

Excerpt from...

“CAESAR & CLEO”

By Bruce Kane

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CAESAR & CLEO

By Bruce Kane

Cast of Characters:

COLITUS: Mid thirties... Slave and confidante of Julius Caesar.

JULIUS CAESAR: Early fifties... Dictator of Rome

CLEOPATRA: Early twenties... Ambitious, beautiful and incredibly well built.

CALPURNIA: Caesar's wife... Mid forties... Formidable.

MARC ANTHONY: Roman general... As dim as he is handsome.

BRUTUS: The noblest Roman of them all... or so he says.

CASSIUS: Tall, thin and conspiratorial.

SOOTHSAYER: Crazy old man

WINE TASTER: Very nervous slave.

CARD GIRL: Looks great in a short toga.

ROMAN CHORUS: Numbering four to six members, more or less. Double in a variety of roles.

Place: The Roman Empire

Setting: Columns, silk curtains and a few artifacts of the era give us a sense of place and time. This set will provide the back drop for all of our locations.

(If possible, have your ushers dressed as Roman Centurions. Once the play begins they should be strategically placed around the theatre and armed with spears... as a precaution)

LIGHTS UP:

*(The Roman Chorus enters. They are Roman with a hip hop flavor)*

ROMAN CHORUS:

This is the tale of Cleo and Caesar  
The Egyptian queen and the Roman geezer.  
He ruled the world and everything in it  
Till she knocked him over in New York minute.  
We'll tell our story with style and wit  
And when things get slow we'll rap a bit  
We'll bring on the characters real and phoney  
From Brutus to Cassius to Marc An-oney.  
We re-wrote the story and knocked off the rust  
To bring you a tale full of greed and lust  
For those of you who find it complex  
We also threw in a whole lot of sex.  
Our story begins in Alexandria  
That's in Egypt folks, not Virgin---eee – ah  
Sit back, relax and let our actors thrill ya'  
Attempt to leave and we'll have to kill ya'

*(CARD GIRL ENTERS. She wears a mini toga and carries a placard that reads "EGYPT – 47 B.C." She crosses the stage as JULIUS CAESAR, his slave COLITUS and several Roman officials enter. They check out the Card Girl who exits past them)*

CAESAR: I hear that as gratitude for the countries I've sacked, the kings I've crushed, the people I've enslaved and the general death and misery I've spread... there's talk of making me a god.

COLITUS: That's true, Caesar. Some talk of making you a god. Some talk of making you immortal. And some talk of making you immortal as soon as possible.

CAESAR: I always wanted to be a god... Even as a young boy I liked to play doctor.

*(Two Men enter carrying a rolled up carpet)*

CAESAR: What is this?

COLITUS: It seems to be a carpet.

CAESAR: A carpet? Does it look like I'm redecorating?

*(One of the delivery men whispers to Colitus)*

COLITUS: It seems the carpet is a gift to the mighty Caesar from her majesty the serene Cleopatra.

*(From inside the carpet we hear)*

CLEOPATRA: That's serene and beautiful you Roman moron... Serene and beautiful.

COLITUS: From the serene and beautiful Cleopatra.

CAESAR: Let's see it then... Unroll the carpet.

*(The Delivery Men snap open the carpet sending Cleopatra rolling across the stage. Her roll comes to an abrupt halt when she hits a column. Pulling her self together, Cleopatra stumbles to her feet, straightens her clothes and her crown and undulates seductively toward Caesar. On the way she plucks an orange from a bowl and sensuously peels it. Approaching Caesar who is awe struck by her beauty, she extends her arm and offers him the fruit by muttering the immortal words...)*

CLEOPATRA: Orange Julius?

BLACKOUT:

*(If the audience groans, which they probably will, the Centurions should threaten them with their spears and continue to do so each time they groan. The Centurions could be very busy.)*

(LIGHTS BACK UP)

*(The Card Girl enters carrying a placard that reads "CLEOPATRA'S BEDCHAMBER". The Roman Chorus pushes in a bed in which Caesar and Cleopatra are lying side by side. The Card Girl exits.)*

CLEOPATRA: Now I know why they call you the "mighty" Caesar.

CAESAR: And now I know why they refer to you as the face that launched a thousand ships.

CLEOPATRA: You're confusing me with Helen of Troy.

CAESAR: No. I knew a girl named Helen in Troy. Believe me, her face couldn't launch a rowboat.

CLEOPATRA: Will you be staying long in Egypt, Caesar?

CAESAR: Unfortunately, I must be getting back to Rome.

CLEOPATRA: Why the hurry?

CAESAR: Work, work, work. Ruling the world is a full time job. But I could make time for one more quick one. *(nuzzles her neck)*

CLEOPATRA: You know what I would do if I ruled the world?

CAESAR: *(as he continues to fondle her)* Let's not talk shop.

CLEOPATRA: If I ruled the world, I'd see to it that every day was the first day of spring.

*(The Roman Chorus hums after each of Cleopatra's lines during this run.)*

CAESAR: I leave that to the weather gods. *(He nuzzles. She ignores)*

CLEOPATRA: I'd see to it that every heart would have a new song to sing.

CAESAR: You sing, I'll fondle.

CLEOPATRA: All of us... Everyone... We'd all sing of the joy every morning would bring.

CAESAR: How about a little joy right now?

CLEOPATRA: If I ruled the world you can bet that we would treasure each day that occurred.

CAESAR: I have a little something I'd like to treasure right now.

CLEOPATRA: My world would be such an incredibly beautiful place.

CAESAR: *(gives up)* I can see where this is going.

CLEOPATRA: If I ruled the world ...

CAESAR: Nowhere. *(starts to get out of bed)*

CLEOPATRA: Are you leaving?

CAESAR: Looks that way, doesn't it?

CLEOPATRA: Off to your next conquest.

CAESAR: I'm afraid so.

CLEOPATRA: You're just like every other man.

CAESAR: Except in my case that conquest happens to be Spain.

CLEOPATRA: Will I ever see you again, Julie?

CAESAR: Perhaps.

CLEOPATRA: What will I do without you?

CAESAR: Suffer... But you'll get over me. In time... Twenty or thirty years if you're lucky... You'll find someone new. Eventually, word will reach me that a new man shares your bed. I'll listen intently to the news and then I'll have him taken out to sea, weighted down with stones and tossed overboard.

CLEOPATRA: Oh, Julie... You do care about me.

*(She throws herself into Caesar's arms. The Roman Chorus pushes the bed off stage. The Card Girl enters. Her placard reads "Roman Forum – Months Later". The Chorus returns, becoming Roman citizens looking off stage at the approaching Caesar. Brutus, Cassius and another Senator enter)*

BRUTUS: Look, Cassius... Caesar has returned to Rome. The mob greets him as though he were a god.

CASSIUS: Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus, and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.

SENATOR: Cassius, why can't you talk like everybody else?

CASSIUS: What I am saying is that since Caesar has become dictator, he has destroyed our beloved republic. I simply want things to return to the way they once were.

BRUTUS: Yes... When we ran things.

CASSIUS: Exactly... And there is a way.

BRUTUS: What are you suggesting, Cassius?

CASSIUS: That you kill Caesar.

BRUTUS: Me? Why don't you kill him?

CASSIUS: I would but the mob thinks of me as just another lazy aristocrat afraid that he'll have to get off his ass and actually go to work. Fearful that he'll be exposed for the fraud that he is. Jealous of Caesar's power.

BRUTUS: Chalk one up for the mob.

CASSIUS: But, you... You're Brutus... You're the noblest Roman of them all. You kill Caesar and it's a blow for truth, justice and the Roman way.

BRUTUS: The mob loves Caesar. I kill him and they'll tear me limb from limb.

CASSIUS: A small price to pay for liberty, wouldn't you say?

BRUTUS: Quiet... Caesar approaches.

*(The milling crowd forms itself back into the Roman Chorus.)*

ROMAN CHORUS: Here comes Caesar. The mighty dictator. He conquers countries then it's see you later. He walks the world like a giant colossus. He's got a lion's heart and a Roman proboscis.

*(CAESAR enters to the applause and huzzahs of the unseen crowd. He is accompanied by his slave Colitus.)*

UNSEEN CROWD: Huzzah... Huzzah.

*(The Centurions nudge audience members with their spears to join in the "huzzahs." Caesar acknowledges the welcome.)*

COLITUS: Master, might I have a word with you?

UNSEEN CROWD AND AUDIENCE: Huzzah... Huzzah.

CAESAR: (*Still acknowledging the huzzahs.*) Not while I'm being adored.

COLITUS: It's important excellency.

CAESAR: Make it quick, Colitus. I'm a busy man. I've got cities to sack, countries to crush and people to enslave.

COLITUS: Excellency, you once said that as soon as you had conquered the known world, you would grant me my freedom.

CAESAR: I said that?

COLITUS: I wrote it down. (*Refers to his notes*) As soon I conquer the world I will give Colitus his freedom.

CAESAR: What is this obsession you have with freedom, Colitus?

COLITUS: I've never been free, Caesar. It sounds like fun.

CAESAR: Freedom? Freedom? I am Caesar. I rule the most powerful empire the world has ever known. Am I free?

COLITUS: Under most definitions of the word, I'd have to say the answer is a resounding yes.

CAESAR: Take it from me, Colitus. Freedom is just another word for nothing left to lose.

(*Brutus and Cassius cross to Caesar. The Roman Chorus now doubles as Roman Senators.*)

BRUTUS: Noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Noble Brutus.

CASSIUS: Noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Noble Cassius.

CHORUS MEMBER #1: Noble Caesar

CAESAR: Noble Casca.

CHORUS MEMBER #2: Noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Noble Cinna

CHORUS MEMBER #3: (*stentorian voice*) On behalf of the Roman Senate, may I welcome the great and worthy Caesar back to the bosom of Rome.. May

Caesar's rule be long and fruitful... May the mighty Caesar...

CAESAR: *(to Colitus)* Who the hell is that?

COLITUS: Pompous.

CAESAR: You're telling me. But, what's his name?

COLITUS: Pompous.

CAESAR: Make a note... Name tags for all Roman Senators.

COLITUS: It's noted, Caesar.

BRUTUS: Welcome back to Rome, Noble Caesar.

CAESAR: It is good to see you again, noble Brutus

BRUTUS: And you noble Caesar.

CAESAR: You, too, noble Cassius

CASSIUS: And you, noble Caesar.

COLITUS: Sire.

CAESAR: Yes, Colitus. What is it?

COLITUS: It's the audience, excellency.

CAESAR: The audience? What about the audience?

COLITUS: This endless repetition of names, sire...

CAESAR: What about it?

COLITUS: It's making them restless.

CAESAR: Restless? The audience is getting restless in the presence of the great Caesar?

COLITUS: Just a tad, Caesar.

CAESAR: Have them flogged. And then have them whipped.

COLITUS: *(to audience)* Don't say you haven't been warned.

CASSIUS: And how did the conquering go, noble Caesar?

CAESAR: You know how it is. A country here, a kingdom there and pretty soon you rule the world.

BRUTUS: And how was Egypt, Caesar?

CAESAR: Someday you must make the trip, noble Brutus. If, only to see the pyramids. Magnificent those pyramids.

CASSIUS: Yes, we heard you met Cleopatra.

CAESAR: Word travels fast.

BRUTUS: The people sing your praises Caesar.

ROMAN CHORUS: Yo, Caesar fought the noble fight. He knocked off Egypt in a night. When Cleopatra called his name. He saw, he conquered and then he came. *(They strike a hip hop pose)*

CAESAR: What can I say? I am the mighty Caesar.

BRUTUS: Especially between the sheets, eh?

CAESAR: Where else does it matter?

*(Caesar and Brutus gently punch each other in the shoulder like a couple of frat boys.)*

CAESAR & BRUTUS: Hey, hey, hey.

CAESAR: Still, it's good to be home. Perhaps the two of you will do me the honor of having lunch with me.

CASSIUS: I would be honored noble Caesar, but I've already eaten.

CAESAR: *(turns to Brutus)* Et too, Brute?

*(If this draws a groan, have the Centurions threaten the audience with spears)*

BRUTUS: I'm afraid so, Caesar.

CAESAR: Perhaps another time.

CHORUS MEMBER: Until then, noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Until then, noble Casca.

CHORUS MEMBER: Until then, noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Until then, noble Vitronius.

CHORUS MEMBER: Until then noble Caesar

CAESAR: Until then noble Cinna.

CHORUS MEMBER: Until then noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Until...

COLITUS: The audience, sire.

CAESAR: The audience??? The audience???

COLITUS: Yes, Caesar... The audience. These long goodbyes... Slows the action... Loses their attention. Limited as it is.

CAESAR: I will not bow to this tyranny of the audience. Tyranny in all forms is a barrier to progress and expression... Especially my progress and expression. Make a note Colitus.

COLITUS: Yes, Caesar.

CAESAR: From now audiences will love everything I say and do... Under pain of death.

COLITUS: Yes, Caesar.

CAESAR: We'll nip this tyranny thing in the bud.

BRUTUS: Until we meet again, noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Until we meet again.

*(Brutus and Cassius and the Roman Chorus exit)*

CAESAR: What can I say, Colitus? They love me... The Roman Senate loves me.

COLITUS: If you say so, Caesar.

CAESAR: Do I detect a note of skepticism, Colitus?

COLITUS: If Caesar believes the Senate loves him, then the Senate must love Him

CAESAR: That look Colitus. I know that look.

COLITUS: Look, sire?

CAESAR: Yes, that look... There's yes, yes in your voice, but there's no no's on your face. *(They exchange confused looks)*

COLITUS: I have no idea what Caesar is talking about.

CAESAR: Tell me the truth, Colitus. I order you.

COLITUS: The Senate hates you Caesar.

CAESAR: The Senate hates Caesar? Why would you say such a thing?

COLITUS: Because Caesar ordered me to.

CAESAR: Oh... But, what would make you come to such an absurd conclusion. *(scoffing)* The Senate hates Caesar...

COLITUS: Well sire, you did destroy the Republic.

CAESAR: Only to save it.

COLITUS: You took away the right of citizens to vote.

CAESAR: Which only gave them more time to fornicate. Remember, Colitus, a fornicating citizen is a happy citizen.

COLITUS: But now yours is the only voice that counts in all of Rome.

CAESAR: That's because I'm the only one that's a god.

COLITUS: Officially, only a candidate for god.

CAESAR: But I'm a shoo-in to win. Any Senator who votes against me will lose his fortune, his home and all he holds dear.

COLITUS: And why is that, Caesar?

CAESAR: Because I will take it all away from him. That's what gods do. They giveth and then they taketh away. Understand?

COLITUS: Yeth. ... Yes. If Caesar says so, then it must be so.

CAESAR: You know Colitus, sometimes you can be a real downer.

COLITUS: You could always set me free, Caesar.

CAESAR: What's next on my schedule?

COLITUS: (*checks his notes*) Home and Mrs. Caesar.

CAESAR: (*fearful*) Mrs. Caesar?

COLITUS: Mrs. Caesar

CAESAR: You sure about that?

COLITUS: It's right here on your schedule.

CAESAR: Perhaps I could ravage another country. Some little out of the way place we missed.

COLITUS: No, excellency. You pretty much ravaged them all.

CAESAR: How about a revolt I could quell?

COLITUS: All is peaceful, I'm sorry to say.

CAESAR: Maybe we could foment a revolt.

COLITUS: By definition you can't overthrow yourself. I'm afraid, Mrs. Caesar is next.

CAESAR: You're afraid?

COLITUS: Excellency... No offense intended, but Mrs. Caesar is, after all, only a woman.

CAESAR: You've never been married, have you Colitus?

COLITUS: No, sire.

CAESAR: I envy you.

COLITUS: But I am a slave, sire. How could you envy me?

CAESAR: You're an unmarried slave. To you, Calpurnia is only a woman. But to me she is the most daunting force of nature the gods ever placed on the face of the earth.

COLITUS: More daunting than the Cyclops, Caesar?

CAESAR: Much more daunting... And with better eyesight.

COLITUS: More formidable than the Alps, Caesar?

CAESAR: Without a doubt. And harder to cross.

COLITUS: But how can this be Caesar? How can one small woman be so daunting... so formidable?

CAESAR: Easy Colitis... She's a wife.

COLITUS: Have you told her you're practically a god?

CAESAR: A wife is not so easily impressed by those kind of things Colitus as let's say the people whose neck I stand on. After all, she's seen me on the john.

*(A CRAZED OLD MAN enters and crosses to Caesar)*

CRAZED OLD MAN: Beware the Ides of March.... Beware the Ides of March. (He wanders off into the audience pointing at various audience members.) Beware the Ides of March.... Beware the Ides of March. *(He finally exits)*

CAESAR: Colitus... Make a note.

COLITUS: Yes, Caesar.

CAESAR: Find out what the hell the Ides of March are.

*(The Card Girl crosses the stage carrying a sign that reads "NEXT STOP CAESAR'S PALACE" As she crosses the stage, Caesar falls in next to her, followed by Colitus.)*

CAESAR: *(to Card Girl)* Did you know, I'm practically a god? Tell her Colitus.

COLITUS: (*flatly*) He's practically a god.

(*They exit as CALPURNIA, Caesar's wife enters complaining to her off-stage slaves*)

CALPURNIA: No, no, no... The orgy mats do not go next to the buffet table. We don't want people eating on the mats or... vice versa. Especially Vice Versa. The man is an animal. (*muttering*) Doesn't anybody here speak Latin? Great Zeus, almighty, it's hard to capture good slaves these days.

ROMAN CHORUS: That's Ceasar's wife.  
Her name is Calpurnia.  
Mess withher and she's sure to burn ya.  
Her reputation is above reproach.  
But when itcomes to Caesar, better not poach.  
She'll smile, she'll bow, she'll scratch your itch.  
But get her in way and she's one scary...

(*Caesar enters accompanied by Colitus*)

CAESAR: (*cutting off the Chorus*) Calpurnia, my beloved wife.

CALPURNIA: Where the hell have you been?

CAESAR: Is that any way to greet your husband upon his return from six years of war. Six years of battle. Six years of killing and pillaging and plundering?

CALPURNIA: You're late.

CAESAR: I was held up in Thessalonia.

CALPURNIA: The Thessalonians objected to being plundered and pillaged, did they?

CAESAR: No I was held up. A Thessalonian pulled a knife on me. Tough neighborhood that Thessalonia. Tell her Colitus.

COLITUS: (*flatly*) Thessalonia is a tough neighborhood.

CAESAR: See... Even Colitus thinks so.

CALPURNIA: Y'know Julius, you're not getting any younger. Maybe it's time you looked around for another line of work.

CAESAR: But I rule the world. Where am I going to find something that pays this well. Not to mention the perqs.

CALPURNIA: I've heard about the perqs.

ROMAN CHORUS: Now Caesar fought his way through hell... And then he rang ole Cleo's bell. Our noble leader had the knack with Little Egypt in the sack.

CALPURNIA: It's true, isn't it?

CAESAR: Is what true?

CALPURNIA: Don't play your coy little "I'm almost a god" routine with me. Did you dock your man of war in the Egyptian delta?

CAESAR: Cleopatra and I just had dinner together

CALPURNIA: And you expect me to believe that?

CAESAR: It's true... Cleopatra is the Queen of Egypt. After destroying her army, jailing her generals and generally laying waste to her country, buying her dinner was the least I could do. It's called foreign policy.

CALPURNIA: Knowing how you conduct foreign policy, Egypt must have taken a real screwing.

CAESAR: I never touched her.

CALPURNIA: You're trying to tell me you didn't sleep with her?

CAESAR: Sleep? With enemies surrounding me at every turn? With mutinous troops demanding more and more tribute? With jealous generals just waiting for me to fail? Sleep? I haven't slept in six years.

ROMAN CHORUS: Big Julie led his troops to war, while Cleopatra begged for more.

CAESAR: *(to Colitus)* Who the hell are they?

COLITUS: It's the Roman Chorus, sire. A theatrical device we appropriated from the Greeks. Along with their gods, their art, their fashion, their women and pretty much everything else that wasn't nailed down.

CALPURNIA: Julius, if I find out...

CAESAR: Trust me my dearest. There is nothing to find out.

CALPRUNIA: But if it is true....

CAESAR: But's it not.

CALPURNIA: But if it is.

CAESAR: But it's not.

CALPURNIA: But if it is.

CAESAR: But it's not.

CALPURNIA: But if it is.

COLITUS: Excellency... *(he nods the direction of the audience)*

CAESAR: I know... I know... The audience. Are they really necessary?

COLITUS: I'm afraid so, Caesar... Money.

CAESAR: (*Caesar nods*) Colitus, tell Calpurnia... You were with me in Egypt. Is there anything between the Queen and myself.

COLITUS: That depends of your definition of "is."

CAESAR: (*whispers*) Remember who owns your ass.

COLITUS: (*to Calpurnia*) I assure you all contact between his excellency and the Queen was strictly business, madame.

CALPURNIA: You expect me to take the word of a slave?

CAESAR: Colitus is more than a slave. He's the most intelligent and honest man I own.

CALPURNIA: I'll find out the truth. I always do. Didn't I find out about you and Celia, the Sicilian Slut? And how about your little fling with Phyllis the philandering Philistine? You may have forgotten about Mary the merry Macedonian, but I haven't. And what about...?

CAESAR: I'm Caesar. People expect me to ravage their women. I'd lose respect if I didn't. It's part of the job description.

CALPURNIA: If I find out that even so much as a look passed between you and what'shername, I'll make your life a living hell. When I'm through with you, being strung up and slowly eviscerated by the Germanic hordes will look like a day at the beach. (*She storms off angrily*)

CAESAR: (*Calling after her, Caesar speaks in a rhythm borrowed from the old blues song "Caledonia"*)

Calpurnia...

Calpurnia...

What makes your big head so hard?

ROMAN CHORUS: (*gives Caesar a final beat*) Huhhhhh!!!

CAESAR: (*to Colitus*) Think she bought it? (*Colitus shakes his head*) Me neither. This could be a problem... A big problem.

COLITUS: In what way, excellency?

CAESAR: Conquering the world has left me in debt up to my eyeballs. Without the political backing and vast financial support of Calpurnia's family...

COLITUS: I understand excellency... You'll be back mucking manure in Macedonia.

CAESAR: I would have phrased it with a little more delicacy.

*(The Card Girl enters carrying a placard that reads: CLEOPATRA'S CASTLE. Caesar, accompanied by Colitus, follows her across the stage).*

CAESAR: I conquered Gaul in two days. Tell her Colitus.

COLITUS: To be accurate Caesar, it was more like... *(Caesar shoots him a hard look)* He conquered Gaul in two days. *(They exit)*

ROMAN CHORUS: Meanwhile back in Egypt land  
Cleopatra walked the desert sand.  
While working out a clever plan,  
She got herself an even tan.  
When she strolled by every head did tilt...  
Man that Egyptian chick was built.  
*(A HERALD enters and bangs his staff. Everyone goes silent.)*

HERALD: Her majesty, Queen of Egypt. The serene Cleopatra.

CLEOPATRA *(offstage)* Beautiful... The sonofabitch left out beautiful. He's supposed to say the serene and beautiful Cleopatra.

*(Cleopatra enters with her number one ADVISOR)*

ADVISOR: He's new here your majesty.

CLEOPATRA: That's no excuse. Have him made a eunuch.

ADVISOR: He is a eunuch, your highness.

CLEOPATRA: Oh... Well, see he stays one.

*(As she crosses the stage, Cleopatra stops to eye one of the members of the Roman Chorus. Cleopatra's eyes come to rest just below his waist)*

CLEOPATRA: *(to her Advisor)* He's not a eunuch, is he?

ADVISOR: Oh, no your highness. He's intact.

CLEOPATRA: See, that he stays that way. *(She moves on, claps her hand and calls out)* Send in the Admiral of the Fleet.

CHORUS MEMBER #1: Send in the Admiral of the Fleet.

CHORUS MEMBER #2: Send in the Admiral of the Fleet.

CHORUS MEMBER #3: Send in the Admiral of the Fleet.

CHORUS MEMBER #4: Send in the Admiral.

CHORUS MEMBER #5: Send in the big boat guy.

*(A handsome ADMIRAL ENTERS and drops to his knees in front of Cleopatra)*

ADMIRAL: My queen.

CLEOPATRA: (*whispering*) Not here in front of everybody.

ADMIRAL: I am just showing respect, highness.

CLEOPATRA: Respect? Oh, of course... Respect. (*to the crowd*) He's just showing respect.

ADMIRAL: What is it you request of me, highness?

CLEOPATRA: Request? ... Oh, yes... Admiral, I want to you to prepare the fleet.

ADMIRAL: For sailing, your highness?

CLEOPATRA: Yes, of course, for sailing. What else does a fleet do?

ADMIRAL: I just wanted to be sure. The last time your highness used the navy, it never left port. As a matter of fact, it never left your...

CLEOPATRA: Yes, yes...

ADMIRAL: The men still sing your praises, highness.

CLEOPATRA: (*pleased*) They do?

ROMAN CHORUS: The navy sailed into Egypt's port.  
With the queen herself they did cavort.  
She proved herself a little demon,  
Making navel contact without loss of seamen.

ADMIRAL: Enlistments doubled.

CLEOPATRA: Doubled? Really? That must have been some recruiting poster.

ADMIRAL: Well, your majesty was magnificent.

CLEOPATRA: Yes, she was, wasn't I? Tell the navy, we'll do it again... real soon. In the meantime, we sail within the week. I'm bored with Egypt. Too much sand. It's gets in everything. I've decided to rule the world.

ADMIRAL: But, the world has never been ruled by a woman, majesty

CLEOPATRA: Then it's about time the world got a woman's touch. Some curtains here... A few throw pillows there and the world will be so much more attractive. Don't you agree Admiral?

ADMIRAL: Whatever her majesty desires.

CLEOPATRA: And speaking of her majesty's desires... (*cozies up to the Admiral*) What are you doing later tonight?

ADMIRAL: Preparing the fleet, highness. Now, if you will tell me our destination...

CLEOPATRA: Destination?

ADMIRAL: Where do you want the navy to take you?

CLEOPATRA: To paradise of course.

ADMIRAL: I mean, where do you want the fleet to sail, highness?

CLEOPATRA: Sail?

ADMIRAL: Yes, Sail.

CLEOPATRA: Yes, of course, sail. I want the fleet to sail to Rome. To Rome and Caesar.

ADMIRAL: But, majesty... Caesar has a mighty army... Caesar controls all the oceans and seas. Caesar has the entire treasury of the Roman Empire at his disposal. What does Egypt have that can match the mighty Caesar's arsenal?

CLEOPATRA: *(hefts her bosom with both hands)* These.

ADMIRAL: Today Rome!!! Tomorrow the world!!!

*(They exit as the Card Girl enters carrying a placard that reads "Caesars Palace – A Few Days Later". Caesar, Colitus and Brutus enter and eye the girl as she exits)*

BRUTUS: I have been sent by the Senate to discuss a matter of great concern to the Empire.

CAESAR: Where's Cassius?

BRUTUS: I have no idea.

CAESAR: I thought you two were joined at the hip. Anyway, You know I am always happy to address matters of concern to the Senate.

BRUTUS: Generosity is always a sign of great leadership, Caesar.

CAESAR: Yes it is and I have generosity up the wazoo, don't I Colitus?

COLITUS: Yes, Caesar... Up your wazoo.

CAESAR: And what concerns the Senate today, noble Brutus?

BRUTUS: The dictatorship, Caesar.

CAESAR: We already have a dictatorship, Brutus. And I am the dictator.

BRUTUS: That's what concerns the Senate, Caesar. The Senate believes the citizens of Rome want a return to the Republic.

CAESAR: Did you hear that Colitus? The Senate believes the people want the return of the Republic?

COLITUS: I heard, Caesar. The Senate believes the people...

CAESAR: There's no need to repeat it. I was being rhetorical. Why don't we discuss this over wine, Brutus.

BRUTUS: Whatever Caesar desires.

CAESAR: Some wine for Marcus Brutus, the respected leader of the Roman Senate.

COLITUS: (*calling out*) Wine for Marcus Brutus, the respected leader of the Roman Senate.

CHORUS MEMBER #1: Wine for Marcus Brutus, the respected leader of the Roman Senate.

CHORUS MEMBER #2: Wine for Marcus Brutus, the leader of the Roman Senate.

CHORUS MEMBER #3: Wine for the leader of the Roman Senate.

CHORUS MEMBER #4: Wine for the Roman Senate's leading windbag.

(*Colitus fills two goblets.*)

BRUTUS: Your generosity is exceeded only by your hospitality, Caesar.

CAESAR: See that Colitus... My friend the noble Brutus thinks my generosity is exceeded only by my hospitality.

COLITUS: (*to audience*) In addition to being the noblest Roman of them all, Brutus is also the biggest kiss ass of them all.

(*Colitus hands Brutus the goblet. Brutus begins to drink*)

CAESAR: Stop? How do we know this wine is not poisoned? (*Brutus does a spit take*) Where is the royal taster?

(*From behind a pillar, we hear a nervous voice*)

TASTER: Uh... right... uh... here, sire

CAESAR: Where?

(*A hand slowly appears from behind the pillar*)

CAESAR: Come here, man, and taste the wine. We wouldn't want a Roman Senator drinking poisoned wine, would we?

TASTER (*emerging from behind pillar*) Well, that depends, doesn't it, sire? (*Caesar takes the goblet from Brutus and gives it to the Taster, who swishes it around in the goblet and takes a sniff*) Lovely bouquet... Impudent without being snotty. (*Taster starts to hand the goblet to Brutus*)

CAESAR: Drink up, man.

TASTER: (*takes a little sip*) Works for me.

CAESAR: Drink up! To your good health.

(*The Taster drinks, gasps and falls down dead. Nobody bats an eye*)

BRUTUS: Perhaps I'll skip the wine.

CAESAR: As you wish.

(*Calpurnia enters. Her regal crossing of the room is marred only by her tripping over the dead Taster*)

CALPURNIA: Julius, we really have to talk about the guest list for your homecoming orgy. Oh, I'm sorry. I didn't realize you had a business meeting.

CAESAR: That's quite alright, my precious. It's only Brutus.

CALPURNIA: Brutus, of course. And where's Cassius?

BRUTUS: I have no idea.

CALPURNIA: I thought you two were joined at the hip.

CAESAR: May I say how lovely you look today, my dear? Doesn't Caesar's wife look lovely, Brutus?

BRUTUS: Caesar's wife has never looked lovelier. The beauty of her face shines like the morning sun. The grace of her shoulders makes Venus herself sigh with envy. Her neck is a marvel that rivals the finest alabaster...(*getting a little turned on*)  
And the fullness of her... her ...

CALPURNIA: Yes, Brutus? You were extolling the fullness of my...?

BRUTUS: The fullness of your... Your

CALPURNIA: Yes, Brutus?

BRUTUS: Your day, madame. Yes, the fullness of your day. Your many good deeds set an example for all of our wives.

CALPURNIA: (*to Colitis*) What a kiss ass.

COLITUS: *(to audience)* What did I tell you?

CALPURNIA: Did I interrupt some business of state, Julius?

CAESAR: *(through clenched teeth)* How many times have I told you never to call me Julius in front of a Senator. I hate that name. It's so... so... Hebraic

CALPURNIA: You're much too touchy for a dictator, dear.

BRUTUS: Caesar... *(sticking it to Caesar)* Concerning your relations with Egypt.

CALPURNIA: Relations with Egypt? You're having relations with Egypt? I knew it.

CAESAR: The country... He's talking about the country.

BRUTUS: The Senate is impatient to know what you plan to do? There are rumblings that Cleopatra has been talking to enemies of Rome. We hear that she is winning hearts and minds.

CALPURNIA: It's nice to know she's set her sights a little higher, this time.

CAESAR: Everything is under control, Brutus. No need to worry about Cleopatra.

BRUTUS: Then why is she coming to Rome?

CAESAR: *(stunned)* What the hell are you talking about???

BRUTUS: Her fleet was spotted sailing in this direction.

CALPURNIA: *(angrily)* Cleopatra in Rome???

CAESAR: *(to Brutus)* Big mouth.

CALPURNIA: *(stepping over the dead Taster's body)* Over my dead body.

COLITUS: Not quite.

CAESAR: But, dearest...

CALPURNIA: Don't dearest me... Julius

CAESAR: Don't call me Julius.

BRUTUS: *(happy to see Caesar squirming)* If you will excuse me, Caesar. I must return to the Senate. We're taking up the issue of making you a god.

CAESAR: A god? Moi? That means me. I picked it up in Gaul.

CALPURNIA: From what I've heard that wasn't all you picked up in Gaul.

ROMAN CHORUS: When Caesar conquered all of Gaul  
His troops sent out a clarion call.  
Send your women, young and pretty  
Or Caesar'll come and sack your city.

CAESAR: (*to Colitus*) Are these guys necessary?

COLITUS: They provide important background and commentary, Caesar. Otherwise the audience would find it difficult to understand the historical context. (*Looks out over the audience*) As it is, I'm not sure they're keeping up.

BRUTUS: (*satisfied with the trouble he's caused*) I can see my work is done here. Farewell, noble Caesar.

CAESAR: Farewell, noble Brutus. Did you hear that Calpurnia? Your husband is going to be immortal.

CALPURNIA: If what Brutus said about Cleopatra showing up in Rome is true, you may be communing with the gods sooner than you expected.

CAESAR: My dear wife... This outburst of jealousy is totally uncalled for. Isn't it Colitus?

COLITUS: (*bored*) Yes, sire. Uncalled for.

COLITUS: Strictly geo-political.

CAESAR: I'm just trying head off any further trouble in that part of the known world. Am I not, Colitus?

COLITUS: You am.

CALPURNIA: Don't pull that suddenly there's trouble in the middle east routine with me, Julius. There's always trouble in the middle east.

CAESAR: Don't call me Julius.

CALPURNIA: I know all about you and that... that... tramp.

CAESAR: That tramp happens to be the Queen of Egypt.

CALPURNIA: I know the whole story of how you made her queen because you had the "hots" for her.

CAESAR: Do you realize who you are talking to, madam? I am Caesar, dictator of Rome... And Caesar does not get the "hots."

CALPURNIA: You're telling me.

CAESAR: Besides, Cleopatra is a child.

CALPURNIA: Please... I've heard the songs.

CAESAR: What songs?

CALPURNIA: *(to Chorus)* Hit it, boys.

ROMAN CHORUS: Yo... Caesar conquered Britain and Gaul.  
Before him all the kings did fall.  
With Cleo though he had a ball.  
Need we spell it out, y'all?

CAESAR: The people are always making up songs. That's their right under Roman law. *(to Colitus)* Remind me to change that law.

COLITUS: Yes, sire.

CALPURNIA: Don't tell me you're not taken by her beauty.

CAESAR: Beauty means nothing to me.

CALPURNIA: Is that why you married me? Because I'm old and ugly.

CAESAR: You're not old.

CALPURNIA: You don't even know how old I am.

CAESAR: Of course, I do. You're thirty three. *(Calpurnia shakes her head)*  
Thirty eight. *(She shakes her head again)* Forty? *(Shakes her head again)* Forty  
three? By Jove, just how old are you?

CALPURNIA: I'm forty six years old?

CAESAR: *(stunned)* You're forty six years old???

CALPURNIA: *(storming out in tears)* I told you I was old.

CAESAR: *(to Colitus)* Did you know she was forty six years old?

COLITUS: Yes, Caesar.

CAESAR: Why didn't you tell me?

COLITUS: Unless ordered to, I only tell Caesar what Caesar wants to hear. I  
may be a slave, but I ain't stupid.

CAESAR: Ah, Colitus, you're the lucky one.

COLITUS: And how did Caesar come to that brilliant conclusion?

CAESAR: You have no wife... No worries... No cares... You're a slave...  
You have nothing.

COLITUS: When Caesar puts it that way, I must be the happiest man in the  
known world.

CAESAR: *(Looking down at the dead food taster)* What do we do with him?

COLITUS: I suppose a decent burial would be in order.

*(Colitus nods at the Roman Chorus, who drag the dead Taster off stage. The sexy Card Girl enters carrying a placard that reads "Cleopatra's Ship". Caesar falls in next to her. Colitus follows)*

CAESAR: And what is your name, my lovely?

CARD GIRL: Clitoris.

CAESAR: Really?

CARD GIRL: Really.

CAESAR: What a lovely name... Isn't that a lovely name, Colitus?

COLITUS: *(flatly)* Lovely.

*(Caesar and Colitus follow the Card Girl out as The Roman Chorus slides in a bed that contains a HANDSOME YOUNG MAN. Cleopatra enters seductively.)*

CLEOPATRA: Hi, sailor

SOLDIER: Soldier, your highness. I'm a soldier.

*(She slides into bed next to him)*

CLEOPATRA: Soldier... Sailor... What's the difference?

SOLDIER: There's actually a big difference, your highness. Our training... Our mission... And especially our equipment.

*(Cleopatra slides her hand under the covers)*

CLEOPATRA: I'll say. And you're obviously very well equipped.

SOLDIER: Thank you, your majesty.

CLEOPATRA: No... Thank you.

SOLDIER: I hope her majesty won't be disappointed.

CLEOPATRA: Oh, I don't think so.

SOLDIER: You might when you find out that's my spear you're stroking.  
*(A disappointed Cleopatra pulls a spear out from under the covers. The Chorus pushes the bed offstage as the sexy Card Girl returns. Her placard reads..."Rome – An alley behind the shop of Linus The Dung Merchant".)*

ROMAN CHORUS: So, what do you say oh lovely Clitoris... Ever make it with a Roman Chorus? *(She smiles at the Chorus. They follow her off)*

*(Brutus and Cassius enter.)*

CASSIUS: Brutus... Well? ... Did you meet with Caesar?

BRUTUS: Yes, yes Cassius, I met with him.

CASSIUS: What did he say about restoring the republic?

BRUTUS: Screw the Republic... Do you know he's having a homecoming orgy?

CASSIUS: Sure... Everybody knows it.

BRUTUS: Then why wasn't I invited? After all, I am Marcus Brutus, the noblest Roman of them all.

CASSIUS: That may be so, but you're still no fun at parties.

BRUTUS: Just once I'd like a shot at that buffet table... Those orgy mats... Calpurnia...

CASSIUS: Calpurnia???

BRUTUS: Caesar has made a fool of me for the last time. You were right Cassius.

CASSIUS: *(surprised)* I was? About what?

BRUTUS: When you said Caesar must die.

*(The play continues...)*

[PURCHASE THE PLAY](#)

[RETURN TO HOME PAGE](#)