

CRY HAVOC! (ASK QUESTIONS LATER)

EPISODE 17 - TO SUMMON A QUEEN

Written by

Grace Knight

Edited with additional material

## Cast

Kazeem Tosin Amore as Mark Antony  
Lara Sawalha as Cleopatra  
Harry Roebuck as Gaius Octavius Caesar  
Andy Secombe as Lepidus  
Sarah Lambie as Octavia  
Sarah Agha as Charmian  
Beth Eyre as Fulvia  
Ahmed Aljabry as Sadiki  
Tom Park as Erastus  
Ian Hayles as Guard

## Content Notes

- Alcohol & Alchohol Use
- Arguments
- Prison
- Restraints
- Discussions of: Blackmail, murder
- Mentions of: torture, classism, slavery
- SFX: metallic clanking & scraping

Picking up very soon after the last episode, GAIUS is PACING excitedly across his carpeted floor. MARK, LEPIDUS and an upset OCTAVIA are still here.

GAIUS  
(muttering)  
Right. OK. This is good. Oh, this is excellent.

OCTAVIA  
(upset, annoyed)  
Urgh, stop pacing, can't you?

MARK  
Yeah, you need to rest. Someone just tried to kill you.

GAIUS  
Not just someone: Cleopatra. The Queen of Egypt tried to kill me. She's finally given me something I can work with! We need to move fast. Get the ball rolling before she even knows her attempt failed... Lepidus, you don't have to put your hand up. What is it?

LEPIDUS  
If the immediate crisis is over... could we all get some shut-eye?

Gaius SIGHS angrily.

MARK  
It has been a long night.

GAIUS  
No-one is going to bed! Can't you both see what an opportunity this is? We finally have some leverage! Confront her with this and we can make her do whatever we want! She sent an assassin identified by two high status witnesses.

MARK  
Mate, I haven't said anything-

GAIUS  
Not you. Octavia.

OCTAVIA

What? Me?

LEPIDUS

Are you alright, my dear? You look absolutely washed out.

GAIUS

Never mind that - you recognised the girl. Who is she?

OCTAVIA

She's an actor. From my company.

GAIUS

Ha. Not a bad move, planting a spy in my sister's little hobby.

(beat)

Did you know?

OCTAVIA

Know what?

Beat.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)

No! Gaius, of course not! I didn't know she'd try to kill you!

GAIUS

I should hope not! I meant did she give any hint that she worked for Cleopatra, anything at all?

The very slightest pause.

OCTAVIA

No.

GAIUS

You're sure?

OCTAVIA

Yes. I knew nothing.

MARK

I mean, I directed the best play Rome's ever seen, and I didn't recognise her from it?

GAIUS

How could you when they're masked? Though that voice was familiar...

(MORE)

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 And wasn't she serving Cleopatra at  
 that gastly *Crown Jules* play?

MARK  
 I dunno, I wasn't there. Could you  
 swear to it?

GAIUS  
 I don't have to. Not when we have  
 the testimony of our esteemed  
 colleague Lepidus.

LEPIDUS  
 Gosh. Really?

MARK  
 You're joking.

GAIUS  
 Octavia, go to bed. You two, we'll  
 continue this in my study. One way  
 or another, Cleopatra is ours.

OPENING TITLES AND THEME TUNE

ANNOUNCER  
 "Cry Havoc (Ask Questions Later)"  
 CEpisode 17: "To Summon a Queen"

2 INT. GAIUS' HOUSE, OFFICE - SHORTLY AFTERWARDS 2

WINE is POURED. A CUP is PASSED.

MARK  
 Here, wet your whiskers.

LEPIDUS  
 Thanks, old man.

GAIUS  
 (purposeful)  
 So, the assassin.

LEPIDUS  
 (purposeful)  
 Charmian. Yes.  
 (confused)  
 What about her?

GAIUS  
 You've seen her with Cleopatra.

LEPIDUS

Oh! Yes, she was always beetling in and out, running errands, pouring drinks, that sort of thing. You remember, Mark. She was the one serving you at that sexy party.

MARK

Uh... was she?

LEPIDUS

Yes! You made a ribald joke and she didn't laugh and you were sad.

MARK

Oh, yeah!... I think?

GAIUS

Damn it, Mark! You can't have been that drunk. We spent the night dealing with senators, remember!

MARK

Mate, I can do anything when I'm drunk. It actually makes it easier.

Under the above, we hear the FRONT DOOR OPENING (off), followed by FOOTSTEPS in the corridor. FULVIA RUSHES IN.

FULVIA

Mark! Good gods, Mark, when you didn't come home tonight I thought-  
(total shock)  
... Gaius!

GAIUS

Hello Fulvia.

FULVIA

You... you're here!

GAIUS

In my house? Yes.  
(confused)  
Does that surprise you?

Beat.

FULVIA

No! No no no. Where else would you be! I just mean, you're not in bed.

GAIUS

It's been a busy night. Although thanks to your husband, not a terminal one.

Beat.

FULVIA

(quiet fury)

Thanks to... my... husband?

MARK

Er. Well.

LEPIDUS

He saved Gaius from an assassin!

FULVIA

(quiet fury)

Did he.

LEPIDUS

Yes! Most exciting!

MARK

Shut your gob, Lepidus...

LEPIDUS

Don't be modest! If it weren't for Mark here, then Gaius would be a stone cold corpse right about now!

FULVIA

(quiet fury)

I... seeeeeee.

MARK

(embarrassed)

We'll talk about it later...

GAIUS

First thing tomorrow I'm going to call Cleopatra here and demand that she accede to our terms.

MARK

Is that really going to work?

GAIUS

She tried to assassinate a Roman head of state while she was a guest on Roman soil.

(MORE)

GAIUS (cont'd)  
 She can't risk us going to the  
 Senate with this, or the people.  
 She'd never leave this city alive.  
 Probably start a war.

MARK  
 Maybe...

GAIUS  
 Her only move is to keep us quiet.  
 We can ask what we like. Feed our  
 veterans, pay them off - we could  
 even make her settle them in Egypt.

FULVIA  
 Gaius, you're overlooking one  
 thing. You haven't any proof that  
 Cleopatra sent that assassin.

GAIUS  
 Both Lepidus and Mark will testify!

FULVIA  
 Oh, you'll be testifying, will you,  
 Mark? That's nice.

MARK  
 Er, well, you see-

GAIUS  
 Right, that's settled. The moment  
 day breaks, I'm going to summon  
 Cleopatra to face an inquiry.

MARK  
 Woah, woah, woah. "Summon" her?  
 That's gonna really piss her off.

FULVIA  
 She's the Queen of Egypt, not a  
 household slave.

GAIUS  
 She tried to murder a head of  
 state. She'll do what I bloody well  
 tell her! Meeting adjourned.

3 **EXT. THE STREET - LATER**

3

Late night REVELLERS are around, a few bar doors OPEN and  
 CLOSE, etc. Fulvia and Mark WALK down the street.

FULVIA

Honestly, Mark. Where do I begin?  
Even Lepidus would find it hard to  
screw up his own murder plot!

MARK

The situation was complex.

FULVIA

You're a professional soldier!  
Killing people is literally your  
whole job!

MARK

A battlefield and a bedroom are  
not-

FULVIA

But you were just getting warmed  
up, weren't you? Because not only  
did you fail to kill him, you also  
made sure that Cleopatra couldn't  
kill him either!

MARK

I was unlucky that's all-!

FULVIA

And then for a finishing touch you  
offer to identify the assassin, in  
public, as someone on Cleopatra's  
personal staff. What do you do for  
an encore?

MARK

Oh come on, how was I supposed to  
get out of that?

FULVIA

Lie maybe?!

MARK

At least I didn't get caught. He  
thinks I saved his life.

FULVIA

Great, so the guy we're trying to  
get rid of thinks you're a hero,  
while the person we're trying to  
get on with is going to see you  
condemning her for attempted  
murder.

MARK

All right, all right! I'm sorry! Is that what you want?

FULVIA

No! What I want is for you to kill Gaius, take Rome, and make me an empress!

MARK

We've never had an empress.

FULVIA

(almost childish want)

Well I want to be the first!!

MARK

Look, he won't be around forever. If we can't pay the armies, I'll make sure Gaius takes the fall.

FULVIA

And how do we make sure you don't take the fall with him? They should have been paid weeks ago, they're not going to wait forever.

MARK

Well. Maybe this plan of his will work? Putting the boot into Cleo?

FULVIA

She's too clever for that.

MARK

Yeah but what if I side with him and testify?

FULVIA

And turn our greatest foreign ally into our greatest enemy?

MARK

OK. I'll side with her then. Done.

FULVIA

No! Don't side with anyone!

MARK

What should I do then?

Fulvia STOPS; so does he.

FULVIA

Just try to get through the day  
without pissing anyone off.  
(tenderly, entreating)  
Will you do that?

MARK

(tenderly)  
For you, I'll try anything once.

4 INT. CLEOPATRA'S VILLA - MORNING

4

Morning BIRDSONG drifts from outside. Musicians are playing  
SOFT HARP MUSIC for an agitated Cleopatra. Then:

CLEOPATRA

Oh, cut it out.

The music STOPS. Cleopatra turns to her servant SADIKI.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Sadiki, you're certain that  
Charmian hasn't returned?

SADIKI

I am, madam.

CLEOPATRA

You checked her bed?

SADIKI

It was cold, madam.

CLEOPATRA

(exasperated)

What is the girl playing at?... Has  
she betrayed me? She wouldn't.  
Would she?

Troubled beat. A KNOCK at the door.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

(calls)

Enter.

The DOOR OPENS. A servant, ERASTUS, ENTERS purposefully.

ERASTUS

Your majesty. Forgive my intrusion,  
but I am charged with summoning you  
to the Domus Carinae.

CLEOPATRA  
Summoning me? On whose authority?

ERASTUS  
A Triumvir of Rome.

CLEOPATRA  
(suspicion)  
... Which one?

ERASTUS  
Gaius Octavius, ma'am.

CLEOPATRA  
Ah. Shit.

5 INT. DOMUS CARINAE - MORNING

5

A SHUFFLING of CHAIRS, arranging of SLATES and PARCHMENTS.  
It's an imposing, airy space, with polished marble floors.

MARK  
Do we have to sit in a row like  
this? We look like kids waiting for  
the teacher.

GAIUS  
We're presenting a united front.

LEPIDUS  
I rather like it. Feels cosy!

MARK  
And why did you have to drag us all  
the way to the Domus? Couldn't we  
have cracked on at your place?

GAIUS  
It's traditional.

LEPIDUS  
Speaking of traditions, it's my  
birthday in a few weeks and-

MARK  
No-one gives a flying fig where we  
hold a private meeting.

GAIUS  
I disagree.

LEPIDUS

I was thinking of throwing a party,  
maybe about three hundred people-

MARK

Not now Lepidus.

LEPIDUS

Sorry, I'll bring it up later.

MARK

No don't do that either.

Off, the street door OPENS, letting in the MORNING CITY  
HUBBUB. It CLOSES again, leaving a MURMUR OF VOICES,  
including Cleopatra's, talking softly.

MARK (cont'd)

Gaius.

GAIUS

I know. She's here.

Imperious FOOTSTEPS approach their door.

MARK

Well, this is tense.

GAIUS

Shut up.

The door OPENS.

ERASTUS

Queen Cleopatra of Egypt.

Cleopatra SWEEPS into the room. Erastus CLOSES the door.

CLEOPATRA

Well?

GAIUS

Your majesty, thank you so much for  
joining us on such short notice.

SCRAPE of chair as Cleopatra SITS imperiously.

CLEOPATRA

May one ask why it was necessary?

GAIUS

I just felt now might be an ideal  
time to renew our negotiations.

(MORE)

GAIUS (cont'd)

I don't know about you: I felt they'd rather stalled of late. But I have a very good feeling about their direction going forward.

CLEOPATRA

What?

GAIUS

Now, we expect you to grant us a substantial injection of funds and resources, in addition to settling rights for a few thousand soldiers on decent, arable land within your domain. Don't worry - we're not asking for the cream here - just somewhere they can dig.

CLEOPATRA

Stop stop stop... You know very well I rejected far more favourable terms than this the last time we met. Why on earth would I now agree to daylight robbery?

GAIUS

Well, the situation is somewhat altered now, is it not?

Beat. Cleopatra doesn't blink; she's playing it cool.

CLEOPATRA

Is it? I don't see how.

GAIUS

Don't you? Well we do. Don't we, gentlemen?

LEPIDUS

I'm afraid we do.

GAIUS

Mark?

MARK

Ah. Well-

CLEOPATRA

Maybe this is a Roman custom with which I am unfamiliar, but in Egypt we get to the point.

GAIUS

Our point is we feel, personally, that trying to assassinate a head of state while you're a guest in their country may slightly weaken your bargaining position.

LEPIDUS

Especially when you get caught.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA

Could you run that past me again?

GAIUS

Cleopatra, you have attempted to thrust a dagger into the heart of the body politic, and now you must answer for the consequences.

(calls)

Guards. Bring in the prisoner.

MARK

(quiet)

So you're the heart of the body politic, are you? What does that make me?

GAIUS

(quiet)

Its liver.

The door OPENS, and Charmian is ESCORTED IN by two GUARDS.

GAIUS (cont'd)

Girl. You know who we are? Speak.

CHARMIAN

Yes I do, sir.

GAIUS

And can you identify this woman?

CHARMIAN

This woman, sir?

GAIUS

Yes.

Beat.

CHARMIAN

I don't know them, sir.

GAIUS

Imagine my surprise. And you, madam, will presumably tell me you've never seen this girl before in your life?

CLEOPATRA

Correct.

GAIUS

I thought so. Well, fortunately for justice, we don't need to rely on your word.

(lawyer mode)

Lepidus.

LEPIDUS

Hello.

GAIUS

Last night, a girl was apprehended in the act of trying to kill me.

LEPIDUS

That's right.

GAIUS

You told us you'd seen that girl numerous times before while you were living under the same roof.

LEPIDUS

Yes.

GAIUS

Would you recognise her if you saw her again?

LEPIDUS

Yes.

GAIUS

And can you see that girl in the room with us today?

LEPIDUS

(getting into it)

Yes!

GAIUS

Can you point her out to us now?

Lepidus LEAPS UP, chair falling down with a CLATTER.

LEPIDUS

YES! There! There she is! Look!  
Throw the book at her!

GAIUS

(calmly)  
We will. Well, your majesty? Have  
you anything to say?

CHARMIAN

Wait!

GAIUS

The prisoner wishes to speak?

CHARMIAN

Sir, am I in the presence of the  
great Cleopatra, Queen of the Nile?

LEPIDUS

Aha! So you have heard of her! We  
rest our case!

GAIUS

No we don't.

CHARMIAN

She is renowned as the most beloved  
and wise ruler in the world.

Charmian PROSTRATES herself at Cleopatra's feet.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Madam! I grew up hearing stories of  
your magnificence, but to find  
myself in your presence...

CLEOPATRA

(rather gently)  
Get up, child.

GAIUS

Enough of these theatrics... Mark,  
do you want to weigh in here?

MARK

Me?

CLEOPATRA

Yes, you've been uncommonly quiet  
so far.

GAIUS

Mark, when I awoke last night, you were in my room, having just caught this girl red-headed.

CLEOPATRA

(icily)

Had he really? How very heroic.

MARK

Um-

CLEOPATRA

Indeed how fortunate you happened to be in the area at the right time.

MARK

(carefully)

Ye-es.

GAIUS

And you can vouch that the girl is in Cleopatra's employ, can't you?

MARK

Er... Yeah, about that...

GAIUS

Yes?

CLEOPATRA

Yes?

MARK

I was at Cleopatra's party, and I was being served drinks, and it might have been her... but I can't say for sure.

GAIUS

Mark.

MARK

I wasn't paying attention. I mean, you were there. Did you see her?

GAIUS

Well, no, but you did. She was serving you drinks. Wasn't she?

MARK

Sorry chum. When you've seen one servant, you've seen them all.

Pause.

GAIUS

Great. Thanks Mark. Terrific.

CLEOPATRA

So, to be clear, the only reason you think I'm linked to this young woman is because Lepidus says so.

GAIUS

He is a Triumvir and you will treat him with respect.

CLEOPATRA

Oh, certainly. Very respectable. Practically venerable. At his age, it must be tricky to remember details...

LEPIDUS

She was with you on the ship when you first arrived! I met you both!

CLEOPATRA

Was that the occasion where you set yourself on fire?

LEPIDUS

Yes.

CLEOPATRA

And fell over the side?

LEPIDUS

Yes.

CLEOPATRA

And nearly drowned?

LEPIDUS

... Yes.

CLEOPATRA

You don't think you may have bumped your head, or suffered from shock, or been otherwise confused?

LEPIDUS

Well... well... it's possible...

CLEOPATRA

You're often confused aren't you?

LEPIDUS

Oh, frequently.

CLEOPATRA  
And has anyone ever trusted your  
word before?

LEPIDUS  
... Not really.

CLEOPATRA  
No.

LEPIDUS  
... No.  
(quietly)  
I withdraw my testimony.

GAIUS  
What?!

CLEOPATRA  
Well if that's all you've got...

GAIUS  
Not so fast! You smuggled the girl  
inside my sister's theatre company,  
in all her plays! I - I even saw  
her serving you at the first one.

CLEOPATRA  
Well if she was serving me, then  
how could she have been on stage at  
the same time? It's absurd surely?

GAIUS  
I... well... Mark, are you sure you  
don't have anything to add?

MARK  
Me? Nah, mate. But you're doing a  
great job, thumbs up.

SCRAPE of chair as Cleopatra STANDS.

CLEOPATRA  
In that case, this has been fun,  
but I have a lot of paperwork to  
catch up on. So if that's all-

GAIUS  
No it isn't. You can obfuscate, and  
defame, but the people of Rome will  
never accept lies over the solid,  
trusted bedrock of our-

CLEOPATRA

Enough.

Pause.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

You summoned me here, and obliged me to sit through this preposterous stunt without so much as offering me a glass of wine - and I am done.

GAIUS

I have not finished-

CLEOPATRA

You have no facts, no evidence, just the vague recollections of a senile old man and a little boy's hunch.

GAIUS

How dare-

CLEOPATRA

Ever since I arrived in this unfortunate city, I have been perplexed, frustrated, frequently bored, and now I've been insulted.

GAIUS

We have not-

CLEOPATRA

I could have been a powerful ally to you. Do not make me an enemy.

Tense beat.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

I leave Rome in the morning. I won't stay here to play scapegoat to your iniquity.

Cleopatra leaves, FOOTSTEPS on marble. Awkward pause.

MARK

Well. Better luck next time, eh?

6 INT. GAIUS' HOUSE, OFFICE - LATE MORNING

6

Lepidus is EATING a late breakfast; CUTLERY SCRAPES across the plate. A weary Gaius contemplates.

GAIUS  
 You know the worst thing about  
 this?

LEPIDUS  
 (mouth full)  
 Mm? No. You really should have some  
 breakfast.

GAIUS  
 The worst of it is that I am  
 actually right. Losing on a bad  
 hand, or losing on a bluff - that I  
 could take. But this...

A KNOCK at the open door.

OCTAVIA  
 Hey.

LEPIDUS  
 Hello Octavia.

OCTAVIA  
 How'd it go?

GAIUS  
 Don't ask. I mean, what was Mark  
 doing? He knew this was our best  
 chance to get everything we need,  
 and he threw it away!

LEPIDUS  
 Must have thought we were barking  
 up the wrong tree.

GAIUS  
 But you saw the way that girl  
 looked at the queen. She's in her  
 employ alright. The liar.

OCTAVIA  
 Well what did you think she'd say?  
 "Yes, that's my employer, the Queen  
 of the Nile, now you can get us a  
 two for one deal with the  
 executioner."

GAIUS  
 It's not over yet. I still have her  
 in my cells.

OCTAVIA

(pause)

Yes.

GAIUS

Not that she's much use. Even if I could extract a confession, the queen would deny it.

OCTAVIA

Probably. Best not to bother.

GAIUS

Oh, I may as well try, I suppose. Might get something incriminating out of her. I'll ask the torturer to apply the hot coals or the bees-

OCTAVIA

No!

GAIUS

Pardon?

OCTAVIA

I mean... Let me talk to her. She knows me... What if she gives you evidence she works for Cleopatra? Something the Senate would accept.

GAIUS

Worth a shot, I suppose. All right. Go and talk to her.

OCTAVIA

Thank you.

Octavia EXITS at speed.

LEPIDUS

Well, that's all sorted then!

He PUTS DOWN his CUTLERY, having finished breakfast.

LEPIDUS (cont'd)

If you've got a moment for some AOB, it's my birthday next month as I said, and I was wondering if-

GAIUS

Lepidus...

LEPIDUS

Could I host my birthday party here? In your house? It wouldn't have to be a late one.

GAIUS

(angry)

Lepidus! I'm trying to avert a national crisis and you're waffling on about a stupid party!

Beat.

LEPIDUS

(hurt)

It's only... Cleopatra's living in my house... and most of my money's tied up in this Triumvirate business, so...

Gaius EXHALES, regaining control.

GAIUS

Of course. You can host your party here. Sorry for raising my voice.

LEPIDUS

Oh. Not to worry. Frayed moods, eh? All a bit on edge. I'll draw up a guest list, shall I?

GAIUS

As you like.

LEPIDUS

Thanks, old man. I appreciate it.

7 INT. THE PRISON - LATE MORNING

7

A heavy METAL DOOR CREAKS OPEN.

GUARD (O.S.)

The prisoner's in here.

Octavia ENTERS, and the door CLANGS SHUT behind her.

OCTAVIA

You're locking me in?!

GUARD

(through door)

No, Miss. I'm locking her in. You've got until the tenth hour.

The GUARD'S FOOTSTEPS as he retreats up the stone corridor.

CHARMIAN

(wry)

... What's the matter? Worried I might try and kill you too?

OCTAVIA

You're joking about this?

CHARMIAN

Why not? A sense of humour is all I've got left.

CLINK OF CHAINS to underline this. Awkward vibe.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

So. Your brother send you down to get a confession?

OCTAVIA

It was the only way I could get in to see you.

CHARMIAN

Why would you want to?

Pause.

OCTAVIA

Charmian, I... I'm reeling...

CHARMIAN

Poor you.

OCTAVIA

I need to understand.

Beat. Charmian EXHALES. She doesn't want this conversation.

CHARMIAN

You knew what I was. I told you what I was. You didn't care.

OCTAVIA

I knew you were passing back little titbits. What Gaius has for breakfast. How he ties his toga. I didn't think-

CHARMIAN

What, that the politics might affect your life in a real way?

OCTAVIA

Oh piss off, I didn't expect you to try and murder my brother!

CHARMIAN

The two men who run your insane empire are very different. My queen was always going to ally with one and get rid of the other. This is real, Octavia. Real people's lives. You write jokes about it, you must understand it on some level.

OCTAVIA

You used me.

CHARMIAN

And you knew.

Beat. CLINK OF CHAINS.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Look, this hand held the knife. It tried to kill your brother. But this is Cleopatra's hand.

OCTAVIA

You were the one who-

CHARMIAN

She sends me out, and my eyes are hers, she speaks through my lips.

OCTAVIA

(angry)

Oh it's pathetic. Stop hiding. We all choose what we do.

Beat.

CHARMIAN

No. We don't all get to choose what we do. The only acts I achieved in my entire life that were truly free were the ones I took with you. Those are mine.

OCTAVIA

Charmian...

CHARMIAN

Don't.

OCTAVIA  
I'm not going to hurt you-!

Octavia MOVES towards Charmian. There's a CLINK OF CHAINS as Charmian retreats from her.

CHARMIAN  
(calls)  
Guard!

Outside, the guard slowly STOMPS back towards the cell.

OCTAVIA  
No!

CHARMIAN  
I think our ten minutes are up.

OCTAVIA  
Charmian, you have to confess. If you don't, they'll torture you - they'll kill you!

CHARMIAN  
Yeah, that's the way it works.

OCTAVIA  
Stop joking!

CHARMIAN  
Stop telling me how to be and what to do. Cleopatra did a lot for me. I've betrayed her too often already, I'm not doing it again!

OCTAVIA  
She's left you here to die!

CHARMIAN  
So will you. Won't you?

The HEAVY KEY TURNS in the lock and the DOOR OPENS harshly.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)  
Goodbye.

Pause.

GUARD  
What's up? Run out of conversation?

OCTAVIA  
(hoarse)  
I guess so.

Octavia STEPS OUT of the cell. The giant metal door CLANGS SHUT behind her.

8 INT. CLEOPATRA'S RESIDENCE - MIDDAY

8

A HARP plays softly in the background.

SADIKI

Is there nothing we can do for her,  
ma'am?

CLEOPATRA

She knew the risks. She failed.  
(tone of regret)  
She disappointed me... The best we  
can hope for her now is a quick  
death - but the Romans can be so  
very cruel...

INSISTENT KNOCK UPON DOOR.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Come.

DOORS OPEN, Mark STRIDES in.

MARK

Cleo.

CLEOPATRA

Mark? To what do I owe this-?

MARK

Don't go!

CLEOPATRA

What-?

MARK

Don't leave Rome. We can make this  
work. Better than that. We can make  
it incredible.

CLEOPATRA

You must have me confused with an  
idiot.

MARK

Can we talk?

CLEOPATRA

(sighs)  
Sadiki, leave us.

SADIKI

My lady.

Sadiki EXITS, DOORS CLOSE

MARK

You could have dobbed me in back there, and I could have done the same for you, but we didn't - why?

CLEOPATRA

Self preservation?

MARK

No, it's more than that. You and me, we're on the same level.

CLEOPATRA

You flatter yourself. What possessed you to try and kill Gaius personally? I assume that's why you were loitering around his bedroom?

MARK

I wanted to show you what I can do.

CLEOPATRA

Mission accomplished.

MARK

I'm a soldier, Cleo. And a bloody good general. I know I'm not at my best with all the admin and planning. That's Gaius' line, or Fulvia's-

CLEOPATRA

OK so what happened?

MARK

Killing a sleeping man isn't the same as slaying an enemy in battle. I bottled it. Couldn't do it.

Pause.

CLEOPATRA

You'd better learn. In politics, the battleground doesn't have edges. And no-one wears colours to show which side they're on.

MARK

Stay. We'll work it out. This thing with Gaius, it's just a setback.

CLEOPATRA

A setback?

MARK

Trust me.

She GETS UP from her divan.

CLEOPATRA

Here's what I'll do. I'll delay my journey by one day. If by then you can bring me a deal worth my time, perhaps I'll decide we have something left to discuss after all. If not, I walk.

MARK

One day, that's all?

CLEOPATRA

One. Day. Time to move fast, Mark. Your future may depend on it.

**END OF EPISODE**