

Roman Virtues (Roman Consul to Noblewoman TG)

By FoxFaceStories

A Commission for Adam

Senator Fabius has achieved his dream; he has become one of the twin consuls of the Roman Republic and given command of an army that will push further into Gaul. But he has a secondary object: a desire to track down a supposed Gallic artefact that has the power to make one youthful again, so he can continue to influence Rome and stave off death. But finding this artefact may require more sacrifice than he imagines, and it's very hard to be a consul or even a senator in Rome when one is merely female . . .

Roman Virtues

There were great celebrations across Italy at the grand discovery. A new land, an entirely new world had been opened up by Columbus, and the letters from Vespucci had continued to spread tales of this new discovery far and wide. It was as if the burden of so many dark ages was finally lifting and a new age dawning upon the world. Everywhere there was hope in the new, at least among the nobler classes: new arts, new sculptures, new architectural mights, and new philosophies. A true renaissance had swept across the known civilised world, and for the first time, many were beginning to question the notion that this world was a vale of tears through which all must suffer, as the good church taught. In fact, many were beginning to question if the age-old teaching that Rome's greatness would never be surpassed had proved a falsehood.

Such was the question that Lady Fiora's granddaughter put to her one evening in the heart of Rome, relaxing in the comfort of her fine villa. The elderly woman was dressed in regal refinement, but seemed utterly content to relax in her chair by the fire and entertain the teenager, who was soon to be betrothed. She was a pretty thing, and would flourish well with her smarts.

"That is a good question, Giana," she said, responding to the sixteen year old. "Your tutors do you well. Indeed, we may perhaps be verging on a grander world."

"And what if it contains strange pagan magic?" the young girl asked excitedly.

Lady Fiora chuckled. "What do you know of magic?"

"Just that the pagans once practised it before the teachings of good Christ prevailed, grandmother. Rituals of sacrifice and darkness!"

There was excitement in her eyes, and Fiora chuckled again.

"Well, I cannot say much of this new world, but I can tell you a fascinating story of the old one. Come closer, little one, and I shall tell you the story of Senator Fabius, who fell prey

to pagan magic and was utterly changed. It is a story you are old enough to hear, if only barely, if you would like.”

The young woman was ecstatic to hear it, and so Lady Fiora began.

It was the age of the Late Republic. Pompey had swept through Syria and Palestine, returning with enough gold to swell the treasury twice-fold. Powerful generals were swaying the plebeians, and the populares and optimates fought on the streets, re-enacting the wars of Marius and Sulla writ small. A conniving, ambitious man named Gaius Julius Caesar had survived that latter general's purges, and was already angling for greater power.

And there was a man named Marius Fabius, born into a noble senatorial bloodline, who swam within this churning tide of politics and skullduggery. He had dedicated his life to politics, even throwing spectacular games while serving as aedile, and had risen up the ranks of the *cursus honorum* with a rapidity that impressed all except the zealously ethical of the day, such as dear Cicero. Of course, as any member of a patrician family would know, the times were ruthless, and even those who pledged to wipe out corruption and restore the honour and *auctoritas* of the republic would have to get their hands dirty . . . perhaps even *bloody*.

Such was the case for Fabius. He had been elected to one of the two consul positions for the year, an immense honour that he deemed himself worthy of. A man in his mid-fifties, he had short silver hair and a wide, stubborn face with thin lips. He had reached the pinnacle of his career in achieving this lofty goal, but as always, there was more that he wished to achieve. He had to make a grand mark, naturally. No consul could be famous without some major military victory, and the recent incursions by the Gauls had provided the best excuse to lead a small army up over the Alps and annihilate the threat.

I could do so much if I knew at twenty what I now know at fifty five, he thought as he readied his armour for the day. *The way to manipulate a crowd, to weird the bread and circuses to get them on your side. How to dispose of your enemies, and ensure the swiftest of rhetorical victories.*

He had so much on his agenda, and so little time to achieve it.

“Imperator,” his adjutant said. “Our scouts proclaim that there are no Gauls within this region. They may have moved on to settle in for the coming winter.”

He could hear the unspoken plea in his aid's voice: *‘We should do the same.’*

But Consul Fabius had more on his mind than mere battles, as important as they would be for his prestige. No, he had taken to heart his own worries of age and looming death. In his research he had discovered that there was, supposedly, a Gallic artefact

dedicated to their strange gods, one that had the power to make a man young and vigorous again, and to sire a great lineage from his loins. Many would dismiss this as mere rumours, but Fabius was a superstitious man, and ready to believe anything that would allow him to grasp for further power: and in this region he had closed in on the worship site of these barbarians, a secretive cave where the artefact was held.

"We shall press on regardless, Sejanus," he said. "But first I must take you and Adrianus, my two most loyal guards. There is a . . . place I would seek to explore, in case of vile ambush. It will also give me a chance to see the lay of the land myself. Come."

Sejanus looked a little confused by this, but then others were often confused by Fabius' ways, only to find him proved right in the end. He was a deft political operator, and a skilled skirmish planner.

"Of course, Imperator," the man replied.

Good, Fabius thought. I'm so very close. And if Sulla can take power of Rome with an army that loves him, imagine what I can do with an army that worships me? Such would be the case for any man who could prove himself immortal!

Ambition stirred in his mind. In many ways, this situation was his own making: it was he who had passed decrees that imposed unfair burden upon the northern Gauls, and he who had deliberately forced them to attack Roman settlements, killing many. But the pretext for war was necessary, and with the artefact in his possession, all would be justified.

At least, that was what he told himself.

The cave was dark and cold, with a chilling effect that felt utterly unnatural. Fabius advanced, torch in hand, and so followed Sejanus and Adrianus. The two couldn't be more alike: Sejanus was a cautious young man, making sure to check every shadow before advancing, while Adrianus was far more eager to prove himself, advancing quickly to please his general.

"See Sejanus? You should be more like your brother-in-arms, eager to display *virtus*."

This was the greatest value of any Roman: the virtue of confidence, action, decisiveness, manliness, and honour. They all stemmed from this notion of *virtus*, and Fabius himself was intent on embodying them all.

"Yes, Imperator," Sejanus replies. "I will advance. What exactly are we looking for, though? This cave looks abandoned?"

"Looks can be deceiving. Continue ahead."

Sejanus nodded, though Fabius could tell he was uncertain. Still, the man was loyal, and he followed around the bend of the underground passages. Fabius inspected some

markings on the nearby wall. It showed the artefact; a cup. A man drank it, and was surrounded by beautiful prostrate women, drawn crudely as they were.

I won't complain about that, either, he mused to himself. He had held off marrying again until he could have a youthful, fertile beauty of a bride.

Suddenly there was a horrible din, followed by a pair of wails. Fabius ran forward, twisting around the underground passages, and came upon a terrible sight. Adrianus was dead, his neck gouged and blood rushing from the wound. Sejanus was heavily injured, a sharpened blade in his side. Two druids lay dead by his hand in the small chamber.

"Soldier! What happened?"

Sejanus took a moment to recover. He was clearly in great pain.

"S-sir, they ambushed us. We need to leave and get more men. I need a physician."

But a glow from an adjacent passage caught Fabius' eye. He had read about the secrets of this artefact, and knew well one thing that might be required.

"Can you stand, Sejanus?"

"I - sir?"

"Stand, soldier. There is one last business to attend to. I doubt any druids are left alive bar these two."

"But sir-"

Fabius ushered him forward, and the pair entered a grander chamber than the last. It was not large, but there were golden jewels and silver trinkets, alongside far more ancient decorations of animal bones and talismans, the kind that other enemies of Rome once wore, such as the now-subjugated Samnites of hundreds of years past. But in the centre of the room, standing upon a display of stone with intricate runic carvings, was a simple cup. It was fashioned in an unusual way, with its own runic inscriptions, and straight away Fabius knew this was what he'd been looking for.

"This is it," he marvelled, inspecting the grooves in the ground, the ones that let all the way up the tall display to the cup itself.

"What is, sir?"

"The thing I've been looking for that will make me master of Rome and guider of its destiny."

Sejanus' brow was becoming matted with sweat, the torchlight showing his sickly face. The young man panted, trying to stem his bleeding.

"Imperator, I'm afraid I need medical attention. I can't protect you."

No, you can't, Fabius thought darkly. *You can do a lot more than that, though.*

He regarded his loyal guard. "You have been a true Roman, Sejanus," he said. Then, with one terrible motion, he drew his sharpened pugio from his belt and slit open the soldier's throat. The man gagged, clutching at it, but Fabius pushed him to the ground. His life's blood

poured out into the grooves of the stone, and then defied the gravity of Jupiter himself by rising up the display and pouring into the cup which began to shine with a crimson light.

"I'm sorry, my brother-in-arms," Fabius said as Sejanus expired. "But a sacrifice is necessary. I promise to embody the greatest of Roman virtues to atone for this action."

He took the cup, closing his eyes and imagining his best self, and drank of it.

At first, there was no sensation whatsoever. The drink was sweeter than the sweetest of grape wines, but beyond the taste there was little change.

But then there was a churning in his belly. Fabius grinned, placing the cup back down and breathing softly, waiting for the rejuvenation to take place. It occurred slowly, and that made it all the more wondrous: his aches and pains dissipated, his wrinkled skin smoothed over. His silver hair regained its dark brown colouring, and to his surprise began to grow forth all the way down to his shoulders, presumably some mere side effect.

"Yes," he gasped, "I can feel it. I feel young! I feel - weaker? What is this!?"

Indeed, his muscles were shrinking instead of growing, his skin losing its blemish and becoming soft, even womanly! The armour he wore was becoming far too heavy on his figure, and having lost much of his stoutness, he was also alarmed to find his height shrinking accordingly as well.

This isn't right. Did I perform the ritual incorrectly? There must be - nghh!

His waist pulled in, and his shoulders also. Even as he struggled to control his breath, it seemed to have an increasingly feminine tint to it, just as his hands, worn from battle and planting in his rich gardens, were now becoming small and fragile like a woman's.

"J-Jupiter, protect me! Mars, I am a warrior in service to you, do not *deny me the body that is mine by rights!*"

But now even his voice had changed, becoming the sweet voice of a young woman. This was followed a series of strange pressures upon his face, which massaged it, changed it, remade it until he could feel the delicate beauty of a woman upon him. He searched in vein to see how he looked, even as a pair of breasts began to grow from his softening chest, enlarging to become a ripe pair. He struggled with his armour, managing to unclasp it so that it fell off of his form, leaving on his warrior's tunic, which now had two obvious bumps upon it.

"Foul druid magic! I will not be unmanned! I will not be stuck as some woman with fine pair of t-UGHH!!"

His breasts expanded yet further, and his stomach gained a small pooch as a new womb settled into place. This was followed by a withdrawal of his member and testicles, leaving only a feminine gash between his legs upon a womanly mound. This last change made him whine in a high-pitched voice, writhing on the spot as his hips expanded quite generously. He found his reflection in a silver jug with a square-facing side, and was alarmed

at his own beauty: he looked like the perfect woman woman: healthy breasts, good hips for birthing, a nice thick middle, and gorgeous curly hair framing a face of submissive beauty.

No. No, no, no, ran the new woman's panicked thoughts. Fabius was meant to be a great hero! A general to rival Alexander the Great and Scipio Africanus! Instead, *she* looked to be perhaps only eighteen to twenty in age, prime for marriage and the speedy delivery of children to a noble senatorial house. A member of the weaker sex, destined to worship Juno and learn to weave upon the spool while her husband met with his clients. It had all gone terribly wrong!

How in Elysium will I explain this?

The travel back to Rome was among the most foreign experiences of Fabia's life, despite having lived and breathed the city for as long as the former man could remember. But all those other times coming back had been as a well-respected politician, a powerful pater familiars at the head of his wider household. Now, *she* was returning as a rescued noblewoman of a lesser branch of that house, having been stolen away by Gallic forces during the raids and now rescued by the sadly deceased Emperor Fabius, who had died saving her along with his two guards from the terrible druids. The man's body was not recovered, of course, but Fabia sang praises of them, and made sure to tell all the soldiers who found her at the cave's entrance, wearing little more than a soldier's tunic and some druidic clothing she'd found, that if they provided her food, comfort, and a safe return back to Rome, they would drown in riches from her family's coffers.

It had been a close run thing. The new female had seen how the soldiers looked at her with lust, and she was aware of just how weak her strength was now. Worst, there was no telling the truth: none would believe her, and would likely mistreat her further if they deemed that the gods had 'unmanned' her. So instead, she simply had to play the part of a woman as well as she could, avoid the gazes of the men around her, and become acquainted with her new role.

Which meant that Fabia had to display entire new Roman virtues, those proclaimed by Vesta and Juno. She had to be modest, to wear a covering stola, to not speak her opinion too loudly in public, and to thank the men kindly for returning her from her 'captivity.' All the while, she tried in vain to turn back from the privacy of her tent: she had taken the cup with her, trying to discern what she had done wrong, or if this was the point of the ritual all along.

Those female figures in the cave drawings, she thought to herself, lying in wake at night and trying to ignore the way her breasts shifted with each movement, how her manhood was no longer there. *Had I missed the obvious all along?* she wondered. *In my*

eagerness I have cast myself down from the height of a great consul into the infantile role of a mere woman!

In many ways, it was a miracle she arrived home safely at all, given how the gaze of so many young men were upon her. It was only because of the loyalty to the now 'deceased' Fabius and the promise of coin that she was spirited to Rome in good condition, and even then, it was a cloistered journey, with few comforts. When it came time for a hot bath to be finally drawn for her, it was only as they reached the Roman peninsula itself.

To luxuriate in a warm bath as a woman was an utterly alien experience for Fabia. She had become used to her wrinkled, stout body, her creaking joints, her powerful musculature even in older age. Now, everything was different. She was soft, slender and pretty, and she continued to touch her breasts and stomach; the latter for their prominence and surprising sensitivity, the latter because the slight pooch was no longer the result of expanding middle age, but rather the presence of a child making organ. She had been courageous many times in her long career as a politician and general, but it felt like another act of bravery altogether to lower her dainty fingers down between her legs and touch her new womanhood.

"Ahhh," she groaned slightly. She had been avoiding that area except for when she needed to urinate - a sitting down affair, now - and to clean. Already she had experienced one bleeding and hated every weak moment of it. It made her curse the nature of woman, so weak compared to the virtues of man, but in this moment she came up against another curse upon the female kind: the passions of the flesh. This was the trap of woman; they were slave to their passions as the ancient Greeks wrote, tempting men away from virtue. In many ways, she had stayed clear of women all her life, barring a brief marriage that secured no living heirs.

No, she moaned pleurably, teasing her folds and gliding her fingers into her entrance.

"Are you okay, my lady?" came a low voice, and she instantly retracted her hand. The army had secured some handmaidens for her from Ravenna, but it would do no good to have them know she had succumbed to the needs of this body, even if they simply thought of her as another woman.

I will find a way to turn back. I just need my villa, my notes, and most of all, time to be alone.

Fabia was furious. She had to bow and greet her new pater familias, the role she once held. It was her cousin Fabius, who held the same name but carried the cognomen Nero for his

connections to that old family. Everyone called him 'Lentil Brain' because of his low intelligence, informed by the crop his farms grew. And yet still, despite this idiot now inheriting Fabius' titles, *Fabia* had to simply accept it and act as this man was a figure of wisdom.

"Of course you are welcome to stay, my dear *Fabia*!" he announced magnanimously, like a patron accepting his morning clients. "My home is your home. I had no idea that our missing relation was alive - or even real at all! But your knowledge has been tested and your face clearly carries our blood."

Unfortunately, she thought to herself. She kept her eyes low, wearing her stola, acting the part of the deferential woman.

"And quite the beauty too! No doubt we can organise a strong match for you. I've already sunk some coin into combating foul rumours that these barbarian Gauls misused you. Sheer charlatan nonsense, right?"

She kept his gaze this time. "Never," she said, and with such clarity and certainty that even Lentil Brain was taken aback.

"Ah, well, if I didn't believe it already - which I did! - I certainly do now. We shall get you accustomed and then we can place you upon the loom. I have many tasks to attend to and finances to overlook - it's all a shambles for me-"

"If I may," *Fabia* said, playing her part perfectly, still deferential. "I may be of use there. Before I was taken, I helped my father with his records before he passed. He taught me everything I know of them, and I could-"

"Perhaps another time, when you have mastered the loom."

Fabia sagged, though she tried not to show it. Little point in pushing back on this, not when the man held all the power. Instead, she meekly accepted this and was brought before the loom to weave and spin like a good Roman noblewoman, bringing honour to the house while Lentil Brain no doubt sent messages and letters off inquiring about possible marriages to form with her . . . if he wasn't already thinking about taking her himself.

Shudder at the thought.

Fabia yearned to curse every god under the sun and Apollo who rode over it. It had been another month, another bleeding, another series of expectations heaped upon her as the cloistered woman of the villa. On the rare occasions she was able to go out, she was accompanied by her pater familias or by a respectable male family member, not that they knew this extended relation of the house even existed until recently. She had to wear her stola, and her prayers to the gods to be a man again fell upon death heavenly ears. Many

men looked upon her on the streets, and even in her modest clothing and carefully maintained hair, her incredible beauty was obvious, and it did not take much imagination to conclude that her body could have been a Greek sculpture of feminine perfection. The worst part was that she occasionally found herself looking at them, admiring their square jaws, their ambitious eyes, their own fit frames. It made her nipples go strangely sensitive, and she felt a warmth within her new womanhood that disgusted her. It seemed even the passions of the weaker sex had transferred to her, because lust for men was rising within her. Word arrived from the north that Caesar was conquering his way through Gaul, and it angered Fabia to be so close to the centre of Rome's power and yet so far removed from it.

Her study had proven fruitless. Lentil Brain Fabian, clearly uncaring or simply doting in a paternalistic fashion, had allowed her to look over her original notes and keep them in her room. She had smuggled the Gallic cup in, and done her best to figure out how to work its magic. But all she could tell was that a sacrifice would recreate the spell's power, not rework or change its effects. She wasn't in much of a position to try, anyway.

As it was, she had to get used to her new body and the roles expected of it. She continued to feel her lusts grow, and so when she bathed she gave in to her new desires.

Just this once, she thought to herself. *It's not as if I didn't take care of my arousals as a man. What difference to be a woman?*

The difference was everything. She couldn't go to a brothel, nor have a sense of power in the fantasies that entered her mind. And so instead she squeezed her breasts, played with her nipples, and rubbed her vulva. The new woman moaned, uncaring about the sounds she was making thanks to her own privacy. She could see in her mind's eye a handsome Adonis looming over her, muscled and fine, a true warrior for the Republic. A man of politics and power. A man she could support. The thought of his member entering her left her gasping as she probed deeper, furthering her own pleasure.

"Yes, yessss," she stammered. "In meeeeeee. Make me a w-woman! Mhmm!!"

And then it happened, the moment of climax. Her body shook, spilling water out of the bath in every direction as her legs kicked out. The bliss was unbelievable, far beyond anything she'd felt as a man, and in that moment she imagined being taken by a man instead.

"Ohhhh, Gods! By the G-Gods! Ohhhhhh . . ."

She had to cover her mouth to avoid making too much noise, and when her body died down from its excitement, a sense of shame flooded through her.

I will not be some lustful bitch, she vowed in the recesses of her mind. *I will not give in. I committed too many sacrifices to end up like this. I . . . I will not let what I did to Sejanus be in vain.*

But always there was that voice in the back of her head, pushed on by her own newly submissive nature, telling her that she did.

The loom was damn busywork, and she hated it from the start. It was surprisingly finicky even with her more slender fingers, and while she had members of staff and several talented female slaves to show her how to do it, it could only get her so far. Her anger was worsened by the fact that the head of the household had announced that he was organising a marriage for her. The best she could do was provide some input into it, but his decision would be final. It terrified her, and the loom's complexity only made her snarl.

"This is the most damnable thing," she complained on the fifth day of her time in Rome as a woman. "Cooped up in here, forced to weave. The forum is right out there! The game are right there! And I can see none."

"When you are wed, you may see the games again, my lady," said Camilla, a slave in her forties who was well-respected in the household and had long been considered family by Fabius. "And I would not make such comments around the men of the house. A woman's place is by the loom and within the kitchen, and you will be head of both when you are wed."

"It is powerless," Fabia complained, pointing and crossing her arms under her lovely breasts.

"My lady, I would counter that point. Man is meant to rule, yes, but a woman has many great powers that is her reserve alone. There is reason for Vesta and Juno, for Minerva and wise Diana. Our own household lares and genius have their female forms to aid home and hearth."

Fabis pouted again, and tried another motion on the loom. "I'd forgotten that we had you educated by the Greeks."

Camilla cocked her head. "My lady? I didn't realise we'd met before?"

"Only briefly. I was . . . a different person, then."

"Girlhood is something we all wish to return to as we age, but I promise you that the best is yet to come. The day when you have a husband to hold and impress, a household to organise, and children to raise. Man may be the master of the house, but woman is master of the *home*. This much I know with my own family and many others. And a woman's words can ply a man's ear quite deftly."

Fabia considered this later in the privacy of a warm bath.

"Power over men," she said aloud to herself. "A different kind of power. A senator's wife . . . a mother to sons who come to power, and daughters who marry into it."

This time, when she pleased herself, she ignored any shame, casting it to the winds. Instead, the ideals of Venus flowed through her as she imagined being a suitor for a fine man. She could let *him* be the one to serve and protect Rome, keeping her hands clean and avoiding the guilt that still marred her soul over what she had done. She could be a respected woman, one revered for her beauty and her wit as well as her loyalty to her husband. She could be loved for the children she produced, and somehow even *that* notion made her further aroused, the idea of swelling up with children from the strong seed of a man - of giving life rather than taking it. Wouldn't that be a far nobler act for Rome? Wouldn't that be a great power and responsibility in its own right? To guide the future?

She climaxed, once more kicking the waters from the bath, but no shame came to her as her heat resided. Fabia had a woman's passion now, and a woman's desires, and after three months of being a woman it was all too much to keep fighting. She wasn't becoming a man again, and so would have to resign herself to being a woman. It would mean learning that damned loom, but if she could harness a woman's talents, then perhaps a new kind of power indeed lay upon the horizon . . .

Fabia was dressed in the greatest finery, her makeup and jewellery modest yet beautiful, inspired by eastern fashions brought into Rome's heart by Pompey's great conquests. Her curled hair was gorgeous, and the outfit was just tight enough to suggest her figure without being scandalous. The former consul had fallen far, but even she couldn't deny how healthy and young she was, nor how oddly carefree her mind had become. A woman's lot was a difficult thing and with few opportunities, but it lacked the endless internecine rivalries of the world of men, the neverending danger of politics. As a great Roman once said, 'a man is a wolf to another man,' but in the world of the fairer sex, women supported one another, keeping safe and aiding young women with their knowledge. It was like a great burden had been lifted off of Fabia's shoulders, and it was how she was able to stand here now, in the halls of her ancestral home, and greet the man who was to be her husband.

"She is a true noblewoman of Rome," Fabius Nero boasted to the father of the groom-to-be. "Despite her captivity among the barbarian northerners, she nevertheless maintained all the values one would expect of a woman: dignity, duty, virginity, godliness, and devotion. Beyond her beauty - which is obvious - she possesses all the Roman virtues one could hope for in a woman."

The other man, whose name was Severius, regarded her, viewing her almost like a piece of meat. It irritated Fabia, but she had been on the other end of this kind of bargain

and knew how best to present herself. She kept a slight smile on her features and her gaze down, in order to show how submissive she was.

“She is indeed a beauty, and if what you say is true, would make a fine wife for my son. Come forth, my boy.”

In walked Fabia’s husband to be, and nervousness filled her heart. It was humiliating, in many ways. She was being sold off, a dowry organised, her physical appearance and loveliness debated, all things that diminished her male auctoritas. And yet part of her truly hoped to be worthy of a marriage and find a husband who could take her far, and her curiosity for his physical appearance was likewise great.

She was not disappointed.

The man who stepped into the room was young, perhaps even slightly younger than her new age of a mere nineteen. He was also deeply handsome, with a fine jawline and attractive grey eyes. He wore an expensive tunic befitting his senatorial station, while his father wore the more traditional toga. Before he could even open his mouth she could feel his attraction to her, his eyes roaming over her body. A small smile indicated his approval, and when she smiled back he actually blushed!

Perhaps I could manipulate him? Or push him in the directions of policy that are required for Rome. Or perhaps . . . simply benefit. Avoid the hassle and just . . . benefit.

She had no idea how she wanted her life to be, only that she wanted his man to be worthy of her, and she worthy of him, if there was to be any success in it.

“My son,” Severius announced. “Crispus. My son, this fine woman Fabia is to be your wife. I have organised it with her father, including matters of her dowry. You have time to talk to one another more deeply at a later date, but for now you may give your introductions.”

The young man strode forth and took her hand, placing a single kiss upon it. It made Fabia’s skin shiver; so different from her stoic aspect as an older man!

“I am blessed by the Gods to be betrothed to one so beautiful and brave,” he said, his voice gentle. “I have heard of your ordeal, Fabia. To have remained so pure and devoted and then to return to Rome unscathed, you must have been blessed by the Gods.”

She blushed a little. “I was indeed, betrothed Crispus,” she said softly, keeping her eyes slightly down, maintaining a demure appearing befitting a future wife.

Just not the right ones, she thought to herself, for they cursed me as well as blessed me. Sejanus, you would be laughing at my misfortune now, and deservedly so for what I did to you.

Crispus’ smile grew, even as he retreated by his father’s side, the two pater familias continuing to finalise their negotiations and chuckle between themselves at the clear attraction both had to one another

Though perhaps, she thought, trying not to be aroused by Crispus' presence, I can forge a new path ahead. Think of it as a restful retirement from public life, Fabius.

"And of course, between her hips and breasts," Fabius Nero said, "and the way these two keep looking at one another, I have no doubt she'll provide many grandchildren for you, my friend!"

Fabia blinked.

Or perhaps not restful at all.

Fabia cried out as she spread her legs as far as they would go, all the more eager to receive her new husband's seed. She had been married barely two hours ago, and after a great feasting she had been carried across the threshold into her new home by Crispus, her now-husband. He had not tripped, nor dropped her, and this was a good omen.

V-Venus bless me, this truly is a gift of the G-Gods. No, Goddesses!

This thought ran through her mind again and again as she thanked Vesta, Juno, Minerva, Victoria, and any other female goddess she could think of. She had been so very nervous leading up to her wedding night, her male pride fighting against her new feminine needs, and in the end the latter had won out. Crispus was simply too fine in his attire, his smile too ready, his own manly virtues obvious to all. And she was resplendent in her dress, her hair beautiful, her makeup and jewellery fine but not ostentatious: in every way she was the ideal Roman woman marrying the ideal Roman man. Senators were present to congratulate her new husband and her after the ceremony, and she recognised many of her old peers, even Cassius who whined on and on about Caesar overstepping his boundaries up in Gaul. And for the first time in so long, Fabia found that she simply didn't care. Oh, she took it in intelligently, didn't retreat to ignorance, but she simply didn't *have* to care anymore. She didn't need an opinion on everything, nor guard every word she said, wary of the cloak and dagger. Instead, she could hold her husband's arm, an inner glow within her, feeling perfectly at ease as if she truly were retired.

Only this was no retirement now. Her husband was on top of her, kissing and suckling her breasts, squeezing them in ways that made her moan like a whore in a brothel. It was a divine sound, and even better were his grunts of satisfaction as he ploughed her fertile fields. He had been the man atop the woman many times, especially on campaign, and each time the sensation of domination had been excellent. Now, Fabia was supplicant, following her husband's lead, letting him fuck her wet tunnel and kiss her tender neck.

"Mhmmm, you are m-magnificent, my love!" she gasped, especially as she squeezed her ass and used the momentum to ram further into her.

“And you are everything I could have hoped for, Fabia! I have never wanted a w-woman like you. I want you to be the mother of my children.”

Children!? Already!?

But the thought was not so alien as she had assumed it would be. This would be part of her new role now, and would carry its own struggles and dangers. The battlefield would be her birthing bed, the blood spilled not that of another - not of poor men like Sejanus - but her own in atonement for what she had done. She would create life, not destroy it, and the Gallic cup she had taken with her to this house would serve as a reminder.

“I - ohhhhh - I want that, husband!” she cried. “I want to bear all the children that you desire! I wish to be the perfect wife for you, and help in all your future successes!”

She gasped again, beyond words as he thrust harder and harder, his rigid member parting her walls further and making her nearly whimper. Her breasts bounced with the movement, her hair becoming slick with her excited sweat.

“You - ahh - truly are a woman of virtue, Fabia!” Crispus said, and then he too lost the power to speak as his body went rigid, and he thrust one final time. It brought him to climax and she gripped him with her thighs. What would have been the ultimate shame just months ago now held the ultimate excitement, and she too climaxed more greatly than ever before as his warm seed rushed into her, heading straight for her ready womb.

“Mhmmmmm!” she moaned. “Yesssss, husband.”

Make me a Roman woman for good, she thought.

“Grandmother, too much detail!” Giana complained.

Lady Fiora chuckled, slapping her cheek lightly in jest. “Oh, my apologies, granddaughter, an old mind like mine does get carried away sometimes. “But it is indeed a true story. Fabia never looked back from that day, and became the ideal Roman woman. Was it a curse or a blessing, who am I to say? But she certainly became blessed from that day: she gave her husband nine children, eight of which made it to adulthood. Eight! What luck! And while it was no doubt a strange experience for her to grow a child within her, I would hazard a guess that having so many healthy children denotes a happy household full of love, and the passion of her sex that she was willing to enjoy.”

“And her husband? Did she aid his success?”

Fiora smiled. “Oh yes, indeed. He became a powerful senator, one who would have been proscribed, or worse, in the coming civil wars, were it not for her helpful navigation. Indeed, he loved her so dearly that he commissioned a bust of her head, sculpted from the finest marble. It’s right over there.”

Giani's eyes widened in shock. "That one? She's beautiful! She looks a bit like mother, actually, only perhaps with your nose and hair."

Fiora smirked. "An amusing coincidence," she said.

At that moment a servant of hers entered, her faithful Antonio, a smart-dressed young man. As he did, Fiora took two bottles and emptied them into the cups before her, putting a hand up to indicate that the man give his message rather than interfere with her own serving.

"My Lady, your daughter has arrived to pick up her child."

His eyes flicked to Giani and the man smiled. Giani smiled back, which Fiora noticed.

"Ah, how sad, I had so many other tales, Giani, but I hope this one has at least impart some knowledge to you." She winked conspiratorially to her granddaughter. "Magic is indeed real, and it can teach a man a valuable lesson, the same one all young betrothed women such as yourself should know: a proper lady, Roman or not, should know how to guide her man. The other sex calls us fallen, temptresses, creatures of too much flesh and passion. But in the end, they desire us, and that desire can always be used. Never forget that, nor the joys womanhood can bring. I certainly haven't."

"I shan't, grandmother!"

Giani bowed and embraced her grandmother, kissing her before leaving. For a moment, Fiora sat down at the fire, watching it glow brighter as Antonio tended to it.

"Sit down, my boy," she said. She indicated the table. "Have a drink."

"My lady-"

"Humour an old woman."

Antonio did so. He truly was a handsome thing, she thought. If she were younger and prettier . . .

"That was just a tale, wasn't it, my lady? The cup and the magic and all that?"

He took a drink, clearly nervous at even asking the question.

"Oh, magic is real alright," Fiora said, looking at the fire. She stood, cracking her aching old back, and pulled down a painting, much to the other man's surprise. He drank a little more as she retrieved an ancient looking wooden cup, inscribed with strange runes on its side, from the wall.

"This is the cup I spoke of right here," Fiora said, smiling as the man took another sip.

"R-really? How did you get it? Was it handed down?"

"Oh, young man; I never lost it! All these centuries, from Caesar's rise to Rome's fall, from then all the way until the tragic fall of Constantinople, right to the forging of this very fire that warms us now, I have enjoyed its fruits."

The man shook a little, his trembling hand putting down the cup. He tried to steady it, but he was shaking terribly.

“But that would make you-”

“Quite old indeed, though I rarely appear it. You see, I enjoyed the fruits of being a woman too much, perhaps. When I grew of age and my husband died, a terrible man tried to take advantage of me. I still possessed some of the decisiveness of being a man, and I struck him down. His blood spilled all the way to the cup, and it began to glow again. When I drank from that tempting artefact, I found myself young Fabia again, as beautiful as ever, my health returned to me as surely as my former age.

“I managed to pass myself off, once again, as a member of my house, and from that day I have lived many lives, steeped in pleasure and happy submission, springing forth great lineages from my belly, and helping steer the careers of great men. And I shall do so again, with your help.”

Antonio was shaking greatly now, his limbs outside his control. “I - I don’t understand. What’s happening to me?”

Fiora stood, and grabbed the carving knife from the table in the centre of the room.

“Just a little poison to keep your body still while I perform the sacrifice.”

“N-no! You c-can’t!”

“Oh, Antonio,” she said, her rasp now malicious. “Call me a hag, call me a witch. Say I learned the wrong lessons from poor Sejanus’ death, but from that day I picked my targets much more carefully, as I do now. Did you think I wouldn’t find out why Adriana had to leave my service? Or that I wouldn’t catch the rumours of the pain you inflicted on those poor girls at the brothels? Or your designs upon my granddaughter Giani? How long until you hurt her too? I imagine you were intending to do so soon, then flee with the silver that’s been missing lately.”

Antonio gulped, unable to speak. He was trying to deny it, but his guilt was obvious in his eyes.

“As I thought,” she said, positioning herself behind him. “I’m sorry there couldn’t be another way, but think of this as another way to atone. If it’s any consolation, Antonio, the last thing you’re going to see will be a very, very beautiful woman, the very embodiment of Roman - sorry, Italian virtue. A pity her passions will be elsewhere.”

And with that, she pulled the knife against his throat.

The cup glowed, a body fell, and an old woman was reborn: new, young, gorgeous, and ready to make the world hers all over again.

How much better is the life of a woman? she thought to herself.

The End