

Empress Octavia

"Take care? He thinks it was an accident," cried the rower, laughing. "Zeus help me! He is hard of hearing."

"What do you mean? What do you want of me?" stammered the deceived youth, and now, as they tried by force to wrench his fingers from the boat, a light dawned upon his brain.

"So that is your plan; you want to kill me?" he cried, through his set teeth, struggling desperately with the centurion, who was vainly trying to force him out of the boat.

"I am betrayed," rang far over the calm surface of the water; "help, help!"

"Stop his mouth," panted the centurion; "help me throw him overboard."

The other soldier seized the victim's feet. Metellus struck wildly around him; he saw, as if through a blood-red veil, the surface of the water glimmering so calmly, so deceitfully before him; the tension of his nerves was so great that the shore seemed whirling before him, the moon danced before his eyes; he felt the approach of the cold lonely death in the still water. And the love of life awoke with terrible, passionate power! Mere breathing now appeared to him so sweet, all the sorrows