

THEODORIC and HILDEBRAND on horseback on a hill, overlooking Rome. Behind them is the Gothic army and cavallery.

Sprecher

THEODORIC

Rome!

HILDEBRAND

The future capital of the Goths,
my King.

THEODORIC

No Hildebrand. A garrison. We will
not carry flaming torches in their
homes, but peace.

HILDEBRAND

To ensure it, we must fly our banners
over Rome.

THEODORIC

Why humiliate Roman pride? A Gothic
garrison, strong enough will serve.
We'll shed no more Gothic blood for
Rome-

Sprecher

Theodoric is lying on his death bed, receiving the last sacrament. His daughters are kneeling near his bedside. Hildebrand, Teja, Witichis, Totila, Aligern are present.

THEODORIC

Hildebrand..... my sword....

The Kingdom of the Goths must remain
one and undivided. I.....I....

HILDEBRAND

The King of the Goths is dead. You, his
daughters, heard his dying wish. The
kingdom must stay undivided. Only one
can wear the crown.

AMALASWINTHA

I am ready.

110 - 130

A CAVE IN THE CATACOMBS. Cethegus is surrounded by Senators and various Roman citizens.

CETHEGUS

Friends, I have sad, but important news:
Theodoric the great, King of the Goths,
Protector of Rome, is dead.

VOICE I

May his soul burn in hell!

CETHEGUS

Theodoric was a wise, just and tolerant man.
His one problem...he lived too long.

VOICE II

No fault of his successor!

VOICE III

Death to all barbarians!

VOICE IV

Storm the Gothic garrison now!

VOICE V

Cethegus, you must lead us!

be more definite now!

CETHEGUS

We must do nothing yet. We must...anticipate.

The barbarian has scant ^{with} subtlety, but we

shall be prepared. One of Theodoric's daughters
will succeed him. We must show no ungallantry.

~~Roman courtesy cannot allow the frail shoulders
of a woman to bear the heavy responsibilities
of state...we ourselves will protect Rome, as
we did in the past. I will sail to Byzanz to~~

confer with the Emperor Justinian, his Empress
Theodora, and most important, the powerful
General Narses.

VOICE

~~Let us fight, Cethegus, not make treaties.~~

CETHEGUS

~~We will fight, but with our brains. We fight
to avenge a humiliation, which cannot be described
with failure. Let us be circumspect....~~

CETHEGUS

Since Rome no longer has arms, we shall
continue our allegiance to the Goths...
but we'll need the help of the armies of
our "friends" in Byzanz. And when we'll
have regained our strength, we will drive
them both back into the sea, where they
belong!
Our purpose? A free Rome! Rome!!!!

VOICES

Rome!!!!

MATASWINTHA

I am the rightful Queen of the Goths.
I'll never renounce the throne. Never!

AMALASWINTHA

But I will be the ruler.

MATASWINTHA

The Crown council has to speak the
final word.

AMALASWINTHA

I am sure it will be in my favour.

MATASWINTHA

It will not. All these men are my friends.
Not one of them would dare to deprive me
of my ^{royal} rights

AMALASWINTHA

And (but) I am warning you, in all good
friendship, my dear Mataswintha, if you
ever become dangerous for my people...
I might forget that you are my sister!