

Caesar and his Legionary

I

CAESAR

Since the beginning of March the dictator had known that the days of the dictatorship were numbered.

A stranger arriving from one of the provinces might well have found the capital more impressive than ever. It had grown enormously; a motley of races thronged the teeming districts; mighty government buildings were nearing completion; the City seethed with plans; business was as usual; slaves were cheap.

The regime seemed secure. The dictator had just been proclaimed dictator for life and was now preparing *his greatest enterprise*, the conquest of the East, the long-awaited Persian campaign, a veritable second Alexandrian campaign.

Caesar knew that he would not live out the month. He was at the summit of his power. Before him lay the abyss.

The important session of the senate on March 13th, at which the dictator made a speech attacking the 'menacing attitude of the Persian government' and announcing that he had assembled an army in Alexandria, the capital of Egypt, revealed the senate's strangely indifferent, even cold attitude. During his speech an ominous list of the sums which the dictator had deposited in Spanish banks under a false name was circulated amongst the senators: *The dictator is salting away his private fortune (110 millions) abroad!* Did he not believe in his war? Or did he not contemplate a war against Persia at all, but a war against Rome?

The senate voted the war credits, unanimously, as usual.

Leading military men are gathered in Cleopatra's palace, the focal point of all the intrigues connected with the East. It is

really the Egyptian queen who has inspired the Persian war. Brutus and Cassius, like other young officers, congratulate her on the victory of the war policy in the senate. Her happy thought of circulating the ominous list is spoken of with admiration and hilarity. The dictator will get a surprise when he tries to raise the approved credits in the City.

Caesar, whom the senate's chilliness, despite its compliance, has not escaped, does indeed have occasion to notice a highly annoying attitude in the City. He escorts the financiers in the Chamber of Commerce to a huge map hanging on the wall and elaborates his plans of campaign against Persia and India. The gentlemen nod, but then start talking about Gaul where, though it was conquered years ago, bloody risings have again broken out. The 'New Order' doesn't work. Someone suggests: wouldn't it be better to postpone the new war till the autumn? Caesar does not answer and leaves abruptly. The gentlemen raise their arms in the Roman salute. Somebody murmurs: 'The man's lost his nerve.'

Do they suddenly not want a war after all?

Enquiries bring a staggering fact to light: the armaments firms are feverishly preparing for war; their shares are rising by leaps and bounds; slave prices are going up too. . . .

What does it mean? They want the dictator's war and deny him the money for it?

Towards evening Caesar realizes what it means: *they want the war, but without him.*

He gives orders for the arrest of five bankers; nevertheless, he is terribly shaken and on the verge of a nervous breakdown, to the astonishment of his adjutant, who has seen him completely calm in the thick of murderous battles. He is slightly soothed by the arrival of Brutus, of whom he is very fond. Yet he does not feel strong enough to go through the dossier which his City agent has sent him. It contains names of conspirators, including that of Brutus. They are preparing an attempt on his life. Fear of

finding the names of intimates in the thick dossier ('It is so thick, horribly thick'), stops the dictator opening it. Brutus feels he needs a glass of water when Caesar finally hands it back unopened to his secretary – for later perusal.

Great consternation breaks out in Cleopatra's palace when Brutus, pale and distracted, reports that there is a dossier on the plot. Caesar may read it at any moment. With some difficulty Cleopatra calms those about her, appealing to their soldiers' honour, and she herself gives orders to pack.

In the meantime the police aedile has come to Caesar to give his report. He is the third this year – still only in its third month – his two predecessors having been dismissed for being implicated in conspiracies. The aedile guarantees the personal safety of the dictator, despite the uproar caused in the City by the arrest of the bankers, for whom, incidentally, influential circles are interceding. . . . The Persian war, of whose early start the aedile seems to be convinced, will, in his view, silence opposition. Whilst he expounds the comprehensive security measures which he thinks necessary, Caesar sees right through him, as in a vision, the manner of his death; for he will die.

He will let himself be carried to the Pompeian Gate, will get out there, deal with petitioners, go into the temple, catch the eye of this or that senator and greet him, and sit down on a chair. There will be a few ceremonies, he can see them before his eyes. Then the conspirators – in Caesar's vision they have no faces, only white smudges where the faces should be – will come towards him on some pretext. Someone will give him something to read, he will reach out for it, they will fall upon him, *he will die*.

No, there will be no war for him in the East after all. The greatest of all his enterprises will not be undertaken after all: *it had consisted of his getting alive on a ship* that could take him to his troops in Alexandria, to the only place where he might perhaps be safe.

When, in the late evening, the sentries notice some gentlemen

going to the dictator's apartments, they still believe they must be generals and army inspectors who want to discuss the Persian war. But they are only doctors; the dictator needs a sleeping drug.

The next day – March 14th – is confused and agonizing. During his morning exercise in the riding school Caesar has a brain wave. Senate and City are against him, what of it? *He will turn to the populace!*

Was he not at one time the great tribune of the people, the white hope of democracy? Had there not been a gigantic programme – break up of the estates, allotments of land for the poor – with which he had shocked the senate to death?

The dictatorship? An end to dictatorship! Great Caesar will abdicate, retire into private life, to Spain for example. . . .

He had mounted his horse a tired man, letting himself be carried passively round the ring of the riding school; then (at certain thoughts – of the populace) his bearing had stiffened, he had shortened the reins, collected his horse and ridden it into a lather; a new man, refreshed, leaves the riding school.

There are not many with a stake in the great gamble who feel as confident as Caesar this morning. The conspirators expect to be arrested. Brutus posts sentries in his gardens, horses stand in readiness at various points. In some houses papyri are being burnt. In her palace on the Tiber Cleopatra prepares herself for her death. By now, Caesar must have read the dossier long ago. She dresses with care, sets her slaves free, distributes gifts. The police will be arriving soon.

The opposition struck yesterday. The regime's counterblow is bound to fall today.

The nature of this counterblow becomes clear at the dictator's levee.

Caesar talks of his new plan in the presence of several senators. He will hold elections, abdicate. His slogan: *Against War!* The Roman citizen will conquer Italian soil, not Persian. For how

does he live, the Roman citizen, the master of the world? Caesar describes it.

The appalling description of the ordinary Roman citizen's misery is greeted with stony faces. The dictator has dropped the mask; he is out to stir up the mob. Half an hour later the whole City will know of it. Enmities between City and senate, between bankers and officers, will vanish; all will be of one mind on one thing: away with Caesar!

Before he has finished his speech Caesar realizes that it was a mistake to make it. Of course he should not have been too frank. Abruptly he changes the subject, switches on his time-honoured charm. His friends will have nothing to fear. Their estates are safe. Help will be given to the tenant farmers to acquire land, but the State will do that, out of State funds. The summer will be a fine one, they must come and stay with him in Baiae.

When they have thanked him for the invitation and left, Caesar orders the dismissal and arrest of the police aedile, who already last night had released the arrested bankers. Then he sends his secretary out to sound the feeling in democratic circles. Everything depends now on the attitude of the populace.

Democratic circles mean the politicians of the trade guilds, disbanded long ago, which, in the great days of the Republic, played the leading part in elections. Caesar's dictatorship has smashed this once powerful instrument and from a part of the guild membership organized a Civil Guard, the so-called street guilds. These, too, have been dissolved. But now the secretary, Titus Rarus, seeks out the plebeian politicians to sound their feeling.

He talks to a former official of the plasterers' guild, then to a former election agent who is a publican. They refer him to old Carpo, the former leader of the building workers, a man who must have the greatest influence *since he is in prison*.

In the meantime Caesar has received an important visitor: Cleopatra. The queen has not been able to tolerate the strain any longer. She must know how matters stand. She is decked out for

death; all the arts of Egypt have been enlisted to mobilize her beauty, famed in three continents. The dictator seems to have time to spare. He treats her, as always in recent years, with studied politeness, ready at any time to give advice, now and again suggesting that, should she desire it, he could again become her lover right away, unrivalled connoisseur of female beauty that he is. But not a word of politics. They sit in the atrium and feed the goldfish, talking about the weather. He invites her to Baiae for the summer.

She is not reassured. He appears not yet to have completed his preparations to strike; that is all, no doubt. With a set face she gets up to go. Caesar escorts her to her chair, then proceeds to the offices where the jurists and secretaries are feverishly working on the draft of the new electoral law. The draft must be kept secret: no one has permission to leave the palace. *This constitution will be the most liberal that Rome has ever known.*

Of course, everything now depends on the populace.

Since Rarus is away an uncommonly long time – after all, what can there be to discuss? those plebs are bound to jump at it if the dictator offers them this unique chance – Caesar decides to go to the dog-races. He feels the need to make personal contact with the populace and the populace can be found at the dog-races. The stadium is not yet quite filled. Caesar does not make for the grand box, he takes a seat amongst the crowd further up. He has really no need to fear that he will be recognized; people have always seen him only from a distance.

Caesar looks on for a while, then he, too, backs a particular dog. To the man who has sat down next to him he explains his reasons for backing this precise dog. The man nods. A few rows in front there is a bit of an argument. Some people seem to be in the wrong seats; those who have just come turn them out. Caesar tries to engage his neighbours in conversation, even on politics. They answer monosyllabically and then he realizes that they know who he is: he is sitting amongst his secret police.

Annoyed, he gets up and goes off. Incidentally, the dog he backed has won. . . . Outside the stadium he meets his secretary, who is looking for him. His news is not good. No one is willing to discuss things. Fear or hatred is rife everywhere. Mostly the latter. Carpo, the building worker, is the man they trust. Caesar listens sombrely. He gets into his chair and is carried to the Mamertine prison. He will talk to Carpo.

First Carpo has to be found. There are so very many erstwhile plebeian prisoners in this dungeon that they are rotting away by the dozen. But after some coming and going the building worker Carpo is hoisted up out of a hole on long ropes and now the dictator can talk to the man in whom the Roman populace puts its trust.

They sit face to face and eye each other. Carpo is an old man; possibly he is no older than Caesar, but the fact is he looks eighty. Very old, very wasted, but not broken. Without beating about the bush Caesar expounds his incredible plan: to reintroduce democracy, hold elections, retire into private life himself, etc., etc.

The old man is silent. He does not say yes, he does not say no; he is silent. He looks at Caesar fixedly and utters no sound. As Caesar takes his leave, he is lowered into his hole again on the long ropes. The dream of democracy is over. It is clear: if there is to be a revolution, then they don't want him in it. They know him too well.

When the dictator gets back to his house the secretary has some difficulty in making the guards understand who he is. They are new. The new aedile has dismissed the Roman guards and posted a Negro cohort at the palace. Negroes are safer: they do not understand Latin and so are less easily incited, infected by the mood in the town. Caesar knows now what that mood is

It is a restless night in the palace. Caesar gets up several times and walks about the rambling palace. The Negroes drink and sing. Nobody pays any attention to him, nobody recognizes him.

He listens to one of their sad songs and goes out to the stables to see his favourite horse. The horse at least recognizes him. . . . Eternal Rome lies in uneasy slumber. Outside the gates of the doss-houses down-and-out artisans are still queuing to get three hours' sleep and reading large, tattered posters calling for recruits for a war in the East which will not take place after all. Last night's sentries from the gardens of Rome's gilded youth have vanished. Drunken voices issue from the palaces. A little cavalcade passes through a southern gate of the town: the queen of Egypt is leaving the capital, heavily veiled. . . . At two o'clock in the morning Caesar remembers something; he gets up and goes in his night attire to the wing of the palace where the jurists are still working on the new constitution. He sends them off to bed.

Towards morning Caesar is informed that during the night his secretary Rarus has been murdered. Spies have apparently got wind of his talks with the plebeian politicians and powerful hands have struck out of the dark. Whose hands? The lists he had had with the names of the conspirators have disappeared.

He was murdered in the palace. So the palace is no longer safe for the dictator's men. And what of the dictator himself?

Caesar stands for a long time beside the camp-bed where his dead secretary lies, his last confidant, who has paid for this confidence with his life.

On leaving the room he is jostled by a drunken guard who does not apologize. Caesar looks round nervously several times as he goes down the corridor.

In the atrium, which is strangely deserted – no one has turned up for the levee – he runs into a messenger from Antonius; the consul and his henchmen send word that he must on no account go to the senate today. His personal safety is threatened there. Caesar lets Antonius know that he will not go to the senate. Instead, he is carried to Cleopatra's house, past the long row of daily petitioners outside his palace. Perhaps Cleopatra would

finance his campaign? In that case he would need neither the City nor the populace.

Cleopatra is not at home. The house is shut up. She seems to have gone away for a long time. . . .

Back to the palace. To his surprise the gate stands open. It turns out that the guard has been withdrawn. The master of the world leans out of his chair and looks at his house which he no longer dares to enter.

He could summon a security guard from Antonius. But he distrusts every security guard. Better to be without any security guard, then at least he need not fear it. But where is he going?

He gives the order. He is going to the senate.

He leans back in his chair, looking neither to right nor left. He lets himself be carried to the Pompeian Gate. He gets out. He deals with petitioners. He goes into the temple. He catches the eye of this or that senator and greets him. He sits down on his chair. There are a few ceremonies. Then the conspirators come towards him on some pretext. They no longer have white smudges above their necks as in his dream of two days ago; all of them have faces, the faces of his best friends. Someone gives him something to read, he reaches out for it. They fall upon him.

2

CAESAR'S LEGIONARY

At daybreak an ox-cart drives through the spring green of the Campania on its way to Rome. It carries the fifty-two-year-old tenant farmer, Caesar's veteran, Terentius Scaper, with his family and household goods. Their faces are careworn. They have been hounded off their small farm for owing rent. Only eighteen-year-old Lucilia looks forward pleasurably to the great cold town: her betrothed lives there.

As they near Rome they notice that unusual happenings are afoot. The control at the turnpikes has been tightened and from

time to time they are stopped by military patrols. Rumours go round of an impending great war in Asia. The old soldier observes the recruiting booths he knows so well, empty now owing to the early hour; his spirits rise. Caesar is planning new victorious campaigns. Terentius Scaper has arrived just at the right time. It is the 13th of March in the year 44 B.C.

Towards nine o'clock in the morning the ox-cart rumbles through the Pompeian Gate. Crowds await the arrival of Caesar and the senators for a session in the temple, at which the senate is to hear 'an important statement by the dictator'. Everyone is discussing the war, but to Scaper's surprise the military patrols are trying to make the people move on. All discussion dries up when the soldiers appear. The veteran is only concerned to get his cart through. Halfway through, he stands up in the cart and shouts loudly over his shoulder: 'Hail Caesar!' He is amazed to find that no one takes up his cry.

Rather irritated, he instals his small family in a cheap lodging house in the suburbs and sets out to call on his future son-in-law, Caesar's secretary, Titus Rarus. He rejects Lucilia's company. He has a little bone to pick with the young man first.

He finds that it is rather difficult to enter Caesar's palace in the forum. The search is very strict, particularly for arms. Trouble brewing.

Once inside, he learns that the dictator has over two hundred secretaries. No one knows the name of Rarus.

In fact, Rarus has not received his master in the library wing of the palace for the past three years. He is Caesar's literary secretary and has been collaborating on his book on grammar. The work lies untouched, the dictator no longer has time for that sort of thing. Rarus is beside himself with joy when the old soldier comes stumping in. What, Lucilia here in Rome? Yes, she's here, but there's no reason to rejoice. The family has been thrown on to the street. Mainly through Lucilia's fault. She could easily have been a little more accommodating to the land-

owner, the leather manufacturer Pompilius. . . . All the more since Rarus is never to be seen nowadays. The young man defends himself hotly. He hasn't had leave. He will do everything he can to help the family. He will get an advance from the administration. He will make use of his connections on Terentius Scaper's behalf.

Why shouldn't the veteran become a captain? After all, a great war is impending.

Tramping and the clatter of swords in the corridor, the door flies open. Caesar stands on the threshold.

The little secretary stands frozen under the searching gaze of the great man. For the first time in three years Caesar appears in his workroom again. He has no inkling that *his fate has just entered the threshold*.

Caesar has not come to work on his grammar. The point is that he is looking for someone he can trust, that is to say, someone not easy to find in this palace. Passing the library, he has bethought himself of his literary secretary, a young man who has nothing to do with politics. So perhaps he has not been bribed. . . .

Two bodyguards search Scaper for weapons and throw him out. He leaves feeling proud: his future son-in-law is evidently not a person of small account in the palace. Great Caesar seeks him out; that is a good omen.

Rarus, too, is searched for weapons. But then the dictator sends him out on a mission. He is to go, preferably in a roundabout way, to a certain Spanish banker and enquire into the source of the mysterious opposition in the City to *Caesar's* war in the East.

Meanwhile the veteran waits outside the palace for the young man. As he does not come out – in fact he has used a rear exit – Scaper goes off to tell his family of the favourable turn of events. On the way he passes a recruiting office. Only young boys are enlisting for military service. It will be a good thing to have patronage and be made a captain. He is no doubt too old to go as a private.

He trundles round a few taverns and when he reaches the little lodging house in the suburbs he is slightly tipsy. He is very much the Captain Terentius Scaper, and his ire is directed to Lucilia's young man, who has still not turned up. So the exalted Secretary has no time to say good-day to his betrothed? And what is the family to live on? At least three hundred sesterces are needed at once. Lucilia will just have to lump it and see the leather manufacturer to borrow money from him. She weeps. She cannot understand why Rarus does not come. Mr Pompilius will not hesitate to give her the sesterces, but he will not do it for the asking. Her father gets very angry. It is quite plain now that the young man is cooling off. He will have to be stoked up a bit. He must not be allowed to think that they are dependent on him. He shall see that there are others who know how to appreciate Lucilia. Lucilia departs in tears, and keeps turning round to look for Rarus.

Rarus is at this moment back in the palace again. He has been given a dossier by the Spanish banker and has handed it over to Caesar. Now he is trying to draw an advance from the administration. He gets a great shock. Instead of receiving the money he is interrogated. Where has he been? What was the dictator's mission? He declines to answer and learns that he is dismissed.

Lucilia is more successful. In the office of the leather factory she is first told, however, that Mr Pompilius has been arrested. The excited slaves are still discussing the incredible event – comprehensible only because the boss has frequently of late expressed his furious opposition to the dictator – when Mr Pompilius enters, smiling. 'Naturally' he and the other City gentlemen could not be kept in prison. Mr Caesar is no longer quite so powerful nowadays. . . .

Lucilia is not back by the time Rarus at last turns up at the lodging house. The veteran is in a bad temper and the family will not let on where Lucilia is. Nor has Rarus brought the three hundred sesterces. He dare not confess that he has been dis-

missed and sheepishly says that he has just not managed to go to the administration. Then a tear-stained Lucilia arrives and throws herself into his arms. But Terentius Scaper sees no reason to exercise special tact. He shamelessly asks Lucilia the result of her begging errand. Without looking Rarus in the face, she gives her father three hundred sesterces. Rarus can easily work out for himself where the money comes from: Lucilia has been to the leather manufacturer.

Enraged, the young man snatches the money from the old man's hand. He will return it tomorrow to Mr Pompilius. At the latest by eight o'clock tomorrow morning he will come to the lodging house bringing Lucilia enough money. And then he will go with her father to the commanding officer of the palace guard to talk about his captaincy.

The veteran grudgingly agrees. After all, it cannot be difficult for the confidant of the master of the world to give a deserving ex-legionary's family a leg-up. . . .

But the next morning the Scaper family waits in vain for Rarus.

At the crack of dawn Caesar had sent for him. In the library he and the dictator unearthed an old speech, made many years ago, in which he had set out his democratic programme. Following this the secretary went into the suburbs to sound various plebeian politicians about what they would say to the reintroduction of democracy. The dictator, incidentally, has ordered the palace guard to be changed and their commanding officer, who interrogated Rarus the day before, to be arrested.

Things begin to look black to Terentius Scaper. He has lost faith in his daughter's fiancé. She has been crying all night long and, in a fury, flung into her parents' faces what the leather manufacturer had asked of her. Her mother has taken her part. The veteran decides to go to a recruiting office and enlist as a private. After much hanging fire he admits to his family that he thinks he is too old to enrol. The family readily assist in his

rejuvenation. Lucilia lends him her make-up and the little son puts him through his paces.

But when, having thus been made presentable, he arrives at the recruiting office, it is closed. The young men outside are heatedly discussing the rumour that the war in the East has been called off. Dashed, the veteran of ten Caesarian wars returns to the bosom of his family and finds a letter from Rarus to Lucilia saying that great events are at hand. At this very moment a law is being drafted by which Caesar's veterans are to receive land-holdings and State subsidies. The family is beside itself with joy.

Rarus's letter, written in the morning, is out of date by the time Terentius Scaper reads it. The secretary's researches have established that the former plebeian politicians, persecuted by Caesar for years, have no longer any confidence in his political gambits.

Rarus, who, incidentally, notices that he is being followed, looks in vain for his master in the palace and comes across him only in the late afternoon at the dog-racing stadium. On the way to the palace he informs Caesar of the dismaying fact. After a long silence, suddenly aware of the appalling danger in which the dictator stands, he makes a desperate suggestion: Caesar should leave Rome secretly that very night and try to escape to Brundisium, there to embark for Alexandria and join his army. He promises to have a team of oxen ready for him. The dictator, lying back exhausted on his chair, does not answer him.

But Rarus is determined to prepare this flight. Dusk is gathering over gigantic, restless Rome, buzzing with rumours, as he negotiates with the sentry at the southern gate. An ox-cart is to go through after midnight without a pass. He gives the sentry on duty all the money he has on him. Exactly three hundred sesterces.

Towards nine o'clock he appears at the Scapers' lodging house. He embraces Lucilia. He begs the family to leave him

alone with Terentius Scaper. Then he goes up to the veteran and asks him: 'What would you do for Caesar?'

'What about the land allotment?' asks Scaper.

'That's off,' says Rarus.

'And the captaincy's off too?' asks Scaper.

'And the captaincy's off too,' says Rarus.

'But you're still his secretary?'

'Yes.'

'And see him?'

'Yes.'

'And you can't get him to do anything for me?'

'He can't do anything for anyone now. Everything's gone to pieces. Tomorrow he'll be done to death like a rat. Now, what will you do for him?' asks the secretary.

The old veteran stares at him incredulously. Great Caesar played out? So played out that he, Terentius Scaper, has to help him?

'How am I supposed to help him?' he asks hoarsely.

'I've promised him your ox-cart,' says the secretary calmly.

'You must wait for him at the southern gate from midnight on.'

'They won't let me through with the cart.'

'They will. I've paid them three hundred sesterces to do it.'

'Three hundred sesterces? Ours?'

'Yes.'

For an instant the old man stares at him almost angrily. Then into his expression comes the sullen uncertainty of those who have spent half their life being drilled and he turns away muttering.

He mutters: 'Perhaps it's just as good a deal as any other. Once he's outside he'll be able to pay me back.'

He has reverted to his life-long attitude: he has hope again.

It is more difficult for Rarus to cope with Lucilia. Since she has met him again in Rome he has never been alone with her. Neither he nor her father has told her what is constantly keeping

him away these days. Now she finds out. Her young man is with Caesar. He is the only man whom the master of the world trusts.

But can't he go with her for a quarter of an hour to a tavern in Coppersmith Street? Can't Caesar manage on his own for quarter of an hour?

Rarus takes her to Coppersmith Street. But they do not get to the tavern. Rarus suddenly notices that he is still being followed. Two dark individuals have been shadowing him wherever he goes since the morning. So the lovers separate outside the lodging house. Lucilia goes back to her mother and, beaming, tells her how close her young man is to great Caesar.

Meanwhile the young man tries vainly to shake off his pursuers.

Before midnight he will learn what it means to stand close to the mighty.

Towards eleven o'clock Rarus is back in the palace in the forum. A Negro regiment has mounted the palace guard. Most of the soldiers are drunk.

In his small room behind the library he goes feverishly through the dossier which the Spanish banker handed him yesterday for Caesar. Caesar has not read it. In this dossier are the names of the conspirators. There they all are. Brutus, Cassius, the entire gilded youth of Rome; amongst them many whom Caesar regards as his friends. He must read the dossier without fail, at once, this very night. That will make him take Terentius Scaper's ox-cart.

He picks up the dossier and sets out. The corridors are in semi-darkness. From another wing come the sounds of drunken song. At the entrance to the atrium two enormous Negroes stand guard. They refuse to let him pass. They do not understand what he says.

He tries a different route; the palace is vast. Here, too, Negro guards and no way through. He tries corridors and gardens, climbing through windows to get there, but everything is barred.

Turning back wearily to his room, he fancies he recognizes the back of a man further down the corridor. It is one of his pursuers.

Gripped by fear, he rushes to his room, barricading the door. He lights no lamp and looks out of the window into the courtyard. There, in front of his window, sits the second pursuer. He breaks into a cold sweat.

For a long time he sits in the dark room, listening. Once there is a knock on the door. Rarus does not open it. So he does not see the man who, after waiting a little, leaves his door again: Caesar.

From midnight on, Terentius Scaper's ox-cart waits at the southern gate. The veteran has told his wife and children no more than that he has to drive the cart, which will take him out of Rome for a few days. Lucilia and her mother are to go to Rarus who will look after them.

Yet no one comes to the southern gate that night to get into the ox-cart.

On the morning of March 15th the dictator is told that his secretary has been murdered in the palace during the night. The list with the names of the conspirators has disappeared. Caesar will meet the bearers of those names this morning in the senate and fall under their dagger blows.

An ox-cart driven by an old soldier and ruined tenant farmer will rumble back to a lodging house in the suburbs, where a small family to whom great Caesar owes three hundred sesterces will be waiting. . . .