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Dramatic Publishing

TAYLOR CALDWELL'S

*Dear and Glorious
Physician*



A FULL-LENGTH PLAY
ADAPTED BY ROLAND FERNAND

The Dramatic Publishing Company

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A Play in Two Acts

TAYLOR CALDWELL'S

Dear and Glorious
Physician

"Our most dear physician, Luke."
ST. PAUL

Dramatized by

ROLAND F. FERNAND



THE DRAMATIC PUBLISHING COMPANY

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(DEAR AND GLORIOUS PHYSICIAN)

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Dear and Glorious Physician

A Play in Two Acts

FOR TEN MEN AND THIRTEEN WOMEN, MORE OR LESS*
AND EXTRAS

CHARACTERS

AENEAS	.....	<i>a freedman</i>
IRIS	.....	<i>his wife</i>
LUKE	.....	<i>their son</i>
DIODORUS	.....	<i>a Roman tribune</i>
AURELIA	.....	<i>his wife</i>
RUBRIA	.....	<i>their daughter</i>
KEPTAH	.....	<i>their physician</i>
JULIA	}	..... <i>their slaves</i>
MIRA		
AVIS		
PRISCUS	.....	<i>Luke's young foster brother</i>
JOSEPH	.....	<i>a teacher</i>
SARA	.....	<i>his niece</i>
SAMOS (later ARIEH)	.....	<i>her brother</i>
PLOTIUS	.....	<i>a Roman Officer</i>
GAIA	.....	<i>Priscus' wife</i>
RACHEL	.....	<i>a servant to Sara</i>
LEAH	.....	<i>a young friend of Sara</i>
MARY	.....	<i>the mother of Jesus</i>
TWO MERCHANTS	.....	<i>slave traders</i>
ZENAB	}	..... <i>beautiful and mischievous Arabian slaves</i>
AYESHA		
PROPHET, BEGGARS, BYSTANDERS, PASSERS-BY, SLAVES	.....	<i>extras</i>

*Extensive doubling is possible.

SYNOPSIS

ACT ONE

Scene One: A section of Diodorus' garden, Antioch.

Scene Two: Gardens, Antioch.

Scene Three: Terrace outside Diodorus' home, Antioch.
A few years later. Spring.

ACT TWO

Scene One: A section of Diodorus' garden, Antioch.
Several years later. Autumn.

Scene Two: A marketplace in Athens. A few years later.

Scene Three: The port of Caesarea. One month later.

Scene Four: The terrace of Sara's home in Jerusalem.

PRODUCTION NOTES

STAGING: *SIMPLICITY* is the key to the most effective staging of this play.

The changes of locale indicated in connection with the various scenes should merely be *suggested* by the substitution or rearrangement of a few simple props. (As to this shifting of props, your stage hands should also rehearse, in order that these shifts may be done quickly and quietly.)

Actually this play may be produced quite well on an almost bare stage with nothing but a curtain for a backdrop. For a smooth flow of action, two curtains may be used, with a scene played in front of the downstage curtain, the props removed during a brief blackout, and then the next scene played in front of the upstage curtain. However, it is not necessary to use two curtains, for all shifts can be made during well-rehearsed blackouts. If practical, a sky cyclorama background can be quite effective for this play, but again, this is not necessary.

Some groups may wish to take advantage of the possibilities offered here for colorful and striking stage design. This may be done by expanding the scenic suggestions contained in the play. It should be emphasized, however, that this play is *not* conceived as an attempt at an on-stage motion picture "spectacular." The purpose of this is to tell in simple dramatic terms the moving story of Luke.

COSTUMES: Costuming should suggest, rather than strive for complete accuracy of detail. Any of the several costume books dealing with this period will provide excellent ideas. Costumes need not be elaborate; the simpler the better, since the material of the play is timeless and elaborate costuming may well detract from, rather than add to, the impact of the play.

NOTES ABOUT THE CHARACTER OF LUKE: During the course of this play, Luke ages from a youth to a mature adult. It is best to convey this by the actor's manner than by overdoing changes in his make-up. In the first scene Luke is reverent but he is also youthful in his gestures

and easy excitements. At the end of Scene Two his rebellion is the inconsidered cry of heartbroken, youthful protest. In later scenes Luke is more reserved and deliberate in his speech and manner. His rebellion is kept more to himself, and when it is revealed, it has an edge of bitterness to it. He stands more erect and his gestures are more restrained later in the play. When Luke regains his faith at the end of the play, he also regains some of his youthful reverence, but it is now the faith that has been achieved through the tests of life, and it is spoken with maturity and authority.

In the beginning Luke may wear a simple tunic, but in later scenes his garments should reflect the hard use to which they are put by a devoted physician who ministers to the poor.

TEMPO: Nothing adds more to the polish of a production than the quick picking up of cues. Unless there is a definite reason for a pause, train your actors to come in with their speeches "on the heels," so to speak, of the preceding speeches. When a production lags, audience interest likewise will lag.

It is always advisable during the last week of rehearsals to hold one or more sessions during which the actors merely sit around in a circle and go through lines only, with the express purpose of snapping up cues.

NOTES ON CHARACTERS
AND COSTUMES

IRIS: Iris is a beautiful young woman with blonde hair, clad in a simple white robe. In Act Two, although several years have passed, she is still slender and beautiful, her hair only lightly touched with gray.

AENEAS: Aeneas, Iris' husband, is several years older, with a shrewd and orderly mind. He is somewhat pompous with his family, but abject in the presence of his superiors.

LUKE: He is a handsome youth, and fair like his mother. In the beginning scenes, he wears a thin white tunic. Around his waist is a leather girdle from which hangs a small pouch. As the play progresses and he grows older, he becomes more confident in himself. In Act Two, when he has become a physician, there is a stateliness about him. He rarely smiles, but there is warmth and dedication in his manner. He dresses like a humble freedman in a simple white robe and hooded mantle. The intervening years have not changed him greatly, and he is still blond and handsome. He carries his physician's pouch always with him.

DIODORUS: Diodorus is a ruggedly handsome Roman officer, with penetrating dark eyes and a stern, almost fierce, countenance. He wears a loose tunic, belted, and sometimes a cape. He changes little with the years.

AURELIA: Aurelia is in her thirties. She is a matronly woman of sense and fortitude. She dresses simply.

RUBRIA: Rubria is a pretty, slender, dark-eyed, dark-haired girl. She is pale and fragile, however, and shows the ravages of her illness. She dresses simply, and her hair falls loosely about her shoulders.

KEPTAH: Keptah is Rubria's physician, a Chaldean. He is forty. There is something Egyptian in his gaunt, remote, mysterious face, with his short black hair. He is tall and thin with long, expressive hands. He wears a dark

robe. The passing years bring no change to his inscrutable countenance.

JULIA, MIRA and AVIS: Julia and Avis are young, pretty slave girls. Mira is older.

PRISCUS: Luke's foster brother is a handsome, merry fellow, much younger than Luke. He wears a simple tunic. Later, when he lies ill, he has aged beyond his years. His hair has grayed, his face is emaciated and his eyes are sunken.

JOSEPH: Joseph, a teacher from Alexandria, is a tall, majestic man, elderly and dressed in robes of dark brown and crimson. His head is bound with a cloth of red cotton. His face is bearded. He seems a little feeble physically, but the brilliance of his mind is undimmed.

SARA: Joseph's niece is a slight, beautiful girl of about seventeen. She has a fine, delicate face and unbound hair hanging to her shoulders. She wears a pale blue dress encircled by a golden girdle, and gold sandals. She also wears a black hooded mantle. In the last scene, she looks slightly older, but beautiful and serene.

SAMOS (ARIEH): As a slave, Samos is dressed in rags and wears chains. He is young, tall, of olive complexion and splendid build. He wears his hair long and brushed low over his forehead to conceal an ugly purple brand—the mark of a runaway. Even as a slave, Samos has a natural dignity. Later, as a free man, Arieih, he is transformed into a dignified physician, and an alert and eager young man. The scar on his forehead has been removed.

PLOTIUS: Plotius is a Roman officer, in uniform.

GAIA: Gaia is Priscus' wife. Her dark hair is bound up. She is slim, with a youthful radiance at first dimmed by sorrow over her husband's illness. She wears a simple tunic.

LEAH: Sara's young friend is a pretty, coquettish girl of sixteen.

MARY: The mother of Jesus is about forty-eight, and beautiful, with the figure and slenderness of a young girl. She wears a cheap and simple dress of dark blue, with a

white headcloth. A lock of golden hair escapes from under the headcloth. Her feet are bare, or she may wear simple thong sandals.

ZENAB and AYESHA: They are beautiful young slave girls, with dusky faces and sparkling eyes. They are mischievous and flirtatious.

NOTE: Physical characteristics—as coloring, height, etc.—may be freely altered to conform with the talents of the specific group producing the play.

PROPERTIES

GENERAL: Bench, statuary (optional), potted shrubs or plants (Act One, Scene One); bench, palm tree (Act One, Scene Two); railing, steps, bench, large high-backed chair, cushions and garlands of flowers on chair, large ball off-stage (Act One, Scene Three); bench, table, chair and small bench beside table; tray containing grapes and small dish on table (Act Two, Scene One); platform, several stalls of goods (optional), in front of curtain: two chairs, table containing flask of wine, three goblets, a vial of opiate, tray of instruments (including scalpel, needle and thread, scissors), linen pads and bandages, basin of water, folded towel (Act Two, Scene Two); Roman flag on standard, bed, table, chair, lamp and cloth on table (Act Two, Scene Three); two stools (Epilogue).

IRIS: Sewing.

LUKE: Odd-shaped stone and small woolen bag in pouch (Act One, Scene One); writing materials (parchment and stylus) in pouch (Act Two, Scene One); physician's pouch, purse (Act Two, Scene Two); Rubria's gold cross (Act Two, Scene Three); writing materials (Epilogue).

JULIA: Large water jug.

MIRA: Large water jug (Act One, Scene Two); sewing in basket (Act One, Scene Three); tray containing carafe of wine and three glasses (Act Two, Scene Three).

KEPTAH: Gold cross.

DIODORUS: Cape.

RUBRIA: Keptah's gold cross.

FIRST MERCHANT: Two crimson cushions.

SECOND MERCHANT: Whip, pouch, key to Samos' chains, bill of sale.

PROPHET: Staff.

GAIA: Carafe of milk, goblet.

RACHEL: Two chairs, small table, carafe of wine and two goblets.

SARA: Sewing.

LEAH: Sewing.

ACT ONE

Scene One

SCENE: Antioch. A small, secluded section of a garden between the house of the Tribune Diodorus and the house of Aeneas, the manager of Diodorus' estate. The house of Diodorus is offstage R, that of Aeneas, offstage L. There may be a piece of statuary, at C stage. (This is optional, however, and not necessary to the action.) At L C is a low bench. A few shrubs or potted plants, set here and there, convey the effect of a pleasant garden.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: It is late afternoon, and the sunlight in the garden is fading fast. IRIS sits on the bench, sewing. She is a beautiful young woman with blonde hair, clad in a simple white robe. IRIS pauses as she hears a sound offstage L, drops her sewing in her lap and turns. AENEAS enters L. He is several years older than IRIS, with a shrewd and orderly mind. He is somewhat pompous with his family, but abject in the presence of his superiors.)

AENEAS (as he approaches IRIS). You'll tire your eyes, Iris, sewing in this light. (Touches her forehead lightly with his lips.)

IRIS. It was cooler out here.

AENEAS. Where is Luke?

IRIS (sewing again). Probably with Rubria. Since her illness, Luke has been helping her with her lessons. They are inseparable.

AENEAS. He's not neglecting his own lessons?

IRIS. You know he wouldn't. (Glances fondly at him.) You are very learned, Aeneas. It's strange the noble Tribune Diodorus doesn't employ you to teach his daughter Rubria.

AENEAS. Then who would manage his Roman affairs in Antioch--and keep the records straight and supervise the overseers of the slaves?

IRIS. You have little time--it's true.

AENEAS. Ah--these greedy Romans! (Strides about as he continues.) Rome is an abyss into which all of the wealth and labor of the world sinks without a sound. With all due respect to my employer, it's hard to forget that he is a Roman barbarian and that his daughter cannot offer my son any intellectual diversion.

IRIS (with slight reproof). Have you forgotten? We were Greek slaves once--until the Roman freed us.

AENEAS. I have not forgotten.

IRIS (rising, putting away her sewing). The light is almost gone. It will soon be time for dinner. (Turns and calls toward R.) Luke--Luke. Your father is home. Come! (She and AENEAS start L.)

AENEAS (as they leave). It's good for a boy to be serious--but at his age--not too serious. (Shrugs.) However, one should remember that his grandfather--my father--was a poet--so I must not blame the boy too much. (IRIS smiles at this, knowing it is one of her husband's fictions, and she and AENEAS continue out L.)

(There is a brief pause. The sunlight has all but vanished from the scene. LUKE enters from R. He is a handsome youth, and fair like his mother. He wears a thin white tunic. Around his waist is a leather girdle from which hangs a small pouch. LUKE moves C, stops, glances L toward his own house, then turns back R, as if reluctant to leave.

He looks down at the pouch, opens it and takes out a small odd-shaped stone. Holding the stone in his hand, he moves toward R again and looks up and off R. His lips move silently. DIODORUS enters D L, but LUKE is unaware of his entrance. DIODORUS is a ruggedly handsome Roman officer, with penetrating dark eyes and a stern, almost fierce, countenance. He has removed his military clothing and wears a loose tunic, belted. He appears preoccupied, worried, as he moves slowly toward U C stage. When he turns to pace D L again, he notices LUKE for the first time. LUKE is still staring off R, his attitude one of prayerful rapture now. DIODORUS watches him curiously a moment before he speaks.)

DIODORUS (finally). Luke? Is it you? (LUKE turns slowly, his face entranced, hardly seeing DIODORUS at all. DIODORUS makes a move toward him, speaking roughly.) What are you doing?

LUKE (smiling slightly). I was praying for Rubria. DIODORUS (moving closer to him, his tone softening).

Praying for Rubria, boy? To what gods do you pray?

LUKE (simply). To the Unknown God.

DIODORUS (in surprise). The Unknown God!

LUKE. My father taught me that He is everywhere-- and in all things. (Holding stone toward DIODORUS.) Even in this stone I found today. (DIODORUS takes the stone and turns it absently in his fingers.) Do you believe God hears us?

DIODORUS (forgetting the stone, looking up). Eh? . . .

LUKE (patiently). The Unknown God. . . .

DIODORUS (moving away from LUKE and speaking thoughtfully, but more to himself). Adonio . . .

(Turns back to LUKE.) His name is Adonio, isn't it? This Unknown God?

LUKE. Adonio? . . . But that only means "Lord."

His name has not been revealed to us.

DIODORUS. Why should it be? He is the God of the Jews.

LUKE (earnestly). Nay, He is the God of all men. Not only the Jews, but of Romans and Greeks, of slaves and Caesars--of wild men in the forest and of pagans in lands yet unknown.

DIODORUS (impressed with this outburst, but smiling slightly). How do you know this?

LUKE. I somehow know. (The stage is becoming gradually darker, and a light now appears up and off-stage R, from the house of Diodorus. LUKE moves slowly toward the bench.) Someday--I shall find Him.

DIODORUS (indulgently). In Alexandria, perhaps?

LUKE (sitting on the bench, raising his face toward the sky). I don't know where--for He is everywhere. (Continues, utter joy in his voice.) But He will speak to me--and I shall give my heart and my life to Him. (A light appears from the direction of Aeneas' house, offstage L.)

DIODORUS (coming down to the bench). And so you pray to Him for my daughter Rubria?

LUKE. Yes, master.

DIODORUS (sitting beside him). But what do you call Him--when you pray?

LUKE (hesitating, then in a low voice). I call Him--Father.

DIODORUS (in amazement, then speaking sternly).

This is insolence! No man dare call a god "Father."

LUKE (more in concern than in fear of DIODORUS).

Master, do not be angry. The Unknown God is not displeased when men call Him "Father." To Him we are as wayward children.

DIODORUS (his anger subsiding). How can you know this?

LUKE. I know it in my heart--and when I ask Him to

cure Rubria, I know He listens--and will cure her--for He loves her.

DIODORUS (bemused). "Loves her"? . . . Luke, the gods do not love us--they demand our worship and sacrifice, but man is a worthless thing to them.

LUKE (with quiet insistence). He loves her. . . .

DIODORUS (rising abruptly). Come, let us walk. My boy, never have I feared a sword or spear or any man or thing. But I am weak with fear for Rubria tonight.

LUKE (rising). There is no need to fear, master, for God is good. Only give the stone to Rubria or place it on her pillow tonight, for something of the Unknown God is in it.

DIODORUS (looking at the stone, which he still holds in his hand, and pausing a moment before replying). It can do no harm. The gift may please her.

LUKE (eagerly, taking a small woolen bag from his pouch, offering it to DIODORUS). And here are herbs I gathered for her. If they are steeped in hot wine, and Rubria drinks of it, the medicine will ease her pain.

DIODORUS (taking them). Herbs! These may be deadly!

LUKE. I ate some of them myself, hours ago--and a headache I had disappeared.

DIODORUS (touched, roughly placing his hand on LUKE'S shoulder and looking earnestly at him, half laughing). Well, well. . . . I shall give them to Keptah, the physician. He will decide. (Stuffs bag in his pouch. He takes LUKE'S arm, and together they stroll about the garden.) You are young, Luke--but you are thoughtful. What do you wish to do when you are a man?

LUKE (without hesitation). I wish to find the Unknown God, master, and to serve Him.

DIODORUS. You mean to enter the priesthood?

LUKE. No--rather I would serve man in His name-- and I think I can best serve man as a physician-- like Keptah.

DIODORUS. A physician, hmm . . .

LUKE. It is what I hope to become.

DIODORUS (musingly). There is a great school of medicine in Alexandria . . . but the fees---!

LUKE (promptly). But I must somehow go there. God will help me do it.

DIODORUS (as they pause in their walking). So--we have a God who not only does not possess a name, a face or a form--and who is everywhere simultaneously--but He is also a banker! (With a smile.) Do you think He will require interest of you?

LUKE (gravely). Of course. He demands my whole life--my whole devotion.

DIODORUS (his smile fading as he looks down at LUKE). Tell me--have you ever visited the temple of the Jews in Antioch?

LUKE. Often, master.

DIODORUS. So! And is their God the Unknown God?

LUKE. Yes--I'm sure He is.

DIODORUS. But He loves only the Jews.

LUKE (firmly). Nay, He loves all men, for they are all His children.

DIODORUS (with a puzzled shrug, then putting his arm about LUKE'S shoulders). You're a strange boy, but I like you. I think the Unknown God may arrange a way for you to study medicine. But, mind you, this is not to be decided lightly. It involves expense.

(IRIS now appears from L. She has heard the voices and speaks as she enters.)

IRIS. Luke, is it you?

LUKE. Yes, Mother. (IRIS moves toward them. Because of the growing darkness, she does not recog-

nize DIODORUS until he speaks.)

DIODORUS. Greetings, Iris.

IRIS. Greetings, noble Diodorus. (To LUKE.) My son, you did not come when I called.

DIODORUS. The blame is mine.

(AENEAS enters L.)

AENEAS (as he enters). Where is that boy!

IRIS (turning). Here in the garden, Aeneas.

AENEAS. Luke, how dare you----(Sees DIODORUS and bows very low.) Oh--welcome, lord! (His voice almost trembles.) Your presence honors us.

DIODORUS (annoyed by AENEAS' servile manner, pushing LUKE roughly toward his father). The boy is home now. He has been talking to me.

AENEAS (turning on LUKE angrily). Isn't it enough that you've upset your mother and sent her searching for you in the darkness? No, you must also affront the noble tribune----

DIODORUS (interrupting). He did not affront me. I found him praying for my daughter's recovery. I have reason to thank him. (Looks at the stone in his hand.)

IRIS (softly). We all pray for her.

DIODORUS (striving for an easy tone). He's most unusual, Aeneas--most unusual . . . (IRIS puts her arm around LUKE'S shoulders and moves upstage, talking to him in low tones. DIODORUS and AENEAS stand by the bench.)

AENEAS. A little too serious.

DIODORUS (sitting on bench). What are your hopes for his future?

AENEAS. Master, that he will follow me in your service.

DIODORUS (scornfully). Keeping books and records-- Luke? (As scene continues, IRIS and LUKE walk

slowly back and forth in the background, conversing in low tones.)

AENEAS. That is my hope.

DIODORUS. Ah, no! He wishes to be a physician.

AENEAS. A physician! Presumptuous!

DIODORUS. Not at all. (Rises.) No, my good Aeneas, he shall be a doctor. (IRIS and LUKE have paused and are listening. AENEAS is almost speechless.)

AENEAS. But the study of medicine is costly--it consumes years----

DIODORUS. That will not be your concern.

AENEAS (incredulously). You cannot mean----

DIODORUS. I do. I shall send him to the school of medicine in Alexandria when he is ready. For the present, he shall study with Keptah--of course, it will all depend on what Keptah reports of his ability.

AENEAS (on his knees before DIODORUS). How can I thank you, noble lord, for your generosity? . . . I am unworthy----

DIODORUS (with slight distaste at this display of emotion, turning away). Come, come, man. This boy is the son I ought to have had. He shall be a physician. Stand up, Aeneas. You're not a slave any longer. (AENEAS gets to his feet. IRIS and LUKE have come downstage, toward the others.)

IRIS. We thank you, noble Diodorus.

DIODORUS (gruffly). Enough of thanks!

(JULIA enters the garden from R. She pauses, sees DIODORUS, then hurries to him.)

JULIA (bowing low before him). Master! Keptah bids me say that the Lady Rubria has awakened. She moans in pain and asks for her father! (Without a word, DIODORUS hurries out R, followed by JULIA. LUKE starts to follow, then stops short and stands looking off R. AENEAS makes a move toward him,

but IRIS gently holds him back. She puts her fingers slowly to her lips, begging him to be quiet; then she takes his arm and leads him off L. LUKE is alone on the stage. It is quite dark now. LUKE bows his head, his hands clasped in front of him. The lights from the two houses offstage converge on the figure of LUKE as he prays.)

SLOW CURTAIN

ACT ONE

Scene Two

SCENE: A remote section of the gardens on Diodorus' estate. There is a bench. A palm tree is silhouetted against a sky of eerie brilliance.)

AT RISE OF CURTAIN: It is later that same evening. The stage is empty. An occasional night bird is heard. JULIA and MIRA enter from R. Each carries a large water jug, which she balances on one shoulder with her hand. JULIA is quite young, MIRA is older. They come L C, and pause.)

JULIA (gasping). The jar's too heavy, I can't go on.
MIRA. We must. (Goes on a step or two, then pauses.)
We'll rest a moment. (Sets her jar on the bench and straightens, taking a deep breath.)

JULIA (putting down her jar and rubbing her shoulder).

They drive us from dawn to dark. "More water! Another jar of water, Julia!"

MIRA. It's always so when there's illness in a house. But Keptah is worse than other doctors.

JULIA. He's merciless! "Wash this! Burn that! Scrub the floor!" Such things do no good. The girl will die anyway.

MIRA (sorrowfully). The poor little one. I would not grudge the labor if it made any difference. But with the white sickness----

JULIA (shocked). The white sickness! Are you sure?

MIRA. I lost my own three children to it. Who should know if not I?

JULIA. Alas!

MIRA. Is life so sweet then?

JULIA. It is to the rich. For the poor like us, life is hard enough without this latest whim of Keptah's.

MIRA. More work for us?

JULIA. More work indeed! Now the Lady Rubria's dishes are to be kept apart and water made boiling hot poured over them!

MIRA. Boiling water poured over dishes!

JULIA. Wasting the water.

MIRA. Why does he command a senseless thing like that?

JULIA. He does it to show authority.

MIRA. Ah, well, let the water be heated somewhat and a small portion of it poured out.

JULIA (admiring her). You'd dare to disobey?

MIRA. Who'll know whether we obey or not? Still, Keptah is a sly one. Always sneaking in when you don't expect him. Perhaps it's as well to do as we are bidden. (Glances up.) How bright the starlight is! We may be seen loitering here.

JULIA. I hear someone! (Glances R and speaks in a low, warning tone.) Keptah comes! (JULIA and MIRA hastily pick up their jars and exit L.)

(From offstage R, quick footsteps are heard, and KEPTAH enters. He is forty; there is something Egyptian in his gaunt, remote, mysterious face, with his short black hair. He is tall and thin with long, expressive hands. He wears a dark robe. He moves C and stands staring up at the sky. All at once he places his hand over his eyes and bows his head in prayer. The brilliance in the sky increases, and KEPTAH now slowly raises his arm, shielding his eyes, and stares up at the sky. The light starts to subside, gradually. For several moments KEPTAH does not speak but continues to stare upward.)

KEPTAH (then, humbly). Oh, Thou for Whom the world has waited so long, blessed am I who have seen Thy sign! Blessed is the earth that has received Thee. Blessed is she who has borne Thee in a place I do not know. Blessed is man because Thou hast come to redeem him. (Lifts his hands toward the sky in a gesture of worship.) Blessed be Thy name, O Lord. (Drops his hands, his head bowed, motionless. There is not a sound. Then KEPTAH slowly raises his head. A slight movement is heard offstage L. KEPTAH turns L, peering off into the shadows.) Who comes?

(LUKE comes in L hesitantly.)

KEPTAH (recognizing him). Luke! You here? The hour is late.

LUKE. I can't sleep. (Moving toward him.) Rubria-- how is she?

KEPTAH (his hand on LUKE'S head, almost in a gesture of blessing). Better. Her fever has subsided-- she sleeps.

LUKE. Then Diodorus gave her the stone?

KEPTAH. He did. It was a pretty stone. She was