

CRY HAVOC! (ASK QUESTIONS LATER)

EPISODE 7 - ROME AFTER DARK

Written by

Rafaella Marcus

Edited with additional material

by David K. Barnes

Cast

Beth Eyre as Fulvia
Harry Roebuck as Gaius Octavius Caesar
Lara Sawalha as Cleopatra
Kazeem Tosin Amore as Mark Antony
Sarah Lambie as Octavia
Sarah Agha as Charmian
Pip Gladwin as Ebrius
Katie Seaton as Julia
Ian Hayles as Publius
Helen Gould as Silvia
Ian Hayles as Vendor

Content Notes

- Abuse of Power (recurring theme)
- Cults & Rituals
- Sexual References & Innuendo
- Alcohol & Alcohol Use
- Human Sacrifice
- Knives
- Vicarious Embarrassment
- Discussions of: Death
- SFX: Thunder & Lightning, vocalised suffering, chanting

An eerie back alley in a bad part of Rome. Two sets of FOOTSTEPS as MARK and GAIUS carefully approach.

MARK

A bloke like you shouldn't be in a rough neighbourhood like this.

GAIUS

I know, Mark, but the evidence points here and we must follow it!

MARK

(sighs)

The cult of thingywotzit?

GAIUS

The Cult of Mithras, yes. Banished from Parthia centuries ago, it took hold in Crete, spread west into Italy, and still goes on today.

MARK

And it's secret?

GAIUS

Very secret.

MARK

And rich?

GAIUS

Legend says that once you were in the cult, you were made for life.

MARK

So enough gold to pay off an army?

GAIUS

Enough gold to buy the world. And if the information I've received is correct, then the secret entrance to the temple is right... here.

THEY STOP.

MARK

What, just like that?

GAIUS

It's been a life's work to get this far. My father - the first one I mean - he devoted everything to it.

(sombre)

I just wish he could be here now.

MARK

I'm sure he'd be proud to see you
ankle deep in filth in a back
alley.

Gaius RUSTLES a piece of PARCHMENT.

GAIUS

Now - what did they say about the
entrance...

(clears throat)

"Seek ye a dog in heat."

MARK

That's disgusting. I'm not poking
around this piss-stained alley
looking for a horned up dog.

GAIUS

No, no - it's a riddle. Now think.
Heat, heat... Maybe a hypocaust...?

MARK

Bugger me, the sun'll be up by the
time we get this.

GAIUS

What did you say?

MARK

I said bugger me-

GAIUS

No no no - you said the sun! Yes!
The Sun! It's Sirius!

MARK

Very serious.

GAIUS

No, Sirius! The dog star! It shines
during the hottest days of summer -
"a dog in heat". Find the dog star
and we find the door!

He FUMBLES in his SACHEL - a METALLIC CLANKING as he takes
out an ASTROLABE.

MARK

What's that?

GAIUS

It's a pocket astrolabe - it tells
you the position of the stars.

MARK

You just carry one around with you?

GAIUS
Yes. Doesn't everyone?

MARK
(bloody hell))
Hydra's teeth.

Gaius TINKERS WITH the ASTROLABE...

GAIUS
And Sirius... is... THERE. Which
means the doorway must be...

The CLICK and THUNK of stone being pressed.

GAIUS (cont'd)
I love puzzles, don't you?

MARK
(sighs)

The heavy STONE DOOR CREAKS OPEN, ominously.

GAIUS
Uh... very dark... isn't it?

MARK
Yeah...

An eerie, chilly BREEZE.

MARK (cont'd)
(shivers)
This cult... They're not going to
be... weird, are they? You know.
Dark rituals, unspeakable acts...?

GAIUS
Oh no, no. Nothing to worry about.
(beat)
Unless you believe the stories.

MARK
What stories?!

Suddenly the echoey ringing of FOOTSTEPS on STONE from the
darkness. And then a raspy voice emanates from the shadows.

EBRIUS
Ahhh... Who are ye, that would seek
the secrets of Mithras?

GAIUS
I... I am G-G-Gaius Octav-

EBRIUS
No names!

GAIUS
But you just asked-!

EBRIUS
Descend, strangers. The temple of
Mithras awaits...

A sudden THUNDERCLAP / LIGHTNING STRIKE in the skies

MARK
(gulps)
After you.

OPENING TITLES AND THEME

ANNOUNCER
"Cry Havoc (Ask Questions Later)" C
Episode 7: "Rome After Dark"

2 INT. JUNO'S COCK DRINKS LOUNGE - EVENING

2

TINKLING FOUNTAINS, the MURMUR of GENTEEL LADIES. The
lilting twangs of a LYRE underscore the atmosphere. OCTAVIA
and CHARMIAN have just arrived.

CHARMIAN
Well, this place is... er...

OCTAVIA
Deathly, isn't it?

CHARMIAN
No, no, it's lovely! Very...
(struggling))
- clean.

OCTAVIA
You don't have to be polite, Mia.
It's a boring club for boring
senators' wives - but at least you
can always get a table!

Another patron WALKS BY.

JULIA
(flirty)
Octavia.

OCTAVIA
(flirty)
Julia.

JULIA passes.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)
 (to Charmian))
 Terrible lay but her husband's
 summerhouse is something else.

CHARMIAN
 Ah. Right.
 (laughs awkwardly)

A kind of 'awkward first date' pause.

OCTAVIA
 I'm glad you could come. You know,
 new cast member, post-rehearsal
 drinks - it's tradition, really!

CHARMIAN
 You take out all of your new actors
 like this?

OCTAVIA
 Well, no, not all of them. Ha.

Awkward beat.

OCTAVIA
 So how are you finding
 rehearsal?

CHARMIAN
 So rehearsal seems to be
 going well -

FLUSTERED LAUGH from both.

OCTAVIA
 You've been with us for a few days
 now, what do you think?

CHARMIAN
 I like it! I'm good at it!
 (beat, hurried)
 I mean I think I am, anyway.

OCTAVIA
 (laughing)
 No no, you are! You're wonderful.

CHARMIAN
 I can't wait to do the play in
 front of an audience.

OCTAVIA
 Ah, well. Audiences. They can be
 rather... unpredictable.

CHARMIAN
 That's good surely? There'd be no
 fun if you knew how it'd turn out.

OCTAVIA
 Well then. To the unexpected!

CHARMIAN
The unexpected!

They CHINK THEIR DRINKS together, as FULVIA appears.

FULVIA
My my, isn't this cosy?

OCTAVIA
(icy)
Fulvia.

FULVIA
Up to your old tricks again I see.

CHARMIAN
Old tricks-?

OCTAVIA
Can we help you? Bury you under
some rocks, or something?

FULVIA
No, don't let me disturb you. I'm
here to see a friend.

OCTAVIA
You mean you've finally made one?
Gosh, how enterprising.

FULVIA
(boasting)
She'll be here soon. You may have
heard of her. Queen Cleopatra?

Charmian SPLUTTERS and CHOKES on her wine.

OCTAVIA
Mia! Mia are you OK?

CHARMIAN
(coughing)
Yes... Sorry... I'm fine.

OCTAVIA
Hey, you're Egyptian, aren't you?
You must know Cleopatra! Well,
maybe not know know but I'm sure I
can get her over when she arrives -

No!

CHARMIAN

No!

FULVIA

FULVIA (cont'd)
She's my guest, leave her alone.

CHARMIAN
 (panicking)
 And I - I - I have to leave. Now.

OCTAVIA
 What? Really?

CHARMIAN
 I just remembered I've got, er,
 work! That's right, an evening
 shift. Damn! Tsk! So sorry.

OCTAVIA
 Won't you even finish your drink?

CHARMIAN
 Oh sure.

Charmian DOWNS IT.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)
 (gasping))
 Holy Isis. Sorry to fly. Let's do
 this again some other night!

OCTAVIA
 Are you feeling-?

CHARMIAN (O.S.)
 Absolutely, see you at rehearsal!

Charmian RUSHES OFF, BUMPING into other PATRONS.

OCTAVIA
 OK, that was weird...

FULVIA
 Losing your touch? How sad.

OCTAVIA
 Piss off Fulvia. On second
 thoughts, allow me.

She GULPS her drink, PUTS CUP DOWN, PUSHES CHAIR OUT.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)
 I've got somewhere more interesting
 to be than this dump. Give my
 regards to 'her royal highness.'

Octavia leaves, passing CLEOPATRA as she enters.

OCTAVIA (O.S.)
 And here she is! Evening, your maj!

CLEOPATRA (O.S.)
 Evening.

Cleopatra strides to Fulvia.

FULVIA
Your Majesty! I'm so pleased you're here! What can I get you?

CLEOPATRA
Anything with some kick - I didn't cross a continent to drink salad dressing. And I didn't come here to waste time. So: what do you want?

3 INT. UNDERGROUND TUNNEL - EVENING

3

DRIP DRIP DRIP of underground caverns. Echoey, spooky. Gaius, Mark and Ebrius DESCENDING the narrow stairway.

MARK
We've been walking for ages!

GAIUS
(hiss)
Shh! He'll hear us.

MARK
Sorry, didn't mean to embarrass you in front of *the cultist*.

EBRIUS
Halt!

Ebrius STOPS SUDDENLY. Mark CRASHES INTO Gaius.

MARK Ooof! GAIUS Ow!

EBRIUS
The Temple lies ahead. Are ye prepared for whatsoever ordeal awaits within? Think carefully before ye answer.

GAIUS
Um... yes? I - I think so?

MARK
Same. Can we get on with it?

EBRIUS
Very well. Ye may enter... the Temple... OF MITHRAS.

EPIC GRINDING OF STONE as a giant door OPENS. They STEP THROUGH and into the larger space beyond.

4 INT. TEMPLE OF MITHRAS - CONTINUOUS

4

An old but marble-floored temple, filled with ROBED CULTISTS.

EBRIUS

Brothers! We have with us two initiates. Hail Mithras!

CULTISTS

Hail Mithras!

EBRIUS

... You too.

GAIUS

Oh. Hail Mithras!

MARK

Hail Mithras.

EBRIUS

Ye have both done well to find us. But ye must be tested further, if induction to our order ye seek.

MARK

All that funny handshake stuff is it? I've heard of people like you.

EBRIUS

Do not take this lightly, stranger. For if ye fail... ye shall die.

Two cultists UNSHEATH SWORDS.

MARK

Oh yeah? We'll see about that-!

GAIUS

No Mark! Don't!

(to Ebrius)

Am I correct that joining the Cult of Mithras brings wealth and wisdom beyond all compare?

EBRIUS

Ye are, for it does.

GAIUS

Mark...

MARK

... Alright. I'll play along. But what tests are we talking about?

EBRIUS

Ye must sup the blood of Mithras...

MARK

... Which is?...

EBRIUS

Wine. But there is much of it.
Bring forth the sacred pint!

CULTISTS

The sacred pint!

GAIUS

Wait, what? That's it? The first
test is to drink a pint of wine?

EBRIUS

Be warned! The wine is very dry.

GAIUS

But that's-! [ridiculous]

MARK

I think I'm going to like it here
after all! Initiate me, lads!

5 INT. JUNO'S COCK DRINKS LOUNGE - EVENING

5

Fulvia POURING WINE and trying to charm Cleopatra.

FULVIA

And how are you enjoying Rome, your
Majesty?

CLEOPATRA

You can drop all that 'Your
Majesty' stuff.

FULVIA

You don't like titles?

CLEOPATRA

Only when they're used with
respect - a commodity that seems in
very short supply here.

FULVIA

But I do respect you, very much.

CLEOPATRA

Your husband doesn't share your
opinion.

FULVIA

(awkward)
Ah, that...

CLEOPATRA

Yes, that. Thanks to Mark I've been insulted, embarrassed, accused of crimes I didn't commit, and had wildly inaccurate assumptions made about my sex life.

FULVIA

You mean the night where he-

FULVIA

Got his cock out.

CLEOPATRA

Got his cock out.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Yes. I realise I'm no expert in Roman custom, but that's not a sign of respect where I come from.

FULVIA

To be honest, this is what I wanted to see you about. To clear the air. Tabula rasa - a clean slate.

CLEOPATRA

Thank you, I can speak Latin.

FULVIA

(choosing carefully)

Mark is a man of... passion! He cares deeply about a great many things - and he likes to take action. Swiftly, decisively-

CLEOPATRA

Like stripping off at a meeting.

FULVIA

No, no no-

CLEOPATRA

Or accusing me of plotting against his best friend and the father of my child - that sort of thing?

FULVIA

(struggling)

No, what I'm saying - what I'm saying is... er ... Another drink?

CLEOPATRA

No.

FULVIA

Right. Well, um... you see, Mark has many talents. He's an excellent general. He inspires the men.

CLEOPATRA

He was popular at the games...

FULVIA

Exactly! He's a born leader, no doubt about it. But he needs... guidance, now and then. Some counsel. Some direction.

CLEOPATRA

Some restraint.

FULVIA

(rueful)

That too.

CLEOPATRA

And let me guess: that's where you come in?

FULVIA

Well, I don't like to boast, but... I do enjoy pitching in.

CLEOPATRA

How?

FULVIA

I'm sure your spies keep you up to date. Enough to know that unlike all the 'good Roman matrons' in this room, I'm not content to sit by with the spinning and weaving. I like to get my hands dirty.

CLEOPATRA

I've heard rumours to that effect. ... Am I to take it they're true?

FULVIA

Why not stay and find out?

Pause as Cleopatra assesses her.

CLEOPATRA

How about another drink?

FULVIA

I thought you'd never ask...

6 INT. TEMPLE OF MITHRAS - NIGHT

6

Mark is KNOCKING BACK ANOTHER PINT OF WINE. The cultists MOANING - sort of like a bunch of lads going "wheyyyyyy" but with religious reverence. They reach a CRESCENDO and APPLAUD.

MARK
(smacking lips)
There! Give us another one!

GAIUS
Mark, you've had five already.

MARK
(drunk)
More sacramental wine! I'M GOING TO
BLESS EVERYTHING HERE!!!

EBRIUS
Brothers! Our initiates have supped
their sacred pints! This one has
gone beyond the realm of duty.

CULTISTS
Hail Mithras!

MARK
Yeah, Mithras! Good lad.

EBRIUS
While this one has applied himself
to the sacred riddle: what has four
legs, then has two legs, then has
three legs?

GAIUS
A bull trying to do a handstand.

EBRIUS
Correct.

CULTISTS
Hail Mithras!

EBRIUS
But before ye may join our number,
ye both must finish the ceremony.

KNOWING MUTTERINGS from the cultists.

GAIUS
Finally!

MARK
(still drunk))
Anything, mate, you're a diamond.

EBRIUS
Take your places in the centre.

Echoing FOOTSTEPS as Gaius and Mark do so.

EBRIUS
Now brothers... strip them.

GAIUS
Do what?

Comically quick sound of GARMENTS being RIPPED OFF Gaius and Mark, with muffled YELPS OF PROTEST from both.

GAIUS (cont'd)
(sotto to Mark))
Wha... what's happening?

MARK
(sotto to Gaius))
Keep calm, it's just a hazing.

GAIUS
(demented whisper))
What does that mean?!

MARK
Get blindfolded, hop over a candle,
maybe some genital beating.

THWACK of Mark being hit by a stinging wet towel.

MARK (cont'd)
(pain))
ARGH! Yep, there it is.

The cultists quietly CHANTING like an occult football match.

CULTISTS
Mith-RAS, Mith-RAS... (etc)

EBRIUS
The final stage is upon us. Pass
this test and ye shall be a full
blooded member of our ranks. None
shall ever refuse ye, whatsoe'er ye
may ask of them.

GAIUS
(to Mark, excited))
Hear that! "Whatsoe'er ye may ask!"
I told you, we'll be rich beyond
our wildest dreams!

MARK
What does he mean "full blooded"?

EBRIUS
Bring out the sacrifices!

The chanting STOPS abruptly. Ominous CLANKING OF CHAINS as PUBLIUS and SILVIA are brought in, WHIMPERING.

MARK
Oh...

GAIUS
Oh no....

The sacrifices are THROWN TO THEIR KNEES with CRIES OF PAIN.

MARK
Er... What's with these two? In rags? And chains?

EBRIUS
Initiation to the Cult of Mithras shall be marked... in BLOOD!

Rhythmic BANGING OF CUPS ON TABLES under:

CULTISTS
Blood! Blood! Blood!

They stop.

MARK
You're taking the piss? Right?

Beat.

MARK (cont'd)
Right?

EBRIUS
Take the sacred blade. Use it. Deliver this sacrifice to the divine Mithras... and then will ye be blessed eternally.

Pause.

GAIUS
OK... Um... Mark, quick sidebar?

MARK
Yeah.
(to Ebrius)
Do you mind? We just need a word.

EBRIUS
(intoning)
Very well. But do not delay. Mithras demands blood...!

7 INT. JUNO'S COCK DRINKS LOUNGE - EVENING

7

Fulvia and Cleopatra are getting on really well: kind of drunk, LAUGHING. Cleopatra SLAPS THE TABLE; goblets SHAKE.

CLEOPATRA

False! I did NOT have the Prelate of Macedon assassinated... I had the GOVERNOR assassinated instead!

They both LAUGH.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Your turn, your turn.

FULVIA

OK! I dragged my first husband's bloody corpse through the streets and threw it on the steps of his enemy's house. True or false?

CLEOPATRA

Um... true! No, false!

FULVIA

It's TRUE!

CLEOPATRA

Get out! That's cold!

FULVIA

Ah, good times. Actually, terrible times. But it did whip up a mob against the man that killed him. I wouldn't wish that on my worst enemy. Well, I would, because I literally did.

CLEOPATRA

My first husband died too.

FULVIA

I'm sorry.

CLEOPATRA

Don't be. He was an odious little brat. Most younger brothers are.

FULVIA

Ah. I hear your second one's none too clever these days either.

Cleopatra starts to sound rather sober.

CLEOPATRA

And what precisely have you heard?

FULVIA

About Ptolemy? Well I know he isn't in Egypt, and he isn't here with you. So I suppose you must have lost him on the journey?

(with a smile)

How very careless of you.

She also sounds sober.

CLEOPATRA

I am never careless. One can't afford to be if one grows up with two brothers and two sisters doing whatever they can to marry or murder you.

FULVIA

You've sobered up.

CLEOPATRA

My dear, I was never drunk. I told the slave to bring me grape juice or I'd feed him to a crocodile.

FULVIA

There are no crocodiles in Rome.

CLEOPATRA

Then I'll take him back to Egypt for the purpose. Only a fool gets intoxicated with one's enemies.

FULVIA

Banging that drum again, are we?

(beat))

You know, my first husband Clodius was a revolutionary. His death was unlucky, but when he died I kept the money... and the connections.

CLEOPATRA

You're being very open.

FULVIA

You'd find out some other way, why not hear it from me? I have informants from here to Parthia, and men who will do far worse if I tell them to. In short: I am a useful person to know.

CLEOPATRA

For instance?

FULVIA

Well I can't grant you any land,
and the King of Judea's a pretty
tall order - but I'm told the
governor of Cyprus is causing you
trouble?

CLEOPATRA

I admit, he is a nuisance.

FULVIA

He won't be any more. I can see to
it discreetly. He won't trouble
you, or anyone else, ever again.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA

Why would you do this?

FULVIA

Call it a goodwill gesture. A sign
that I'm open for business. To the
right friends.

They don't trust each other, but they do like each other.

CLEOPATRA

Thank you, Fulvia. I'll bear that
in mind... If only your husband
would be as co-operative...

FULVIA

He will be. Give him time. This is
only the beginning.

8 INT. TEMPLE OF MITHRAS - NIGHT

8

The chilly temple. Gaius and Mark conferring in low voices.

MARK

Mate. We're not really going to do
this - are we?

GAIUS

I - I don't know. It's complicated.

MARK

What's complicated about sticking a
dagger in somebody's neck?!

EBRIUS (O.S.)

Are ye alright over there?

GAIUS
 Yes! Won't be long!
 (to Mark)
 Look, these people can help us!

MARK
 Sacrificing animals is one thing,
 but people? That's barbaric!

GAIUS
 All our money troubles at an end!
 Our soldiers paid off! We could
 finally get on with the business of
 actually ruling this place.

MARK
 So you're saying yes?

GAIUS
 I'm saying...
 (sighs)
 We must do what's best for Rome.

MARK
 You'd better be right about this...

Beat. Mark STEPS FORWARD. A hushed, reverent silence.

MARK (cont'd)
 Ebrius. Give me the blade.

EBRIUS
 Let it be done.

A SHING as Mark slices through the air, testing the blade.
 HEAVY FOOTSTEPS as he approaches the victims.

MARK
 What's your name, son?

PUBLIUS
 P - please. Have mercy.

MARK
 Your name?

PUBLIUS
 P-Publius. Sir.

MARK
 Publius. Hold still. This will be
 quick.

Publius whimpers. Big build up. A terrible RUSHING SOUND of
 a blade through the air and then - SNICK. His ropes are cut.

PUBLIUS
 You - you cut my bonds.

MARK

Off you go. Fast as you can.

PUBLIUS

Sir! Th - thank you - the gods
smile on you!

Publis SCURRIES AWAY.

EBRIUS

Ye have defied us.

MARK

(furious, drunk))

Is THIS what Rome stands for? No!
Kill a man in battle with a sword
in his hand! Spill blood defending
your people! THAT is Roman. But
this? To kill a man, cowering in
bonds? It is base. It is cowardly.
It is UN-ROMAN. And it shall not be
done IN MY NAME, nor in ROME'S.
Good NIGHT, "gentlemen".

He LEAVES - door SLAMMING SHUT behind him.

CULTIST

He hasn't got any clothes on.

EBRIUS

Yes, well - the Rites of Mithras
are not for all! Only an elite few
may be welcomed into the stygian
circle! And we still have one
acolyte who would pledge himself...

GAIUS

Er. Yes. About that-

EBRIUS

Unless he is not worthy of
Mithras... and his riches.

Pause.

GAIUS

Fine. Give me the knife.

He TAKES IT and APPROACHES the other victim, Silvia.

SILVIA

Please - please-

GAIUS

(quiet)

I'm sorry about this, I am. But if
it's any consolation, you're doing
it for Rome.

SILVIA

But sir...

GAIUS

Could you - close your eyes?

Alright - alright...

He shakily raises the knife.

GAIUS (cont'd)

(a fervent prayer)

Apollo, in your wisdom - guide me -
let my hand be true - let this
prove the right path... Now...

(a yell of pure adrenaline
as he swings)

AAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAAH-!

Suddenly a SPLAT of a TOMATO on Gaius's face.

GAIUS (cont'd)

... Did... did somebody just throw
a tomato at me?

EBRIUS

Yes.

GAIUS

... Why?

Beat. Ebrius suddenly drops the ominous cultist act.

EBRIUS

Because you've passed! Boys, give a
round to our newest member!

Huge CHEER and CLAPPING from the cultists.

GAIUS

You mean - no sacrifice?

EBRIUS

No! We left all that stuff behind
in the Bronze Age - can you imagine
if we still went for it?

Cultists all LAUGH.

EBRIUS (cont'd)

Sorry for the song and dance but we
had to make sure you were serious.
The time-wasters we've had in here!

GAIUS

(still shaken)

I - I see.

EBRIUS

And let's give it up for Publius
and Silvia! Didn't they do well?

WHOOPING from the cultists.

SILVIA

Thanks, Ebrius!

Publius JOGGING BACK IN.

PUBLIUS

Yeah! Always a pleasure!

GAIUS

Sorry, who are you?

EBRIUS

Oh they're just friends of ours.
They do this for kicks.

(leans in)

Keeps their marriage spicy. I don't
ask.

GAIUS

No, right.

EBRIUS

Well, then - I think we've got a
new member to toast! Party!!!

CHEERS. BANGING on TABLES. PARTY POPPERS and PARTY WHISTLES.
A convivial party atmosphere for the rest of the scene.

EBRIUS (cont'd)

Oh, let me introduce you to the
Pater!

GAIUS

The Pater?

EBRIUS

Yeah, he's the head of our little
gang. He slipped in just before the
sacrifices. That's him over there.

GAIUS

That... cloaked, hooded, silent
figure presiding over the revels
with grim authority?

EBRIUS

Yeah. Real party animal. Oh - look
sharp, he's coming over.

The reverential pater - really OCTAVIA - APPROACHES.

EBRIUS (cont'd)
 Wotcha Pater! The man, the myth,
 the hangover - how's it hanging?

OCTAVIA
 (deep, imposing voice)
 You may leave us.

EBRIUS
 Sure, no worries. Don't do anything
 I wouldn't! Wahey!

He BOUNDS AWAY.

GAIUS
 Holy Pater of the divine Mithras, I
 want to say what an honour it is-

OCTAVIA
 (normal voice)
 Lighten up, Gaius, it's meant to be
 a party.

GAIUS
 (shrill))
 Octavia?! ... You're the Pater?

OCTAVIA
 Shhh! Yes - just be chill, alright?
 They don't know who I am, and it'd
 be so boring to explain it.

GAIUS
You're the head of a mysterious
 cult? For how long?

OCTAVIA
 Ooh, couple of years now? They
 weren't hard to find. They're thick
 as planks, but they have good wine.

GAIUS
 You could have saved me a lot of
 bother!

OCTAVIA
 Well if you'd told me what you were
 trying to do...!

GAIUS
 Alright, alright. This changes
 nothing. I'm still a new member.

OCTAVIA
 Yes you are! When do you want to
 host your inaugural banquet?

GAIUS

I - what? Host it?

OCTAVIA

Yeah. Standard policy. All this booze has to come from somewhere.

GAIUS

What does that mean?

OCTAVIA

They're flat broke. Always have been. I could have told you that.

GAIUS

But their reputation! Riches!

OCTAVIA

Yep, that's the legend that suckers in new members like you - and each new member picks up the tab!

GAIUS

So...?

OCTAVIA

Until we get another new member, all the drinks are on you!

GAIUS

Oh wonderful. Just great.

He KICKS a table and SIGHS.

OCTAVIA

... Gaius?

GAIUS

What?

OCTAVIA

Back there... the sacrifice... If it hadn't been fake... well, you weren't really going to...?

Pause.

GAIUS

No! No, of course not. I would never. No.

(beat)

I would never.

But he's not sure - and neither are we.

9 EXT. STREET - AFTER MIDNIGHT

9

A late night street after all the pubs have shut; DRUNKEN CITIZENS going home. Fulvia and Cleopatra buying snacks.

VENDOR

...and two dormice... that'll be...
couple of bronzes, love.

CLEOPATRA

Here, have a drachma. It's gold.

VENDOR

(over the moon)

Thanks! For that, I'll throw in an
extra bag of wine-fed snails.

HANDS OVER A BAG OF SNAILS. Flavia and Cleopatra WANDER.

FULVIA

You really should let me pay.

CLEOPATRA

Nah, you can get it next time.

They MUNCH on roasted DORMICE.

FULVIA

Gods, there's nothing like a baked
dormouse dipped in honey.

Cleopatra LICKS HONEY OFF HER FINGERS.

CLEOPATRA

Mmm. Crunchy.

FULVIA

Far be it from me to ruin a good
night with more shop talk, but-

CLEOPATRA

Am I going to give Mark another
chance? I'll give it some thought.

FULVIA

He has hidden depths.

CLEOPATRA

Perhaps. Though I do wonder why
someone of your talents needs him
at all. Forgive a blunt question.

Fulvia LAUGHS MIRTHLESSLY.

FULVIA

My second husband was a man called
Curio.

(MORE)

FULVIA (cont'd)

Within a year of our marriage he was elected tribune and Julius Caesar's right hand man, thanks to me - and if he hadn't died in battle we'd have got much further.

CLEOPATRA

I don't doubt it.

FULVIA

But with Mark, there's no limit to what we can achieve. We're leading the Republic and I haven't even begun to flex these muscles. The people love him. He's handsome, he's brave, he's fun, and he's-

CLEOPATRA

Walking naked down the street.

A drunk Mark is STUMBLING with great dignity.

MARK

(muttering to himself)

Bunch of wackos, I never wanted to be part of their gang anyway...

FULVIA

Mark?

Mark BELCHES and STOPS.

MARK

Hello! Hey, you look very like my wife. She's got the most beautiful scowl. Yeah, just like that!

FULVIA

Urghhh.

MARK

I'd better get home or she'll be wondering where I am! Enjoy your evening, ladies!

He STAGGERS on, BELCHING.

FULVIA

Well.

CLEOPATRA

So he gets his cock out in front of everyone, does he? I'm glad it wasn't just me.

Fulvia LAUGHS easily.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Do you need to follow him?

FULVIA

No, let him walk it off.

CLEOPATRA

I must say, it's been a treat to spend time with you at last. The night's flown by. Shame it has to end really.

FULVIA

I'd invite you back to our place, but we'd only be disturbed.

CLEOPATRA

Yes, and there's Lepidus at mine.

FULVIA

I mean we could always find a hotel and book a room?

CLEOPATRA

Oh, yes! Good idea! Let's do that.

FULVIA

Great!

CLEOPATRA

I never mix pleasure with business - but I do enjoy it afterwards.

FULVIA

Your Majesty, you took the words right out of my mouth!

The two ladies happily WALK OFF together.

END OF EPISODE