

## LUCUS FERONIAE

### SCENE 1

- OUTDOOR, in the Forum

Farmer

Hello, I come from Capena, I've been traveling all day. Could you show me where Vireius's workshop is?

Woman

That way. Then you arrive at the cross-roads, and turn right along the side of the basilica. You came from Via Capenate?

Farmer

Yes, I come from there, like my father and grandfather, and all my ancestors. Along the hills, full of farms and olive groves.

### SCENE 2

- OUTDOOR, in the Forum, under the podium

Children

Three! Seven! Four! Five! What's your name? Demitto? Dinietto? Come on!!

Demetrio

What? Yes, they're Greek...you asked me a thousand times...but why are you so curious?...your city has always welcomed everyone! Already in early times it was a great international emporium, a meeting point of many peoples: the Etruscans, Capenates, Falisci, Sabines and Latins... There have never been any walls, nor fear or hatred of foreigners.

....A long time ago...men from my land, Greece, traded with the Etruscans, who lived here long before the Romans arrived.

- OUTDOOR, in the Forum, on the right of the podium

Cesia

I know who you are. You are Feronia. My grandmother always told me about you, from when she was a child.

Feronia

How clever you are! You know, here only you can see me. We all live when someone remembers us, and now, nobody remembers me any more...(more thoughtful).

Here, once upon a time, everyone worshipped me. There was a sanctuary, and a sacred grove dedicated to me, I was the Lady of the Sabines. People organized big parties, and people came from all the valleys.

Cesia

And why don't they remember you anymore?

Feronia

They have forgotten me, to honour this new Goddess, Salus Frugifera (with contempo=

Cesia

But is she like you?

Feronia

Like me? Not really little one... Yes, she has the same characteristics as me: she protects the harvest, fertility, health... she's young. She doesn't know the long history of these peoples, the ancient legends of the woods and the waters, the faith of the freed slaves, who walked miles and miles in pilgrimage. Where your feet have trodden, have passed thousands of pilgrims to bring me a prayer, a sacrifice, a gift. The land around here resounds with their ancient songs, which today no-one understands anymore, because men have changed so much with respect to one hundred years ago.

SCENE 3

- INDOOR, in the basilica, entrance of the Augusteum

Man 1

Have you seen the marvelous Augusteum that we are setting up here in the basilica? The statue of Agrippa is just the first. There will be the whole family of Augusto here. Look at his refined features! Now the Roman sculptures imitate only the ancient artists of your land, Demetrius.

Man 2

Sure....but Agrippa! I don't understand what he did for...

Demetrio

It's true. Agrippa doesn't have the merit of...

Man 1

Demetrius, you come from Greece, and you are an educated man. But in this city we don't only give honour to intellectuals. There are important political and military figures, such as Lucio Volusio Saturnino or Cneo Egnazio...

Man 2

What are you saying? They're all opportunists. The only one who was truly great was the Divine Augustus, founder of the colony of Lucus, Emperor of the Romans

Man 1

And Pontifex Maximus

Man 2

Yes, only he deserved to be venerated. As a God.

SCENE 4

- INTERNO in Vireius' shop

Farmer

Vireius, I've finally found you! I couldn't find the way anymore! I left the cart at the back of the shop, to unload the goods...

Vireius

Well look who it is! Welcome! It's been such a long time...the city has changed, I know. They've put up a lot of new buildings. Life is hectic here, my friend! Have you brought me fruit as usual?

Farmer

The best! And I only bring it to Lucus. Here, luckily there are still good craftsmen's shops like this one. I've also got amphorae of olive oil and...

Vireius

Very good, but now get some rest, and we'll speak later. Stay for lunch with us, my wife will be happy to see you again, she's cooking a really tasty barley soup above (indicating the upper floor): can you smell the fragrance?

[the farmer winks yes with his head]

Ah, how lovely!

[He sees the user and he speaks to him looking at the camera]:

Those olives are the best of all...but...you've the face of a foreigner, you...a new face... Foreigners are always welcome here...above all if they have money and appreciate quality...make yourself at home...sit down, we'll prepare you a dish as it should be prepared...its all first choice: the wine and the food come from plantations around here, which are very fertile because the land is flat and close to the river. The land what has been divided into lots (centurie) and given to settlers in the time of Augustus. And...don't worry about the price, we'll come to a good agreement.

But...what are you listening to? What are you looking at?

Ah, that is Cesia! She's a very bright child, but she's too fanciful, she tells a lot of stories...

- OUTDOOR, under the portico, in front of Vireius' shop

Cesia

Feronia...are you still here?

FERONIA

Of course I am! Even if no one can see me any more. And yet once they built a beautiful temple for me!

Over there, beyond that wall which closes the Forum, you see? There's no portico, like on this side, because once there was my temple there. It was sacked by Hannibal. But they rebuilt it, and around it, the people built houses and roads. And there were many children like you who running around. Then when Augustus founded the colony there...Colonia Iulia Felix Lucoferoniensium, I was replaced by Salus Frugifera, and...

CESIA

Ugh! You're always talking about the past!

FERONIA

You're right, little one! For this reason I'll give you a present, and I'll talk to you about the future. Just for today, you'll see what this place will be like in 100 years time!

Here...this is how it will look in 100 years, under Emperor Traiano. It is my last gift, before being forgotten forever. I salute you: take care of yourself!

SCENE 5

- INDOOR, Baths in the Forum, Calidarium

Magistrato Nasidio

Lucius Ottavius! So, you're back from your trip to Rome!

Lucio Ottavio

Magistrate Nasidius! Yes, I came back yesterday, and I had to rearrange all the acts...I just need to relax a bit. These spas are wonderful. No comparison with those on the Via Capenate...

MAGISTRATO NASIDIO

Absolutely no comparison. And then here we're much nearer to the Aula dei Duoviri (The Mayor's

office)...I can get there in just a few minutes. Eh, you see that Emperor Trajan has given new impetus to the building program. This is one of the best decisions that...

LUCIO OTTAVIO

Sshhh!...that's Caius Bruttius...his was one of the shops that they demolished to build the Baths...

MAGISTRATO NASIDIO

And what was he hoping for? They did the right thing. Knocking down a few shops to build a large new Spa complex...

LUCIO OTTAVIO

He didn't take it well. He was hoping that his friendship with the Volusii Saturnini family would have let him save the shop.

MAGISTRATO NASIDIO

Not a hope! The Volussi are still the most influential noble family, but they're not able to do that for him. Maybe fifty or one hundred years ago, when they were actually friends of Emperor Augustus...but today they certainly don't have the power it needs to guarantee certain decisions.

*The end*