

## Empress Octavia

his sole thought, which floated like a radiant divinity before his soul.

"You must know, lord," said the soldier, when both stepped out into the moonlit night, "you must know that Octavia is on the opposite shore of the Gulf. A little boat lies hidden among the bushes yonder on the beach; I will row you across as fast as possible. You cannot stay after sunrise."

"Very well," replied Metellus, wholly absorbed in his own thoughts, walking on at the centurion's side. He scarcely noticed how they went to the shore, that the soldier unfastened the boat, or that another armed man, emerging from the bushes, sprang into the skiff as it pushed off; he might have been wounded at this moment without perceiving it; his mind seemed dazed by the anticipation of the meeting.

"Everything is going well, Julius," said the second soldier, laughing spitefully as he gave the centurion a poke in the ribs.

"The Cæsar can rely upon me," said the other; "whatever I undertake succeeds; but this cursed oar is broken. Push the boat off against yonder rock, that we may get afloat."

The man obeyed the command, replying: "Only let us not be over-hasty. He who is