

CRY HAVOC! (ASK QUESTIONS LATER)

EPISODE 14 - ROME, OPEN CITY

Written by

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### Featuring

Sarah Lambie as Octavia  
Sarah Agha as Charmian  
Harry Roebuck as Gaius Octavius Caesar  
Kazeem Tosin Amore as Mark Antony  
Ryan Hopevere Anderson as Roman Messenger 1  
David K Barnes as Demetrius  
Andy Secombe as Lepidus  
Benjamin Garrison as Quintus  
Karim Kronfli as Tavern Keeper  
Alexander J Newall as Roman Messenger 2

### Content Notes

- Infection & disease
- Pandemic
- Quarantine
- Isolation
- Arguments
- Poverty
- Alcohol & Alcohol use
- Discussions of: Classism, prejudice, financial & housing insecurity child neglect & death
- Mentions of: Food, slavery, burns
- SFX: Crowds, loud vocalisations, metallic clanking & scraping

A busy day in the forum. We hear all sorts of STREET CHATTER, the RUMBLE of carts - but it feels 'civilised'. OCTAVIA and CHARMIAN are WALKING amid the crowd. Very into each other.

OCTAVIA

The thing about Rome isn't that it's an eternal city so much as it's eternally *interesting*. There's always something going on, always something to do...

CHARMIAN

(teasing)

Always somewhere to take a simple common girl and impress her with all your big city sights?

OCTAVIA

Well, when a simple common girl is looking for hot gossip to pass back to her super secret boss...

CHARMIAN

I thought you said this was a date.

OCTAVIA

And I thought you wanted to mix business with pleasure.

She playfully GRABS at Charmian, who JUMPS away.

CHARMIAN

(half amused)

Hey!! No touching! Remember, you and I are a state secret.

OCTAVIA

(fake sigh)

Fine!

CHARMIAN

You realise, you could be accused of colluding with a foreign power?

OCTAVIA

Yeah. That's what makes me sexy.

Beat. A sincere note of longing.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)

I wish we could have a *proper* day out. Where I could wine and dine you. In a golden litter, all up and down the Palatine. In front of everybody!

CHARMIAN

(smiling)

I like the sound of that.

OCTAVIA

One day maybe.

CHARMIAN

(sad, doubtful)

Yeah.

OCTAVIA

What's wrong?

Charmian forces herself to cheer up again.

CHARMIAN

Nothing. Look, we've got a whole day together. Where do we start?

OCTAVIA

Well, I *could* take you to one of the usual spots. Circus Maximus. See the gardens. Go to some of the historical whatever's my brother *loves* to mention to his guests... But I don't really want to.

CHARMIAN

No?

OCTAVIA

Been there, done that. I want to show you somewhere new. See a part of Rome that not even *I* know about.

CHARMIAN

(sly)

Huh... I can think of a few places that might fit that description.

OCTAVIA

You can?

CHARMIAN

I mean, if you're really sure...

OCTAVIA  
Absolutely! But where?

CHARMIAN  
You'll see. It's time I showed you  
around Rome for a while...

OPENING TITLES AND THEME TUNE

ANNOUNCER  
"Cry Havoc (Ask Questions Later)"  
Episode 14: "Rome, Open City"

2 INT. DOMUS CARINAE, OFFICE - MORNING

2

Mark is laid out on a divan, annoyed and bored. GAIUS is surrounded by stacks of paper. He PICKS UP a paper.

GAIUS  
Hmm... Anneaus may be the best  
choice... What do you think? Mark?

Mark MAKING BORED NOISES with his lips.

GAIUS (cont'd)  
Mark?  
(snaps)  
Mark!

MARK  
Yeah? You talking to me?

GAIUS  
(exhales, keeping control)  
I wanted your opinion on what to do  
with the thirteenth.

MARK  
What, you mean the legion?

GAIUS  
Yes, the legion. We could transfer  
them to a different command, like  
Lucius Anneaus.

MARK  
Who's he when he's at home?

GAIUS

He's a senator, Mark. An incredibly wealthy senator who could support the legion, get their expense off our backs, and *probably* wouldn't rampage all over Italy with them.

MARK

How do you know?

GAIUS

He's trustworthy and honest.

MARK

If you think any senator is honest, you're a bigger fool than you look.

Tense beat, bristling animosity.

GAIUS

Do you think we spend too much time together?

MARK

You reckon every minute of every day could be considered too much?

GAIUS

Yes.

MARK

Then yes I do think that actually, thanks for asking.

GAIUS

This is the job we signed up for.

Mark LEAPS to his feet, suddenly animated.

MARK

It isn't, mate, it really isn't. There's a whole Republic out there, places to go, people to see, and I'm stuck in here talking to you. What did I do to deserve it, eh?

GAIUS

(angry)

Do we give the thirteenth legion to Lucius Anneaus, yes or no?

MARK

(roar)

Lucius Anneaus can drop dead!

Suddenly the door flies open with a SLAM and in runs a MESSENGER, PANTING and OUT OF BREATH.

MESSENGER

General! Sir! I come to you from Neapolis, bearing terrible news!

MARK

What is it?

MESSENGER

Plague, sir! Plague at the house of Lucius Annaeus!

GAIUS

You mean he's ill?

MESSENGER

No sir - dead!

GAIUS

(annoyed)

Oh! Perfect! See what you've done!

MARK

Oh shut up! You sure he's dead?

MESSENGER

He was dying when I left him.

GAIUS

Wait, you were there?

MESSENGER

The last thing he did before he keeled over vomiting was order me to warn Rome before it's too late.

GAIUS

Right. So. If he had the plague... you could be carrying it now.

MESSENGER

Er. Well.

GAIUS

Which means you ran straight to Rome, you came in here, panting and breathing all over us...

MESSENGER

... Oh.

MARK

We might be infected as well?!

GAIUS

Yyyyyyep.

MARK

So on top of everything else, we've got the plague!! Oh great! Things can't get any worse can they!

GAIUS

Oh yes they can. Lock the doors.

MARK

Why?

GAIUS

Because we're at risk of spreading the plague. Which means until a doctor says otherwise, we've got to isolate ourselves from the rest of Rome.

MARK

What, you mean... you and I can't leave this room?

GAIUS

Exactly. Still. Look on the bright side.

PICKS UP some papers.

GAIUS (cont'd)

At least we've got lots of work to get on with.

Mark draws in a massive breath and:

MARK

FUUUUUUUUU-

Door SLAMS shut.

3 **EXT. THE AVENTINE - MARKETPLACE - LATE MORNING**

3

A much busier, crowded marketplace. No bells, no chimes, but a BUZZ OF LANGUAGES MINGLING TOGETHER and the SIZZLE of things being cooked on the street. BRAYING of livestock.

Octavia and Charmian walk, MUNCHING on something delicious.

OCTAVIA

Mmm. Okay. These are amazing! What d'you call them, sweet nuts?

CHARMIAN

Yeah and you got ripped off on the price. In Alexandria you can find them everywhere.

OCTAVIA

Truly, you come from an enlightened culture.

CHARMIAN

Speaking of culture: street art!

They STOP by a wall bearing sexually crude graffiti.

OCTAVIA

Oh... good Gods.

CHARMIAN

(cheerful)

Graphic, isn't it?

OCTAVIA

I've heard of graffiti, but... is that meant to be Sextus Pompey?

CHARMIAN

(smiling)

With Mark Antony, yes. I didn't even know they were friends!

OCTAVIA

WOW. ... It's all over the wall!

CHARMIAN

Must be part of a series. They really should have got Pompey's famously good ass in proportion.

Beat, as Octavia stares.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Scandalised are we?

OCTAVIA

No! No. I suppose I understand the impulse. To draw this stuff.

CHARMIAN

How'd you mean?

OCTAVIA  
Leaders get to do absurd things and  
we... get to make fun of them for  
it. If we as the people have no  
influence, the only power we have  
is... naming it. Laughing at it.

Charmian rolls her eyes and SNORTS.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)  
What?

CHARMIAN  
"We as the people?"

OCTAVIA  
This isn't me self-aggrandising.

CHARMIAN  
It isn't?

OCTAVIA  
No.

CHARMIAN  
OK.

OCTAVIA  
OK, but what?

CHARMIAN  
It sounds like you're letting the  
success of a few plays go to your  
head, that's all.

OCTAVIA  
They do have a message, though.

CHARMIAN  
And they're very funny too, but do  
you ever stop to see who's in the  
audience? Hint: they're the only  
people in Rome who can afford  
tickets.

OCTAVIA  
You think I shouldn't do them?

CHARMIAN  
No! Don't stop! But maybe as  
someone at the top of the civic  
order, you might just have a little  
more influence than you say you do?

OCTAVIA

Influence? OK, under Roman law, my little brother could marry me off to whoever he chooses, on a whim. As if I was nothing more than...

CHARMIAN

Property? Or a slave?

From down the street, they hear a COMMOTION OF VOICES and the SHRIEKS of CHILDREN.

OCTAVIA

What's happening? Over there, look.

CHARMIAN

Not our business, whatever it is.

OCTAVIA

Oh come on! Maybe we should see how far my "influence" can get me?

Octavia HEADS OFF towards the commotion.

CHARMIAN

I - Octavia!

4 INT. DOMUS CARINAE, OFFICE - MIDDAY

4

A KNOCKING on the locked door: it's LEPIDUS.

LEPIDUS

(muffled)

Hello in there? Chaps?

GAIUS

What is it Lepidus?

LEPIDUS

(muffled)

It's the doctor! I'll unlock the door and send him in!

A comedy interlude of very complex locks being UNBOLTED, CHAINS LOOSENED, AND METALLIC TUMBLERS POPPED. Over this:

MARK

I hope this guy is worth it, that's all I can say. He costs enough.

GAIUS

For risking his life with potential plague victims he'd have to. Still, you can't get better than a Greek.

MARK

You didn't say he was a Greek.

GAIUS

So?

MARK

Well... I mean they read too much, don't they? Isn't healthy.

GAIUS

(you idiot)

What is the matter with you?

The door OPENS and DEMETRIUS gleefully STORMS into the room.

DEMETRIUS

Kai-ray! Kai-ray, honored sirs!

MARK

Y'right there-?

DEMETRIUS

May I say what an honour it is to have two such esteemed and noble patients to practise upon?

MARK

Practise?

DEMETRIUS

Your palm sir, thank you.

He GRABS Mark's hand.

MARK

Here, keep your hands to your-

We hear A SERIES OF POPS AND CRACKS as Demetrius swiftly manipulates Mark's hand.

MARK (cont'd)

Aaaargh!! Did... did you just -

DEMETRIUS

Massage the air gaps in your hands to increase circulation, sir. Flex! Feel the difference.

MARK

I - huh. That actually feels a lot better. How'd you do that?

DEMETRIUS

And as for your associate here-  
(gasps)  
Oh my.

GAIUS

What?

DEMETRIUS

A runny nose. An early sign of plague, don't you know? Give thanks to Apollo you called me in time.

He PUTS DOWN a heavy SACHEL bulging with BOWLS, INSTRUMENTS and POWDERS, and begins RUMMAGING through it under:

DEMETRIUS (cont'd)

We must work fast if we're to ward off any bad airs hanging around.

MARK

Too late for his bad airs, mate.

GAIUS

Shut up.

(to Demetrius)

We're not sure we have the plague of course, but-

DEMETRIUS

Better safe than sorry. I quite understand. In fact I wrote my will just before I came over.

GAIUS

Right.

DEMETRIUS

Have you done yours?

GAIUS

No.

DEMETRIUS

Oh very unwise. Anyway, I - your new friend Demetrius - will do my utmost to prevent the plague from taking root in your bodies.

GAIUS  
I presume you have some...  
prophylactic to ward off disease?

DEMETRIUS  
Not quite. I have some ash.

GAIUS  
I beg your pardon?

DEMETRIUS  
It is well known that a wolf's  
head, reduced to ash, combined with  
a mixture of oil, niter, vinegar,  
and tar, makes for a salubrious  
lotion.

MARK  
It does?

DEMETRIUS  
When rubbed over the entire body  
with ram's wool, and heated, it  
creates a shield against bad airs.  
And that's very important y'know.

MARK  
Any other options?

DEMETRIUS  
Well, sir, there's always this.

MARK  
That's... an onion.

DEMETRIUS  
Yes! And a suppository!

Mark and Gaius both SIGH, deeply.

5 **EXT. THE AVENTINE - APARTMENT ROW - MIDDAY**

5

Charmian and Octavia approach the outer rings of what sounds  
like A MOB; all SHOUTS, JEERS, and BUZZING CHATTER.

CHARMIAN  
Octavia, we shouldn't linger here.  
This crowd is getting restless.

OCTAVIA  
I want to know what's going on!  
(MORE)

OCTAVIA (cont'd)  
 (pinches nose)  
 Though I may not be able to put up  
 the smell for long.

CHARMIAN  
 Seriously? Rude.

OCTAVIA  
 How do people live so closed in  
 like this? Don't tell me they  
 actually raise families here.

CHARMIAN  
 Where do you think the space for  
 your senators' mansions came from?  
 These people didn't crowd onto the  
 one hill for fun. Now if you've  
 seen enough, can we go?

OCTAVIA  
 You've faced down pirates. Why are  
 you afraid all of a sudden?

QUINTUS  
 Because *she* has sense.

QUINTUS is here, arms full of RUSTLING GROCERIES.

OCTAVIA  
 Quintus! What are you doing here?

QUINTUS  
 My weekly shop. I live three  
 streets over.

OCTAVIA  
 Dear gods, you? Live here?

QUINTUS  
 (dry)  
 Be it ever so humble. I'd invite  
 you over, but I've two flatmates  
 sleeping under the dining table,  
 and another three on top.

OCTAVIA  
 But if I had known...

CHARMIAN  
 Quintus, what's with the crowd?

QUINTUS  
 The wife of Decimus gave birth.

OCTAVIA  
That's a happy occasion, surely?

QUINTUS  
Oh you really don't belong here...

OCTAVIA  
(insistent)  
What's happening?

QUINTUS  
*Patria potestas* is happening.

CHARMIAN  
What's that?

QUINTUS  
Loosely translated, it means the head of the household - the father - can do anything. In this case, he may either acknowledge the birth of his new daughter, or deny it.

OCTAVIA  
He can't deny her!

QUINTUS  
It's another mouth to feed; he can barely support his family as it is.

OCTAVIA  
Oh come on, you can't excuse it-

CHARMIAN  
(sharp)  
Octavia, enough now.

QUINTUS  
So, the poor mother has till sunset to get someone else to take it. Hence the community meeting.

OCTAVIA  
They're giving the baby away?

QUINTUS  
Well eventually they'll leave the girl out on the street to see if anyone wants her.

OCTAVIA  
And if they don't?

QUINTUS  
She'll stay there.

OCTAVIA  
(disgusted)  
But. But she'll die. Just. Die in  
the street. And no one cares?

CHARMIAN  
(annoyed with her)  
Of course they care.

QUINTUS  
There isn't enough to go round.

OCTAVIA  
Enough what?

QUINTUS  
(exasperated)  
Money, dear! Money, food, space!

OCTAVIA  
So there's nothing you can do?

QUINTUS  
What do you want me to do? If it  
offends your dignity then you ought  
to push off before it gets worse.

OCTAVIA  
This is Rome! We don't do *this*!

CHARMIAN  
(not kind, but not angry)  
You do. It's just easy for you not  
to think about it.

OCTAVIA  
Please tell me you've never seen  
anything like this before.

CHARMIAN  
I can't. I have. Even in Egypt.

Beat.

OCTAVIA  
Quintus?

QUINTUS  
Darling, please, these groceries  
aren't getting any lighter.

We hear a metallic SNAP as Octavia undoes a bracelet.

OCTAVIA

Take this. The emeralds are small  
but they should be worth something.

QUINTUS

You want me to sell your bracelet?

OCTAVIA

I want you to give it to a good  
Roman woman, who might have some  
space in her home tonight. Can you  
do that?

QUINTUS

*Then* can I go home?

OCTAVIA

(impatient)

Yes.

QUINTUS

(genuine)

... Alright. Consider it done. See  
you both later. Oh, *Mia?*

CHARMIAN

Yeah?

QUINTUS

Take the lady for a drink. She's  
looking somewhat pale.

Quintus MOVES AWAY through the crowd.

OCTAVIA

Did you know it would be this bad  
when you brought me here?

CHARMIAN

No. Not this bad, at least.

Beat.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Let's get that drink.

6 INT. DOMUS CARINAE, OFFICE - AFTERNOON

6

Cauldrons BOIL AND BUBBLE. TWACKING like someone's beating a  
rug clean. Gaius and Mark COUGH FURIOUSLY.

DEMETRIUS

That's it, sirs! Breathe the rust!  
Put your backs into it, very good!

GAIUS

(Still coughing)  
Why does it have to be rust from a  
chariot wheel?!

DEMETRIUS

Because that rust has absorbed the  
sweat and urine of horses.

GAIUS

Of course. Whyever did I ask?

MARK

This is your fault.

GAIUS

Me?!

MARK

Blah blah the republic's at risk  
lock the doors panic panic panic.

GAIUS

Oh, so you'd rather let a plague  
run rampant through the city?

MARK

If it got me out of this bloody  
room, yes!

DEMETRIUS

It's time, sirs!

GAIUS

For what?

DEMETRIUS

Canaries!

MARK

What are they gonna do? Sing?

DEMETRIUS

Most amusing sir! You eat them.

MARK

What? Eat them?

Demetrius PULLS OUT two DRIPPING canaries from the cauldron  
and SERVES them up on a plate under:

DEMETRIUS

A healthy treat to brace the body  
against infection! Especially when  
deep fried, wrapped in cabbage -

MARK

That doesn't sound too-

DEMETRIUS

- with a side of vulture's quills!

MARK

Right.

GAIUS

You carry vulture quills around  
with you?

DEMETRIUS

(a mad gleam)

Of course I do! I'm a doctor!

MARK

On second thoughts, maybe the  
plague wouldn't be so bad?

GAIUS

Shut up and eat your canaries.

7 INT. THE AVENTINE - THE HAPPY PHOENIX TAVERN - AFTERNOON 7

Charmian and Octavia at the bar of a wine shop.

TAVERN KEEPER

Two Poscas, ladies.

CHARMIAN

Thank you.

PLUNK! The TAVERN KEEPER sets the drinks down and leaves the  
subdued couple to themselves.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Come on. Drink up.

OCTAVIA

What are you even doing with me?

CHARMIAN

As in sitting with you in a so-so  
wine shop, or more abstract?

OCTAVIA

I mean I'm a fool. Why would you waste any time with a fool?

CHARMIAN

You're not a fool, Octavia. You're just wrapped up in your own world.

OCTAVIA

But you were right. I didn't know the truth because I didn't want to.

CHARMIAN

You won't want to hear this but... this isn't about you. It shouldn't be. I love that you care, I do. But you have to actually put yourself out to make change. Otherwise, you just muddle through and get by, like the rest of us.

OCTAVIA

I guess plays aren't enough.

CHARMIAN

No. But they're as good a start as any.

Beat. Octavia takes a SIP of her wine.

OCTAVIA

I want to hear some of what you've seen. In other cities. Maybe not now, but later.

CHARMIAN

You're not just trying to give yourself guilt trips are you?

OCTAVIA

No. Would you be up for another absolutely awful day with me?

CHARMIAN

Oh come on, parts of it were fun. Like the sex drawings.

OCTAVIA

You should have copied a few for Cleopatra to laugh at.

CHARMIAN

Oh, *Gods below*, I forgot. I still need to report back to her with something.

OCTAVIA

Maybe you can tell her you saw the ugly side of Rome.

CHARMIAN

It'll do, but I try to pepper my accounts with some jokes...

Outside, a HORSE has come to a stop. SECOND MESSENGER ENTERS.

SECOND MESSENGER

Hey there! Which is the quickest way to the Esquiline Hill?

OCTAVIA

Less than an hour's ride in that direction. You looking for the Triumvirs?

SECOND MESSENGER

Yeah. My master sent them a warning about plague in the countryside, but it was a false alarm.

TAVERN KEEPER

Ha! They won't want to know that.

CHARMIAN

Why not?

TAVERN KEEPER

Because I heard Mark Antony and Caesar have been locked up in their office all day, getting poked about by some quack!

OCTAVIA

(laughs)

And all for nothing! Oh I can't believe I missed it.

CHARMIAN

Write a play about it, and you won't have to!

SECOND MESSENGER

I better ride over before the doctors kill them.

HE EXITS.

OCTAVIA  
 (calls after)  
 Why rush? Take the scenic route!

CHARMIAN  
 Well there's a story for Cleopatra.  
 The gods must be smiling on me!

She gives Octavia a quick KISS.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)  
 Thanks for the day out. I'm sorry  
 it wasn't more fun for us.

OCTAVIA  
 (brave face)  
 Ah, well. We'll have other days,  
 won't we?

Beat.

CHARMIAN  
 Yeah.

8 INT. DOMUS CARINAE, OFFICE - EVENING

8

OIL BUBBLES as Demetrius STIRS it with a ladle.

GAIUS  
 Look, doctor, are you sure this is  
 necessary?!

DEMETRIUS  
 Oh, essential! The surest way to  
 rid yourselves of the plague is to  
burn it away!

MARK  
 I'm starting to wonder if you have  
 any qualifications at all.

DEMETRIUS  
 They all say that, sir!

MARK  
 And do you?

DEMETRIUS  
 I'll tell you after the treatment!  
 And. Hold. Still...!

A SLOW SIZZLE. Suspense, as Gaius WHIMPERS. Even Mark makes a strained NOISE OF DISTRESS.

Then: BANG BANG BANG! Someone's knocking at the door!

GAIUS  
Enter! Please, Gods, enter!

The second messenger JOGS UP and KNEELS.

SECOND MESSENGER  
Noble sirs! I bring word from  
Lucius Annaeus.

MARK  
Hang on! He had the plague!

SECOND MESSENGER  
Reports of his death have been  
greatly exaggerated. He and his  
dinner guests weren't struck with  
plague but some undercooked shrimp.

GAIUS  
You mean they had food poisoning?!

SECOND MESSENGER  
The Senator hopes his  
understandable distress did not  
cause you any panic.

MARK  
(gritted teeth)  
No. Thank goodness nobody panicked.  
Eh, Gaius?

SECOND MESSENGER  
The Senator sends you his regrets  
and also...

A COIN PURSE JINGLES.

SECOND MESSENGER (cont'd)  
... an apology, as it were.

MARK  
Ta. Off you piss now.

SECOND MESSENGER  
Sir!

The messenger DEPARTS.

DEMETRIUS

Well, medicine wins again! I'd call this case highly successful!

GAIUS

How'd you make that out?!

DEMETRIUS

You're not dead are you?

GAIUS

No, but-

DEMETRIUS

Well in my book, that's a win! I'll leave my bill with your secretary.

MARK

And you know where you can shove it.

DEMETRIUS

Yes, right where I put that onion! Kai-ray, sirs! Good health!

Serenely, he DEPARTS, closing the door behind him: CLUNK.

MARK

Can you have a doctor struck off for being too cheerful?

Gaius PICKS UP the coin purse; JANGLE of coins.

GAIUS

Mark.

MARK

If you say anything to me in this moment, boy, I will pop your head off your neck like a cork.

Gaius POURS OUT THE COINS onto the table.

MARK

Oh. That's a lot of coin.

GAIUS

I told you Annaeus was rich.

MARK

I'm not giving one of my legions to a man who gets defeated by shrimp.

GAIUS  
 No. But nice of him to send a  
 bribe... A sizeable bribe...

Some coins JINGLE as Gaius counts.

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 Mark. I've had an idea.

MARK  
 Yeah! Let's spend it on booze.

GAIUS  
 No, I mean I think I finally know  
 what to do about the army. About  
 everything. There's a solution we  
 haven't thought of: the Senate.

MARK  
 What about it?

GAIUS  
 The state is broke, but the  
 senators aren't. All the wealth  
 we need is there in private hands.  
 We just need to make them give it  
 to us...

The DOOR OPENS and Lepidus pokes his head round.

LEPIDUS  
 Evening, chaps! Everything all  
 right in here?

GAIUS  
 For once, Lepidus, I think the  
 answer is yes.

LEPIDUS  
 No plague?

GAIUS  
 No plague. We should send Annaeus  
 back his messenger.

LEPIDUS  
 The one from this morning? No can  
 do, I'm afraid.

MARK  
 Why not?

LEPIDUS

We had to treat him for plague, and the doctor suggested fire... The poor fellow burnt right up...

GAIUS

Ah.

Mark shakes his head and SCOFFS.

MARK

*Doctors.*

9 INT. CLEOPATRA'S RESIDENCE - SITTING ROOM - EVENING

9

CLEOPATRA sitting at a window listening to Charmian's report.

CHARMIAN

... And a messenger from a wealthy Roman warned of plague. The rumour was false. But the triumvirs spent the day locked up, being tortured by doctors in hopes of a cure.

(beat)

Well? What do you think?

A LONG BEAT as Cleopatra gazes out a window. She SIGHS.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

My queen?

CLEOPATRA

What I think... is you can do better than that, Charmian.

CHARMIAN

I'm sorry?

CLEOPATRA

You should be. Another day to scout out the city, and you bring back a handful of rumours. Amusing ones, yes, but hardly sufficient.

CHARMIAN

But doesn't it mean anything that Mark Antony and Caesar will overreact to even the slightest whiff of bad news?

CLEOPATRA

I knew that two minutes after I met them. What I need are a list of officials we can bribe, guard shift schedules, an accounting of the flow of wealth through the city. Things I cannot learn from a villa - but a faithful servant of mine might ferret out for me.

CHARMIAN

(stammering)

I - I will redouble my efforts-

CLEOPATRA

I gave you free rein to pursue this matter in your own way - and that was clearly a mistake. From now on, you're done with the theatre.

CHARMIAN

*What?!*

CLEOPATRA

It's not a fruitful avenue of attack, that's clear. We must find another use for you.

CHARMIAN

But - it - I -

CLEOPATRA

Charmian, I've spoken.

CHARMIAN

I just - I think that I can-

Cleopatra is furious - the fury that we rarely see.

CLEOPATRA

*You think?! You?*

Beat.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Tell me, girl, aside from learning about the plague that never was, did you suddenly become a Goddess of Egypt, beloved of your father and nation? No? Then there's nothing more to be said.

Then, scornful and dismissive:

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Get out.

Charmian is furious too. But she can't do anything with it.

CHARMIAN

Yes, my queen. I am as ever your obedient servant.

CLEOPATRA

I hope so, Charmian. For your sake.

And on that ominous note...

**END OF EPISODE**