joshua.

ADAM

And that boy--it's uncanny--doesn't Sarah realize--?

ADAM

The resemblance--it's like Joshua resurrected--

LEEANNE

Maybe because Joshua always had a beard--

LEEANNE

It breaks my heart every time I see him. I'd kick him out on his ass except he takes good care of her--

ADAM

Even his voice is the same, without the accent--

LEEANNE

He sings, too. Remember--?

ADAM

Don't--

LEEANNE

That fake Greek song--he and Sarah made up--

ADAM

Leeanne, just so you know--

LEEANNE

(Sings.)

The rosy fingers of dawn

ADAM

Honey, I asked you not to--

LEEANNE

(Singing.)

Child of the morning

ADAM

You're just making it worse--

LEEANNE

(Singing.)

When the night is gone

LEEANNE

(Singing.)

New day is borning.

(Speaking.)

She won't talk about it, but I'm sure in Sarah's mind you went to Jerusalem and sacrificed our son.

ADAM

Sacrificed! Does she really think that? Do you?

LEEANNE

It's not your fault, but you were the death of him.

ADAM

That was my vision--a kind of sacrifice--but of Sarah.

ADAM walks away from her toward the dig site designated with a string grid.

LEEANNE

You don't have visions. Help me break them up and you can stay.

ADAM

If they're in love--

LEEANNE

But he's--it's like watching--incest--with her dead brother!

ADAM

They're having sex?

LEEANNE

No, thank God. She says the Prophet wouldn't approve. And I don't actually think Gokhan's serious about her.

ADAM

Then you just have to let her figure it out.

LEEANNE

Or help her figure it out.

ADAM

You help her too much.

LEEANNE

I never understood her the way you did. Am I a clueless mother?

ADAM

Just inconsistent.

LEEANNE

Both kids thought you the better parent. If only I'd gone to Israel with you instead of Joshua--

ADAM

Maybe you had a premonition.

LEEANNE

I was afraid. Just afraid.

ADAM

He was afraid, too.

LEEANNE

Then why'd he go?

ADAM

I don't think we'll ever know. This is Sarah's area, her work?

LEEANNE

You can tell?

ADAM

It's precise, meticulous, in a way your work isn't.

LEEANNE

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is a positive for archeologists.

ADAM

She's not OCD!

(LEEANNE shrugs.)

Where are you working?

LEEANNE

(Gestures, off.)

The latrine.

ADAM

You've gone from middens to latrines?

LEEANNE

You learn more about daily life from what people discard.
Sarah's really developing that concept--

ADAM

What are you finding?

LEEANNE

Buncha shit. Take a look.

ADAM

I will. Are you reconstructing the last days here, the hours
before the volcano blew?

LEEANNE

I conjure their lives, their deaths, their lunch. It's
almost like they were having a party, extra wine glasses in
odd places, carbonized bread, fish sauce--

ADAM

I love that. The tiny moments history ignores, where life is
really lived.

LEEANNE AND ADAM

On the toilet!

They laugh.

ADAM

Of course, you could imagine them wrong. Bringing the wrong
people back to life.

(Glances at notes)

You said you have the name of one?

LEEANNE AND ADAM

Quintus Terentius Varro.

LEEANNE

(Indicates herm)

Important or wealthy enough to have a bust carved, but we
haven't found it yet, just the herm it sat on. And one more,
probably a slave woman, because it's just a first name and
written in Greek.

ADAM

On what?

LEEANNE

A lyre.

ADAM

A young slave woman. That was my vision.

LEEANNE

What?

ADAM

That was it exactly. Like Sarah in Bible clothes.

LEEANNE

What was she doing?

ADAM

I got the impression she was committing suicide, proclaiming the end of the world, lit up by flames--

LEEANNE

Suicide? She's past that, I hope--!

ADAM

--But welcoming them, welcoming death!

ADAM

She wouldn't try that again, would she?

LEEANNE

Not without Joshua.

ADAM

It wasn't his fault! He saved her!

LEEANNE

Becoming Muslim is a kind of suicide, if you're a woman.

ADAM

No worse than any other religion--I wouldn't call Islam suicide--

LEEANNE

You're not a woman.

ADAM

Leeanne, please--

He reaches for her and she steps away.
He stifles a sob. Lights out on
LEEANNE but not on ADAM.

ADAM

Surrounded by what's left of my family choking back their anger every day. The people I love most in the world and yet alone--I can't leave without--making sure Sarah's not going to--

(Calling.)

Sarah!

Lighting change reveals SARAH breezing past ADAM carefully carrying an ancient lyre in a foam support.

The plaster cast is covered by a crate, which FELIX and GOKHAN are about to lift onto a cart, overseen by LEEANNE.

SARAH		LEEANNE
Papa--hello!--I'm busy. The truck is coming for the artifacts in just a few minutes.	The	Ready? Lift!

ADAM		FELIX
I need to talk to you--		Plaster is heavy!

SARAH		GOKHAN
And I need not to talk to you!		Slowly!

GOKHAN and FELIX carefully place the crate on the cart. SARAH starts packing the lyre into a smaller crate.

LEEANNE

Sarah, do you need me to cut more foam?

SARAH

I'm not going to break it, mom.

ADAM		LEEANNE
Maybe when you get back from Naples?		Aside from the cast, that lyre's the most significant artifact we've found.

SARAH

No!

FELIX		ADAM
(As they finish setting the crate.)		Be careful--they've been holding that embrace 2000 years!
Can I see the lyre? And the name?		

ADAM rummages around, distracted, searching for something.

SARAH

(Showing it to him.)

It's so informal and Greek, it's probably a servant, not your ancestor.

FELIX

(Reading it.)

E-oz? Is that how you pronounce the Greek?

GOKHAN

Eos is Greek for dawn, which in Latin is *aurora*.

FELIX

Aurora, really? Like St. Aurora?

GOKHAN

Patron Saint of the Northern Lights?

SARAH

Aurora was the princess in *Sleeping Beauty*.

FELIX

No, the Christian Saint Aurora.

LEEANNE

Lutherans don't do saints.

ADAM

Don't look at the Jew.

FELIX

I only half remember, but I think she was an early Roman saint--

LEEANNE

So? She's made up, like most early saints.

FELIX

Does the Museo Archeologico have an archive or library?

SARAH

Yes, and there's the Biblioteca Nazionale.

LEEANNE

Gokhan, you should take him there.

FELIX

Can I go with you when you take the crates to Naples?

ADAM

Has anyone seen my UCLA notebook? I'm lost without it.

GOKHAN

Sure!

(Off SARAH'S look.)

We might need help.

ADAM

It says "*Fiat lux*" on the cover.

GOKHAN

Let there be light?

ADAM

That's UCLA's motto.

LEEANNE

Where'd you see it last?

ADAM

In the...uh...latrine.
(Off their look.)
It's a quiet place to write.

LEEANNE

You're so absent-minded. If
it wasn't for me, you'd leave
the house without pants.

SARAH

Why didn't you bring a
laptop?

ADAM shrugs.

SARAH

Still don't have laptop, do you? Or even a tablet. You are
so feckless!

SARAH

And cheap, cheap, cheap,
cheap, cheap!

GOKHAN

What's feckless mean?

LEEANNE

Sarah, be nice.

FELIX

Doesn't give a feck.

SARAH

When we were kids, vacations were only to archeological
sites, since they were paid for by grants, and we usually
ended up driving all over the US in that awful old VW,
camping or staying in the worst possible motels--

LEEANNE

You just let us know if we
did anything right as
parents...

SARAH

And we never went to
restaurants, even diners,
just ate sandwiches Mom made,
and had to share a single can
of soda among the four of us--

LEEANNE

You're getting all worked up--
over nothing!

ADAM

Don't sing, it aggravates
your mother--

SARAH sings.

SARAH

Arizona's dry and hot
But Mom and Dad like it a lot
Indian ruins, fry bread, too
I miss home a bunch, don't
you?

ADAM

I'm really lost without
something to write in. Did
someone take my notebook? If
so just leave it in the
latrine where you found it--
no harm, no foul.

GOKHAN and FELIX are amused, ADAM preoccupied, and LEEANNE annoyed and a little apprehensive. SARAH keeps singing.

SARAH
A quarter can of fizzy drink
No air conditioning--we stink

LEEANNE
They sang this in the car to
get back at us for taking
them on vacation when they'd
rather stay home and play
video games.

SARAH keeps singing.

SARAH
Deviled ham and deviled eggs
Oh, no, I spilled them on my
legs!

LEEANNE
Sarah, stop it! Your father
feels bad enough without you
dredging up all these--

SARAH
(Suddenly sobbing.)
No one knows that song but me and Joshua! Now I'm the only
one, and if I forget it, it's gone forever!

FELIX
(Sotto voce.)
That might not be a bad thing.

ADAM
Honey, I'm sorry, we all miss
Joshua--

LEEANNE
Hush, Sarah, it's just a
silly song--

SARAH quickly and violently gestures
them both away in turn. LEEANNE
gestures to GOKHAN, who goes to SARAH.

SARAH
I know it's trivial! Like everything we're finding here--

SARAH
--Broken terracotta lamps,
fake knives, pottery shards--

GOKHAN
Shhh, *canim* [my soul]. Shhh!

As GOKHAN holds SARAH, she begins to
control herself. The others stare
apprehensively.

SARAH
--But isn't that the point? Daily life? Nothing means
anything and trivial things mean everything. A hairpin
precious...as a palace.

Lights out on everyone but ADAM.

ADAM

She's always been...emotional, self-destructive, even, so this is frightening indeed. We're all devastated by what happened to Joshua--the breath knocked out of the whole family and we can't remember how to inhale. They say losing a child is the worst pain, love mutated into madness. Now it's happening a second time, before we can recover from the first. I love both equally--I really do! But somehow this is worse--her brother's death--it's--withered her goodness, somehow. I can save her, but there's--no--time.

Lights out on ADAM and up on SARAH, GOKHAN and FELIX riding in the back of a truck with the crates of artifacts. They are all studying their iPhones. Silence for a bit.

FELIX

Brilliant!

(They look up.)

I don't need to go to the Bibleoteca after all.

GOKHAN

Why not?

FELIX

There's actually a church of St. Aurora in Naples. It'll be chock full of pamphlets, books, and maybe even relics.

SARAH

You know those are all fake.

FELIX

Of course. But even fake relics are so deeply invested with faith they have a kind of power.

GOKHAN

Still want to go to the Museo Archeologico?

SARAH

It'll take all afternoon to unpack these crates properly.

FELIX

Do you need our help?

SARAH

No, you wouldn't--it's fine--go to the Museo.

FELIX

Great.

GOKHAN

I'll show you the Gabinetto Segretto.

FELIX

What's that?

GOKHAN

Erotic art from Pompeii and other nearby ruins. They locked up all the dirty stuff in this Secret Cabinet in the 18th century.

SARAH

Of course you want to show him that porno shit.

GOKHAN

Canim! That is hardly proper talk for a modern Islamic woman.

SARAH

I don't want to be modern. I want to be conservative. I believe in full investment.

GOKHAN

Go on a dig in a burka, why don't you?

SARAH

You should take your religious heritage more seriously.

SARAH

"There is no god but he--the Living, the Self-subsisting, the Eternal--"

GOKHAN

Please! With a Greek mother and a Turkish father, I couldn't be more ambivalent about religion.

SARAH

Ambivalence! I want commitment!

GOKHAN

You'll change your mind once you know more about it.

SARAH

I know a lot about Islam! Researched the fuck out of it!

GOKHAN

If your mother wasn't so Lutheran, and your dad so atheist, you'd never--

FELIX

You two meet at Friday prayers?

SARAH

At Northwestern.

GOKHAN

Three months ago in graduate school.

GOKHAN

I was directing a renegade student production of *The Libation Bearers*--

SARAH

In Greek!

GOKHAN

--And I needed an Electra.

SARAH

I was terrible. No stage presence whatsoever! He very quickly promoted someone from the chorus and demoted me to slave girl.

GOKHAN

I'm only like that when I'm directing. Otherwise very sweet.

SARAH

I was comfortable as a slave. No thinking, just surrendering, taking orders. On stage and off.

GOKHAN

But you made sure it was the most archeologically accurate production of Aeschylus in the last 2500 years.

SARAH

I can be annoying. But I guess you know that.

FELIX

I'm sorry about your brother. Is that okay to say?

SARAH

Okay for you. It's not your fault.

FELIX

What was he like? Sang a lot, I guess, huh?

SARAH

He wasn't gay, if that's what you're implying.

FELIX

Not at all. That's just the only thing anyone's said about him.

GOKHAN

Sarah, rude!

SARAH

Mom's favorite, but he always wanted to be like dad. Very intellectual--I hardly understood him half the time. But we had conversations we couldn't have with anyone else. Sharing genes makes that possible, I guess. We were twins, you know.

FELIX

Fraternal twins?

SARAH

And he sort of saved my life one time. So losing him was like losing part of myself.

Lights out on the truck and up on LEEANNE examining a snake skeleton while ADAM watches.

ADAM

Is that a lizard?

LEEANNE

A snake. Sarah dug it up in the orchestra.

ADAM

And you took it?

LEEANNE

I didn't take it. She wasn't interested in animal remains.

ADAM

It's really big.

LEEANNE

I'm wondering if the family was part of a snake cult. It was next to remains of an altar.

ADAM

Ophites?

LEEANNE

What are those?

ADAM

Early Christians who worshiped snakes as the embodiment of wisdom, since the serpent gave man the knowledge of good and evil.

LEEANNE

The skull is shattered. Did they kill snakes in their rituals?

ADAM

(Shrugs)

Eve's offspring will bruise the snake's head with his heel. LEEANNE, while the kids are gone, I need to ask--

LEEANNE

Adam, don't. What you need is to get back the daughter you lost when we lost our son.

ADAM

I want to get you back, too. We haven't been a family since--

LEEANNE

Then help me break up Sarah and Gokhan--

ADAM

I won't do that as long as she wants--

LEEANNE

And you could help me convince Felix that this dig is important--he's still skeptical, and he respects your opinion, kind of idolizes you.

ADAM

Leeanne, I don't think I have a lot of time.

LEEANNE

I know, you should get back--

ADAM

No, I'm running out of time altogether.

LEEANNE

Altogether? Adam--?

ADAM

My brain. It's not--in good communication with my heart. The electrical impulses get interrupted and the heart...forgets to beat.

LEEANNE

You can get a pacemaker.

ADAM

I got one. It's more complicated than that--the doctors haven't really figured it out.

LEEANNE

What are your symptoms?

ADAM

Sometimes I pass out, see things, my brain becomes...untethered.

LEEANNE

Adam, enough. It's really hard to hear this so soon after Joshua.

He moves to hug her, but she withdraws slightly, almost flinching.

ADAM

Will you at least hold me? You haven't touched me since he died.

Impulsively, LEEANNE holds him, but only for a moment, then she starts to cry and pushes him away.

LEEANNE

No--sorry--I can't. Everyone I hold, I lose.

Lights out on them and up on FELIX and GOKHAN looking at artifacts in a museum.

GOKHAN

Wow. With a goat.

FELIX

That's...remarkably detailed.

GOKHAN

Fucked up!

(Takes a pictures with his phone.)

And well preserved.

FELIX

I love the fake coming look on his face.

(Imitates it.)

GOKHAN looks up. FELIX follows his gaze.

FELIX

Coat hook? Hat rack?

GOKHAN

Sign for a bakery.

FELIX

Really? An erect phallus?

GOKHAN

(Taking a picture with his phone.)

Bread rises.

They look at another artifact.

FELIX

Romans were so much less uptight than people today.

GOKHAN

You mean Americans today.

FELIX

Turks aren't uptight?

GOKHAN

We invented the Turkish bath.

FELIX

Did you grow up there? Your accent's pretty American.

GOKHAN

Turkish is my first language and my mom taught me Greek, but we left Istanbul when I was eight.

FELIX

Have you been back?

GOKHAN

Every few years.

FELIX

So what's the best Turkish bath in Istanbul?

GOKHAN

Depends on what you want.

FELIX

Traditional, but not touristy.

GOKHAN

Sex or not?

FELIX

Wow--I didn't--well--I'm in an open relationship.

GOKHAN

So, sex.

FELIX

But traditional.

GOKHAN

Traditional sex.

FELIX

I heard the government cracked down.

GOKHAN

I haven't been in a few years, but you might try Firuzaga Hamam, very traditional, founded in fourteen-something.

FELIX

When you were there, did you see any action?

GOKHAN
 Sure.

FELIX
 Like what?

GOKHAN
 Guys touching themselves under their *pestemals*.

FELIX
 Showing hard?
 (GOKHAN shrugs.)
 Any actual coupling?

GOKHAN
 Later in the evening it's more...overt. There's a dry sauna
 and a dark room.

FELIX
 And masseurs?

GOKHAN
 Usually Kurdish. They'll do what you want for a higher
 price.

FELIX
 Ah.

GOKHAN
 When are you going?

FELIX
 Soon as I can!

GOKHAN
 Be careful. Lots of pickpockets and hustlers.

FELIX
 Everyone says Istanbul is the most beautiful city in the
 world. Bi-continental, half European, half Asian.

GOKHAN
 Beautiful but sad. *Hüzün*. Wistful.

FELIX
 Why?

GOKHAN
 People miss being an empire.

SARAH
 (Off.)
 You're misinterpreting!

FELIX
Turks like to dominate?

GOKHAN
See for yourself.

SARAH
(Off.)
Reading way too much into it!

They look at each other as the lights
fade on them and come up on SARAH
scurrying across the orchestra with a
bundle and a small box.

SARAH
You need to approach this from a more rational perspective.

FELIX and GOKHAN reappear, following
her.

GOKHAN	FELIX
It seems pretty obvious.	You think I have a <i>religious</i> bias?

LEEANNE appears in SARAH'S way.

LEEANNE
Sarah! What'd they say at the lab?

SARAH
(Sitting on the bundle.)
It's only preliminary!

LEEANNE	FELIX
Of course.	It's incredible!

SARAH
Definitely two different bodies.

GOKHAN
One male and one female.

FELIX
But that's not the cool part!

ADAM
(Appearing.)
Oh, good, you're back. I need to speak with you, Sarah.

SARAH
Not now, Papa, we got the lab results.

LEEANNE

But apparently there is disagreement.

FELIX

Ambiguity.

GOKHAN

It's not ambiguous. Show what they found.

Reluctantly, SARAH opens the small protective box she is carrying and shows them a cross made of stone or metal.

LEEANNE

Where was that?

FELIX

With the bodies!

SARAH

Mingled with the bones at the bottom of the cast.

GOKHAN

One of them must have been wearing it.

FELIX

So it seems likely they were Christians.

ADAM

Ophites!

SARAH

It's just a cross. It could mean anything back then. A charm against crucifixion. You're engaging in presentism!

FELIX

What's that?

LEEANNE

Projecting modern ideas or values back before they were thought up.

FELIX

God is a pretty old idea. You wacky atheists!

SARAH

I'm not an atheist! I'm Muslim!

ADAM

If God is anything like we imagine him--her--it to be, then he--she--it is fundamentally unknowable. Our minds are too small to comprehend...them.

SARAH

That's what the Koran is for.

LEEANNE

If God's what it says in the Koran, no thanks.

ADAM

Or the Bible.

FELIX

How do you live without God?

GOKHAN

Show 'em what you got!

FELIX

Are you kidding? I'd be struck by lightning for sharing it with the godless heathen.

LEEANNE

I won't let Adam make fun of you, Felix.

GOKHAN

It's a relic!

SARAH

From that church in Naples? Was that what you were up to while I was slaving away in the lab?

ADAM

What kind of relic?

FELIX

(Unwrapping a small object.)

The knuckle of St. Aurora.

ADAM

(Examines it.)

Why's it red?

FELIX

Stained with vermilion.

ADAM passes the knucklebone to SARAH.

SARAH

If it's really her knucklebone, how'd they even let it out of their sight?

FELIX

They had a few.

SARAH

Even so, how could they--?

FELIX

Apparently she made a mess of predictions.

SARAH

Such as what?

FELIX

A lot of them were associated with the church. She predicted it would be the religion of Rome 250 years before Constantine declared it. Also the Schism with the Eastern Church and the Reformation.

LEEANNE

Like Nostradamus, they were probably so vague--

GOKHAN

"Six million Jews will die."

SARAH

She predicted the Holocaust?

FELIX

And the end of the world.

LEEANNE

Everyone predicts the end of the world. It's a pretty safe bet if you wait long enough.

GOKHAN

She was really specific about it--a series of signs leading up to the apocalypse. Say what they are!

FELIX

My Italian is terrible, so this could be pretty garbled: the book, the dove, the spirits--

GOKHAN

(Counting)

Book, dove, spirits--

FELIX

Then God will come in a machine.

LEEANNE

What the hell does that mean?

GOKHAN

God coming in the machine? That's easy.

FELIX

Easy?

GOKHAN

Did she make the prediction in Italian?

SARAH

There was no Italian then,
only Latin.

FELIX

Latin, I'm sure.

GOKHAN

So what is it in Latin?

Ah.

LEEANNE

No response.

LEEANNE

It's a theatre term.

Puzzlement.

GOKHAN

Deus ex machina! Gods in machines.

ADAM

What?

SARAH

Right, from the ending of bad Greek plays--

ADAM

Did St. Aurora really say "*deus ex machina*"?

FELIX

Something like that.

ADAM

She's my vision!

SARAH

What vision?

ADAM

The one I thought was you! A young girl wearing Roman clothes shouting "*deus ex machina!*" She was predicting the end of the world.

LEEANNE

The apocalypse is the ending of a bad play?

Lighting suddenly changes, isolating SARAH and ADAM together as everyone else disappears.

ADAM

Don't hurt yourself.

SARAH

Why would I--?

ADAM

I'm hearing echoes from when you and Joshua were fifteen.

SARAH

I'm not depressed--I'm pissed off!

ADAM

And this vision of St. Aurora--
-who looked just like you--
proclaiming the end of the
world with such...joy.

SARAH

What makes you suddenly believe in visions?

ADAM

Joshua.

SARAH

I can't talk about him with you.

ADAM

You blame me.

(She looks away.)

If anything happens to you, my world *will* end. St. Aurora
came to tell me I'm almost out of time.

SARAH

You have time. You haven't accomplished your purpose.

ADAM

What's the purpose of any person, any species? To reproduce.
To pass something on to the next generation.

SARAH

Until they go extinct. And they all do. We will, too. So
what's our real purpose?

(He shrugs.)

God. What else is there? Our purpose is to glorify God.

ADAM

Flatter the vanity of a myth? Even gods go extinct.

SARAH

Not Allah!

ADAM

I think my real purpose is to get our family back.

SARAH

You can't get us back. You lost us forever when Joshua died!
I can't express--how fucked-up angry I am--

FELIX appears but they don't see him right away. He still carries the knucklebone.

SARAH

--How looking at you I only see him--

FELIX

Oh--I'm sorry--I--

(Lamely holds up the knucklebone.)

I wondered--never mind--

(Starts to go.)

SARAH

My father thinks I'm your Saint Aurora--he comes all the way here--

ADAM

I saw you sacrificing yourself!

SARAH

Joshua was sacrificed!

FELIX

I know he died. But no one will say exactly why that's your fault.

ADAM

I organized a conference. On the apocalypse.

SARAH

In Israel!

ADAM

A peace conference--it was supposed to be--

SARAH

The best scholars, the brightest minds, the most cogent theories--

SARAH

Koranic eschatology in Algerian national discourse, military strategies for the end times in the Dead Sea Scrolls--

FELIX

Oh, you mean the conference where--earlier this year--

SARAH

Yes, that one! In Jerusalem! Mecca for every apocalyptic crazy in the world! Armagedden R Us!

FELIX

"Tearing the Veil"--*that* was your conference--?

ADAM
It was a play on "lifting the veil," the literal translation of "apocalypse"--

SARAH
You can imagine the enthusiasm of the Muslim world.

ADAM
--Really an attempt to stave off Armagedden through understanding--

SARAH
Mother begged him not to do it there--if he was going to stage an eschatology conference--any place but Israel!

FELIX
Was your son one of--?

ADAM
It was time! The most ecumenical location--

FELIX
You don't have to tell me-- everybody knows--

SARAH
It was an invitation. Come shoot me. Blow me up!

FELIX
I didn't realize you were involved.

ADAM
My son came with me. Insisted on coming--

SARAH
He'd go anywhere you went. You knew it was dangerous and went anyway.

ADAM
And he saved my life. A nail bomb in a backpack--

SARAH
When the suicide bomber inevitably came--Joshua pushed dad behind a pillar--

FELIX
Seventeen people--?

SARAH
Sixteen people whose world is always ending, and my brother, whose world had just begun.

(ADAM cannot speak.)
He went there for you. He wanted to be you.

ADAM
So sudden--no kiss good-bye--

FELIX
I'm sorry.

SARAH
Thank you.

ADAM

Sarah, do you really think he...admired me?

SARAH

I know you loved him. More than me, that's always been obvious.

ADAM

He wasn't--my favorite--maybe if he had been--

SARAH

I'm not following you to Israel like he did. I'm not following you anywhere. Here's where I'm going!

She flings open the package, draping a *burka* across herself. Instant lighting change puts ADAM and FELIX in the dark and reveals GOKHAN, who stares at the *burka* in disbelief.

GOKHAN

Canim, you're kidding.

SARAH

Isn't it beautiful?

GOKHAN

A *burka*? Where'd you find it?

SARAH

A shop near Imam Bukhari mosque.

GOKHAN

No one wears *burkas* in Turkey! There's even a law against wearing veils in public.

SARAH

I want to wear it.

GOKHAN

Okay, go ahead, but not because of me.

SARAH

I want you to want me to wear it.

GOKHAN

I'm not religious! And you aren't either.

SARAH

I was.

GOKHAN

When you were fifteen for about five minutes it sounded like.

SARAH

Very born-again, way too intense for a Lutheran mom and insane to a Jewish atheist dad. They got a doctor to say I was depressed and medicated me.

GOKHAN

For being religious?

SARAH

I took it pretty far.

GOKHAN

How?

SARAH

I wanted to see what crucifixion was like, transcendence through suffering, sacrifice. So I asked Joshua to--
(Cruciform pose)

--Tie me up.

GOKHAN

To the point of...asphyxiation?

SARAH

I'm still here. But I liked the surrender. I wanted transcendence. I still do. Tell me to put it on.

GOKHAN

No.

SARAH

Ask me, as my husband, to put it on.

GOKHAN

I'm not your husband yet.

(She just stares at him.)

Put it on.

(She hesitates.)

Please?

SARAH

Tell me to don the burka.

GOKHAN

Don the *burka*.

SARAH strips off her clothes.

GOKHAN

A good Muslim woman would not disrobe in front of a man who is not her husband. We've been strict with ourselves so far--never seen--never gone--love isn't passion--it's more--

She is naked.

GOKHAN
 OK, put it on.

SARAH
 Order me.

GOKHAN
 What?

SARAH
 Order me to don the *burka*.

GOKHAN
 Sarah--

SARAH
 (Trembling.)
 Order me!

GOKHAN
 Don the damn *burka*!

With great ceremony, SARAH puts on the *burka*. Just before she disappears under it entirely, she freezes.

GOKHAN
 Put it on now!

She covers herself completely with the *burka*, giving a little moan.

GOKHAN
 I can't even tell who you are.

She kneels at his feet.

GOKHAN
 You could be anybody.
 (She moans.)
 Stop it! *Sus! Sus!*

SARAH
 Oh, my husband! *Canim!*

GOKHAN
 We're not married--don't--!

She bows to him.

GOKHAN
 This isn't--right--

SARAH
La ilaha illa Allah!

GOKHAN
You're creeping me out!

SARAH
Mohammed rasul Allah!

Under the *burka*, SARAH has an audible orgasm. GOKHAN looks horrified. Lights out on them and up on LEEANNE wearing gloves, gingerly holding what looks like a charred notebook. ADAM and FELIX stare at it.

LEEANNE
I thought the bodies would be the most significant find, but--

FELIX
What is it?

ADAM
It's charred. By the volcano?

LEEANNE
It was pressed between the ash layer and the fecal layer--

ADAM
In the latrine?

LEEANNE
So it's definitely from the date of the eruption.

FELIX
Is it a book?

LEEANNE
A codex.

FELIX
No.

LEEANNE
Rare for the first century.

FELIX
Not rare--impossible. It couldn't be Roman.

LEEANNE
The Romans invented the bound book. Until then there were only scrolls--

FELIX
Our family records claim the *Varros* invented the codex. I'm very skeptical, of course, but supposedly they made their fortune in publishing starting in the early *second* century.

ADAM
They invented the book?

LEEANNE

Maybe this is one of their first.

FELIX

If I thought that was true, it would justify every penny of your grant--proving an unbroken line going back 2000 years--

ADAM

Is it...legible?

LEEANNE

Not on this side--I need help to turn it over without damaging--

Very carefully she and ADAM turn the codex over. They all gasp.

FELIX

I told you it's not Roman. No!

ADAM

LEEANNE

The stratigraphy's first century--! That Latin's handwritten in a first-century style--

ADAM

How could that happen--?

FELIX

But that part's printed--!

LEEANNE

It looks exactly like charred papyrus from Herculaneum--

ADAM

Fiat lux!

FELIX

Are you fabricating findings?

ADAM gingerly takes the codex from LEEANNE.

LEEANNE

No, Felix, this really is ancient! It has to be!

ADAM

This is only the back half of it. Where are my notes?

FELIX

I recognize that bear!

Lights out on LEEANNE and FELIX, isolating ADAM in light.

ADAM

The first of St. Aurora's predictions, the first sign of the apocalypse, is that a book will be found. But is it a fraud? Sending this carbonized wad to the *Officina dei Papiri* in Naples to be scientifically dated, conserved, revived, made legible in its entirety--will prove--what?

Lights come up slowly on SARAH excavating a portion of the orchestra. She wears her usual work clothes, not the *burka*.

ADAM

Time out of joint, radioactive isotopes decaying at an accelerated rate? Past, present, future, colliding? Which I refuse to believe. When we got this--artifact--if I can call it that--when we got it back weeks later from stabilization in Naples--all hell broke loose! This codex that survived the eruption in the summer of 79 AD is half of my own UCLA notebook!

Lights out on ADAM and up fully on SARAH as she discovers something interesting in the ash layer.

SARAH

Oh.

She becomes very focused in her extraction of the object, clearing the ashes away faster, but even more carefully.

SARAH

Unbelievable!

She stops to photograph it *in situ*, then digs some more.

SARAH

(Calling.)

Mom!

(Digs.)

Mom, come look at this!

She lifts an ancient Roman glass vial out of the ground.

SARAH

Glass. Papa! Come see!

(Holds it up to the light.)

Liquid inside. Viable liquid after 2000 years!

QUINTUS TERENTIUS VARRO appears dressed as AEGISTHUS and collapses to his knees as if poisoned and stabbed. SARAH, focused on the vial, sees him out of the corner of her eye.

SARAH

Papa, you won't believe it, look!

VARRO AS AEGISTHUS

Detestor scelus in caput tuum! Non punient deis--

SARAH jumps up and stares, but
hesitates to go to him, seeing that
he's dressed in a toga.

SARAH

Papa--what? Are you hurt?

VARRO AS AEGISTHUS

--Damnatus de sceleri!

VARRO AS AEGISTHUS falls over dead.

SARAH

Papa!

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

Isolated in light, LEEANNE and GOKHAN carefully take the blackened codex, which has been separated into pages, out of an acid-free box. GOKHAN has a laptop computer.

GOKHAN

It's beautiful.

LEEANNE

It's destroyed.

GOKHAN

If they didn't separate the pages, we'd never be able to read it.

LEEANNE

But its integrity as an artifact is compromised.

GOKHAN

What good's an artifact you can't interpret?

LEEANNE

It's shit anyway. A modern artifact. Contamination of the site.

GOKHAN

But how do you explain that it's carbonized and the ink tested to be 2000 years old?

LEEANNE

Paper wasn't even invented then, came from China a thousand years later! The Romans only had papyrus. Sloppy technicians fucked up somehow. They can't tell a *sovrapposto* from a *sottoposto*! All they do is multispectral imaging any more--

GOKHAN

But it's legible.

(Reads.)

Clytemnestra.

LEEANNE

Oh, come on! It's a goddamn play?

GOKHAN

This is a theatre.

LEEANNE

(Looks closely.)

Oh!

GOKHAN AND LEEANNE

Menander?!

GOKHAN

Isn't there a House of Menander in Pompeii?

LEEANNE

Just because there's a fresco of the poet.

GOKHAN

Menander never wrote a Clytemnestra. And certainly not in Latin.

LEEANNE

So it's definitely fake.

GOKHAN

He never wrote any tragedies...that we know of.
(Continues reading.)

LEEANNE

If this gets out, the whole site is compromised--three years' work--everything invalidated!

GOKHAN

(Reading.)

Mihi in somnis...serpens dormiens visus adesse

LEEANNE

You read Latin?

GOKHAN

Please! I studied classics
as an undergraduate--

LEEANNE

A dream of snakes?

GOKHAN

Just as I dreamt...there is a sleepy snake...

GOKHAN types this into his laptop.

LEEANNE

(Reading.)

Not "a sleepy snake"--"a snake asleep."

GOKHAN

Clytemnestra's first line--the structure, the metre--it's a Greek play! And we can translate it--

LEEANNE

We? Translate a fake Latin
version of an unattributable
Greek play--?

GOKHAN

--Publish it--direct it!

GOKHAN

It's not fake!

LEEANNE

It's by no means authentic!

GOKHAN

Then how'd it get here?

LEEANNE

We should destroy it!

GOKHAN

No! It could be the archeological find of the century! A new Greek tragedy by a writer who only wrote comedies!

LEEANNE

There's no explanation. But it's sure as hell written on half a UCLA notebook brought here by *my husband*--the archeological *scandal* of the century!

GOKHAN

So how do you define authentic? It couldn't possibly be an ancient Greek play written by the famous comic playwright Menander copied into Latin and carbonized in the eruption of Vesuvius. Got that. But it exists. It is paper and ink, from different eras, but paper and ink just the same. And--

(Examining another page.)

--Yes, here's someone else speaking--*ancilla*--a handmaid--it seems to be a play. Written by someone. Left here by someone. To be found by us. Inherited, passed down--somehow. Fake or real, modern or ancient, it is an authentic idea...of something. I'm going to find out what.

LEEANNE

That's not scientific in the slightest.

GOKHAN

It's *artistic*.

LEEANNE

Whatever you do, if you publish, don't say where you got it.

GOKHAN

I'm under no obligation.

(Reading.)

Interficias--

LEEANNE

If you want to marry my daughter.

GOKHAN

You don't want that anyway.

LEEANNE

I'm not convinced you do. How's the sex?

GOKHAN

(Looks at her a moment, then
types)

Interficias means--"kill."

LEEANNE

(Examining it.)

"May you kill it," actually. It's the subjunctive.
Oh, look at this--coarse Latin--*stulte infirme*--weakling fool
or wimp--hardly the elevated language of tragedy!

GOKHAN

Maybe it's a comedy.

LEEANNE

Clytemnestra murdered by her son. How's that a comedy?

GOKHAN

That's what we'll find out!

LEEANNE

Again, we?

GOKHAN

I can translate, but you're better. More nuanced. C'mon,
you're dying to!

LEEANNE

I'm behind on the excavation--

GOKHAN

And then I can direct the world premiere of a lost Greek
play! You never know.

LEEANNE

(Smiles.)

Your passion is almost persuasive. Like Joshua's.

GOKHAN

Then you'll do it?

LEEANNE

No.

(He gives her a pleading look.)

But if you get stuck on a word, you can ask me.

GOKHAN

Thank you! Oh, and--!

LEEANNE

What?

GOKHAN

Could you ask Felix for a grant to support the production?

LEEANNE

Ask my funder to give you a grant?

GOKHAN

He'd do it, I bet!
(Calls.)

Felix!

LEEANNE

Happy to help, if you break up with Sarah.

GOKHAN

How about I just agree never to disclose the sketchy provenance?

LEEANNE

Guns to each others' heads. Nice.

FELIX and ADAM approach, mid-conversation.

FELIX

Supposedly the first Varros in this line were father and son publishers--and maybe Leeanne can help verify--

ADAM

Indeed! What's the documentation?

GOKHAN

Felix, Leeanne wants to ask you something.

FELIX

A narrative genealogy--

LEEANNE

I do not!

FELIX

--Not much more than a bunch of begats, written in the third century by Lucretius Varro, who lived near what's now Mantua.

GOKHAN

Felix, look at this.

FELIX

Oh, that thing.

ADAM

My notebook!

FELIX

You kept it?

GOKHAN

It's a play!

ADAM

Someone wrote a play in my notebook?

GOKHAN

In ink from the first century!

LEEANNE

Adam, whatever it is, it's not real.

GOKHAN

We just started--

GOKHAN

--Translating it--

LEEANNE

Not we!

GOKHAN

--But it seems to be a play called *Clytemnestra* written by a Greek playwright--

GOKHAN

--Named Menander except nobody's ever seen it before!

LEEANNE

In Latin, so it's a copy of a copy of a translation of an abortion--

GOKHAN

Look at the first line: *Mihi in somnis serpens dormiens visus adesse--*

FELIX

That's really legible.

GOKHAN

--*Quod orbis inter ara amo a laqueum.*

GOKHAN

Just like my dream, a snake asleep--

LEEANNE

--Just as I dreamt would be more correct--

GOKHAN

And coiled around the altar like a noose.

ADAM

A snake? Like the one Sarah found?

FELIX

Like a moose?

LEEANNE

Adam, don't make connections where none exist--

GOKHAN

Not a moose! A noose!

LEEANNE

--Between real archeology and literary fraud--

ADAM

Maybe your snake is a prop from the play!

GOKHAN

I'm seeing it in my head! The whole production!

ADAM

Felix, maybe your ancestors were actors--

FELIX AND LEEANNE

God forbid!

ADAM

Or playwrights--

ADAM

--Instead of publishers. You have the opportunity to rewrite your family's founding myth.

FELIX

I hope it's not a myth--

ADAM

You said it was legendary--

FELIX

I want real evidence, the truth.

FELIX

That's why I sponsored this dig. My family means a lot to me, actually--so I have to say this is more than a little disturbing.

GOKHAN

This is why I dumped Classics for theatre. So I could I actually do something--

SARAH

(Off.)

Papa!

GOKHAN

--Instead of sit around bullshitting about minutiae!

SARAH runs in clutching the ancient Roman glass bottle.

SARAH

Papa!

She sees ADAM and rushes to hug him.

ADAM

Sarah, what's wrong?

SARAH

Papa, you're all right!

ADAM

Yes, I'm fine. Why are you--?

She pushes herself away from him.

SARAH

You were just--! I saw--!

GOKHAN

What'd you see?

LEEANNE

Sarah, calm down!

ADAM

(He reaches toward her, she avoids him.)

Sweetie, tell us--

FELIX

Is that possible?

LEEANNE

Yes, other sealed vessels from Pompeii have been found with liquid inside, wine.

GOKHAN

What's the liquid?

LEEANNE

Have to take it to Naples to unseal and analyze.

ADAM

Where'd you find it?

SARAH

In the *skene*, back stage--and then Papa--or somebody--came out to the orchestra and fell over dead.

Sound of a muezzin. They all look around, confused.

FELIX

Is that a muezzin?

SARAH

(Pulling out her phone.)

Time for prayers. Excuse me.

SARAH rather ostentatiously lays out a prayer rug.

GOKHAN

Sarah, where'd you get that?

LEEANNE

Seriously? A mullah ap?

SARAH

I downloaded it last time we were in Naples. Join me.

GOKHAN

That's okay.

LEEANNE

You're shitting me.

ADAM

She's more Islamic than thou.

SARAH

Really, you should pray.

SARAH bows and prays. GOKHAN does not. They all look embarrassed as the muezzin continues. Lighting change isolates ADAM in light.

ADAM

Visions of me! Or some Roman saint who looks like me. I'm in her head, if not her heart! She was my favorite. I indulged her too much, gave her no limits--and now she's spitting fatwas, oppressing herself. This marriage to Gokhan, converting--a form of suicide?

Lights up on everyone and the muezzin ends. SARAH holds a tray of small bones.

SARAH

A pigeon.

ADAM

A dove!

SARAH AND LEEANNE

Same thing.

ADAM

That's--a sign--

FELIX

One of St. Aurora's signs--

ADAM AND FELIX

--Of the apocalypse!

SARAH

Oh, Papa, no!

LEEANNE

Adam, go back to LA. You're losing it entirely.

SARAH

It's just a dead bird I found in the orchestra.

GOKHAN

Someone's last lunch--squab!

ADAM

The first signs were--

FELIX

The book, the dove--!

GOKHAN

The play is a book!

SARAH

Gokhan, are you kidding me right now--?

GOKHAN

A book in verse! I'm putting it in iambic pentameter so it flows more naturally in English.

ADAM

What was the last sign?

FELIX

The spirits resurrected.

ADAM

Sarah, you saw a ghost!

LEEANNE pulls GOKHAN aside.

SARAH

I saw you! It wasn't a ghost. There's no such thing.

ADAM

I saw one, too--St. Aurora!

FELIX

I saw one once.

LEEANNE

(Sotto voce, to GOKHAN.)
Ask Felix for your grant now--
he seems to believe anything!

FELIX

That's right! Two spirits
resurrected!

GOKHAN

(Sotto voce.)
I can't just--

ADAM

And then?

LEEANNE

(Sotto voce.)
Get him alone. I'm sure he'd
like spending more time with
you.

FELIX

God will come in a machine.

LEEANNE

(Sotto voce.)
And he's not at all bad
looking.

SARAH

That's straight up crazy.

ADAM

It's just physics, isn't it, Leeanne? The arrival of God as
a metaphor for the universe spiraling down into a super-
massive black hole--

LEEANNE

Yeah, in about 100 trillion years--

ADAM

--And we'd see time overlap, the past, present and future
happening simultaneously--

FELIX

I guess I don't need to fund
another season of
excavation...

LEEANNE

Adam, now's the worst time to
get irrational--

ADAM

Belief is irrational, of
course, but--

LEEANNE

Felix, don't even joke!

SARAH

It's not! Faith is the only rational response to a universe-- a God--too vast for us to understand. You said that yourself.

LEEANNE

The end of the universe matters not at all. Only each life, our selfish concerns, the pigeon we ate for lunch, our little play, our tiny bottle of mysterious liquid--

SARAH

Our brother and son.

LEEANNE

Sarah, of course--

ADAM

Sarah, Joshua matters!

ADAM

His last act--saving my life--meant he mattered to the very end--

SARAH

To you! But he shouldn't have gone to your horrible conference!

FELIX

(To GOKHAN.)
She's kind of a dog on a bone.

ADAM

He didn't have to go to Jerusalem! He insisted on going!

SARAH

You didn't try to talk him out of it.

LEEANNE

Sarah, that's enough!

ADAM

I thought I scared him off, then he came back and said he couldn't let me go alone.

(Near tears.)

He wanted to--protect me--and I never got to thank him--

SARAH

The Mossad told you the conference was targeted. You shouldn't have gone!

ADAM

(In tears.)

I know that now.

LEEANNE

Sarah, leave your father alone. He can't change what he did. Adam, can you take that bottle to the lab in Naples?

SARAH

I was planning on--

LEEANNE

No, you and I need to talk.

ADAM

I don't know where the lab--

LEEANNE

Gokhan does. And Felix can go with you.

GOKHAN

Okay.

FELIX

Sure.

Lights out on everyone except ADAM.

ADAM

Of course it was a ploy. But what was Leeanne up to? How can I so love this vulgar-tongued scientist who accepts that the Son of God is present in, with, and under multi-grain pita and Two-Buck Chuck? Leeanne doesn't believe in St. Aurora's prophecies, but she herself found the next sign. And she didn't tell me because she was afraid I'd believe.

Lights out on ADAM and up on LEEANNE excavating a marked-off area, not near SARAH'S sections. SARAH kneels next to LEEANNE as she brushes and picks at the ground.

SARAH

It looks like terracotta.

LEEANNE

But not glazed, raw, rough--

SARAH

Be careful!

LEEANNE

I am!

SARAH

Faster!

LEEANNE

Careful or faster? Which?

SARAH

Let me do this side!

They work together on the same area.
Lights up on FELIX and GOKHAN in a
train compartment on the Vesuviana.

GOKHAN
I thought I could save her, but I don't know if I'm up to it.
(Looking at the knucklebone.)
Do you think this can still work miracles?

FELIX
Holy relics are powerful for centuries--if you believe the
hagiography.

GOKHAN
Can I make a wish?

FELIX
I don't think that's how it works.

GOKHAN
Every one of us has touched it. Maybe we'll all get our
miracles.

FELIX
Maybe that's why Adam and Sarah are seeing ghosts.

GOKHAN
Now it's my turn.
(Closes his eyes to wish on the
knucklebone.)

FELIX
This is so wrong.

GOKHAN
How rich are you?

FELIX
Richer than I'm comfortable with. I didn't grow up that way.
Kinda grosses me out, actually.

GOKHAN
So now you want to give it all away, some form of
propitiation?

FELIX
It's my family's money, so I have to be responsible, smart
about it.

GOKHAN
Sponsoring this dig is responsible?

FELIX

I hope so. They're after me to pull the plug. Frivolous, they say. And Leeanne's reputation as an archaeologist is that she plays fast and loose...

GOKHAN

It's not just kinda...vain? Like Daughters of the American Revolution?

FELIX

History's important. I really want to believe my family goes back to Rome, that our lineage, our love, really, held us together this long--

GOKHAN

Love can do that?

FELIX

Sorry. I get a little sentimental about family.

GOKHAN

Me, too.

FELIX

Is that why you're marrying Sarah? She's a wee bit spoiled.

GOKHAN

But really smart, lots smarter than me.

FELIX

Academically. But not very socially intelligent. Compared to you, anyway.

GOKHAN

That's kind of a weird compliment. Makes me sound... manipulative.

FELIX

Are you in love with her?

GOKHAN

I'm marrying her!

FELIX

Love like a cataclysm, like the end of the world?

GOKHAN

Love isn't--insane--like that.

FELIX

It can be.

GOKHAN

I don't love her *insanely*.

FELIX

You love her like a brother.

GOKHAN

You play dirty.

FELIX

I think you like that. What'd you wish for? What's your miracle?

GOKHAN

If I tell you it won't come true.

FELIX

Or maybe telling me could make it come true.

They smile at each other. ADAM comes into the compartment.

ADAM

Damn enlarged prostate. Wait till you're my age! What are you up to?

FELIX AND GOKHAN

Nothing.

They look at each other and smile again. Lights out on FELIX, GOKHAN and ADAM.

SARAH

It *is* a face!

LEEANNE

A sculpture, maybe a bust--where'd you find the herm?

SARAH

(Pointing.)

Over there. Do you think it's Quintus Terentius Varro?

LEEANNE

It looks--familiar--

SARAH

Like the face on the cast! *Just* like it!

LEEANNE

Something's wrong with the side of the head--

SARAH

Where? Oh, I see--

LEEANNE

It's poked in, smashed a little--

SARAH

I can see finger marks--

LEEANNE

Fingerprints!

SARAH

Oh, my God! Fingerprints from a Roman sculptor!

LEEANNE

Look at that face! Sarah, look at it!

SARAH

Without a doubt the same as the cast. Which means the body is probably Quintus--

LEEANNE

You could be right, but also--

SARAH gasps and they stare at the face in the ground.

LEEANNE

We've all been spending too much time together, isolated up here--

SARAH

Right, preoccupied with each other, like me imagining that toga guy--

LEEANNE

You imagined Quintus--who looked like--

SARAH

(Indicating the face in the ground.)

This.

Silence for a moment.

SARAH

Papa will see this as validation of St. Aurora.

LEEANNE

He doesn't really believe that crazy prediction?

SARAH

You have to believe in something.

LEEANNE

Can you forgive him for Joshua? That might bring him back to earth.

SARAH

No. Only Allah is all-forgiving. How can you forgive him?

LEEANNE

As much as I loved--love--Joshua, I care about Adam, too.

SARAH

But you stopped loving him, didn't you?

LEEANNE

I can't imagine a better father. I was always jealous you loved him more--

SARAH

I don't love him more than you, but you piss me off--and you didn't answer my question.

LEEANNE

Of course, I love him!

SARAH

I haven't seen you touch him since Joshua died.

LEEANNE

I can't, Sarah. Leave it at that.

SARAH

So you haven't been a good Lutheran and really forgiven him.

LEEANNE

Forgiveness is a tiny thing, but as big as the whole world--how'd you put it?--a hairpin precious as a palace.

SARAH

Joshua loved him more, not me.

LEEANNE

You don't have to compete with your brother.

SARAH

Not any more.

LEEANNE

Joshua and I had very harsh words before he left--our last words--and I never got to tell him I loved him or say good-bye.

SARAH

I had words with him, too.

LEEANNE

You tried to talk Joshua out of going to Jerusalem?

Silence.

LEEANNE

Be honest now. You almost went with your father to Jerusalem, were excited about it--

SARAH

Before the Israelis warned him it was dangerous!

LEEANNE

That's what excited you.

SARAH

I wanted to protect Papa!

LEEANNE

If I hadn't threatened to bar you from the dig, you'd have been at the conference instead of Joshua.

SARAH

Don't you think I think about that all the time?

LEEANNE

I'm sorry. Let's worry about your father. It's too late to worry about Joshua.

SARAH

Papa's not going to die, the world's not ending--he just thinks it is.

LEEANNE
He's not well.

SARAH
Duh!

LEEANNE
It's serious. His heart. Electrical interruptions--

SARAH
But he's not dying!

LEEANNE
I hope not, but he got a pacemaker and doesn't need anymore stress.

SARAH
A pacemaker? Really?

LEEANNE
Plus meds.

SARAH
What kind of meds? I've never seen him so manic. It's scary and sad.

LEEANNE
He's scared for you.

SARAH
You two always think I'm depressed. I'm angry!

LEEANNE
As angry as your born-again phase? Your Lubovitcher phase?

SARAH
I went to chabad *twice*!

LEEANNE
You shaved your head.

SARAH
Islam is not a phase!

LEEANNE
Is Gokhan a phase?

SARAH
He's just obsessed with this stupid play.

LEEANNE
I'm getting fond of him--he asks me Latin questions so politely--but you haven't really put him to the test.

SARAH
What test?

LEEANNE

You've always preferred abstractions.

SARAH

Gokhan is not an abstraction!

LEEANNE

No, he's a man. And you could try being nicer to him.

SARAH

I am nice!

LEEANNE

I mean...*nice*.

SARAH

How am I going to marry into Islam properly if I lift my slippers to the ceiling before?

LEEANNE

It's not like you're a virgin.

SARAH

Mother! Gross!

LEEANNE

I'm the one grossed out, Sarah. You only met him a few months ago. Your proposal of marriage--and it was you who proposed, wasn't it?--some sort of bitter self-abnegation just to get back at me and Adam, converting even though Gokhan couldn't care less--when you're at heart an atheist like your father--

ADAM

(Off.)

Sarah! Leeanne!

LEEANNE

Mama, I wanted to be you, not Papa!

FELIX and GOKHAN bring a large box into the orchestra, followed by ADAM.

GOKHAN

It's hella good!

FELIX

It's amazing!

ADAM

You're not going to believe it!

LEEANNE

I'm starting not to believe anything we've found.

FELIX

They gave us the bones and showed us--

SARAH

We've got something to show you, too.

GOKHAN
Don't ruin it!

LEEANNE
No, we don't.

LEEANNE covers the small area of excavation while GOKHAN and FELIX open the box.

ADAM
It's two things, really.

SARAH
Mom, we can't--

FELIX
Two major things!

LEEANNE
Sarah, not now!

GOKHAN
Three things--the bottle--!

ADAM
Yes! I almost forgot about the bottle!

SARAH
What's in the bottle?

The men all look at each other.

ADAM
Belladonna.

LEEANNE
Poison?

FELIX
Heart medication. And women took it to make their pupils large and alluring, hence the name, according to Wikipedia.

GOKHAN
But poison if you use too much!

SARAH
Really?

LEEANNE
Were the cast people poisoned? Killed themselves when the volcano erupted?

FELIX
No, the bottle was sealed, full--

ADAM
And the chemical analysis of the bones showed no traces of belladonna.

FELIX
The man died of an aortal aneurism.

GOKHAN
A heart attack!

LEEANNE

His heart?

FELIX

There's a deformation of the
bone that makes it clear--

ADAM

Which is probably why they
had the belladonna!

ADAM

The woman died of gas inhalation: methane, carbon dioxide,
just like you thought--traces in her bones--

FELIX

We figured the man saw the eruption, had a heart attack, and
the woman--maybe his wife--stayed with him and suffocated in
the gasses.

GOKHAN

It's really very sweet.

ADAM

Love that's lasted 2000 years!

LEEANNE and SARAH put on gloves.

LEEANNE

No heart attacks, Adam, cause I'm not facing a volcano for
you.

ADAM

But there's more!

LEEANNE

God help us. What?

GOKHAN

We thought it was two bodies, but it's three!

LEEANNE

(Carefully lifts bones out of
the box.)

Three? Two skulls, two pelvises--

FELIX

(Pulling a small bundle out of
the box.)

Another skull--

SARAH

Careful! Gloves! It's organic material!

FELIX

(Unwraps it.)

Another pelvis, two femurs--

SARAH
 (Taking it from him.)
 A baby?

FELIX puts on gloves.

GOKHAN
 A fetus.

LEEANNE
 She died pregnant?

LEEANNE hands one of the skulls to
 FELIX and takes the bundle.

ADAM
 Early in the second
 trimester.

LEEANNE
 It's tiny!

SARAH
 How horrible!

GOKHAN
 Yeah, it's really sad.

FELIX
 But she stood by her man.

SARAH
 Or at least lay down on him.

ADAM
 They must have thought the world was ending.

LEEANNE
 (Cradling the fetal bones.)
 It did, for them.

ADAM
 And when we die, time stops--*all things* end: civilization,
 the universe. Not Man in God's image, but the universe in
 Man's image!

FELIX accidentally separates the
 jawbone from the skull.

SARAH
 And therefore God in Man's image? Bullshit!

FELIX
 Oh, my God.

ADAM
 Which makes us gods.

ADAM

(Silence.)

Doesn't it? Only gods can create gods. Where did Zeus come from?

ADAM

Ahura Mazda, Shiva,
Quetzacoatl, Baal--

FELIX

Holy shit! Look at this!

ADAM

--Yahweh, Allah, but from
human imagination?

FELIX

Did you deliberately plant
these bones?

LEEANNE

What is it, Felix?

ADAM

Every one of us is a god!

FELIX

To trick me into giving you a grant?

LEEANNE

No, we'd never--

SARAH

What are you accusing us of?

FELIX

Look at this:

(Holds up the jawbone.)

Fillings! Silver fillings!

Sudden lighting change isolates SARAH
and GOKHAN in light and puts the others
in darkness.

SARAH

You believe in Allah, don't you?

GOKHAN

Mostly. Some. A little. I mean, God is love, right?

SARAH

Do you want me to convert?

GOKHAN

Only if it's for the right reasons. Religion is value
neutral, neither good nor bad. Depends on what you do with
it. If you convert will you feed the poor or blow up
infidels? Make love or war?

SARAH

Love! Exactly! Faith is love! I feel it in my bones! The Prophet Mohammed said "Each of you should save himself from the fire by giving even half a date in charity." How beautiful is that?

GOKHAN

"Your Lord has decreed that you shall serve none but him, and do good to your parents. Speak to them kindly and respectfully, spread over them the wings of humility and mercy." Don't don the burka for me. Please. And if it's really about your family--pissing off your parents--you should forgive them before involving me--give them half a date!

SARAH

Only Allah is All-Forgiving, All-Merciful. But what can I do for you?

GOKHAN

You already brought me here, where we found this play--it's like a miracle! I'm almost halfway through translating, and the voices from two thousand years ago are so clear, so human, so funny!

SARAH

Mom found the play, real or fake, whatever. I can do more for you. I can be...nicer.

GOKHAN

You're nice. Just stressed.

SARAH

(Touches him.)

I want to be nice in a way I haven't.

GOKHAN

(Responding cautiously.)

That would be...nice. But you wanted to wait--I respect that.

SARAH

I'm stressed by not being nice.

They start making out.

GOKHAN

Let's go--in the villa--

SARAH

No, takes too long--

GOKHAN

--The sleeping bags--privacy--

SARAH

I'll be quiet. Neither seen nor heard.

Lighting change puts SARAH in darkness
and illuminates ADAM in the same pool
of light as GOKHAN.

ADAM

Half Greek and half Turkish?

GOKHAN

(Uptight.)

That's right. Like Cyprus.

ADAM

But not Jewish?

GOKHAN

No Jewish blood that I'm aware of.

ADAM

Not even Sephardic?

GOKHAN

I thought you were an atheist, or at least non-practicing.

ADAM

Non-practicing, indeed.

GOKHAN

I figured, since you think we're all gods.

ADAM

Does love outlive us?

GOKHAN

That's random.

ADAM

No one wants to live forever. But we want love forever--we
say it's forever--is that how you love my daughter?

GOKHAN

I love her in the most honorable way.

ADAM

If it's honorable, it's not love.

GOKHAN

Why does everyone think love has to be crazy?

ADAM

Do you think that belladonna is still viable?

GOKHAN

After 2000 years? If you need heart meds, I'm sure there are fresher ones.

ADAM

If I lose my only remaining child, that's the end of my world. And if you don't love her--she doesn't take disappointment well--

GOKHAN

I love her, okay?

ADAM

How well do really know her? She tried to hurt herself before.

GOKHAN

The crucifixion game when she was a kid?

ADAM

It wasn't a game. One time she stopped breathing. Joshua took her down, gave her CPR, saved her life. She told him he lost his nerve and never forgave him. Are you playing a game with her?

GOKHAN

No!

ADAM

If something should happen to her because of you--

GOKHAN

Why get all protective now, when you've been practically a deadbeat dad?

ADAM

Because she and LEEANNE are all I have left! If I lose them, St. Aurora's prophecy would come true for me.

GOKHAN

You really believe the prophecy?

ADAM

It's starting to feel like it.

GOKHAN

Love isn't insane, but maybe you are.

ADAM

I told LEEANNE I'd give my blessing to your marriage, but only if you really love Sarah. You're the first she's trusted her heart to like Joshua. Do you truly love her?

GOKHAN

Is this some twisted way for you to make peace with your son?

ADAM

You don't look that much like him.

GOKHAN

I've seen pictures. Video. I even sound like him.

(Sings, beautifully.)

The rosy fingers of dawn

Child of the morning

When the night is gone

New day is borning

ADAM weeps.

GOKHAN

I can play the crucifixion game, too.

DAPHNE, a Roman matron, 40s-50s,
appears as CLYTEMNESTRA with a knife.
ADAM sees her, but GOKHAN doesn't.

ADAM

Leeanne--what--?

DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA

Vos servabo ne piaculum committatis in matrem!

DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA stabs herself.

ADAM

Leeanne! Gokhan, stop her!

ADAM starts to run to DAPHNE AS
CLYTEMNESTRA, but GOKHAN grabs and
holds him. DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA
falls.

GOKHAN

Adam, there's nothing there!

ADAM

It's Leeanne--she stabbed
herself!

DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA

*Animi Furiarum placantur,
scelere matricidii non
committato!*

GOKHAN

She didn't! She's fine!
She's in the villa!

DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA

*Manu matris solvemini
eximemini!*

ADAM

Another vision--suicide--!

DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA

Desinat pestis! Nullae deae saevae! Liberamini!

ADAM

The honorable Roman way?

ADAM breaks away from GOKHAN. An instant lighting change isolates ADAM in light, putting both GOKHAN and DAPHNE AS CLYTEMNESTRA in the dark.

ADAM

I lost my son by taking him on a suicidal trip, so could I save my daughter by sacrificing myself? Is that what I should do if I believe Saint Aurora's prediction--her curse? Is the secret in these bones?

ADAM picks up the jawbone from the box of bones and examines it.

ADAM

What in God's name--?

Lights out on ADAM and up on GOKHAN and LEEANNE, working on the play. She's looking at the carbonized pages and he's typing into his laptop.

GOKHAN

"Revenge goes on and on--"

LEEANNE

No, it's a negative--"*Non explemus ultione nisi peccatos deis ignoscamus*" means "Revenge will never end--"

GOKHAN

"Revenge will never end once it begins
Till we forgive the unjust gods their sins."

Silence.

LEEANNE

Congratulations, you're done.

GOKHAN

A brand new ancient Greek tragedy.

LEEANNE

Or a comedy.

GOKHAN

Comedies are supposed to end in marriage, and tragedies in death.

LEEANNE

Don't be such a tight-ass!

GOKHAN

Please! I'm a classicist! I can't help it!

LEEANNE

Maybe the old definitions of comedy and tragedy don't work any more. Or at least in this case. Laughing at death.

GOKHAN

A funny Greek tragedy. Or a bummer of a comedy.

LEEANNE

Or a fake. The ideas are too modern.

GOKHAN

Because it argues for human responsibility and rebukes the gods? Lots of Greek plays showed the gods with feet of clay.

LEEANNE

All those Bible quotes! Completely anachronistic.

GOKHAN

Goes with the cross we found.

LEEANNE

Who would write something like this, and why?

GOKHAN

Comedy is the weapon of the oppressed, tragedy a warning from the oppressor.

LEEANNE

The people who lived in this villa were not oppressed.

GOKHAN

Maybe one of their slaves wrote it--a Greek slave, what's her name--Eos!

LEEANNE

Most Greek plays end with a *deus ex machina*--this one refuses--
-Clytemnestra thwarts the gods by taking matters into her
own hands.

GOKHAN

It's still relevant 20 centuries later-- humanity developing
godlike powers, the ability to both create and destroy--

LEEANNE

Of course it's relevant today--it was probably just written.
Maybe by Adam! It's his notebook! Please tell me you're
not going to try to pass this off as real.

GOKHAN

That's a marketing decision.

LEEANNE

As soon as producers know the provenance, they'll drop it.

GOKHAN

Not if Felix is the producer.

LEEANNE

Have you asked him?

GOKHAN

Not yet.

LEEANNE

He could do a lot more for you than Sarah.

GOKHAN

(Gesturing to the carbonized
pages.)

Sarah did this. Brought me here to find it, I mean.

LEEANNE

Maybe she did. Maybe she wrote a whole goddam Greek play in Latin, then carbonized Adam's notebook! Maybe she put fucking silver fillings in the teeth of a 2000-year old skeleton, just to compromise the site and humiliate her mother, ruin my career! Her own career before it even gets started!

VOICE

Finiscila! Sei sempre arrabbiata! [Be quiet! You are an angry woman!]

LEEANNE

(Shouting.)

Lei è tranquilla! Siete pigri scemo! Suchiami il cazzo! [You be quiet! You lazy jerk! Suck my dick!]

(Silence.)

I'm in deep shit. Now my Fiat is going to explode.

Lights out on LEEANNE and up on someone in a burka sitting quietly. GOKHAN sees the figure.

GOKHAN

Take it off.

(No response.)

Take off the *burka*.

(No response.)

If you plan to be a Muslim wife, obey your husband. There's no one here to see you except me. Take it off!

(No response.)

No *jilbab*, no *khumur*! The Prophet does not require it.

(No response.)

Speak!

(No response.)

Speak to your husband!

(No response.)

Ah. Quiet. Neither seen nor heard.

(The figure nods.)

That is not my wish!

GOKHAN goes to the figure and tries to take remove the *burka*, but the figure grabs him, resisting, pulling him close, into the folds of the burka. They wrestle.

GOKHAN

Sarah, that's enough. You're freaking me out! Take it off! Let go! This is so fucked-up! You're fetishizing Islam! If I have to yell, everybody's going to be embarrassed! This whole site will erupt!

GOKHAN suddenly stops struggling, freezes. The figure freezes as well. GOKHAN steps back. Slowly, the figure lifts the *burka* high enough to reveal that it's FELIX underneath (possibly naked). They stare at each other for a moment, then FELIX steps forward and lowers the *burka* over GOKHAN, covering them both. Lights out on them and up on ADAM, greatly distressed and holding the jawbone in his hand.

ADAM

Sarah's not insane. I'm not insane. I am not one of them. But time is spiraling down to the end.

(Gesturing with the jawbone.)

Is this proof enough?

Lights up on EOS, kneeling, a rapturous look upon her face. ADAM sees her and is transfixed.

EOS

Ecce! Rhododáktylos Eos! Novum diem! O novam terram!

She goes into a fit of religious ecstasy, writhing and moaning.

ADAM

Sarah! Sarah!

(She doesn't hear him.)

Aurora! Eos!

EOS

Nonne audis? Nomen mihi vocat!

ADAM

Eos! Yes! I'm your father!

EOS

Destruitur flammis terra sanguine!

ADAM

I am...Quintus Terentius Varro!

EOS

Venit! Venit!

Lights out on EOS, and ADAM faints. FELIX appears and kneels beside ADAM.

FELIX

Adam, are you okay? You were shouting. Did you pass out?

ADAM

(Sitting up.)

All the signs have come true--the book, the dove, the spirits resurrected--I just saw her again!

FELIX

(Calling.)

Leeanne! Sarah!

(To ADAM.)

You didn't drink the belladonna, did you?

LEEANNE rushes in.

FELIX

You're sort of raving!

LEEANNE

Felix, what's wrong?

ADAM

The prophecy's coming true!

FELIX

It is not! There's a prophecy that my family will end when the founders meet again--and that will never happen! They've been dead as long as Jesus.

ADAM

I am the founder! I'm Quintus Terentius Varro!

LEEANNE

Adam, did you write that Clytemnestra play?

ADAM

I figured it out, Leeanne.
All of it!

FELIX

I think he might have taken
belladonna--let me check--

FELIX runs off just as SARAH and GOKHAN
run in.

SARAH

What's happening to Papa?

LEEANNE

He's talking crazy.

GOKHAN

Crazier than usual?

SARAH

Shut up, Gokhan. Can you
stand, Papa?

LEEANNE

He's going on about
prophecies again!

SARAH helps ADAM stand.

ADAM

The children become the parents, the humans become the gods--

FELIX runs back in.

FELIX

It's not in storage--did someone take it?

LEEANNE AND GOKHAN

What?

FELIX

The belladonna.

(To ADAM.)

Did you take it?

LEEANNE

He wouldn't have the nerve.

No way!

SARAH

ADAM

You didn't take it, did you, Sarah?

SARAH

Of course not!

LEEANNE

Felix, what happened?

FELIX

Evidently he passed out.

ADAM

The prophecy's fulfilled!

SARAH

Papa, stop, what's wrong with you?

ADAM

(Picks up the codex)
Proof!

LEEANNE

Adam, that's fake--

ADAM pulls a sheet off the bust, now excavated, cleaned and sitting on top of the herm. GOKHAN gasps, checks his phone.

LEEANNE

(To SARAH.)

Did you show him?

SARAH

No, I hid it!

ADAM

It's me, don't you see? I look just like him!

GOKHAN

(Looking at his phone.)
It's the face of the cast, too! Look!
(Shows it to FELIX.)

ADAM
The cast, yes! That's me in that eternal embrace--love
that lasts forever! Our love, Leeanne!

FELIX
All right, that's it. *I'm* going away.

LEEANNE
No, Felix, he'll be all right--!

FELIX
This is no longer a credible dig. Too many compromises, too
much--craziness--the foundation, the family, has been looking
for an excuse--

LEEANNE

Most of the artifacts are authentic--

ADAM

No, Felix, the craziness proves authenticity--!

FELIX

A) too many fakes, calls the whole site into question. B) you probably carved Varro into that herm to get our support!

LEEANNE

Felix, no! We'd never do that! This site is remarkable--don't--!

FELIX

I'm going to Naples and flying back to New Orleans as soon as I can get a flight. I'll wire you the money for the rest of the season, then I'm done.

GOKHAN

And I'm going with him.

Silence.

SARAH

Gokhan...what?

GOKHAN

His foundation is funding a production of the play.

LEEANNE

Funding a production? When the play's a forgery?

GOKHAN

You never know.

FELIX

We're discussing it--a presentation to the board.

SARAH

When will you be back?

GOKHAN

Dunno.

SARAH

You're just going to stay in New Orleans?

GOKHAN

(Looks at FELIX, shrugs.)

So you can wear your *burka* all you want.

FELIX

But you might want to wash it first.

SARAH

You're fucking kidding.

LEEANNE

Honey, he's in theatre.

ADAM

This is for the best.

SARAH

This is insane!

GOKHAN

Maybe love is insane.

SARAH
 (Tries to embrace him.)
 And you love me!

GOKHAN
 (Stopping her.)
 Yes, but--like a brother.

SARAH freezes, devastated.

LEEANNE
 Good-bye...Gokhan.

Everyone is a little embarrassed.

GOKHAN
 (Picks up the codex.)
 And I'm...uh...taking the codex.

LEEANNE
 You can't! It's a cultural property of the Italian state!

GOKHAN
 A burnt UCLA notebook? I don't think so. And you don't want me telling anyone where I got it. Felix, the car will be here in five minutes.

FELIX
 Gokhan, hold on, we have to--

GOKHAN leaves.

SARAH
 Papa...

ADAM
 I'm sorry, sweetie, it's the end of the world.

SARAH
 My boyfriend's running off with a man--

LEEANNE
 That's not the end of the world.

ADAM
 Yes, it is--here's the proof and my vision of St. Aurora confirmed it!

He holds out the jawbone with the fillings.

LEEANNE
 Enough with the fakes!

FELIX
 How can a fake artifact be proof?

ADAM

It's not fake! The bones carbon-date to the first century.

LEEANNE

The Romans didn't have silver fillings and porcelain crowns!

ADAM

But I do.

(Holding the jaw up to his
mouth.)

I knew there was something familiar about those fillings,
that crown, and then I saw them when I brushed my teeth.

FELIX

Adam, did you put them there?

LEEANNE

That doesn't make any sense!

SARAH

They match your dental work?

ADAM

It *is* my dental work!

(Holds up the skull or other
bones.)

These are my bones! I am Quintus Terentius Varro, the actor!

Suddenly ADAM clutches his heart.

SARAH

Papa! What is it?

ADAM

Ohhh!

LEEANNE

He's got a new pacemaker.

ADAM

My heart--

FELIX

Tachycardia's a symptom of belladonna poisoning! According
to Wikipedia.

SARAH

Is your arm numb?

FELIX

Delirium, too, hallucinations--
-!

ADAM

It's coming true! I'm dying
again!

FELIX

Check his pupils!

They crowd around him.

LEEANNE

He didn't take belladonna!

SARAH

Breathe, papa, breathe!
You're not dying!

LEEANNE

(Produces the bottle.)
I hid it so Sarah wouldn't.

SARAH ADAM
 You thought I--? Yes, I am! Aurora said--

ADAM
 My chest, my abdomen--

SARAH
 Papa, you're just upset, it's my fault--I'm sorry!

ADAM
 It's not your fault.

SARAH
 Yes, it is! I told Joshua to go with you to Jerusalem. To look out for you since Mom blackmailed me out of going. He was scared to go--lost his nerve, but I talked him into it--told him I was your favorite--egged him on. He wanted you to love him so bad. I'm sorry!

SARAH cries.

LEEANNE ADAM
 You sent him? Sarah, thank you.

SARAH
 For what? Joshua's dead because of me.

ADAM
 Thank you for sending him to take care of me. And telling me now.

SARAH
 (Sobbing.)
 Can you forgive me?

ADAM
 Yes, that's--my purpose. Forgiveness. Trivial and yet enormous.

Suddenly, there is a loud sound like an eruption, but stranger, unearthly. Only ADAM looks up, but no one else seems to notice. Violent lights and shadows, unnatural colors.

ADAM
 It's erupting!

FELIX
 The volcano? Where?

LEEANNE
Adam, what do you see?

VOICE
(Off.)
La fine del mondo! [The end
of the world!]

SARAH
Papa, I don't see a thing!

ADAM
It's roaring! Thundering!

LEEANNE
He *is* hallucinating!

ADAM
Can't you see? A cloud like a pine tree!

FELIX
Adam, just relax--

ADAM
(Laughing, wincing.)
I told you we were gods!

SARAH
There's no eruption!

SARAH
Papa, be quiet! Hold my hand!

LEEANNE
We just need to get him to the truck--

VOICE
(Off.)
Alla fine dei tempi! [The end of time!]

The roar grows louder and stranger.
The lights intensify. ADAM laughs
louder. Other VOICES begin shouting
from various directions and distances
in a growing cacophony of languages,
all saying the same thing: "The end of
the world! The end of time!" [see
Appendix].

ADAM
Don't you hear the voices?

FELIX
What voices?

SARAH
Papa, it isn't funny!

ADAM
It's hilarious! We're going to end up a bunch of frozen casts!

SARAH ADAM
How can you be laughing? LEEANNE, hold me!

LEEANNE
There's no eruption--!

ADAM
Nothing else matters if you hold me! Love outlives us! Love is forever!

ADAM collapses backwards.

SARAH
Papa!

JOSHUA appears, a young, bearded man nicely dressed in a sport coat, tie and slacks. But his clothes are torn and burned, with blood on his forehead and the side of his coat. ADAM stares and the others see nothing.

ADAM
Joshua?!

FELIX
Let's pick him up--

JOSHUA
Father--

ADAM
Sarah, look!

SARAH sees JOSHUA and gasps. As the others stare, seeing nothing except ADAM'S rapt gaze, JOSHUA extends his hands to ADAM, the palms red with bloody wounds.

SARAH
Joshua!

LEEANNE
Sarah, Adam, there's nothing there!

JOSHUA
Father--I forgive you--you didn't know what you were doing.

JOSHUA kisses ADAM, then gives SARAH his hand. She gets blood on her fingers.

ADAM

Leeanne--Sarah--it's okay to die, to go extinct--

LEEANNE

Adam!

SARAH

His blood--on my hands!

Sound of tiny pumice stones raining down upon them. The roar gets louder as LEEANNE embraces ADAM, exactly as the plaster casts were posed. FELIX, JOSHUA and SARAH lean in, their poses from the opening scene of the play. The herm falls over, the bust tumbling to the ground. They freeze. The roar ceases instantly, as does the cacophony of VOICES.

ADAM

--It's all right for the world to end--if love lives on!

In the silence, ADAM'S face relaxes into the expression on the face of the cast and sculpture. After a moment he realizes the others have all frozen. He gets up. No one else moves.

ADAM

Frozen. Stopped. Time...stopped. The volcano now and in 79 AD--erupting, exploding, taking the whole world with it while the many voices of God shout and scream. All stopped.

(He returns to LEEANNE'S embrace.)

I am the god in the machine, and after 2000 years I have my family back.

Blackout.

THE END

APPENDIX

Joining the Italian VOICE is a growing chorus of other VOICES calling out in a variety of languages, some panicked, some accepting, some in a tone of authority or warning. Some languages may even be dead or archaic. But all say the same thing: "The end of the world! The end of time!" They come from a variety of distances and locations, more and more overlapping, until the cacophony sounds as if the whole world is shouting. Repeat as necessary, with different sexes and inflections.

VOICES

Orbis terrarum! Ad consummationem saeculi! [Latin]
 El fin del mundo! El fin de los tiempos! [Spanish]
 Die einde van die wêreld! Die einde van die tyd! [Afrikaans]
 Fundi i botës! Fundi i kohës! [Albania]
 Dünyanın sonu! Vaxt sonu! [Azerbaijani]
 Munduaren amaiera! Denboraren amaiera! [Basque]
 La fi del món! La fi dels temps! [Catalan]
 Kraj svijeta! Kraj vremena! [Croatian]
 Konec sveta! Konec casu! [Czech]
 Den ende af verden! I slutningen af tid! [Danish]
 Het einde van de wereld! Het einde der tijden! [Dutch]
 Maaailma lõpp! Aegade lõpuni! [Estonian]
 Ang katapusan ng mundo! Ang katapusan ng panahon! [Tagalog]
 Maaailman loppu! Vuoden ajan! [Finnish]
 La fin du monde! La fin des temps! [French]
 O fin do mundo! O fin dos tempos! [Galician]
 Das Ende der Welt! Das Ende der Zeit! [German]
 Nan fen mond lan! Nan fen tan! [Haitian Creole]
 A világ vége! Az idok végezetéig! [Hungarian]
 Endalok heimsins! Í lok tímans! [Icelandic]
 Akhir dunia! Akhir waktu! [Indonesian]
 Deireadh an domhain! Deireadh an ama! [Gaelic]
 Beigas pasaule! Gada beigam, laiks! [Latvian]
 Pasaulio pabaiga! Laiko pabaigos! [Lithuanian]
 Akhir dunia! Akhir zaman! [Malaysian]
 It-tmiem tad-dinja! It-tmiem ta 'zmien! [Maltese]
 Slutten på verden! Slutten på tid! [Norwegian]
 Koniec swiata! Koniec czasu! [Polish]
 O fim do mundo! O fim dos tempos! [Portuguese]
 Sfarsitul lumii! Sfârsitul timpului! [Romanian]
 Mwisho wa dunia! Mwisho wa wakati! [Swahili]
 Slutet på världen! Tidens slut! [Swedish]
 Dünyanın sonu! Zaman sonu! [Turkish]
 Mae diwedd y byd! Mae diwedd amser! [Welsh]