

CRY HAVOC! (ASK QUESTIONS LATER)

EPISODE 19 - ROMAN COMEDY

Written by

David K. Barnes

www.davidkbarnes.com
Agent: micheline@steinplays.com

Cast

GAIUS ~ HARRY ROEBUCK
MARK ~ KAZEEM TOSIN AMORE
CLEOPATRA ~ LARA SAWALHA FULVIA
~ BETH EYRE
LEPIDUS ~ ANDY SECOMBE OCTAVIA
~ SARAH LAMBIE ANTYLLUS ~
AARON-LOUIS CADOGAN QUINTUS ~
BENJAMIN GARRISON CHARMIAN ~
SARAH AGHA

CILLO ~ KARIM KRONFLI
NASO ~ TOM CROWLEY
VARRO ~ ALASTAIR CHRISTIE
BASSILLA ~ LOWRI ANN DAVIES
SADIKI ~ AHMED ALJABRY

Content Notes:

- Decapitation
- Sexual Reference/Innuendo
- Classism
- Explicit Language
- Discussions of: Financial Insecurity, murder
- Mentions of: Drowning, strangulation
- SFX: Mobs, loud vocalisations, loud noises

CLEOPATRA is SCRIBBLING a note. Outside in the courtyard we hear BUSTLING ACTIVITY; her retinue are moving out.

CLEOPATRA
Yours sincerely, Queen Cleopatra...
of... Egypt... Right, done.

She quickly and firmly STAMPS a seal.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
(calls)
Sadiki!

The DOOR OPENS immediately and her servant SADIKI ENTERS.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
Any word from the Romans?

SADIKI
None, your Majesty.

Cleopatra is annoyed but expected this.

CLEOPATRA
Well their time's up. We're pulling
out of this dump and going home.

SADIKI
Preparations are underway.

CLEOPATRA
Good. Oh and take this letter to a
property agent. Someone up-market.

HANDS Sadiki the LETTER under:

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
I got a good deal on this villa, so
let's sell it for double the cost.
May as well get something out of
this awful trip...

Cleopatra BROWSING her other PAPERS.

SADIKI
At once, your Majesty. A message
just arrived from the Lady Fulvia.

CLEOPATRA
Fulvia? What's it say?

SADIKI
I can't read Latin.

CLEOPATRA
Oh for-

Cleopatra SNATCHES the message, reads quickly.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
Ha! Should I intend to leave, she
begs an audience. To entreat me on
behalf of her husband no doubt.
Well she'd better have a good-

Breaks off as she reads.

SADIKI
Your Majesty?

CLEOPATRA
... She says Charmian has escaped
captivity.

SADIKI
How so?

CLEOPATRA
She doesn't say. She clearly thinks
I was behind it... Where is
Charmian, do we know?

SADIKI
She has not returned to us. Should
I send our agents to locate her?

Beat. Tone of regret.

CLEOPATRA
No... She may have escaped the
Romans, but she knows the penalty
for failure...

Beat. She SCRUNCHES UP the paper, DISCARDING it.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
The situation is unchanged. We
leave her behind.

SADIKI
Yes your Majesty.

CLEOPATRA
Have my things taken to the barge,
and prepare a litter for me.

(MORE)

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 I'll see the Lady Fulvia. Perhaps
 the Romans will be sensible after
 all?

SMASH CUT TO:

2 INT. DOMUS CARINAE CHAMBERS - MORNING

2

GAIUS
 (stressed)
 Maybe we could emmigrate?

MARK furiously PACING.

MARK
 You know we can't do that.

GAIUS
 No no hear me out: maybe we could
 emmigrate? You know, it's a big
 world, we could hide anywhere.

MARK
 We are not emmigrating!

GAIUS
 Because of honour?

MARK
 No, because WE'D GET CAUGHT!!

LEPIDUS
 (yells)
 GENTLEMEN, PLEASE! This is no time
 to panic! We need to work together!
 Why don't we review our situation
 and try to find a way out of it?

MARK
 Alright, go on then.

LEPIDUS
 OK. One, we planned to assassinate
 a few senators. Two, we're actually
 going to kill a few hundred
 senators, by mistake. And three,
 there's nothing we can do about it.

Beat.

LEPIDUS (cont'd)
 Have I missed anything?

GAIUS

No!

LEPIDUS

... Oh. Damn.

A nervous SWALLOW.

LEPIDUS (cont'd)

In that case, I think we should
keep panicking, don't you?

TITLES AND THEME TUNE

ANNOUNCER

'Cry Havoc (Ask Questions Later)'
Episode 19: 'Roman Comedy'

3 INT. DOMUS CARINAE CHAMBERS - MORNING, LATER

3

MARK, GAIUS and LEPIDUS all ARGUING over each other (ad-libbed). Total tired panic. Then:

GAIUS

Look!!! We've been round and around
this for an hour. Let's just try
and think about this logically.

MARK

OK. Logically, we've fucked up.

GAIUS

That's not helpful.

LEPIDUS

(panicked)

He's right though isn't he? One
moment you're just writing a few
names down, and the next-

MARK

There'll be absolute carnage out
there! Could start at any moment.

GAIUS

Not necessarily.

MARK

What do you mean not necessarily,
look at this wanker's head!

SQUELCH as he DROPS the decapitated HEAD on the DESK.

LEPIDUS
 (despair)
 Oh!

MARK
 You think he lost that in a card
 game?

LEPIDUS
 Treat him with some dignity can't
 you! I knew the man!

MARK
 Oh sorry I forgot. There we are.

SQUELCH as he adjusts the head.

LEPIDUS
 (sadly)
 Thank you.

GAIUS
 Lepidus, the names on your birthday
 list - do they all live in Rome?

LEPIDUS
 No, a lot of my friends retired and
 moved to the country. It's very
 peaceful out there.

MARK
 It won't be anymore.

LEPIDUS
 (wail)
 Oh!!

GAIUS
 The point is it's going to take
 time for the assassins to reach
 their targets, and even longer for
 the news to get back to Rome.

MARK
 So what??

GAIUS
 So we may be able to contain it!
 Avoid a panic, devise a plan-

LEPIDUS
 They're all going to die! Can't we
 stop it?!

GAIUS
 (exasperated)
 Wha - I don't know! Mark, what
 about Fulvia, can she help?

MARK
 Yeah if she ever gets here!

DOOR OPENS, FULVIA enters. Professional and unruffled.

MARK (cont'd)
 Fulvia!

FULVIA
 Hello darling, you're up early? ...
 Dear gods is that somebody's head?!

MARK
 Yes it is.

FULVIA
 I hope you haven't been eating off
 that table.

GAIUS
 Lepidus, get rid of it. Discreetly.

LEPIDUS
 The table?

GAIUS
 The head!

LEPIDUS
 Oh, yes.

SQUELCH as Lepidus PICKS IT UP.

MARK
 Never mind the head - what took you
 so long?

FULVIA
 I was sleeping.

MARK
 I sent a messenger!

FULVIA
 Who'd you think I slept with?

MARK
 (under breath)
 Oh would you believe it...

FULVIA

Well if you will send a strapping young man to my room at night-!

GAIUS

Yes yes alright, you're here now.

FULVIA

And I've got two questions. First, what happened? Second, why is Lepidus still holding that head?

LEPIDUS

I wondered if his family might want it back?

MARK

(gently but firmly)
Go away now.

LEPIDUS

OK.

He LEAVES, door OPENING and CLOSING under:

FULVIA

Last night, or rather very early this morning, I receive a contract to eliminate a sizeable number of VIPs. I pass it on and set the wheels in motion. And now you want to call the whole thing off, right?

GAIUS

If we can, yes.

FULVIA

Well you can't, tough luck.

GAIUS

Why not?

FULVIA

The matter's already in hand.

GAIUS

(strained)
I'm aware that work has commenced, but surely we can halt proceedings?

FULVIA

It's too late for that. Word's gone round. Every killer on the books has packed a dagger and gone.

MARK

Well tell them to come back again!

FULVIA

They're professionals! You'd never reach them in time. I dropped in on my contacts to see what I could do but no dice - you're stuck with it.

GAIUS

But you see what's happened is that we didn't want to kill those people - we wanted to kill these people.

He GRABS and HOLDS UP the original SHORTLIST.

FULVIA

Oh that's no problem. You can kill them afterwards. I mean by that point who's going to notice?

GAIUS

Us for a start! Don't you see, many of them are friends and allies!

FULVIA

You shouldn't have had them all killed then, should you?

MARK

Damn it, we made a mistake!! It was obviously a mistake! Didn't you stop to think that three hundred targets was somewhat excessive?!

FULVIA

(acid)

Sorry, I thought the three of you running the show could be trusted to know what you're doing!

GAIUS

She's right... We were meant to lead a golden age, not a massacre.

MARK

Look, maybe we're still in the clear. Nobody knows it was us.

GAIUS

It's too big a risk! There's got to be a way round this. There must be!

FULVIA

Try and get this into your heads:
you issued a command and that
command has been obeyed. As we
speak, professional killers are
spreading out across the city,
across the country, across the sea
if they have to, and they won't
rest until they hunt down and
murder the three hundred innocent
men you told them to kill, as well
as their wives and children if they
happen to be nearby. There's
nothing more to be said, so you can
either be upset - or you can deal
with it and move on. Your choice.

A KNOCK at the door, it OPENS.

LEPIDUS

(low spirits)

Me again.

GAIUS

What is it now?

LEPIDUS

We've lost another one. An aedile,
Maximus Petullian.

GAIUS

One of our biggest supporters...

LEPIDUS

Drowned in his bath... The really
sad thing is I only invited him to
my party to even up the numbers...

MARK

I don't like to say it but I reckon
people are going to notice.

LEPIDUS

The Senate's called an emergency
meeting.

MARK

Ah crap.

FULVIA

You'll have to go. Calm them down.

GAIUS

And how should we do that?

Mark summons up confidence. DEEP BREATH.

MARK
We brazen it out.

GAIUS
You're joking.

MARK
No other choice. We're still in
charge here. Let's show them what
we're made of.

They both EXIT, Gaius SIGHING.

LEPIDUS
And what should I do?

FULVIA
About the dead men? I'd start
taking their estates if I were you.
There's no point in letting a good
murder go to waste.

4 INT. SENATE HOUSE - MORNING

4

LOUD concerned RHUBARB RHUBARB from a lot of angry SENATORS.

GAIUS
(calling)
Honoured men of the Senate! Really,
there is nothing to fear!

CILLO
Nothing to fear, he says!

NASO
Two men are dead!

MARK
(calling)
Easy now, gents! Settle down. No
need to get our togas in a twist.

Senators QUIETEN.

MARK (cont'd)
(low, to Gaius)
I'll handle this.

GAIUS
(low)
Take it away...

MARK

As m'colleague said, there is no
cause for alarm.

NASO

Two prominent statesmen have been
murdered!

MARK

Who said it was murder? Maximus
drowned. I say it was suicide.

NASO

But he was strangled!

MARK

(unruffled)

He must have been very determined.

BURST OF UPROAR from the senators, giving way to:

CILLO

And what about Habitus? He had his
head cut off! His family found it
only an hour ago.

MARK

The head?

CILLO

Yes. It was sat on their doorstep,
with a note saying "Sorry."

MARK

(low to Gaius)

I'm gonna kill Lepidus.

GAIUS

(low to Mark)

Not if I do it first.

NASO

Senators! It is clear to me that
some foul conspiracy is at work!

MARK

Oh come on! Yes, two statesmen have
died, but that's hardly evidence of
an organised conspiracy.

NASO

Then how would you explain it?

MARK
 (exasperated)
 Oh, I don't know...! It's probably
 just some maniac.

NASO
 WHAT?!

Massive panicked UPROAR from senators.

GAIUS
 (dry)
 Well that's reassured them.

MARK
 I mean, that is to say, er-!

VARRO
 I move that we should increase the
 number of guards in the streets and
 our homes, for our protection!

GAIUS
 We can't afford more guards! Rome
 hasn't got the money.

MARK
 Though give it a day or two.

Gaius kicks him; THUMP!

MARK (cont'd)
 Ow!

CILLO
 You still haven't solved it?

GAIUS
 Nearly, nearly! We just need a
 little more time and cooperation!

He slides into speech mode.

GAIUS (cont'd)
 That is why we may stand tall, side
 by side, as comrades, as
 countrymen-

VARRO
 I'm not falling for that! I'm going
 to buy my OWN bodyguard!

Lots of senate MURMURS OF AGREEMENT under:

CILLO

Me too!

NASO

Can't be too careful!

GAIUS

But wait, if you all paid more into the state then we could actually cover the army's wages, and then they could protect us-

VARRO

No thank you, I'm going private.

CILLO

Same.

NASO

Better quality of service.

AGREEMENT from the senators.

GAIUS

(low, to Mark)

I give up.

MARK

Now come on you lot! I'm telling you, there's nothing to worry about! You can trust us! We've never steered you wrong before!

A loud RASPBERRY from the crowd.

MARK (cont'd)

I heard that!

VARRO

I'm taking my safety into my own hands, and I advise the rest of you to do the same. And as for you, Octavius Caesar and Mark Antony...

MARK

Yes?

GAIUS

Yes?

VARRO

Whether conspiracy or maniac, we expect you to get to the bottom of this affair - or we'll replace you with someone who will.

GAIUS
You'll what?

CILLO
Someone worthy of the office!

NASO
Rather than worthy of the prisons.

MARK
But you can't fire us!

CILLO / NASO / VARRO
(ominously)
Oh yes we can.

ROAR of AGREEMENT from senators.

5 INT. TEMPLE - MORNING

5

OCTAVIA is delivering a slow, deeply personal address.

OCTAVIA
I used to be so sure of things. Who
I am. What I want. I understood the
world and the ways it didn't work.
I thought I'd been so clever. But
now I know there's so much more.
Please tell me it's not too late.

BASSILLA
Er... ah... er... line?

OCTAVIA
(angry sigh)

QUINTUS
(off, weary)
"Too late for what?"

BASSILLA
Too late for what-?

Octavia cuts her off, trying to regain the intensity.

OCTAVIA
Too late for us of course! I love
you, and I need you, and I've no
right to ask this but I want you to
leave your master and come and live
with me - as my equal, as my love!

BASSILLA
 (angry intense)
 Don't you think I want that too?

OCTAVIA
 (angry intense)
 I don't know - do you? Tell me!

Tense beat.

BASSILLA
 (exhales)
 Sorry, line?

QUINTUS
 "Yes."

BASSILLA
 Yes.

Rehearsal breaks down.

OCTAVIA
 Right, that's it, I can't go on
 with this. This is painful-

BASSILLA
 I'm sorry.

OCTAVIA
 You are PAINFUL.

QUINTUS
 (wearily)
 OK let's stop there.

Other ACTORS RELAX, SIGH, etc.

BASSILLA
 I'm trying my best!

QUINTUS
 I know you are dear, we all are.

OCTAVIA
 We need professionals, is that so
 much to ask?!

QUINTUS
 (warning)
 Octavia-!

OCTAVIA
 She doesn't know her bloody lines!

QUINTUS

No one knows their bloody lines!
You give us a brand new play we've
never seen before and you want it
learnt, rehearsed, and out before
an audience in the very same day.
It can't be done!

OCTAVIA

Charmian could do it!

BASSILLA

Well I'm not Charmian am I! If I
tried to kill your brother then
perhaps you'd like me more!

Ouch.

OCTAVIA

... Get out.

BASSILLA

I... I'm sorry-

OCTAVIA

You're cut from the show, get out.

BASSILLA

Please I didn't mean-

OCTAVIA

I SAID GET OUT! Go back to the
streets! I picked you up, I can put
you back again - GET OUT!

Bassilla RUNS OFF, CRYING. Beat.

QUINTUS

(quiet, steel)
Octavia.

OCTAVIA

What?

Beat. Regret.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)

What is it? Say something. Please.

QUINTUS

Why? I doubt someone of your
'elevated' status would hear it.

QUINTUS exits.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
 (on way out)
 Bassilla!

OCTAVIA
 Oh... go, all of you. Take a break.
 We'll try again later.

Troupe of ACTORS EXITING, ANTYLLUS remains.

ANTYLLUS
 (gentle)
 Octavia.

OCTAVIA
 Yes. Antyllus?

ANTYLLUS
 These people are your friends.
 They've barely rested. If you
 recall, we were breaking someone
 out of prison last night.

OCTAVIA
 (quiet)
 I know.

ANTYLLUS
 You're better than this.

OCTAVIA
 ... I'll apologise to Bassilla.

ANTYLLUS
 That may not be enough.

Beat.

OCTAVIA
 (hollow)
 ... What am I doing?

ANTYLLUS
 Look, we've sold out tonight. We
 always do, thanks to you. But...
 this new play, it's too... raw. For
 you. Right now.

OCTAVIA
 Perhaps...

ANTYLLUS

Why don't we do the pirates again?
Or The Crown Jules? One we all
know. The crowd will enjoy it.

Beat.

OCTAVIA

I want her back, Antyllus.

ANTYLLUS

I guess people like us tend to get
what we want. We should find out
how it feels when we don't.

6 **EXT. DOMUS CARINAE COURTYARD - MORNING**

6

Mark and Gaius WALKING into the courtyard, feeling the
weight of the world on their shoulders.

MARK

The nerve of those vultures! And
Varro giving us threats! Was he on
the list?

GAIUS

(sadly)
Afraid not.

MARK

Typical!... We break our backs for
them and this is how they repay us!
It'd serve them right if we did
kill 'em all.

GAIUS

We may have to at this rate.

MARK

Ha! Would that be such a bad thing?

GAIUS

I wouldn't say it's why I got into
politics... I had dreams. I had
ideas.

MARK

Still time for all that.

GAIUS

(mirthless laugh)

By the end of the day we'll either be arrested by the Senate or strung up by the army... Riots in the streets. Bodies in the gutters, and the fields. Good men dying across the whole country. We've brought the Republic to its knees. We've only been in charge a few months.

MARK

There's always tomorrow.

GAIUS

Not for us.

Lepidus appears from a doorway - strangely upbeat again.

LEPIDUS

Hello chaps! How was the Senate?

GAIUS

Don't ask. Any more news?

LEPIDUS

Yes, while you've been out we've had four or five deaths!

MARK

Friends of yours?

LEPIDUS

Most of them, yes! Ha ha.

MARK

You're taking it pretty well.

LEPIDUS

Ah, well, nothing I can do about it! Why worry, that's what I say!

GAIUS

You're trembling.

Beat. Lepidus is clearly losing the plot.

LEPIDUS

... Gosh, well, I'd better crack on then! Got a few things to show you - oh and Cleopatra's here.

GAIUS

Today gets better and better...

MARK

She'll want to find out if there's
a deal on the table.

GAIUS

Then she's in luck... We're giving
her everything she wants.

MARK

What are you on about?

GAIUS

We have to. We're not holding any
cards. Rome needs that food.

MARK

But by the time we get it, it'll be
too late anyway!

GAIUS

For us yes, but not for Rome. If
this is my last day in politics I
want to do some good.

MARK

Mate, seriously, think about this-!

GAIUS

I'll deal with her. You and Lepidus
try to work out some way we can...
I dunno, survive another day.

He WALKS AWAY, a defeated man.

LEPIDUS

Poor chap.

MARK

Oh save it. He was happy to condemn
a dozen men, he just didn't want to
get caught that's all. What'd you
want to show us?

LEPIDUS

Well, at your wife's suggestion,
I've been doing some maths.

MARK

Urghhhh...

7 INT. MEETING ROOM - MORNING

7

At the table, a keen Fulvia having a secret conversation with a not very interested Cleopatra.

FULVIA

Anyway, I just wanted to make sure we were still on the same page, you know, after the last few days...

CLEOPATRA

(uninterested)

Mmhm, yep.

FULVIA

What with negotiations, and the summons, and that little murder plot going tits up.

CLEOPATRA

(barely trying)

I don't know what you mean.

FULVIA

Well naturally - wink wink - but between us, I mean, if you want to have another pop at Gaius, I'll make sure Mark's in another country this time. Say no more.

CLEOPATRA

(not interested)

Yep, sure.

DOOR OPENS as Gaius enters. Fulvia raises her voice to ordinary volume, somewhat obviously.

FULVIA

Oh, er - SO I'll just leave that with you then.

CLEOPATRA

You do that. Morning, Caesar.

GAIUS

Morning.

FULVIA

And if you'd ever like to visit again, drop by any time!

CLEOPATRA

Will do.

FULVIA

Talk soon then! Bye! Bye bye!

Fulvia EXITS, SHUTTING the door behind her.

CLEOPATRA

That woman hates your guts.

GAIUS

(rueful)

I know.

Gaius SITS opposite, SHUFFLES PAPERS, CLEARS THROAT.

GAIUS (cont'd)

So, your Majesty. We got off on the wrong foot.

CLEOPATRA

That's a new one. Yesterday you were calling me a murderer.

GAIUS

Yes, well, I'm willing to overlook that whole affair if you are.

CLEOPATRA

(dry)

How magnanimous.

GAIUS

We wouldn't want our two great nations to suffer because of a few words spoken in haste would we?

CLEOPATRA

Haste? That's a laugh. We haven't made any progress since the day I arrived. I've been fobbed off, insulted, abused, and I've even had to sit through several plays.

GAIUS

I thought you liked them.

CLEOPATRA

They're full of topical jokes I don't understand, and characters breaking wind.

GAIUS

Well most of that is ad-libbed, but either way, I can see this hasn't been a pleasant visit for you.

CLEOPATRA

It really hasn't, so I'm telling you now that unless we reach a mutually beneficial arrangement heavily tilted in my favour, then I am boarding my ship and going home.

GAIUS

I think we can do that, yes.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA

What?

GAIUS

In return for your assistance in the matters hitherto discussed, and business ongoing, Rome is prepared to meet...

(a resigned breath)

... all reasonable requests.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA

Oh. Um. OK. ... Really?

GAIUS

Yep.

CLEOPATRA

(suspicious)

I warn you, I want it all. Renewed recognition of my sovereign rights, my children ruling after me, our enemies destroyed, the return of Judea, Damascus and Antioch, and you can throw in a Greek island too - Rhodes or Delos, I don't mind which. That should just about do it. What do you say?

Gaius tenses but takes a DEEP BREATH.

GAIUS

On behalf of the Senate, and the people of Rome, we agree to your-

The door BURSTS OPEN, Mark STUMBLES IN.

MARK

Gaius!

GAIUS
Mark? What are you doing-?

MARK
We need to talk.

GAIUS
We can't, not now!

MARK
Yes now, right now, can't wait.
Lepidus showed me something.

Lepidus pops his head round.

LEPIDUS
Hello!

GAIUS
Please! I'm about to reach an
agreement with Queen Cleopatra!

MARK
Won't take a moment, really.
(to Cleopatra)
Y'alright there!

CLEOPATRA
(suspicious)
Hello.

MARK
Come on, I promise you-

GAIUS
OK!! I do apologise, your Majesty.

CLEOPATRA
(confused)
Sure.

MARK
Lepidus will entertain you.

Mark and Gaius EXIT swiftly.

MARK (cont'd)
Come on-

GAIUS
Alright alright-!

Door SLAMS. Beat.

LEPIDUS

So. Going anywhere nice on your holidays?

CLEOPATRA

(suspicious, confused)
I was thinking Greece.

LEPIDUS

Ah! Lovely this time of year! I do so enjoy the Greek Isles.

CLEOPATRA

Yes I'd like to own a few myself.
... Are you trembling?

LEPIDUS

Yes. Eight friends have died. No.

FLIPS A PAPER.

LEPIDUS (cont'd)

Nine. Sorry about that. Ha ha!

CLEOPATRA

(unnerved)
Don't apologise. Wasn't your fault.

LEPIDUS

Ha! Funny you should say that-!

DOOR OPENS, Gaius ENTERS. He seems different. (His problems have been solved but it hasn't sunken in yet.)

GAIUS

Right. Yes. That all seems in order. Um... good. Very good.

CLEOPATRA

Is everything...?

GAIUS

Absolutely, yes. Yes. Absolutely. Lepidus, tell Mark I won't be long.

LEPIDUS

Righto!

Lepidus EXITS, DOOR SHUTS. Cleopatra confused and suspicious.

CLEOPATRA

What's going on?

GAIUS
Er... Nothing.

CLEOPATRA
Nothing?

GAIUS
Yep. So... Where were we?... Oh
yes. Er... Deal's off.

CLEOPATRA
What?

Gaius GATHERING PAPERS, eager to get away.

GAIUS
Turns out we're fine actually. So
no need for you to help us at all.

CLEOPATRA
What do you mean, fine?

GAIUS
All existing arrangements continue,
of course, usual rates. Grain,
trade, and so on. If it ain't
broke, don't fix it, as they say!

CLEOPATRA
Sorry, do you have somewhere to be?

GAIUS
No! No no no-!

Door OPENS.

MARK
Gaius!

GAIUS
Coming!

Gaius keeps COLLECTING PAPERS.

GAIUS (cont'd)
Yep so was there anything else?

CLEOPATRA
Wait wait wait - what about the
rest of it? Like my sovereign
rights in Egypt?

GAIUS
Oh, duly recognised. Carry on with
the good job. You and the kids.

CLEOPATRA
What, just like that?

GAIUS
Yep, let us know if you have any
trouble, always happy to lend a
hand. What else?

CLEOPATRA
Territories.

GAIUS
Yes, we're keeping those, but tell
you what, token of goodwill, why
don't you take, er... Ephesos.
Little present from us. Oh, and
Pergamon, why not? I never go there
anyway.

RUSTLE of PAPERWORK being HANDED OVER as he says this.

CLEOPATRA
Um, thank you.

GAIUS
There we are. No hard feelings,
nice to see you. Drop in again
sometime! Bye for now!

He EXITS, door SLAMS. OPENS.

GAIUS (cont'd)
Oh, and have a safe trip!

SLAMS SHUT. Beat.

CLEOPATRA
What the fuck just happened?

8 INT. DOMUS CARINAE CHAMBERS - MOMENTS LATER

8

An excited Mark, smug Fulvia and a fragile Lepidus.

MARK
And if it all falls into place, you
know what this means!

FULVIA
I wonder if Gaius does...

Door OPENS, Gaius RUSHES IN, excited.

GAIUS
She's gone. Gave her some trinkets
to keep her happy. Tell me again,
please. I need to hear it again.

MARK
(jubilant)
We're rich, mate! Rich! We're
absolutely rolling in it!

GAIUS
You're sure? No mistakes?

MARK
No! Lepidus did some maths!

LEPIDUS
(slipping into shock)
We've begun seizing the assets from
the er... from the er...

FULVIA
The dead men.

LEPIDUS
... Yes...

MARK
(sharp)
Lepidus.

LEPIDUS
(snaps out of it)
Exactly! Yes and here's a quick
evaluation of the profit so far!

HANDING over a PARCHMENT.

GAIUS
Alright, let's take a... WOW. Oh
wow wow wow. This much already?

MARK
Don't you see, the plan's working,
just as we hoped!

GAIUS
We could pay back, what, about half
of the army with this?

MARK

And there's plenty more where that came from! We're in the clear! I mean, sure, the wrong men died, but who cares about that?

LEPIDUS

Me, I suppose! Ha ha ha...!
(quiet broken laugh)

MARK

Gaius? Why've you stopped smiling?

GAIUS

Because what happens when everyone finds out where the money's come from? We're killing three hundred VIPs! We'll never get away with it.

FULVIA

Not with that attitude you won't.

GAIUS

What?

MARK

You see mate, we've been talking this thing through. And if we want to secure power - I mean, really secure it - then we've got to act, and we've got to act fast...

9 INT. CLEOPATRA'S BARGE, HER QUARTERS - MIDDAY

9

Outside it's a sunny day, WATERS LAPPING. USUAL HUBBUB of servants and sailors. Off, a pissed off Cleopatra boards her ship with a retinue of guards, STRIDING across WOODEN DECK.

CLEOPATRA

(calling out)

Sadiki! We're leaving. Instruct the Captain to set sail immediately.

SADIKI

Your Majesty, the Captain says the conditions are not favourable-

CLEOPATRA

Then leave when they are!!

SADIKI

There is another matter I should-

CLEOPATRA
Don't want to hear it.

SADIKI
But your-

CLEOPATRA
No-o!

Cleopatra SLAMS her door, and LEANS BACK on it, SIGHING.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
Urghhhhhh... This stupid city. Its
stupid people. Why do things have
to be so...?

CHARMIAN
Difficult? Your Majesty?

Beat.

CLEOPATRA
Charmian? You've come back?

CHARMIAN
I had nowhere else to go... And I
had a request to make of you.

CLEOPATRA
(stunned)
A request? ... A request? After the
betrayals and the failures and the
trouble you've put me to, you dare
to ask something more of me?

CHARMIAN
Yes.

Charmian holds a tightly bound BUNDLE OF PAPERS; RUSTLE.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)
Someone's written me a play. And
before you have me put to death...
I want to know what happens in it.

END OF EPISODE