

THE CITY BENEATH

(La città sotto)

Full length play in three acts by Marco Calvani

“A thing lay in the tunnel of history
a thing adorned, explosive
that transports its true son with oil poisoned.
to whom the poisoned merchant intones a melody.
An East existed like an imploring child,
asking for help
and the West was its infallible senior.
This map has changed
the universe is a fire
the East and the West are a grave
only one
gathered from its ashes.”

(*Adonis*)

Characters:

ADEL, 50/60

MADAME, 60/70

SARA, 25

KASSIM, 19

ERIC, 30

Plot:

Europe. In one of our cities, in the south of one of our countries, men and women continue to arrive by sea in search of a better future. The young Muslim, Kassim, is not among the fortunate ones. Upon arriving in the city he manages to escape the policemen who believe him to be a terrorist and who arrest and then kill his brothers. The incident is the inevitable spark for riots in the community. Kassim finds refuge and comfort in Adel, a fellow Muslim, who runs a fruit shop at the bottom of a run-down building owned by Madame, a former opera singer who lives in hopes that both her glorious past and her absent son will return one day. When Sarah, a young and naive journalist arrives in town in search of 'the truth', the disorders and crimes have become dangerously routine. But Sarah ends up embracing the cause of the immigrants and falls in love with Kassim. The return of Eric, Madame's son who has become one of the many soldiers dispatched from the government to restore order, will create greater chaos and lead to tragic consequences.

Production history:

Première (of the first edition of the script): 16 February 2009, Sage Theater, New York.
Directed by Marco Calvani. With: Nada Rowand, Stephan Morrow, Estelle Collins Bajou, Mark
Couchot and Al Miro. Translated into English by Bing Taylor.

Indonesian première (staged reading): 10 October 2009, Ubud Writers and readers Festival (Bali).
Directed by Marco Calvani. With Diana Greentree Kellie Jones, Richard Piper and Nicki Wendt.

American première (staged reading): 6 May 2009, The Actors Studio (New York). Directed by Estelle
Parsons. With Thesa Loving, Ed Setrakian, Anne Son, Gabriel Fazio and Cihangir Duman.

Play commissioned by Grec Fundació of Barcelone, Spain

Originally written in Italian
Available also in English, Spanish, Catalan and French