

ABSTRACT

Tiber Queen: The Wrath of Clodia Metelli

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This thesis is a historical fiction narrating the interactions of Clodia Metelli and Marcus Tullius Cicero from 59 to 56 BC through a series of letters. It will cover the election of Clodius Pulcher as Tribune of the Plebs, Cicero's exile, and the burning down of his house. The letters also go through Cicero's triumphant return and the trial of Marcus Caelius Rufus, all explained through a series of letters between Cicero and Clodia. Because this is a fictitious account, Clodia Metelli's influence and involvement are exaggerated to better fit the historical events of the narrative. The letters aim to imitate the style of Cicero, though other aspects of his writing are also exaggerated. Through these letters, I hope to explore the dynamic of a public orator and an aristocratic female who would not have had as much voice in the late Roman Republic and provide a more nuanced portrait of Clodia Metelli than has been provided by her own personal enemies.

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TIBER QUEEN: THE WRATH OF CLODIA METELLI

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English and then taught herself Latin so she could teach me English and then teach me Latin.

CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Take a woman with the murderous streak of Euripides' Medea, the political ambition of Lady Macbeth, the allure of a siren, and the savage wit of any given modern "strong, female character" and perhaps one may begin to understand the Roman aristocrat, Clodia Metelli.

Cicero's "Palatine Medea,"¹ an apt nickname for a woman accused of attempted murder by poison, is known mostly through exaggerated speeches, private letters, and bitter love poetry. Clodia Metelli has lived in infamy through the voices of men. In fact, this personification of the vicious female lover, or a "brazen, dissipated whore"² as Cicero elegantly calls her, is entirely dependent on the voice of scorned, spurned, and sorrowful men.³ Though she has been immortalized through their works, Cicero and Catullus have painted her as the epitome of cruel female passion, scheming and murderous, a predator of young men, and one whose life was characterized by perpetual scandal. Cicero says of her:

¹ Cicero compares Clodia to the fictional Medea, who killed her ex-husband's new wife and her own children with poison out of jealousy.

² Hejduk, *Clodia: A Sourcebook*, 3

³ Skinner, "Clodia Metelli: 273: "The usual view of this woman accepted by a majority of authorities and reflected in an impressive number of popular historical novels derives from a fusion of two ostensible major sources, the poetry of Catullus and Cicero's forensic oration on behalf of M. Caelius Rufus."

Nihil iam in istam mulierem dico; sed, si esset aliqua dissimilis istius, quae se omnibus pervolgaret, quae haberet palam decretum semper aliquem, cuius in hortos, domum, Baias iure suo libidines omnium commearent, quae etiam aleret adulescentes et parsimoniam patrum suis sumptibus sustentaret; si vidua libere, proterva petulanter, dives effuse, libidinosa meretricio more viveret, adulterum ego putarem, si quis hanc paulo liberius salutasset?

Now, I say nothing against that woman: but, if there some woman unlike this one, who spread herself around amongst all, who always had someone settled openly, in whose gardens, house, and at Baiae the lusts of all men visited rightly, who even nourishes young men and sustains the frugality of the father with her own expenses; if she, widowed shamelessly, impudent petulantly, rich extensively, were living in the wanton manner of a prostitute, if someone greeted this woman a little too freely, would I think him the adulterer?⁴

Cicero's description of her, or rather description of a woman *unlike* her, as he sarcastically claims, is anything but flattering. The portrait encompasses her lust, her violence, and her recklessness. And yet this woman has managed to cement herself in Rome's history, veiled in rumor of affair after affair with multiple figures, ranging from young noblemen to erotic poets.

Clodia Metelli, initially Claudia Pulchra, was one of three daughters of Appius Claudius Pulcher and the sister of Publius Claudius Pulcher. She was married to Quintus Caecilius Metellus Celer, albeit unhappily, and her marriage was marked by several affairs, drinking, gambling, and later on, the suspected poisoning of Metellus. Claudia and her brother changed their names to Clodia and Clodius, respectively, names with a more plebeian connotation. This was due to Clodius' desire to become Tribune of the Plebs, a position which could only be fulfilled by a plebeian. Infamously, Clodius had

⁴ Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, section 38. All translations are my own.

himself adopted by Publius Fonteius, a much younger plebeian, in order to qualify as a plebeian and run for Tribune.

As a widow, Clodia was involved in many affairs, including most famously with Catullus and with Marcus Caelius Rufus, who was several years her junior. Caelius had rented a house from Clodius on the Palatine hill near Clodia's apartments and the two eventually struck up a torrid love affair.

This stormy relationship would eventually explode into a trial, during which Cicero's famous *Pro Caelio* would forever mark Clodia as a shameless and perhaps even incestuous prostitute. One of the most infamous and damning statements, disguised as some sort of Freudian slip, suggests before the whole court that Clodia is sleeping with Clodius:

Sin ista muliere remota nec crimen ullum nec opes ad oppugnandum Caelium illis relinquuntur, quid est aliud quod nos patroni facere debeamus, nisi ut eos, qui insectantur, repellamus? Quod quidem facerem vehementius, nisi intercederent mihi inimicitiae cum istius mulieris viro—fratre volui dicere; semper hic erro.

But if that woman has been removed, neither any charge nor any means for them to attack Caelius are left, what is there which we, as defenders, should do except to repel those who pursue him with hostile speech? And indeed I would do so more vehemently, if a rivalry with that woman's husband did not exist—*brother*, I meant to say; I always err on that.⁵

Clodia's relationship with Marcus Caelius may in fact have been the unraveling of the case itself, as Cicero claimed that her charges stemmed from a personal grudge against her ex-lover rather than from any real crime on Caelius' part. Yet, Cicero himself was also the subject of several rumors of an affair between himself and Clodia, which led to

⁵ Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, section 32

his own marriage with Terentia suffering and a possible reason behind the vehemence of his attack on Clodia in the *Pro Caelio*. Plutarch certainly seemed to think so, in his history of Cicero. He claimed that Cicero did not necessarily give his testimony for the sake of truth but rather to prove to Terentia that there was no illicit affair between him and Clodia. Terentia, he says, had significant sway over Cicero and pushed him to attack Clodia.⁶

Another reason posited for the fervor of Cicero's diatribe against Clodia could be a previous accusation of incest against Terentia's half-sister, Fabia. Clodius is generally believed to have been the prosecutor, and although she was eventually declared innocent, Fabia's reputation was ruined forever. It is possible that Terentia wished for Cicero to ruin Clodia's reputation in revenge for her sister.⁷ At any rate, Cicero's insinuations of an incestuous relationship between Clodia and Clodius are not completely unexpected, especially given that Clodius had previously been charged of incest.

Cicero saw Clodia very clearly as a threat. Her brother was a longtime political enemy of Cicero's and was involved with the latter's exile and the ambushes around his return. As Tribune of the Plebs, Clodius introduced a law that would exile any public official who had executed a Roman citizen without trial. This was very obviously aimed at Cicero who, a few years prior, had stamped out the Catilinarian conspiracy and ordered the execution of its leading members without giving them a trial. Despite Cicero's arguments that the gravity of the situation called for execution and indemnified him from

⁶ Plutarch, *Cicero*, section 29.

⁷ Tatum, "Cicero and the Bona Dea Scandal," 202

punishment, he was exiled to Greece. During his exile, Clodius had Cicero's house burned down, allegedly to expand the Temple of Liberty which stood nearby. When the senate voted for Cicero's recall, Clodius was the only one who cast a vote against him and later attempted to waylay him when he returned. Titus Annius Milo, Clodius' successor as Tribune of the Plebs, indirectly played a role in Cicero's return and helped fend off Clodius' ambush on Cicero. This created a rivalry between Milo and Clodius which would eventually lead to the latter's death.

Cicero believed, or at least pretended to believe, that Clodia was heavily involved with Clodius' political affairs and their feud. He mentioned Clodia multiple times in a letter to Atticus, referring to her as "cow eyes" and complaining of her open political allegiance to her brother. Marilyn Skinner has described her as "displaying a passionate concern with her brother's political fortunes, going so far as to assign his goals priority over her own domestic tranquility⁸." Cicero humorously described her as "blowing the war trumpet" that would lead her brother's charge into battle. He even believed that she had killed her own husband, which he heavily implied, if not outright declared, in the *Pro Caelio*.

Ex hac igitur domo progressa ista mulier de veneni celeritate dicere audebit? Nonne ipsam domum metuet, ne quam vocem eiciat, non parietes conscios, non noctem illam funestam ac luctuosam perhorrescet?

And therefore, will that woman, leaving this house, dare to speak about the speed of the poison? Does she not fear the house itself, lest it should cast forth some voice, or the walls which are privy to her crime, and does she not shudder at that fatal and grievous night?⁹

⁸ Skinner, "Clodia Metelli," 280

⁹ Cicero, *Pro Caelio* 60

It is fairly obvious that he is here accusing Clodia of murder by poison, the same charge Clodia accused Caelius of attempting. This insinuation, rather unsupported by any concrete evidence, was yet enough to tarnish the case against Caelius and bruise the integrity of the prosecution.

In my thesis, I portray the culmination of the feud between Clodia and Cicero resulting in the *Pro Caelio*. It is not certain that Clodia was the one who instigated the charges against her former lover, though some of the accusations leveled against Caelius included attempted poisoning of Clodia, colluding with Catiline, murder of ambassadors, and other such treasonous activities. The prosecution was headed by a very young man named Lucius Atratinus, whose father had been taken to court for charges of bribery by Caelius not once but twice. The reason for having such a young prosecutor in such a high-profile case, as Cicero argues, is that the prosecution hoped that Cicero would appear pompous and insensitive if he, a seasoned orator, were to completely destroy the case of a much younger and inexperienced man. Cicero instead turned the case on Clodia, leveling all of his power as a speaker against an old rival and eventually secured Caelius's innocence.

This characterization of Clodia from the *Pro Caelio* alone was enough to paint her as the "Quadrantaria" or "two penny-whore"¹⁰ that she was claimed to be, though two thousand years removed from their lifetime, modern scholars have finally begun to

¹⁰ The name Quadrantaria comes from the word "quadrans" which was a small copper coin. Cicero alludes to Clodia's "Quadrantaria" nickname in section 62 of the *Pro Caelio*. Plutarch in *Cicero* section 2 says "They called her 'Quadrantaria,' because one of her lovers had put copper coins in a purse and sent them to her as silver." The implication is that Clodia was cheap. See Hejduk, *Clodia; A Sourcebook* p. 98 for more.

realize that Clodia may not have been the evil temptress she was depicted as. Marilyn Skinner points out that Catullus' portrayal of his mistress "abandoning herself to the coarsest kind of sexual encounters are often called upon to furnish an aesthetically and morally satisfying epilogue to the orator's tales of a profligate who hounds reluctant lovers and supplements the income of young favorites from her own liberal purse."¹¹ She suggests that Clodia was an easy scapegoat, a convenient way to tie up Catullus' heart-break fueled series, supported by Cicero's exaggerated account of her profligacy. Of course, one cannot take Catullus' erotic poems or even a (heavily biased) oration as historical documents, wholly representative of the truth.

Some sources claim that there really was no rivalry between Cicero and Clodia. In later letters after his public humiliation of Clodia in the *Pro Caelio* he mentions to Atticus that he hopes to buy some property of Clodia's to build a shrine to his late wife, Terentia.¹² It is unlikely that Cicero would have even considered it likely that Clodia would consent to selling him land if they were intensely feuding, especially if it would be for his wife, who may have fueled the intensity of the *Pro Caelio*. He does not refer to her with the same bitterness as in previous letters. It is possible that Clodia understood that his defense of Caelius was merely for show and that outside of the public eye, the two were not enemies, or that they had made up their differences.

In the correspondence between Cicero and Clodia, I chose to confirm some of Cicero's exaggerations and yet give Clodia the chance to defend herself. I did not want the letters to come across as a series of ill-humored retorts from a woman little better than

¹¹ Skinner, "Clodia Metelli," 274

¹² Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 13.29

a prostitute to a noble and faultless Roman orator. At the same time, I also did not want to portray Clodia as the modern ideal of feminine strength. I chose to give her enough voice that she might at least have the opportunity to clarify her side of the story. I attempt to offer a more nuanced portrait of Clodia, rather than the one-sided depiction that exists, though perhaps not as a modern icon of feminism. I also take some credibility away from Cicero by making him pompous and melodramatic. His letters to Atticus provided some background and support to the emotional and often self-aggrandized tone of the letters in this thesis. While Cicero's letters are more heavily cited than Clodia's, this is simply due to the number of historical documents that can prove Cicero's side of the story, rather than Clodia's.

The letters take place between 59 and 56 B.C., beginning from Metellus' death, covering Cicero's exile and return, and ending with the *Pro Caelio* and public humiliation of Clodia. As for the events which pass in their correspondence, most of them are neither confirmed nor denied by Clodia. Although I could have taken creative liberties with some of the historical events that transpired, I thought it more befitting my portrait of Clodia to simply keep them ambiguous. Smaller rumors, such as the feud between Clodia and Terentia, I confirmed within the letters for the sake of drama. However, most of the history during the time frame of these letters has been left up to the suspicions and interpretations of the reader. Events not directly related to Clodia are generally just mentioned in passing with explanations in the footnotes throughout the creative part of the text.

I chose to translate the latter half of the letters into Latin, since those sections could be more reliably tied back to a historical text and I could focus on refining the

voices of each character in the Latin. By letter 6, Cicero and Clodia's relationship has completely unraveled and the groundwork for the *Pro Caelio* has been laid. I have attempted to emulate Cicero's style as much as possible, in both the English and Latin. Since no evidence exists of Clodia's voice, I kept it relatively similar to Cicero's, as she was, despite everything, a well-educated woman.

CHAPTER 2

The Letters

Letter One

Cicero to Claudia, I hope you are well.¹³

It certainly seems so, given that during this time of mourning, I often see the Tiber visited by numbers of young men in their leisure. I suppose the view of the Tiber from your house must be quite pleasant at this time¹⁴. I am exceedingly sorry to hear about the death of your husband, Quintus Metellus. To see one so faithful to the Republic snatched from his fatherland so suddenly and unexpectedly is a terrible misfortune.¹⁵ You must be devastated with sorrow, as I am.

¹³ “Salutem dicit” was generally used as a greeting in letters. In several of Cicero’s letters to Atticus, this was shortened to S.D. As the letters become more hostile towards each other, it becomes more humorous to begin the letter with the polite, “I hope you are well.”

¹⁴ *Pro Caelio* section 36 “Habes hortos ad Tiberim ac diligenter eo loco paratos, quo omnis iuventus natandi causa venit; hinc licet condiciones cotidie legas;” “You have gardens by the Tiber and they have been prepared diligently where all young men come for the cause of swimming: here it is permitted for you to pick lovers every day.”

Cicero takes a jab at Clodia’s house by the Tiber, from which she can conveniently spy on young men.

¹⁵ *Pro Caelio* 59 “Vidi enim, vidi et illum hausit dolorem vel acerbissimum in vita, cum Q. Metellus abstraheretur e sinu gremioque patriae...” “For I saw, I saw and I swallowed that grief, indeed the bitterest grief in life, when Quintus Metellus was dragged from the lap and bosom of the country...” Cicero’s sorrow

I know your blood-brother Claudius¹⁶ often opposed Metellus in public affairs and that you even defied the duties of a wife in your great fidelity to dear Claudius, for whom you so often sound the *lituus*¹⁷. I am sure even he, of course as well as you, is grieving for this great loss. I know that your marriage to Metellus was often turbulent and that recently you were seen quarreling—often and in public¹⁸. Perhaps this is due to your unconventional and degenerate behavior which might make any wife blush¹⁹. But I am *sure* you now mourn him quite sincerely, especially given the strange and sudden nature of his death.

in this section of the oration is clear and he will certainly use it to suggest that Clodia murdered Metellus.

¹⁶ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 2.23 Julia Hejduk suggests that “consanguineous”, the word used for “blood brother” in the letter may have some obscene pun hidden in the meaning, if one compares it to *Domus* 25. In that section, Cicero describes Sextus Cloelius as a “sharer in Clodius’ blood”. This could be Cicero hinting at an incestuous relationship between the siblings again.

¹⁷ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus* 2.12.2 Cicero complained to Atticus that Clodia was often sounding a “war trumpet” for her brother, a rather humorous description and not one used often to describe women.

¹⁸ Skinner, 280. She suggests that Clodia’s passion for her brother’s political career would have derailed her marriage with Metellus. Regardless, it was never a happy marriage.

¹⁹ Marilyn Skinner 274. Catullus’ descriptions of Clodia are far from flattering and not at all the ideal Roman housewife.

Indeed, it is upsetting and baffling, how such a beloved and strong man could have died so unexpectedly. Perhaps your ox-eyes²⁰ saw something that can give us some insight into his tragic death? Perhaps some of the slaves I have often seen sneaking in and out of your house in the middle of the night may have heard some sinister rumor or other, involving his demise. For certainly, the circumstances under which Quintus Metellus has died are strange. If walls could speak, surely they might tell us the truth of his death²¹. And I believe that, given your rapid recovery from grief for him—I am sure the very many young men swimming in front of your river house must be an indication that you at the very least are fit to entertain guests—you may perhaps investigate the mysterious death of your husband. Perhaps I will look into it myself.

²⁰ Griffith 381. He explains that Cicero used the nick-name “Ox-eyes” for Clodia because it was a code-name designed to minimize risk of her identification and also because of her large eyes which earned her this Homeric epithet. See D.R. Shackleton Bailey, *Cicero’s Letters to Atticus*, 1. Of course, any comparison to Hera would also draw comparison to her relationship with Zeus—yet another incest joke from Cicero.

²¹Cicero, *Pro Caelio* section 60 In this section Cicero implies that Clodia poisoned her husband, Metellus and dramatically describes her house as witness to the murder. He draws on this incident later on in her accusation that her lover, Marcus Caelius, tried to poison her.

Letter One Reply

Claudia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

I trust you are well. I am surprised to have received such a letter from you implying, nay accusing me of the death of my beloved Metellus. I certainly mourn my husband. As for our public quarrels, as you call it, you are ignorant of our whole marriage, as you certainly must be of many things, if you will accuse me of murdering my husband.

You must spend a lot of time gazing towards my house on the Tiber if you constantly notice the numbers of my guests or the activities of my servants in the middle of the night. Does dear Terentia know how often your eyes linger on my abode?²² Give her my regards. I strive to be a gracious host to anyone who may want to visit my home—indeed you used to visit my house not a little in the past, yourself. The young men of Rome, I suppose, find my home pleasant and even in such a time of mourning as this, I intend to be gracious. It would not be impossible for you to extend the same courtesy to me.

As for the goings-about of my slaves, I am a kind mistress to them and allow them to go as they please when I do not need them. They are quite faithful to me. Could

²² Plutarch, *Cicero*, 29, 1-5. Plutarch thinks that, due to a rumor of a proposal of marriage from Clodia to Cicero, Cicero's wife held a grudge against Clodia. Here, Clodia also implies that Cicero must have some sort of obsession with her, if he notices details like the number of young men swimming near her house.

you say the same about your household? So, Marcus, it would be fitting if you did not disturb me—and even my “blood-brother Claudius” who is also in mourning, despite your insinuations—in my time of sorrow.

Letter Two

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

I trust you are well and that you have heard the good news. My brother Claudius, whom as you repeatedly tell me, is very dear to me, has been elected Tribune of the Plebs. He cares very much for the plebeians, of which the same cannot be said about you, and has thus even changed his name to Clodius²³. And in solidarity, I have changed my name from Claudia to Clodia. I know you may try to contest the legality of Clodius' new office, but sure you have also heard that Publius Fonteius has adopted Clodius. You understand that we are now Plebeians as well. But you will have nothing to fear from this, since such goodwill exists between you and Clodius. You needn't worry that your prosecution involving the Bona Dea rites²⁴ will have any effect on you, now that Clodius holds power. Nor will his opposition of you during your prosecution of Catiline, and of course your insinuation that he was one of the conspirators²⁵, be harmful to you at all.

²³ Billows, Richard *Julius Caesar: The Colossus of Rome*. In order to run for office, Claudius would have to be a plebeian. Among other things, he changed his name to Clodius, a more plebeian spelling. Clodia changed her name from Claudia as well. He had himself adopted by Publius Fonteius, a much younger plebeian.

²⁴ Tatum, *Cicero and the Bona Dea Scandal*. Clodius was put on trial for dressing up as a woman and sneaking into the temple of the Good Goddess in order to seduce the hostess. Cicero was the prosecutor for the trial, possibly in revenge for Clodius' previous prosecution of his sister-in-law. See introduction p.4.

²⁵ One of the charges against Clodius, aside from incest, was that he was one of the conspirators in the Catilinarian conspiracy.

Speaking of your prosecution of Catiline, I suppose that maybe you will have something to fear, since you so quickly executed these conspirators, despite even the protests of Caesar²⁶. Your swiftness and harshness in having them executed in the Tullianum²⁷ was shocking and horrifying to all. One might even call it the murder in the Tullianum, given that you condemned them to death without a trial. Should dear Clodius remember with too-little fondness how you included him amongst the conspirators, perhaps he would move to rectify these illegal deaths.

I hope you and Terentia are quite well. As usual, I trust she knows you have come down to my house recently and quite often. You accuse me of being common with young men, but what does Terentia think of your frequent associations with a woman such as myself? As always, give her my best.

²⁶ Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, section 50. Caesar was against the execution of the conspirators, because he was afraid it would impact Rome's reputation.

²⁷ Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, section 55. Cicero infamously had all of the leaders of the Catilinarian Conspiracy executed without a trial first, an act which Clodius would later use to his advantage in his rivalry with the orator.

Letter Two Reply

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

I hope you are well. Your brother certainly seems to be quite well. I trust that he enjoys the new family Pompey has procured for him.²⁸ It is clear what he means by having himself be adopted into a plebian family. Claudius—I mean to say *Clodius*—and I have quite often indulged in witty public banter²⁹, though now I am afraid that our relationship is now quite hostile. I suppose, ever since I prosecuted him for his violation of the rites of Bona Dea³⁰, the punishment for which he only avoided because of bribery and jury fixing, I have not been very dear to him. But now that he is tribune, I wonder if I have even more to fear. For certainly that is what this farce, I mean adoption, was for.

I am sure I understand your *threat* concerning my prosecution of Catiline. You need not worry yourself on my behalf, especially since you, a woman, do not understand the goings-on of the senate. The deaths of the conspirators, even without trial, were necessary, though I do not expect you to understand this. Should I appear before the senate yet again to reveal the machinations of that man? The punishments carried out in

²⁸ Hejduk, *Clodia: A sourcebook* 29. Pompey helped Clodius in many of his political endeavors, including his adoption by the plebeian family.

²⁹ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*. 2.1.5 The two were rivals. Cicero details a quarrel they had in a letter to Atticus. He says to Clodius, “Don’t complain about one foot from your sister...you can always hoist the other one!” This is another of his innumerable jokes about incest.

³⁰ Tatum, *Cicero and the Bona Dea Scandal*

the Tullianum were justly and lawfully done.³¹ But nevertheless, I ought to thank you for this “warning.” I will bear it in mind.

I am happy to see that you are quite well and that your river house still flourishes with partying and drinking. I had hoped on the basis of our goodwill towards each other³² you would no longer attempt to bait my wife Terentia. You may be certain that our marriage is quite stable. She most certainly understands that, whosoever house I may visit, it is undoubtedly for the business of the state only. Therefore, you may put aside your accusations and insinuations.

³¹ Sallust, *Bellum Catilinae*, section 55. See footnote 27 about Cicero’s execution of the conspirators.

³² Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 5.1 This is the only letter in which Cicero depicts Clodia in a positive light and perhaps as a friendly acquaintance. He had asked her to negotiate on his behalf with her brother-in-law. Hejduk, 32

Letter Three

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

You and Clodius must be so pleased with yourselves at the moment. Though I do not expect you to understand, being so unloyal and unfaithful to our country, I will again affirm that the conspirators whom I have executed for the good of Rome deserved to die. I know Clodius is targeting me specifically with his new law and hopes to drive me into exile by claiming I executed Roman citizens without trial³³. Though he believes I have acted outside the law, I am certain that the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum*³⁴, which holds that the consuls must see that the state suffer no harm, will clear me of any of your brother's charges. In this state of emergency, it was not only justifiable, but even required for me to execute the conspirators who sought the downfall of Rome.

Of course, a mere woman such as yourself, cannot be expected to understand any of this. This is not a surprise to me, since you had warned me in your last letter, which I thank you for. Yet even though you condescend to warn me of your brother's

³³ As soon as Clodius was Tribune, he passed a law stating that anyone who had executed citizens without a trial must be exiled. This was obviously targeted towards Cicero and his execution of the conspirators. This is what Clodia was mockingly hinting at in her last letter.

³⁴ Tom Holland, *Rubicon*, 237-239. Cicero tried to argue that the *Senatus Consultum Ultimum* meant that he was justified in his deeds.

machinations, I know you still hold him dearest and constantly blow the *lituus* for him³⁵.

I hope you and your brother, plebeians now, are happy in the failing Republic.

³⁵ Cicero, *Letters to Atticus*, 2.12.2 Lituus means war-horn, which I had Cicero bring up in an earlier letter, again mocking Clodia for her involvement with Clodius' political affairs.

Letter Four

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

Though perhaps, by the time my letter reaches you, you will find my greetings quite insincere. I do extend my sympathies to you in your current miserable and unfortunate condition. Of course, exile must be quite horrible for you—although I would not be able to understand, being a simple woman. I also have never done anything to merit exile.

I hear that you exile is not treating you well.³⁶ While I sympathize with you, dear Cicero, perhaps you should have heeded my warning, which you called a threat, earlier. But I can't help it if you won't take advice from a woman.

But perhaps you have heard about Clodius' latest works. If you have not, I am quite happy to tell you. My brother is, as you must be convinced of by this point, is a faithful and patriotic citizen. Despite whatever you might think about his loyalty to the Republic, you must concede that it is you and not he who is in exile. The people have spoken on that account. But back to Clodius' latest works: he has once again proved his dedication to Rome and the people. He has decided to enlarge the Porticus Catuli and

³⁶ Cicero's letters to Atticus during exile were marked by deep melancholy. Atticus talked him out of suicide at one point.

build a Temple of Libertas on the Palatine. Of course, he had to burn down everything around it so as to make more space for these new developments.

I must have forgotten, but remind me where your lovely home is? Isn't it located right on the Palatine as well³⁷? How coincidental that Clodius has undertaken this endeavor in your absence. Perhaps it would do you well not to stand against him anymore. It would be a pity if something were to happen to your property in your absence

³⁷ Cicero's house was on the Palatine Hill in Rome, near the Porticus Catuli where Clodius wished to build a Temple to the goddess Libertas. Whether or not Clodius sincerely wished to build a temple is uncertain. At any rate, it was convenient for the Tribune of the Plebs, that Cicero's house stood in the way. He had the exiled orator's house burned down so he could build the temple. Clodia unsubtly hints at Clodius' plans here. See Cerutti, "The Location of the Houses of Cicero and Clodius and the Porticus Catuli on the Palatine Hill in Rome."

Letter Four Reply

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

Your insincere greetings and useless sympathies have reached me quite well. I assume that you would have thought I would be grieving at this point, but you may be at peace knowing that I am perfectly well³⁸.

Exile is, indeed, unpleasant, but, as you yourself said in your last letter, I do not expect you to understand. Of course, in a state where the likes of your brother can force himself into the position of Tribune through deceit, someone such as yourself would never face exile. You thrive in a state corrupted with treachery. He has escaped trials through treachery, he has attained office through treachery, and he has sent me into exile through treachery. Perhaps it is best I am away from this vile cesspool for a while.

I have by this time heard of Clodius' latest endeavors. How kind of you to inform me of this development concerning the Palatine, where my home is located. It is of no use for you to lie to me, dear Clodia. I know the true nature of both you and your brother. Of course, Clodius did not want to extend the Porticus Catuli or build a Temple of Libertas. We both know that his designs are not so patriotic.

³⁸ Although Cicero expressed his grief to his best friend Atticus, I chose to have him lie to Clodia whom he viewed as a rival.

But I must ask you the same question you so spitefully asked me. Where is Clodius' home located? Isn't it right on the Palatine near mine? How convenient it must be for Clodius to have suddenly acquired much more space around his own abode. Perhaps the Porticus Catuli is not the only thing he intends to enlarge.

But I do agree that it is suspiciously coincidental that Clodius has undertaken this endeavor in my absence. Your pathetic excuse of a brother can only get away with such actions while I am gone. However, this has only fortified my case against him. When I return—and I certainly shall return—it would be wise of you to be frightened.

Letter Five

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

I have heard news that your beautiful home on the river is still being frequented by many young men. Indeed, some say that your parties have only increased in excess and wanton behavior.

I understand that a mutual friend of ours has recently moved into the house of your dear brother³⁹. Caelius is a most talented young man (especially since he was tutored by me at the desire of his father⁴⁰) though perhaps he has made a few minor blunders in the past⁴¹. His most noble father might have clashed with him at some point

³⁹ Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, section 17 One of the charges against Marcus Caelius was that he was too extravagant with his spending, one of the examples being that he had purchased an apartment from Clodius. This was near Clodia's house and probably played a role in the beginning of their relationship.

⁴⁰ Cicero, *Pro Caelio*, section 9 "Hoc dicam, hunc a patre continuo ad me esse deductum; nemo hunc M. Caelium in illo aetatis flore vidit nisi aut cum patre aut mecum aut in M. Crassi castissima domo, cum artibus honestissimis erudiretur."

"This I do say, he was led immediately from his father to me; no one saw this Marcus Caelius in the that blossoming of his years unless either he was with his father or with me or in the most virtuous house of Marcus Crassus, while he was being educated in most honest arts."

Cicero had a major role in bringing up Caelius. He uses this fact as evidence of Caelius' good character during the trial.

⁴¹ Caelius had aligned himself with Catiline at one point, against the wishes of Cicero, though he later returned his allegiance to Cicero.

and I understand that he is renting the apartment on the Palatine of your brother Clodius for no small sum of money. Of course, you must have made his acquaintance, then.

Caelius is a bright and impressionable young man and I am sure he will have noticed the excessive merry-making in your house. He will find it altogether too easy to accept money and favors from women. And I suppose you, having an abundance of both, will find it quite easy to hand them out.

I ask you to leave him alone. Whatever you quarrel may be with me, do not bring him into it. I would not have you tarnish his reputation with your whorish ways. If you will not listen, at least for your own sake, beware of such dangerous relationships. Of course, you have navigated such waters with ease before. But should you and Caelius turn hostile towards each other, who can say what consequences lie in wait for you?⁴²

⁴² Because of Clodia's past, it is presumably easy for Cicero to predict that the relationship will not end well. Although neither of them realize that it will end in the trial of Caelius, Cicero believes it will end very poorly.

Letter Five Reply

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well

I see your infatuation with my home continues. Your prying and curiosity have paid off indeed: Marcus Caelius is indeed renting an apartment from my brother. And of course, I have made his acquaintance. It may come as a surprise to you when I tell you that I agree with you about Caelius. He is indeed a talented young man, despite his past blunders and allegiances. You will, of course, have to overlook his previous relationship with our mutual friend Catiline, whom you so vehemently charged, and on account of the death of whom you are now in exile. This situation is rather ironic. For any words you wish to speak in absolving Caelius from that relationship will be a good word for Catiline⁴³.

In regard to my handing out money and favors, you should not be so worried. If he is, indeed, as virtuous a young man as you would have me believe, especially since he has been brought up by you, then my charms and ox-eyes, as you so often call them, will have no effect on him. But I cannot help it if young men flock to me, can I? If he falls so easily for my wiles, then perhaps you have not brought him up as well as you believed.

⁴³ If Cicero is to say anything positive about Caelius, he will have to take into account the latter's allegiance with Catiline, Cicero's enemy.

I am not afraid of the souring of such a relationship, nor do I fear whatever you might have planned in store for me. I am not the one hurt by these flings. Ask Catullus about that⁴⁴. And if you are threatening me, if I dare enter a relationship with this young man, know that I do not care. After all, you are homeless and in exile, while my brother is Tribune of the Plebs. You have nothing.

⁴⁴ While we do not know how Clodia handled the breakup with Catullus, we do know from the many poems he wrote about her that he was devastated. I have chosen to portray Clodia as indifferent to their relationship.

Letter Six

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

So, I hear you are to return to Rome at last, due to ignorance and idiocy of the Senate and that fool Milo⁴⁵. I welcome you back to your home—though in fact, I suppose you do not really have a home anymore, thanks to services of my brother for Rome. The new Temple of Liberty is such a pleasing sight. It was definitely worth the cost of your little house. I am sure you will manage to find lodging when you return, though.

I trust you enjoyed exile while it lasted. The senate may have voted to recall you, but don't think your return will intimidate me or my brother. I know Pompey wants your help against my brother⁴⁶, but trust me when I say there are other ways in which I can ruin you. Clodius may no longer be Tribune of the Plebs—and I am sure that that despicable Milo had only succeeded in recalling you by some deceit—but nevertheless do not doubt that you still have many enemies in Rome.

⁴⁵ Lintott, *Cicero and Milo*, 63. Lintott believes that Milo did not directly intend to play a part in recalling Cicero from exile, but that he was supporting Pompey who wished to recall Cicero. However, because Milo succeeded Clodius as Tribune of the Plebs, I chosen to have Clodia believe he was the reason for Cicero's return, partially out of jealousy.

⁴⁶ Wiedemann, *Cicero and the end of the Roman Republic*, 50. Milo was acting on behalf of Pompey, who wanted Cicero as a client.

Perhaps Clodius himself will come greet you when you return from exile⁴⁷. You had better take care, Cicero.

⁴⁷Billows, *Julius Caesar: The Colossus of Rome*, 167-168. After Cicero was recalled from exile, Clodius subsequently attacked the workmen who were rebuilding Cicero's house at public cost, assaulted Cicero himself in the street and set fire to the house of Cicero's younger brother, Quintus Tullius Cicero. Milo ended up preventing an assault on Cicero from Clodius during his return, though it is not clear if Milo did this to protect Cicero or his own home which was nearby.

Letter Six Reply

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

I had almost decided not to answer your letter but of course *such* a sincere letter of welcome must warrant a reply. I would not concern myself about my home, if I were you. I shall have everything that is mine restored to me, despite the so-called services of your brother for Rome. His act of expanding the Temple of Liberty—indeed no one believes even for one moment that this was an act of altruism on his part—will hardly hinder my return .

I know that Clodius cast the single vote against me when the Senate recalled me from exile. How frustrating it must be for you to be so defeated. I hear that brother of yours even broke up the meeting concerning my return with his own personal gang of thugs⁴⁸. His successor as Tribune of the Plebs, Milo, had them arrested and imprisoned⁴⁹. It is no wonder to me that you hate him so much.

⁴⁸ Lintott, *Cicero and Milo*, 63. When Fabricius tried to hold a final vote on the bill concerning Cicero's return in the Concilium Plebis, the meeting was broken up by Clodius' gangs (including gladiators belonging to the entourage of his brother Appius, then praetor. Milo subsequently imprisoned these gladiators, but they were later released.

⁴⁹ Cicero, *Sestius*, 85. Cicero explains that Milo had the gladiators arrested though they were later released by Serannus. This is further evidence of the feud between Clodius and Milo.

I will always have enemies in Rome, I know this much. Do not try to threaten me with your brother and his thugs and gladiators. There will be consequences for Clodius yet, and I will not be surprised.⁵⁰

⁵⁰ Tatum, *Publius Clodius Pulcher, The Patrician Tribune*, 239–240. While Clodius was traveling with a group of armed slaves, he passed by Milo and his escort of gladiators. A scuffle ensued and Clodius was wounded. Milo deemed it advantageous to have this political enemy disposed of and ordered his men to kill Clodius. Although Cicero does not know this will happen, I have him predict that Clodius' feud with Milo will end badly.

Letter Seven

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

It is with no small delight that I hear you and Marcus Caelius have fallen out of favor with each other. Could it be he discovered you bore the same malicious intentions toward him as you did towards your late husband? Or perhaps he found your extensive list of past lovers quite repulsive? Or perhaps, and this is the most likely, he has become aware of the significant number of years between you and, being young, decided to cast you off for someone more suited to his age? In fact, you had once proposed some sort of marriage between me and you.⁵¹ Should Caelius have discovered this, he would have been made quite aware of the fact that you are far too old for him. Hercules! You must have exhausted all the young men in Rome by this point. The only one left is your brother! Though I suppose, given your promiscuity and wantonness, that will hardly stop you.

Either way, I find it quite fortunate that Caelius has come to his senses and left you behind. It must be a bitter loss for you, an arrogant meretrix, to have been spurned by a lover after having abandoned so many yourself! Dear Clodia, it would be best for you

⁵¹ T. A. Dorey *Cicero, Clodia, and the 'Pro Caelio'* 179. Dorey suggests that some of the animosity Cicero displays towards Clodia arises from Plutarch's account that says Clodia had proposed marriage to Cicero, who found the idea offensive.

to beware. I have returned from exile and you have gained another enemy in your once darling Caelius.

Letter Seven Reply

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

Once again, I see you have nothing better to do with your time than to intrude into affairs that do not concern you whatsoever. Indeed, have you no more important things to attend to than the dalliances of a lowly *mulier*? The great Cicero, once consul, now enjoys petty gossip like some old woman!

But, since you are so eager to find out how it happened that Caelius and I fell apart, I suppose I will tell you. I cast him off, much like all my other lovers.⁵² The poor boy was quite distraught, but of course you must already know this. You know I tire easily of these young men. Perhaps I am much older than Caelius. But this was never a subject of concern for him while we were together.

⁵² T. A. Dorey *Cicero, Clodia, and the 'Pro Caelio'* 178. It is unclear who cast whom off. While Clodia's motives behind testifying for the prosecution have always been portrayed as vindictive spite and vengeful, possibly because Caelius left her, there is no authority for this view besides Cicero's claims in the *Pro Caelio*, which was an essential argument for his case. Dorey says that it is equally possible that Clodia tired of Caelius first and broke things off with him. There was the rumor the poison which Caelius allegedly attempted to use on Clodia was in fact a love-potion, which would in fact fit the interpretation here that Clodia was the one to initiate the split. In this account, I have chosen to have Clodia be the one to cast Caelius off, which makes sense, given her many other affairs. Of course, she could be lying, but it is up to the interpretation of the reader.

As for your blatant lies about this proposal between you and me, I can hardly respond without laughing. Whatever I might have said which you perceived as a marriage proposal, I do not even remember. What a sore point this must be between you and sweet Terentia! Do send her my greetings. But let her rest easy knowing that I have no interest in someone as advanced in years as yourself, nor am I eager for marriage with a returned exile with no estate.

Threaten me all you like, Cicero. I am not afraid of you. In fact, I even begin to grow bored of you, witty and biting as your letters are. Perhaps you should go join the ranks of Caelius and Catullus.

Letter Eight

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

Consider this a warning. Your *upright* young Caelius is no better than the treacherous conspirators you had executed. Perhaps you ought to execute him without trial as well and be exiled again!

This follower of yours tried to have me poisoned. My loyal servants told me all. He had arranged some sort of secret meeting at the baths to exchange some box of poison. It is quite fortunate that I have come away unharmed from this incident, but this attempt on my life is a serious one. If you think I will allow an attack on my person to go unaddressed, then you are the fool I've always taken you for.

Caelius has many enemies. He's a rash and foolish young man. I have spoken to Lucius Herrenius and Lucius Atratinus—who bears no small grudge against him for prosecuting his father Bestia twice—and they will be charging Caelius for his crimes. Do not think anyone has forgotten his affiliation with Catiline, whom you yourself exposed before all of Rome, or his involvement with the intimidation of the Alexandrian envoys at

Puteoli⁵³. You urged me to beware now that you have returned, but perhaps you ought to extend the same courtesy to Caelius.

Of course, I can understand that the young man must be heartbroken, having lost someone such as myself. I never received the box of poison myself, but it would not surprise me if he had sent me some sort of love-philtre in an attempt to win me back⁵⁴. This reflects poorly on him as well, nor will it stop his enemies from charging him for his many crimes. Either way, I will not suffer this attempt on my personal welfare to go unpunished. You had best start taking your own advice, Cicero. Do not say I did not warn you.

⁵³ T. A. Dorey *Cicero, Clodia, and the 'Pro Caelio'* 177 Dorey thinks it is quite possible that Caelius had been somewhat involved in almost all of the charges brought up against him, although Cicero successfully defended him.

⁵⁴ T. A. Dorey *Cicero, Clodia, and the 'Pro Caelio'* 178 Dorey also suggested that the poison was a love potion.

Letter Eight Reply

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

It seems you have not in fact tired of our witty banter. It brings me no small amount of amusement to hear of the vicious turn in your relationship with Caelius. It brings me even greater joy to see the irony of your situation. You, who murdered your own husband by poison should nearly suffer the same fate from one of your own spurned lovers!

I do not care for your idle threats. Do you think I, as powerful a speaker as I am, cannot defend Caelius in court? Clodia, you yourself have given me ample material by which I might have him acquitted. Caelius has nothing to fear.

I am sorry for the brevity of my letter, but as you had mentioned earlier, I have far more important things to attend to than answering the letters of some courtesan.

Letter Nine

Cicero to Clodia, I hope you are well.

It is only fair that I warn you about the upcoming trial of Caelius. I know that you are behind these charges brought against him. How easy was it to convince young Lucius Atratinus to come to his father's defense by charging Caelius with violence?⁵⁵ Of course that brother of yours is involved as well.

You intend to charge him with attempted poison. Of course, you are very familiar with poison and the ways in which it works, having introduced it to your late husband. Do not think that your malicious activities have gone unnoticed by me. Do you not think that I can turn the accusation against you? Do not think that the topic of your wild, whorish ways will not arise in the trial.

You and your brother thought to send me into exile and in that way defeat me. But I returned more gloriously than ever in a triumphal procession, amidst many

⁵⁵ Cicero, *Pro Caelio*. One of the many charges against Caelius was that he murdered several ambassadors. One of the prosecutors was Lucius Atratinus. Earlier, Caelius had taken Atratinus' father to court for bribery twice, an act which would have left Atratinus very bitter. It is very possible that Atratinus took up the position of prosecutor out of revenge.

congratulations⁵⁶. You overestimated the reach of your dear brother and now you will pay for the grievances you have caused me. But do not say I did not warn you.

⁵⁶ Haskell, *This was Cicero*, 204

Cicero was greeted by a cheering crowd upon his return. Here, I wanted Cicero, who considered his own exile to be a national calamity, to feel very justified in his return and remind Clodia of his procession.

Letter Nine Reply

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

Yet again you come to attack me with accusations for which you have no support. First you insinuate that I murdered my *own* husband and now you argue that I convinced Atratinus to charge Caelius. These are, in fact, the very sort of hasty accusations without proof that got you exiled in the first place.

And since we are on the topic of why you were exiled, do you not remember whom your dear Caelius used to support? After your splendid accusation of Catiline and execution of all his followers, do you not suppose it will be a little difficult to defend poor Caelius? Every good word for this young man will be a mitigating word for Catiline. And wouldn't you, the great Cicero, be forced to agree that any supporter of that dastardly man must be executed?

I am not afraid of your threats. In fact, perhaps you are the one who ought to be anxious for the trial. How do you suppose you shall appear to the senate, viciously debating Lucius Atratinus, who is barely nineteen?⁵⁷ Any triumph over a mere boy will

⁵⁷ Holmes, T. Rice, *The Roman Republic and the Founder of the Empire*, 240-241 One of the reasons the prosecution may have chosen such a young and unexperienced man as lead prosecutor is because it would reflect poorly on Cicero, a seasoned lawyer, to crush a boy in court. Cicero avoided this by complimenting the virtue and intelligence of Atratinus and saying he understood why Atratinus would be angry with Caelius. He also then questioned why the prosecution would even choose Atratinus in the first place, possibly putting their own case in jeopardy. See *Pro Caelio* sections 2 and 7.

not seem very flattering on your part. In fact, you will seem quite cruel. Though that will not come as a surprise to anyone. You see, dear Cicero, I am only seeking to defend myself from this wild boy who tried to have me poisoned. Whatever accusations you make against me will be of no consequence. But I thank you for your useless warnings.

Letter Ten

Clodia to Cicero, I hope you are well.

I suppose you think you have had the upper hand recently. I hope you enjoyed your public display of wit at my expense. You think you're clever, dredging up my deceased grandfather the way you did.

Your accusation about the relationship between me and my dear brother Clodius amused me. I suppose I had forgotten about the little incident in which Clodius accused your wife's sister of incest with Catiline. I had hoped Terentia would have forgotten about that.⁵⁸ I suppose, though that Terentia would have very many reasons to be angry with not only me, but you.⁵⁹ After all, what other reason would you have for attacking me as harshly as you did? And does she know exactly how familiar you are with my house? I must admit that even I was surprised you had remembered so much of how it looked.

You've won this round, Cicero. I suppose you think you've ruined my reputation for good this time. Now you, and Caelius, and Catullus can be happy, knowing that

⁵⁸ Tatum, "Cicero and the Bona Dea Scandal" 202 Terentia may still be bitter against Cicero, Clodia, Clodius and anyone else involved in accusing her half-sister of incest. Here I have Clodia baiting her with rumors of the affair between herself and Cicero once again.

⁵⁹ Plutarch. *Cicero* section 29 Terentia may have encouraged Cicero to be especially harsh towards Clodia in the *Pro Caelio*, which was quite detrimental to Clodia's reputation.

you've avenged your injured feelings. No more implicating poetry coming my way, dare I hope? There is some small comfort in the fact that, should anyone happen to remember you and your speech—or Catullus for that matter—I shall be remembered along with you. Whatever connection we have will be immortalized. After all, I would rather be remembered as a *meretrix*⁶⁰ than not at all.

⁶⁰ A Latin word meaning courtesan, prostitute, or harlot. Cicero refers to Clodia as little better than a prostitute, though in these letters, Clodia has the last laugh, as she her memory will always be brought up in conjunction with the one who made her famous through hating her. As much as Cicero would want for the rumors of their affair to be forgotten, they will always be remembered.

Chapter 3

Epistulae (VI-X)

Letter Six

Clodia Ciceroni, SD.

Sic accipio te reddendum esse Romam tandem, propter inertiam et insipientiam Senatus et istum Fatuum Milonem. Conplector te domi tui—cum quidem, puto te vere domum iam nec habere, propter munera fratris urbi Romae. Novum Templum Libertatis gratissimum species est. Certe dignum dispendio domus parvae tuae fuit. Enimvero tamen hospitium comparabis illo tempore quo reddeas.

Spero te fructum esse exilio donec manet. Senatus quidem censuit te revocate, sed noli putare reditum tuum me aut fratrem meum terrere. Scio Pompeium auxilium contra fratrem meum cupere, sed noli dubitare quin sint alii modi quibus te perdere possim. Clodius non iam Tribunus Plebis est, et certum est istum Milonem despiciatum in te revocadno solum prospere evenisse quodam dolo , sed noli tamen dubitare te adhuc multos inimicos Romae habere.

Fortasse Clodius ipse te reddentem ab exilio salutabit. Debes cavere, Cicero.

Letter Six Reply

M. Cicero Clodiae, S.D.

Me litteris tuis non responsurum esse paene decreveram, sed scilicet tam sinceris litteris gratis respondendum est. Te sollicitare de domu mea non debes. Omnes res meae reddentur mihi, contra vana munera istius fratris pro Re Publica. Quod Templum Libertatis amplificavit— nemo quidem putat eum liberalitate egisse—quin reddeam non impediet.

Scio Clodium unicum suffragium contra me misisti, me a Senatu de exilio revocato.

Vos victos esse quantum te frustrat, bene scio. Audio fratrem istum etiam conventum de redditu meo turbavisse cum latronibus propriis. Milo, qui munere Tribuni Plebis post Clodium fungitur, effecit ut comprehensi essent et incarcerationem coniecti. Non miror te eum tantum odisse.

Certum est me semper inimicos Romae habere, ut clarum est. Noli conari mihi minari fratrum istum et latrones et gladiatores. Bene scio Clodium eventibus afflicturum esse quibus accidentibus haud mirabor.

Letter Seven

M. Cicero Clodiae, S. D.

Non parva voluptate accipio te et Caelium inimicos factos esse. Fortasse repperit insidias easdem malignas quas mortuo coniugi tulisti? Aut fortasse abundatis indicis tuum priorum amatorum eum pertaedet? Fortasse, quod maxime creditur, quot anni inter vos intersint sensit, et ut iuuenis, decrevit te abiecere pro altera aetate sua magis idonea. Olim quidem matrimonium inter nos proposueras. Si Caelius hoc repperit, te aetate proveciore esse scivit. Me Hercule! Omnes iuvenes Romanos clare iam confecisti. Frater tuus solus restat! Te autem tam promiscuam ac libidinosam, hoc vix impedit, ut opinor.

Quodcumque sit, puto, Caelius insanire fortunate desivit quod te iam dereliquit. Clare hoc tibi calamitatem acerbissimam accepisti, superba meretrix, te ab amatore sprete esse, quae tot amatores ipsa dereliquisti. Cara Clodia, optimum est ut caveas. Ab exsilio regressus sum et fecisti novum inimicum Caelium quondam tibi carissimum acquisivisti.

Letter Seven Reply

Clodia Ciceroni, S. D.

Rursus, video nihil melius esse quod facias inruas in res quam ut quae ad te non attineant. Habesne quidem nullas res ampliores ministrandas, quam leves amores humilis mulieris? Magnus Cicero, quondam consul, nunc pusilla fama fruitur, sicut anus!

Sed, cum tam cupidus sis reperiendi quomodo ego et Caelio inimici facti sint velim narrare tibi. Illum abieci, sicuti alios amantes meos. Puer miser tristissimus erat, sed certe iamiam hoc scis. Bene scis quam facile fatiger fiam iuvenibus. Fortasse senior multo quam Caelius sum. At haec cura ei numquam erat, cum coniuncti essemus.

Quod attinet ad istam istud mendacium fragrans, de condicione inter nos, vix sine risu respondere possum. Quodcumque dixerim, quod interpretatus es; ut condicionem matrimoni, haud memini. Talis acerba rixa necesse est ut hoc sit inter te et Terentiam. Consaluta eam pro me. Sed Quiescat, sciens me nihil utile habere in aliquem tam proevectum aetate ut te, nec avida sum ne nubam exsuli redito sine praedo.

Minare mihi quantum vis, Cicero. Non te metuo. Tui quidem me taedere incipit, quamvis salsae et mordaces epistulae sint. Fortasse debes te cum Caelio Catulloque iungere.

Letter Eight

Clodia Ciceroni, S.D.

Nunc te moneo. Iste pius iuuenis Caelius melior quam hi fallaces coniurati qui supplicio capitis, te auctore, affecti sunt, non est. Fortasse debes eum sine iudicio interficere et iterum exsulabis.

Iste discipulus me veneno occidere conatus est. Fidi servi mei omnia dixerunt. Constituit nescio quem congressum secretum in balneis ut nescio quam arcam veneni commutaret. Beatum est, salva evasi hoc casu. Sed periculum in vita mea grave est. Si putas me situram esse hunc impetum inultum esse, es stultus quem semper habebam te esse.

Caelius multos inimicos habet. Audax et protervus iuuenis est. Locuta sum cum Lucio Herrenio et Lucio Atratino, qui Caelio invidet, cum patrem Bestiam iudicio bis prosecutus sit, et Caelium scelerum arguent. Noli putare quendam oblatum esse eum cum Catilina se iunctum esse, quem et ipse detexisti prae omnibus Romanis aut eum implicatum esse cum legatis Alexandrinis Puteolis minatum sit. Hortatus es me ut caverem, cum iam redieris, sed fortasse debes offerre liberalitatem eandem Caelio.

Scilicet, iuvenem maestissimum esse intellegere possum, cum amiserit talem qualis sum. Numquam ipsa arcam veneni accepi, sed non mirata sum si nescio quod amatorium mihi mississet ut temptaret me reconciliare. Et sic prave facit, nec prohibebit inimicos ne

eum scelerum multorum arguant. Tamen non sinam periculum saluti privatae meae
inultum esse. Debes exaudire consilium tuum Cicero. Ne putes me te non monuisse.

Letter Eight Reply

Cicero Clodiae, S.D.

Videris quidem non fatigatam esse salsa cavillatione. Accipere proprinquitatem tuam cum Caelio tam vitiose in peius versam esse non nullum delectamenti mihi fert. Videre ironiam rerum tuarum etiam maiorem laetitiam fert. Tu, quae virum proprium veneno occidisti eundem casum ab isto amante spreto paene decet te pati.

Denuntiationes inanes curae mihi non sunt. Putasne me, tam potentem oratorem, Caelium in iudicio defendere non posse? Clodia, tu ipsa materiem amplam dedisti, qua Caelium absolvam. Caelius nihil timebit.

Me paenitet quod hae litterae tam breves sint, at ut prius dixisti res graviores mihi ministrandae sunt, quam ut respondeam cuicumque meretriculae.

Letter Nine

Cicero Clodiae, S.D.

Fas est, te de iudicio postero monere; scio te responsabilem esse, pro crimine in Caelium illato. Quam facile tenero Lucio Atratino persuasi ut, ad patrem defendendum, Caelium vi argueret. Scilicet iste frater quoque implicatur.

Habes in animo arguere quod te veneno interficere conatus sit. Certe, venenum notum est tibi, et quomodo operatur cum dederis iam mortuo viro. Nolite putare facinora me fefellisse. Nonne putas me crimen in te vertere posse? Noli reri feroces res meretricias tuas in iudicio non exstituras esse.

Tu et frater iste speraverunt me in exilio demittere et sic me frangere. Sed ego regressus sum gloriosius quam ante in pompa triumphali in media multa gratulatione. Praesumpsisti opem fratris cari et nunc dabis poenas pro dolore quem efficisti mihi. Sed noli dicere me te non monuisse.

Letter Nine Reply

Clodia Ciceroni, S.D.

Iterum venis ut me accusationibus ut impelleas quae nullam excusationem habeant. Primum insinuas me occidisse proprium coniugem et nunc arguis me persuasisse. Atratio ut Caelium argueret. Haec quidem crimina praepropera sine argumento eius generis sunt, quibus prius exsulatus es.

Et cum autem de causa exilii tui loquamur, meministine cum quo Caelius iste carus se adiungeret? Postquam Catilinam splendide accusares et asseculas eius supplicio capitis afficeres, nonne putas difficile esse defendere miserum Caelium? Omne verbum bonum pro Caelio molliens verbum pro Catilina est. Et compelleris praeterea, Cicero magnus, adsentiri ullum advocatum istius interficiendum esse?

Non metuo minas tuas. Tu fortasse debes sollicitus esse de iudicio. Quomodo senatui videberis, ut putas, studiose disputans cum Lucium Atratinum, qui tantum undeviginti annos habet? Nulla victoria super adolescentulum tibi blandietur. Profecto videberis ammodum saevus. Nemo autem hoc mirabitur. Quaero, enim, care Cicero, modo me defendere contra ferocem iuvenem, qui conatus est me veneno occidere. Quascumque accusationes in me affers, nihil refert. Sed gratias tibi ago pro inani admonitione.

Letter Ten

Clodia Ciceroni, S.D.

Mihi videris fingere te nuper vicisse. Spero tibi placuisse ostendere salem tuum me ludificata. Calidus tibi videris, quod mentionem illo modo fecisti de avo meo mortuo.

Crimen tuum de me et fratre meo me delectat. Oblita sum, ut puto, rei qua Clodius sororem uxoris incestus cum Catilina arguit. Speraveram Terentiam illius rei oblitam esse. Terentia autem mihi videtur multas rationes irae habere, non tantum mecum sed etiam tecum. Quam tamen aliquam causam habes ut petas me hoc acerbissimo modo? Scitne quidem quam nota tibi domus mea sit? Compellor fateri me miratam esse quam bene meminisses quomodo videretur domus mea.

Hoc proelio vicisti, Cicero. Mihi videris putare te in perpetuum honorem meum corrupisse. Nunc tu et Caelius et Catullus laeti esse potestis, scientes vos affectus laesos vindicavisse. Plura carmina implicantia ad me haud venient, ut spero. Paulum solatii habeo quod, si quis tui orationisque tuae—vel etiam Catulli—meminerit, ego quoque memoria tenebor. Quodcumque necessitudinis habemus, immortalis fiet. Denique, vellem magis meretrix memoria teneri quam in oblivione esse.

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