

TANIS AND ZELIDE A tragedy to be set to music By Voltaire

Translated and Adapted by Frank J. Morlock C 2002–2003

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Etext by Dagny

Translator's Note:

Missing lines, indicated by ————— are missing in the Original French text. Voltaire never made the corrections.

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CHARACTERS:

ZELIDE, Daughter of the King of Memphis

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TANIS, a shepherd

CLEOFIS, a shepherd

PANOPE, Zelide's confidant

OTOES, head of the Magi of Memphis

PHANOR, warrior of Memphis

ISIS and OSIRIS

Shepherds, Shepherdesses, People, Choruses

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ACT I

ZELIDE: Beneficent gods, that are adored in these groves,
Continue to protect me from my oppressors!
The Magi of Memphis still pursue me!
And simple shepherds are my only defenders.
It is here that Tanis repulsed the fury
Of our invincible conquerors.
In my cruel misfortune, I have no other pleasures
Than to speak of his courage.

PANOPE: Have you forgotten Phanor?

ZELIDE: Attached to my father,
He followed my fate; I know his valor.

PANOPE: Ah! With what indifference you see him!

ZELIDE: He did his duty; my heart is touched by it.

PANOPE: He braves the wrath of the Magi of Memphis,
Since these tyrants have dethroned the kings,
Since they've shed the blood of your father,
He has risen against them; he has defended your rights;
He has escorted your steps; he loves you: he hopes,
By his exploits, to deserve you.

ZELIDE: Despite all his efforts, wandering, pursued,
I would have perished hereabouts.
He himself was falling under the odious yoke.
We owe to Tanis liberty and life.
How great Tanis is in my eyes!

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PANOPE: Esteem and gratitude
Are the just reward of good deeds;
But could simple shepherds ever
Brave the violence of the tyrants of Memphis?
Your throne is fallen; you have no more friends.
What do you still hope?

ZELIDE: Solely to the arm of Tanis do I owe my deliverance.
I hope all from generous Tanis.

(Shepherds armed with lances enter; shepherdesses carrying shepherd's
crooks and instruments of rustic music.)

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS: Stay, reign over our shores;
Know the peace and beauty of life.
Nature has placed in our groves
True virtues unknown in courts.

A SHEPHERDESS: Without pomp and without envy,
Satisfied with our fate,
We rejoice in life.
We don't fear death.
Innocence and courage,
Friendship, tender love,
Are the glory and the future
Of this fortunate abode.

A SHEPHERD: It can charm us,
Never defeat us;
We know how to fight.
We know how to love.

CHORUS: Stay, reign over these shores;
Know the peace and beauty of life.
Nature has placed in our groves
True virtues unknown in courts.

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ZELIDE: Herdsmen, happy herdsmen, as sweet as invincible,
You who brave death, you who brave the chains
Of our inflexible pontiffs,
How I love your laughing deserts!
How this abode pleases me! How savage Memphis is!
How have you been able, in these enchanted groves,
Near the walls of Memphis, and near slavery,
To preserve your liberty?
How have you been able to live forever, without masters,
In these peaceable parts?

SHEPHERDS: We have kept the mores of our ancestors.
We brave tyrants and we love our gods.

ZELIDE: O Heaven! How much grandeur in this simple innocence!
Respectable mortals! Happy heavens! Serene days!

SHEPHERDS: This is the way all humans once lived.

ZELIDE: But amongst you, Tanis has some power?

SHEPHERDS: In our happy equality,
Tanis has a gentle authority.
Because his virtues and his valor
Are only too well deserved.

TANIS: (entering) Is it possible O God!
Phanor dares to attempt
To expose your beautiful life to our haughty enemies!
What would you go to do,
Alas! On the ramparts of Memphis?
What fate can you expect there?
Our fields, our groves, and our hearts are yours.
Must he bring you to a perfidious people,
That bloodthirsty Magi, a homicidal court,
Carry you away from such sweet favors?

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ZELIDE: What! Phanor, after his defeat
By the shores of the Nile, dares to return?
Ah! If I must leave this friendly abode,
Will Tanis wish to abandon me?

TANIS: We do not ravage the earth.
We defend our fields when they are threatened.
We detest horrid war,
But you are changing our laws since you appeared.
To the ends of the universe, I am ready to follow you.
It wasn't much to help you.
It's because of you that it is sweet to live.
It's by avenging you that it is sweet to die.

(Phanor and his suite enter.)

PHANOR: The enemy is coming to us, and thinks to surprise us.
It's up to you to second me;
Tanis, and you, shepherds, go: go defend
Your passes that must be guarded.

TANIS: We have no need of your supreme order.
You have seen us hereabouts
Deliver the princess and save you yourself.
And we know only her eyes as master.

PHANOR: I am commanding in her name.

TANIS: Let your pride ponder
Our zeal and our exploits.
Cease to give us orders,
And learn from our example.

PHANOR: Tanis, in other times, your boldness
Clung to a different language.

ACT I

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TANIS: And in all times, my courage
Scorns and crushes pride.

ZELIDE: Stop: what distraction are you devising for my eyes?
My fortune is obedient to yours;
All is lost for me if you are not united.

TANIS: That's enough, pardon, I fly and I obey.

(Exit Tanis and the shepherds.)

PHANOR: No, I cannot bear
That before my eyes you honor him.
Equality alone offends me.
The injurious preference
Is too odious an affront.

ZELIDE: He's fighting for you yourself:
Is it for you to complain of?
You owe more respect for the exploits of Tanis.
We must treat with caution, we must fear
The great hearts who have served us.

PHANOR: Go on, finish, ingrate:
Blame on me our common misfortune.
Raise to your level a barbarian, a herdsman.
Forget—

ZELIDE: Do you dare?

PHANOR: Yes, I see that he prides himself on it.
Yes, you encourage his bold ardor.

ACT I

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Your weakness bursts out,
In your eyes and in your heart.

ZELIDE: Why do you suspect that I am able to descend
To the point of suffering him to live under my rule?
Your threatening suspicions are sufficing to teach me
Who is not unworthy of me.

PHANOR: O heaven! How right I was to want
To leave this fatal shore today!
Can you outrage my courage to this degree?

ZELIDE: If to equal him to you causes you an outrage,
Surpass his great heart by serving me better than him.

CHORUS OF HERDSMEN: To Arms! To arms! Let's March! Direct us!

PHANOR: Well! I am going to perish for your perfidious charms.
I am going to seek death, and I will cherish the blow.
You alone cause my alarms.
I have no enemies more funereal than you. (he leaves)

CHORUS: To arms! To arms!
Let's march, direct us!

ZELIDE: Ah! I deserve his wrath.
I don't dare confess my secret feelings.
I see, from his distraction,
How much Tanis has known how to please me.
From his new danger, I feel how much I love him.
How much virtue! How much valor!
Gods! For his reward,
Is this greater than my heart?
Must my glory be offended
By such a deserved passion?
No, for his reward,
I owe him all my heart.

ACT I

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CURTAIN

ACT II

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS: Victory! Victory!
Our cruel enemies
Have fallen under the blows of generous Tanis.

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDESSES: Let their memory perish!
Pleasures will no longer be banished.

BOTH CHORUSES: Triumph! Victory!

THE PRIEST OF ISIS: Tender Isis, Osiris, first gods of mortals,
Why do you reign only in these happy groves?
Won't you punish further these implacable Magi,
These enemies of your altars?
At the gates of Memphis we brave their power.
But is it enough for us not to succumb?
When will we see them fall
Under the blows of our vengeance?

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS: Loveable freedom reigns in these beautiful parts.
What other boons are you demanding of the gods?

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDESSES: Sweet shepherds, so many fears in these alarms
Are only subdued by our charms.

A SHEPHERDESS: May these new flowers
Decorate our shepherds.
These to the beauties,
To crown the conquerors.

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CHORUS OF SHEPHERDESSES: Sweet shepherds, so many fears in these alarms
Are only subdued by our charms.

(Dances.)

A SHEPHERDESS: Of Venus' charming birds,
You are not so faithful.
Of more tender turtledoves,
The raptures are less touching.
The rapid and impetuous eagle,
Carries to the height of the heavens,
With a flight less intrepid,
The shining thunder of the gods.

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDESSES: Sweet shepherds, so many fears in these alarms
Are only subdued by our charms.

PRIEST OF ISIS: Come, shepherds, it is time
To consecrate to our gods the noble monuments
Of valor and glory.

CHORUS: Triumph! victory!

(They leave. Tanis and Cleofis remain.)

CLEOFIS: What! you aren't following their steps?

TANIS: Remain, don't leave me.
You know my secret flame,
Know the terrible trouble which tears my soul.

CLEOFIS: Do you suspect Phanor?

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TANIS: In my cruel troubles,
Everything near Zelide alarms me.
Friend, the most proud of mortals
Becomes the most timid lover.
I fear what I adore, I hesitate, I stagger.
My heart speaks to her eyes, my voice dares not speak.

In secret, I nourish the flame which devours me.
And when sleep comes to calm my sorrow.
The gods still increase it.
Osiris appeared to me preceded by lightning.
In the breast of profound night,
About him thunder growled.
Neptune raised his waves,
The black abysses have opened.
What have I done to the gods?
What horror threatens!

CLEOFIS: Osiris is protecting you, he has led your steps.
It's he who has rendered you invincible.
They are warning you, not threatening you.

TANIS: Osiris, you know how we love.
Isis, in her celestial abode,
Isis alone makes your supreme happiness.
Gods who experience love, favor love!

(As Tanis prays, the gods Isis and Osiris descend in a brilliant cloud.)

ISIS AND OSIRIS: Love leads you into this barbaric city
Where the Magi rule.
Undergo the terrible fate that Love is preparing for you
And see death without dread.

(They vanish.)

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TANIS: With what new trouble I feel my soul struck!

CLEOFIS: With what horror I am astonished!

TANIS: To brave danger and see death without fear,
My heart expected no oracle from Osiris.
But for my tender flames what a funereal omen!
What an oracle for a lover!
O Gods! Of whom Zelide is the image,
Can one displease you by loving her?

(Zelide enters.)

TANIS: Princess, in my eyes you read my offense.
My crime bursts before you.
I fear celestial vengeance.
But I fear your wrath more.

ZELIDE: I am unaware to what plans your heart is abandoning itself.
In you I see my defender.
If it is a crime, in the depth of your heart,
I feel that mine is pardoning you.

TANIS: A shepherd adores you and you pardon him!
Ah! I was trembling to say it to you.
I have braved crowned faces,
And their dazzle, and their empire.
My pride deceived me. I listened too much to its voice.
This pride is abasing itself, it begins
From the day I saw you,
To feel that between us there is too much distance.

ZELIDE: There isn't, Tanis: and if there had been,
Love would have made it disappear.
It isn't the grandeurs, which the gods have given birth to in me,
That my heart is most flattered by.

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TANIS: The lover that your heart prefers
Becomes the first of humans.
To see you, to adore you, to please you,
Is the most brilliant of destinies.
But, when you are smiling on me,
Heaven seems enraged.
I would have believed its justice
Always thought like you.

ZELIDE: No, I cannot suspect that heaven doesn't love you.

TANIS: I've just heard here its supreme oracle.
In Memphis, love must punish me before your eyes.

ZELIDE: Punish you? you, Tanis! What horrible injustice!
Ah! sooner let Memphis perish!
Let's avoid these odious walls.
Let's avoid this impious and murderous city.
I renounce Memphis, I will dwell hereabouts.
Your laws will be my laws, your gods will be my gods.
Tanis will take the place of nature in its entirety for me.
I will no longer see anything but the two of us.

TANIS AND ZELIDE: May love interest Osiris,
Always loved by Isis and always amorous.
We will be faithful, happy,
In this obscure grove
As you are in the heavens.

PHANOR: (entering) Cruel, inhuman, Zelide!

So this is how I am betrayed!
I did everything for you; love has punished me.
Under the rule of a herdsman, a vile love subdues you!
Ah! If, in your unworthy fetters, you do not fear
The reproaches of the universe,
At least fear that I will avenge myself.

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TANIS: You avenge yourself, and on whom?

ZELIDE: Calm this vain wrath!
I fear neither the universe nor you.
I must confess that I love him.
Do you pretend to force a heart
That depends only on itself?
Are you more my tyrant than my defender?
Ask pardon of Love, it reigns with caprice,
It enchains at its will,
The hearts of shepherds and kings.
For a shepherd like him, I've no need to blush.

PHANOR: Ah! I blush for you in your blindness.
But you: tremble from the torture which overwhelms me.
You've made the most implacable enemy
Of the most faithful lover.
The asylum wherein they betrayed my faith
Will no longer defend you from my inflexible rage.
We will see if the lover, whose law you submit to,
Will always appear invincible,
As he was in fighting under me.

TANIS: You can test that, and at this very moment, even.
What finer field for valor.
It is easy to fight under the eyes that one loves.
Don't delay my happiness.

PHANOR: This is too much and my arm—

ZELIDE: (stopping him) Barbarian that you are,
Rather, pierce this heart full of trouble and ennui.

TANIS: You deign to stop his indiscreet furors,
Less from fear for me, than from pity for him.

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SHEPHERDS CHORUS: (entering) Suspend, suspend the inhuman furor,
Which troubles you before our eyes.
Discord and hate
Don't dwell hereabouts.

ZELIDE: Phanor, realize the injustice
Of a barbarous and jealous love.

PHANOR: If you love Tanis, I must perish
I am less barbarous than you.

(Phanor leaves.)

CHORUS: O terrible Discord,
Frightful daughter of tender Love,
Respect this beautiful abode.
Let it be forever peaceful!

TANIS: Let my furious rival
Vainly exhale his rage.
Zelide is my share.
I will have all the gods for me.

CHORUS: O terrible Discord,
Frightful daughter of tender Love,
Respect this beautiful abode.
Let it be forever peaceful!

CURTAIN

ACT III

(The stage represents the Temple of Isis and Osiris. The statues of these gods are on the altar; they are holding hands to indicate the marriage of these two divinities.)

TANIS: Temple of Isis where nature reigns,
Beautiful place without decorations, image of our customs,
You are going to crown a passion as pure
As our offerings and our hearts.
Neither the love of Phanor, nor the dazzle of grandeur,
Have seduced the beautiful Zelide.

Zelide resembles our gods.
For her goodness prefers
The most sincere heart.
The rest of mortals are all the same to her eyes.
Charming moments, delicious moments,
Hasten to embellish this fine day which enlightens me;
Hasten to fulfill my wishes,
Temple of Isis where nature reigns,
Beautiful place without decoration, image of our customs,
You are going to crown a passion as pure
As our offerings and our hearts.

CHORUS OF SHEPHERDS: Never has Love carried off
A more brilliant victory.

TANIS: I must await here the beauty who enchants me.
How slow these moments are to my agitated heart.

CHORUS: Zelide has disdained dazzling grandeur;
Zelide is like us, she is simple and constant:
And her virtues equal her beauty.

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GREAT CHORUS: Never has love carried off
A more brilliant victory.

A SHEPHERD: In the nearby grove decorated with its attractions,
The pomps of marriage and its joys are preparing.
Our shepherds are trimming her head
With flowers born beneath her footsteps.
Phanor with his friends have left our asylum.
Marriage, tender Love and the Gods, and Peace
Assure us of tranquil days.
(Dances)
In this fortunate retreat,
Drums and fifes,
The scepters of kings, and crosiers,
Are joined in the hands of Love.

A SHEPHERDESS: Soon, according to the custom established amongst us,
The shepherds consecrated to the gods of our ancestors,
To the sounds of their rustic flutes,
Will bring Zelide to her happy spouse.

TANIS: Come, fly, dear thing; it's Love that is calling you.
Our runes are traced on young elms.
Time will make them grow, and render them more beautiful,
Without being able to add to my faithful love.
These fields are greener; a new grace
Animates the songs of birds,
Come, fly dear thing; it's Love that is calling you.

(Enter Cleofis.)

CLEOFIS: O perfidy! O crime! O eternal sorrow!

TANIS AND CHORUS: Heavens! What ills are you announcing to us?

CLEOFIS: Soldiers from Memphis and your jealous rival,
Those who dare not fight against us—

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TANIS: Well?

CLEOFIS: They have betrayed our simple innocence.
They've carried off Zelide!

TANIS: O furor! O Vengeance!

CHORUS: They've carried her off, O gods!

TANIS: Let's run, let's punish this outrage.

CLEOFIS: On a vessel hidden near the shore,
They have cleaved the impetuous waves.
Having faith in oaths, we remained calm:
It's the first time they've been betrayed
In the breast of these sweet asylums.
She invoked the gods, she called Tanis:
We didn't respond to her screams,
Except with useless weeping.

TANIS: Great gods! These are the ills you foretold me.
I will see those unlucky and guilty walls,
Those terrifying Magi whose hands
Shed the blood of wretches.
Friend, it's there I must die.
They could not break you; they dared to betray you.
Let's destroy this impious city.
Friends, it's up to your valor
To punish this perfidy.
Friends, it's up to your valor
To assist my just fury.

CHORUS: We are going to seek death or vengeance;
We are marching under his standard.

ACT III

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CLEOFIS: Let's avenge Love, let's avenge Innocence.
But let's fear to arrive too late.
We must cross this inaccessible mountain,
And Memphis, to our eyes, is another universe.

TANIS: Love sees nothing impossible;
All roads are open to it.
It crosses the earth and the ocean.
It penetrates the breast of hell;
It crosses the boundaries of the world.
Believe the distractions of my outrage.
Memphis will see me dead, or see me avenged.
What do I see? What happy omen?
Our gods are casting the most tender glances on me.
Gods, whose bounty encourages me,
I follow Love and you; everything urges me on, I am going.

CURTAIN

ACT IV

The stage represents the Temple of the Magi in Memphis. To the right and left one sees Pyramids and Obelisks; The capitals of the temple columns are filled with representations of all the monsters of Egypt.

OTOES: Ministers of my rule that my vengeance directs,
Phanor has made amends for his crime.
May the blood of dangerous partisans of kings,
Which threatened the altar, and that the altar oppressed,
Fall annihilated!
Let's consult our art of formidable secrets;
Let's see by what terrible blows
The guilty are to be confounded,
When sacrilegious pride moves them against us.

CHORUS OF MAGI: O mighty magic!
Be forever in our hands
The instrument of vengeance.
Make weak humans tremble!

OTOES: May our impenetrable secrets
Be forever veiled in dark night.
The less they are known, the more they are venerated
By our blind slaves.

CHORUS: O mighty magic!
Be forever in our hands
The instrument of vengeance.
Make weak humans tremble!

OTOES: Let's begin our somber mysteries
Hidden from profane mortals;
I am going to pierce the shadows of the fatal future.
And seek eternal decrees of Destiny.

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(Terrible symphony)

(They can express with a stylized dance the somber horrors of these mysteries)

What do I see? What danger! What horror threatens us!
A shepherd, a simple shepherd,
Is coming to revive the race of kings I have destroyed.
He is erecting a foreign altar.
A vengeful god leads him! A vengeful god hunts us!

CHORUS OF MAGI: May all armed hell forestall this audacity!

OTOES: Let's separate all hope from vile sedition
Of kingly blood, of this so funereal blood,
Zelide is the sole remaining.
We must sacrifice her before their eyes.

CHORUS: Let's be inexorable;
Let's not spare blood.
May beauty, age and rank
Make us more pitiless.

OTOES: Let them bring Zelide: all must be prepared
For this terrible sacrifice.

(Phanor enters with his suite.)

PHANOR: I am come to demand the reward of my service.
You promised it to me, and I must hope for it.
I bring back my followers under your sway.
Zelide is in my hands, our troubles are over.
And Zelide is the unique prize
That I want for my reward.

OTOES: What are you daring to demand?

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PHANOR: At the foot of your altars,
It's up to you to form this august alliance.

OTOES: You come to dispute with our immortal gods.

PHANOR: Heaven! What am I hearing! I tremble, I shiver.

OTOES: After your criminal conspiracies,
You have much to be pardoned for.

(Otoes reenters the temple with the Magi.)

PHANOR: O crime! O infernal plan!
I grasp the horrors that this temple is preparing.
It's I, it's my barbarous love,
Which is going to bring the fatal blow.
Avenge me, avenge yourself: prevent the sacrifice
Which is all our destiny.
What do you expect of their justice?
These monsters tainted with blood have never pardoned.
What horrible preparations are revealed to my eyes

Zelide in chains! a sword on the altar!
(Zelide appears at the back of the temple, he continues)
Let's regroup our friends, second my courage,
Share my shame and my rage,
Follow my mortal despair.

(Phanor leaves with his followers.)

ZELIDE: (entering) Get it over with, inflexible monsters.
Strike, cruel minister,
Hasten the vengeance of heaven
With your horrible sacrileges.
What has become of Tanis? Heavens, what do I see?

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TANIS: (running to the altar) Stop, stop, ministers of carnage.
From this bloody temple, I am learning what the law is.
Death must be my share.
Zelide has my heart and my faith.
A husband in these parts can offer himself as victim.
Respect the love that drives me,
Let all your blows fall on me.

ZELIDE: O prodigy of love! O summit of terror.
Tanis sacrificing himself for me!
(to Tanis)
Here is the only moment in my funereal life,
In which I can wish not to belong to you.
(to Magi)
He's not my husband; it's vain that he demands
Rights so dear, a name so sweet.

TANIS: Ah! Do not betray my hope and my flame!
Let me bear to the grave the happiness of being yours!

ZELIDE AND TANIS: (together)
Save the better half of myself.
Strike, don't wait,
Pardon the one I love.
It's to me that death is owed.

OTOES: Our unworthy enemy himself declares himself,
He's the one gods and hell have brought here.

TANIS: I am your enemy, don't doubt it, barbarian.

OTOES: Let them enchain him,
Let's begin with this sacrifice.
Bold one, you will perish.
But your just death
Won't save her.
Take this sacred sword. Gods! What a frightful prodigy.
This sword falls to pieces, these walls are stained with blood!

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Your god vainly imposes on me with this new illusion.
There still remain arrows with which to pierce your breast.

ZELIDE: People, a god takes up his defense.

(Phanor with his followers arrives on stage.)

PHANOR: Friends, follow my steps, and let's avenge innocence.

OTOES: (to his Magi) Soldiers who serve me, beat down the insolent.
You, guard these two criminals.
You, march, fight, and avenge the altars.

(The combatants enter into the temple whose gates shut on them.)

TANIS: O useless prodigy! O dolorous pains!
Phanor fights for you, and I am in chains!
All mine have followed me, but their aid is slow;
I have nothing for you but powerless wishes.

CHORUS: (behind the scene) Give up, fall, die, sacrilegious offenders.
Our swords are invincible.

ZELIDE: Do you hear the shouts of the combatants?

TANIS: What harmonious sounds are blending with the uproar of arms!
What an unheard of mixture of sweetness and alarms!

(A sweet symphony can be heard.)

CHORUS: (Behind the scene) Fair gods

ACT IV

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Are taking care of your fine lives;
Favorable gods
Are protecting your tender loves.

TANIS: I recognize the voices of our helpful gods.
These gods of innocence are taking arms for you.

CHORUS OF COMBATANTS: Fall, tyrants; die sinners.
Fall into the night of death.

ZELIDE: I shiver!

TANIS: No, fear nothing.
If my gods have spoken, I hope in their clemency.
I believe in their blessings and my heart.
They led my steps into this byway of horror,
They are making their power burst out,
They are extending their vengeful arms.

ZELIDE AND TANIS: Beneficent gods, finish your work;
Deliver the innocent who hope only in you.
Hurl your arrows, crush under your blows,
The barbarism that outrages you.

(The guards lead Zelide and Tanis off.)

ZELIDE: They still fear you, alas! they are separating us.
Death nears, they are separating us.

TANIS: Let them tremble at the
Voice of heaven which is declaring itself.
It's for us to hope right up to the breast of death.

CURTAIN

ACT V

ZELIDE: Death brings us together here.
The sacrifice is prepared; we will perish together.

TANIS: Zelide, calm your terrors.

ZELIDE: Our cruel tyrants are conquerors.
Our herdsmen can hardly be seen in the distance
And Phanor has lost his life.

TANIS: He deserved death; he betrayed you.

ZELIDE: You are alone and disarmed.
And your heart is without fear!

TANIS: I love you, I am loved.
Love and the gods are my weapons.

ZELIDE: Tanis! my beloved Tanis! without you, without our loves,
I would brave the death that threatens me.
But these bloody Magi are masters of your life.
We are enchained; you are without succor.

TANIS: Our chains are going to fall off;
Everything is going to change its face.

ZELIDE: What! the gods will protect us to this degree!
Let's flee these parts—

TANIS AND ZELIDE A tragedy to be set to music By Voltaire

TANIS: Me, flee, when I am going to avenge you!

ZELIDE: Don't abuse the celestial favor;
Steal away from these bloody Magi;
All hell is subdued by their funereal power,
Nature obeys their commands.

TANIS: It obeys mine.

ZELIDE: Heaven! What's this I hear?

TANIS: From Isis and Osiris, destiny caused my birth.

ZELIDE: Ah! you are of the blood of the gods!
You know that to my eyes
You alone are worthy of being so.

TANIS: They deigned to test me by the roughest means;
They wanted to recognize me
Only after having made myself worthy of you at last,
When these bloody tyrants
Separated us by a barbaric effort,
I saw my tutelary gods once more.
They revealed to me my glory. They changed my fate.
They've put in my hands thunder and death.
You are going to resume the rank of your ancestors.
Egypt is going to change its gods and its masters.

ZELIDE: Such a great change is worthy of your hands
But I see these inflexible Magi advancing.
Alas! I love you and I fear.

TANIS AND ZELIDE A tragedy to be set to music By Voltaire

TANIS: These terrible tyrants will soon be trembling.

OTOES: People, prostrate yourselves; let the whole earth adore
The eternal judgements of our formidable gods.
Monsters of Egypt come running—
Recognize my voice, devour
These audacious sinners
With the sword of the vanished altars.

TANIS: Osiris, my father, strike.
Hurl from the high heavens your ineluctable darts.

(Arrows thrown by invisible hands pierce the monsters which had spread
over the stage.)

THE MAGI: O heaven! Is it conceivable
They can equal our power!

OTOES: Terrible and holy art, deploy your prodigies.
Confound these new illusions!
Bring from the abysses of hell,
From burning Phelegethon, sparkling flames!

(A whirlwind of flames is seen rising.)

TANIS: Heavens, open to my voice!
Torrents suspended in the air,
Come and destroy these powerless flames!

(Cascades of water pour from the obelisks of the temple and extinguish
the flames.)

CHORUS OF PEOPLE: O heaven! In this combat which god will conquer?

TANIS AND ZELIDE A tragedy to be set to music By Voltaire

OTOES: Dare you doubt! Let the voice of thunder
Growl and decide in my favor!
Lightning, shine alone on the earth,
Elements, make war,
Confound with horror!

TANIS: The gods have exhausted you, but it's for your torture.
Here their immediate justice.
Hell is going to succumb, and your power end.
Heaven is inflaming itself, thunder sparks.
Tremble, it's your voice that called it;
It's falling, it's striking, it's punishing you.

CHORUS OF PEOPLE: Ah! The gods of Tanis are the legitimate gods.

(Thunder falls, the altars of their Magi are overturned.)

TANIS: Bloody altars, priests laden with crimes,
Be destroyed, be hurled
Into the eternal abyss of
Tenare from whence you came!

TANIS: (to the shepherds who appear armed on stage)
You, who are coming to avenge Zelide,
Heaven has foreshadowed your hearts and your exploits.
Its justice dwells hereabouts,
It falls only to the gods to reestablish kings
On this bloody debris, on these vast ruins,
Let's celebrate the heavenly favors.

CHORUS: Both of you reign in profound peace.
Always united, always virtuous.
Daughter of kings, child of the gods,
Imitate them, be the love of the world.

TANIS AND ZELIDE A tragedy to be set to music By Voltaire

TANIS: Calm succeeds war.
From new heavens, a new earth
Seems formed on this fine day.
On the heels of Virtues, Pleasures are going to appear.
It's all the work of Love.

(Dances)

CHORUS: Both of you reign in profound peace,
Always united, always virtuous.
Daughter of kings, child of the gods,
Imitate them, be the love of the world.

CURTAIN