

CRY HAVOC! (ASK QUESTIONS LATER)

EPISODE 20 - UNDERWORLD

Written by

David K. Barnes

Recording Script (Version 4.0)

Cast

Kazeem Tosin Amore as Mark Antony
Harry Roebuck as Gaius Octavius Ceasar
Lara Sawalha as Cleopatra
Andy Secombe as Lepidus
Beth Eyre as Fulvia
Sarah Agha as Charmian
Sarah Lambie as Octavia
Benjamin Garrison as Quintus
Pip Gladwin as Rufus
Mark Thompson as Drusus
Ahmed Aljbray as Sadiki
Lowri Ann Davies as Bascilla
Aaron-Louis Cadogan as Antyllus
Karim Cronfli as Cillo
Tom Crowley as Naso
Ellie Dickens as Atia
Alastair Christie as Varro

Content Notes

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

MARK alone (we think) giving a soliloquy. Starts low and slow but builds in volume and intensity. Everything we can do - including music - to make this awesome.

MARK

A curse shall light upon the limbs
of men... Domestic fury... and
fierce civil strife... shall cumber
all the parts of Italy...

Building...

MARK (cont'd)

Blood and destruction shall be so
in use... and dreadful objects so
familiar... that mothers shall but
smile when they behold their
infants quartered with the hands of
war - all pity choked with custom
of fell deeds!

Really building...

MARK (cont'd)

And Caesar's spirit, ranging for
revenge, with Até by his side come
hot from hell, shall... in these
confines... with a monarch's
voice... "CRYYYYY HAVO-

GAIUS

No.

MARK

What?

GAIUS

No. It's too much. It's far too
much. I'm not even sure where
you're going with it.

FULVIA

He's right darling. The tone's
completely wrong.

MARK

... Oh...

By now very clear that we're in the Domus Carinae courtyard.

MARK (cont'd)

Was it the delivery?

GAIUS
No no! That was great, really. It's
just all a bit, um...

FULVIA
We're trying to galvanise them, not
scare them to death.

MARK
Hm. Too heavy, you reckon?

FULVIA
It's not very you.

GAIUS
Who wrote it?

MARK
I did.

GAIUS
What just now?

MARK
Yeah.

GAIUS
(impressed)
Woah. I mean that's impressive.

MARK
(genuine)
Oh, cheers mate.

FULVIA
You just need to be yourself. Do
what you'd normally do.

MARK
Yeah you're right. I'll wing it.

TEARS UP the speech.

MARK (cont'd)
I'll be off then. Good luck all.
We've got one shot at this, so
let's make it count.

Mark BREATHES DEEPLY.

MARK (cont'd)
Showtime.

TITLES AND THEME MUSIC

ANNOUNCER
 'Cry Havoc! (Ask Questions Later)'
 Episode 20:
 'Underworld'

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

2

BEER POURED into a GLASS. CLEOPATRA drinks, SATISFIED GASP - she needed that.

CLEOPATRA
 By Isis, that tastes good... I've
 been dying for a beer all morning.
 Anything except watered down wine.

Beat. She regards CHARMIAN coolly.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 Would you like one?

CHARMIAN
 Oh. Er. Yes. Thank you.

Cleopatra POURS another.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)
 Please, let me-

CLEOPATRA
 No no, it's no trouble. After all,
 this may be your last drink.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 Here. Take it.

Charmian DOES. She's waiting for the axe to fall.

CHARMIAN
 Thanks.

Cleo SIPS again. A serious tone. Icy control.

CLEOPATRA
 Now then, Charmian. What am I to do
 with you?

CHARMIAN
 I don't know. My lady.

CLEOPATRA

You deceive me. You prioritise a member of the Roman elite. And then you fail to kill her brother. Really, Charmian. It's rather more than disappointing. It's pathetic.

CHARMIAN

Yes.

CLEOPATRA

I've given you so much. My time. My trust. You had great potential.

Beat.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Why did you come back? To throw yourself upon my mercy?

CHARMIAN

No. I don't deserve it. But I also don't deserve to be hunted down like a dog by the Romans.

CLEOPATRA

You should have thought of that before you escaped, my dear.

CHARMIAN

I didn't, I was rescued.

CLEOPATRA

Rescued?

CHARMIAN

Octavia, and her friends at the theatre. Behind her brother's back.

CLEOPATRA

Really? That's... very interesting.

She PUTS HER GLASS DOWN; shifts back to previous topic.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

But irrelevant for now. That mission was your last chance to prove your obedience. Not only did you not kill Caesar but you allowed yourself to get caught. The position you put me in was intolerable. Can you think of one good reason why you should not be taken from this room and executed?

CHARMIAN

Your Majesty, I... I did try.

CLEOPATRA

This is murder, girl, you don't get points for effort! Besides I've only got your word and what good is that to me? Perhaps you stayed your hand, you didn't have the guts.

CHARMIAN

No!

CLEOPATRA

Perhaps your little fling with that trollop from the theatre made you forget whose side you're on?

CHARMIAN

(furious)

That isn't true!

CLEOPATRA

Oh really?

CHARMIAN

(loud)

YES! Mark Antony was already there - if it weren't for him then Gaius would be dead!

Charmian's riled up. She softens, implores.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Please. I am loyal. I did not betray you when I was caught.

CLEOPATRA

I'd expect nothing less.

Cleopatra studies her. Then:

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

But your glass isn't shaking. A test of conviction, and truth... I believe you would have killed him.

CHARMIAN

(imploring)

Yes.

CLEOPATRA

The failure was not your own. We could have hardly predicted Mark would be so reckless. Your ability was never in doubt. But I needed to see the fire in your eyes. To know your heart remains with Egypt.

CHARMIAN

It does, my lady.

CLEOPATRA

Mmm.

Dangerous beat. Cleopatra PICKS UP the RIBBONED MANUSCRIPT.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

And yet there's the matter of this manuscript you brought us... A new play by Octavia, I take it?

CHARMIAN

Yes.

CLEOPATRA

You wish to hear it read? Why?

CHARMIAN

I... I'm curious.

CLEOPATRA

More than curious. This would have been your last request. A final unfortunate testament to your lack of sound judgement of late.

CHARMIAN

(sudden)

It's just that no one's ever written me anything before! That's all!

Beat. Remembers herself.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Your Majesty.

CLEOPATRA

About you? You inspired it?

Charmian has a nihilistic air about her.

CHARMIAN

She gave it to me just before I fled the city. And I thought... if there's nothing else for me, then at least before I die I can find out how the story goes.

Beat.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

I mean it might be rubbish.

CLEOPATRA

(faintly amused)

It might. But I am intrigued. The Romans are usually so busy hating us, it'd be nice to read something that bucked the trend...

She PICKS the FIRST PAGE.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Very well. We have the time.

CHARMIAN

You'll read it?

CLEOPATRA

Yes. Out loud. If you're very lucky, I may even do the voices.

3 **EXT. STREET / DOMUS CARINAE - AFTERNOON**

3

OCTAVIA and QUINTUS WALKING QUICKLY along a BUSY STREET. Quintus has been summoned by Gaius, and Octavia is annoyed.

OCTAVIA

We're performing in three hours! Did Gaius give any indication at all why he wanted to see you?

QUINTUS

When summoned by a politician, one shouldn't ask any questions.

OCTAVIA

But we've enough to do as it is!

QUINTUS

You didn't need to come!

OCTAVIA
 What, and give him a chance to con
 you into rewriting another of my
 plays? Yeah right.

QUINTUS
 Octavia, I am wounded!

OCTAVIA
 Tell me I'm wrong.

QUINTUS
 You know I can't; I like bribes.
 But it'd have to be a large one to
 make me do it again, I promise you.

OCTAVIA
 (sarcastic)
 Thanks, that means a lot.

They've arrived outside the Domus Carinae.

QUINTUS
 OK, here we are. Do I just knock
 or-

The DOOR OPENS.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
 Oh! Hello.

A nervous LEPIDUS EXITS.

OCTAVIA
 Lepidus?

LEPIDUS
 (jumps, startled)
 Ahh! What is it, what do you want?
 You haven't any proof!

OCTAVIA
 (puzzled)
 We're here to see my brother.

LEPIDUS
 Oh I see! Well, nothing wrong with
 that is there, eh? Ha ha ha!

OCTAVIA
 Um, are you alright? You look like
 you haven't slept.

LEPIDUS

(paranoid)

What, yes, of course! Everything is fine! Fine fine fine! Who said it wasn't, was it YOU?

QUINTUS

No!

LEPIDUS

Ha! A likely story! Don't hurt me.

OCTAVIA

(low to Quintus)

What's wrong with him?

QUINTUS

I don't know, but I wish he'd been this good when he was on stage.

Door CREAKS OPEN a bit more as GAIUS STEPS OUTSIDE.

GAIUS

Lepidus? You're meant to be finding us a priest. Time's of the essenc.

LEPIDUS

(enforced cheer)

Yes, sorry, got distracted!

He squeezes past Octavia and Quintus as he GOES.

LEPIDUS (cont'd)

Do excuse me, sorry - important business! Hush hush! Ta ta!

OCTAVIA

... Seriously, what's up with that?

GAIUS

Yes, well, you know Lepidus. Nose to the grindstone, up all night.

OCTAVIA

And why do you need a priest?

GAIUS

Er, just a routine check. Talk to the gods, see how we're doing, that sort of thing. Ah, you there!

QUINTUS

Good afternoon, sagacity!

OCTAVIA
For goodness sake.

GAIUS
Your company is performing tonight
isn't it?

QUINTUS
Correct Caesar. A repeat of our
riotous comedy The Crown Jules.

GAIUS
Is that the one about the tragic
death of my father Julius?

Awkward.

QUINTUS
... Ye-es. We can change it if you
like?

OCTAVIA
(firm)
No we can't.

GAIUS
No whatever, it's OK, you go ahead.
(under breath)
It might even be appropriate.

OCTAVIA
What was that?

GAIUS
(blithe)
In fact I wanted to book a few
tickets if that can be arranged?

OCTAVIA
You've already seen it.

GAIUS
Our mother wants to see it again.
Just give us a couple of seats up
the back, nothing conspicuous.

QUINTUS
Yes Caesar, of course!

GAIUS
Oh and I'm inviting some friends
along, if you can squeeze them in.

QUINTUS

Anything for you! How many?

GAIUS

Er, about a dozen or so. With their plus ones. Probably some guards too. You know what, let's book out the first two rows. Can I do that?

QUINTUS

Yes! We'll have to shift a few cultists, but that's easily done-

OCTAVIA

Gaius, what's this all about?

GAIUS

Don't you want any business?

OCTAVIA

Since when have you cared?

GAIUS

Octavia, it's a work thing. Take some clients out for dinner and a show, swing their votes in the Senate, yadda yadda. Can we do it?

QUINTUS

Nothing would grant me more joy!

GAIUS

Right at the front?

QUINTUS

Right at the front.

GAIUS

Glorious. I'll settle the account later. I know where you are.

QUINTUS

(bonhomie)

And I know where you are! Ha ha!

GAIUS

What?

QUINTUS

(smile wiped off face)

Nothing.

GAIUS

Good. Well, that's all, off you go.
I'm sure you're both very busy.

OCTAVIA

Writing more jokes at your expense.

GAIUS

That's it, keep up the good work!
Bye now!

Door SLAMS as he goes back inside.

QUINTUS

The first two rows! This is how you
sell out.

OCTAVIA

Selling out is right. You're a
government stooge.

QUINTUS

A government stooge who can buy new
shoes!... What's with the frown?

OCTAVIA

Something isn't right here... He's
got a gleam in his eye. It's very
unusual.

QUINTUS

Don't be paranoid.

OCTAVIA

I tell you I don't like it...

QUINTUS

Darling, we're staging a play of
yours to a sell-out crowd and
everyone will say how brilliant you
are. Isn't that enough?

OCTAVIA

You know it isn't.

QUINTUS

Tsk! Writers. Never satisfied.

4 INT. MILITARY CAMP - AFTERNOON

4

Mark speaking with a GROUP of ten SENIOR OFFICERS. They're
MURMURING about what they've just heard. Mark QUIETENS them.

MARK

So lads, that's about the size of it. We're close to the finishing line, but I need you for one last caper. What do you say?

DRUSUS

Well it's like this, sir. We want to help you out, you know that. But we can't feed our kids on promises.

RUFUS

Yeah, we've been patient and all, and given you more time when you've asked for it...

DRUSUS

But to ask us to wait even longer, with more work involved...

RUFUS

Exactly, well it's kind of...

MARK

You reckon it's taking the piss.

RUFUS

A bit, yeah.

DRUSUS

What you're proposing sounds a right laugh, we'd love to do it, but without cash up front...

RUFUS

Most of the boys are talking about rioting tonight.

MARK

As bad as that?

RUFUS

Yeah, it could get pretty ugly.

MARK

Lads, I hear what you're saying. We're all up against it and I can't expect the men's support without putting my money where my mouth is. So that's exactly what I've done.

He THUMPS a big (and full) WOODEN CHEST.

DRUSUS
What's with the mystery box?

MARK
So confident am I in the outcome of
this little venture that I'm
sticking this up as collateral.

He OPENS the chest; CREAK of HEAVY LID.

MARK (cont'd)
Feast your eyes, lads.

With a ROAR of effort, he TIPS the chest and loads and loads
of COINS SPILL OUT over the table. All the soldiers MURMUR
appreciatively.

DRUSUS
Oh mate!

RUFUS
Now that's what I'm talking about!

MARK
I sold my summer house for some
cold hard cash, because damn it we
all need to make sacrifices. And
there's another twenty-five chests
outside. You reckon that's enough
pay for an extra night's work?

DRUSUS
I'd say the boys will be very on
board! We always believed in you!

RUFUS
Just give us the word sir! For the
glory of Rome!

The officers all make STRIDENT "YEAH!"s etc

MARK
Let's go over the plan again. If we
get this right, we're home and dry.

5 INT. CLEOPATRA'S BARGE, HER QUARTERS - AFTERNOON

5

Cleopatra is finishing the play. She does the voices.

CLEOPATRA
Enter Poppaea, still dressed as an
Egyptian servant. Shana turns and
laughs.

(MORE)

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Shana: "Let's get you out of those silly clothes." Poppaea: "As my lady commands...!" They laugh, embrace, and cling onto one another. Though they may joke, they've fought hard for this moment. We sense it will last them a lifetime. Audience applause. End.

Cleopatra PUTS IT DOWN.

CHARMIAN

(moved)

... Um... Wow...

CLEOPATRA

Mmm! Not bad at all! The jokes are still a touch broad for my taste, but the passion is unmistakable. Did you enjoy it?

CHARMIAN

(loved it)

I did. Quite a lot actually.

CLEOPATRA

I suppose it takes a few attempts for a writer to find their voice. You've been a good influence.

Beat. Cleopatra is less approving of this next bit.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

It's also clear to me how much she feels about you.

CHARMIAN

(hesitant)

You think so?

CLEOPATRA

An elite Roman woman defies her class to adore a foreign servant? She's even given it a happy ending.

CHARMIAN

(inward smile)

She was always naive like that.

CLEOPATRA

It's obvious that the two of you were very much in love.

CHARMIAN
 (forgetting herself)
 Well, I don't know about that, but
 the sex was great.

CLEOPATRA
 TMI Charmian.

CHARMIAN
 Yes sorry, sorry...

Beat, Charmian considers.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)
 I think if it wasn't love... then
 it was something very close to it.

CLEOPATRA
 (sighs)
 Charmian...

CHARMIAN
 It was new and exciting, and it's
 over, and I'm sorry. If you so will
 it then I'll be proud to serve you
 till my dying days, and my heart
 remains with Egypt - but I can't
 regret the days I spent in that
 theatre, and with her. I... can't.

Cleopatra EXHALES and CROSSES the room, mulling it over.

CLEOPATRA
 Oh I'm really not sure how to feel
 about this. I must deplore you
 fraternising with a Roman... Mind
 you, which of us hasn't?

CHARMIAN
 That's different. You're a queen.

CLEOPATRA
 And you're a servant - but you're
 also brilliant.

CHARMIAN
 Me?

CLEOPATRA
 It's what makes this so difficult.
 You're one of the brightest and
 most courageous people I've ever
 met - and I've met Sextus Pompey.

CHARMIAN
 (slips out)
 So have I.

CLEOPATRA
 What, when?

CHARMIAN
 Er, well, I mean, um-

CLEOPATRA
 You were on the pirate ship? Don't
 tell me - trying to mount a rescue
 of your lady love. Oh Charmian!

She's almost amused by the gall of it.

CHARMIAN
 I imagine my future prospects look
 pretty bleak right about now.

CLEOPATRA
 Yes they bloody well do!

She CROSSES TO Charmian.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 And yet... Oh, maybe that silly
 play has calmed my spirit, but you
 remind me so much of myself... My
 real self, beneath the crown. That
 which I keep locked away...

She regards Charmian fondly. Thinking it over.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 You love me, don't you?

CHARMIAN
 Yes.

CLEOPATRA
 You know you cannot stay in Rome.

CHARMIAN
 Yes.

CLEOPATRA
 And even as I read that play, you
 committed it to memory?

CHARMIAN
 (unsure where this is
 going)
 ... Yes. I did.

CLEOPATRA
 Mmm. Wait there.

She WALKS to the door, PULLS IT OPEN.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 Sadiki! Can we sail to Egypt?

SADIKI
 Alas the Captain says we cannot-
 Cleopatra SLAMS THE DOOR.

CLEOPATRA
 Well Charmian.

CHARMIAN
 Yes my lady?

CLEOPATRA
 It seems we have an evening free.

She WALKS BACK to Charmian. With a cunning smile:

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 Shall we spend it at the theatre?

6 INT. THEATRE BACKSTAGE - EVENING, A FEW HOURS LATER

6

NERVOUS WHISPERING, MUTTERING: ACTORS backstage getting ready to start. Off, a LARGE AUDIENCE are TAKING THEIR SEATS. It's pretty full. Quintus approaches, CLAPPING his hands.

QUINTUS
 OK everybody, thumbs out, masks on.
 Get to your places. Not long now.

ANTYLLUS
 Quintus! I just had a thought.

QUINTUS
 Antyllus! I don't want it.

ANTYLLUS
 It was just, do we really need the masks? We could express a lot more with our faces.

BASSILLA
And they make the kissing scenes a
bloody nightmare.

QUINTUS
(hasn't time for this)
And how else would you communicate
the personality of your characters?

ANTYLLUS
Acting.

QUINTUS
(laughable)
HA! I'd love to revolutionise
theatre but we're not doing it
tonight. Masks on.

ANTYLLUS
(grumble)

BASSILLA
(grumble)

Octavia ENTERS. She's trying too hard to be upbeat.

QUINTUS
(acknowledgment)
Octavia.

OCTAVIA
Hey everyone! Big crowd out there.
Lots of buzz! You all look great!

QUINTUS
(low)
Too much, darling.

OCTAVIA
Bassilla, I wanted to say again-

BASSILLA
You don't have to ma'am.

OCTAVIA
But I feel I-

BASSILLA
No, really. Please.

Bassilla WALKS AWAY.

OCTAVIA
I'm not doing very well am I?

QUINTUS

No but you'll feel better after
applause. Any sign of our VIPs in
the front rows?

OCTAVIA

They're only a bunch of dusty old
senators.

QUINTUS

Oh my favourite kind! Lots of money
and always so grateful.

OCTAVIA

Well try to control yourself - my
brother's greeting them now.

7 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM ENTRANCE - CONTINUOUS

7

The hum of the AUDIENCE louder here. Gaius is greeting the
SENATORS as they come in with their wives. ATIA is here too,
in a disagreeable mood as usual.

GAIUS

Decius, hello! ... Messala, so glad
you made it! And your lovely lady
wife too...

CILLO

Thanks for the tickets, old boy!

GAIUS

Cillo, not at all! Wanted to show
no hard feelings. You know my
mother, of course.

ATIA

'allo.

CILLO

Good evening, Atia. Looking forward
to seeing the show?

ATIA

I doubt I'll see anything, we're
right at the back.

CILLO

Oh dear. Er, where are...?

GAIUS

Front row there, best seats in the
house! Enjoy the show.

CILLO
 (going)
 Thank you!

Gaius keeps smiling fakely at PASSING SENATORS as Atia talks.

ATIA
 Why can't we sit at the front?

GAIUS
 You've seen this one already. Give the others a chance.

ATIA
 You didn't want to cough up the extra money did you.

GAIUS
 Believe what you like, mother.

ATIA
 Cheapskate.

GAIUS
 (not engaging)
 Yep.

NASO
 (passing)
 Evening, Caesar.

GAIUS
 Naso, front two rows, that's it.

NASO
 Do I have time for a pee?

GAIUS
 They'll be starting soon, but there's a bucket behind your seat.

NASO
 Oh splendid.

GAIUS
 Yes... Not long to go now...

8 INT. THEATRE BACKSTAGE - CONTINUOUS

8

Actors GETTING READY TO START. Octavia looking on.

OCTAVIA
(sighs)

QUINTUS
Octavia?... Octavia!

OCTAVIA
(snaps out of it)
Yes? Hello? Sorry.

QUINTUS
Front of house have given us the
all clear. We're ready to go.

OCTAVIA
Right, yes.

QUINTUS
You should get to your seat, if you
want to watch the play. We may even
do it properly this time!

OCTAVIA
I guess we can't build a reputation
on plays that go wrong.

QUINTUS
You'd be surprised. Anyway, go! Go!

Beat. He needs Octavia to go already.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
(sharp exhale)
Look, I'm sorry Charmian isn't
here. I liked her, eventually.
But we've got a show to do. And
wishing that she was here isn't
going to bring her back.

CHARMIAN
You never know, it might.

Beat of awesome.

OCTAVIA
... Charmian!

CHARMIAN
Hey.

QUINTUS
Oh. Well. Clearly I don't know what
I'm talking about. The fact
remains-

OCTAVIA
Yes - could you give us a moment?

QUINTUS
What? No! I can't! We need to
start-

OCTAVIA
Please! Quintus.

Beat. Quintus has had it up to **here** but...

QUINTUS
Yep. Sure. One moment. Why not?
(exiting)
I *hate* theatre.

He WALKS AWAY, leaving them alone. Off, the hum of the
AUDIENCE waiting for the play to start.

CHARMIAN
Hey. So. I wasn't sure if you'd
even want to see me again, after
the way things ended, but I-

Octavia EMBRACES her very tightly.

OCTAVIA
(close)
Come here.

CHARMIAN
(squeezed)
Wow! OK! Yeah.

OCTAVIA
I missed you.

CHARMIAN
(squeezed)
Yeah. I missed you too.

She COUGHS a bit. Octavia RELEASES her.

OCTAVIA
Oop, sorry. I thought you'd gone -
why'd you come back?

CHARMIAN
To see you again.

OCTAVIA
(smiling)
Really?

CHARMIAN

Yeah. Aaaand... I read your play.

OCTAVIA

You did?

CHARMIAN

Well a friend read it for me - well to tell the truth, the immortal Queen of Egypt read it for me, but anyway - I liked it. So. Here I am.

OCTAVIA

Wh-what? Really? I thought Cleopatra was going to kill you?

CHARMIAN

So did I, but she liked the play so much she's already bought a ticket. She's out there, in disguise. Said you finally wrote me a part that's actually worth playing!

OCTAVIA

Oh, she did, did she? Where is she, I'll spit in her eye-

CHARMIAN

Not now! We've got a show to do.

OCTAVIA

... What?... You mean, you want to be in the play! Tonight?

CHARMIAN

Yeah. I do. You wrote some nice lines, be a shame to waste them.

OCTAVIA

But Charmian... we're not doing it tonight.

CHARMIAN

Why not?

OCTAVIA

No one knows the lines.

CHARMIAN

(grin)
But I do.

OCTAVIA

Really?

CHARMIAN

Of course! How about you? I mean, I take it you were playing Poppaea...

OCTAVIA

How'd you know?

CHARMIAN

Lucky guess. So...? For old time's sake?

They're both grinning. Octavia decides.

OCTAVIA

Quintus!

Quintus COMES BACK OVER.

QUINTUS

Yes! Can we get on with the show!

OCTAVIA

Sort of. We're changing it.

QUINTUS

Changing it?

OCTAVIA

Yes changing it. To the new play.

QUINTUS

The new play?!

OCTAVIA

Yeah, bit short notice but that's what we're doing. Tell the others.

QUINTUS

(panicking)

But!... I!... No! No no no!

OCTAVIA

I thought you'd say that, but consider this-

QUINTUS

I don't want to! Please!

OCTAVIA

I know the lines and she knows the lines - and let's face it, that's 90% of the play - and we can reuse all the sets and the props and-

ANTYLLUS
But that's madness!

QUINTUS
It's theatre, roll with it.

PANICKED MURMUR of actors trying to FIND NEW PROPS.

OCTAVIA
(thankful)
Quintus...

CHARMIAN
Thank you. Really.

QUINTUS
(sighs)
Sometimes I think crucifixion would
be so much easier. Places please!

9 INT. THEATRE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

9

Quintus WALKS OUT ON STAGE, compere mode. AUDIENCE
CHATTING.

QUINTUS
Ladies and the rest of you! Good
evening one and all! Yes, settle
down, I know we're all excited.

Audience QUIETEN. A WOOP from one audience member.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
Thank you madam. Welcome to
tonight's performance of The Crown
Jules by the Palatine Players. Now,
I feel personally that theatre
should surprise us...

Almost a personal side:

QUINTUS (cont'd)
... and tonight I've discovered
just how surprising it can be...

CLEARs THROAT. He's sweating buckets.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
So in an unexpected but - I hope -
exciting change from the evening
that was advertised, we are in fact
doing... a totally different play!

CONFUSED MURMURS from the audience.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
 Yep. Um. It's never been performed
 before - even by us - so, you know,
 let's run it up the flagpole and
 see who salutes it. From the
 celebrated author of The Crown
 Jules and The Passionate Pirates,
 we seek to stimulate and entertain
 you with the stage debut of...

His crescendo flounders.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
 ... whatever this is called.

OCTAVIA
 (off)
 The Girl from Egypt!

QUINTUS
 The Girl from Egypt! Now give us
 your applause and take it away!

Audience APPLAUD as Quintus EXITS the stage. ENTER Charmian
 in character (masked) as Shana, an Egyptian servant.

CHARMIAN
 "Wow! Compared to Thebes where I
 come from, this city of Rome is so
 different! The sights! The sounds!
 ... The stench!"

Audience LAUGHS.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)
 "I've seen three men pissing in the
 street. I wouldn't have cared but
 they were all senators."

Audience LAUGHS. ENTER Octavia in character (masked) as
 Poppaea, an elite Roman woman.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)
 "Here comes a lady. Excuse me!"

OCTAVIA
 "Yes, what is it?"

CHARMIAN
 "I'm newly arrived in Rome. I've
 come to earn my fortune."

OCTAVIA
 "A fortune?"

Beat. Audience LAUGH - she's glanced at them knowingly.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)
 "My, did you pick a bad time!"

BIG AUDIENCE LAUGH.

CHARMIAN
 "You mean there are no jobs?"

OCTAVIA
 "Oh there are plenty of jobs - you
 just won't get paid for them!"

Big audience LAUGH, appreciative APPLAUSE for that gag.

10 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM BACK SEATS - CONTINUOUS

10

As the audience APPLAUD, Atia and Gaius watching together
 from the back. Atia CLAPPING.

ATIA
 (laughing)
 Oh very good! That'll hit 'em where
 it hurts.

GAIUS
 Mother, you're talking about my
 government!

ATIA
 Well you should run it better.

OCTAVIA (O.S.)
 "May I interest you in a position?"

CHARMIAN (O.S.)
 "That's very tempting madam but I
 ought to get a job first."

Audience LAUGH under:

ATIA
 (uproarious dirty laugh)

GAIUS
 If you'll excuse me, I need to go
 check on something.

ATIA
But you'll miss all the jokes!

GAIUS
I'm sure you'll repeat them at me
all week, as usual.

He GETS UP and MOVES AWAY.

ATIA
Suit yourself.

OCTAVIA (O.S.)
"You saucy girl! I meant I could
find a use for you at home!"

CHARMIAN (O.S.)
"I bet you could!"

Audience LAUGH.

ATIA
(uproarious dirty laugh)

11 **EXT. THEATRE, FRONT - EVENING**

11

Gaius EXITS the theatre. Peals of LAUGHTER from within. He takes a DEEP BREATH, enjoying the cool evening air. Beat.

MARK
How is it?

GAIUS
(jumps out of his skin)

MARK
Bit jumpy aren't we? I hope you're
keeping it together in there.

GAIUS
Of course I am. No one suspects a
thing. Is everything prepared?

MARK
The men are in position.

GAIUS
And Fulvia?

MARK
She won't let us down.

GAIUS

OK, give our 'friends' time to get comfortable. Maybe half an hour.

MARK

Don't tell me you're enjoying the play.

GAIUS

Hardly. You know, I'm fairly sure that's Octavia on stage.

MARK

I didn't know she acted.

GAIUS

There's no limit to her ego. The other girl's voice is familiar too... Can't quite place it...

MARK

Never mind that, keep your head in the game. Everything to play for.

GAIUS

Yes... Funny to think that our troubles will be over soon, one way or the other. We'll either be winners, or dead.

MARK

(dry)
Oh sure. Hilarious.

12 INT. THEATRE BACKSTAGE - LATER

12

(Insert music break / transition?) About half an hour later. Quintus and Bassilla watching from the wings.

OCTAVIA (O.S.)

"No, I cannot marry him. I shall have to write a message and tell him I have a headache."

Off, audience LAUGHTER.

QUINTUS

(low, impressed)
I have to hand it to her. Over halfway through and it's not done too badly.

BASSILLA

(low)

Not too badly? I had to learn an entirely different role between scenes!

QUINTUS

(low)

Bassilla...

BASSILLA

(low)

I get treated better on the streets! There's no way you can keep me in this company.

QUINTUS

(low, unconcerned)

How about a ten percent pay rise?

BASSILLA

(low)

... Yeah, that'd work.

On stage, Octavia has finished writing - FLURRY OF PARCHMENT.

OCTAVIA (O.S.)

"There! Now to call for... ah, but do I dare? The very sight of her makes me..."

13 INT. THEATRE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

13

On stage.

OCTAVIA

"No. I shall simply have to control myself. She is but a lowly servant and I am a dignified Roman woman."

(calls)

"Shana!"

Charmian ENTERS.

CHARMIAN

"My lady calls again so soon?"

OCTAVIA

"You are but a dignified servant and I am a lowly Roman woman!"

Audience LAUGHTER.

CHARMIAN

"Pardon?"

OCTAVIA

"I'm all mixed up! I'm not well."

CHARMIAN

"Not well? In that case should I-?"

OCTAVIA

"No! Don't come any closer! ... The fever gets worse with every step that brings you nearer."

CHARMIAN

"You feel warm?"

OCTAVIA

"Oh hot I'd say, very hot."

Audience LAUGHTER.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)

"Because, I must confess, my spirit yearns, my body trembles, my vision clouds... for when I look at you I do not see a servant. I see the one with whom I wish to spend my life."

CHARMIAN

"Your life? Indeed?"

The lines between characters and actors become blurred.

OCTAVIA

Yes. If it were possible.

CHARMIAN

And if it wasn't?

OCTAVIA

... Then I'll weep. I'll weep until the banks of the Tiber break.

CHARMIAN

You cannot mean these things.

OCTAVIA

But I do.

CHARMIAN

Then it isn't fair to say them. You have the right to choose your path. But what do I have?

OCTAVIA
 You have my heart. If you want it.
 Anything I can offer is yours. I
 would tear down the world for you.

CHARMIAN
 You don't know how.

OCTAVIA
 Then teach me.

Beat.

CHARMIAN
 No one would understand. We
 couldn't even love in public.

OCTAVIA
 Let this audience be our public.

Beat.

CHARMIAN
 (unscripted)
 Alright. But let's do it properly.

OCTAVIA
 (low)
 Charmian? What are you-?

Charmian REMOVES HER MASK. Surprised audience MUTTERINGS.

CHARMIAN
 See? I remove the mask. I hide
 nothing from you.

Beat, then Octavia REMOVES HER MASK.

OCTAVIA
 (smiling)
 Nor I from you.

Romantic pause.

CHARMIAN
 Fuck me you're gorgeous.

OCTAVIA
 You too.

Warm audience CHUCKLES.

CHARMIAN

A kiss, my love? I'm told actions
speak louder than words.

OCTAVIA

You're on.

Octavia CROSSES to her; they EMBRACE and KISS. Audience
"AWWW"s and some CLAPPING.

14 INT. THEATRE AUDITORIUM BACK SEATS - CONTINUOUS

14

Gaius and Atia watching, amongst CLAPPING audience.

ATIA

Awww. That's sweet isn't it? And so
nice that Octavia's getting some
action at last.

GAIUS

You have no idea what happens in
our house do y... wait a moment.
That girl! It's her! She's the one
who tried to murder me!

ATIA

I'm sure she had her reasons.

GAIUS

Well she won't get away this time!
I'll make sure of-

Several sets of DOORS around the theatre BURST OPEN and
lines of SOLDIERS MARCH IN. Confused audience MURMUR, CRY
OUT, etc.

GAIUS (cont'd)

Ah. At last.

ATIA

Hang on a mo. What's happening?

GAIUS

Stay calm, mother. Everything is
under control.

ATIA

What are all those big hairy
soldiers doing here?

(calls out)

Clear off you lot! You're ruining
the show!

MARK (O.S.)
Please remain in your seats. This
is official business.

15 INT. THEATRE STAGE - CONTINUOUS

15

Soldiers still FILING IN. Concerned audience MUTTERINGS.
Mark GETS UP onto the stage (CREAK OF ARMOUR) to address
them all.

MARK
Hello hello hello! After a day in
the Senate it's refreshing to see
so many smiling faces! Please don't
get up. For the majority of you,
there is no cause for alarm.

Quintus STORMS OUT across the stage.

QUINTUS
(furious)
Get out! You have absolutely no
right to storm in here like this!

Mark UNSHEATHES SWORD quickly - SWHING.

MARK
I think this gives me the right.

QUINTUS
(backs down)
Yes well of course, let me know if
you'd like a programme.

OCTAVIA
Mark? What the fuck?!

MARK
Sorry Octavia. Security matter.

Senators CRY OUT from the front rows.

CILLO (O.S.)
This is disgraceful!

NASO (O.S.)
Appalling behaviour!

MARK
You ain't seen nothing yet.

He calls to the soldiers.

MARK (cont'd)
 OK men! In the front two rows of
 the audience you will find twelve
 senators. They are to be arrested
 immediately.

GASPS from the audience.

CILLO (O.S.)
 Arrested?! On what charge?!

MARK
 On the charge of conspiracy - to
 commit mass murder, and to
 overthrow the Republic!

GASPS of astonishment, horror, terror etc from the audience.

NASO (O.S.)
 What?!

CHARMIAN
 Oh this is bad...

ANTYLLUS
 Dad?! Dad, what are you doing?

MARK
 Stay out of this, son. You'd better
 tell your actor friends to pack it
 in and go home - shows's over.

ANTYLLUS
 You had to do this now?!

MARK
 As good a way as any to get twelve
 traitors in one place at the same
 time! Finally, culture has a
 purpose. Cheers Octavia.

OCTAVIA
 Seriously Mark, I'll make sure you
 get so much shit for this!

MARK
 Just doing my job. Keeping us safe.

OCTAVIA
 Safe?!

MARK
 (at soldiers)
 Alright men, no point hanging
 about. Arrest those traitors and
 anyone who tries to stop you.

Audience shocked MUTTERINGS across the whole auditorium.
 KERFUFFLE as SOLDIERS escort SENATORS out, under:

DRUSUS (O.S.)
 Yes sir! OK, come on you lot, you
 heard what the man said.

CILLO (O.S.)
 But - but no - we're innocent!...

NASO (O.S.)
 Please!

MARK
 Yeah yeah, heard it all before -
 come on, get 'em outside.

Gaius PUSHING his way through.

GAIUS
 Mark! Mark!

MARK
 Gaius! Plan's working like a charm!
 You should get to the Senate.

GAIUS
 I will, I will - but the girl,
 Cleopatra's servant, she's here!

MARK
 Eh? Where?

GAIUS
 Look, she's... no, she was right
 there! Where are the actors?

MARK
 I told them to go home.

GAIUS
 You what?! We've got to find her!

MARK
 We haven't got time for that, we've
 more important fish to catch!

GAIUS
But she needs to-

MARK
Stick to the plan and get to the
Senate!! I'll keep things moving
here. Go on, piss off, piss off!

GAIUS
Alright, fine! See you later.

An annoyed Gaius HURRIES AWAY.

MARK
Stupid boy.

16 **EXT. THEATRE, STAGEDOOR - CONTINUOUS**

16

We're outside the theatre, tucked away at the side by the
stagedoor. It's secluded here, but we hear masses of curious
CROWDS not far away, at the front. A door OPENS as Quintus,
Octavia and Charmian STUMBLE out.

QUINTUS
Come on you two, quickly!

OCTAVIA
Charmian?

CHARMIAN
I'm here, I'm here!

QUINTUS
Praise Bacchus for the stagedoor!

He SLAMS the door shut.

QUINTUS (cont'd)
Now then: hide. Run for the hills.

OCTAVIA
We're not running!

QUINTUS
Octavia, your brother recognised
Charmian, and I doubt he's your
biggest fan right now either.

CHARMIAN
What about you?

QUINTUS

Who knows what my future holds
after tonight? I expect I'll be
found guilty of harbouring a
fugitive in a romantic comedy. It's
new, I'll give you that.

OCTAVIA

I'll protect you.

QUINTUS

You'll have a job on protecting
yourself, dear.

Beat. She knows he's in danger now.

OCTAVIA

... I'm sorry.

QUINTUS

I'm not. Well that's not entirely
true, I'm terrified, but what a
show to go out on.

Off at the front, a ROAR from the CROWDS as the SENATORS ARE
DRAGGED OUT.

CHARMIAN

They're dragging out those
senators. Do you think they're
really guilty?

OCTAVIA

I've got a funny feeling they're as
surprised as the rest of us.

MARK (O.S.)

Clear a path there, clear the way!

17 **EXT. THEATRE, FRONT - CONTINUOUS**

17

A huge CROWD of people have GATHERED AROUND; CURIOUS,
EXCITED MUTTERINGS. SOLDIERS LEAD SENATORS out of the
theatre. Mark is very much playing to the crowd.

MARK

Everybody, please, go back to your
homes! We're just arresting a dozen
senators for conspiring against the
State. There's nothing to see here!

CILLO

Please! Please! There's been a mistake! We're innocent!

MARK

Oh shut it, Cillo! Your assassins have already drawn first blood.

CILLO

What?!

MARK

Thanks to your rabble, over three hundred esteemed patriots of Rome may die! How many more will you kill before you're satisfied?

CILLO

I don't know what you're talking about! Really!

Crowd start BOOING and JEERING.

CILLO (cont'd)

Someone, listen to me!

FULVIA steps out from the crowd and riles them up.

FULVIA

We don't listen to traitors! Do we?

Crowd: "NO!" Mark and Fulvia have rehearsed this.

MARK

Fulvia, my darling wife! Don't let your feminine emotions run wild!

FULVIA

I can't help it, husband! When I see those twelve cringing cowards I feel sick for the brave men who died at Philippi, fighting for a safer and juster Republic!

CROWD agree, lots of angry "Yeah!"s and "She's right!"s.

MARK

I feel it just as strongly, but we must convey these men to prison, where they will await their trial in a fair and honest court of law!

FULVIA
 (to crowd)
 But they're guilty! We know they're
 guilty! Don't we?

Crowd LOUDLY CONCUR. She's whipping up a mob.

FULVIA (cont'd)
 Rome demands justice now!

CILLO
 No, no please!

NASO
 Jupiter, help us!

FULVIA
 DRIVE OUT THE TRAITORS! RID US OF
 THEIR PERFIDIOUS FILTH!

"YEAH!!!" Crowd go WILD and SURGE against the small group of senators, BEATING them and THROWING things at them.

<p>CILLO No! Keep back, please! Keep away from me!</p>	<p>NASO Don't touch me! Aargh! Aughhh!</p>
--	--

As the VIOLENCE UNFOLDS, we pull back a bit to hear a soldier talking to Mark Antony.

DRUSUS
 General, sir! What do we do? They
 could tear the prisoners to pieces!

MARK
 Stay back. I won't endanger the
 safety of our men to save those
 pricks. Besides, they're the reason
 you lot couldn't get paid on time.

DRUSUS
 Really?

MARK
 Yep.

DRUSUS
 Oh. Well in that case.
 (calls back)
 Keep back, lads! We're sitting this
 one out.

They stand by as the senators are BEATEN TO DEATH.

18 INT. SENATE HOUSE - EVENING

18

Meanwhile, lots of worried SENATORS are listening to Gaius. He addresses them confidently in a way he never has before.

GAIUS

Fellow men of the Senate! The conspiracy I uncovered is the most unconscionable and heinous assault on the freedom of our government since the killing of my own father, the divine Julius. That twelve of our own trusted colleagues could hatch a plot so ruinous in its scope and evil in its application, it turns my very blood to ash just to think of it... My colleague Lepidus feels the same.

LEPIDUS

(broken)

I'm so tired... so tired...

VARRO

Their assassins could strike at any moment! We're all of us in danger!

GAIUS

It grieves my heart to see our number so sharply reduced already - and to know that there are those across the country beyond the reach of our protection. Had we not acted when we did, your lives would even now be forfeit - for who knows how many of us these traitors planned to destroy!

Lots of SCARED MURMURINGS from SENATORS.

GAIUS (cont'd)

But my friends, we have caught and arrested the conspirators. Their assets and properties will be seized as recompense. That money will be used to hire more guards to defend us, more soldiers to fight for us. More food to fill their bellies and keep them constant.

VARRO

What of those statesmen already dead?

GAIUS

Their assets too shall be donated
to a just cause - the defence of
Rome and its people.

LOUD AGREEMENT from SENATORS.

GAIUS (cont'd)

The good Lepidus himself has been
to the Temple of Apollo to pray and
seek the guidance of its priests.
And what did they say, Lepidus?

LEPIDUS

(broken)

So many dead... so many dead...

GAIUS

OK - they said the auspices were
strong! An eagle descended on a
rat, tore into the flesh with its
talons, and then discharged upon a
priest. I don't need to tell you
how good a sign that is.

RELIEVED MURMURS from senators.

GAIUS (cont'd)

My friends! Trust in our strength!
Our supremacy is assured! Long live
the Republic!

RAUCOUSE APPLAUSE from senators.

19 **EXT. THEATRE, FRONT - EVENING**

19

A RIOT has started. People RUNNING AROUND everywhere. FIRE,
LOOTING, and so on. Mark and Fulvia look on, quite happy.

MARK

They're getting carried away over
there. Rioting. Looting. Setting
things on fire.

FULVIA

You wanted an angry mob, darling,
so that's what I got you.

MARK

One of your best, I have to say.
Could even be your finest work.

FULVIA

Thank you. There's something so stimulating about a good riot.

MARK

You've got 'trouble' written all over you. And believe me, I've checked.

They LAUGH lasciviously, and KISS.

MARK (cont'd)

It's all smoothe sailing from here.

FULVIA

But darling, you're forgetting Gaius. While he lives...

MARK

Yeah. I've thought of that.

FULVIA

You've got the armies back now. Any senator who stood against you is either powerless or dead already.

MARK

Yeah... I don't need Gaius to take the hit for any mistakes. We won't be making any more from hereon out.

FULVIA

And in the wanton chaos of tonight, anything could happen to him... We'll never get a better chance...

MARK

You're right. I guess I've got one more job to do tonight.

FULVIA

A soldier's work is never done.

MARK

We're going far, you and me. Right to the very top.

FULVIA

Oh Mark. I can top you any day.

Mark CHUCKLES lustily. They KISS. Fulvia PATS his chest.

FULVIA (cont'd)
 Come back home when you're done. I
 fancy a spot of looting myself.
 There's a brooch I had my eye on.
 I'd say I've earnt it, haven't I?

MARK
 Yeah. See you later.

FULVIA
 Remember: don't come home until
 he's dead...

Fulvia WALKS AWAY. Mark takes a DEEP, STEADYING BREATH.

MARK
 Well. I guess it's time. Sorry
 Julie, if you're looking down on
 us. As usual, nothing worked out
 the way you planned.

CLEOPATRA
 Nothing ever does.

It seems as if she's suddenly appeared. Mark is surprised.

MARK
 ... Hello Cleo.

CLEOPATRA
 Hello Mark.

MARK
 I thought you'd left for Egypt.

CLEOPATRA
 I stayed to see a Roman comedy. I
 can't say I enjoyed the punchline.

MARK
 Just some internal restructuring.

CLEOPATRA
 Those men were beaten to death.

MARK
 Their insides were restructured,
 exactly. How long have you been
 standing there?

CLEOPATRA
 Long enough. Charmian isn't the
 only one who knows how to stay
 undetected.

MARK

And where is your little spy?

CLEOPATRA

Sent onwards to my ship, to ready
our departure. Rome doesn't feel
like a very safe place right now.

MARK

It will be. I'll see to that.

CLEOPATRA

So I just heard.

Beat. Sizing each other up.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)

Were you to find yourself going
East... Alexandria is always open
to you. We could carry on that talk
we started.

MARK

Yeah. I'd enjoy that.
(trying to be cool)
You know, if I have the time.

CLEOPATRA

(smirk)
Obviously. If you have the time.

A soldier RUNS OVER.

DRUSUS

General Antony! General!

MARK

Yeah? What is it Legate?

DRUSUS

The men are raiding the traitors'
homes. Do you have any orders?

MARK

They can take anything from the
first house, but the rest belongs
to Rome. Sound fair?

DRUSUS

Yes sir. You joining in the fun?

MARK

No, I've got something else to take care of. If her Majesty would excuse me?

DRUSUS

What'd you call me sir?

MARK

Not you! I meant Cleopatr... Huh.

DRUSUS

There's no one there sir.

MARK

I wouldn't be too sure of that. You can never tell with these people.

DRUSUS

You don't mean Egyptians?

MARK

I mean women. Have a good night.

He WALKS OFF.

20 **EXT. HARBOUR, NEAR CLEOPATRA'S BARGE - EVENING**

20

The harbourside near Cleopatra's barge. We can hear **ACTIVITY** on the barge as **SAILORS PREPARE TO LAUNCH**, but the mood is otherwise oddly tranquil. The **WAVES LAP** against the dock. Octavia and Charmian are here. Awkward mood.

OCTAVIA

Looks like your ship's about ready.

CHARMIAN

They don't want to keep her waiting again. She might not be so merciful a second time...

OCTAVIA

Is she really that bad?

CHARMIAN

She clicks her fingers, people die.

OCTAVIA

(awkward)

Oh. Wow. Are you going to be OK?

CHARMIAN

I guess that depends on what she thought of my performance tonight.

Beat.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

That's a joke.

OCTAVIA

Doesn't sound like it.

CHARMIAN

I'll be fine. Really. She knows I'll never fail her again.

Beat.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

Which also means... Well.

OCTAVIA

No more... of...

CHARMIAN

Us. Yeah. No.

It's the end but they don't want it to be.

OCTAVIA

Maybe I could run up onto that ship and refuse to get off until it gets back to Egypt.

CHARMIAN

Hey, I can't stop you.

OCTAVIA

I've always wanted to go there. Your people are... just so much more advanced than us. You've got culture. You've been around for thousands of years.

CHARMIAN

Yeah well, we've been conquered several times over so it's not all fun... But I wish I could take you to the library. You'd love it.

OCTAVIA

The library?

CHARMIAN
In Alexandria.

OCTAVIA
Oh, the library.

CHARMIAN
Yeah.

OCTAVIA
You ever go in?

CHARMIAN
Sure, but I couldn't read anything.

OCTAVIA
The greatest collection of
literature and learning in the
entire world...

CHARMIAN
Yeah. It's just sitting there.
Waiting for you.

OCTAVIA
Us.

CHARMIAN
You could read it all to me. As you
know, I'm a fast learner!

OCTAVIA
I'd like that.

Beat.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)
It's goodbye isn't it?

CHARMIAN
Yes. I've already pushed my luck
more than I can dare.

OCTAVIA
And I can't run away. Quintus, and
the Players, I've landed them in so
much trouble. I need to help them.

CHARMIAN
We did kind of screw them up.

OCTAVIA

And someone's got to keep an eye on Gaius. Tonight was... like, the Gaius I grew up with, he'd never use the army like that. Ever. It's got to be Mark.

CHARMIAN

Has it? Power does things to people.

OCTAVIA

Ha, my brother's too boring to get corrupted. But he's easy to push around. I should know.

CHARMIAN

Yeah but... have you never seen a ruthless streak in him?

OCTAVIA

... All this tonight, those men beaten to death, that can't be him.

CHARMIAN

Octavia... whatever happens, you've got to stay smart. OK? You need to be very, very smart.

OCTAVIA

You think I'm in danger?

CHARMIAN

Name a single person who isn't. If ever in doubt, just think to yourself, "What would Octavia do?" and remember who you are. OK?

OCTAVIA

I love you.

CHARMIAN

I said OK?

OCTAVIA

OK. Yes. I will. You be smart too.

CHARMIAN

I don't know any other way to be.

A HORSE GALLOPING towards them; Cleopatra is riding it.

OCTAVIA
 Charmian. I really want to see that
 library with you.

CHARMIAN
 I'll keep hoping.

OCTAVIA
 I'll never stop.

The horse comes to a HALT, SNORTING.

CLEOPATRA
 Woah, boy! Woah.

Cleopatra DISMOUNTS.

CLEOPATRA (cont'd)
 Well! That was exhilarating.
 Charmian, is all prepared?

CHARMIAN
 Yes my lady. We can leave at once.

CLEOPATRA
 Octavia, thank you for your
 hospitality.

OCTAVIA
 Oh, er, no problem.

CLEOPATRA
 And congratulations on the new
 play. Don't give up, you're getting
 better every time.

OCTAVIA
 (unsure how to take this)
 Thank you.

CLEOPATRA
 Now then! Come along Charmian.
 Don't keep me waiting.

Cleopatra WALKS UP the GANGPLANK. Charmian frantic.

CHARMIAN
 (to Octavia)
 I'm sorry, I have to go-

OCTAVIA
 I know.

CHARMIAN

Goodbye.

She begins to RUN UP the gangplank, then RUNS BACK to Octavia and KISSES her.

CHARMIAN (cont'd)

I love you. Never stop.

OCTAVIA

(crying)

I won't.

Charmian RUNS back up the gangplank.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)

I won't! I promise! I won't.

She CHOKES BACK TEARS as she watches Charmian run out of her life. She BREATHES.

21 INT. DOMUS CARINAE CHAMBERS - EVENING

21

The distant sounds of Rome RIOTING permeate this scene. Gaius FUSSING over his desk and FLICKING THROUGH DOCUMENTS, with a near catatonic Lepidus standing nearby.

GAIUS

(muttering)

The trick is to ensure we're never in debt again... Lepidus, could you hand me the grain tallies for the Caucasus?

Beat.

GAIUS (cont'd)

Lepidus?

LEPIDUS

Oh. Er. Here.

PASSES A DOCUMENT.

GAIUS

These are blueprints for a temple renovation. Lepidus snap out of it.

LEPIDUS

(a spark of life)

Sorry, yes.

GAIUS
 You have to put tonight behind you.
 We both do. You think you're the
 only one with a conscience?

LEPIDUS
 Well, er...

GAIUS
 Do you?

LEPIDUS
 (frightened)
 No.

GAIUS
 Nobody's happy about this evening.
 But the best thing we can do now is
 get our heads down and govern the
 country.

DOOR OPENS as Mark STRIDES in, ARMOUR CREAKING.

GAIUS (cont'd)
 Ah, Mark! How's it going? Are the
 twelve safely put away?

MARK
 They're dead if that's what you
 mean.

GAIUS
 Dead?

MARK
 Yeah, Fulvia's rent-a-mob got a
 little over-zealous, shall we say?

GAIUS
 Was that necessary?

MARK
 Unless you actually wanted a very
 embarrassing public trial. The
 problem with you is you've got no
 killer instinct.

GAIUS
 (off-hand)
 Well I don't enjoy it like you do.

Beat as Gaius FLICKS THROUGH DOCUMENTS. Mark stares at him.

MARK
 (cold)
 Lepidus, could you wait outside?

LEPIDUS
 Oh. Er. Yes. If you'd like.

MARK
 I would.

Lepidus WANDERS out, CLOSES the DOOR behind him.

GAIUS
 (muttering)
 Where is that grain tally... Ah,
 here we are... Yes... Hmm...

MARK
 (cold, calm)
 Gaius?

GAIUS
 We'll need to increase our grain
 supply from somewhere, I don't want
 us relying on Egypt...

MARK
 Gaius?

GAIUS
 Sicily would be ideal, but Sextus
 Pompey isn't letting go...

Mark UNSHEATHES his sword. Gaius doesn't seem to notice.

MARK
 Gaius?

GAIUS
 Would you look at this? The
 governor of Antioch wants a
 holiday - paid! Doesn't he know
 we're in recession? Well, were.

MARK
 See the thing is, Gaius, we've got
 the army back now.

GAIUS
 Yes, that makes things easier.

MARK
 And he who holds the army holds the
 balance of power in the Republic.

GAIUS
True, true.

MARK
They need have no fear. They answer
to no one. They have no opposition.

GAIUS
Indeed.

MARK
No opposition means no problems.
Which is good. Because when I see a
problem, I like to solve it. Once,
and for all.

GAIUS
Until the next time, of course.

Beat.

MARK
Next time?

GAIUS
We've dealt with our first crisis
for the moment, but money and food
and order, well, they're the sort
of problems that never go away.

He THROWS DOWN DOCUMENTS on each statement and place name:

GAIUS (cont'd)
Then you've got building projects,
petitions, administration of the
regions - Hispania, Cilicia,
Africa, the list goes on -
diplomatic disputes, tax fiddles,
oh and we've got a bandit problem
in the North, and the South, and
the West, and actually in the East
too now that I think of it. And
this is just to start with.

Beat. Mark considerably less sure of himself.

MARK
... Right. Wow.

GAIUS
What's the sword for?

Beat.

MARK
Just scratching my back with it.

SCRATCH SCRATCH.

MARK (cont'd)
Ooo, yeah. There we go.

He SHEATHES his sword, under:

MARK (cont'd)
So um... you're happy cracking on
with all the admin, then?

GAIUS
We've both got our work cut out for
us, and Lepidus, but I don't mind
bearing the brunt for now. I live
for this sort of thing, really.

MARK
Yeah! Well, someone's got to!

GAIUS
Why don't you take a holiday? You
deserve one after all you've done
tonight.

MARK
Maybe. Yeah... Might head out East
for a spell.

GAIUS
Why not? Drop in on Parthia, knock
a few heads together!

MARK
Yeah! Sounds right up my street!

They both CHUCKLE, amiably.

MARK (cont'd)
Tell you what - Lepidus!

DOOR OPENS, Lepidus pokes head in.

LEPIDUS
Yes?

MARK
Let's all of us have a toast. To
the new special relationship.

GAIUS
To the new special relationship.

22 **EXT. CLEOPATRA'S BARGE, DECK - EVENING**

22

The ship travels gently by night.

SADIKI
Your Majesty?

CLEOPATRA
Sadiki. How long until Alexandria?

SADIKI
With prevailing winds the captain says no more than three weeks.

CLEOPATRA
Tell him to make it two.

SADIKI
Your Majesty.

Sadiki SCURRIES AWAY across deck. Cleopatra looks out across the waters to Italy, with a subdued Charmian.

CLEOPATRA
Well, Charmian. What did you think of your first visit to Rome?

CHARMIAN
(trying to smile)
It had its ups and downs... Fell in love, broke my heart. Life's an education.

CLEOPATRA
The real problem with Rome is the Romans. Of course you could say that about anywhere.

CHARMIAN
They're not all bad. I mean, not all of them are bad.

CLEOPATRA
I'd spare a few. At the very least a handful. I dare say we haven't seen the last of them yet.

CHARMIAN
Will we ever go back, do you think?

CLEOPATRA
Unlikely. But if we ever do set
foot in Rome again, there's only
one way I'm doing it.

CHARMIAN
Yes?

CLEOPATRA
Mmm... As it's conquerer.

23 INT. DOMUS CARINAE OFFICE - EVENING

23

The distant sounds of RIOTING continue. Mark, Gaius and
Lepidus bring their WINE CUPS TOGETHER. Wine SLOSHES.

MARK
Cheers!

GAIUS
Cheers.

MARK
There y'are Lepidus. This should
put a smile on your face.

LEPIDUS
(quiet)
Thank you, boys.

MARK
And if the wine doesn't, then we
have a surprise for you.

GAIUS
An early birthday present.

He hands over a SCROLL. Lepidus UNFURLS it.

LEPIDUS
I'm not sure I want to think about
my birthday ever again... Is... is
this... It's the deed to my house!

GAIUS
Yes. And it's yours once again.

LEPIDUS
Mine?

MARK
Went on the market this afternoon.
Inflated price of course, 'cos
everyone's out for themselves these
days. But what are friends for eh?

LEPIDUS

I've got my home back...! Oh thank you, boys, thank you!

MARK

Don't mention it!

GAIUS

The three of us are a team. We look out for each other.

LEPIDUS

I say! I'll drink to that!

They all LAUGH. Doors BURST OPEN. Octavia storms in, followed by Atia.

OCTAVIA

(approaching)

Gaius!

ATIA

(following)

Octavia, now isn't the time!

OCTAVIA

Shut up mum. Gaius! You've got to do something!

GAIUS

Hello Octavia. What's this about?

OCTAVIA

Don't you know what's happening out there?! The mob's growing, they're killing people...

Beat. She takes in the scene.

OCTAVIA (cont'd)

Wait. Are you toasting?

MARK

Yeah.

SLOSH of bottle.

MARK (cont'd)

Want some?

OCTAVIA

(furious)

... You shits!

Eh? MARK What? GAIUS

LEPIDUS
Even me?

OCTAVIA
All of you!

ATIA
Octavia, don't.

OCTAVIA
Rome is burning! It's actually
fucking burning! And you're all so
fucking pleased with yourselves!

GAIUS
I can see you're upset but-

OCTAVIA
Upset?!

MARK
(amused)
Bit of domestic strife eh, Gaius?
Ha ha.

Antyllus STORMS IN.

ANTYLLUS
Dad!

MARK
Ah shit.

ANTYLLUS
What have you done?! The soldiers
are looting, they're tearing down
houses - they're dragging out
families!

MARK
Only the guilty ones.

ANTYLLUS
There are no guilty ones!!

OCTAVIA
Antyllus is right. Even if those
men were conspirators, what have
their families got to do with it?
This isn't justice.

GAIUS
 Anyone guilty of an unjust act will
 be reprimanded in the morning.

OCTAVIA
 People are dying!

MARK
 This is Rome. People die every day.

LEPIDUS
 Are you sure you won't have some
 wine? It did wonders for me!

OCTAVIA
 I don't want any pissing wine!

ATIA
 Octavia, let's get you home.
 There's nothing you can do here.

GAIUS
 Though you may be able to provide
 an explanation as to what a
 convicted criminal was doing in
 tonight's performance.

Beat.

OCTAVIA
 I...

GAIUS
 You even appeared to be quite
 intimate. Unless that was acting.

Dangerous beat.

GAIUS (cont'd)
 Was it? Sister?

Beat.

GAIUS (cont'd)
 Mother, take her home. I think that
 would be best for everyone.

ATIA
 (looking daggers at Gaius)
 Yes, so I see.

OCTAVIA
 You're a shit, Gaius. A snivelling
 little shit!

She STORMS OUT.

GAIUS
We'll have to keep an eye on her in
future. Write that down Lepidus.

LEPIDUS
Oh, er, certainly.

ATIA
Gaius.

GAIUS
Yes mother?

Atia is angry, but knows better than to overstep the mark.

ATIA
(stern)
... Be very, very careful.

She EXITS.

GAIUS
I will, mother.

MARK
Antyllus, you should go home too.

ANTYLLUS
No! I'm not leaving until you
explain what this was all about!

MARK
(angry)
We're running a country, what's it
look like? We're running a whole
bloody Republic! No one said it'd
be easy, did they?

Beat. He's instantly ashamed of blowing up at his son.

ANTYLLUS
(shaken)
Dad?

MARK
I... Oh... Go home, son. We'll talk
in the morning.

LEPIDUS
(sheepish)
Goodnight, Antyllus.

Beat.

ANTYLLUS
(disgusted)
Yeah.

He MAKES TO LEAVE. Mark attempts to connect with him.

MARK
Oh, Antyllus?

ANTYLLUS
What?

MARK
You were good tonight, in the play.

ANTYLLUS
You didn't see it!

An annoyed Antyllus EXITS, DOOR SLAM.

MARK
(sadly)
Oh. Yeah.

GAIUS
It's been a long night.

MARK
You can say that again.

Puts his WINE CUP DOWN.

MARK (cont'd)
The wine's sour... I'm turning in.

GAIUS
You did great work today.

MARK
Yeah, well. Let's keep it up, eh?

He takes a FEW STEPS, then STOPS with a thought.

MARK (cont'd)
Hey wait a moment. If the assassins
are killing all the names on that
birthday invite list... are we OK?

GAIUS
You mean, you and I could suddenly
wind up dead tomorrow?

MARK

Yeah!

LEPIDUS

(embarrassed)

Er, well, actually, you're both safe. You see.

MARK

Oh!

Beat. Penny drops.

MARK (cont'd)

Hang on, you weren't inviting us to your own birthday party?!

LEPIDUS

Well, we see each other so often as it is, so I thought... Um...

MARK

(shakes head)

... Incredible. ... 'Night.

Mark EXITS, door OPENS and CLOSES. GAIUS picks up a document.

LEPIDUS

Yes, well. You ought to rest too.

GAIUS

I will.

LEPIDUS

What's that?

GAIUS

Mmm? Oh, just a letter. A messenger gave it to me on the way here...

We hear CLEOPATRA's voice as he reads it again.

CLEOPATRA

"My dear Gaius Octavius Caesar. If you're ever in the neighbourhood, my home is your home. Yours, Cleopatra. P.S. Mark was in your room to kill you. Just thought you'd like to know."

LEPIDUS

What's it say?

GAIUS
... Oh, just something for me to
think about.

He FOLDS IT UP, SLIPS it away.

LEPIDUS
All these letters and messages...
It gets so confusing sometimes.

GAIUS
Mmm.

LEPIDUS
(mirthless chuckle)
I was only thinking earlier how
this whole ghastly business with
the senators and the assassins
would never have happened if you
hadn't mixed up those two lists!

Beat.

GAIUS
(cold)
Yes.

Oh fuck.

LEPIDUS
Accidentally, I mean.

Beat.

LEPIDUS (cont'd)
Accidentally?

Beat.

GAIUS
Go home old friend. Sleep. We've
got a lot to do tomorrow. It's time
we started getting things done.

END OF EPISODE