

QUO VADIS

full feature animation

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FADE IN

SCENE 1 DAY\_EXT\_APPIAN ROAD. SUNRISE

Appian Road is empty at this time of a day. Among its very dry and roasted silence you can hear only narrowing cicadas. The road meanders in a landscape, leaving behind Rome, which we cannot see.

The long shadow of a man in a hood leaning on a powerful staff catches up to us and appears in the frame. The shadow stops and stares at the landscape.

Suddenly the morning sun begins to appear from over the hillsides. The rays of the sun seem to spin and blind us very strongly.

Until now, the camera has not moved, but now suddenly the lens has been obscured with a sleeve.

APOSTLE PETER shields his eyes with his arm. Behind him the way to Rome.

A beam of color penetrates the darkness. There is a barely recognized figure of Merciful Jesus - as described by Saint Faustina.

Peter sinks to his knees, resting his hands and head on his staff. Around his outline appears a pulsing light. The beam of light splits like a prism into two streaks - one of them is pale pink - another clear, luminous.

Silence falls. The golden light fades. Peter raises his head slightly and looks directly into Jesus' face, although we don't see His Holy Figure there.

PETER  
Quo Vadis, Domine?

FADE OUT

SCENE 2 CREDITS

The screen lights up with "Quo Vadis".

SCENE 3 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_PANORAMA. SUNRISE

Under the early morning light appears the City of Rome. We realise that this is a Drone Camera view, as it makes an unpredictable turn around, before taking a stable focus. A rooster crows from a distance.

The city is totally empty - we cannot see any humans or animals. At the same time, the sound tells us something different. With every second, the sounds of the waking up Rome increase.

NARRATOR

Rome. The eternal city. The sixty third year of the modern era.

Camera drone begins slowly panning, showing a panoramic view and the outline of Rome's buildings, meanwhile the progress of the time of a day is shown through the changes of the light. Passing over the immense statue of Herakles at the Nero Palace we can hear the rooster's crowing for a second time.

NARRATOR

Thirty years ago, far to the East of the Roman Empire, in the land of Judea, Jesus Christ was crucified.

The natural soft morning light transforms into the afternoon. The camera drone reaches the central point of the Arena - The Egyptian Obelisk.

NARRATOR

The Passion on the Cross was not the end, but the beginning of a new life.

While we are stuck to the Obelisk, we can see the drone flying away from behind the camera to the horizon line. The rooster crows for the third time.

SCENE 4 DAY\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

The interior of PETRONIUS'S home.

PETRONIUS with closed eyes enjoys the cool water in the pool. He is half immersed - his head tilted back and leaned against the mosaic edge of the pool.

There is a statue of Petronius behind him. Both he and his statue motionless.

MARK VINICIUS enters the atrium with the springy step of a soldier.

VINCICIUS

Greetings Petronius! May the Gods bring you prosperity!

Torn awakes from a delightful nap, Petronius does not believe his ears. He leaps out of the pool regardless of the lack of tunic to welcome his nephew.

PETRONIUS

By Jupiter! If it isn't my nephew  
 Marcus Vinicius! A true god of war.  
 Dear boy, let me embrace you!

Petronius makes a sudden movement towards Marcus Vinicius, unknowingly almost knocking Eunice over. Petronius hugs Vinicius. At the same moment several beautiful slave girls enter - two Ethiopians, three slender Greeks and Eunice enter the atrium.

After a while, Petronius is already wrapped in a fragrant sheet. One of the slaves gives him a bowl of fragrant vetiver.

PETRONIUS

Welcome back to Rome! So, you've  
 returned from the war in Armenia?

Vinicius takes a step back and turns sideways to Petronius.

VINICIUS

I have already forgotten about this  
 war. Other wounds tire my soul...

Without interrupting the conversation with Vinicius, Petronius is delighted with the smell of vetiver. He even encourages Vinicius to make use of the fragrance.

PETRONIUS

Has Cupid's arrow pierced my nephew's  
 heart?

Vinicius's face glows with radiance.

VINICIUS

What a perceptive judge of people you  
 are, Petronius! No wonder you're the  
 Emperor's chief adviser.

PETRONIUS

To advise Nero, it's enough to know  
 the ways of monkeys. What am I  
 saying!? Even monkeys aren't dumb  
 enough to believe everything they're  
 told.

VINICIUS

Is it that bad in the Palatine? War  
lets you forget about politics.

PETRONIUS

Rome will soon bring you crashing back  
to reality. Unless, that is, you're  
still under the spell, of some young  
mermaid. Speak up, boy!

Vinicius grabs his arm and begins to speak rapidly.

VINICIUS

Returning to Rome, I stopped at the  
house of Aulus Plautius. He welcomed  
me, like family, and that's where I  
saw her. One day, at dawn, right  
beside the fountain. The morning rays  
seemed to pass right through her  
body...

Vinicius' face beams. Petronius laughs.

PETRONIUS

As transparent as a young sardine! So  
you truly have fallen for a mermaid!

FADE OUT

SCENE 5 DAY\_INT\_PLAUTIUS PALACE\_FOUNTAIN

FADE IN

FLASHBACK.

The fountain is surrounded by anemones and lilies. Lilies in  
clumps of red and white are interwoven with sapphire irises.  
Their patches are silvered from water dust that obstructs the  
entire space of the atrium.

LYGIA is seen from behind standing next to a fountain and  
dipping her hand in the cool water. She turns to the camera  
and smiles with girlish innocence. Her body is early  
transparent - so light and delicate.

Vinicius stands admiring her. He is at first dumb struck by  
her beauty.

VINICIUS

Venus? Is that you?

Lygia stares at Vinicius, but makes no reply. Surprised and ashamed, her face covered suddenly with a blush.

VINICIUS  
What is your name?

Lygia bends down and with a pebble found on gravel she draws the "Pisces" symbol in the sand.

Vinicius tries to take her by the hand, Lygia's hand is running away.

END OF FLASHBACK

SCENE 6 DAY\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE - ATRIUM

BACK TO REALITY

Vinicius finds himself crouching at the edge of the pool.

VINICIUS  
...She makes my hungry, which burns  
inside me.

Petronius watches with amusement as Vinicius arises nervously, ashamed with his own behavior.

PETRONIUS  
The maiden or the fish?

VINICIUS  
Both.

PETRONIUS  
No better fish than these you see here  
are to be found in all of Rome.  
Eunice!

An intimidated Eunice walks up to them.

PETRONIUS  
What do you think of Eunice? She  
smells of violets. Even I do not know  
how sweet her kisses taste. Go on,  
she's yours.

Eunice throws herself at Petronius' feet, pleading.

EUNICE  
Please, Master, don't send me away.

Petronius is visibly upset by her disobedience.

Vinicius turns down the offer by shaking his head and turning his back to them as an Ethiopian slave presents a bowl of oils for Petronius to rinse his hands.

VINICIUS

I only want Lygia. She's better than a hundred of these... She is the daughter of kings.

Petronius wipes his brow, wraps his arm around Vinicius's shoulder and leads him towards the exit.

PETRONIUS

You mentioned hunger, right? Fair enough. Let's go for breakfast, and then we'll do something for the soul. What about....What about Plautiuses? What if we go pay them a visit?

After they exit, the slaves pick up all the baskets and bowls and leave.

Eunice looks around and when she sees no one is looking she runs up to the statue of Petronius, stands on her toes and lightly kisses him on the lips.

SCENE 7 LATE AFTERNOON\_INT\_PLAUTIUS PALACE\_COLLONADE

Petronius and Vinicius enter to the atrium at the house of Aulus Plautius, greeted by a shrill raven announcing to everyone the joy of seeing guests.

RAVEN

Salve! Salve! Salve!

Petronius and Vinicius observe for a moment the bird. Beyond, in the courtyard can be seen a wonderful fountain. The pearls of water shine and reflect the sun with a rainbow.

POMPONIA and AULUS PLAUTIUS coming from afar to welcome the unannounced guests.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

Marcus Vinicius and his honorable uncle, a trusted friend of Caesar in our humble home?

PETRONIUS

Please allow me thank you, for the

hospitality you gave to my sister's son.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

Vinicius reminds me of my younger days. As you well know, I've spent half my life out on the battlefield. Today, with old age creeping in, my whole world is what you see here.

Suddenly the sound of joyful laughter raises together with a girl and child running from the fountain side. As the sun illuminates them from behind, they approach like shadows filled with the joyful sound of a happy race.

The boy runs first, followed by a girl blindfolded with a light scarf.

LITTLE AULUS

I'm too fast for you!

Lygia and LITTLE AULUS run to the atrium. The boy stumbles and falls at the feet of Vinicius.

Vinicius and Lygia bend at the same time to raise the child. Vinicius barely manages to brush Lygia's hand, and the boy stands up and runs out, slamming between the columns back to the fountain. Lygia follows him.

LITTLE AULUS

Hee-heeeee!

The little boy gets up on his own and runs out of the atrium and back to the fountain. Lygia blindfolded runs after him.

Aulus Plautius smiles proudly.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

I hope that young Aulus will someday replace his old father in the field of glory.

Pomponia assures her husband with a kind reproach.

POMPONIA

I hope that the future does not belong to the soldiers.

Petronius looks at Vinicius with a smile of triumph on his face.

PETRONIUS

Dear Pomponia. Can we hope to put our lives in the hands of such a beautiful Roman women?

POMPONIA

Why not? Look at Lygia. We raised her as our own daughter, even if she has barbaric blood.

Talking, they watch Aulus and Lygia playing by the fountain.

POMPONIA (CD)

The glory of Rome will one day pass away. Others will come who will lead the world.

Aulus looks tenderly at his wife.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

I must admit that my world is ruled by a Roman woman. And this is totally enough.

PETRONIUS

And what a different place your world is, dear Plautius, from the one out there, where Nero rules.

POMPONIA

It's not Nero, but God who rules the world.

PETRONIUS

There are so many gods. It's hard to choose which one is better. And at the end of a day everyone has his own god...or goddess.

Petronius turns towards Vinicius. He is not there anymore, as he has moved towards the fountain.

POMPONIA

There is only one God - all powerful and merciful. And just, to all of us.

Golden flames of the setting sun illuminate Pomponia's face.

SCENE 8 LATE AFTERNOON\_EXT\_PLAUTIUS PALACE\_FOUNTAIN

Little Aulus jumps into the fountain, so Lygia, blindfolded,

can't catch him.

The sun casts long shadows just before sunset with very strong, warm light. Vinicius - on the other side of the fountain pool can't take his eyes off Lygia. She looks like she's all made of gold.

Impatient, Lygia finally slides a scarf from her eyes to find Aulus. Her eyes immediately fall on Vinicius, who reaches among the lilies and drops of water. However, she looks at him against the light, so she can not see the details of his face. The dark silhouette is mysterious and menacing.

Delighted, Little Aulus begins to spray Lygia with water, which he splashes out of the fountain.

LITTLE AULUS

Hee-heeeee!

Lygia's tunic soaks up the water revealing wonderful statuesque shapes. She looks down, embarrassed.

Vinicius does not take his eyes off her. Suddenly he starts talking as if he wants to stop this moment forever. As he speaks to her, he is more eager and more fervent with every second. He spins his visions with such commitment that he closes his eyes to see in his own imagination what he wants Ligia to believe.

VINICIUS

If you are a goddess, show me a meadow, for without you my life is worth nothing. I will create for you a world that no woman has ever seen before, and Caesar himself could not throw at your feet. You will sleep on rose petals and you will be swayed by Calabrian nightingales. Let me take you with me...

At this point Vinicius opens his eyes to see Lygia. But she is not there anymore.

FADE OUT

SCENE 9 LATE AFTERNOON\_EXT\_FORUM\_ROMANUM

FADE IN

The contours of the street emerge. Petronius and Vinicius are being carried in a litter.

TRAGARERS rapidly disperse the crowd, until passengers must be careful not to fall out.

Petronius is vexed, looking at the crowd. Vinicius's face is impassive, as if he were absent.

PETRONIUS(OFF)

And you, Vinicius. Are you writing poetry? That's quite the fashion these days. But you must be careful, my boy - Caesar hates the competition.

Petronius smiles sadly. Vinicius suddenly explodes.

VINICIUS

I don't care about Caesar, nor do I care about poetry!

Petronius shakes his head with amusement.

PETRONIUS

So we have the right diagnosis for this disease. You are really in love.

Vinicius is uncomfortable in the litter. He bangs on the side and the runners come to a halt. Vinicius jumps out into the street among the crowd.

VINICIUS

What about you, weren't you ever in love?

Petronius bursts out laughing

PETRONIUS

Are you really asking me that kind of question? Most of the women in Rome knows the love of Petronius quite well.

Petronius extends to Vinicius his hand with a manuscript. "Nero Augustus Caesar" is written on the parchment.

VINICIUS

What's this?

PETRONIUS

Poems. The author: Redbeard Monkey. Misfortune hangs over the heads of the Romans, since we are ruled by such weak poets.

Vinicius shakes his head and without taking the manuscript he moves away. Petronius watches as Vinicius disappears into the crowd. He whispers to himself.

PETRONIUS(OFF)

Do you dream of a fish? So we'll catch her for you, soldier.

Petronius taps with his cane for the Porters to continue.

PETRONIUS

The Palatine Hill, Ceasar's palace!  
Fast!

The litter hastily moves away.

SCENE 10 EARLY MORNING\_EXT\_PLAUTIUS PALACE

CENTURION HASTO followed by eight soldiers from his contubernium approaches the door of Aulus's house. They walk in menacing, even formation, strongly tapping sandals on a gravel alley.

Hasto bangs the front door three times.

SCENE 11 DAY\_INT\_PLAUTIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

The house of Aulus Plautius. The Centurion Hasto, his soldiers at his back, stand in front of Plautius.

HASTO

Commander! I bring you greetings from Caesar!

Plautius frowns. Long silence.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

Speak up Hasto! What is the charge?

The centurion bows his head slightly. However, he must gather himself and announces the Caesar's order.

HASTO

No charges against you, sir, but an order from Caesar: the Divine Nero is grateful to you for giving shelter to the daughter of the barbarian Lygian king. But as a hostage, the girl belongs to the court. Therefore our divine emperor hereby commands you to hand her over.

Plautius turns around and looks deep into the atrium at his wife, to whom Lygia is clinging. Next to the women stands the powerfully built URSUS.

SCENE 12 DAY\_INT\_PLAUTIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

Tears stream down the cheeks of Lygia and Pomponia. Plautius calms them down with a voice that trembles.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

Lygia! Both Pomponia and I love you like our own daughter, but you are Caesar's responsibility now... Jupiter! I will beg him to change this order!

POMPONIA

I will send a messenger to Acte. She still has her ways for Caesar.

Aulus walks past the women and disappears into the house. Ursus kneels before Pomponia.

URSUS

Domina! Allow me to go with my lady to the house of Caesar.

Tears sway in Pomponia's eyes

POMPONIA

You are not longer mine, Ursus, but Lygia's servant now. Keep her safe!

Pomponia makes the sign of the cross on Lygia's forehead.

POMPONIA

May the Lord watch over you. Trust Him. And believe in his mercy.

SCENE 13 LATE AFTERNOON\_EXT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_COLLONADE  
+INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_PATIO

Plautius suddenly opens the door of the house of Plautius.

On a shaded patio, Vinicius trains with the wooden sword. He stops training at the sight of Plautius. He looks at him with a kind curiosity.

The commander's face is drawn in anger.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

I curse the moment you stepped foot in  
my house!

VINICIUS

Plautius! What are you saying? It's  
me, the most loyal of your friends!

AULUS PLAUTIUS

Friend? You are a thief! You took my  
daughter from me!

Vinicius rushes across to Plautius.

VINICIUS

What?! Speak up! Tell me what  
happened! Where is Lygia?

Plautius halts Vinicius with a look, before he can get too  
worked up.

AULUS PLAUTIUS

Your uncle, Petronius persuaded Caesar  
to take Lygia to the Palatine, to his  
palace.

In one second Vinicius's face explodes with unbridled anger

VINICIUS

Nooooo!

Vinicius slams the wooden sword against the training puppet  
with all his might.

SCENE 14 AFTERNOON\_INT\_ PALATINO\_ PALACE\_THE DRESS ROOM

The windows do not allow the full afternoon sun to shine into  
the dress room. The elegant woven blinds obscure the light of  
the day. In the middle of the room is Lygia, alone,  
terrified. She stands still with her back to us, we can only  
see her from behind.

The sudden sound of approaching footsteps make Lygia turn  
towards the camera fearfully anticipating a meeting with a  
stranger.

ACTE (OFF)

Get ready, young lady. Caesar wants  
you to join the party.

SCENE 15 NIGHT\_EXT\_ PALATINO\_ PALACE ENTRANCE\_TWILIGHT.

The gigantic Hercules statue dominate the Roman skyline where the Ceasar's palace is standing in Palatine.

The growing buzz of laughter and cheers can be heard. The outlines of columns and rows of statues of gods can be seen. Along them move crowds of people heading towards Caesar's feast.

It's late evening time. All you can see are human shadows lit by countless torches.

Sounds of pipes and other instruments come from afar.

Two female figures are seen passing down a walkway bordered by perfectly trimmed hedges. They are illuminated by lamps burning on the ground behind them. The camera follows behind them, eventually catching up.

One of the women is Lygia. She walks hesitantly, looking around with anxiety. She is dressed in a beautiful white tunic with gold ornaments and has a unique hair style. She appears to be a different person than the one we've met before. Her companion is ACTE, older but also beautiful. The voice of Acte is warm and soothing.

ACTE

Just remember not to mention that God of yours! As for the rest don't be afraid. I'll be right there by your side.

LYGIA

I am not afraid of Caesar, but that my heart would change at Caesar's court.

ACTE

You would anger Nero by not attending his banquet. Then you would really have to be afraid of him.

LYGIA

Acte! You have always been at Nero's side. But you are so different from what I see around. Pomponia has always loved you as a sister.

ACTE

I was his wife!... Caesar will soon forget all about you...the same as he

forgot about Acte.

LYGIA

I'd rather die than ...

ACTE

That's why, my dear, I've promised Pomponia not to let you out of my sight.

The two of them disappear into the crowd of guests walking up the stairs.

SCENE 16 NIGHT\_EXT\_ PALATINO\_ PALACE ENTRANCE

Two male figures move along a walkway surrounded by illuminated sculptures. They enter into the circle of light, allowing us to recognize them. It is Petronius and Marcus Vinicius.

Vinicius's face is clouded with anger. Petronius repeatedly glances at his companion and says with irritation.

PETRONIUS

Enough already with the glares and frowns. Cheer up, and quick, unless you want them to think you're hiding a weapon inside those robes!

VINICIUS

This is not what I wanted, Petronius!

Vinicius's voice sounded too loud in this crowd. Petronius places his finger over his lips.

PETRONIUS

You've got a lot to learn about the ways of this world, Marcus Vinicius. This is Rome. The centre of, everything. Here we handle things discretely.

VINICIUS

Lygia should not have been abducted from the house of the Plautiuses.

Petronius responds without looking at Marcus. He smiles to the other guests they meet along their way to the palace.

PETRONIUS

Only Caesar could have taken her away,

to give her to you. Trust me, my boy,  
you'll spend the whole night in her  
arms. Now come back to yourself right  
away.

At this moment the two figures of Lygia and Acte disappear into a crowd of guests walking up the stairs. In the light of giant lanterns, everything seems extremely beautiful.

Vinicius turns to look at Rome, which is falling into the darkness of the night.

SCENE 17 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUET HALL

The buzz and hum of the banquet. Servants bring in great plates of fruits and other food. Acte and Lygia are lying on the sofas.

At that moment the room erupts in great applause full of screaming and cheering.

CROWD-1

All hail the Emperor! Nero Caesar  
Augustus!

CROWDS

Hail Caesar!

CAESAR NERO, surrounded by dignitaries, enters the room.

Caesar is placed at the table next to his closest court, Among which are two arch-enemies fighting for influence in Caesar's court - Petronius and TIGELLINUS - the commander in chief of the Praetorians.

At that moment thousands of yellow rose petals fall from the ceiling onto the tables and guests.

SCENE 18 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUETTE HALL

Nero's table. Caesar looks around boredly. After a moment, he focuses and squints in one particular direction.

NERO

Is this the beauty Vinicius loves so  
much?

Tigellinus leans over to Caesar and whispers in his ear.

TIGELLINUS

A beauty she is indeed Sire, too

beautiful for Vinicius.

Nero grabs his emerald monocle, puts it up to his eye and stares.

Acte noticed Caesar's interest. She is starbug directly at him from a distance and does not glance away, as if she would be waiting to face Nero.

Lygia instead, looks the other way, as if she did not want to look at Caesar at all costs. Her tender body seems to tremble.

Nero can't see much of her beauty. She is turned away. Thus he moves his eyes armed with the emerald from Lygia to Acte, from Acte to Lygia, and back.

Acte looks deeply into Nero's eyes - calmly, without fear. It's a bit of a nuisance for him. So he puts down the emerald monocle and goes back to talking with his advisers. So he puts down the emerald and goes back to talking with his advisers.

Petronius's face contorts with mockery.

PETRONIUS

Sire, Tigellinus must have noticed that the girl is too narrow in the hips, but as usual, he doesn't tell you all he has in mind.

Nero busts out laughing.

NERO

Tigellinus, you've missed the boat!  
Too narrow in the hips.

Petronius releases a sigh of relief as Tigellinus sends him a deadly stare.

SCENE 19 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUET HALL

VOICES

Poppea! Poppea!

VOICES

(In hushed awe of her majesty.) The  
Empress!

Electrifying cheers run through the room. AUGUSTA POPPEA, the wife of Caesar approaches, majestically gliding across the hall dressed in luxury robes and wearing gorgeous jewelry and

an amazing hairstyle resembling a giant sailing ship.

Nero staring at her through the emerald monocle.

Poppea approaches Nero so close that the monocle distorts her image like a caricature.

She snatches the monocle out of the Emperor's hand. She stares into his face and jealously hisses at him.

POPPEA

You don't need this, my divine Nero.  
The greatest beauty is right beside  
you.

Surprised, Nero turns to her with a grimace. He reaches out and tears a ruby from her neck and looks at her through it, twirling the stone in front of his eye.

POV Nero. This stone is cut with several facets; through it we can see five heads of Poppea.

NERO

This is a woman with five heads. I'll  
get rid of at least four of them. Her  
hairdressers cost me too much.

Poppea can't hide the anger on her face but duly takes her place next to her husband as thousands of red rose pedals fall from the ceiling.

She mutters under her breath.

POPPEA

You better watch out for your own  
head, Nero.

SCENE 20 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUET HALL

Vinicius takes a place next to Lygia, moving Acte to the side, with his bare arms decorated with silver epaulettes.

Lygia is so surprise, that she puts her hand to the mouth not to scream.

Vinicius grabs Lygia by that hand. She tries to pull away.

VINICIUS

I knew I'd find you here. But little  
did I know it would make me so happy!

Acte would like to intervene as Vinicius pulls Lygia towards him, but upon hearing Nero is going to sing, she suddenly changes her mind and stops.

ACTE

Hold your breaths! Caesar is about to sing.

SCENE 21 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUET HALL

Nero in a laurel rally on his head recites a poem, posing like a grotesque actor, while holding his zither in his hands.

NERON

Sweet Venus, founder of Rome and pride  
of the heavenly Gods, You who guard  
travelers on the high seas, you who  
make the land blossom for all living  
things, the Goddess of sunlight who  
stills the storm...

Two young FREEDMEN kneel at the feet of Caesar. They remove the laurel wreath from their heads and put it at the feet of Caesar with an expression of adulation on their faces.

CROWD

Oh heavenly voice! Our divine Caesar!  
Redbeard, the greatest poet in the  
world!

Nero looks quizzically at Petronius and then at Tigellinus, then again at Petronius. A boundless self-admiration appears on his face.

Petronius remains in an indifferent silence, as if the spectacle did not make the slightest impression on him. Not finding delight in the eyes of Petronius, Nero changes his expression to that of a little boy begging for the praise of his father. Petronius drags out the situation but in the end speaks while retaining his stone face.

PETRONIUS

Cursed be the fate that has us live  
with You, Nero.

All the guests of the party froze in terror.

PETRONIUS (C/D)

Were his verses any less perfect,  
perhaps I could find it in my heart to

praise them. But, no. I will remain silent. Embarrassed. Destroyed by their beauty.

Nero's face lights up with delight and boundless vanity.

TIGELLINUS

Thy verses, Caesar, were born like you among the gods. Their father is Zeus Apollo and their mother....

Nero suddenly turns red in anger.

NERO

Fool! My mother was Agrippina, that woman was cursed...

Nero lets out a sob as past trauma shows on his face.

NERO

A monster of a woman, a snake of a woman, a poisonous woman. That's why I had to kill her. I'm not a mother killer, I'm an orphan!

A gloomy expression appears on Nero's face.

NERO

I had no choice; I had to sentence her to death. She paid assassins to kill me, her own son! I had to act, quickly, or, or...or you wouldn't have been able to hear me sing today.

Tigellinus, wants to calm Caesar's anger. He yells out with excitement in his face as he raises a glass of wine.

TIGELLINUS

On behalf of the city and the world, I thank you Caesar for destroying your mother Agrippina and freeing us from her evil power.

With contempt Petronius reaches for Nero's emerald monocle, putting it up to his eye. He stares at Tigellinus and the wild party and its guests, hugging, raising glasses and eating.

In the background, shadowy slaves move around carrying massive trays of food and pitchers of wine.

The image is drowned by another precipitation of multicolored rose petals. Petronius removes the sapphire from his eye and hands it to Nero, jolting him from his mad, distant stare.

PETRONIUS

Close your ears, Nero, don't let the words of fools hurt them. Your world is like an emerald. Rare and fragile.

SCENE 22 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUET HALL

Loud noises as Gladiators enter the arena between the tables. With bare bodies rubbed in oil, they begin to battle. Two guests shake hands.

FIRST GUEST

So, I bet that Croto wrings his neck in one round! What's your wager?

The fight continues. One of the gladiators wins an advantage, choking his opponent and throwing him to the ground.

CROWDS

Get him! Crush him! Do it!

The winner puts a foot on the back of his foe and crosses his arms over his chest in a sign of victory. The hall erupts in the cheers of the men and women looking on.

CROWD

Croto! Croto! Croto!

SCENE 23 NIGHT\_INT\_ NERO PALACE\_ LARGE BANQUETTE HALL

Taking advantage of the confusion, Vinicius catches Lygia in the waist and he kidnaps her like a doll, forcing her to leave.

The roar of the wrestlers and the audience triumph, weakened the vigilance of Acte, who also applauds Croto without suspecting anything.

Vinicius whispers courage for himself and Lygia. Lygia tries to break free, but Vinicius is too strong. He mumbles.

VINICIUS

Who beat the Parthians and brought the glory of Rome to the world? Marcus Vinicius. And now Rome gives back my reward!

Vinicius leaves the hall without any trouble, but as soon as they got out of the crowd a gigantic figure of Ursus appears. One hit of the giant fist is enough to make Vinicius lose his consciousness.

Ursus takes Lygia on his hands. They disappear in the shadows.

SCENE 24 DAY\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

Petronius is walking alongside the pool.

Vinicius sits on the ground at the foot of the statue. His head leaned on his knees. He is not feeling the strength to face the angry Petronius.

PETRONIUS

Congratulations. I can't believe I  
threw away the friendship of  
Plautiuses just to decorate your empty  
head with a wreath of withered leaves.

Vinicius drops his head in shame. Petronius is furious. Eunice silently slips into the room and turns towards Petronius.

EUNICE

Master, there is a man.....

From behind Eunice appears a clumsy figure of an old man in a torn coat, who bows and mutters. He is not waiting to be introduced. CHILON CHILONIDES.

CHILON

Chilon Chilonides at the service of  
the equal and the more equal.

SCENE 25 DAY\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

Eunice looks puzzled. Chilon instead in his old, dirty coat is totally confident. He immediately takes over the role of the host.

CHILON

She complains of unrequited love. I  
gave her two threads from the mantle  
of Venus.

Petronius looks the man over without interest, while he stares at Eunice. He regards her with amusement, as she starts to scatter violets on the mosaic floor.

PETRONIUS

Are you a magician?

The stranger pulls his clumsy hands from his worn coat. His smile contorts his face.

CHILON

A philosopher, Master! Haven't you heard?

PETRONIUS

And what is that you wish to announce to us?

CHILON

I'm to find some girl who's been abducted by her slave from a feast held by Caesar.

Vinicius who until now had his face hidden in his hands, raises his eyes abruptly and looks at Chilo with pain.

VINICIUS

Now, listen to me, you villain! This isn't just some girl. She is the divine daughter of the Kings.

Chilon stares into Petronius's face, unsure who is in charge and who holds the money. He is afraid of Vinicius. Petronius calms the situation.

PETRONIUS

Do you have a way to do this?

CHILON

If you have the means, sir, I'll find a way.

PETRONIUS

So you are a philosopher for money, in other words, a crook.

Petronius seems cynical, as the newcomer once again fiddles with his old coat.

CHILON

I'm saving up, to hire a scribe, who'll transmit my message to posterity. For myself, I do not keep a penny. Not even for a coat.

From outside of the frame into the hands of Chilon fly a leather pouch jingling with coins. Even though he wasn't looking, he catches it like a juggler.

VINICIUS  
When will you start?

Chilon hides the bag in his jacket.

CHILON  
I already have!

His tone becomes confident.

CHILON  
Noble lords, will you permit me also  
to ask a question or two?

Petronius follows Eunice and reaches into her basket so as to also spread some flakes himself. At the same time, a strange thing - he does not take his eyes off her.

CHILON  
Did you notice the divine Lygia having  
any special marks: any amulets, or  
tattoos?

Vinicius shakes his head. Chilon falls back and frowns.

CHILON  
It won't be easy.

Vinicius comes to life and suddenly shouts.

VINICIUS  
Yes! She drew this!

Vinicius crouches in the place where Eunice scattered violets and draws a sign of fish with his finger.

Chilon twists his head and mutters.

CHILON  
What is that? A Fish?

VINICIUS  
A Fish.

CHILON  
I'll do everything in my power...  
but....as you can see ... a Fish is

not much...

Showing the holes in his coat as he slowly walks backwards towards the exit and disappears. Petronius calls out to him.

PETRONIUS

Tell my servant to give you a new coat!

From outside the door Chilon calls back.

CHILO (OFF)

Thou art a true philosopher, Sire! I can see you hate even the slightest injustice.

Eunice caresses the flowers in her hair, looking more beautiful than usual. Petronius looks at her in amazement. Vinicius interrupts his staring.

VINICIUS

What now?

Petronius puts his fingers to his nose and changing his voice, pretends to be Chilon.

PETRONIUS

First we fumigate the house. And then we ask the equal and the more equal to graciously visit the Palatine so that Caesar is not bored in the company of Tigelinus.

SCENE 26 EVENING\_EXT\_ DARK ROME STREET

A gloomy path on which Chilon is sneaking behind gray walls. He runs into the first lit building, a winery.

SCENE 27 EVENING\_INT\_ WINERY

Chilon runs in excitedly. He throws a gold coin on the table, and without hesitation approaches the furnace, which burns in the center of the room. He pulls one piece of burnt wood from the shore. His skin sizzled, but Chilo doesn't care.

Sporus puts a chalice on a table and wants to take a coin. But Chilon grabs his hand and doesn't let him take the coin.

With his right hand and a piece of burnt wood Chilon draws the shape of a fish on a table.

Sporus watches the drawing with a blunt expression.

CHILO

Have you ever seen this?

Sporus' face expressionless. A second gold coin falls onto the table. Sporus's big hand still in the iron grip of Chilo's claws.

SPORUS

A fish...??

CHILON

All Rome comes here. You know

all that is happening in the city. Who is behind this?

Sporus mumbles.

SPORUS

Fish...people?

A third gold coin falls on the table.

CHILON

Can you at least count to three, you fool?

Sporus's eyes lit up at the sight. Chilo releases his iron claw and Sporus scoops all three coins, while wiping the table with a piece of rag so that the fish mark disappears.

SPORUS

Fish in Greek is Ichthys. The sign stands for Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Saviour.

CHILO

Christ? The one who was crucified in Judea?

SPORUS

But they say he has risen.

SCENA 28 BEFORE SUNSET\_INT\_CRISPUS HOUSE VIEW TO THE ROOM WITH A TABLE

Chilon sneaks up to the home of Crispus and cautiously looks inside. At a table are sat: the Apostles Peter and PAUL, CRISPUS, NAZARIUS, Ursus and Lygia. Peter breaks bread, dips

a piece in wine and passes it to Paul. He passes out the bread, doing the same for all those present.

A golden sunset, though the sky is still blue, falls into the room and illuminates the table.

This scene is accompanied by music.

SCENE 29 DAY\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

House of Petronius. In the doorway appears the haggard figure of Chilon.

CHILON

Pax Vobiscum. Peace be with you.

Vinicius grabs him, pulls him in and shakes him like a dog.

VINICIUS

Where have you been, you villain!?

Held by Vinicius, Chilon hangs in the air, shuffling his feet. He yells through clenched teeth. His voice breaks as he wheezes.

CHILON

Don't choke me, Sir. I'm just a poor philosopher.

Chilon wheezes and snorts trying to catch his breath.

VINICIUS

Where is Lygia?

CHILON

She's safe, among her own people.

VINICIUS

What do you mean!?

CHILON

Your divine Lygia is a non-divine Christian.

Vinicius puts him on the ground. Unable to find an answer to this news, he turns to Chilon in a more friendly tone.

VINICIUS

Tell me more.

CHILON

More means more....for the both of us,  
less than tomorrow, but a lot more  
than yesterday.

Chilon is alluding to extra payment.

VINICIUS

Haven't I paid you enough,  
philosopher?

Chilon responds immediately.

CHILO

Haven't I told you enough, Sir?

The pouch falls into the hands of Chilo.

VINICIUS

Here, take this purse and know it's  
not the end. If you lead me to Lygia,  
I can repay you. But if you lie, you  
can be sure that Croto will break your  
bones one by one.

CHILON

And if I am telling the truth?

VINICIUS

I'll give you a house and five slaves.

CHILON

So I choose a house.

Chilon takes a deep breath, as if to start all his life again  
on the verge of discovering something insanelly momentous.

CHILON

Well, this very night, Christians will  
be gathering in Ostrianum. They're  
waiting for a man who knew Christ.  
They call him "The Rock" - Petrus. The  
Apostle Peter. That's where we'll find  
her, Sire.

SCENE 30 NIGHT\_EXT\_DARK ROME SUBURBAN STREETS

Darkness. Two figures with hoods over their eyes traverse the  
street immersed in darkness. Only the full moonlight

illuminates their path. A third huge figure in a hood follows them at a distance.

The lowest of the three characters looks back with fear in his eyes where he walks colossus.

CHILON (OFF)  
Who is this, Sir?

VINICIUS (OFF)  
Croto. The best Wrestler in town.

CHILON  
You are a wise man, Sir. You'll right to keep him at your side. Guarding your virgin is a true giant.

Vinicius grabs Chilo by the hood and pulls toward him.

VINICIUS  
What did you say? Who?

Chilo is terribly afraid of Vinicius.

CHILO  
Don't pay attention to mine words, Sire, but for the deeds that follow them.

At the sight of Vinicius' gesture, Croto makes one jump and now catches the old man in half, turning him upside down.

CROTO  
Now?

Vinicius gestures for Croto to leave Chillon alone.

Barely catching his breath, the old man lands back on the ground.

SCENE 31 NIGHT\_EXT\_RAVINE OUTSIDE ROME

Dozens of shimmering lights fall down to the gorge from all sides and then disappear obscured by rocks.

Vinicius, Chilon and Croto, still hidden under hoods watch the incoming crowd from afar.

PETER (OFF)  
You know what happened in all Judea from Galilee after the baptism, who

John was giving to you. You know the case of Jesus of Nazareth whom God anointed Holy Spirit and power. Because God was with Him, He went through doing good and healing all who were there under the control of the devil.

SCENE 32 NIGHT\_INT\_CAVE IN OSTRIANUM

One of the caves in Ostrianum. Two large bonfires are burning under the rock walls, casting long shadows and a luminous glow on gathered people.

People in a large semi-circle surround the Apostle Peter. Light fire illuminates his gray head like a halo.

PETER

And we are witnessing everything what he did in the Jewish land and in Jerusalem. They killed him by hanging him on the tree. God raised him the third day and let Him appear to us, previously chosen who with him we ate and drank after his resurrection.

The singing begins. Vinicius with Chilo and Kroto are standing behind the backs of listeners and keeping away from crowd.

CHILON

There! Take a look! He's right there!  
The giant!

Vinicius turns his head where Chilo points the powerful figure of Ursus outstretched. However the sight of Vinicius immediately falls on the tiny figure alongside the giant.

Vinicius takes off his hood as if he wanted to see better. From the tightened larynx of Vinicius, a choked cry is heard.

VINICIUS

Lygia!

Vinicius rushes towards her, but Chilo stops him grabbing the capes by the lap.

CHILON

Wait, Sire! You'll bring disaster on our heads. Once this is all over, we'll follow them, and then, quietly

in the dark, this fella here...

Chilon glances at Croto, who stands behind them with his hands crossed on his chest. Chilon makes a gesture as if he broke Ursus bones by himself. Seeing this, Kroto rushes towards them and directs his thoughtless gaze on Vinicius.

CROTO

Now?

Vinicius does not take his eyes off Lygia. Now he can see her. Dancing flames reflect on her face, making her almost transparent.

SCENE 33 NIGHT\_EXT\_RAVINE OUTSIDE ROME

High on the top of the ravine, we see the silhouettes of those who return home from a meeting with the Apostle Peter. The sky slowly shines because dawn is approaching.

SCENE 34 NIGHT\_EXT\_ ROME STREET

A dark alley. Chilon looks around the corner.

CHILON

They got into that house.

He whispers, nodding towards the gray facade of a house. Croto stands in front of the building opposite the entrance.

CROTO

Now?

From behind him appears the shorter Vinicius.

VINICIUS

Now!

He proclaims his order with a shout, draws a dagger and runs into the house himself.

SCENE 35 NIGHT\_INT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_ENTRANCE + NIGHT\_EXT\_CRISPUS HOUSE COURTYARD 1

They walk down a long hallway. A large figure appears and blocks their progress. From the darkness emerges the face of Ursus.

URSUS

And who do you think you're looking for?

CROTO

You!

Croto screams and throws himself on the giant.

CROTO

RAAAAAARUH! [Savage battle cry]

URSUS

UNNH! [Grunts in reaction]

The two giants fight.

SCENE 36 NIGHT\_EXT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_COURTYARD 2

Vinicius runs down the hallway and out into the second courtyard. By a fireplace burning in the courtyard Lygia sits, accompanied by an old man, Crispus.

Vinicius heads towards them. The fire illuminates their face.

At this sight, Vinicius lunges at them and stabs a dagger to Crispus neck. At the same time he catches by the hand terrified Lygia and begins to run with her back in side of the first courtyard.

He runs back out of the courtyard. In his way lies the fallen body of Croto.

In one second Vinicius is in an iron embrace with Ursus.

The freed Lygia calls out to the giant.

LIGIA

No, Ursus!!! No! Don't kill him!

Vinicius slumps to the ground.

FADE OUT

SCENE 37 DAY\_INT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_MAIN CHAMBER

FADE IN

Darkness. Voices can be heard.

VINICUS(OFF)

Kill me.

His voice is full of sorrow.

CRISPUS(OFF)

He was lucky; you almost broke his neck, Ursus.

URSUS(OFF)

In my former life I killed a lot of people, but back then I didn't know Christ.

Vinicius POV. Darkness slowly disappears and allows to see the character outlines. They lean over him and try to make a dressing on his head.

CRISPUS(OFF)

Trust in the Lord, Ursus. He knows why you were born with such great strength.

LYGIA (OFF)

And such a great heart...

SCENE 38 DAY\_INT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_MAIN CHAMBER

House of Crispus. Vinicius is lying on a bed with a serious head wound. His eyes already open.

Ursus watches as the young Nazarius sits on the ground, sculpting a bird from a piece of wood. He has a huge Vinicius' dagger in his hand.

Suddenly Lygia sits at the end of the bed. When Vinicius sees her he whispers with all his passion.

VINICIUS

Is it you, Lygia?

Lygia is quite cautious. She doesn't answer.

Crispus hands to Vinicius a slate with a stylus.

CRISPUS

Peace be with you, Marcus Vinicius. God tells us to love our enemy, so we have dressed your wounds. Now we want you go away. Write a note to your people, have them come for you.

Vinicius tries to raise his head, but with an expression of pain on his face he falls exhausted on the bed.

VINICIUS

Let me stay. If only for one day. I  
will never lay a finger on the woman  
that I love more than my own life. May  
your God be my witness.

Lygia is moved by this confession. She lowers her head and  
whispers a shy plea.

LIGIA

Let him stay. Let him live.

FADE OUT

SCENE 39 DAY\_EXT\_LAKE WITH A BOAT + DAY\_EXT\_SUNNY BEACH

FADE IN

The dream of Vinicius and his POV. Water floods his eyes. He  
is fighting with waves. Darkness, wind, storm around him.

The angelic hymn is intertwined with the sounds of this  
storm.

He loses his strength and eventually slides under the water.  
A ray of light it flashes like lightning. It's not light,  
it's a paddle.

With the last of his strength, Vinicius grabs the shaft and  
in this way after a while he is on the surface again.

With the help of an oar, Vinicius reaches the boat. And there  
he sees above - as before Crispus - this time the Apostle  
Peter.

A fishing boat flows through a wide, fiery lake. Angelic  
hymns become stronger and the storm subsides.

End of POV. Vinicius wet and tired lies at the bottom of the  
boat. His eyes are wide open and he looks straight into sky.

Vinicius POV. A stream comes out of the darkness of the  
stormy sky. These are actually two rays...

LYGIA (OFF)

Come on, follow me; I'll bring you to  
the light.

FADE OUT

## SCENE 40 DAY\_INT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_MAIN CHAMBER

FADE IN

URSUS(OFF)

You should drink this.

Ursus' massive hand with a metal cup from which rises a steam, approaches the face of Vinicius. In the corner of the chamber, Nazarius continues to sculpt his birds with the Vinicius' dagger.

VINICIUS

Are you Lygia's slave?

URSUS

Where we come from, there are no slaves.

VINICIUS

Where is that?

URSUS

Where "yes" means "yes" and "no" means "no".

VINICIUS

And Lygia?

URSUS

When you Romans appeared in our forests, Lygia's father, our king died from a Roman arrow. Soon after that her mother died. Your leader, Plautius took their child under his wing. Rome became her home. And Christ her consolation.

There is a transition to a stable from this chamber. You can see a donkey, which is eating hay in a shadow and suddenly, the face of Lygia, hidden there, listening, close to the donkey - appears.

VINICIUS

Christ! Who is he, that he could bring consolation to the Romans!?

URSUS

He who changes sorrow to joy. And death itself, which for you is the end of life, is for us the beginning.

Lygia appears suddenly at the entrance with a palm in her hand. She stays there, at the entrance.

LYGIA

Yes! Believing in Christ makes us happy.

VINICIUS

I am happy believing in you. I don't need Christ to love you.

LYGIA

You are mistaken, Marcus. Christ is love.

VINICIUS

Fair enough, why don't you let me try it for myself? Be my wife, Lygia. We'll throw the biggest wedding ever seen in Rome. I'll ask the emperor himself for his blessing...

Lygia's eyes begin to fill with tears and she runs out.

SCENE 41 DAY\_EXT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_COURTYARD 2

Apostle Peter is sitting on a bench, leaning against his staff. Next to him sits some taller and more powerfully built APOSTLE PAUL.

Peter taps his staff on the flagstones beneath his feet.

Lygia runs out into the courtyard, but as soon as she notices the two of them sitting on a bench, she slows down and even stops.

Peter and Paul don't pay attention to her, absorbed in conversation.

PAUL

Do you remember how you attended the wedding at Canaa in Galilee?

Peter nods his head with a smile, remembering the old times.

PETER

But you weren't there! How do you know exactly what happened that day?

PAUL

You told me all about it yourself,

remember? Even thousand of times.

PETER

My mind is weakened by old age, but John has written everything down. Have you read it?

PAUL

Yes, I've read the whole thing. Quite well written. Jesus and his Mother went to a wedding, and they run out of wine.

PETER

And Jesus called a servant and said, "Fill the wine jars with water."

PAUL

He blessed the love between the woman and the man.

Peter nods his head.

PETER

While the eyes of the one you love remain closed to the light of truth, avoid him so that he does not lead you into sin. But pray for him and know that Grace is with you.

PAUL

It is I who persecuted and put to death those who served Christ. I am the one who wanted to rid the whole earth of the truth. And yet the Lord chose me to spread the truth over all the earth.

PETER

Thrice I denied our Lord, but he forgave me and commanded me to be a good shepherd to the people.

Apostle Paul stands up, turning out to be the large man.

PAUL

It's time for me.

He looks at Lygia.

PAUL

Trust in your love. Christ has  
softened hearts even harder than the  
heart of one Roman.

Peter pulls his staff out to Lygia like a great hint.

SCENE 42 NIGHT\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_LIBRARY

House of Petronius. He lounges in a seat in his library. The soft light of the moon enters the library.

Eunice peeks around the corner, looks at Petronius as always, with love, as he quietly reads verses of Horace out loud.

PETRONIUS

Not all of me will die, a greater part  
of me will rise again. As long as high  
priest climbs the Capitoline Hill...

Petronius raises his eyes from the pages and continues to speak the verse in near silence.

Petronius can see Eunice looking at him, unaware that she is reflected in a huge mirror. He momentarily stops reciting, and then suddenly ends the poem aloud, as if speaking to Eunice.

PETRONIUS

...May Melpomene, the muse of song  
take pride in what I have made of all  
talents she gave to me, and crown my  
head with laurel wreath.

Without taking his eyes off Eunice, he rolls up the manuscript.

PETRONIUS

Have you ever thought about freedom,  
Eunice?

Eunice retreats behind her corner, hiding.

PETRONIUS

You could leave this place, if I were  
to free you.

Eunice suddenly appears from around the corner again.

EUNICE

Oh no! Please don't do any such thing,

Master.

Eunice approaches him from behind as he continues to look at her in the large brass mirror.

PETRONIUS

Freed, you could go your own way, have a husband, children, a life of your own...

EUNICE

You are my life, my Lord.

PETRONIUS

But admit that you envy the beautiful Romans, their fine apparel, jewellery, hairstyles, lovers...

Eunice moves slowly closer and closer.

EUNICE

Love is not jealous or boastful, is not borne up by pride.

PETRONIUS

But what if I sent you to work in the fields? What if I marry another woman? Or had you whipped?

EUNICE

Love believes all things, sees hope everywhere, endures everything.

PETRONIUS

But sooner or later it ends, burns out and dies...

Petronius turns sharply and looks straight into the eyes Eunice, who is quite close now..

EUNICE

Love never dies.

SCENE 43 DAY\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_ATRIUM

Vinicius still with a dressing on his head. He leans heavily on the marble statue of Petronius.

This, in turn, does not hide irritation. He rolled up his tunic and enters the pool to refresh himself.

PETRONIUS

So it's true. You have gone quite mad.  
You free your slaves, distribute away  
all your money to the poor ...

VINICIUS

I have come to believe that worldly  
happiness, worldly beauty, and worldly  
love - are nothing but vanity.

PETRONIUS

If you want to repay evil with  
goodness ... then ... then what do you  
repay goodness with!?

VINICIUS

I'll tell you , when I know myself...

PETRONIUS

So you want to say, that you accept  
the teachings of this ... Christ?!

VINICIUS

When I'm ready.... I would like you to  
know him too, Petronius.

At this moment Eunice is approaching with a clay tablet.  
Petronius is dissatisfied with the message. After a while the  
tablet lands shattered against his own statue.

PETRONIUS

Caesar orders us to gather at the  
Antium. I advise you not to refuse  
such a request.

VINICIUS

I cannot leave Rome now. Christians  
are waiting for me. I need to  
understand their teachings, otherwise  
I will lose her.

PETRONIUS

Unless you don't want to lose her for  
ever, you'd better start packing  
before. Nero will notice your absence.

VINICIUS

I want nothing from Caesar. If I'm  
going anywhere, it'll be with Lygia

and the Plautiuses ...to Sicily. She promised me that as soon as I am ready, meaning free of Rome's sins.

Petronius looks at Vinicius with growing pity.

PETRONIUS

My dear young men. No one is free of sins. Everyone has someone above him who decides whether he lives or dies. Keep that fact in mind.

Chilon's contorted face appears in the doorway.

CHILON

Psst....

VINICIUS

What is he doing here?!

Chilon approaches them and reaching the pool, sits down, takes off his sandals, and dips his tired, dirty feet in the cold water. He begins his game with a mysterious expression.

CHILON

I know how you can possibly kidnap Lygia...

Vinicius jumps to his feet.

VINICIUS

You dare not speak her name!

Chilon is completely surprised by this turn of events.

CHILO

Why is that, sir? What has changed since you promised me a house and five slaves. Have I not kept my word?

Vinicius grabs Chilon by his coat and lifts him up over the pool, his feet dangling above the water.

VINICIUS

I'm telling you not to hang around here any more and to forget that you ever knew us.

CHILON

If you drown old Chilo, you'll be doing a favour to the enemies of Rome.

Along with me will perish matters  
important to the Empire, saved in this  
head of mine.

Chilon tries to tap his head. Vinicius eventually throws him  
down at the edge of the pool.

VINICIUS

You are to cease your spying her. You  
understand? If I ever see your face  
again!

Vinicius throws a purse of coins towards the door.

Chilon runs after it and catches it, already close to the  
exit. He turns around and looks at Vinicius with plots and  
revenge in his mind.

CHILON

You're very generous, Sir. Chilo will  
never forget it.

He gives a low bow and exits.

SCENE 44 EVENING\_ANTIUM AT THE SEA SIDE\_EXT\_TERRACE

Antium. A large terraced villa. Below can be seen the calm  
waters of the bay.

Nero, with a zither in his hands plays the last two chords,  
pathetically picking at the strings as he leans against a  
rail under a blood red sunset.

NERO

Aneas could not save the city. Oh,  
such a pity, everything's lost, but  
Aneas, he'll make them pay, He'll make  
them pay! But what about Troy...

Nero has just finished reading a poem, now he proudly cocks  
his head and looks at those present.

Nero is surrounded by Petronius, Vinicius, Poppea and  
Tigellinus. Servants move around silently in the background.

Tigellinus claps his hands with an idiotic smile as he nods  
his head, as if he was agreeing with what he had just heard.

NERO

What are your feelings? ... Did you  
see the fire consuming Troy?

Tigellinus still claps his hands in appreciation and nods.

TIGELLINUS

That was cool!

Nero casts Petronius a contemptuous look. Moving across, he closely observes Poppea, who with a look of indifference on her face, stuffs some grapes into her mouth. She has no understanding or interest in the poetry of Caesar.

NERO

Clear the tables. Augusta is choking.

With a look of disgust, Nero turns around and yells out to the servants with an impatient voice.

NERO C/D

Cool? Tigellinus! But was it true? Did you feel the fire burn your hands?!

Tigellinus stutters like a pupil in front of the blackboard.

TIGELLINUS

Oh! Divine one! It blinded me! E ...  
ehh ... hm ... it was chilling in  
veins ...

NERO

Chilling? But are you sure? You do not  
feel this fire even at the fingertips  
?!

TIGELLINUS

Divine! This fire ... blinded me!

Meanwhile, Nero looks at Petronius intensely. Petronius withstands the long stare, and after a long pause pronounces his judgment.

PETRONIUS

Throw your verse in the fire, Caesar;  
that would be the best thing to do.

Caesar tries to control his anger and squints at him.

NERO

What do you find so wrong in my  
description of the fire, Petronius,  
that you would have the fire consume  
it?

PETRONIUS

I am too cold.

NERO

It burnt Tigellinus.

PETRONIUS

Don't believe him, divine Caesar. Your talent could wipe Rome from the face of the earth, let alone Troy!

Hearing this, Nero calms down.

NERO

It's true. The gods gave me talent. That is why I am sharing it with you.

PETRONIUS

The greatest poet of Rome does not look for acclaim from his soldiers, but is worthy of eternal glory in the pantheon of fame.

Nero swells with pride and looks at Tigellinus with contempt, who shrinks in his armor.

NERO

Tigellinus has the mind of a mouse and skin thin as a woman's. But you could die in the flames of my poetry, Petronius.

Tigellinus's face blackens with anger.

NERO

Every sculptor needs a model. I need to see a real fire.

TIGELLINUS

At your command, Sire, I'll give the order. All of Antium will be set alight for you!

NERO

What is Antium for Caesar!

SCENE 45 NIGHT\_EXT\_ANTIUM AT THE SEA SIDE\_BEACH

The Antium coast shines with a thousand stars that are reflected in the sea.

VINICIUS

Aren't you playing with life and death  
talking like that to Caesar?

Wrapped in his thoughts, Petronius for a moment doesn't  
reply.

PETRONIUS

If you want Caesar to allow you to get  
married Lygia, he must be pleased with  
himself first.

VINICIUS

So why do you tease Tigellinus?

PETRONIUS

Tigellinus does all he can do to  
prejudice Caesar against me.

Small waves lap the shore.

VINICIUS

It is said: he who lives by the sword,  
dies by the sword.

PETRONIUS

It is also said: if you want peace -  
prepare for war.

VINICIUS

How are we supposed to know what it's  
all worth, in the end. I'm a soldier  
and you are a diplomat ... who will  
judge us?

PETRONIUS

You yourself and I, myself.

The late evening horizon is illuminated by the sphere of  
Jupiter, lighting up the way for the two men walking across  
the beach as tiny waves crash onto the shore.

FADE OUT

SCENE 46 EVENING\_ANTIUM AT THE SEA SIDE\_EXT\_TERRACE

FADE IN

The great fire, born in Nero's head, in his poem, reflects  
off of the water. Small waves lap the sands. The crackling  
and popping of burning wood and houses. The flames were born

in Nero's head only.

FADE OUT

SCENE 47 EVENING\_ANTIUM AT THE SEA SIDE\_EXT\_TERRACE

FADE IN

Nero is watching the sea from the terrace of his villa in Antium.

PETRONIUS (OFF)

We need air, Caesar. We are suffocating! Soon, the fires of Troy will reach us.

NERO

What are you saying, Petronius? Have the stanzas, I've written impressed you that much?

Nero does not turn his head to them, staring at the horizon.

PETRONIUS

I'm burning up, and don't know what will put out the flames. Vinicius, here, who remains stubbornly silent, would stand up and say the same, if he weren't already frozen with terror.

NERO

What have you to say about my fire - you've felt the fire of battle?

Vinicius freezes, not knowing what to say in response to Nero.

Tigellinus takes advantage.

TIGELLINUS

Divine Caesar. Although I've been in a hundred battles...

Nero, with a gesture signals him to be silent. He looks at Vinicius, expecting an answer. Petronius tries to help.

PETRONIUS

Vinicius would rather die than face the might of your poems, Nero.

Nero breaks out into laughter.

NERO

Then you will die, Vinicius, if you don't tell me right this instant... which one shall I give you? A poem, or a horse?

Petronius is bitterly silenced. In that silence, Vinicius is serious and stiff

VINICIUS

I'd rather have a poem, Sire. There are many horses, but only one Caesar. Nothing is worth more than his words.

Nero's face lights up in appreciation and he cries out to the servants from the terrace.

NERO

Bring me my horse!

He turns to Petronius.

NERO

They think me a monster ... they call me mother killer, but they are jealous. Jealous of my talent. The burden of greatness is too much to bear, dear Petronius.

He puts his hand on Petronius's shoulder.

Tigellinus as always looks on their relationship with jealousy.

The servants bring along his horse beneath the terrace.

NERO

And I do so like to make people happy. Vinicius - the steed is yours!

Confused, Vinicius looks at Petronius. Petronius nods reassuringly, implying that you can't refuse Nero.

Footsteps on the terrace approach from behind. Nero turns around. Faon and Pythagoras hurry up with a message.

Close up you can see how dead they are, they are becoming breathless. They fall to their knees in front of Nero.

FAON

Forgive me, divine emperor! There is a

fire. In Rome! Most of the city is on  
fire!

Nero looks at him with curiosity then raises his eyes and  
hands with amusement.

NERO

Ye Gods! Here's what a real artist can  
do! A fire at a distance. Now I get  
some burning city and finish my poem!

PITAGORAS

The flames are swallowing up the city,  
the people! Rome is dying, Sire!

Vinicius runs down the terrace, not listening to the  
conversation. He jumps on the horse and rides towards Rome.

Nero turns to Tigellinus.

NERO

Tigellinus. Will I be in time to see  
the fire?

The face of Tigellinus shows great excitement as he savors  
Nero's every word.

TIGELLINUS

Sire, the show is all for you.

SCENE 48 NIGHT\_EXT\_HILLS AROUND ROME

A horse with its neck outstretched and panting heavily rushes  
past gardens and hedges. Vinicius leans over the horse's  
neck. He urges the animal on, but the horse is so tired, that  
foam rolls from his mouth.

VINICIUS

Come on, you can do it.

The horse and Vinicius reach the hill. On the horizon we see  
the city engulfed in gold and pink, with flashes, like  
distant thunder.

The horse on top of the hill rears up on its hind legs.  
Vinicius calms him down and looks down on the city.

The burning city can be seen in the distance, a mass of fire  
and smoke. Vinicius heads down towards the city.

## SCENE 49 NIGHT\_EXT\_ROME STREET IN FIRE

Vinicius tries to navigate with his horse through the chaotic crowds in the city. The crowds of people are hard to see through the thick black smoke. Every now and then a terrified face, black from the smoke flashes into view. Screams of pain, anger, and curses can be heard.

## VOICES

Death to Nero! Mother killer! Down  
with the tyrant! We know he did this!  
Assassins! Arsonists! Hang them all!

## SCENE 50 NIGHT\_EXT\_ ROME STREET CLOSE TO THE CRISPUS HOUSE

Vinicius enters the street on which Crispus lives. From the entrance of the street fire can be seen. The fire quickly moves towards the rider, engulfing and consuming the vines surrounding him. The horse rears back in fear.

A RUNAWAY runs past. Vinicius grabs him by his tunic, almost falling off of his horse.

## RUNAWAY

Hey! Let me go! And you run away, too!

## VINICIUS

Where are they!?

## RUNAWAY

There's no one here! The Christians  
have already fled!

He disappears in the smoke. The horse turns around. Its hooves pound on the flagstones of the street as it disappears into the clouds of smoke.

FADE OUT

## SCENE 51 NIGHT\_EXT\_BURNING ROME\_AQUEDUCT

FADE IN

Nero's entourage stops at the edge of an aqueduct. Nero takes a few steps forwards and from the top looks down on the burning city. They are surrounded by scorched tree trunks and a growing angry crowd.

## CROWD

Death to Nero! Where is Caesar!?! He  
put us in hell! His men did this! Hang

them all!

Nero turns to his entourage and recites a short line with a pathetic voice as he gestures towards the burning city.

NERON

Homeless ruler of a homeless people,  
where will I lay my miserable head  
this night...

From beneath the aqueduct, the roaring of the crowd grows louder.

Nero tunes his zither and looks down. Striking the strings he begins to sing.

NERO

Oh star of my ancestors, dear  
birthplace ... Oh star of my  
ancestors, dear birthplace...

After these few words, he throws the zither into a gap in the aqueduct where it smashes among the crowd below. Nero wraps himself in his robe and stands in statuesque pose. A sinister howl comes from the crowd down below.

CROWD

Kill Caesar! Kill Caesar! Kill Caesar!

Nodding his head, Nero says plaintively.

NERO

This is how the people appreciate me  
and my poetry.

Tigellinus comes up beside him.

TIGELLINUS

Have the praetorian guards called out  
to attack them, Sire.

Petronius comes up on Nero's other side.

PETRONIUS

Better speak to your people, Sire and  
promise them something.

Tigellinus glares at Petronius. Nero raises his head to the sky and with a heavy sigh sarcastically comments on the proposal.

NERO  
Would you have the divine Caesar speak  
to the rabble?

Nero stars at Tigellinus.

NERO  
You go down to them!

Tigellinus lowers his head in silence.

PETRONIUS  
Caesar, I will go.

NERO  
Yes, you are my most faithful ... Go  
and lavish promises on them!

SCENE 52 NIGHT\_EXT\_BURNING ROME\_AQUEDUCT

Petronius alone stands on the edge of the aqueduct, staring  
at the crowd. He raises his arms and after a while the  
bellows subsides.

CROWD  
Petronius! It's Petronius!

PETRONIUS  
Citizens!

From afar, Nero listens to Petronius, adding his own comments  
to the speech.

NERO  
...And you scum...

PETRONIUS  
The city will be rebuilt.

NERO  
...as soon as we're done with the  
show...

PETRONIUS  
Caesars gardens will be opened to you.

NERO  
...just don't throw any garbage around  
or bring your goats...

PETRONIUS

Tomorrow, grain, wine and oil will be handed out!

NERO

...fill your bellies till you choke...

PETRONIUS

Then Caesar will organise for you games like Rome has never seen before.

NERO

.. and will never see again...

PETRONIUS

Great feasts and generous gifts await you!

NERO

...Rome has burnt to the ground - long live Rome!

CROWD

Bread! Bread! Games! Bread and games! Bread! Bread! Games! Bread and games!

SCENE 53 DAY\_EXT\_CRISPUS HOUSE\_COURTYARD 2 BURNED AFTER THE FIRE

The ashes of Krispus's house are burnt.

Vinicius opens his eyelids slowly. The sun immediately blinds him. He's trying to get up.

Nazarius laments. He is sitting next to Vinicius on the ground like an orphaned child.

NAZARIUS

We don't have a home anymore! Everyone is scattered. I don't know where anyone is.

VINICIUS

Where is she?

Nazarius can't hear. He is shocked. He starts crying.

NAZARIUS

Ursus led us all out. He carried me out in his arms while the ceilings

collapsed around us.

Vinicius sits next to Nazarius. He unfastens his dagger from the belt and gives it to Nazarius.

VINICIUS

Can you carve a pony?

SCENE 54 DAY\_INT\_ROME\_UNDERGROUND CAVERN

Underground Cave. The hot light of the day comes from outside. The cave is full of kneeling and praying people. The crowd whispers in painful and terrified voices.

Standing against a wall is a more clearly illuminated Peter the Apostle. He makes the sign of the cross with his hands.

People walk to Peter and reach out to him. He blesses them and speaks to them not too loudly, one by one.

PETER

Peace be with you! Peace be with you!

CROWD

Do not abandon us! Do not leave us on this day of judgment!

Peter raises his hands many times to bless them, one by one.

PETER

Lord has shown mercy to those of you washed by baptism! Peace be with you!

Vinicius breaks through the crowd looking for Lygia. In vain.

Suddenly Vinicius himself stands face to face with Peter. The Apostle looks at him attentively, deep in his eyes, as they have met before.

Someone hands Peter a twig with a few leaves still swaying on it. Peter dips it into the water and sprays Vinicius with it, baptizing him.

PETER

I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Follow me, Son.

Vinicus has a moment of a deep reconciliation with God. But

Nazarius runs in shouting with fear.

NAZARIUS

The gladiators have revolted. They are  
killing everyone!

Horror overcomes the faces of those gathered.

Vinicius shakes, he is back in reality. He runs out.

SCENE 55 DAY\_INT\_ROME\_PALATINO\_NERO'S CHAMBER

FADE IN

Palatino. Nero's chamber.

Caesar sits on his throne, and Petronius and Tigellinus come over to communicate him their quite thoughts.

PETRONIUS

Sire, you need to go to Hellas. It's  
getting too dangerous in Rome.

Tigellinus abruptly interrupts him.

TIGELLINUS

That is not a good idea! Civil war  
could erupt before you get to Ostia,  
Sire! The Praetorians may betray us!

Angry voices from a crowd approach from a distance.

CROWD

Death to the arsonists of Rome! Mother  
killer! Coward! Death to the tyrant!  
Arsonist! Burn him at the stake! Burn  
them all!

NERO

They have enough grain and oil, what  
more do they want?

TIGELLINUS

Vengeance.

Nero squints and collects his thoughts for a moment. Suddenly an idea comes to mind and he smiles evilly.

NERO

And vengeance requires a victim,  
Tigellinus. You must go out to them

and admit you were the one who set  
fire to Rome.

Tigellinus looks petrified. After a moment he looks at Nero's  
with defiance.

TIGELLINUS

I burned Rome on your orders!

Nero and Tigellinus measure each other like wild beasts. The  
sudden voice of Freedman standing in the doorway to the hall  
interrupts the moment.

FAON

The divine Poppea wishes to see  
Tigellinus.

SCENE 56 DAY\_INT\_ROME\_PALATINO\_POPPEA'S CHAMBER

Poppea's Chamber. The Empress lies on a bed holding the  
collar of a huge leopard. In front of Tigellinus - Chilon.

TIGELLINUS

So, you're saying that Vinicius...?

CHILON

Yes, Master.

TIGELLINUS

And how about Petronius?

CHILON

Perhaps! It may very well be.

Poppea bursts into hysterical laughter.

POPPEA

Don't be ridiculous, Tigellinus.  
Petronius, that lover of lust and  
pleasure - a Christian? You won't  
protect us with this. The anger of the  
people will turn against Nero and will  
fall on me.

Chilon falls to his knees and crawls towards Tigellinus,  
glancing at Poppea the entire time.

CHILON

Vinicius, he's with them. I swear!  
Lygia's a Christian, too. She's his  
wife, now. They're planning to escape,

in the night, and leave Caesar here,  
in this burning stench of a city.

TIGELLINUS

You came here with that? That's all  
you have? Nothing on Petronius?!

Chilon rubs his fingers together insinuating money.  
Tigellinus rejects him with a kick.

CHILON

Catch the nephew in the net, and the  
uncle will fall into the trap of his  
own. And may I count on your good  
graces, Sire?

SCENE 57 DAY\_INT\_ROME\_PALATINO\_NERO'S CHAMBER

The room in which Nero resides. Poppea and Tigellinus enter.

Nero laughs sheepishly, clearly nervous. From afar, under the  
Palatine, the screams of the crowd can be heard.

CROWD

The mother killer set fire to Rome!  
Death to Nero!

NERO

It's getting nasty. Time to make our  
escape to Hellas.

Caesar walks over to Tigellinus.

TIGELLINUS

The people already know it was Caesar  
who set fire to Rome!

NERO

If I so desire, I can turn the people  
against you.

TIGELLINUS

I haven't killed my mother. They  
remember Agrippina and haven't  
forgiven you for that... crime.

NERO

You played your part in it.

TIGELLINUS

As I do with everything that goes on

in the palace.

Silence. Petronius listens from the side of the room, looking out from a window at the hills covered by the figures of the growing crowd.

PETRONIUS

Do my ears deceive me, Nero; do you really intend to let this muscle-bound fool have the last word?!

Tigellinus looks at Petronius as if he had been struck with an arrow in the windpipe. All of a sudden he takes a more conciliatory tone.

TIGELLINUS

The people need revenge and... someone to sacrifice. You have heard, Sire, of the followers of this prophet...this, Christ? As soon as we agreed to have him hung on the cross, they made a God of him. They set fire to Rome!

Nero's face begins to assume an expression of anger, grief and indignation.

NERO

What did this poor city do to deserve such a crime ... at their hands? And what is Rome to do now, with these beasts?

Poppea walks up to the emperor.

POPPEA

They are your enemies! Punish the arsonists!

TYGELLINUS

They go around the city trying to convince people to turn against Caesar.

Nero makes another theatrical gesture.

NERO

What punishment and torment fits such a crime?

Petronius comes out of the shadows, silently and intently watching the faces of Poppea and Tigellinus and then Nero. He

starts to talk with a growing power in his voice.

PETRONIUS

Beware, Sire, for they will say Nero  
burned Rome, but blamed the innocent.  
Nero - the coward.

Tigellinus stands by Nero.

TIGELLINUS

One word from you, and Petronius will  
forever hold his peace.

Nero looks at Petronius, cocking his head, feeling hurt.

NERO

Although he's wounded my heart, I  
still love him like a brother.

PETRONIUS

Treat your brother the way you treated  
your mother, and they'll soon be  
nobody in the world to love you.

Petronius walks out silently.

SCENE 58 DAY\_EXT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_COLLONADE + PETRONIUS  
PALACE\_HALL\_VIEW THROUGH THE WINDOW

House of Petronius. Porters quickly bring a litter through  
the gate. Petronius leaves and heads towards the entrance.  
Eunice is there to greet him.

EUNICE

I was afraid you would not come back  
from Nero.

Petronius embraces her affectionately.

PETRONIUS

And if we had to go our separate ways,  
one day?

EUNICE

Where you go, Master, I go.

PETRONIUS

Some journeys we have to take alone.

EUNICE

Take me with you.

Petronius strokes her golden hair and with his arm around her they both enter the house.

From inside can be heard their voices, interrupted by Eunice's laughter, as if they were children playing.

PETRONIUS(OFF)

I have no right to decide about the life of the beautiful Eunice.

EUNICE(OFF)

Eunice belongs to you.

PETRONIUS(OFF)

Then I am the happiest man in Rome. There are some things that cannot be taken from me..

SCENE 59 NIGHT\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_LIBRARY

Library. Petronius is writing, leaning over his desk. We see his outline from behind, along with the outline of columns leading to the garden.

After a few moments, Paul the Apostle appears in the entrance. He stands for a moment looking at Petronius.

PAUL

You do not want her to accompany you and you are setting her free. Note well God's goodness and severity: he was severe with cut branches, and for you he is good - if you persist in this goodness.

At the sound of his voice, Petronius looks up, confused.

PETRONIUS

Who are you? A thief?

PAUL

They told me I would find Vinicius here. I say to you, I, Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle to preach the good news from God.

Petronius snorts and laughs bitterly.

PETRONIUS

The follower of Christ again! "Enemy

of Rome!" "Arsonist"! Are you here seeking revenge?

PAUL

Do not mete out justice yourselves, but leave that to God. "I mete out punishment, and I will repay for everything" - says the Lord. Don't be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.

Stunned by the discussion, Petronius stands up and paces the room.

PETRONIUS

Good? How is that compared to wealth, fame and happiness, which the tyrant can destroy at a moment's notice?

PAUL

Wish well for those who persecute you. Live in harmony with one another. Do not pretend to love, but really love other people.

PETRONIUS

Death cancels everything. Have you not heard how its victims groan?

PAUL

If we believe that Jesus died and rose again, God will take those who have died in Jesus and lead them into eternity.

PETRONIUS

If God is on your side, what will become of those who are against you?

Petronius lifts his head to hear the reply, but Paul is no longer there.

SCENE 60 MORNING\_EXT\_ROME\_STREET VIEW\_FORUM ROMANUM

Streets of Rome. Crowd. You can hear roars and drunk singing from the crowd meandering among the ruins. The city is still glowing and the smoke wafts through the air like funeral ribbons.

CROWDS

Christians to the lions! They poison

our wells! Let the animals at them!  
 Get rid of these fanatics! Death to  
 all Christians! Death to all  
 Christians!

Vinicius, with a look of despair on his face, in madness search looks in every nook and cranny. After a while it disappears obscured by winding smoke.

SCENE 61 MORNING\_INT\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_LIBRARY

Petronius stands with his back to the library table, exactly where Paul stood before. The difference is the morning light. He looks at the vegetation growing around the columns of the atrium.

He doesn't respond to the sound of Vinicius approaching.

VINICIUS(OFF)  
 Caesar has accused the Christians of  
 setting fire to Rome!

When Petronius turns, he can't hide his surprise. Vinicius looks stunned. A search of the burned ruins of Rome left a mark all over his body.

PETRONIUS  
 Have you hidden her?

VINICIUS  
 They sent over a hundred Praetorians  
 after them. They took everyone away.  
 Did you know about this?

PETRONIUS  
 Let's say that I underestimated  
 Tigellinus. What about Lygia?

VINICIUS  
 I didn't find her anywhere. I was not  
 only at the prison.

PETRONIUS  
 You'll have to bribe the guards to  
 release her immediately. Otherwise  
 it'll be too late!

VINICIUS  
 Talk to Caesar. Nero loves you. He  
 will release her for you.

PETRONIUS

Do you think a man who sentenced his own mother to death can truly love? Today, I'm the first he'd wipe away and the last he'd like to hear.

SCENE 62 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_PRISON GATE

Dressed in mantles, Petronius and Vinicius approach the prison walls. As they get closer they see a double line of PRAETORIAN GUARDS surrounding the sealed entrance to the prison.

CROWD

Arsonists! They burned down Rome! Death to Christians! Let the animals at them! Get rid of these fanatics! Death to Christians! Throw them to the lions! Let's rid the city of these fanatics! Death to all Christians! Let's see their God save them now!

Petronius searches for the commander, eventually spots him and approaches him. It is KRICSOS.

PETRONIUS

Hail, Kricsos! Have you been ordered to guard the jail?

Kricsos stands at attention.

KRICSOS

Yes, noble Petronius. Tigellinus fears there may be an attempt to free the arsonists.

PETRONIUS

My slave is in there. There is some mistake. I know her well and I know that she had nothing to do with them.

KRICSOS

My orders are to let no one out!

Despite this, Petronius takes a step forward, Niger blocks his path.

PETRONIUS

Don't you dare....

You can hear the clinking of weapons from the Guards.

KRICSOS

That means no one, Sir.

VINICIUS

And are you also forbidden to let anyone in?

KRICSOS

I can do that.

VINICIUS

So tell your men to let me through the cordon. I want to find those who burned down my house.

After a few moments of consideration, Kricsos gives his men the signal to let them in.

Vinicius turns round, embraces Petronius, says goodbye and enters the prison.

SCENE 64 DAY\_INT\_ROME\_PRISON

Vinicius passes over the threshold of the prison and is enveloped in darkness. The hallways and cells are filled with people. Words of prayer reverberate throughout the prison.

CROWD

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us, and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

In the meantime, Vinicius wanders around helplessly, looking for Lygia. A CENTURION EXPEDIT approaches Vinicius; he leans over and whispers to his ear.

CENTURION

I've seen you before, Sir. In Ostrianum.

VINICIUS

Are you....?

With his long Gallic sword the centurion draws a fish in the sand. Vinicius looks deep into the eyes of Expedit.

VINICIUS  
I must find Lygia. Do you know her?

The centurion shakes his head.

CENTURION  
So far, she was not seen.

Vinicius grabs him by the shoulder.

VINICIUS  
Protect her, if you see her. I'll be back.

CENTURION  
The time has not come yet.

VINICIUS  
What do you mean?

CENTURION  
The time for salvation.

Centurion turns around and nods his head towards Vinicius.

CENTURION (C/D)  
You should get out of here.

Vinicius follows him as they disappear into the darkness.

SCENE 65 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_PRISON\_EXIT\_STREET

Vinicius exits through a side door from the darkness of the prison and comes out into afternoon sunlight.

He takes a few steps and encounters the Apostle Paul. He sees him, however, from a distance across the entire width of the street full of people and traders. The Apostle looks at Vinicius's face. A litter passes between Paul and Vinicius.

The voices of its PORTERS can be heard.

PORTERS  
Make way for the noble Chilo! Make way!

Vinicius grabs the edge of the litter and tips it in his direction. Chilon slides across to him, his eyes wide with surprise.

VINICIUS  
Greetings to you, Chilo.

Chilon tries to cover his face with his arm.

CHILON  
Hail, Vinicius, but I can't talk. I'm  
late to meet my friend Tigellinus!

Vinicius grabs him by the robe and screams.

VINICIUS  
It was you who betrayed them!

Chilon replies arrogantly.

CHILON  
My friend, if you have a request, come  
to my house. I welcome all visitors  
and clients in the morning, after I  
have taken my bath.

Vinicius is still half holding on to his tunic.

SLOW MOTION.

Through the other side of the litter, from behind Chillon, Vinicius can see the figure Apostle. Vinicius's gaze meets Paul's. A flash of energy appears between them.

Vinicius turns his head back to Chilo, looks at him carefully, as if he wanted to remember that face.

VINICIUS  
May God forgive you.

Vinicius lets go of his tunic and lets the litter pass on.

Then he looks back to where Paul was standing, but he is no more there.

SCENE 65 DAY\_EXT\_APPIAN ROAD + DAY\_EXT\_APPIAN ROAD\_PANORAMA

At this time of day the Appian Road is usually empty. This time however, leaning on a powerful stick, the Apostle Peter quickly traverses the road.

At some distance behind him Nazarius pulls a donkey.

Oncoming heat sizzling. The road meanders leaving Rome behind.

Suddenly the Apostle Peter stops and covers his eyes with his sleeve.

After a moment, he falls to his knees, resting his hands and head on the staff. A pulsing golden light appears around its contour.

A single ray of light splits like a prism into two streaks - one of them is pale pink - the other is light, luminous ..

In silence only the cicadas let us know that there is some life around.

Peter looks up.

PETER

Quo Vadis, Domine?

VOICE (OFF)

If you abandon Rome, I shall be crucified once again.

PETER

Forgive me, Christ!

VOICE (OFF)

Feed my sheeps.

Suddenly, there is Nazarius coming from the distance. He pulls the bridle of a gray donkey. The donkey denies to go with four hooves. Each step is difficult for them.

Finally, Nazarius abandons the donkey and runs to the kneeling old man. He helps him rise from his knees.

The golden light fades as Nazarius grabs Peter and helps him up off his knees.

NAZARIUS

We have to hurry. Anytime they can get us.

The apostle Peter turns to look at Rome. Shakes off dust with sandals and leaning on a stick he sets off on his way back.

Nazarius looks confused. When Apostle is already near the donkey, Nazarius catches him up and grabs his arm, trying to stop him.

NAZARIUS

Where are you going, Peter?

Peter raises his staff like a great pointer and shows off in the distant the outline of the city.

PETER  
I'm going back to sheeps!

SCENE 66 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

The Arena of the big Circus. View from the imperial terrace towards the audience.

Nero sits on an elevated podium with the magnificently dressed Poppea beside him. They are surrounded by the court.

There is also Petronius and Tygellinus and even Chilo, totally changed in his new white robe. Place on the left of Petronius is empty.

Petronius seems to be waiting for someone. He is tapping on the ground with an elegant ivory cane. Suddenly Vinicius takes place next to his uncle.

PETRONIUS  
Have you found her?

Vinicius shakes his head.

Nero looks suspiciously at Petronius and Vinicius, as if he kept an eye on them. In the end, he stands up and raises his arms triumphantly welcoming Rome.

The crowd in the Circus roars and cheers.

CROWD  
Nero! Nero! Divine Augustus!  
Christians to the lions!

SCENE 67 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

Arena. Massive gates are located on the left and right side of the arena. The shrill sound of trumpets breaks the silence.

As soon as the trumpets fall silent, the gate on the right side opens with a crash. From the black depths of the open gate emerge human figures that slowly move towards the center of the arena. The crowd in the Circus murmurs.

CROWD  
Christians! Christians! Christians!

The Christians huddle together in the middle of the arena, squinting under the sun. They kneel and bow their heads together while holding each other.

CROWD

Bring on the animals! The animals!

The trumpets begin to play again. The gate on the left side of the Circus opens. From a black tunnel emerges a lion. Behind it, more lions rush out.

The animals sniff the air, growl and squint in the bright light. The crowd Howls with delight.

CROWDS

Finish them! Kill the Christians! Kill them all! Kill! Kill! Kill!

From the middle of the cluster of Christians comes the song -"Christus Regnat".

SCENE 68 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

SLOW MOTION

"Christus Regnat" continues. Images shown from a distance, without dramatic shots.

Nero's terrace. With his emeralde monocle, Caesar looks out over the arena. Poppea's eyes shine with excitement. She embraces her husband's neck and shoulders.

Tigellinus wears an expression of contempt and triumph.

A lion lurks closer, readying to pounce on the tight cluster of kneeling people. He pounces and with his mouth grabs an old man by the neck. The crowd goes wild.

The lions drag their victims across the sand, the arena is now filled with the screams of those being murdered.

Increasingly horrified, Chilon slides lower and lower into his seat.

The sounds of "Christus Regnat" are slowly drowned by the overwhelming triumphal roar of crowds.

THE END OF SLOW MOTION

SCENE 69 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

TŁUM

Uaaaaaaaaaaa!

Chilon's head is tilted back unnaturally. Face pale, eyes closed, sweaty forehead. With a wild roar of laughter, Tigellinus jerks Chilon's arm.

TIGELLINUS

Look! Look! You did that! And aren't you proud?

Petronius from behind Tigellinus reaches out towards Chilon with his cane. He taps lightly on his pulsating Adam's apple.

PETRONIUS

The Gods created him a foul villain,  
and the humenas made him a demon! But  
even a demon can't stomach this.

Chilon wheezes, his eyes shut tight. He reaches breaking point.

CHILON

Enough, Caesar! Enough!

Vinicius looks up. He sees something and nudges Petronius's arm. Petronius follows his gaze. At the top of the arena stands Peter, making the sign of the cross with his hand. Standing in the light, he looks like a ghost.

VINICIUS

Look! It's Peter!

PETRONIUS

I can't see anyone.

Peter's piercing eyes are looking straight at Petronius, even though he denies his existence.

CROWD

Finish him! Kill them all! Do it! Make  
them bleed! For the love of Rome!

Some strange energy passes between them. The howling of the crowd in the Circus mixes with the roars of the maddened animals.

Tigellinus leans into Nero's ear.

TIGELLINUS

I have something even better arranged  
for tomorrow.

SCENE 70 TWILIGHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PALATINO GARDENS

Twilight. Palatine Gardens. The area where cypress trees once grew is now covered with large crosses. On these are tied half naked people, their arms attached to the crosses by thick ropes, their heads hanging down, their bodies covered in bruises and marks from beatings.

The crosses are draped in dry garlands of ivy. Suddenly a large peal of trumpets.

Nero looks down on the scene from the windows of the Palatine. He makes a gesture and puts his monocle to his eye to examine the nearest cross.

And he likes what he sees.

SCENE 71 TWILIGHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PALATINO GARDENS

Darkness falls. Close-up of the crucified Crispus. His head slowly rises.

The victim is still alive. He opens his eyes and stares at somebody stying there. His chapped lips move silently, his chest rising with each breath as his face shines. He whispers.

CRISPUS

I forgive and ask for forgiveness.

The ivy is immediately lit, lighting up the main avenue of the garden as the flames travel up the shafts of the crosses.

Chilon's white robe shines yellow and purple in the reflection of the fires. That is him who is standing at Crispus cross. He hides his face in his hands and is shaken by spasms.

SCENE 72 TWILIGHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PALATINO GARDENS

Chilon runs down the middle of the avenue past the burning crosses, the flames whipping at him as he tries to find an exit from the garden. Once past the fires, he trips and falls, crashing to the ground.

## SCENE 73 TWILIGHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PALATINE GARDENS

A hooded figure bends over Chilon and touches his arm. Chilon fears to open his eyes.

CHILON

I am cursed, I'm damned.

The face of Paul emerges from under the hood.

PAUL

I bring you salvation.

CHILON

No one can save me.

Paul then draws a cross on his forehead. From Chilon's chest comes a moan.

CHILO

Christ rose from the dead !

The Apostle Paul disappears back into the darkness.

## SCENE 73 TWIGLIHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PALATINE GARDENS

Trumpets, noise and fanfare.

CROWD

He's here! The emperor's here!

The imperial retinue halts at the top of the avenue of burning crosses. The gleam of the fires play on the faces of Nero and Tigellinus. Both sides of the avenue are filled with the smoke of burnt flesh.

The crowd cheers and greets Caesar.

CROWD

Hail Caesar! Long live Nero! Savior of Rome!

Nero raises his hand to silence the crowd. Suddenly out of the darkness emerges a figure wearing a soot covered robe. He stands in front of the imperial retinue. It is Chilon. He points at Nero.

CHILO

Mother killer! Murderer! It was You, Nero, you! You burned down Rome. And Rome will have its vengeance on you.

Your time's up, Nero!

He points dramatically at the burning crosses.

CHILON

I swear that you're killing the  
innocent here. He's the guilty one! It  
was Nero who set fire to Rome! This  
man!

With his right hand Chilon points at Nero and freezes in that position. Silence falls. At first single voices are heard, then a growing number of ominous cries rise up from the crowd.

CROWD

Arsonist! Murderer! Tyrant! Mother  
Killer! Down with Caesar! Down with  
tyranny! Death to Nero!

Chilon begins to run along the crosses, in despair, moving away from Nero.

SCENE 74 TWIGLIGHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PALATINE GARDENS

Chilon, lonely and desperate, escapes the burning alley, but the glow of fire still illuminates his figure and all around.

It stops only under the monument of a speeding quadriga, which crowns the entrance to Nero's palace.

He stops there for a moment and listens from afar, catching with difficulty his breath.

Suddenly, horses above anchor, stirring up the clouds of sparks.

The fiery lava falls on Chilo's tormented body. The old man falls lifeless at the entrance to Nero's palace.

FADE OUT

SCENE 75 TWILIGHT\_EXT\_ROME\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_COLLONADE

FADE IN

Twilight. In front of Petronius's home. The sky is covered in driving clouds. Fires scattered in the house cast long shadows along the walls.

Leaning against the columns of the house is Vinicius, waiting

for word from Petronius. At the sight of his chariot, he jumps up and waits at the front for it to stop.

VINICIUS

Tell me that you found her!

Petronius does not reply. He passes Vinicius with the expression of a deep seriousness, and enters the villa.

At this moment, before Vinicius follows him, a figure in a gray tunic appears from the darkness. He's obviously in hiding.

NAZARIUS

Pssst...

Nazarius looks around nervously, making sure he isn't being followed. He whispers.

VINICIUS

Nazarius? What are you doing here?

NAZARIUS

I have a message from Lygia. She is feverish. Ursus takes care of her.

VINICIUS

How do you know?

NAZARIUS

Centurion Expeditus told me.

VINICIUS

I'm going with you!

Nazarius begins to run off in panic. He stops, turns, and from a distance conveys the most important part of his message.

NAZARIUS

She keeps repeating your name. And that you trust in God.

Tears stream down Nazari's cheeks. The moonlight filters directly onto his face. Nazarius disappears quickly in the bushes.

Suddenly lightning flies across the ceiling. A while later thunder is heard. A heavy downpour finally separates them.

VINICIUS (OFF)  
I will wait for her! Always!

Vinicius stands in the rain.

Petronius wraps his arm around Vinicius and forcefully brings him inside the villa.

PETRONIUS(OFF)  
Pull yourself together, soldier. Or  
pray to your God, if you know how.

SCENE 76 MORNING\_INT\_ROME\_PALATINO\_NERO'S CHAMBER

FADE IN

Chamber in Pallatino - the palace of the emperor. Nero is walking around the chamber.

VOICES (OFF)  
Arsonist! Murderer! Tyrant! Mother  
Killer! You burnt my house down, you  
dog! Make him pay! I want revenge! No  
mercy!

TIGELLINUS  
The ship is waiting in Naples, Caesar,  
you can sail any time.

NERO  
So we shall take a vacation on Hellas  
after all?

Petronius stands before Caesar. Now or never. Nero now hides his surprise. He isn't used to being restricted.

PETRONIUS  
Before you sail Sire, and deprive us  
of your divine presence, do faithful  
Petronius one last favour.

NERO  
What's that supposed to mean?

PETRONIUS  
Bless the young couple.

NERO  
You're getting married? Now? What a  
great sense of style!

PETRONIUS

Vinicius wants to marry the Lygian  
hostage.

TIGELLINUS

Nero, she's one of them. We keep her  
at your disposal, Sire.

PETRONIUS

You keep her through your stupidity,  
Tigellinus.

Tigellinus's face turns black with anger.

Nero squints suspiciously.

NERO

One thing that worries me, Petronius,  
is that you take sides with the  
arsonists.

Now Nero looks at Tigellinus. Suddenly, his face lights up  
with the happiness of a child who suddenly discovered  
something very important and anticipated. He claps his hands  
in joy.

NERO

Than we shall organise a wedding the  
likes of which Rome has never seen.

SCENE 77 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

Circus. Brilliant sunlight. Nero is on the terrace. With him  
is Tigellinus, Poppea, and even Hasto, and all his servants  
and Freeman. The sand in the arena has turned to pools of mud  
from the rain.

Nero looks curiously through his monocle at the pale face of  
Vinicius.

Petronius and Vinicius are no longer the guests of Nero. They  
sit away from Nero, in an adjacent terrace. Behind them armed  
Praetorians hold the guard.

Nero is in a great mood. Shouts joyfully to Tigellinus,  
looking forward to the performance.

NERO

I admire you, Tigellinus. You're worse  
than me.

TIGELLINUS

I had lessons from the best master,  
Nero.

As always, a peal of trumpets marks the beginning of the  
spectacle.

Nero explodes with joy. He speaks very slowly and clearly over  
the trumpets reach the ears of Petronius.

NERO

I can do anything, but that's you who  
have managed to amaze Petronius  
himself. Look!

At this moment, the trumpets are silent. Petronius is pale  
and exhausted. He gets up slowly and reverses his head  
straight at Caesar. He answers Caesar in silence, as it falls  
just before the performance starts.

PETRONIUS

If their God really exists, what will  
become of those who are against Him?

SCENE 78 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

The gate on the right opens, revealing the dark abyss of a  
tunnel.

A moment later a huge athletic figure emerges. Ursus enters  
the arena. Struck almost blind by the rays of the sun, he  
squints and looks around. He is half naked and devoid of any  
weapon. He kneels down and bows his head as if in prayer. He  
stands motionless in that position. The crowd stares in  
silence.

The left gate opens and an enormous German bull runs out. It  
has a half naked girl tied to its back. With chapped lips, a  
pale Vinicius whispers

VINICIUS

God, I trust in you.

He closes his eyes and mouths a silent prayer.

VINICIUS

...though I walk through the valley of  
the shadow of death, I will fear no  
evil: for you are with me.

Ursus sees Lygia hanging limply across the bull's back. He

charges towards the bull and extends his hands.

URSUS  
(savage war cry) Ruuaaaaah!

The bull rears its powerful head, its horns ripping Ursus's left side. Blood pours from the wound.

URSUS  
(a warriors' shout of pain)  
Urraah!

Ursus falls to the ground as the crowd roars and the bull runs around the arena.

CROWDS  
Get him! Get him! Kill the giant!  
Bleed him like a bull!

The injured Ursus struggles to get up. He sizes up the beast and then lunges at it, grabbing it by the horns.

URSUS  
(warrior's savage grunt and cry)  
Uuurrrrrrrah!

The bull starts shaking its head. Ursus tightens his muscles around the bull's neck. The animal pushes back. Ursus plants his feet in the ground, halting the beast's advance and they remain momentarily frozen. A murmur of admiration rises from the crowd.

CROWDS  
Mrrr....

Ursus begins to twist the bulls head. Straining his muscles to their limit, he throws the beast to the ground. The animal's head, held in the giant's vise-like grip, begins to tilt downward. The beast lets out a roar as it begins to foam at the mouth.

A moment later, Ursus twists the bull's head into an unnatural position. Roaring, it falls to the sand, kicking with its hooves.

Ursus kneels over the fallen beast, takes hold of Lygia and lifts her up. The arena goes crazy.

CROWDS  
Giant! Giant! Giant! Giant!

Ursus holds Lygia's body up and stands still in the middle of the arena.

The air is filled with the sound of thousands shouting.

CROWDS

Giant! Giant! Giant! Giant!

SCENE 79 DAY\_EXT\_ROME\_CIRCUS

Imperial terrace. Nero looks down, squinting. Clearly upset, he throws down his monocle. He looks around. The crowd chants.

CROWD

Mercy! Mercy! Mercy! Free them! Free them! Free them! Mercy! Mercy! Free them! Free them! Mercy! Mercy! Set them free!

From all sides thumbs go up - a sign of mercy. The whole arena is a forest of raised thumbs.

Nero does not want to accept their decision. He is furious. He looks to Poppea, Faon, Hasto and the others for support. However, everyone is showing the thumbs up.

Nero directs his gaze at Tigellinus. The pressure of the chanting crowd is enormous.

CROWDS

Life! Life! Life! Life! Life! Life!  
Life! Life! They won fair and square!

Tigellinus gazes at the crowd. In the end, he too reluctantly raises his thumb.

The crowd once again starts shouting malevolently at Caesar.

CROWD

Arsonist! Murderer! Tyrant! Mother Killer! Despot! Down with tyranny! Kill the swine!

Nero still has yet to deliver his judgment. He keeps looking for at least one thumb turned down to support his decision.

He looks at Petronius. They stare at each other for a while. First, second, third look. And suddenly Petronius raises his hand and then holding this position, without taking his eyes off Nero, he changes direction and shows a thumbs down. It is

just as Petronius expected.

Nero despises his former friend, seeing in him the antithesis of everything he hates in his own life. He cannot bear the thought of acting like Petronius.

Caesar's thumb slowly drifts upwards. A look of relief passes over Petronius's face.

SCENE 80 DAY\_INT\_CIRCUS\_DARK CORRIDOR TO THE STREET VIEW

Ursus, Lygia's on hand, walks down the corridor from the arena towards the light coming into the Circus from the street.

The centurion Expeditus who leads them in the shadows, quickly opens the gate of the Circus and Ursus takes a step towards the light and freedom.

Vinicius stands in the sun's rays, on the other side of the bars. Ursus gives Vinicius the body of the unconscious Lygia.

A crowd of Romans gathered at the exit to watch the giant who defeated the bull. All hands stretch out to feel his biceps, powerful arms. Nobody is interested in Vinicius. Ursus is a real star.

Vinicius turns round and leaves among the crowd with Lygia in his hands.

SCENE 81 DAY\_INT\_CIRCUS\_DARK CORRIDOR TO THE ARENA VIEW

Centurion Expeditus is on his way back to the arena. He returns quickly. At the entrance of the corridor to the main arena he faces Caesar Nero himself entering the corridor with ferocity, followed by Tygellinus.

NERO

Where are they?

The Centurion understands that his end has come.

CENTURION

They left. Freed by the people of Rome.

The three of them standing now between the light and the shadow. Nero illuminated, Centurion in the dark.

Nero doesn't take his eyes off the Centurion, while he reaches his arm back to Tigellinus.

NERO

Sword!

Nero has an expression of pleasure and rage, looking at Expeditus.

NERO

What is your name, soldier?

CENTURION

Expeditus.

Nero celebrates every moment of it.

NERO

Are you ready?

Centurion Expeditus makes one single step, and kneels on the threshold of the exit from the corridor, on the sun side. He makes the sign of the cross.

CENTURION

Now.

Nero - seen against the light like a dark figure. He makes a powerful swing with the sword.

SCENE 82 EVENING\_EXT\_ROME\_PETRONIUS\_COLLONADE

Centurion followed by eight soldiers from his contubernium approaches the door of Petronius' house. They walk in menacing, even formation, strongly tapping sandals on a gravel alley.

PETRONIUS (OFF)

Do you think Vinicius and Lygia have reached Sicily by now?

EUNICE(OFF)

I am sure they have. They were carried on the wings of love.

Hasto pounds on the front door three times.

SCENE 83 EVENING\_INT\_ROME\_PETRONIUS PALACE\_LIBRARY +  
EXT\_ROME\_PANORAMA

When Hasto enters the morning light penetrates the library. On the stone floor the footsteps of his soldiers are reflected in an even echo.

Petronius leans on Eunice's arm. We can see them from the back, as they sit overlooking the garden, huddled in a beam of morning sunlight, staring into the distance, motionless.

PETRONIUS(OFF)

It's time we also took a journey.

EUNICE(OFF)

Finally, Master, I'll have you at my side, forever.

PETRONIUS(OFF)

It's a pity you didn't want to stay in Rome. In my will I left you all my material property.

EUNICE(OFF)

Where we're going now, we won't lack anything!

The centurion Hasto stands right at their back. Even he does not want to disturb this peace and waits a moment before speaking up.

HASTO

On Caesar's orders, Petronius, I hereby sentence you to death.

The camera zooms out from the centurion's face and continues as Petronius and Eunice enter the frame, motionless. Now we can see that they are marble sculpture, leaning against each other, their heads touching, devoid of life, but frozen in an eternal happiness.

#### SCENE 84 EXT\_ROME\_PANORAMA

The camera - drone, continues to leave the world below - through the open door to the garden, soon gets to Rome, and leaving the Eternal City - it reaches the Apian Road.

The cart pulled by a donkey carries Paul the Apostle along the Appian Way. It passes the place where Peter met Christ.

This time, all characters met in the film stands along the road. They say goodbye to God's diploma.

Paul standing upright, cheerful, although his hands are tied, his head held high.

Some of people are kneeling, others just standing, looking at Paul passing by. The camera passes them and soon from a

height we only see the hills surrounding Rome.

Camera - drone is getting higher and higher.

The picture becomes clouded blue with the eternal fog.

And the clouds, like on an airplane, are suddenly under instead of above.

SONG (OFF)

If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud.

If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not dishonor others, it is not self seeking,

If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs.

Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. Thus faith, hope and love - these three endure: but the greatest of these is love.

Love is patient, love is kind. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.