Rhaetian warriors have attacked northern Italy and the Roman provinces of Gaul. In response, Roman armies commanded by the twenty-seven-year-old prince Tiberius have pushed the barbarians deep into the Alps. The Rhaetians, confident in their mountain strongholds, refuse to surrender. One of the enemy forts is on Lake Venetus (Lago di Garda), thirty-three miles long and walled in by impenetrable mountains on three sides.

Tiberius and a dozen of his officers, including his second in command and old friend, LONGUS, are assembled on the southern shore of the lake. Soldiers in formation march and artillery and supply wagons roll past them. There are sounds of many axes and hammers – the army is setting up a fortified camp. Tiberius listens intently as an officer gives his report.

OFFICER ONE
The barbarian camp is at the far end of the lake. 15-20,000 warriors with their women and children. The position is impregnable, sir. Steep mountains behind and on either side. The passes are well-defended – too narrow for siege engines.

LONGUS
We should attack the enemy elsewhere, Tiberius. When the uprising has been crushed, this stronghold will surrender, too.

Tiberius strokes his chin.

TIBERIUS
If we fail to take this position now, the enemy will have all winter to be encouraged. Remember, Longus, when the Rhaetians took our villages, they killed all the males – even the unborn. That must not remain unpunished. We must find a way.

(CONTINUED)
OFFICER THREE
But sir, how did they know the unborn were male?

Tiberius lifts his hands and makes them into claws.

TIBERIUS
Magic!

Tiberius points across the lake.

TIBERIUS (CONT’D))
How are the beach defenses?

The officers look at each other in surprise.

OFFICER ONE
Nothing to speak of, sir. They know we will not attack by water.

Tiberius looks at Longus. They exchange grins. Tiberius rolls up the map in front of him and addresses all present.

TIBERIUS
Build enough ships to carry two legions.
(beat)
We’ll show them some magic!

DISSOLVE TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS: ROMAN SOLDIERS BUILD A FLEET OF SHIPS
(A) Soldiers felling trees.
(B) Soldiers splitting wood into logs.
(C) Shipwrights assembling ships.
(D) Ships being launched in the lake.
(D) Soldiers in uniform boarding ships, setting sails.

CUT TO:
A large group of barbarians are warming themselves around a campfire on the beach. A fleet of Roman warships appears on the lake from out of the fog. The barbarians are terror-stricken. Roman soldiers jump out of the ships. The barbarians surrender without a fight.

CUT TO:

Tiberius and Longus are at the livery. Tiberius is preparing to mount his horse. All around them is great activity. Bound barbarian captives are being herded by soldiers. Wagons piled high with barbarian weapons, bronze pots, and other booty roll behind them.

LONGUS
So, off to Rome, to bask in your glory?

TIBERIUS
(laughs)
I'm going to sneak into the city and see Vipsania before word gets out that I'm back. First, a night alone with my wife.

Tiberius mounts and rides away at breakneck speed, yelling to Longus as he leaves.

TIBERIUS
Vipsania's kiss is all the glory I need!

DISSOLVE TO:

(A) Tiberius riding his horse at a gallop.
(B) Tiberius changing horses at a military outpost.
(C) Tiberius approaching the gates of Rome at sunset.
Vipsania sits alone in a garden courtyard within a grand house, spinning wool in the waning light. A cricket chirps nearby. She looks up and gazes at the first stars of the evening. Suddenly the cricket is silent. She notices. There is the whisper of leather on marble. She turns to see Tiberius in the shadows, wearing a soiled, hooded cloak.

TIBERIUS
Vipsania!

They rush into each other’s arms. After long kisses and caresses, Vipsania pulls away.

VIPSANIA
(softly)
You smell of horses. Let me bathe you.

DISSOLVE TO:

Tiberius and Vipsania are alone and naked in the bath. She sits in his lap with her back to him, washing his arms.

TIBERIUS
The Alps are so beautiful, Vipsania. I will take you to see them someday, when they are safe.
You won’t believe this, but I commanded a fleet of warships on a mountain lake. Even the great admiral Marcus Agrippa will be impressed.

VIPSANIA
My father is impressed by everything you do, Tiberius. You know that.

They kiss and roll together in the bath.

FADE OUT:
Tiberius and Vipsania enjoy a snack of cucumbers, olives, soft cheeses, and bread with their infant son Drusulus, the servants orbiting from a distance. Vipsania selects the softest bits of cheese and uncrusted bread for Drusulus to taste. Tiberius moans with pleasure as he eats a cucumber.

VIPSANIA
(teasing)
How do you survive in the Alps without your cucumbers?

Tiberius smiles.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
(pouting playfully)
I believe you love them more than you love me!

Silence.

Vipsania laughs, smacking him lightly on the shoulder. She feels her baby kick, places her hand on her swollen belly. Tiberius notices and smiles. He gives her a necklace - a Trojan horse in red carnelian, dangling from a silken cord. She is surprised and fingers the horse quizzically.

TIBERIUS
There is a Ulysses within you as well. I know it.

He places it around her neck.

VIPSANIA
But why now?

TIBERIUS
(pretending to be hurt)
You have forgotten our anniversary?

VIPSANIA
Our what?

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(looking hurt)
Twenty years ago, we were betrothed to each other...and it meant so little to you?

VIPSANIA
(stroking his chin)
I was one year old!

TIBERIUS
(gravely)
I remember.

VIPSANIA
You were ten!

TIBERIUS
But I already loved you. I watched you grow more beautiful every day. You were my delight; you made it all worthwhile.

VIPSANIA
(reflecting)
You were always so polite to me, so gentle; you made me feel grown-up. The other children teased me, but I liked it.

She produces a ring with a shining blue stone, exquisitely engraved with a portrait of Venus. She gives it to him. Tiberius is amazed.

VIPSANIA
I do not remember the occasion, but I do remember the date. It’s Venus because I believe she loves us.

Tiberius puts the ring on his finger and gazes at her. Gradually, his smile fades into a slight cringe of anxiety. Vipsania tilts her head, asking why.

TIBERIUS
It worries me, Vipsania. I am so happy. The gods envy such happiness. They take it away.
VIPSANIA
(playfully)
Yes, the cucumbers have been very good this year. We shouldn’t take them for granted.

TIBERIUS
(remaining serious)
The stars say that I will have power and wealth, but not love. And I have all three.

Vipsania strokes his brow and pulls closer. They embrace as he lifts his eyes to the portico ceiling. It has been painted with stars and planets in the positions they held on the November night of his birth.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

9 INT. BEDROOM AT JULIA’S HOUSE - NIGHT

The emperor Augustus’ daughter Julia is with a lover at her villa in Rome. The bedroom is decorated with the finest curtains, sculptures, and paintings. Bronze lamps and tripods sputter and plume with smoke. Musicians in the shadows play a soft melody on flutes and stringed cithars, cymbals chiming in time with the music.

In the middle of the room is a large round bed, covered with embroidered cushions and shimmering cloths. It is surrounded by life-size bronze statues of nymphs and satyrs, their nude bodies seeming to move in the quavering light. In the center is Julia with a man named Sempronius Gracchus.

A man and a woman approach them tentatively. The musicians hesitate and then stop playing.

WOMAN
My lady Julia!

Julia rolls onto her back and rails at her.

(CONTINUED)
JULIA
(angry)
How dare you interrupt me! Is the house on fire? The house had better be on fire!

WOMAN
But Lady... your husband... he has died!

Gasps from the lover and musicians.

WOMAN (CONT.)
The fever worsened. He was unable to take food or drink. Marcus Agrippa is dead.

A pause.

JULIA
(calmly)
Was my father with him?

MAN
No, my lady. Your husband died before Augustus Caesar reached Campania.

Julia pulls a thin wrap over her breasts, shudders slightly, and steps out of bed. She is obviously pregnant. She circles the bed slowly.

GRACCHUS
Your husband was a great man, Julia. The greatest man, after Augustus. He will be missed.

JULIA
(preoccupied)
You may go, Gracchus... I will be in touch... Probably...

FADE OUT:
After Agrippa’s funeral. Several members of the imperial family are in the atrium of Tiberius’ home. He sits beside Vipsania, his arm around her shoulder.

The women wear the white of mourning; the men are in black. At Vipsania’s side is her mother ATTICA, whom Agrippa had divorced. Also present are Tiberius’ mother LIVIA, his brother DRUSUS with his wife ANTONIA and their three year-old son, later to be known as GERMANICUS. He and Vipsania’s little DRUSULUS are playing with a young servant in a corner of the room.

Livia clearly presides over the group; all eyes are on her, watching for a clue.

TIBERIUS
That was a magnificent funeral - appropriate for such a man.

ATTICA
Yes. Even though he divorced me, we remained friends. He was always a good father to Vipsania.

TIBERIUS
And to the Roman people. He taught me a great deal. He was irreplaceable.

DRUSUS
Yes, brother, but he will be replaced, and soon. Augustus believes the only way to avoid civil war when he dies is for an heir to take his place. You are the logical choice now.

ATTICA
(surprised)
But Drusus, what about Julia and her sons? You know how important blood is to Augustus. “The line of the divine Julius Caesar” and all that.

(CONTINUED)
LIVIA (thoughtfully)
Augustus has great hopes for his grandsons, but they are only boys. Gaius is just eight, Lucius only five. Tiberius and Drusus might share Agrippa’s powers, until the boys are ready. Augustus might even marry Julia to a lesser man, to avoid complicating the succession.

Drusus and Tiberius glance at each other.

DRUSUS
I don’t see Julia settling for a non-entity, Mother. She’s been both wife and mother to Augustus’ heirs. She won’t settle for less.

LIVIA
Enough of this. Today we remember Agrippa.

ATTICA (still thinking of Julia)
She didn’t even go to her husband’s deathbed, Livia!

LIVIA
Julia is pregnant, my dear. Travel is difficult.

ANTONIA
Pregnancy hasn’t interfered with her social life. They say she was with Gracchus when she heard the news.

ATTICA
Her infidelities worried Marcus. If his paternity was doubted, it could affect their children’s futures.

LIVIA (firmly)
Julia is no fool - she is always careful.

ANTONIA (smiling)
How did she put it? “I never take on passengers unless I have cargo on board.”
All laugh.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

11 INT. ROOM IN THE PALACE IN ROME - AFTERNOON

Julia is with Augustus, who still wears black. She looks away from her father during their conversation, to hide her expressions.

JULIA
Father, the daughter of the emperor cannot remain single. I’ll need a new husband.

AUGUSTUS
(exasperated)
You've just buried your old one, Julia! You must wait a year - ten months at least. And the choice is an important one.

JULIA
(half to herself)
Tiberius, I think...

Julia is aroused by the thought.

AUGUSTUS
(surprised)
Tiberius!? Are you mad? He is married to Vipsania! She is pregnant! They have a family!

JULIA
(impatiently)
And he is the best man, the only man, to fill Agrippa’s shoes.

AUGUSTUS
Actually, I was thinking of marrying you to someone of no importance this time. Someone who wouldn’t interfere with my plans for your sons, Gaius and Lucius.

(CONTINUED)
JULIA
(aghast)
And have my children, descendants of the divine Julius Caesar, in the house of a nobody? Who will protect them when you are gone?

A pause, she lowers her voice.

JULIA (CONT.)
Father, don’t you see? If anything should happen to you, power will go to the most capable man. But will he tolerate the grandsons of Augustus as his rivals? No! He will kill them, and me.

But if I am married to the most capable man in Rome, how can he kill us? My sons will be his sons, and eventually his heirs. Tiberius is your stepson and the most capable man in Rome; he must be my husband. There is no other way.

Augustus nods, but says nothing. Livia enters the room and takes Augustus’ arm.

AUGUSTUS
(to Livia)
Livia! She wants to marry your son, Tiberius.

LIVIA
(pleased)
Of course! It makes sense. The perfect match.

Julia is pleased with herself.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

12 INT - PALACE CORRIDOR - DAY

Tiberius approaches Augustus’ chamber. He passes Julia in the hall on the way. He takes her hand.
TIBERIUS
My deepest condolences, Julia. If there is anything I can do...

JULIA
Thank you, Tiberius...there will be.

Bemused, Tiberius watches as she hurries down the corridor. He enters a room in which Augustus and Livia are waiting. A few servants are present.

TIBERIUS
Mother. Augustus.

Livia moves to greet him.

LIVIA
How is Vipsania?

TIBERIUS
Quite upset, naturally.

AUGUSTUS
(softly)
Of course. I am sure that her mother will see her through.

Augustus motions for the servants to leave.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
Tiberius, we must talk of the future. I know that you disapprove of emperors. But you do see that it was a necessary step, to end the civil wars?

TIBERIUS
(surprised by this)
Well, yes, I can see that. You ended a century of bloodshed. But sir, the senate and the noble families must have a role in government. Our goal must be to return power to their hands now that the crisis has passed.

(CONTINUED)
AUGUSTUS
Have I not shown the utmost respect to the senate, to the noble families?

TIBERIUS
(cautiously)
Of course. But the senators are forgetting how to govern. The important decisions are taken by you and your advisers. Senate meetings are empty show these days. The senators have no real responsibility, no power, only the appearance of it.

AUGUSTUS
The senate is full of wolves and vultures, as it has been for more than a century. Chaos will reign if a competent man doesn’t continue my work when I am gone.

And that is why I must have a colleague, ready to carry on should I die. As long as Marcus Agrippa was alive, I knew that the peace and stability of the empire would survive my passing. But now?

I must raise a man to Agrippa’s position immediately, Tiberius. Otherwise, we will have achieved nothing but a pause in a century of violence.

Tiberius nods slowly in agreement.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
Do you understand what I am saying, Tiberius?

Tiberius nods - he thinks he does.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
You must divorce Vipsania and marry Julia. It is the only way to consolidate the family’s position, your position. Your wife’s political usefulness died with her father. Julia is your future now.
Tiberius feels the words strike him. He actually stumbles.

TIBERIUS
What? You aren’t serious! I love Vipsania more than my life!

AUGUSTUS
Do you love her more than your country?

There is an awkward pause.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
I am not just making a suggestion, Tiberius, this is an order. You will marry my daughter. The betrothal must take place as soon as possible, so there is no doubt about my arrangements for the future. Do you agree?

(in a softer tone)
Tiberius, you are a Claudian. You know that duty to Rome comes first for a man in your position. Look at the sacrifices your father made - even releasing your mother.

Tiberius sets his jaw in defiance. He towers over Augustus, who glares up at him with a menacing look.

TIBERIUS
No! I will not do it! If you insist upon it, there is an honorable alternative.

AUGUSTUS
(appalled)
You would kill yourself to avoid marrying my daughter?

TIBERIUS
No - to avoid living without the woman I love!

LIVIA
(softly to Augustus)
He loves her. You know his attachments are strong. Let me speak with him.

(CONTINUED)
Augustus storms out - pausing to point a meaningful finger at Tiberius. Livia rushes to Tiberius and slaps him hard on the left cheek. She strikes him again. Tears spill from his eyes.

LIVIA
(in her loudest whisper)
Tiberius! Think! What will happen to us if Julia marries someone else?

TIBERIUS
But Vipsania is my life!

LIVIA
Don’t you think I was attached to your father? And yet I left him for Augustus. Because it was my duty to my country and to my children. If I had refused, would you be in this position today?

Tiberius gives her an ironic look.

LIVIA
(exasperated)
Listen, Tiberius, you have no choice in the matter. If you refuse, you will lose Vipsania anyway. Your entire family will suffer. Marry Julia or we lose everything.

Dissolve to:

13 INT. THE FRONT DOOR OF TIBERIUS’ HOUSE IN ROME - DAY

Vipsania greets Tiberius at the door and they stride arm in arm to the courtyard. She knows that something is terribly wrong.

VIPSANIA
What did Augustus say? Is there a crisis? Must you return to the army? Tiberius, what has happened?
He looks into her eyes, knowing that the words he is about to utter will change their lives forever.

TIBERIUS
He wants me to marry Julia. Divorce you and marry Julia.

She neither moves nor breathes.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I told him no, but he won’t accept it. My mother says I have no choice.

Tiberius is alarmed by her reaction. She turns pale and says nothing. She feels a sharp, throbbing, growing pain in her upper belly. He moves to help her to a stool, but she collapses at his touch. The servants, watching from the shadows, hurry to help.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

14 INT. VIPSANIA’S BEDROOM - DAWN

It is three days later. Tiberius has not left Vipsania’s bedside. She has lost the baby. Vipsania wakes. She hears a dove in the distance. Her eyes open, she surveys the dimly lit room and realizes Tiberius is holding her hand. He awakes and raises his head to look at her.

TIBERIUS
How are you, my love? Is there pain? Can I do anything?

VIPSANIA
I’m tired, so tired.

TIBERIUS
This is my fault. I should never have wavered. My weakness has made us lose our child. I will die before I leave you, Vipsania. When you are strong enough, we will escape, leave the empire.

(CONTINUED)
VIPSANIA
(calm and resigned)
No, Tiberius, we must obey. This is the price of our position. We understand this. Your mother left your father. My father left my mother. And now my father’s death has changed everything. We always knew this could happen.

We will survive. For little Drusulus, we must survive. Think of the future he has been born for. Would you make him an exile before he has his teeth?

Tiberius kisses her hand.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
Why couldn’t we be obscure, Tiberius? Why couldn’t we be simple shepherds in some remote province, or German tribesmen in a dark forest, far from the call of duty? Then we could always be together.

Tiberius looks at her, sets his jaw.

TIBERIUS
I want you to know. No matter what we do. In my heart, you will always be my wife.

Vipsania takes his hand but turns away.

VIPSANIA
That will be an easier fiction for you than for me, Tiberius. You will be with the army most of the time. But I will be married to a man not of my choosing. I will have to bear his children, if I can, and his manners.

TIBERIUS
What will become of Drusulus?
VIPSANIA
(losing control)
He will live with you and Julia. Of course!
Augustus will have plans for him. It is “for the
good of Rome.”

Vipsania struggles to compose herself. Tiberius covers his face with
both hands.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

15 INT. PALACE ROOM - DAY

Tiberius reports to Augustus.

AUGUSTUS
Well?

TIBERIUS
Vipsania is a better Roman than I am. I will do
as you say.

AUGUSTUS
(briskly)
Good! You must divorce immediately so the
betrothal can take place. The wedding will be
early next year. But now you must prepare to
leave for Pannonia. The rebellion has flared up
again. The barbarians were cowed by Agrippa. Now
that he is gone, they have found their courage.

TIBERIUS
But Vipsania is still very weak. You know she
lost the baby. I...

AUGUSTUS
She has her mother, Tiberius. She is not your
concern anymore. This affair in Pannonia is
serious. It requires your full attention.
Besides, the change will be easier for you this
way. Best to leave Rome and be busy.

FADE OUT:
A lavish dinner party in the home of Pollio, a rich and powerful senator. His son Gallus is present, as well as several guests and family members. Pollio speaks excitedly as he dismembers a lobster.

Pollio
Think of it, Gallus. Your sons would be the half-brothers of Drusulus, Livia’s grandson. They would mingle with the imperial family, perhaps even marry into it! This is too good an opportunity to miss. And who else will dare to marry Vipsania? Your old enemy Tiberius will be furious!

Gallus grins mischievously.

Pollio (cont.)
And remember, Vipsania is the granddaughter of Atticus - the richest man in Rome in my day. Her dowry will no doubt be returned to her, a tidy sum I am sure.

He stuffs a large morsel into his mouth.

Male dinner guest
She isn’t bad looking either.

Gallus
(dissmissively)
Not my type, but that isn’t important. I’ll still have my mistresses, and we know she is fertile - Drusulus is a strapping lad. But the miscarriage concerns me.

Pollio
It was shock, that’s all. Losing her father. Divorced so suddenly. She is young; she will recover.

He scans the room for further comments. No one has any. He claps his hands together.
POLLIO (CONT.)
Good, then it’s settled. But we must act quickly, before Augustus makes his own choice. We will see him tomorrow, before Tiberius leaves for Pannonia.

GALLUS
(frowning)
Is that wise? As you say, Tiberius will be furious.

POLLIO
(briskly)
Yes, but Augustus will not commit Vipsania to anyone while Tiberius is away. He will want his approval.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

17 INT. PALACE ROOM - DAY

Tiberius is in uniform. He enters Augustus’ chamber. Pollio and Gallus are with the emperor. Tiberius nods, but he is not happy to see them.

AUGUSTUS
(nervous, but trying to hide it)
Ah! Tiberius! Ready to march, I see. Perhaps we can settle one more piece of business before you leave. Gallus has offered to marry Vipsania. An excellent match for her, don’t you think?

Tiberius is aghast. The three men watch him with dread on their faces.

TIBERIUS
(testily, to Gallus)
Aren’t you concerned about the difference in status?

(CONTINUED)
GALLUS
(breezily)
Yes, of course, but I am willing to overlook her father’s humble origins, and that her grandfather was only a knight.

Tiberius moves towards Gallus, his fists clenched, but Augustus blocks his way, cheerfully scolding the impudent senator.

AUGUSTUS
Now Gallus, you know Vipsania has other connections that will serve you well.

Then, in a whisper to Tiberius as he pulls him aside.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
This was not my idea, but can you think of a better family for her to be connected with? Gallus has talent, wealth, position.

TIBERIUS
(contemptuously)
And a very high opinion of himself.

Augustus clasps his shoulder and lowers his voice even more.

AUGUSTUS
Yes, but with some justification. There is no better match politically for her. Or for us, come to that. You know how ambitious they are. This will tie them to your son, to our family. Don’t you see?

Tiberius grunts and turns to leave.

AUGUSTUS
(exasperated)
Do - you - approve?

Without looking back, Tiberius raises his hand in agreement and leaves the room.

FADE OUT:
FADE IN:

18 INT. KITCHEN IN HOME OF POLLIO - DAY

Vipsania is preparing to leave the house, carrying a bag of food and other items, accompanied by a servant. Her mother-in-law, SALONINA, accosts her.

    SALONINA
    And where do you think you’re going?

    VIPSANIA
    (surprised)
    To see my son, Drusulus, at his father’s home.

    SALONINA
    (imperiously)
    Not without my permission! As your mother-in-law, I will decide when and where you may go, do you understand?

    VIPSANIA
    Yes, Salonina. May I have your permission?

    SALONINA
    No. Not today. It doesn’t suit me. Perhaps tomorrow.

Salonina leaves the kitchen. Vipsania hesitates, then looks at the servant and gestures with a nod of her head to the door. They leave.

CUT TO:

19 EXT. TIBERIUS’ FRONT DOOR - DAY

Vipsania and her servant are taken into Julia’s presence.

    JULIA
    My dear Vipsania, what brings you here? Tiberius is away, killing barbarians, as usual.

    VIPSANIA
    Yes, I know. I have come to see Drusulus.

(CONTINUED)
JULIA
You should have let me know you were coming.
I can’t let you see him now - he is at his studies.

VIPSANIA
But...

JULIA
(imperiously)
No, Vipsania, it is out of the question. You may leave your gifts over there.

Julia points to the corner of the room.

JULIA (CONT.)
I’ll see that he gets them.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

20  EXT. TIBERIUS’ FRONT DOOR - DAY

Another day. Vipsania alone at Julia’s door. A servant with a thick Greek accent appears.

SERVANT
No, Lady Julia says the boy is unwell today. You can see him some other time.

The servant slams the door.

CUT TO:

21  INT. VIPSANIA’S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Vipsania in her room, weeping.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
Vipsania is finally with Drusulus, now aged four. She holds out her arms to embrace him; he pulls away.

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DRUSULUS
Why haven’t you come to see me, Momma? Why are you so mean to me?

VIPSANIA
My darling, I have tried to see you. You were at your studies, you were ill - they wouldn’t let me.

DRUSULUS
I don’t believe you. They said you were too busy.

VIPSANIA
(indignant)
Who said that?

Drusulus won’t say.

VIPSANIA
(picking him up)
Drusulus, there is nothing I would rather do than be with you. Nothing matters more to me. I am always thinking about you, wondering how you are, wishing I could see you. I love you so much.

Drusulus looks at her for a moment, then breaks into tears, burying his face on her shoulder and wrapping his arms around her neck. Julia promptly appears.

JULIA
Vipsania! You have upset him! It is time for you to go now. His tutors are waiting for him.

A servant takes Drusulus from Vipsania. He resists, crying and reaching for her as he is taken away. She weeps and stretches her arms towards him, then covers her mouth with her hands. As Vipsania leaves, she passes all sorts of people in Julia’s house - actors, jugglers, gladiators - rough men and women.

FADE OUT:
FADE IN:

23  INT. OPEN-AIR COURTYARD AT TIBERIUS’ HOUSE - DUSK

The courtyard is empty. A cricket is chirping, then stops. Tiberius appears from the shadows. He enters the main part of the house and finds it full of Julia’s entourage. He avoids being seen and climbs the stairs and approaches her bedroom door. There are shrieks of Julia’s laughter and a man’s voice from within the room. Tiberius pulls up short, turns around and goes down the hall.

Tiberius enters Drusulus’ chamber. Drusulus is sitting on the floor with two older boys. They are making small model gladiators do battle. Tiberius raises his arms to embrace Drusulus.

TIBERIUS

Drusulus, my boy! I have returned! Come to me!

Drusulus looks at Tiberius and turns up his nose. When Tiberius steps towards him, he runs out a door on the far side of the room. Tiberius is crestfallen. The other boys smirk at each other.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

24  INT. LIVIA’S APARTMENT IN THE PALACE - DAY

Tiberius is seated in a chair, looking glum and resigned.

LIVIA

What do you mean you’re moving out? You can’t move out of your own house!

TIBERIUS

I can’t live there, Mother. She disgusts me.

LIVIA

Well, you can’t divorce her. Augustus wouldn’t hear of it.

TIBERIUS

I know that, but he can’t stop me from leaving her.
LIVIA
Tongues will wag.

TIBERIUS
Tongues are already wagging. She has a queue of lovers outside her bedroom door. She makes a spectacle of herself wherever she goes - and a laughing stock out of me.

LIVIA
But what of Drusulus?

TIBERIUS
He hardly knows me, and I can’t take care of him anyway. I’m away from Rome most of the year. Augustus won’t let me take him away from Julia. I can only hope Vipsania has some influence over him.

Tiberius leans back in his chair and reflects.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Mother. Wherever I go, people congratulate me on my marriage to Julia. Every city has statues of us together - the “happy couple”. It turns my stomach!

A pause. He leans forward and buries his face in his hands.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
How I miss Vipsania! What have I done, Mother? What have I done?

Livia has no reply.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

25   EXT. CITY STREET IN ROME - DAY  

A depressed Tiberius wanders through the crowded streets, lost in his thoughts. He rounds a corner and glimpses Vipsania in her litter. Tiberius calls out to her.
TIBERIUS

Vipsania!

Vipsania sees him and turns away. She is pregnant. She doesn’t want Tiberius to see. She places her hand over her belly and speaks to her litter bearer.

VIPSANIA

Walk on!

TIBERIUS

(more urgently)
Vipsania!!

Tears well into Vipsania’s eyes. She raises her left arm, telling Tiberius not to approach her. He understands and comes no closer, but follows her all the way to her door, calling her name softly. By the time they have reached Vipsania’s house, there is a crowd of onlookers who have recognized them.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

26 INT. AUGUSTUS’ RECEPTION ROOM AT THE PALACE - DAY

Tiberius and Livia are with Augustus. There are a few guards present. Augustus is furious with Tiberius.

AUGUSTUS

How dare you insult my family! It is the talk of Rome!

Tiberius is impassive like a soldier being dressed down.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)

Chasing your ex-wife through the public streets! You have embarrassed me and my daughter, and your mother!

Augustus collects himself, assumes the posture of a magistrate.
AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
You are my stepson, a member of my household and under my power. If you ever see Vipsania again, if you are ever found in her company, you will pay with your life.

Livia gasps. Augustus turns to her, his finger raised in warning.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
I will NOT have my daughter dishonored. Do you understand, Tiberius? It undermines our position and I cannot allow that. You will never see Vipsania again!

Tiberius lowers his head.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
And don’t think you can hide it from me — nothing escapes my notice.

LIVIA
(moving towards her husband)
Nor mine.

Livia looks imploringly at Tiberius. Augustus is pleased by her support.

AUGUSTUS
(continuing in a softer tone)
You do Vipsania no favors by approaching her, Tiberius, you know that. Gallus is a jealous, spiteful man. If, as they say, she would not speak with you, that should tell you how she feels.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

27 EXT. BY A CAMPFIRE IN AN ARMY CAMP - NIGHT

Tiberius is with his troops, sitting by a fire with several officers. Longus is beside him. Tiberius’ brother Drusus has recently died.

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(in a grim mood)
I can’t believe that, after all the hazards of war – the hand to hand combat, even sailing the North Sea – my brother Drusus should die from a riding accident.

There is a long silence.

LONGUS
None of us knows how we will die, Tiberius, or when.

More silence.

TIBERIUS
(to all present)
When I was in Athens with Augustus, I saw an Indian sage leap into a fire – just to show how little his life meant to him. Zarmarus was his name. Longus was there.

Longus nods, there is a long pause.

TIBERIUS
(looking into the flames)
I could do that!

Everyone is stunned, at a loss for words. Finally, Longus looks meaningfully at Tiberius.

LONGUS
But Zarmarus died joyfully!

Tiberius nods and says no more.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

28  INT. OPEN-AIR COURTYARD AT TIBERIUS’ HOUSE - DAY

Julia is in the courtyard with her children, Gaius, Lucius, Julia
the Younger, Agrippina, and Postumus. Drusulus (aged eight) is also present. She is inspecting Gaius, aged fourteen, who models a military uniform, including cuirass and elaborate helmet.

JULIA
(approvingly)
Yes, Gaius, you look very impressive! The Germans will tremble at the sight of you. One day you will lead the armies of Rome into battle. And then you will be emperor, just like Augustus.

DRUSULUS
But what about my father Tiberius? I thought he was going to be the next emperor?

JULIA
(laughing dismissively)
Oh no, Drusulus, your father is just a general. He doesn’t have the blood of the Julians in his veins. Tiberius is just filling in until my sons are old enough to take his place.
(to everyone)
Can you imagine? Tiberius, emperor?

Julia laughs out loud. The others join in, except for Drusulus.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

29 INT. TAVERN IN ROME - NIGHT

Tiberius is with Longus and a couple of other officers at a tavern. They are drinking and eating a little too well. A couple of Roman knights introduce themselves. They are FLACCUS, intelligent and quick-witted, and his sidekick MARINUS, tall, awkward, and none too bright.

FLACCUS
(obsequiously)
General Tiberius, this tavern belongs to my family. Please allow me to welcome you and (MORE)
FLACCUS (CONT’D)
your friends. My name is Vescularius Flaccus and
this is my business associate, Julius Marinus.
You do us a great honor by coming here. Please
accept our hospitality at no charge, as a
gesture of our respect.

TIBERIUS
That is most gracious of you. Won’t you join us?

Longus is displeased - he doesn’t approve of these two.

DISSOLVE TO:

30 INT. TAVERN IN ROME - NIGHT

After a lot more eating, drinking, and jesting. There is now a
tavern maid for every man in the party, except for Tiberius and
Longus. Marinus is wearing a flat, round loaf of bread as a hat.

FLACCUS
(toasting Tiberius)
General, I have never seen a man drink so much
and hold it so well. You are truly prodigious!
With your permission, I give you a new name:
rather than Tiberius Claudius Nero, you should
be called “Biberius Caldus Mero” - “drinker of
hot wine without water!”

Everyone laughs, including Tiberius - but not including Longus. He
thinks this is disrespectful. The party goes on. Everyone is drunk
and rowdy - with Marinus and Flaccus the lives of the party. All
are celebrating, except for Tiberius and Longus. Tiberius sips his
wine glumly and looks at his Venus ring as he turns it on his finger.
Finally he rises to leave. The room abruptly quiets down.

TIBERIUS
(to Flaccus and Marinus)
Thank you for your generosity, my friends.
Perhaps you will join us on another occasion, so
that I may repay your hospitality?

Both of them bow in agreement.
LONGUS
(agitated)
Tiberius! Why did you encourage those two? They are scoundrels and opportunists - surely you know that?

TIBERIUS
Of course I know that. But they are also the life of the party. If I take them with me, people will concentrate on them rather than on me. Do you see?

LONGUS
(grudgingly)
Yes, I see. But watch your back. I don’t trust them.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

32 EXT. STREET SCENE IN ROME - DAY (A DREAM SEQUENCE)

Vipsania is dreaming in slow motion. Tiberius is following Vipsania’s litter, calling after her.

TIBERIUS
Vipsania! Vipsania!

She finally turns to see him, gets out of the litter and embraces him. They run away together. But the dream is disrupted by Salonina’s angry face.

CUT TO:

33 INT. VIPSANIA’S BEDROOM - MORNING

SALONINA
Vipsania! Vipsania!

Vipsania awakes. Salonina is peering down at her.

(CONTINUED)
SALONINA
(urgently)
Vipsania! Get up at once! There is much to do! Your husband has been named the governor of Asia - a great honor! He will take you with him, not that you deserve it.

VIPSANIA
(surprised)
Will you and Pollio be going, too?

Salonina is looking through Vipsania’s jewelry and clothes.

SALONINA
No, someone has to look after the family’s interests in Rome. I told Gallus that he should leave you here as well, but he wants the people of Asia to see (affectedly) “Marcus Agrippa’s daughter.”

Salonina shakes her head in dismay.

SALONINA (CONT.)
Well, your father was popular there, I suppose. But you will be alone most of the time. Gallus will be traveling to remote parts of the province, collecting taxes.

She turns to face Vipsania.

SALONINA (CONT.)
You had better behave yourself while he is away, or I will boil you in oil when you return! Remember that you will be representing our family.

Vipsania turns away to hide her pleasure at the news.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
Tiberius, with Drusulus, is visiting his sister-in-law Antonia and her three children, Germanicus, Livilla, and Claudius. Tiberius and Antonia are on dining couches, sipping wine and nibbling a snack. Tiberius smiles when he sees Drusulus playing with his cousins.

ANTONIA
You know, Tiberius, I still expect Drusus to return each fall, after the campaigning season has ended. Part of me doesn’t believe he is gone.

Tiberius, sipping some wine, nods.

ANTONIA (CONT.)
Did you know that Augustus ordered me to remarry? I absolutely refused! Drusus was the only man for me - he will never be replaced.

TIBERIUS
(wistfully)
If only I had been as strong as you when it mattered, Antonia!

Tiberius drinks deeply from his wine goblet.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I miss her so much. How is she? How is Vipsania?

ANTONIA
Oh, she is busy with her children, with Drusulus, when she can see him. She is very excited about the trip to Asia with Gallus.

Tiberius swings his legs off the dining couch and sits upright.

TIBERIUS
She is going with him?

ANTONIA
Of course. Does that surprise you?

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
No, I suppose not. It’s just - I always think
of her being here in Rome when I’m away. Near
Drusulus. And, even though I never see her...

Tiberius’ thoughts are racing.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

35 INT. AUGUSTUS’ RECEPTION ROOM IN THE PALACE - DAY

The next day, in Augustus’ chamber. Augustus and Livia are present.
Tiberius enters, wearing a simple tunic rather than a toga or
uniform. Augustus notices the informal dress and disapproves.
Tiberius addresses Augustus as a soldier addressing his commander.

TIBERIUS
Sir, I wish to take an indefinite leave of
absence from my duties, effective immediately.

Augustus is dumbstruck. He pretends not to understand.

AUGUSTUS
Which duties do you mean?

TIBERIUS
My duties as a soldier, as a magistrate, as a
diplomat.

AUGUSTUS
(raging)
As a Roman, you mean?

Tiberius doesn’t flinch.

TIBERIUS
I am worn out, sir. I have served Rome for
twenty years.

AUGUSTUS
(ironically)
And what do you propose doing now, instead of
serving Rome?
TIBERIUS
I will go to the island of Rhodes off the coast of Asia and resume my studies. My teacher, the rhetorician Theodore of Gadara, is still there. I learned much from him during my last stay on the island. And there is the school of the stoic Posidonius.

AUGUSTUS
(shaking his head)
Socrates said that philosophy should be set aside when a man grows up.

TIBERIUS
(firmly)
It is because Socrates ignored his own advice that we remember him today.

Both men know that this is not the real issue. Tiberius takes another tack.

TIBERIUS
Caesar, your grandsons, Gaius and Lucius. It is natural that you will want to advance them, now that they are coming of age. Gaius is fourteen, ready to take the toga of manhood. I will only be in his way.

AUGUSTUS
(exasperated)
They are only boys. I need men to help me rule. Now that your brother Drusus is gone, you are the only one I can rely upon.

No! It is entirely out of the question; you would be deserting your post. It would be nothing less than treason!

TIBERIUS
(resolute)
A man’s first duty is to his own conscience - the real treason is to ignore it. I have rebelled against my conscience for the sake of Rome long enough. I will do this!

(CONTINUED)
Augustus turns his back to him.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I will not eat until you grant my request. If
you do not let me go, then I will die and my
death will be on your hands.

Tiberius leaves the room.

LIVIA
(to Augustus)
He means what he says, my dear. Tiberius is slow
to commit himself to a course of action, but
when he does, he never backs down.

AUGUSTUS
(furious)
Then he will starve!

Livia hurries after Tiberius in the hall. She cuts him off and tries
to slap his face, but he catches her hand.

TIBERIUS
Mother, I will not be his victim like father
was. Since I was a teenager, he has made me kill
people, tell lies to them, hurt the ones I love
- all for the sake of duty. I am just a pawn in
his game, to be cast aside when Julia’s boys are
grown. I must live while I can - be my own man.

LIVIA
If you will just be patient...

TIBERIUS
Until Gaius takes my place?

LIVIA
Tiberius, you have enemies. You will be
vulnerable without Augustus’ support.

TIBERIUS
The senate has given me the power of a tribune
for five years. Even Augustus can’t take that
away from me. I will be safe as long as I hold that office.

LIVIA  
(accepting)  
What will you do in Rhodes?

TIBERIUS  
Many things. Recover.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

36  INT. PALACE ROOM - NIGHT  

Livia is with Augustus.

LIVIA  
(distraught)  
He hasn’t eaten in four days. He won’t speak to anyone. He has taken to his bed and he will die there! I know my son! Let him take his holiday; he will come to his senses soon enough.

AUGUSTUS  
I cannot allow him to defy me. He is too important to just wander around the empire like a schoolboy. What will people think of us?

LIVIA  
Does it matter? Perhaps they will think that he is on a mission, touring the empire on your behalf. You know that he is loyal.

AUGUSTUS  
Do I?

LIVIA  
Of course you do. And that he is sensitive, and not well-suited for his position. Give him some time.

Livia strokes Augustus’ shoulder.

(CONTINUED)
LIVIA (CONT.)

Please?

FADE IN:

37    EXT. HARBOR OF OSTIA NEAR ROME - DAY

Tiberius and his party are boarding ship in Ostia, ten miles from Rome. Tiberius’ entourage includes his old friend Longus, a few knights, including Flaccus and Marinus, the obligatory lictors (attendants of his office who carry the fasces - rods and axes that symbolize his right as a tribune to beat or execute anyone he chooses), and a couple of servants.

Livia, Drusulus, Antonia and her children, and some others are present to see him off. Tiberius approaches Drusulus to say goodbye. The boy moves away, angry and fighting back tears. Tiberius is dismayed. He waves to his son as the ship leaves harbor.

CUT TO:

38    EXT. AT SEA - DAY

A violent storm at sea. Foam and spray lash and toss the reeling ship, soaking all aboard her to the bone. Everyone is terrified except for Tiberius, who grins from ear to ear, laughing out loud as the waves throw him from railing to railing.

LONGUS

(shouting)
Have you gone mad?

TIBERIUS

(shouting back)
The greater the danger, the greater the glory. Don’t be afraid, my friend; the stars will protect us. And, if not, there are fates worse than death.

(continuing theatrically)
I have escaped the cave of the Cyclops! Nor storms nor monsters nor sirens nor kings can keep Ulysses from his Penelope!
Longus is bewildered for a long moment. Gradually he understands.

LONGUS
(astonished)
You can’t be serious! Vipsania is married! She is with her new husband!

TIBERIUS
(smiling)
And soon with her old one!

Tiberius continues laughing.

CUT TO:

39 EXT. HARBOR - DAY

Tiberius and his party disembark in Rhodes. They are immediately besieged by the local dignitaries, their leader being a man by the name of Eurymachos. He swarms all over Tiberius.

EURYMACHOS
(obsequiously)
Please, my lord, my name is Eurymachos. Accept my house here in town as your headquarters in Rhodes. It would be a great honor.

TIBERIUS
You are gracious, but I have come here to rest and study. I’ll be looking for a small country house, some distance from the city.

EURYMACHOS
(determined)
I have the perfect place for you, sir. A guest villa on my estate, two miles from town. You may take possession as soon as you wish.

TIBERIUS
(nodding)
Thank you. I will look at it.

DISSOLVE TO:
(A) Tiberius and his party survey the magnificent harbor of Rhodes.

(B) Tiberius and his party view the gigantic bronze fragments of the fallen Colossus of Rhodes, one of the seven wonders of the ancient world.

(B) Tiberius and his party tour the city buildings and marketplace.

CUT TO:

41  EXT. OUTSIDE ASSEMBLY HALL IN RHODES - DAY

At a signal from Tiberius, Longus engages some magistrates near the assembly hall in conversation.

LONGUS
Greetings, friends. I need some information. I would like to pay my respects to the new Roman governor in Asia. Does anyone know his itinerary?

RHODIAN MAGISTRATE ONE
I have just come from Ephesos. The proconsul Gallus is there now, but he will leave this week to begin his tour of the province. First, north to Pergamon, then into the interior.

RHODIAN MAGISTRATE TWO
(addressing the first magistrate)
Will he come to Rhodes?

RHODIAN MAGISTRATE ONE
There are no such plans – Rhodes is not in his province.

LONGUS
(cautiously)
Do you know – will his family travel with him?

RHODIAN MAGISTRATE ONE
No, the lady Vipsania and her attendants will remain in Ephesos.
Tiberius hears from a distance and smiles; his timing seems perfect.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

42 INT. EURYMACHOS’ GUEST VILLA - DAY

Tiberius and his party are settling into the villa. Eurymachos hovers about. Tiberius notices this and realizes he will be in the way.

TIBERIUS

(firmly)
My friend, your hospitality will not be forgotten. But now I must ask you to grant me privacy. I am exhausted from my journey and from my labors - I must have time to myself. You do understand?

EURYMACHOS

(bowing)
Of course! I will leave you now. He points to his house on a nearby ridge. If you should need anything at all, I will be at my villa, just over there. I assure you that you will not be disturbed. All of this is my land - no one enters or leaves it without my knowing.

Tiberius frowns, wondering how he will be able to leave Rhodes without Eurymachos noticing.

DISSOLVE TO:

43 INT. OPEN-AIR COURTYARD - AFTERNOON

Tiberius has summoned everyone into the inner courtyard of the villa.

TIBERIUS

My friends, I am tired of being a prince - like a bird in a cage. I need to get out a bit; see how the other half lives, incognito. But I don’t want anyone to know what I’m up to.

(CONTINUED)
Tiberius looks at Marinus, who has the same general appearance as himself.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Marinus. You are quite the actor. Let’s see your impression of me. March around a little bit. Pace back and forth. Look bad-tempered. Talk to yourself and throw your arms around.

I want Eurymachos to think you are me while I’m gone and I don’t want him to be tempted to visit. Show me!

Marinus is reluctant, but Tiberius encourages him. He bursts into an exaggerated impersonation, striding rapidly with his head jutting forward, muttering to himself. Everyone laughs heartily, including Tiberius.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I want you to look irritable, not insane!

All laugh even louder.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

44 INT. AT FRONT DOOR OF TIBERIUS’ VILLA - BEFORE SUNRISE

Longus helps Tiberius into his disguise - a hooded cloak over an old tunic, with a grimy fleece across his shoulders, a false beard, flecked with gray, weather beaten leather shoes held together with rags, and a crooked wooden staff. Tiberius clasps Longus’ elbows in farewell and disappears into the blackness.

DISSOLVE TO:

45 EXT. HARBOR OF RHODES - SUNRISE

Tiberius selects a merchant ship and approaches the captain.
TIBERIUS
Where to?

CAPTAIN
Ephesos. We don’t need passengers.

Tiberius offers him a handful of silver coins.

CAPTAIN
(scrutinizing the coins)
No.

TIBERIUS
I’ll work, too.

CAPTAIN
And what could you do for me, old man?

Tiberius strides to the cargo being loaded and lifts two seventy-five pound amphorae onto his shoulders as if they were newborn lambs.

CAPTAIN
(very impressed)
Welcome aboard, whoever you are.

DISSOLVE TO:

46 EXT. HARBOR OF RHODES - MORNING

The ship leaves the harbor under sail for the north.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

47 EXT. STREET IN EPHESOS OUTSIDE VIPSANIA’S RESIDENCE - DAY

Vipsania watches Gallus leave for his tax collecting and province-inspecting journey. He rides off on horseback, followed by a contingent of soldiers, servants, bookkeepers, and priests. He gives a perfunctory wave to Vipsania as they start. Vipsania returns the wave, turns her back and smiles to herself. Freedom!

FADE OUT:
An outdoor reception in Ephesos. There is a festival atmosphere, with music and tables loaded with food and drink. Vipsania is the guest of honor. She is seated with several dignitaries. A queue of citizens present her with food, craft work, and other offerings, displaying the talents and prosperity of the city. A pot-bellied man with a huge white beard places a pot full of coins at her feet.

POTTER
My lady, I represent the guild of Ephesian potters. We have collected this donation for the welfare of orphaned girls in our city, to be made in your name, if you please.

VIPSANIA
(smiling)
I would be honored. A splendid offering! Thank you!

POTTER
My lady, your connections do you honor. Not only are you the daughter of Marcus Agrippa, but you are also the stepdaughter of Julia, the daughter of Caesar!

Vipsania winces slightly at the mention of Tiberius’ new wife.

POTTER (CONT.)
What a great lady to be connected to. Yes, you are the most fortunate of women!

VIPSANIA
(softly)
So it would seem.

CUT TO:

Later, the reception guests are mingling. A magistrate introduces Vipsania to the high priestess of Artemis.
EPHESIAN MAGISTRATE
Permit me to introduce her serene highness
Artemis, high-priestess of our revered goddess.
In Rome, our goddess is known as Diana of Ephesos. The entire world honors her as the
great and beneficial mother of us all.

The two women greet each other warmly and feel an instant rapport. They are soon chatting together, away from the crowd.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. TABLE UNDER TENT IN EPHESOS - EVENING

Vipsania and ARTEMIS, already fast friends, are chatting.

ARTEMIS
I saw your reaction to the potter’s speech. That was unfortunate.

VIPSANIA
I must learn to hide my feelings better! But he was not to know...

ARTEMIS
...that your father’s widow stole your husband? Everyone knows that.

VIPSANIA
Not how I feel about it.

ARTEMIS
How do you feel about it?

Vipsania reflects for a moment.

VIPSANIA
We Romans are taught to put duty to family and country above all else. I was prepared for the sacrifice mentally, but not emotionally. I truly loved Tiberius. I still do.

Another thoughtful moment.

(CONTINUED)
VIPSANIA (CONT.)
It would be easier if my new family wasn’t so
different from my old one. And if there wasn’t a
statue of Tiberius on every corner.

Vipsania looks across the courtyard and sees a statue of Tiberius.

ARTEMIS
The lady Julia was with your father when he came
to Ephesos. I met her. A brilliant woman; very
quick-witted.

VIPSANIA
Oh yes, and beautiful.

ARTEMIS
She reminded me of Cleopatra. Which is ironic,
considering Augustus’ views on Cleopatra.

VIPSANIA
(impressed)
You met Cleopatra?

ARTEMIS
Yes, I was a novice at the time, but I was
assigned to her apartments so I had the chance
to observe her. Like Julia, she was bright and
ambitious, and very amorous. Restless, too.
Always pushing ahead.

Artemis laughs to herself. Vipsania tilts her head to ask why.

ARTEMIS (CONT.)
I think that both Cleopatra and Julia resented
the fact that the goddess’s house was bigger
than theirs.

Both women laugh.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
(A) Vipsania approaches the magnificent temple. Artemis greets her.

(B) She tours the temple complex with Artemis and their attendants. Vipsania admires the lavish temple decorations and the numerous statues and shrines in the vicinity.

(C) They stroll through the groves of rare and ancient trees and gaze at the purple hills beyond.

(D) When the flutes and cymbals begin to trill, Vipsania returns to the temple and watches the ritual dancing of the melissae, or priestesses, and the megabyzoi - the eunuch priests who dress like women.

(E) As the music and dancing soar to a crescendo, the towering cypress doors of the temple mysteriously swing open, revealing the awe-inspiring archaic wooden statue of the goddess herself.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

52 EXT. ON A SHIP BOUND FOR EPHESOS - DAY

Tiberius aboard ship, looking at the coastline of Asia Minor. He turns his Venus ring nervously on his finger, anxious to see Vipsania.

DISSOLVE TO:

53 EXT. IN FRONT OF TIBERIUS’ VILLA ON RHODES - DAY

In Rhodes, at the country villa. Marinus does his duty as Tiberius’ stand-in, stomping about in Roman military uniform within the distant view of Eurymachos.

CUT TO:

54 INT. AT FRONT DOOR OF TIBERIUS’ VILLA - EVENING

Marinus and Flaccus have changed into casual Greek attire and are preparing to leave the villa. Longus accosts them.

(CONTINUED)
LONGUS
Where do you think you’re going?

FLACCUS
(irritated)
Eurymachos invited us to dine with him.

LONGUS
But Tiberius declined the invitation.

FLACCUS
And Tiberius isn’t going. We were invited as well, you know. Don’t you think it will seem less suspicious if some of us attend?

Longus thinks it over and reluctantly decides they are right.

LONGUS
But be discreet - no slips.

CUT TO:

55 INT. SMALL ROOM AT EURYMACHOS’ HOUSE - NIGHT

Eurymachos and Flaccus and Marinus are sitting at a table, sharing a jug of wine by lamplight.

FLACCUS
Tiberius is gone - he left early this morning, before sunrise.

EURYMACHOS
(astonished)
What? But I saw him myself this afternoon, outside the villa!

Marinus springs to his feet and marches around as Tiberius.

EURYMACHOS
(understanding)
But why? Where did he go?
FLACCUS
That’s what we want to know. He went toward the harbor. How many ships sailed today? Can you find out?

EURYMACHOS
No more than a dozen. But surely he was recognized?

FLACCUS
No, he was disguised as a poor shepherd, with a gray beard and a hooded cloak. That is what interests me. He doesn’t want anyone to know he is gone. Why?

He claims he just wants to experience life as a common citizen, but there is an urgency about this mission. Tiberius is no rowdy youth, looking to sow some wild oats. Whatever he is doing - he doesn’t want Augustus to know about it.

MARINUS
(to Eurymachos)
Augustus was furious when Tiberius resigned his post. He even called him a deserter. Could Tiberius be planning a rebellion? The armies in the north might support him, after so many campaigns under his command.

FLACCUS
That’s why we’ve come to you. We can’t leave the villa, but you could follow him. When we know what he’s up to, we can decide how to profit from it - all of us.

Eurymachos pushes himself away from the table and strokes his beard.

EURYMACHOS
If you are right about a rebellion, then he would have gone north. Ephesos is the “bank of Asia” that is where he could get the necessary funds. No more than four or five ships (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
EURYMACHOS (CONT’D)
would have sailed in that direction today. I’ll make some enquiries tomorrow morning.

FLACCUS
(firmly)
Now listen, if you try to cut us out, or betray us, you’ll be sorry. If we stick together, we could all do very well from this.

The three men clasp hands and nod in agreement.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

56 EXT. NEAR TEMPLE IN EPHESOS - MORNING

Tiberius in disguise approaches the great temple and sits on the steps, scanning the crowds for Vipsania. Time passes. Suddenly, he hears her voice from behind him. She is only thirty feet away, with the priestess Artemis and a group of attendants. He watches as Vipsania says her goodbyes, gets into her carriage, and drives away. For a moment, Tiberius is paralyzed, but then the priestess turns toward the temple door and he hurries down the steps and calls after her.

TIBERIUS
Sacred mother, a moment please. May I ask your indulgence?

He stops a short distance from her and falls to one knee. She considers him for a moment, then holds out her hand. He kisses it. She gestures toward the temple.

ARTEMIS
Come, my child.

CUT TO:

57 INT. TEMPLE CHAMBER IN EPHESOS - MORNING

Artemis and Tiberius are seated facing each other. A couple of her attendants are present.
TIBERIUS

(warily)
The lady who was with you just now ... we are acquainted. I... I knew her father.

He slips the Venus ring Vipsania gave him into her hand.

TIBERIUS
Would you show her this ring and beg her to see me? Privately?

Artemis looks closely at the ring and returns it to Tiberius.

ARTEMIS
(bluntly)
Who are you? What do you want with Vipsania?

Tiberius says nothing. Artemis understands and waves the attendants out of the room.

ARTEMIS (CONT.)
Whatever you say in the temple of Artemis is between us and my goddess. Have no fear.

Reassured, Tiberius takes off his false beard.

TIBERIUS
My name is Tiberius Claudius Nero.

Artemis digests these words for some time.

ARTEMIS
And what do you want with Vipsania?

TIBERIUS
I must see her; I must know that she is safe. I must see her once more and tell her that I am sorry.

ARTEMIS
(alarmed)
That is not good enough!

She looks intently at Tiberius.

(CONTINUED)
ARTEMIS (CONT.)
But I believe that you love her, and would not
harm her.

A pause while she considers.

ARTEMIS (CONT.)
Come to the front of the temple tomorrow, before
the end of the third hour. An attendant will
lead you into this room. If Vipsania agrees, I
will bring her to you.

Tiberius takes her hand and kisses it. She places her other hand on
his head.

ARTEMIS (CONT.)
(affectionately)
My poor son, you have suffered greatly. May you
find peace.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

58 EXT. NEAR EPHESOS TEMPLE - AFTERNOON

Vipsania is with Artemis. They are walking through the temple
grounds.

ARTEMIS
I was wondering, my dear, do you think often of
Tiberius? Where he is - what he is doing?

VIPSANIA
(uncomfortable)
Tiberius? I try not to think about him at all,
Artemis. I must forget. Tiberius is yesterday.

ARTEMIS
(pointedly)
And maybe tomorrow.

Vipsania stares at her, uncomprehending. Artemis moves closer.
ARTEMIS

(softly)
Vipsania, he is here, in Ephesos! He came to me this morning and showed me a ring - a blue stone with the image of Venus, just as you described. He wants to see you.

VIPSANIA

(reeling)
It’s impossible! How could he be here? Why would he want to see me? It is forbidden!

She reflects and continues after a pause.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
What did you say to him?

ARTEMIS
I told him I would ask you. He will come to the temple tomorrow morning. I said that I would bring you to him if you agree. I made him no promises.

VIPSANIA
(without conviction)
No! It cannot happen! I couldn’t bear it! What if someone sees us? What if Gallus finds out?

ARTEMIS
(cautiously)
I believe I can promise you secrecy. There is always a risk. He has taken a great chance in coming here - he wears a disguise.

VIPSANIA
As what?

ARTEMIS
As a very tall shepherd with a noble bearing and a false beard.

Vipsania bursts into laughter – she cannot stop. Finally she composes herself and becomes serious.

(CONTINUED)
VIPSANIA
Should I see him? Can I see him?

ARTEMIS
I think you must, my dear. But sleep on it first. Perhaps the goddess will guide you. If you decide against it, I believe he will understand.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

59 EXT. CITY STREETS IN EPHESOS - MORNING

The next morning. Tiberius is walking to the temple. He overhears a man talking.

EPHESIAN
Yes, that’s right. The governor has postponed his visit to Pergamon. He’s on his way to Rhodes right now, to pay his respects to Tiberius, who arrived there a couple of weeks ago.

Tiberius is stunned and heartbroken. He does an about-face and runs off to find a ship for Rhodes.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. ROAD TO EPHESOS TEMPLE - MORNING

Vipsania in her carriage, hurrying to the temple, anxious to see Tiberius. When she arrives, she climbs the steps so quickly that her attendants can’t keep up with her. Her eyes are darting from face to face, looking for Tiberius. Finally, Vipsania sees Artemis moving towards her. The priestess takes Vipsania aside.

ARTEMIS
(whispering)
He has not come. I do not know why. Something must have happened.

Vipsania exhales - but has difficulty breathing in again. Artemis guides her to a marble bench and they sit quietly for a moment.
Suddenly, Vipsania is composed. She looks at Artemis and is a little embarrassed.

ARTEMIS
I’m so sorry. I’m certain he will explain when he can. There was a reason for this.

VIPSANIA
(very softly)
Yes, there was a reason. I had forgotten how much I love him.

CUT TO:

61  EXT. ON A SHIP AT SEA - DAY  61

Tiberius on board another ship, racing back to Rhodes.

CUT TO:

62  INT. FRONT DOORWAY OF TIBERIUS’ VILLA IN RHODES - AFTERNOON  62

Longus is at the front door talking with Gallus, who is with his entourage. Gallus is anxious to get into the villa and keeps looking past Longus, trying to spot Tiberius.

LONGUS
Gaius Asinius Gallus, you are most welcome, but please listen to me. Tiberius is not here right now. He has gone hunting in the high country. I am not certain when he will return.

GALLUS
(impatiently)
Listen, Longus, I broke away from very important business in my province to see him. I won’t be kept waiting!

LONGUS
Perhaps tomorrow, then.

GALLUS
This is a small island - send a servant to tell him I am here.

(CONTINUED)
LONGUS
He may be difficult to find.

GALLUS
(angrily)
Find him!

CUT TO:

INT. FRONT DOORWAY OF TIBERIUS' VILLA IN RHODES - MORNING

The next morning. Longus watches Gallus and his entourage approaching the front door of the villa. Suddenly, Tiberius appears behind him.

LONGUS
(relieved)
Thank the gods, you have returned!

TIBERIUS
(breathlessly)
Am I in time?

LONGUS
Only just. Gallus arrived yesterday, but I told him you were hunting.

Tiberius is putting on his toga.

TIBERIUS
What about Eurymachos? Did he suspect?

LONGUS
He went away on business just after you left - we’ve heard nothing of him.

Gallus is ushered into a reception room in the villa where Tiberius is seated, his lictors and other attendants standing on either side of him. They nod stiffly to each other.

GALLUS
Salutations, Tiberius Claudius Nero, Tribune of the Roman people and protector of the State.
TIBERIUS
(mechanically)
Greetings Gaius Asinius Gallus, noble senator, ex-consul, and Proconsul of Asia.

GALLUS
(bluntly)
Tiberius, I have come here because your rank requires it. I have received no instructions from Rome - will you require my assistance during your mission here?

TIBERIUS
(flatly)
I have no mission here. I am retired. I have come to study and to rest, that is all.

GALLUS
Will you be inspecting my province?

TIBERIUS
I have no plans to visit your province or any other. If I do, it will be as a private citizen.

Gallus realizes that Tiberius has no real authority over him, just an empty title.

GALLUS
(sneeringly)
Vipsania sends you no greeting. She is very busy with our children, engrossed in her new life. We are very happy.

Tiberius stands up abruptly and hurries Gallus to the door.

TIBERIUS
(abruptly)
It grieves me that you interrupted your duties to come here, Gallus. I assure you, I won’t interfere in your administration. Have a safe voyage to ... where do you go from here?

GALLUS
To Pergamon, to continue my tour of the province.

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(coldly)
May you arrive there safely, and serve Rome well.

Tiberius and Longus watch Gallus and his men leave. Tiberius’ attendants move away, leaving only Tiberius and Longus.

LONGUS
What will you do now?

TIBERIUS
Kill myself!

He glances in exasperation at Longus and grins.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I think I would if I had to live with that man.
Poor Vipsania!

LONGUS
Did you see her?

TIBERIUS
Yes, I saw her, but she didn’t see me. I was arranging a meeting when I heard about Gallus. She knows I was in Ephesos by now. I have to go back, Longus. As soon as Gallus is safely away.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

64 EXT. HARBOR IN EPHESOS - DAY

A frustrated Eurymachos, carrying his sack, is approaching the harbor to board ship for Rhodes. As he nears the docks, he spots Tiberius in disguise coming the other way, having just returned to Ephesos. Eurymachos turns about face and follows him.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
Vipsania’s carriage rolls toward the temple. As she climbs out of her carriage, Artemis joins her and escorts her into a grove of trees in the temple precinct. She seats Vipsania on an ornately carved marble bench.

VIPSANIA
What is it, Artemis, a picnic? Would you mind terribly if we didn’t? I’m not feeling very festive today.

ARTEMIS
Not a picnic, but a surprise you might like.
Wait here a moment.

Artemis moves away, taking their attendants with her. Vipsania sits alone, looking up into the trees. She listens to a cricket and notices when it stops chirping. A man appears from behind a tree, lowering his hood and stripping off his false beard as he moves into view. It is Tiberius. They gaze at each other in silence.

Tiberius sits beside her, softly molding her cheeks with his fingers, as if to confirm that she is real. The spell is broken and they embrace. Eventually, Artemis appears, moving tentatively towards them.

TIBERIUS
(to Artemis)
Thank you!

ARTEMIS
It is nothing. But you will want time alone. I have a cottage, not far from here. No one goes there. It is my escape. Let me show you.

CUT TO:

66 INT. COTTAGE NEAR THE TEMPLE IN EPHESOS - DAY

Artemis shows Vipsania and Tiberius to a small cottage near the stables - just two rooms. It is clean, private, sparsely furnished - there is a bed. Artemis leaves them alone.

DISSOLVE TO:
Tiberius and Vipsania sit together at a table, eating dates for breakfast. Vipsania looks out the window at a religious ceremony beyond the trees, in front of the temple. The music can be heard in the distance.

VIPSANIA
What a lovely place this is. I wish that we could stay here forever, Tiberius. This is all I could ever want, hidden away from the world.

TIBERIUS
Yes, that would be ... perfect. Until Gallus returned.
(urgently)
We must be together, Vipsania. There is a way. Come with me to Parthia! I have connections there. We can sail to Antioch and cross the frontier with a caravan. The Parthians are civilized people; they will treat us well.

For a moment, Vipsania is tempted. But then she knows it would be a mistake.

VIPSANIA
(carefully)
We would never see Drusulus again. I would never see my children again. They would be at the mercy of Julia and Gallus. And you would become nothing but a curiosity; a pawn in the Parthian court. You would be miserable.

TIBERIUS
I am miserable without you. We would be together.

VIPSANIA
(taking his hand)
You are destined for greatness, my love. You would be trading a life of achievement for one of inactivity and powerlessness.
TIBERIUS
(in earnest)
Don’t you see? I have already given that up to be with you. I left Julia. I defied Augustus. It was the only way I could atone for what I did to you; to us.

VIPSANIA
(struggling to remain sensible)
No! You cannot change what has happened, my love. We cannot go back. Drusulus’ future, my children’s futures – everything depends on what we do now!

TIBERIUS
Are you happy with Gallus? Is that it?

VIPSANIA
No, NO! You know I am not! I am just one of his possessions. He thinks to himself: this statue once belonged to Crassus, this table to Mark Antony, this woman to Tiberius. But he is not cruel; he does not beat me.

Tiberius gives her an ironic look. Vipsania ignores it and continues.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
My love, there is more to life than happiness. We have children, and duties – to ourselves as well as to others. We would live to regret it. And then we would resent each other; our feelings for each other would change.

Tiberius is devastated, but he cannot argue with her. Vipsania continues.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
There is hope. Life is uncertain. No one knows what the future holds, except maybe your stars. Did they tell you we should live in Parthia?

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(looking down)
No. They predict only military victory,
political success, and domestic misery. I was
trying to alter fate, to seize control of our
lives. I guess I knew it was hopeless.

Vipsania kisses him on the cheek.

VIPSANIA
Not hopeless, my love. And we have these fresh
memories to see us through. Remember, we are
always together in our hearts.

Tiberius nods gravely. She lifts his chin and kisses him gently, he attempts to smile.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

68 EXT. DOORWAY OF COTTAGE IN EPHESOS - SUNRISE

Tiberius, in his disguise, is leaving Vipsania at the cottage door. They kiss and caress at length. He walks away, turning back for another look several times. She waves. They are both weeping.

When Tiberius has disappeared from view, Vipsania reenters the apartment, closes the door, and leans against it from the inside. She daydreams for a moment, but is interrupted by a knock on the door. She smiles, thinking it is Tiberius returning for another kiss. She is startled to see a stranger.

EURYMACHOS
(grinning)
My lady, you have had a very important visitor.

VIPSANIA
(reeling)
Who are you? What do you want?

EURYMACHOS
Your patronage, lady.
VIPSANIA
That is a matter for my husband and he is away.

EURYMACHOS
(wryly)
I don’t think you want your husband involved in this. The emperor would pay a great deal for this information. Everyone knows Tiberius is forbidden to see you.

Vipsania looks around to make sure no one is watching.

VIPSANIA
Come inside.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

69 INT. ARTEMIS’ ROOM IN TEMPLE AT EPHESOS - DAY

Vipsania is alone with Artemis.

ARTEMIS
(agitated)
Blackmail?! But you mustn’t pay. When did he approach you?

VIPSANIA
Just after Tiberius left - two months ago. I didn’t want to burden you with it, but I must tell someone. I have been sending him money. I have no choice, Artemis. He saw me with Tiberius. Augustus has forbidden us to meet on pain of death.

ARTEMIS
Surely the emperor didn’t mean it. He wouldn’t kill his wife’s own son?

VIPSANIA
I can’t take that chance. In any case, it would mean disgrace, for both of us.

(CONTINUED)
Artemis shakes her head in dismay.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
There is more.

A long pause.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
I’m pregnant. By Tiberius.

Artemis gasps.

ARTEMIS
Could Gallus think it is his?

VIPSANIA
No, we haven’t been together that way in a long time.

There is a pause. Vipsania answers the unasked question.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
Yes, I have thought about abortion - then Gallus would never know.

ARTEMIS
(cautiously)
I understand there are excellent physicians in Ephesos who perform the operation. There would be very little risk.

VIPSANIA
(with feeling)
I cannot do it, even though it would be so much easier for me. This is Tiberius’ child - our child. It seems a miracle for us to be connected in this way again. I cannot put an end to that, whatever the consequences. My only real fear is for the child’s future. Gallus will be furious - he will expose it.
She suddenly grasps Artemis’ thigh.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
(imploringly)
Promise me you will arrange for its care?

ARTEMIS
(taking her hand)
Of course, my dear. We will bring it to the temple and look after it until I can find a good home. You have my solemn vow.

VIPSANIA
(relieved)
But the child must never know who its parents are. It would be a curse. I want it to have a simple, happy life. The life that Tiberius and I always wanted, without the shackles of high birth.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

70  INT. MAIN ROOM OF VIPSANIA’S HOUSE IN EPHESOS - EVENING

Gallus, Vipsania, several servants, and SYRIACUS, Gallus’ friend from Rome, are together. Vipsania dislikes Syriacus. When he looks at her, she instinctively places her hand on her belly, as if to protect her womb. Syriacus notices this.

GALLUS
(to Syriacus, excitedly)
I tell you, my friend, it exceeded my wildest expectations. After I have made my payments to the emperor and to the senate, I’ll still have a million and a half drachmas for myself. And I haven’t even been to the southern cities yet!

SYRIACUS
And I see that you are expecting another child. Congratulations, Gallus! May it be a son!

(CONTINUED)
GALLUS
(dumbfounded)
What are you talking about? Vipsania is not pregnant!

SYRIACUS
I believe you will find that she is.

Vipsania is terrified. She hurries out of the room. Gallus fumes.

CUT TO:

71 INT. ROOM IN VIPSANIA’S HOUSE IN EPHESOS — LAMPLIGHT

Vipsania is bare to the waist. A soldier is lashing her with a whip made of leather cords. Syriacus is present. There is no blood, but her back has several red stripes.

GALLUS
(furious)
Who is he? I demand to know! A tradesman? A soldier? A slave? You have dishonored my family!

VIPSANIA
(in tears)
I will never tell you! Isn’t my shame sufficient punishment?

SYRIACUS
(in a low voice to Gallus)
Perhaps a little blood will loosen her lips?

Gallus shudders slightly, surprised by this suggestion.

GALLUS
No, she is still my wife, the mother of my sons.
(to Vipsania)
But so much for the “noble” Vipsania! “Too good for Gallus” indeed! The daughter of the “great Agrippa” — nothing but a whore!

Gallus signals to the soldier to stop the whipping.
GALLUS (CONT.)
Whoever he is, you will never see him again. I’m taking you to Sardis with me. Your confinement will be total and you will have the child there in secret. I’ll not have my reputation soiled by your degradation!

Gallus storms out of the room. Vipsania is stunned and weeping aloud – Artemis will not be able to save her child after all.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

72 INT. BEDROOM OF HOUSE IN SARDIS – AFTERNOON

Vipsania is in childbirth. A baby girl is born. Gallus sweeps into the room, stands by the side of the bed, never looking at Vipsania. In a time-honored Roman ritual, a servant places the baby at his feet.

SERVANT
It is a girl, Master.

He glances briefly at the child, looking down his nose.

GALLUS (breezily)
No! I will not raise this one. Have the child exposed.

Vipsania breaks into uncontrollable sobs. She pulls herself out of the bed, wraps a green blanket around her baby and surreptitiously places the Trojan horse pendant Tiberius gave her around the child’s neck. Vipsania says a prayer and kisses her child. A servant picks up the bundle and leaves the room, followed by Gallus and the other attendants.

Vipsania rushes to the window, trying to catch a final glimpse. She can see the child placed at the base of a column some distance away. She can hear the child crying in the distance. She sobs and listens. After a while, the baby’s crying stops. Vipsania looks and sees two people carry her child away. Vipsania lets out a cry of relief. She sheds more tears.

(CONTINUED)
VIPSANIA
(softly to herself)
She lives! Our baby lives!

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

73 INT. KITCHEN AT VIPSANIA’S HOUSE IN ROME - DAY

Vipsania is with Salonina. Salonina picks up an oil-soaked sponge and throws it in her face.

SALONINA
(furious)
And this is how you repay our kindness - cheating on my son? I knew you shouldn’t have been allowed so much freedom! Well, now that I know you can’t be trusted, don’t expect to be!

CUT TO:

74 INT. HALLWAY IN JULIA’S HOUSE IN ROME - DAY

Julia takes Vipsania and her servant into a room where Drusulus is practicing with a wooden sword. He barely takes notice of her - tolerates her embrace without stopping his swordplay.

VIPSANIA
Drusulus! Aren’t you happy to see me?

DRUSULUS
Why should I be? I thought you had forgotten about me.

VIPSANIA
How could I forget about my own son? You knew I was going away. I wrote to you. Why didn’t you write to me?

DRUSULUS
I got no letters from you. I think you are lying. I hear Father is sulking in Rhodes, all washed up. Augustus will never let him come back.
Vipsania grabs him by the shoulders and looks into his eyes.

VIPSANIA
Your father is a great man and Augustus needs him. He is taking a well-deserved break; that is all. He will come back some day. I know he longs to see you.

DRUSULUS
That’s a lie; he could have taken me with him!

Tears come to his eyes – he wipes them away quickly.

VIPSANIA
No! He knows that you are happier here in Rome.

DRUSULUS
It doesn’t matter anyway. I am happier here. I don’t care if I never see him again.

VIPSANIA
(changing the subject)
How are your studies? How do you like to spend your time?

DRUSULUS
Study is boring. I like the games! I know a few of the best gladiators! I saw one of them get killed a few days ago - the blood spurted from his neck like a fountain!

VIPSANIA
(ghast)
You attend the games? They let you attend the games at your age?

DRUSULUS
Of course! Augustus says it will make me ready to be a soldier; it will teach me how to kill and how to die. He says he needs soldiers. Even more since Father deserted him.

CUT TO:
As Vipsania leaves Julia’s house, she works her way through a crowd of toadies – actors, gladiators, partiers. A dignified looking senator named Sextus approaches her.

SEXTUS
Pardon me! Lady Vipsania!

She recognizes him and walks towards him.

VIPSANIA
Greetings, Sextus.

SEXTUS
What a surprise to see you here! But since you are, there is a business matter I wish to discuss with you.

He takes her aside.

SEXTUS (CONT.)
Forgive me for bringing this up in such a place.

Vipsania is perplexed.

SEXTUS (CONT.)
There is a Greek who owes me a great deal of money. A man named Eurymachos of Rhodes.

Vipsania is stunned.

SEXTUS (CONT.)
He says that you are acquainted with him and that you will gladly satisfy his obligations, but that I shouldn’t let your husband know of our arrangement. Have I done wrong in approaching you?

Vipsania considers. Sextus appears to be entirely innocent of the true circumstances.

VIPSANIA
Sextus, you are an old friend of my brother-in-law Drusus, and of Tiberius, so I will do what I
can. But my means are limited. What is the sum
that he owes you?

SEXTUS
A million sesterces.

VIPSANIA
(staggered)
I cannot cover that amount!

SEXTUS
I understand, but Eurymachos said you would be
willing to pay the interest, while he arranges
for the payment of principal.

VIPSANIA
How much would you need?

SEXTUS
Only 100,000 a year.

Vipsania winces – this is a lot of money for her.

VIPSANIA
When will you need the money?

SEXTUS
We agreed that interest would be paid every
other month. There is no hurry – we can begin
next month. I will let you know when Eurymachos
has repaid me, of course.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

76 INT. BATHS AT TIBERIUS’ VILLA ON RHODES – DAY

Tiberius is belly down on a table as a servant massages his back.
Longus rushes into the room.

LONGUS
(breathlessly)
Tiberius! I have important news from Rome!

(CONTINUED)
Tiberius waves him off.

TIBERIUS
Spare me, Longus. It’s always “Gaius and Lucius, Gaius and Lucius”. I don’t care what happens in Rome anymore.

LONGUS
You’ll care about this! Julia has fallen! Augustus has banished her from Rome! For “moral turpitude.” It seems her debauchery has finally done her in.

Tiberius is stunned.

CUT TO:

INT. TIBERIUS’ OFFICE IN HIS VILLA AT RHODES - DAY

Tiberius is reading a letter from his mother Livia. Longus sits nearby, watching him.

LIVIA (O.C.)
My dear son. Rome is in uproar; Julia is disgraced! Many of her lovers and cronies have been punished. Sempronius Gracchus has been exiled. Iullus Antonius, Mark Antony’s son, has committed suicide.

You will hear that she has been accused of “numerous adulteries and immoral behavior,” which have only now been discovered by Augustus. The truth is much more sinister. She was at the center of a plot to overthrow the government!

The ramifications will become clearer as time goes on, but you will be anxious to know where you stand, and what has become of Drusulus. He has been taken into the family of Gaius Asinius Gallus, much to Vipsania’s relief. Gallus says that he will treat him as his own son.
Julia’s misdeeds have put you in a better light with Augustus. He has signed a bill of divorce in your name, freeing you from further obligation to her. But he will not let you return to Rome, should you wish to. Your tribunician power would overshadow Gaius and Lucius and he wants their preeminence to be clear.

Also, he has not forgiven you for leaving against his orders, though I think he now has a better understanding of what it was to be Julia’s husband.

Tiberius’ hands are trembling.

LONGUS
Not as indifferent to events in Rome as you thought?

TIBERIUS
She was planning to overthrow her own father - with the son of his old enemy Mark Antony. Can you imagine? Thank the gods my son is safe. He is with Vipsania now.

DISSOLVE TO:

78 INT. VIPSANIA’S OFFICE IN ROME - DAY

Vipsania is at her desk, composing a letter. She reconsiders, crumples the scroll, and tosses it aside. Then she reconsiders again, selects a new scroll and resumes writing.

VIPSANIA (V.O.)
Dear Sextus, I regret to say that I will no longer be making interest payments on behalf of Eurymachos of Rhodes. As you must have heard, there has been a change in my family situation.

She pauses to consider, then speaks out loud.
VIPSANIA (CONT.)
Surely Augustus won’t care, now that Julia is gone!

She thinks for a moment, then confidently rolls up the scroll.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
May the gods make it so!

CUT TO:

79 INT. TIBERIUS’ OFFICE ON RHODES - DAY

Tiberius at his desk, writing a letter. The floor is strewn with crumpled scrolls - earlier attempts at composition.

TIBERIUS (V.O.)
...Caesar, I know that you were displeased by my retirement, that you felt I had abandoned my responsibilities. However, now that your grandsons Gaius and Lucius are grown men, I am able to confess the true reasons for my departure.

It was clear to me that Gaius and Lucius should be without rivals. I knew that I might be seen as standing in their way, so I removed myself and allowed them to come into their own as your undoubted heirs.

Now that this has happened, I beg you to allow me to return to my home and see the members of my family, whom I greatly miss...

CUT TO:

80 INT. TIBERIUS’ OFFICE ON RHODES - DAY

The reply from Augustus has arrived, bearing the imperial seal. Tiberius is afraid to read it. Finally, he unrolls the scroll carefully, reading it one line at a time.
AUGUSTUS (O.C.)
Your letter requesting permission to return to Rome has been received by me...

A pause. Tiberius composes himself.

AUGUSTUS (O.C.)(CONT.)
Concerning the members of your family, whom you were so eager to leave...

A pause.

AUGUSTUS (O.C.)(CONT.)
Abandon all hope of seeing them, or the city of your birth, ever again...

Tiberius is stunned. Then angry. He begins to weep.

AUGUSTUS (O.C.)(CONT.)
You have made your bed; now lie in it!

Tiberius stands up and throws the scroll against the wall.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

81 EXT. ON TOP OF A TOWER IN RHODES - NIGHT

Tiberius, Longus, and the astrologer THRASYLLUS are gazing at the stars. A servant holds a torch.

TIBERIUS
I must know how long I will have to endure this exile, Thrasyllus. What do you see in the stars?

THRASYLLUS
(pointing at the sky)
There is the influence of the bull. Taurus is rising and blocking your progress. Do you know what this means?

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(impressed)
Yes! Taurus is Gaius, Julia’s eldest son. He has taken my place in Rome. And now he has come to the East.

THRASYLLUS
Then you must placate him. Humble yourself; then all obstacles will be removed.

TIBERIUS
You are quite right. Gaius is nineteen now; he must see me as his rival. I will appeal to him.

You must stay and advise me, Thrasyllus – teach me to read the stars.

THRASYLLUS
(humbly)
I am at your service.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Tiberius and Longus are sitting under a tree, watching Thrasyllus use his astrological computer (cf. the Antikythera Mechanism) to read Tiberius’ horoscope. Tiberius is impatient for the results.

TIBERIUS
Well? What does it say?

THRASYLLUS
A moment – there is much to consider.

TIBERIUS
There is always much to consider, but nothing ever happens. I send letters – Gaius says “no.” It is always the same.
THRASYLLUS

Not this time! If my calculations are correct - and they always are - your reprieve is on that ship, just entering the harbor. You will be allowed to return to Rome.

Tiberius and Longus jump to their feet and look at a Roman warship approaching the dock.

LONGUS

Don’t be ridiculous, Thrasyllus! You can’t be that precise.

THRASYLLUS

(confidently)

Look at the sail!

The sail bears a large image of Taurus, the bull.

TIBERIUS

(laughing)

The bull! Thrasyllus, you are amazing! But if there is no reprieve on board, I’ll throw you off this cliff myself!

Thrasyllus isn’t sure if he’s joking or not. He furiously manipulates his computer, checking his own horoscope. Tiberius and Longus laugh heartily.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

83 EXT. ON A ROAD CLOSE TO ROME - DAY

Approaching the walls of Rome, Tiberius, Thrasyllus, and Longus are riding in a cart. Suddenly, Tiberius jumps out and runs ahead. He traces his fingers over the tombs and monuments along the way, through the leaves of the overhanging trees, over the grass and weeds by the roadside. When he walks through the gate, he falls flat on his face and kisses the earth.

CUT TO:
Tiberius enters. Augustus and Livia are present. Livia rushes to her son and smothers him with kisses. Tiberius is moved and surprised. Tiberius approaches Augustus warily. They hesitate, but then embrace warmly. Augustus sheds copious tears as he pats Tiberius on the back. Augustus finally breaks away and speaks.

AUGUSTUS
(cheerfully)
My dear Tiberius, now that you are back in Rome, you must remarry! You know, it is against the law for you to remain single. There are penalties.

Augustus waves his finger ominously, but in jest.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
Seriously, Drusulus needs a mother. You can start a new family. We must set an example for society.

TIBERIUS
(firmly)
I will never marry again. Never! There was only one woman for me, and you took her away.

Augustus begins to react, but Tiberius cuts him off.

TIBERIUS
(lightening up)
No! That is the past. I have not come home to dwell on the past. I have a son who needs me. I will live for him now.

And Drusulus already has a mother. He is with her now. If I am going to be a true father to him, I will need to see her. Do I have your permission?

AUGUSTUS
Vipsania? Yes, now that you are divorced from Julia, I have no objection. But don’t think of rekindling the flame, Tiberius. She is married to an important man. I will not tolerate adultery—by anyone.
TIBERIUS
No. I only want to consult with her - about our son’s career and marriage.

Augustus puts his hand on Tiberius’ shoulder.

AUGUSTUS
I want you to know that the problems we have had will not reflect on your son. I have great hopes for his future; he comes from good stock.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

85 INT. MAIN ROOM AT VIPSANIA’S HOUSE IN ROME - DAY

Vipsania sits with Salonina. They are choosing fabrics; a vendor busies himself presenting his wares. Suddenly, the doorman appears in the room to announce a guest.

DOORMAN
Tiberius Claudius Nero.

Vipsania is thrilled. She struggles to remain composed. Salonina’s mouth drops open.

SALONINA
(to a servant)
Fetch the master at once!

Salonina stands to greet Tiberius, who glances at Vipsania and swallows, but hides his feelings. Vipsania rises and moves to Salonina’s side. She looks at Tiberius and begins to smile. Tiberius notices and can’t help smiling back at her. Salonina is furious - she pushes Vipsania behind her, but Vipsania moves forward.

VIPSANIA
Dear Tiberius, it is good to see you. I am glad you are back in Rome.

TIBERIUS
I am happy to see you, too, Vipsania. You are looking well.

(CONTINUED)
The words are formal, but they embrace with their eyes. Gallus bursts into the room. He makes a show of being busy with other matters, muttering to his assistant, looking over a scroll or two. Without looking at Tiberius, he finally speaks to him.

**GALLUS**
So you have returned - or come back to Rome, at least. What do you want from me?

**TIBERIUS**
My son!

**GALLUS**
(outraged)
So, now that I have raised and fed and protected him, you want him back, just like that?

**TIBERIUS**
Yes, just like that. He is my son, Gallus.

No one speaks. Finally, Vipsania moves toward Gallus.

**VIPSANIA**
(to Gallus)
Drusulus belongs with his father.

Salonina hisses. Gallus flares briefly, but Vipsania continues.

**VIPSANIA (CONT.)**
Livia will support Tiberius in this, my husband. So will Augustus.

Gallus is defeated. He gathers his scrolls and leaves the room. Salonina and the servants go with him. Vipsania is alone with Tiberius. They share a sigh of relief.

**TIBERIUS**
(softly)
I regret taking Drusulus away from you. You may see him as often as you wish, of course, but it is time for me to be a father to him.
VIPSANIA
Yes, it is what I have hoped for. Let me take you to him.

CUT TO:

86 INT. HALLWAY AT VIPSANIA’S HOUSE IN ROME - DAY

As they walk together through the house, passing the frowns of servants and family members.

TIBERIUS
So, you have been a mother nine times now? Remarkable!

VIPSANIA
Ten actually.

Vipsania immediately realizes she has slipped.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
No, you are right, nine...

TIBERIUS
(thinking he understands)
You were thinking of the one we lost?

VIPSANIA
(relieved)
Yes, of course.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

87 EXT. APPIAN WAY NEAR ROME - DAY

Pollio and Gallus are riding together in a carriage.

POLLIO
I saw Augustus yesterday - he is devastated, as you might expect. Gaius - dead! And only a couple of years after Lucius. All of his plans for the succession - ruined!

(CONTINUED)
GALLUS
But there is still Agrippa Postumus, his other grandson, born after Agrippa died.

POLLIO
Obviously, you’ve never met him. A stupid brute. Augustus won’t advance him. Besides, he’s only fifteen. No, there is only one possible successor now.

GALLUS
You don’t mean...?

POLLIO
(laughing)
Yes, your old friend Tiberius! But don’t get your toga in a twist. This could work out very well for us - if you can swallow just a bit of your pride.

GALLUS
What do you mean?

POLLIO
Well, if Tiberius succeeds Augustus, Drusulus will be in line for the throne. Your sons are his brothers.

You must strengthen this bond, Gallus - and that means you must encourage Vipsania to see Tiberius as much as possible. Let her take your boys to visit Drusulus; they will be her chaperones. The closer she is to Tiberius, the better for our family.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

88 INT. PALACE ROOM IN ROME - DAY

Augustus and Livia together. He is in tears, wearing black. Livia is wearing white, with a veil over her head. Tiberius enters, also in black.
AUGUSTUS
(distraught)
Tiberius! Thank Jove you are here! We must talk.
Now that Gaius is dead, and Lucius...

He breaks into tears, then continues.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
Rome needs you, Tiberius. I am willing to
forgive your past indiscretions and restore you
to full power. But you must take a solemn vow
never to abandon your post again!

TIBERIUS
(stiffening)
I am not inclined to give up my privacy. I feel
too old for military campaigning. Besides, you
have undermined my reputation for so many years
- how can I expect to be taken seriously as a
leader now?

AUGUSTUS
How have I undermined you?

TIBERIUS
By refusing me leave to visit my family when I
was in Rhodes. You made me an exile, scorned and
mocked throughout the empire.

AUGUSTUS
You made yourself an exile. There were reasons for
refusing your return. Gaius needed a clear field.

He begins to weep again at the memory of his loss. Tiberius rolls
his eyes and begins to leave. Livia stops him.

LIVIA
(to both of them)
We are here to discuss the future, not the past.

TIBERIUS
(angrily)
He’s just like a woman. As soon as the discussion
goes against him, he breaks into tears.

(CONTINUED)
LIVIA
(raising her voice)
Then like a woman, he should be treated with respect and compassion!

TIBERIUS
Anyway, I don’t believe in emperors. I do not want to be one.

AUGUSTUS
(suddenly composed)
You know what will happen if I die without a successor? Chaos! Who will take charge? Will you be his servant - or his victim? Perhaps it will be Asinius Gallus? He certainly wants the job.

Tiberius shudders at the thought. Augustus moves closer to him.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
You fancy yourself an old fashioned Roman, don’t you? A man like Scipio, or Cincinnatus, or your father. But what did you do? You retired in the prime of life - to (sarcastically) “study philosophy.”

You left your post because you were “tired.” Rome needed you - she needs you now. Prove that you are a true son of Rome and not a self-centered greekling!

TIBERIUS
(raging)
What is a Roman without a family? Twice, you took away my family! First my mother, and then my wife! You broke my heart! Twice!

Livia’s hands cover her mouth. Augustus stumbles back into his chair and begins to weep again. Tiberius shakes his head in disgust and turns to leave.

AUGUSTUS
(pleading)
No! Stop! You misunderstand me! I am not crying
for me, I am crying for you. You are right. I am sorry. Forgive me!

TIBERIUS
(calming down)
Give me some time. I will think about it.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

89 INT. OPEN-AIR COURTYARD AT TIBERIUS’ HOUSE - AFTERNOON 89

Tiberius is alone with Vipsania.

TIBERIUS
Thank you for coming, Vipsania. You must know what is on my mind. Augustus wants me to return to power. I don’t know if I can do it again.

VIPSANIA
(cautiously)
Can you live with not doing it? Imagine yourself in the future, Tiberius, watching another man rule. Will he be threatened by you? Will he be threatened by Drusulus? Will he let you both live?

Tiberius paces in front of her, rubbing the corners of his mouth.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
But those are negative reasons; there are better ones. You believe that no man can be content who avoids his destiny. Is this not your destiny? Your whole life has prepared you for this – and the gods have prepared no one else. You are kind, you are just, you are capable. Rome is fortunate that the gods have chosen such a man.

Tiberius leans forward and takes her hand.

TIBERIUS
I cannot do it without you.

Vipsania smiles.

(CONTINUED)
VIPSANIA

(softly)
The more power you have, the more I will be able to see you.

Tiberius understands - now the decision is an easy one.

CUT TO:

90  INT. PALACE ROOM IN ROME - DAY

Tiberius is with Augustus.

AUGUSTUS
Well, what do you say?

TIBERIUS
I will do it on one condition: you must adopt me as your own son. That is the only way I can feel secure in my position.

AUGUSTUS
(without hesitation)
Of course I will adopt you. Your new name will be “Tiberius Julius Caesar”!

Both men laugh heartily at this. Then Augustus gets serious.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
But Tiberius, you must remember this. In our position, there is no difference between public and private. An injury done to a member of our family is an injury to the state, a threat to the peace and stability of the empire. If we lose the respect of the senate and people - or especially the army - then rivals will appear and there will be violence.

You are a kind man, Tiberius. So was my great uncle, Julius Caesar. He was too trusting and forgiving. It cost him his life. And it cost the lives of thousands of Romans, because his murder led to civil war.
You must punish those who attack our family, even though you might want to be merciful. Anyone who plots or commits a crime against us — or even withholds vital information from us — is an enemy of the state. Do you see that?

Tiberius hesitates, but then nods.

AUGUSTUS (CONT.)
Never forget. You may be called cruel, even a tyrant, but you will be doing your duty to Rome.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

91 INT. VIPSANIA’S OFFICE IN HER HOUSE IN ROME — DAY

Vipsania is at her desk, writing a letter to her friend, the priestess Artemis.

VIPSANIA (V.O.)
My dear Artemis, May this letter find you well and happy. I am both — especially as Tiberius has been restored to his position as Augustus’ heir and we are free to see each other again. My husband does not object because my connection with Tiberius promises rapid advancement and high offices for all my sons.

DISSOLVE TO:

92 EXT. COLONNADE IN ROME — DAY

On another day, Vipsania is reading Artemis’ reply to her letter as she strolls through a colonnade.

ARTEMIS (O.C.)
My dear Vipsania, I have a story to tell that will delight and amaze you! Some months ago, a high priestess named Melissa came to pay her respects. She is a good woman, gentle and discreet. Shall I tell you where her temple is located? In Sardis! (MORE)
ARTEMIS (O.C.) (CONT’D)
I thought so highly of this woman that I took a chance, for which I believe you will forgive me. I asked her to inquire in her city about a young girl, adopted at such and such a time, wearing such and such a talisman. I did not tell her on whose behalf I asked this favor.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS: HELENA IN ASIA

(A) Helena at her home in Asia with her adoptive family.

(B) Helena frolicking in a pasture with other children and newborn lambs.

(C) Helena carrying water for her mother.

(D) Helena helping to tend the flocks.

ARTEMIS (V.O.)
I believe you will be overjoyed to know that her search was successful! Your daughter flourishes! Her name is Helena, the daughter of Telemachos.

He is, by all accounts, a good man and well-situated. He is a landowner with large flocks of sheep. I am told that Helena is very tall and already beautiful, and that she is teased by the other children that her parents must have been gods.

Neither Helena nor her family is aware that inquiries were made about them.

BACK TO SCENE

Vipsania quakes with joy after reading this news.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:
Tiberius stands off to the side of a third floor balcony with a panoramic view of the Roman Forum. He cannot see the people below, but he hears their voices, their groans of sorrow and fear. Augustus is dead! His new advisor, SEJANUS, approaches him.

SEJANUS
Caesar, now that Augustus is dead, you must address the senate.

TIBERIUS
All in good time, Sejanus. Let the people mourn for a while. Truly, the earth has moved!

A pause.

SEJANUS
Caesar. As you requested, I have summoned Gaius Asinius Gallus. Will you see him now?

TIBERIUS
Yes! Show him in!

Gallus enters with Syriacus. Tiberius glares at Syriacus, who can see he is not welcome and withdraws. He and Sejanus leave the room.

GALLUS
Tiberius, a great man has left us! Accept my condolences for your loss - for Rome’s loss. Augustus is now one of the gods!

TIBERIUS
Yes, but that is not why I summoned you, Gallus.

A long pause.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I ask you to relinquish Vipsania.

Gallus is stunned. He sighs loudly, then replies.

GALLUS
So, you will be that kind of emperor, will you?

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(irritated)
I am asking, Gallus, not demanding. I need an empress. She is the daughter of Marcus Agrippa — it is her birthright. I cannot do what I have to do without her support.

GALLUS
But you have Livia.

TIBERIUS
My mother is an old woman. I need a wife by my side.

GALLUS
If you are truly “asking,” then my answer is “no.” Do you think I will give up the mother of my sons? You made a choice when you divorced her, Tiberius. It seems to be turning out rather well for you. That should be enough.

TIBERIUS
(frowning)
You know that I have no desire to rule, Gallus. Only destiny has put me in this position. It is my intention to restore the senate to its rightful place at the center of power.

GALLUS
(surprised)
If you do not want to be emperor, there are others who do!

TIBERIUS
(loudly)
And I suppose you are among them?

Gallus retreats, realizing he is on dangerous ground.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
(exasperated)
I shouldn’t even have to ask this.
GALLUS
No, you could do to me what Augustus did to your father, what he did to you.

TIBERIUS
(wincing)
But Gallus, you don’t love Vipsania!

GALLUS
(scoffing)
Did you love Julia? No, this isn’t about love, Tiberius. I didn’t marry Vipsania for love. I married her so that I would be connected to the imperial family. If I gave her back to you, I would have nothing.

TIBERIUS
Your sons’ mother would be an empress! That is something.

GALLUS
Then they would be her sons and not mine. And what would I be? A laughing stock. A man without a family! Be warned, Tiberius, if she divorces me, she will lose our children, my children. She will be a stranger to them, I will see to that.

Tiberius stiffens and glares at Gallus - the meeting is over. Gallus leaves.

CUT TO:

94 EXT. STREET OUTSIDE PALACE IN ROME - DAY

Outside in the street, Gallus rejoins Syriacus.

GALLUS
The fool, he wants the senate to rule! The shepherd wants the sheep to tend his flocks for him! Well, I won’t have it! I didn’t marry his ex-wife to be connected to a figurehead!
Tiberius sits in his ceremonial seat in the fully attended senate. A senator stands and addresses Tiberius.

SENATOR ONE
Hail Tiberius Caesar Augustus, worthy son and successor of the divine Augustus Caesar!

As one, the senators stand and cheer. Tiberius squirms and gestures for them to return to their seats.

TIBERIUS
(emphatically)
I refuse the title "Augustus." I cannot take my father’s place.

The senators gasp in unison.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Augustus had divine powers of intellect. I am not his equal. I do not have his gifts or good fortune. And I am getting on in years; I am fifty-six - a quarter century older than he was when he took control of the state. My eyesight is weak, I am weary from the wars.

I have shared the anxieties of rule with Augustus for many years. I know that it is too burdensome for one man, unless that man is touched by the gods, as he was. I am not such a man. I do not want this awesome responsibility.

SENATOR TWO
Do not abandon us, Caesar! We need your strength and wisdom! It is Augustus’ will, it is divine will, for you to rule over us! We beseech you!

The senators echo his sentiments. Tiberius stands up and walks towards the senators.
TIBERIUS

(imploringly)
Don’t you see? No one man can administer so much. But, my brothers, look around you! We do not need to rely on one man! This chamber is full of men who can share the burden, as your ancestors once did. How much better governed will the empire be when we work together!

The senators are alarmed - they erupt into even more urgent pleas for Tiberius to remain as emperor.

TIBERIUS

(reassuringly)
I understand your concerns, noble senators. I do not wish to abandon my duties as a Roman senator and the son of Augustus. I am, after all, your servant - the servant of Rome.

But the task of government is too much for me. If you divide the job into parts, I will undertake the part that you assign to me. What will you take upon yourselves?

Gallus stands to speak. He understands Tiberius’ plan and seeks to sabotage it.

GALLUS

And what part of the empire do you want, Caesar?

He glances at Tiberius slyly - his eyes making it clear that there is a subtle allusion to Vipsania here. Then he turns to the crowd.

GALLUS (CONT.)
Which legions shall be Caesar’s? Which cities? How many ships? How many miles of road? Caesar must choose which part of the empire he will rule!

TIBERIUS

(dismayed and exasperated)
How can the same man be the divider and the chooser?

(CONTINUED)
GALLUS  
(treading carefully)  
I only mean to demonstrate that it is impossible to divide the empire, Caesar. Power must remain in the hands of one suitable man.  
(playing to the crowd)  
And who is more qualified, more deserving to follow the noble Augustus, the savior of the entire world, than his son, the great and noble Tiberius? Two times consul, Triumphator, Imperator, Conqueror of the Alps, Subduer of the Germans, Dalmatians, Illyrians...

The senators rise in thunderous applause. They begin to chant Tiberius’ name (“Caesar”). He has lost the moment. Gallus signals for silence and continues.

GALLUS (CONT.)  
I propose that the month of November, when Caesar was born, be renamed “Tiberius” in his honor.

The senators cheer this motion with great enthusiasm.

TIBERIUS  
(sarcastically)  
And what will you do when there have been thirteen Caesars?

He gets up and leaves the room. Gallus goes back to his seat among the senators, satisfied with his victory.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

96  EXT. FARMHOUSE DOOR NEAR SARDIS, ASIA - EVENING

Helena (now twenty-one) is at her farm. She fingers her carnelian horse and looks up at the sky. Suddenly, the ground begins to shake violently. It is an earthquake! The sound is deafening. Helena runs into the house.
Helena rescues her two-year-old son Telemachos from his crib. She runs out the door carrying him.

The house collapses behind Helena immediately after she exits. She sees her mother CHLOE stumbling around, carrying a lamb. The tremors continue - the ground sways, rising and falling like waves, everything is destroyed. Fires break out in many places where lamps have fallen.

The next morning, Helena, her child, and her mother Chloe walk into the ruined city of Sardis. They are dirty and dazed. The injured and dying are all around them. Much of the city is still in flames. A woman approaches them.

WOMAN IN SARDIS
(breathlessly)
Chloe, Helena! Thank the gods you are alive!
Where are your husbands?

CHLOE
(tearfully)
They are in the Underworld!

The news of the disaster has arrived. A public crier reads from a scroll to a crowd. Vipsania, in her litter, listens nearby.
The gods have wreaked their vengeance upon us! Jupiter, protect us from their fury! The earth has trembled and thousands of men have fallen! Asia is in ruins! Twelve cities have been destroyed: Magnesia, Philadelphia, Cyme, Temnus, Sardis, the hardest hit of all...

Vipsania hears Sardis mentioned.

VIPSANIA
(shrieking)
No!

Vipsania leaps from her litter and runs to the palace.

CUT TO:

101 INT. PALACE IN ROME - DAY

The guards allow Vipsania to pass through the corridors where she searches frantically for Tiberius. She finds him busy with architects and decorators - the palace is being expanded and remodeled.

Tiberius sees that Vipsania is distraught and steers her into an empty room. When they are alone, she sobs uncontrollably. Tiberius is alarmed.

VIPSANIA
The earthquake...it is so horrible! You must promise me to help those poor people!

TIBERIUS
Of course, my dear! I have already engaged Marcus Aletus to lead the relief party. He will go to Asia with five lictors to assess the damage and coordinate the rebuilding. I will do all that is appropriate. You know that I will.

VIPSANIA
(urgently)
No! You must do more than what is ‘appropriate’! You must do everything that can possibly be done, whatever the cost!
Tiberius is mystified. He leads Vipsania to a workman’s bench and sits with her, his arm around her shoulder.

TIBERIUS

(gravely)
I will do all that is legally possible to relieve the stricken cities. And then I will do all that is personally possible, from my own funds. You have my word.

Vipsania is relieved. She kisses his hand. She is a little embarrassed that he does not understand and she cannot explain.

VIPSANIA

It’s just that, during my time in Asia, I made so many close friends and dear acquaintances. I can see their faces in my mind - their fear and devastation. I want to help them, but what can I do? Only you can help them!

Tiberius has an idea.

TIBERIUS

Why don’t you go with Aletus? You can see for yourself what is being done.

Vipsania is thrilled by the idea. Tiberius can see that she is willing.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

102 EXT. ROAD TO SARDIS - DAY

Vipsania and a contingent of Roman soldiers, officials, and civilians approach Sardis. Many homeless people call to them for help from the sides of the road. Vipsania, riding in a cart, scans their faces, moved by their plight, looking for Helena.

CUT TO:
At the temple of Artemis-Persephone in the city, the Romans are greeted by the local leaders. MELISSA - the priestess Artemis corresponded with - approaches Vipsania.

MELISSA
Great lady, daughter of Marcus Agrippa, I am Melissa, the high priestess. We are deeply honored by your presence. You have surely undergone many hardships to come here...

Vipsania waves off her concern.

VIPSANIA
Thank you, Melissa, but my hardships are nothing. We have come to help in any way that we can. I see that you have made the temple the center for relief efforts. It is fortunate that it was spared.

MELISSA
Yes, the goddess protected us. Now the people come to her for solace ¬ and for food and medicine.

VIPSANIA
We have brought all we can carry.

MELISSA
Wonderful! But you must be tired after your journey. Allow me to show you to your quarters. It is one of the few residential rooms still standing.

Vipsania takes Melissa by the arm.

VIPSANIA
You are kind, Melissa, but I have not come all this way to be a burden. Use this room for those who need it most. We have brought army tents with us, for ourselves as well as for the homeless.
MELISSA
How generous of you! This will inspire our people, to know that important Romans like you care so much.

Vipsania takes Melissa’s hand and pulls her aside.

VIPSANIA
(softly)
There is something that you can do for me. I am looking for a young woman. Helena, the daughter of Telemachos. The high priestess of Ephesos spoke to you about her?

MELISSA
Yes, I know the woman. Her father and husband were killed by the quake.

VIPSANIA
(horrified)
How awful! Was she injured? Is she safe?

MELISSA
She is fine. Artemis sent a messenger to me, begging me to find Helena and look after her. I found her among the refugees, with her mother and little boy. They are staying with us in the temple quarters.

Vipsania sighs with relief.

VIPSANIA
(breathlessly)
May I see her?

CUT TO:

104 INT. ROOM IN TEMPLE IN SARDIS - DAY

Vipsania enters a small room in the temple. Helena, her infant son TELEMACHOS, and her foster mother Chloe are there. Chloe takes one look at Vipsania - the image of her daughter - and knows. She covers her face with both hands. Helena, nursing her son on a couch by the wall, is mesmerized.

(CONTINUED)
VIPSANIA
(tentatively)
My name is Vipsania Agrippina. I am the wife of Gaius Asinius Gallus. He was the governor of Asia twenty-one years ago.

Chloe reels and bursts into loud sobs. Vipsania rushes to her and keeps her from falling.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
Sister, do not be afraid! I will not take your daughter from you. How can I ever thank you for loving my child, for being a mother to her? Certainly not by taking her away!

Chloe is calmer, but still frightened. Helena is overwhelmed. Vipsania speaks to her as she consoles Chloe.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)
You were wrapped in a green cloth, with a Trojan horse around your neck. It nearly killed me to let you go, but I had no choice. You were not my husband’s child.

HELENA
(very softly)
I am Helena.

CHLOE
Because of the horse, we named her Helena.

HELENA
This is my son, Telemachos. After his grandfather.

Her voice chokes and her eyes glisten as she remembers their loss. Vipsania walks Chloe to the couch and sits between the two women. She embraces her daughter - kisses her on the forehead for a long moment, then gazes at her in wonder. Helena looks at her with the large brown eyes of a small child.

HELENA
Who is my father?
Vipsania hesitates. Then she produces a small silver coin, a denarius. Wordlessly, she places it in Helena’s palm and points at the portrait of Tiberius. The women understand.

There is a moment of awestruck silence, then the baby cries, burps, and continues feeding. Vipsania and Helena share their first laugh together.

VIPSANIA  
(her finger to her lips)  
Only one other person knows. No one else. Not even he.

HELENA  
What sort of man is he?

VIPSANIA  
(measuring her words)  
In his heart, he is a kind man, a simple man, very gentle. He is under more pressure than you can imagine, than anyone can imagine. He is a peaceful man who has had to kill thousands of people; a family man who is alone; a sensitive man ridiculed by everyone; a private man forced to be a public icon.

Vipsania turns the coin over in Helena’s hands to reveal a seated portrait of Livia.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)  
His mother, your grandmother, is like him in that way - private by nature. But she has grown a hard shell to protect her from the world. Not your father - he is utterly defenseless, which sometimes makes him cruel. But he would adore you.

Chloe lowers her head. Vipsania reassures her.

VIPSANIA (CONT.)  
No! She must stay in this beautiful place, far from Rome. I will help you rebuild, and give Helena a handsome dowry so that she can remarry and have more babies. She strokes her grandson’s cheek. He smiles.

FADE OUT:
Drusulus and Tiberius are alone together, looking over the city.

**TIBERIUS**
Tomorrow all of Rome will celebrate your victories, Drusulus. An ovation in your honor. I am very proud of you. And now that Germanicus is dead, you are the sole heir to the throne. Does that frighten you?

**DRUSULUS**
Should it?

**TIBERIUS**
It frightened me.

**DRUSULUSS**
Yes, but you were following Augustus. I will only be following you.

Tiberius is surprised by this comment and looks at him. Drusulus has a grin on his face - the two men laugh together.

**TIBERIUS**
Yes, very good! And true. Augustus was the greater man.

Drusulus tries to disagree, but Tiberius holds up his hand to stop him.

**TIBERIUS (CONT.)**
Except in one sense. He was no general. He relied on me to keep the barbarians at bay. Just as I rely on you now.

Drusulus is pleased by his father’s approval and enjoying this moment; he stiffens and frowns when Sejanus suddenly appears.

**SEJANUS**
Caesar, there is work to be done.

Tiberius leaves Drusulus and follows Sejanus.
A triumphal procession in Rome for Drusulus, to honor him for his triumph over the Illyrians. Tiberius mounts the steps of the temple of Jupiter on the Capitoline Hill, where he will view the spectacle.

The streets of Rome are lined with the multitudes, gathering to gawk at the young prince and the spoils of his victories. The buildings are festooned with garlands and ribbons.

Arrayed behind the emperor are the Vestal Virgins, the consuls and other magistrates, and the leading senators with their wives, including Gallus and Vipsania.

Finally, Drusulus rides past the dais, trying to look humble and dignified, but unable to squelch his happy grin. His horse prances and tosses its mane. On horseback around Drusulus are several men on horseback wearing life-like masks of Drusulus' forbears - Julius Caesar, Agrippa, Augustus, Drusus the brother of Tiberius, etc.

Tiberius raises his hand in salute and nods with approval at Drusulus. Drusulus returns the salute and beams at Vipsania, who is proud of him. Gallus sits at her side, looking glum. Tiberius looks at Vipsania, offers his own chair to her, and sits beside her. The crowd explodes with approval while Gallus fumes.

**TIBERIUS**

Do you see how much power they have given me, Vipsania? I did not want it, but I have it nonetheless. What shall I do with so much power? There is only one thing that I want. But I will not take it. Only you can give it to me. Will you be my wife again?

Vipsania hesitates, then smiles at him and nods gently. The cheers seem to swell and acknowledge the moment. Drusulus cannot keep his eyes off of them. He can see that something wonderful has happened.

They leave the porch, Tiberius still holding Vipsania's hand, Gallus storms after them. The guards restrain him.
GALLUS
(snarling)
Woman! Have you no shame? Come away at once! I could have you flogged for this!

Tiberius moves threateningly towards him.

TIBERIUS
Silence! She is with me now. You will let her go or feel my wrath!

Tiberius turns away with Vipsania, Gallus calls after him.

GALLUS
(shouting)
You call yourself a champion of the law, of liberty. You are a tyrant, a despot!

TIBERIUS
True! In this case, you have left me no choice. Rome owes me this much, Gallus. I will do this because I can do this. Do not test me!

Tiberius and Vipsania enter a room just off the dais and embrace. They kiss and weep together. Vipsania composes herself and pulls away slightly, looking into Tiberius’ eyes. He thinks she has changed her mind.

VIPSANIA
No, we will be together, I promise! Just give me a few days to make my peace with my children. And with Gallus. I will come to you very soon.

Tiberius is reassured and nods his agreement.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

107 INT. PALACE ROOMS IN ROME - DAY

Tiberius is preparing for Vipsania’s arrival. He is excited, leading a small army of artists and architects.
TIBERIUS
These will be the rooms of the lady Vipsania. They must be decorated simply, but elegantly, and with the very finest of materials.

He turns to a bearded Greek man wearing a tunic soiled with the colors of paint.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
I want the walls of this room to be decorated with pastoral landscapes; a bucolic paradise. The scenes should be so realistic and detailed that one’s eyes can roam in them for hours.

He goes into another room with a window balcony.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
This chamber will contain marble busts of her father and her mother. Also Drusulus, of course. They should all be life-size and of the very finest workmanship.

CUT TO:

108 EXT. COURTYARD AT VIPSANIA’S HOUSE - DAY

Gallus is conferring alone with Syriacus. Gallus holds a dagger and repeatedly jabs it into a wooden bench.

GALLUS
I cannot let him take her from me, Syriacus. How could I face the other senators? Or look the bastard in the eye, knowing that he sleeps with my wife! This cannot happen. It will not happen.

SYRIACUS
There is no way to stop it, my friend. He is the emperor. And you know what Vipsania wants. But think, man, your sons will do very well by this. They will be the sons of the empress!

Gallus stabs the bench, leaving the dagger in the wood.

(CONTINUED)
GALLUS
I don’t care anymore. I will not let that man triumph over me! I will do anything to stop him.

Syriacus pulls the dagger free and turns his back to Gallus.

SYRIACUS
Anything?

CUT TO:

109 INT. PALACE HALLS IN ROME - MORNING

Drusulus jogs through the palace, looking for Tiberius. At every turn, painters and laborers get in his way. He brushes them aside in his haste, spilling bowls of plaster.

DRUSULUS
Father! Father!

Drusulus finds Tiberius, bent over a table that is covered with building plans. Tiberius turns and sees that his son is distraught. He grabs his arms.

TIBERIUS
What has happened, Drusulus? What is the matter?

CUT TO:

110 INT. BEDROOM AT VIPSANIA’S HOUSE IN ROME - MORNING

Tiberius at Vipsania’s bedside. She is perspiring and in agony; almost delirious. The doctor, Drusulus, other children of Vipsania are nearby.

TIBERIUS
(to the doctor)
Where is Gallus?

DOCTOR
He has left, Caesar. He says that she is now in your care.

Vipsania opens her eyes and sees Tiberius. She grips his hand.
VIPSANIA
(desperately)
It is not his fault! I ate too freely, Tiberius.
There was so much excitement.

TIBERIUS
(leaning close to her)
Vipsania, do not be afraid. I know that he would not harm you.

Vipsania looks intently at Tiberius, tears streaming from her eyes.

VIPSANIA
Oh my love, can the gods really be so cruel?

Tiberius kisses her hand.

TIBERIUS
(softly, tearfully)
The gods can do nothing - it is the stars. They cross us at every turn of our lives.

He realizes that she is gone and buries his face in her bosom, convulsed with grief and shedding bitter tears.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

111 INT. PALACE BALCONY IN ROME - EVENING

Tiberius and Drusulus alone on the palace balcony, in shock over Vipsania’s death. After a long silence, Tiberius speaks.

TIBERIUS
I realize now that, even when life was unbearable, it was always the hope of Vipsania that made me carry on. Now, all hope is gone. I can never be happy again.

Drusulus, I am retiring. Leaving Rome. It will be up to you and Sejanus to rule the empire. It can crumble around my ears and I won’t care. Vipsania is dead.

DISSOLVE TO:
EXT. PUBLIC SQUARE IN SARDIS - DAY

As Tiberius speaks, the scene shifts to Sardis. Helena watches the erection of a monument to the imperial family. She is deeply moved when they unveil the statue of Vipsania. Then she focuses on the statue of Tiberius, gazing at his face in wonder.

TIBERIUS (O.C.)
But first, I want to see that she receives the honors she deserves. She will be restored to the imperial family and her statues will appear in public monuments throughout the empire. She will not be remembered as Gallus’ wife - she will be remembered as my wife, and as your mother.

BACK TO SCENE:

TIBERIUS
I want you to know that I am proud of you, Drusulus. Your mother would be proud, too. You have become a good man, a great Roman, and my right arm. I don’t know how I could live without knowing that you share my world.

CUT TO:

112 INT. DRUSULUS’ BEDSIDE IN ROME - NIGHT

Drusulus is lying down, choking, struggling to breathe. His wife watches from a distance, a cold expression on her face. Tiberius looks down on his son, tears streaming down his cheeks. Suddenly, Drusulus exhales at length - and doesn’t breathe again.

Tiberius stands straight with a look of disbelief and despair on his face. He walks to a marble statue of Jupiter in the corner of the room, picks up a bronze lamp stand, and strikes the statue, knocking its head off.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

113 EXT. MOUTH OF CAVE AT SPELUNCA - MIDDAY

TEN YEARS LATER
At Spelunca on the coast south of Rome. Tiberius has converted a natural cave by the sea into a fantastic Homeric gallery. There are pools and fountains, and awe-inspiring sculptural groups. Tiberius greets Gallus, who has come to have lunch with him. Thrasyllus is also present. There is a table with food and wine.

TIBERIUS
Gallus, welcome! It has been a long time!

GALLUS
Yes, Tiberius, a great many years. We haven’t seen each other since...

TIBERIUS
Since Drusulus’ funeral. That was quite a shock – losing him so soon after his mother. And then my friend Longus and a grandson in the very same year.

So many at once. That would have killed me, had I not been dead already. So I left Rome. When a man is run over by chariot after chariot, he must get out of the road to tend his wounds.

They take their seats at the table and begin drinking deeply. This is uncomfortable for the old enemies, but they are trying to be cordial.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
But today is a happy occasion, Gallus. Sejanus tells me that you have been a great help to him in the senate, supporting my policies, and after so many years of opposing them. I wanted to thank you in person. Whatever changed your mind?

GALLUS
(uneasily)
Sejanus, I suppose. He is very persuasive.

TIBERIUS
(missing the innuendo)
Yes, and a great help to me: the “partner of my labors.” I think this job would have killed me if I didn’t have him by my side.

(CONTINUED)
Gallus is becoming a little more at ease and a little drunk. He laughs and nods sympathetically. Tiberius puts his hand on his shoulder and continues.

TIBERIUS
And you made my task more difficult. You know that.

Gallus tenses slightly, but the emperor slaps his back and carries on in a friendly manner.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
But now you are on our side. At long last, we should be friends, Gallus. You and I remember the old days. We have been through a lot together.

Tiberius hoists his cup.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
To our friendship!

Gallus raises his cup and the two men drink even more deeply. Thrasyllus watches and drinks sparingly. Gallus begins to open up.

GALLUS
I resented Sejanus at first, I admit it. I don’t approve of upstarts having too much power. But he has talent. I see that now. He is necessary.

TIBERIUS
(gushing)
And he saved my life! Right here in this cave! You must have heard about it?

Gallus nods.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
There was a terrible rock fall, right over there (he points) and Sejanus placed his body over mine, to take the blows for me.
GALLUS
Yes, he has great courage, and affection for you. Of course, where would he be if you were dead?

TIBERIUS
(scowling)
And where would he be if he were dead? You are too cynical, my friend. I’m surprised Vipsania didn’t weed that out of you in all those years.

GALLUS
(wincing)
As you well know, Vipsania and I were not close. It was a useful marriage. We did our duty to each other. She gave me sons and connections; I protected her. But we were very different in our tastes and attitudes.

Tiberius drifts in his thoughts for a moment, then raises his cup again.

TIBERIUS
To Vipsania! The most wonderful woman who ever lived!

Gallus laughs nervously, as if it is a joke.

GALLUS
I will say this: in thirty years of marriage, she only disappointed me once.

TIBERIUS
(curious)
Yes?

GALLUS
Oh, it was many years ago. In Ephesos, when I was governor of Asia. My duties required us to be apart for several months. While I was touring the province, she became pregnant. I knew it wasn’t mine. No doubt she was lonely while I was away. A girl was eventually born, in Sardis.

(CONTINUED)
Tiberius is suddenly sober. He realizes that he is the father of this child. Gallus is looking at his cup; oblivious of the change in Tiberius’ countenance.

TIBERIUS
And what of the child?

GALLUS
(offhandedly)
Exposed, naturally. There were others who knew that it couldn’t be mine. Had to be hushed up, for her sake as well as my own. Of course, Vipsania was very upset. But my punishment was mild. Syriacus told me to beat her with rods, but I only had her flogged, and not very harshly.

Tiberius’ hands close into fists, trembling on the table.

TIBERIUS
Did the child survive?

GALLUS
(shrugs, then shakes his head)
I’m certain it perished. Vipsania placed a pendant around her neck, a Trojan horse! Can you imagine anyone on the Trojan side of the Aegean accepting a gift bearing a Trojan horse?

He laughs coarsely at his own joke. Tiberius rises stiffly from his seat, his fists trembling at his sides. He signals for the guards to arrest Gallus.

TIBERIUS
(raging)
Take this man into custody!

He scribbles on a piece of paper as the guards seize Gallus.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Take this letter to the senate immediately - I want it read publicly at once.
GALLUS
(stunned)
What are you charging me with? You can’t begrudge a wronged husband his rights! This can’t be about the girl? She’s nothing to you!

TIBERIUS
(affectedly vague)
No – you are guilty of being jealous of my friendship with Sejanus. Yes, that’s right. Even though you also have famous friends of your own, like (sarcastically) Syriacus.

Tiberius spits on the marble floor and then continues.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Of trying to cozy up to my prefect in the hopes of turning me against him, since I despise you so much. Also of “misdemeanors” to be investigated when I come to Rome.

GALLUS
(trembling)
But you haven’t set foot in Rome in four years! When will my trial be held?

Tiberius hands the note to an officer.

TIBERIUS
Has it been that long? Well, one of these days.

The soldiers hurry Gallus off. Tiberius calls after them.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
He must not be allowed to harm himself, do you understand?

After Gallus is gone, Thrasyllus speaks.

THRASYLLUS
Will you search for the girl?

There is a pause.

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
And condemn her to a fate like her mother’s? She
is better off unknown, if she lives.

Tiberius plunges into the grotto pool. His mind drifts back.

CUT TO:

FLASHBACK

INT. HALLWAY AT VIPSANIA’S HOUSE - DAY

As Tiberius and Vipsania walk together through Gallus’ house on
their way to find Drusulus.

TIBERIUS
So, you have been a mother nine times now?
Remarkable!

VIPSANIA
Ten actually.

BACK TO SCENE:

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
(to himself)
But why didn’t she tell me?
(beat)
Because she knew I would punish Gallus.
(more loudly)
And I will!

He reflects some more and smiles.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
We have a daughter! Vipsania lives in her!

Tiberius laughs out loud and splashes away.

CUT TO:

INT. PRISON CELL IN ROME - NIGHT

A horrified and confused Gallus is thrown into a prison cell and the
door locked.
115 EXT. CLIFF TOP ON CAPRI - DAY

Syriacus, his hands bound behind his back, stands before Tiberius at Capri. They are at the top of a high cliff overlooking the sea and rocks below.

TIBERIUS
Welcome to Capri, Syriacus! I will be more merciful than you were. I won’t have you beaten with rods first.

Syriacus is mystified by this remark. The guards grab him from either side, and throw him off the cliff. Thrasyllus is revolted by this execution - Tiberius notices.

TIBERIUS
He was a friend of Gallus. That is enough. He also urged Gallus to beat my Vipsania. That is more than enough.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

116 INT. OFFICE ON CAPRI - DAY

Tiberius, Sejanus, and Thrasyllus are together in Tiberius’ office on Capri. Sejanus gathers his scrolls as Tiberius slips his signet ring back on his finger.

TIBERIUS
So, is that all the business from Rome?

SEJANUS
There is one other matter, Caesar — the usual entreaty from Asinius Gallus.

Sejanus mocks him, assuming a high, plaintive voice.

SEJANUS (CONT.)
“What is my crime? When will I be tried?” Etcetera, etcetera.

(CONTINUED)
Tiberius grunts. Sejanus hesitates, then decides to speak.

SEJANUS
I must say, Caesar, I think you have shown remarkable leniency in his case.

TIBERIUS
(absentmindedly)
You do?

SEJANUS
Yes. I mean - I know that you loved her above all others.

There is an awkward pause. Tiberius becomes interested.

TIBERIUS
I’m surprised that you knew about it. Who told you?

Sejanus is alarmed. He realizes he may have made a mistake.

SEJANUS
(trying to be casual)
Oh, it’s my business to know these things, Caesar. I learned it from Syriacus, several months before Gallus was arrested. I thought it would be useful in bringing Gallus under our control, and I was right. Still, I regret that it took me almost ten years to discover the murder.

There is silence. Tiberius is stunned. He picks up a dagger from his desk and toys with it.

TIBERIUS
Ten years? Murder?

SEJANUS
Of the worst kind, Caesar. To poison his own wife, just to keep you from having her? Why, that’s more than murder, that’s treason!
Tiberius tries to hide his reaction. He grips the dagger so tightly his knuckles grow white.

    TIBERIUS
    (apoplectic)
    Here is my response to Gallus: he is to be given only tiny morsels of the most disgusting, filthiest food they can find. Warm polluted water to drink. Barely enough food and water to keep him alive, you understand, but not enough to give him satisfaction or vigor.

Tiberius is shaking violently, his words expelled with great exertion.

    TIBERIUS (CONT.)
    His accommodations are to be as uncomfortable and unattractive as possible, cold in winter, hot in summer. No blankets or mattress. No visitors other than his guards. His trial will commence when I come to Rome.

    I know there are always rumors that I am coming to Rome. Keep them current, Sejanus, and make certain that Gallus hears them all!

    SEJANUS
    (confused and alarmed)
    Do you plan to come to Rome soon?

    TIBERIUS
    No!

Thrasyllus takes Sejanus by the arm and escorts him to the door.

    THRASYLLUS
    Thank you, Sejanus.
    (whispering)
    It is still very painful for him to remember. You understand.

Sejanus nods, reassured. He salutes the emperor, and leaves. Tiberius falls to his knees in paroxysms of grief and anger.

    (CONTINUED)
Tiberius rolls onto his side and sobs. Loudly at first; then only whimpers. Thrasyllus carefully removes the dagger from his hand. Finally, Tiberius pulls himself onto a chair. He looks at Thrasyllus.

THRASYLLUS
(quietly)
What will you do now?

Tiberius heaves up his words.

TIBERIUS
To the man who hid the murder of Vipsania from me so that he could blackmail Gallus to do his own bidding? What else does he hide from me? Whom else does he control? The Praetorian Guard is his. He is betrothed to my son’s widow. I thought that he, of all men, was my friend. Someone I could trust.

Tiberius stares vacantly at the wall.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Vipsania, poisoned. Because of me. Because I wanted her.

He dissolves again into tears.

FADE OUT:

117 INT. TIBERIUS’ OFFICE ON CAPRI - DAY

The prefect MACRO is reporting to Tiberius. Thrasyllus is present.

TIBERIUS
So it is done?

MACRO
Yes, Caesar. Sejanus and his children are dead. So are his principal supporters.

TIBERIUS
Excellent! You have done well. That is the price of keeping secrets from the emperor!
MACRO
(saluting)
Yes, Caesar!
(he hesitates)
There is a letter I think you should see. It is from Apicata, Sejanus’ former wife, written just before she committed suicide.

Tiberius reads the letter.

APICATA (O.C.)
Caesar! You have killed my children! May the worms of Hades gnaw your flesh and grind your bones to powder! May you never find peace in this world or the next!

Tiberius glares at Macro.

MACRO
(uneasy)
Read on, Caesar.

APICATA (O.C.)
They are dead because you trusted Sejanus. And now I will tell you what sort of a friend he really was. It was he who killed your son! He and Drusulus’ wife Livilla were lovers. They conspired to poison him, and they succeeded with the help of her doctor and your son’s eunuch. If you do not believe me, torture them and you will see that I am telling the truth...

Tiberius reels. He hands the scroll to Thrasyllus, who reads it while the emperor weeps and then begins to pound on his desk in fury. Finally he is composed enough to speak.

TIBERIUS
Drusulus must have suspected. That is why he hated Sejanus so much.
(a pause)
I will surely go mad if I do nothing about this. Justice is the only cure for Rome’s shame, for my shame! (MORE)

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS (CONT’D)
(to Macro)
Arrest the doctor and the eunuch at once. Bring me every scrap of paper you can find belonging to Drusulus, to Livilla, to Sejanus, to Apicata. Any informer who can provide verifiable information will be rewarded. I will not rest until I have understood everything!

CUT TO:

118 INT. TIBERIUS’ OFFICE ON CAPRI - NIGHT

Thrasyllus enters and finds Tiberius seated, surrounded by a mountain of scrolls.

THRASYLLUS
Caesar, you must rest.

TIBERIUS
Not until everyone has been punished, including me.

He gestures to a large wooden chest in the corner.

TIBERIUS
Do you know what this contains, Thrasyllus? Vipsania’s papers. Her household bills, guest lists, letters. Do you know what I discovered?

Thrasyllus shakes his head and moves closer.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
It has a false bottom! And do you know what was in the secret compartment? My letters to her — going all the way back to before our marriage.

Thrasyllus is intrigued.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
And that is not all. There were also letters to her from a friend in Ephesos, a priestess, telling her about our daughter Helena in Sardis. Do you understand? Our daughter is
alive! Her name is Helena! And Vipsania saw her in Sardis during the earthquake mission.

Thrasylus is fascinated.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
But there was still more. A draft of a letter from Vipsania to my old friend Sextus, telling him that she would no longer make payments to him on behalf of Eurymachos.

THRASYLLUS
Eurymachos?

TIBERIUS
A Greek. I stayed in his house when I first arrived in Rhodes. He must have learned of my visit to Ephesos. He was blackmailing Vipsania. I summoned him here – he arrived last week.

CUT TO:

119 EXT. CLIFF TOP ON CAPRI - DAY 119

A very apprehensive Eurymachos is brought before Tiberius at the top of the cliff on Capri.

EURYMACHOS
Caesar! Why have you brought me here? I have done nothing!

Tiberius holds up Vipsania’s letter. Eurymachos reads it and collapses with fear - the guards pick him up.

EURYMACHOS (CONT.)
But that was thirty-five years ago!

He sees that Tiberius is unmoved.

EURYMACHOS (CONT.)
(bitterly)
It was your friends! Flaccus and Marinus! It was all their idea. They suggested I follow you to Ephesos. Romans should never be trusted!

(CONTINUED)
TIBERIUS
(ironically)
Whereas Greeks like you are completely honest? What was Sextus’s role in this?

EURYMACHOS
(defiantly)
He was my contact in Rome. Flaccus put me in touch with him. Vipsania gave him the money. He took a share and distributed the rest.

Tiberius nods to the guards, who toss the screaming Eurymachos from the cliff.

DISSOLVE TO:

120 INT. TIBERIUS’ OFFICE ON CAPRI – NIGHT

Tiberius continues to explain to Thrasyllus what has happened.

TIBERIUS
So I had them all arrested and brought to me. Sextus, Flaccus, Marinus.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SCENES: CAPRI – EXECUTION OF THE CONSPIRATORS

(A) Sextus is thrown off the cliff as Tiberius watches.

(B) Flaccus is thrown off the cliff as Tiberius watches.

(C) Marinus is thrown off the cliff as Tiberius watches.

RETURN TO SCENE:

Tiberius continues to talk with Thrasyllus.

TIBERIUS
They all received the punishment they deserved. Everyone but me. I should have thrown myself from the cliff as well, but perhaps my punishment is more severe. I must live with the memory of the pain I caused her.
Thrasyllus struggles and fails to maintain a blank expression.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)

(amused)
I know you are a Buddhist at heart, my friend. You don’t believe in revenge?

THRASYLLUS
I believe that anger and spite disturb the mind.

TIBERIUS
(chuckling)
You may be right, but failure to do my sacred duty to my family disturbs my mind even more. It’s the Roman way. You are a Greek; you wouldn’t understand.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

FIVE YEARS LATER.

121 SERIES OF SHOTS: TIBERIUS ON HIS JOURNEY TO ROME

(A) Tiberius on horseback with his entourage.

(B) Guards hustling roadside onlookers out of the way as Tiberius passes.

(C) Tiberius looks at the city of Rome in the distance as he dismounts from his horse.

TIBERIUS
Macro, I will need a day or two to rest before I enter the city.

MACRO
Yes, Caesar!

CUT TO:

122 INT. BEDROOM IN A VILLA NEAR ROME - AFTERNOON

Tiberius, now 77, is snoozing on a couch. Macro enters his room.

(CONTINUED)
MACRO
All preparations for your entry into Rome have been made, Caesar. Will you go there tomorrow?

TIBERIUS
(his eyes remaining closed)
No, not tomorrow. I need another day to rest. Leave me in peace.

MACRO
(hesitating)
Caesar. Forgive me...

TIBERIUS
What is it, Macro? I am tired.

MACRO
There is a Greek woman here to see you. She says that she has come to pay her respects. She has brought her son, a good-looking young man.

TIBERIUS
(irritated)
You know how I feel about gawkers, Macro. Send her away!

MACRO
But she says that you were acquainted with her family, when you were in Rhodes. She asked me to give you this.

Tiberius opens his eyes to see a red carnelian horse dangling from Macro’s fist. He swings his legs off the couch and stares at the necklace, then takes it from Macro.

TIBERIUS
(suddenly wide awake)
Yes, I remember her family. I will see them.

Macro turns to usher them in. Tiberius calls after him.

TIBERIUS (CONT.)
Macro!
MACRO
Yes, Caesar?

TIBERIUS
See that we are not disturbed. By anyone.

MACRO
Yes, Caesar.

Helena and her son Telemachos enter the room alone. Tiberius stops breathing. Helena closely resembles Vipsania. Tiberius begins to cry. He blubbers out her name.

TIBERIUS
Helena!

She is surprised he knows her name. She runs to him and wraps her arms around her father. Tiberius eventually pulls himself together and looks into her eyes. His smile is so sweet that she begins to cry. Then he looks at his grandson – he has Tiberius’ large nose. Tiberius laughs and points at his own proboscis, then at Telemachos. The young man laughs and strides closer, takes his grandfather’s hand. Tiberius strokes Helena’s cheek.

TIBERIUS
You are so like your mother. She was lovely, like you. I loved her more than anyone will ever know.

CUT TO:

SERIES OF SHOTS: TIBERIUS, HELENA, AND TELEMACHOS TOGETHER

(A) The three are shown laughing, crying, embracing, talking together with great animation.

(B) They share a meal – Tiberius instructs Telemachos in the proper way to dip cucumber strips in olive oil.

(C) Helena and Telemachos prepare to leave. With great tenderness, Tiberius returns the horse pendant to Helena, placing it around her neck. Then he kisses her forehead.

FADE OUT:
FADE IN:

123 EXT. ROAD IN FRONT OF VILLA NEAR ROME - DAY

Helena and Telemachus are climbing into a cart. Tiberius is bidding them farewell.

    HELENA
    Will you continue to Rome?

    TIBERIUS
    (gently)
    No, I don’t believe I will.

He looks lovingly at her, and then at Telemachos.

    TIBERIUS (CONT.)
    I believe that I have now seen all that I will ever want to see.

They drive off, waving to Tiberius, who waves back.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

124 INT. TIBERIUS’ BEDROOM AT MISENUM - NIGHT

Tiberius is in his bed. Suddenly, he is awakened by a nudge. He rubs the sleep from his eyes and turns over. The young Vipsania is leaning over his bed. She smiles at him, she places her hand on his cheek. He is amazed.

    VIPSANIA
    (softly)
    My darling, it has been so long. I have missed you so much.

He peels back his blanket and she lies beside him. She strokes his chest and his arms. She kisses his brow sweetly, and then his lips.

    TIBERIUS
    (in wonder)
    But you haven’t aged! I have grown so old and you haven’t changed. Where have you been all these years?
Always in the next room, my dear. Always listening. I have been waiting for you.

He is calm. He drifts into a slumber, then awakes. He sits up looks at his side, but she is gone.

(softly, to himself)

A dream!

I don’t care if it was a dream. It was real. I am still tingling. I can still taste her. Perhaps this is the dream.

He takes his ring off his finger and looks at it, then puts it back on. He gets out of bed with difficulty, takes a step and a half and collapses on the floor.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

Helena and Telemachos are on board a ship that is just embarking - sailing home. The last passenger who boards has news.

(to all)

Have you heard? The emperor is dead! Tiberius died two days ago! Caligula is the new emperor!

Everyone but Helena and Telemachos cheer. She wipes tears from her cheeks.

(to Telemachos)

I am so glad we saw him...

Yes. But I will be glad to be home again. He was once a good man, I think. But Romans make me nervous. And I would never want to be a Caesar.

THE END
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