

CRY HAVOC! (ASK QUESTIONS LATER)

EPISODE 1 - AFTER CAESAR

Written by

David K. Barnes

### CAST

Kazeem Tosin Amore as Mark Antony  
Harry Roebuck as Gaius Octavius Caesar  
Sarah Agha as Charmian  
Lara Sawalha as Cleopatra  
Sarah Lambie as Octavia  
Andy Secombe as Lepidus  
Beth Eyre as Fulvia

Ahmed Aljabry as Ptolemy  
Pip Gladwin as Drusus  
Mark Nicholson as Rufus

### CONTENT NOTES

- Abuse of Power (recurring theme)
- Vicarious Embarrassment
- Threats of violence/murder
- War/Warfare
- Innuendo/Sexual References
- Alcohol & Alcohol use
- Manipulation
- Historical Sexism
- SFX: Misophonia (eating/  
drinking/coughing/belching/kissing),  
crowds, stabbing

A FLAME flickers into life.

The luxurious private quarters of Queen CLEOPATRA, with an atmosphere of reverence. This opening has stylistic elements, as CHARMIAN tells a story both to us and to her Queen. We won't know it's Cleopatra yet - though we might guess.

Charmian BREATHES deeply and slowly, preparing herself.

Then she begins.

CHARMIAN

Not long ago, in a distant land,  
there lived a warrior, of great and  
noble deeds. He wished to rule the  
people of his city as their King.

Distant CROWD ROAR; non-diegetic (slight echo / reverb?).

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

But his friends didn't think it was  
a good idea. So they killed him.

PLUNGING OF DAGGERS. The FALL OF A BODY. Non-diegetic.

Beat.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Er... That's right, isn't it?

CLEOPATRA

(wry smile)  
Broadly.

CHARMIAN

I don't want to get the facts  
wrong.

CLEOPATRA

Don't worry about those. Just tell  
me the story.

Cleopatra RECLINES on her pillows. She's the most powerful woman in the world, having a quiet night in.

CHARMIAN

(still nervous)  
Alright. Well...

She continues her tale.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

They ran away - the killers, I mean - to the plains of Philippi.

Many Roman soldiers MARCHING, under...

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

There they raised an army. They knew they'd soon be followed, for two men sought revenge against their crime. Two men forged in opposites: the first strong of muscle, the second strong of mind. United in common cause.

Soldier atmos fades.

CLEOPATRA

And what did these two men do?

CHARMIAN

Basically... they won.

2 **EXT. FIELDS OF PHILIPPI - DAY**

2

A ROAR of victory from many thousand troops. Their General, MARK ANTONY, man of the people, addresses them.

MARK

We did it, lads! We bloody did it!

The soldiers ROAR, rhythmically BANGING SWORDS AGAINST SHIELDS.

SOLDIERS

Mark! Antony! Mark! Antony!(etc)

Mark soaks in adulation, LAUGHNG. He motions them to silence.

MARK

Alright, alright...! Now. You know I'm not much of a speaker.

The soldiers CHUCKLE KNOWINGLY - he is a great speaker.

MARK (cont'd)

I never even passed my Latin! But if any occasion deserved a few words it's this one, because you boys were incredible out there! I mean that was peak performance!

APPRECIATIVE LAUGHTER from the soldiers.

MARK (cont'd)

Rome is proud of each and every one of you here today. And that goes double from me. This was no ordinary war. We fought no foreign enemy. These were Romans, like you and me. Some may even have been our friends, once.

A solemn hush.

MARK (cont'd)

I wouldn't have blamed you for finding this one a struggle, if you'd put down your swords and said, "This far and no further."

Stirring them up again.

MARK (cont'd)

But. Each of you put his duty first! You fought like lions! And Brutus may have been an honourable man but we bloody well showed him a thing or two, didn't we, eh?!

ROAR. A quick burst of SWORDS ON SHIELDS, breaking up into excited CHATTERING, under...

MARK (cont'd)

My old mate Julius is looking down upon us, and he saw justice done this day! And here standing with me, at my side, is his very own son. He fought with us, he's your friend and mine - he's Gaius... Octavius... Caesar!

Soldiers CHEER.

Beat.

GAIUS

(nervous)

Hello everyone.

Painful beat. Mark steps in to help.

MARK

Oh son of the divine Julius Caesar,  
inheritor of his titles and  
estates, have you anything to add  
on this day of victory?

GAIUS

Me?

MARK

Yes.

GAIUS feels the eyes of thousands of men. Rabbit in the  
headlights.

GAIUS

Er.

Pause.

MARK

Anything? On this august occasion?

Beat.

GAIUS

Er.

Beat.

GAIUS (cont'd)

No.

Beat. A COUGH from the crowd.

GAIUS (cont'd)

No, I think you just about covered  
everything. Yep.

Mark leans in CLOSE for a hushed word.

MARK

(annoyed)

What's the matter?

GAIUS

There's... just so many of them.  
Just. Looking at me.

MARK

And?

GAIUS

I've... I've lost my voice.

MARK

(firm, annoyed)

You'll lose more than your voice if  
you don't say something inspiring.  
Well go on, give it some!

Gaius tries and fails to address the men impressively.

GAIUS

Er. That is to say... I have  
nothing else to add but... Well  
done! You men. Well done.

(swallows)

Yes.

The soldiers MURMUR uncertainly. Ripple of POLITE CLAPPING.  
Mark tries to salvage this.

MARK

Well. The son of the divine  
Julius... has spoken. And, er, now  
that's done with... we celebrate!  
WHO WANTS TO GO AND GET HAMMERED?

Huge ROAR of appreciation, the biggest yet. The soldiers  
DISPERSE to begin partying.

GAIUS

(hopefully)

That went well, I thought?

MARK

(forced smile)

Yeah. Sure.

Mark PATS Gaius's shoulder as he MOVES AWAY. Smile drops.

MARK (cont'd)

(muttered)

What a plank.

CHARMIAN (V.O.)

Rome's enemies lay vanquished in  
the field, and there were no more  
left to fight. Mark Antony and  
Gaius Octavius had won. Rome was  
theirs to rule... And that's when  
their troubles would really begin.

TITLES AND THEME MUSIC

ANNOUNCER  
 Rusty Quill Presents 'Cry Havoc (Ask  
 Questions Later)'  
 Episode 1: 'After Caesar'

3 **EXT. PLAZA, ROME - DAY**

3

We're back in Rome for a city-wide knees-up. CHEERING. SOLDIERS and CITIZENS celebrating, laughing, drinking, dancing. Some music.

CHARMIAN (V.O.)

The armies returned to Rome in triumph, and there was much rejoicing. General Mark Antony embraced his loving wife - the model of a Roman woman.

MARK

Fulvia!!

FULVIA

Mark!!

FULVIA RUNS INTO HIS ARMS; he GRUNTS from the impact.

FULVIA (cont'd)

Oh Mark I missed you so!

Covering him with KISSES.

MARK

And I missed you, my love!

SOLDIERS

Awww.

The watching soldiers APPLAUD. Mark and Fulvia LAUGH GAILY, putting on a good show. But close together, they can talk properly. Hurriedly, conspiratorially.

FULVIA

How'd it go out there?

MARK

Fine, it was dead easy. You'd have loved it. Lots of big, handsome men working up a sweat.

FULVIA

No problems with the army?

MARK  
They'll do whatever I tell 'em.

FULVIA  
So it's over then? Rome is ours?

MARK  
Yep.

FULVIA  
(squeal of delight)

Fulvia EMBRACES Mark TIGHTLY. The watching soldiers CHUCKLE.

MARK  
She can't keep her hands off me,  
lads!  
(to Fulvia, close)  
The Senate's already ratified it.  
As from now, I'm running the show.

FULVIA  
Yes!! Finally we can get things  
done around here! Just you and me.  
Oh Mark!

MARK  
I mean it's a bit more complicated,  
but basically yes.

FULVIA  
(smile frozen)  
What do you mean? Are you in charge  
or not?

MARK  
Yeah! Absolutely.  
(beat)  
... Me and Gaius.

FULVIA  
You and Gaius?!

MARK  
Yeah. Julie's boy.

FULVIA  
I know who he is! You said you were  
going to kill him!

MARK  
Yeah I know, I know...

A SOLDIER, DRUSUS, PASSES.

DRUSUS  
Hey Mark, you're the best!

MARK & FULVIA SNAP BACK TO A SHOW OF HAPPINESS.

MARK  
(laugh)  
Yes I am, thank you.

FULVIA  
(laughs gaily)

Then close again, hurried, hushed.

FULVIA (cont'd)  
You promised me you'd kill him.

MARK  
I can't do that.

FULVIA  
Why not?

MARK  
Cos Julie was a mate of mine and  
you don't kill a best mate's son.  
No matter how annoying he is.

FULVIA  
Adopted son. You owe him nothing.

MARK  
Oh he's harmless, he's a whelp.  
There's nothing he can do to us.

FULVIA  
(quick)  
Kill him.

MARK  
No.

FULVIA  
(sighs)

MARK  
We're still a Republic! I can't  
just take it over by myself can I?

FULVIA  
How do you know if you won't try?

MARK

Julie tried and look what happened to him. Is that what you want for me? Lying in the forum with swords in my back? Thank you very much.

FULVIA

You should rule. You deserve it. Rome deserves it. Quite frankly, I deserve it.

MARK

Look look look, don't worry. It's all working exactly as we wanted it. I am in charge. I'm Mark Antony, they love me.

FULVIA

And Gaius?

MARK

The boy's a wash-out, he's got no clue at all. You wait, I've got him wrapped around my little finger. Just like I'm wrapped around yours.

Fulvia accepts this - for now.

FULVIA

You'd better be right.

MARK

When have I ever been wrong? Now keep kissing me, they're still watching.

FULVIA

No they're not.

MARK

(lascivious)  
Well. Pretend they are.

FULVIA

(lascivious laugh)

The MUSIC comes to the foreground as we transition...

CHARMIAN (V.O.)

The celebrations continued long into the night. Some say the Romans go to war so they can justify the orgy afterwards.

CLEOPATRA (V.O.)

'Some say?'

CHARMIAN (V.O.)

I do, yeah. And the more blood spilt, the more they enjoy it. Sort of like a fetish.

Partying recedes into the background. In the foreground, GAIUS sits alone reading SCROLLS, near a CRACKLING FIRE.

CHARMIAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

But one man sat alone, away from the throng. Gaius Octavius didn't know how to party. He knew only how to think.

GAIUS

(reading, muttering)

No... no, this doesn't make any sense... What did it say in that other one...?

He HURRIEDLY BROWSES a pile of SCROLLS. Mark APPROACHES.

MARK

(calls)

Gaius!

GAIUS

(looks up)

What-?... Oh. Hello Mark.

Mark is somewhat drunk, but benevolent.

MARK

What are you doing! Come and join the gang!

GAIUS

Oh, er, later maybe, later. Mark, come and take a look at this. Look.

He's totally wrapped up in admin. MARK can't believe it, but also can.

MARK

You're working.

GAIUS  
Thought I'd get a head start. Look  
what I've found. It's maddening.

MARK  
Can I sit?

GAIUS  
Sure, let me just...

He PUSHES SOME SCROLLS out of the way, clearing a space, as  
MARK SITS heavily in his soldier's uniform, talking all the  
while.

MARK  
My son's around here somewhere. I  
told him to spend the night with  
his grandparents. Fulvia and I want  
some privacy tonight, heh heh...

GAIUS  
Goodo. You see here, I found an  
executive summary from our governor  
in Syria, and in it he says-

MARK  
Have some wine.

GAIUS  
What?

MARK  
Wine.

MARK passes a SLOSHING CUP OF WINE. Gaius TAKES it.

GAIUS  
Oh, thank you. Anyway, he says -  
the governor - they're paying far  
more in interest to the Publicani  
than we're actually making back in  
taxation-

MARK  
(bland)  
Really.

GAIUS  
Yes, and they're still running up  
debts like you wouldn't believe.

He's FLICKING through some scrolls.

MARK

Gaius.

GAIUS

And the magistrate's collecting a  
back-hander - I mean we have to  
stop this, it's appalling-

MARK

Gaius.

Beat.

MARK (cont'd)

Put your papers down and understand  
one simple thing.

Mark LEANS IN; CREAK OF ARMOUR / TUNIC. Smiling.

MARK (cont'd)

We did it.

GAIUS

(blinks)

What?

MARK

(taking his time)

Rome. Us. We did it.

GAIUS

We did it?

MARK

We. Did it.

GAIUS

(slowly getting it)

.... We did it...

MARK

Mmhmm.

GAIUS

(smiling)

I guess... we did it. Didn't we?

MARK

Now you're thinking straight.

Both grinning. This is the happiest they'll ever be  
together.

MARK (cont'd)  
 You know why they're all happy  
 tonight? Those people? Our people?  
 You know why?

GAIUS  
 Tell me.

MARK  
 Because we get stuff done, my  
 friend. We get stuff done. That's  
 what we do. We're unstoppable.

GAIUS  
 Well. I'll drink to that!

He LIFTS HIS WINE (slosh).

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 To the Republic!

MARK  
 If you like.

They CLINK CUPS. Gaius SIPS. Mark GULPS.

GAIUS  
 Do you think Caesar... I mean, my  
father, my new father - still feels  
 weird by the way.

MARK  
 You'll get used to it.

GAIUS  
 Do you think he really wanted to be  
 a king?

MARK  
 Doesn't matter.

GAIUS  
 No?

MARK  
 No. What does matter is that the  
 scum who killed him are dead in the  
 ground, and we're still here. How  
 many did you kill?

GAIUS  
 Eh?

MARK  
The enemy. How many?

GAIUS  
(not many)  
Oh, uh... I lost count. You?

MARK  
(mental arithmetic)  
Two hundred and... sixty-nine.  
Nice.

GAIUS  
What is?

Mark LAUGHS. CLAPS Gaius on the back, a bit heavily.

MARK  
Never mind, young Gaius, it's all over now! No more civil wars for us. You're not much of a fighter, on the quiet, are you?

GAIUS  
Well...

MARK  
It's OK. You don't have to be. You're the son of Caesar, right? The men respect that.

GAIUS  
Yes.

MARK  
But I know how you feel.

GAIUS  
You do?

MARK  
Oh yeah. I was new once. Rome's a tough world. Hard to be the bloke who doesn't get his head kicked in.

GAIUS  
I suppose so, yes.

MARK  
But look. For whatever reason, Julie adopted you to be his son, and that means something. I don't know what, but it does.

(MORE)

MARK (cont'd)  
And as sure as his divine spirit is  
looking over us, I just want you to  
know... that I'm looking out for  
you too.

Beat. He's trying so hard to look magnanimous.

MARK (cont'd)  
It's going to be OK.

GAIUS  
(genuine)  
Thanks Mark. That means a lot.

MARK  
No worries, friend. And in the days  
ahead, when it's all going on,  
doing this and that, well... You  
know you can leave it to me, if you  
ever need to. All this. It's never  
too much trouble. Alright?

GAIUS  
(uncertain)  
... Yeah.

MARK  
Good.

A single light CLAP on the back.

MARK (cont'd)  
Now come on. It's time to enjoy  
yourself. Plenty of fish in the sea  
looking for a hot strong war hero  
tonight.

He STANDS unsteadily.

MARK (cont'd)  
Gaius?

GAIUS  
I was just thinking.

MARK  
It can wait till tomorrow.

GAIUS  
It's simply that-

MARK

No! Come on! We've won! Right now, you and me are the most powerful men in the world. We own the entire Republic of Rome.

GAIUS

Ye-es...

MARK

So?

GAIUS

What are we going to do with it?

The fire goes on CRACKLING. In a stylistic flourish, the flames get stronger. It gets louder and louder until... EXTINGUISHED. The party's over.

5 INT. CLEOPATRA'S QUARTERS - EVENING

5

CLEOPATRA

You never met Julius, did you?

CHARMIAN

No. Well, I served him dates once, but we never spoke... What was he like? If you don't mind me asking.

CLEOPATRA

Caesar? He was...

Pause. Almost wistful.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Honest. In his own way.

CHARMIAN

Do you think he'd have made a good king?

CLEOPATRA

The Romans don't believe in them. To be honest, nor do I. On that subject, when is our visitor arriving?

CHARMIAN

I believe their ship docked nearby not too long ago. Should I leave you to prepare?

CLEOPATRA

Oh no, no, I'm ready for him...

Cleopatra lazily proffers a PLATE of cakes.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Would you like a honey cake?

CHARMIAN

Are you sure? ... Thank you!

They both MUNCH on a crisp honey cake.

CLEOPATRA

(eating)

Resume your story. It helps me to think. Where were we?

CHARMIAN

(swallows)

The morning after.

**6 INT. GAIUS'S OFFICE - MORNING**

6

Gaius's home on the Palatine Hill. His private office. GAIUS is standing at his desk, FUSSING over some scrolls.

CHARMIAN (V.O.)

It was a new dawn for Rome, free from internal strife. Gaius Octavius and Mark Antony were due to meet to begin their governance in earnest, and Gaius was well prepared. He doubtless spoke of it with his sister, Octavia; known to all as the epitome of virtue.

OCTAVIA ENTERS, SANDALS ON MARBLE. She's only recently woken up after a long night's drinking.

OCTAVIA

Hey Gaius. Don't talk too much; I'm still a bit trashed.

Gaius gives her the briefest disapproving look.

GAIUS

Morning.

He spends much of their conversation looking at his work.

OCTAVIA  
 (big yawn)  
 What time is it?

GAIUS  
 Sundial's outside if you want to  
 look.

OCTAVIA lazily WALKS further in.

OCTAVIA  
 Didn't see you out celebrating last  
 night. Surprise surprise. Can't  
 even show up for your own party.

GAIUS  
 I was there. Briefly.

OCTAVIA  
 You do know it was all for you.

GAIUS  
 It was for the armies of Rome and  
 their commanders.

OCTAVIA  
 Including you.

GAIUS  
 (bitter hint)  
 But mainly Mark.

OCTAVIA  
 Well of course. They like him.

He THROWS DOWN A SCROLL and MOVES AROUND THE DESK, agitated.

GAIUS  
 (exasperated noise)  
 Where's the new girl? She's meant  
 to have tidied up in here. Look at  
 my desk, it's filthy.

OCTAVIA  
 She's still in bed.

GAIUS  
In bed?

OCTAVIA  
 Yes, leave her, Gaius. We had a  
 very long night.

GAIUS  
(sharp sigh)  
I see.

OCTAVIA  
(yawning)  
I think she'll work out.

GAIUS  
Not interested, to be honest, thank  
you Octavia.

OCTAVIA  
Oh, don't be such a prude. You'd  
understand if you could only find  
yourself a nice... anyone!

GAIUS  
Perhaps I'm pickier than you are.  
It'd be impossible not to be,  
wouldn't it?

An unruffled OCTAVIA CROSSES OVER to the desk.

OCTAVIA  
What is all this anyway? Reading  
anything good?

GAIUS  
Corsican tax revenue for the past  
five years. Very important.

OCTAVIA  
(how boring)  
I'm sure it is. I know how your  
heart leaps at the sight of a  
finely written receipt.

GAIUS  
I have responsibilities now. You  
may not have noticed. Oh, and I  
found this amongst my papers.

Gaius TAKES OUT the offending SCROLL from a stack of them.

GAIUS (cont'd)  
If you could keep your hobbies away  
from my work...

OCTAVIA  
What is it?

GAIUS

"The Palatine Players began their new season with a riotous revival of Plautus's comedy classic *Asinaria*, or *The One with the Asses*, which in this critic's opinion has rarely been blah blah blah blah..."

DROPS IT on his desk.

OCTAVIA

Hey, no, keep reading! It's a good review!

GAIUS

(scorn)

The One with the Asses? I hope you mean donkeys.

OCTAVIA

See the play and find out. We've been doing ever so well lately. Sell out nights across the board. Though I sometimes think we rest on our laurels - pardon the phrase.

GAIUS tries to focus on his work.

GAIUS

It's just a theatre company.

OCTAVIA

It's my theatre company.

GAIUS

No it isn't.

OCTAVIA

I pay for it. That makes it my company! You wanted me to be a patron of the arts, and I'm doing it.

GAIUS

It's the wrong sort of art. I should have had that bunch of parasites shut down years ago.

OCTAVIA

You can't. They're too popular.

GAIUS

But they're always slipping in jokes about me!

OCTAVIA

Naturally; they get the biggest laughs! Gaius, if you give the people entertainment, and a way to blow off steam now and then-

GAIUS

Then you make them restless.

OCTAVIA

You make them happy. I'm sure I'm doing more for Rome with my plays than you are with all your dull reports.

She KNOCKS a stack over onto the desk; PAPERS everywhere.

GAIUS

Stop it, that's my in-tray!

KNOCK at the open door. It's LEPIDUS, a good-natured old buffer who has survived decades of politics through barely understanding anything.

GAIUS (cont'd)

(sharp)

What is it?

LEPIDUS

Hello there! Only me!

GAIUS

Oh, Lepidus. Good morning.

LEPIDUS

Your servants let me in. Not disturbing you, am I?

GAIUS

No, not at all, please, make yourself at home. We'll be setting up in the dining room.

LEPIDUS

Oh! Going to eat, are we?

GAIUS

Er, no. Sorry.

LEPIDUS  
 (note of disappointment)  
 Oh. Shame. Still, raring to go!  
 Getting stuck in, what?

GAIUS  
 That's right, in you go, won't be a  
 moment.

Lepidus exits, CHUCKLING good-naturedly.

OCTAVIA  
 (hushed)  
 Lepidus?

GAIUS  
 (knew she'd make fun)  
 Yes.

OCTAVIA  
 Seriously, Lepidus? He's in the  
 gang?

GAIUS  
 He was a key part of our victory.

OCTAVIA  
 But he's such a fool.

GAIUS  
 Even fools have their uses.  
 Especially when they're well  
 connected.

OCTAVIA  
 (laughing)  
 Does Mark know about this? He'll  
 hit the roof. He'll tear the old  
 man apart.

GAIUS  
 No he won't. He knows already.  
 (doubt)  
 I think.

OCTAVIA  
 Why bother with Mark anyway? He's  
 popular, but he doesn't know the  
 first thing about government.

GAIUS  
 Now, that isn't fair. I spoke to  
 him last night.  
 (MORE)

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 He may be full of himself, yes, but  
 he cares about Rome and he's taking  
 this very seriously. I know he is.

OCTAVIA  
 (smug)  
 Ah. So why isn't he here yet?

7 **EXT. ROMAN FORUM - MORNING**

7

A ROWDY group of SOLDIERS drinking, with Mark in their  
 midst.

CHARMIAN (V.O.)  
 Mark Antony was nearby. He'd been  
 waylaid by friends, that was all.

Mark DRINKS a massive vessel of WINE, SPILLING everywhere.

SOLDIERS  
 Chug! Chug! Chug! Chug! (etc)

Mark FINISHES the vessel, triumphantly. SMACKS LIPS.

MARK  
 Howzat?

HUGE CHEER from soldiers. Bigger BELCH from Mark.

MARK (cont'd)  
 Now someone pour me a proper drink!

Soldiers LAUGH.

MARK (cont'd)  
 Oop, hang on. Duty calls. It's my  
 first day at work, don't ya' know!

CHEERS and CHUCKLES from the happy throng of soldiers.

LUCIUS(off)  
 You'll show them who's boss!

MARK  
 You bet I will! Wish me luck,  
 lads!What I do, I do for Rome!

More CHUCKLING.

RUFUS  
 When are we getting paid?

All chuckling STOPS. Awkward silence.

MARK  
... What's that?

Another soldier, RUFUS, nervously STEPS FORWARD.

RUFUS  
It's just, er... After the campaign  
we just had... and everything...

Drusus STEPS FORWARD.

DRUSUS  
You see, sir, none of us are  
wealthy men. And we was sort of  
looking forward to getting what's  
owed to us.

Mark has never considered this.

MARK  
What's owed to you.

DRUSUS  
Yeah. Like, the rest of our wages.  
And the bonus you mentioned.

RUFUS  
We all want to buy some land to  
call our own, you see. Settle down,  
run farms, raise our families.

MARK  
Right, yes...

DRUSUS  
And not being funny or anything,  
but there's not much food kicking  
about, and we're all hungry.

RUFUS  
Yeah, you can hardly even find  
bread these days.

DRUSUS  
I want a massive pie.

Mark is totally out at sea.

MARK  
Well, yes, of course. Wages. Land.  
Food. Goes without saying.

DRUSUS

Yeah! So.

RUFUS

When do you reckon we might get all that?

Silence.

MARK

Er.

DRUSUS

We know you won't let us down, sir.

MARK

No. No, I will not do that. No. Definitely not.

Pause.

MARK (cont'd)

It's just that-

LUCIUS

(back of the group)  
He's letting us down!

Surge of HOSTILITY.

MARK

No no no, on the contrary, my friends! On the contrary. Please!

HOSTILITY DIES DOWN. A drunken Mark tries to rally them.

MARK (cont'd)

You see I'm going to, er... I'm er... I'm going into that meeting, right now - the first of a new and improved Republic - to sit with-

He BURPS.

MARK (cont'd)

'scuse me - with Gaius Octavius, son of the divine Julie Caesar... and I will see to it PERSONALLY... that you get your money, and food, and everything you need... immediately! Straight away. NOW.

Beat.

MARK (cont'd)  
How... how's that sound?

Soldiers CHEER. They chant.

SOLDIERS  
Mark! Antony! Mark! Antony!(etc)

Mark EXHALES with nervous relief.

MARK  
(to self)  
OK, that worked. Now. Which way am  
I going?

Mark STUMBLES away.

CHARMIAN (V.O.)  
As the general sought out the home  
of Gaius Octavius, his new  
colleagues awaited him with eager  
anticipation.

8 INT. GAIUS'S DINING ROOM - MORNING

8

Gaius and Lepidus waiting. Gaius SLOWLY DRUMMING HIS FINGERS on the table. Lepidus CLEARS HIS THROAT and COUGHS quietly, not trying to seek attention. After a bit, GAIUS SIGHS and LEANS back in his chair.

LEPIDUS  
Oh, my aunt was asking after you.

Beat. Gaius is so bored he's forgotten what conversation is.

GAIUS  
Sorry?

LEPIDUS  
My aunt Claudia. She wanted to know  
if you were keeping well.

GAIUS  
Oh. Good.

A lazy beat, with no subtext.

LEPIDUS  
I said you were.

GAIUS  
Yes.

LEPIDUS  
 Hope that's alright. You know.  
 Saying that.

GAIUS  
 (puzzled)  
 Sure.

LEPIDUS  
 Ah, good. Thought I might've said  
 too much. Careless talk costs  
 lives, and all that.

Can Gaius be bothered to ask what he's on about?

GAIUS  
 I... Sure, yeah.

Beat.

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 Good thinking.

THWACK as the doors open, and SMACK against the wall. Mark  
 STUMBLES into the room.

MARK  
Finally! I swear this hill isn't  
 normally here.

GAIUS  
 Ah, Mark. Good morning!

MARK  
 (laddish)  
 There he is! My boy!

Mark LAUGHS, advancing on Gaius and giving him a matey HUG  
 with SMACKS ON THE BACK.

MARK (cont'd)  
 Great to see you, friend. Exciting,  
 yeah? All this? Exciting.

Gaius suspects Mark is drunk. Diplomatically, he won't  
 mention it yet.

GAIUS  
 Yes, it is. Er, you know Lepidus of  
 course.

MARK  
 What? Oh, yeah. Morning-

Mark BELCHES.

MARK (cont'd)  
- sorry.

LEPIDUS  
That's alright.

MARK  
Grand. So, er... Um...

His mind goes blank. Nearly unconscious.

GAIUS  
Take a seat?

MARK  
Yes! Now that you mention it.  
Cheers. Any of them?

GAIUS  
Any one, yep.

Mark pulls out a CHAIR and pours himself heavily into it.

MARK  
Wow, that's better. Augh!

GAIUS  
OK, I think we'll start. Do help  
yourself to refreshments - and  
there's a bowl of figs there, if  
anyone's hungry.

LEPIDUS  
Aha!

Mark TAKES the BOWL.

MARK  
I'll take those.

LEPIDUS  
Oh.

MARK  
Absolutely starving.

He BELCHES LOUDLY.

MARK (cont'd)  
Blimey!

He MUNCHES on some figs.

GAIUS  
Um... Mark?

MARK  
(mouth full)  
Mmm?

GAIUS  
I'm not trying to put you on the spot here, but are you... drunk?

Mark SWALLOWS his figs.

MARK  
(secretive grin)  
Well. I might be. Who can say?

Beat.

GAIUS  
I mean, we can. Because you look really drunk.

MARK  
I can keep up with the chat, don't you worry. The cogs are whirring.

GAIUS  
Are you sure?

MARK  
Yeah. Crack on.

MUNCHING figs. Gaius tries to strike a friendly but professional note.

GAIUS  
OK, well, greetings both of you, to what I'm sure will be the first of many... stimulating and productive meetings about the running of our glorious Republic.

Mark SLAPS THE TABLE several times.

MARK  
Yes! Stirring stuff!

LEPIDUS  
Oh yes. Top drawer.

GAIUS  
Thank you. We are, er... we are great men.

(MORE)

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 I, Gaius Octavius, son of the  
 divine Caesar. Mark Antony, general  
 of the armies of Rome.

MARK  
 That's me.

GAIUS  
 And Aemilius Lepidus, without whom  
 we could never have raised the  
 capital to raise the armies! The  
 Roman State owes you a great deal.

LEPIDUS  
 Pleasure, pleasure. Nice to be  
 involved!

GAIUS  
 The future prosperity of the Roman  
 Republic now rests between the  
 three of us, and we will succeed.

MARK  
 Wait, hold on. This bloke's working  
 with us?

GAIUS  
 Yes.

MARK  
 You mean, he's in charge, like us?

GAIUS  
 What did you think he was doing  
 here?

MARK  
 I thought he was the secretary.

Beat. He's serious.

MARK (cont'd)  
 Like, taking the minutes.

GAIUS  
 No.

LEPIDUS  
 I can do that too if it'd be  
 useful?

GAIUS  
 No no, it's fine. Mark, we agreed  
 that Lepidus would join us.

(MORE)

GAIUS (cont'd)  
That's what the Senate ratified  
yesterday. We're a triumvirate.

MARK  
A what?

GAIUS  
Triumvirate. Three of us. To make  
sure that supreme power never gets  
concentrated in any one person.  
They think it's safer that way.

Beat.

MARK  
Three of us?

GAIUS  
Yes.

Beat.

MARK  
(big sigh)

He HEADDESK's the TABLE.

GAIUS  
Are you alright, Mark? You've  
smacked your head on the table.

MARK  
(head down on table)  
I know. Carry on.

Beat.

GAIUS  
OK. Well, as the ruling triumvirate  
of the Republic of Rome, we face  
many challenges, as we all know.

LEPIDUS  
(agreeing)  
Mmm, yes.

GAIUS  
We must strive to meet them, for  
the good of the people of Rome, and  
also, to be fair, for us. So-

MARK  
(sudden)  
Land!

GAIUS

What?

Mark is so drunk.

MARK

They want to buy land. The soldiers. And food. Money and food.

GAIUS

... Right, well, that is actually at the top of our agenda today. Thank you, Mark.

MARK

Welcome.

GAIUS

Thanks to Lepidus, we covered the initial costs of our most recent campaign, against the killers of my late, divine father-

LEPIDUS

Lovely man.

GAIUS

Yep - but now we need to pay off the rest of it, to the tune of...

FLICKS over a paper to read it.

GAIUS (cont'd)

Approximately three hundred million sesterces.

Mark nearly falls out of his chair.

MARK

How much?!

GAIUS

It's a big army, it costs a lot.

LEPIDUS

What have we got in the coffers?

GAIUS

Not much. In fact, not only are we low on money, but we are also facing... a massive food shortage.

LEPIDUS

Oh dear.

MARK  
You're joking?

GAIUS  
No. So, while we tackle that growing problem, we're also looking for a way to settle our account with the armies before they get... restless. Lepidus, do you have any ideas on that front?

LEPIDUS  
Ah, now, I was thinking about this, and er, no, I haven't. Nothing.

GAIUS  
... OK.

LEPIDUS  
Sorry.

GAIUS  
No, it's a tough problem.

LEPIDUS  
I suppose Rome wasn't built in a day!  
(laughs, then seeks confirmation)  
Was it?

MARK  
Look, the way I see it...

Mark is trying to concentrate through the drunken haze.

MARK (cont'd)  
We need... stuff. Right? And we don't have it.

GAIUS  
Correct.

MARK  
Then. Let's take it from people who do. Simple.

SLAPS TABLE. Point made.

GAIUS  
Well actually, as it happens, I've been looking through our treaties with neighbouring kingdoms, and I think Egypt is the best shout.

MARK

Done.

Gaius UNROLLS THE TREATY.

GAIUS

As we can see from the treaty,  
they've got grain and gold aplenty,  
and they might even have land for  
any men who want to live there.

LEPIDUS

Living abroad. Nice idea.

GAIUS

So I move that we open diplomatic  
channels with Queen Cleopatra  
immediately. All in favour?

MARK

Diplomatic channels? I'm not  
talking about having a talk, I'm  
talking about not talking. And  
acting. Instead.

GAIUS

(deep breath)

I'm sure Cleopatra will be amenable  
to our needs after some polite  
conversation.

MARK

That Egyptian harlot? You can't  
trust her.

GAIUS

The Egyptian Queen, yes, we can.

MARK

Mate, we've garrisons in Egypt. We  
can take what we need by force.

GAIUS

We had to recall our men from Egypt  
to fight at Philippi.

MARK

We'll send them back! We can win any  
war. Our armies are unbeatable.

GAIUS

These would be the armies we  
haven't paid yet for the last war  
they fought for us?

LEPIDUS

I don't suppose they'd take it on credit?

GAIUS

I doubt it. I say if we want the resources of Egypt then diplomatic overtures to Cleopatra is the best way forward at the present time. All in favour?

MARK

May one speak?

GAIUS

Please. Everyone's opinion here is equally important. Go ahead.

MARK

Your idea stinks.

GAIUS

Right.

Mark STANDS, threateningly but unsteadily.

MARK

We are Romans. We don't ask. If we need something, we take it. That's the way it's always been.

GAIUS

And I'm sure it will be again, but right now we've got to regroup, to rebuild, so we can ride this out.

MARK

And how long will that take?

GAIUS

I expect a few months. That's why we need to start-

MARK

Months?! Those men out there won't wait months! They need paying now!

GAIUS

Mark, Rome hasn't any money! It hasn't any food! We have nothing to offer these men, unless we can-

MARK

You're worse than the Senate! Talk  
talk talk - where's the action?

Mark WALKS around the table.

GAIUS

Where are you going? Mark?

LEPIDUS

I say, is the meeting over?

MARK

I'll tell you where I'm going. I'm  
going to the middle of the forum,  
I'm going to talk to the men, and  
I'm going to tell them that we're  
invading Egypt - now!

GAIUS

What!

MARK

No ifs, no buts - and that's a  
guarantee, from all three of us!

GAIUS

You can't do that.

MARK

Gaius, you have no idea what I can  
do.

GAIUS

No, I mean you can't go out there.  
Look at you. You've pissed  
yourself.

Beat.

MARK

Have I?

He has.

MARK (cont'd)

Oh, what...?

He begins SLAPPING AT HIS LEGS.

GAIUS

(to himself)

I don't believe this...

MARK

Oh no... Has anyone got a towel?

LEPIDUS

Here, use the treaty.

GAIUS

Don't use the treaty.

MARK

Mate, I've got to use something,  
it's all over the floor.

Octavia ENTERS. Around about now, we can hear the ANGRY VOICES of a MOB OF SOLDIERS outside.

OCTAVIA

Hey, Gaius? Can I borrow you for a second?

GAIUS

Not now, Octavia.

OCTAVIA

Um, it's quite urgent though. See, there's a mob of soldiers outside, and they're getting impatient.

SOLDIERS

(off)

Where's our money? Where's our money? Where's our money? (etc)

GAIUS

Oh Gods...

OCTAVIA

Do you want me to pass a message?

MARK

Yeah, tell them I'm not here.

GAIUS

Mark, we've got to deal with this.

MARK

Tell them to go away then!

GAIUS

We can't.

MARK

But we're in charge! Don't they know that? They'll do what we tell them, because we are in charge!

OCTAVIA

Have you pissed on our floor?!

MARK

Clearly, yes! Now find some towels!

LEPIDUS

Um. If the meeting's over, I thought I might head off for an early lunch?

GAIUS

Urghhh...

Gaius FALLS BACK INTO HIS CHAIR, defeated.

SOLDIERS

(off, still chanting)

Where's our money? Where's our money? Where's our money? (etc)

9 **INT. CLEOPATRA'S QUARTERS - EVENING**

9

We end Charmian's narrative, and find ourselves back in Cleopatra's quarters where the queen is LAUGHING smugly.

CLEOPATRA

Incredible! The situation sounds worse than I'd ever dared to hope. And is all of this really true?

CHARMIAN

I filled in a few gaps, but I drew upon the reports of our spies in Rome. The Triumvirs intend to seek aid from us - it can only be a matter of time.

CLEOPATRA

Thank you, Charmian. You have a knack for bringing these matters to life. Makes it so much easier to know what to do.

CHARMIAN

My Queen is too kind. I've always enjoyed telling stories.

CLEOPATRA

You've got a real gift, I shall  
make full use of it.

GUARDS are APPROACHING; feet on WOODEN FLOOR. They DRAG a  
prisoner with them.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

And if I'm not mistaken, it sounds  
like we finally have company.

PTOLEMY

(off)

Unhand me! Let go! Let go of me!

CLEOPATRA

Trust him to be late. You'll do the  
honours, won't you?

CHARMIAN

My lady.

The GUARDS enter with their prisoner, PTOLEMY, an unimposing  
lad who happens to be King. They THROW HIM DOWN.

PTOLEMY

Aargh!... What is going on around  
here?... I demand-!

CHARMIAN

Silence. You kneel in the presence  
of the almighty, beloved by her  
father and her people. Abase  
yourself before the infinite  
majesty of the rightful Pharaoh of  
Egypt, the living goddess, and our  
Queen... Cleopatra!

PTOLEMY

I know that! I'm her husband!

CLEOPATRA sits up, in command of the situation.

CLEOPATRA

Ptolemy, dear. I'm so sorry to get  
you out of bed like this. It must  
have been quite the surprise, to  
you and whomever or whatever you  
were sharing it with.

PTOLEMY

Get me out of bed?! You've dragged  
me all the way to Greece! I was  
still in Egypt a week ago!

CLEOPATRA

Well I wasn't cutting my holiday short just because of you.

PTOLEMY

Holiday? You've never taken a day off in your life.

CLEOPATRA

You take more than enough for both of us. Charmian, how many was it?

CHARMIAN

Too many to count.

CLEOPATRA

Not a good look for a King is it?

CHARMIAN

Not a good look at all.

PTOLEMY

You can't treat me like this! I'm Egypt's King! I outrank you! You're committing treason, I hope you know that!

CLEOPATRA

I do. But here we are.

PTOLEMY

What do you want from me?

CLEOPATRA

From you? Nothing.

Cleopatra APPROACHES him slowly, confidently.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

You're of no use to me, to Egypt, or to anyone. I'd half a mind to leave you alone, but you're always whining, and causing a scene.

CHARMIAN

Or plotting to remove the Queen.

CLEOPATRA

Yes, because you're right, I don't take a holiday without cause. I left Egypt to see what you'd do - and you rather took the bait.

PTOLEMY  
 (stubborn)  
 I don't know what you mean.

CLEOPATRA  
 But your conspirators do - they're  
 all dead. So instead of keeping you  
 hanging around, I thought it best  
 if I... didn't.

PTOLEMY  
 Damn it, I'm your brother.

CLEOPATRA  
 Yes... Marrying one's brother.  
 Never my favourite part of the job.  
 Still, with you gone, I won't have  
 to do it ever again, will I?

PTOLEMY  
 You're going to have me executed?

CLEOPATRA  
 No. I believe if you want something  
 done, you should do it yourself.

PTOLEMY  
 What the-

Cleopatra SLITS PTOLEMY'S THROAT. Horrible DEATH GURGLES.  
 His body FALLS to the ground.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA  
 Good. That was simple enough.

SHEATHES KNIFE.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)  
 Have his body dumped in the sea.

CHARMIAN  
 Of course my lady.  
 (TO GUARDS)  
 Remove it!

She CLAPS HER HANDS. The guards DRAG the BODY away.

CLEOPATRA  
 And now, a change of scenery.

CHARMIAN

Shall I instruct the Captain to  
ready our ship for Egypt?

CLEOPATRA

No we're not returning home just  
yet. We're going to Italy.

CHARMIAN

Italy, really?

CLEOPATRA

We mustn't keep our Roman friends  
waiting, must we? Matters like  
these require the personal touch.

CHARMIAN

Is it wise for you to return there  
so soon? After Caesar's death -

CLEOPATRA

(brisk, not unkindly)

Your concern is noted, Charmian,  
but unnecessary. I feel quite able  
to face Rome once again. After all,  
it's time we all knew who's really  
in charge...

**END TITLES & CREDITS**