

Cicero: In Catilinam 4

I

1. I see, members of the senate, that the faces and eyes of all of you are turned on me; I see that you are not only anxious concerning the danger to yourselves and the republic, but also, if those things were averted, you are anxious about the danger to myself. Your goodwill towards me is pleasant in my evils and assuring in grief, but, by the immortal gods, put it aside and having forgotten my safety, think about yourselves and your children. If the condition of consulship has been given to me, that I should suffer all afflictions, all grief, and all tortures, I bear them not only bravely, but even cheerfully, provided that by my works the authority and security is provided for yourselves and the people of Rome.
2. I am that consul, members of the senate, to whom neither the Forum, in which all justice is contained, neither the Campus Martius, consecrated by the auspices of consuls, nor the Senate, the utmost help for all nations, nor my house, commonly a refuge, nor my bed, having been given for quietness, nor finally this chair of honour, has ever been empty from danger of death or plots. I have quietened many things, I have suffered many things, I have yielded to many things, I have cured many things by a certain grief of mine, in your fear. Now, if the immortal gods wanted that this should be the outcome of my consulship, that I should tear you and the people of Rome from away from the most miserable death, your wives and your children and the Vestal Virgins away from the most savage persecution, the temples and shrines and all of this most beautiful fatherland of ours away from the most ruinous flames, and all of Italy away from war and ravage, then whatever is thrown at me alone by fortune, let it be undergone. For if Publius Lentulus having been persuaded by the soothsayers thought that his own name would be destined for the destruction of the republic, why should I not rejoice that my consulship has emerged almost destined for the safety of the people of Rome?

II

3. Wherefore, members of the senate, have regard for yourselves, provide for your fatherland, preserve yourselves, your wives, and your children and possessions, defend the name and the safety of the people of Rome. Cease to spare me and to think about me. For I ought to hope first, that all the gods, who are in charge of this city, will return the thanks even as I deserve. Then, if something were to happen (to me), I will die with a calm and prepared mind. For neither to the brave man can a disgraceful death happen, nor to the consul is it untimely, nor a wretched death to the wise man. Yet I am not a man of such hardness, who is not moved by the grief of my dearest and most loved brother, who is present, and the tears of all these people, by whom you see me surrounded. Frequently my terrified wife calls my mind back to my house, and my daughter, cast down with fear, and my dear little son, whom it seems to me that the state has embraced as if a hostage of my consulship, and he, who waiting on the outcome of this day stands in my sight, my son-in-law. I am moved by all these things, but only so that I must wish, all (of us) with you could enjoy safety, even if a certain force overpowers me, rather, than both them and ourselves perish by the one ruin of the state.

4. Wherefore, members of the senate, devote yourselves to the security of the state, look around at all the storms, which threaten it, unless you have taken care of them. Tiberius Gracchus is not being led to a certain decision or to the judgment of your severity, because he wanted to become the tribune of the people again, nor Gaius Gracchus, because he tried to incite the agrarian party, nor Lucius Saturninus, because he killed Gaius Memmius: these men are held, who remained for the burning of the city, for the slaughter of all of you, in order to receive Catiline at Rome; their letters, seals and handwritings are held, and in short confessions of every one: the Allobroges are incited, the class of slaves are incited, Catiline has been summoned—this is the plan having been entered into, so that with all having been killed no one will remain in order to even mourn the name of the Roman people or to lament the misfortune of such an empire.

III

5. Witnesses have reported all these things, the criminals have confessed, you have already judged (these men) with many judgments; because first you have given thanks to me with unparalleled words, and you decreed that by my courage and diligence the plot of these corrupt men has been revealed, then because you compelled Publius Lentulus to resign the office of the praetorship, secondly because you voted that him and the others, upon whom you had pronounced judgment, should be taken into custody, and above all because you decreed a thanksgiving in my name, an honour which has been rendered to no one wearing the toga before me. Finally yesterday you gave most distinguished booty to the envoys of the Allobroges and Titus Volturcius. All these things are of the kind, that these men, who, by name, have been given into custody, seem without any doubt, to have been condemned by you.

6. But I have undertaken to refer it to you, members of the senate, as if undecided, and concerning what has been done, what you judged, and concerning the penalty, what you will vote. I will speak first (only) those things, which are of the consuls. I began to see a long time ago, that a great frenzy abided in the republic and certain new evils were being mixed and stirred up, but I thought that this so great, so deadly plot, never was held by citizens. Now whatever it is, to wherever your minds and opinions incline, you must decide before it is night. You see, how great a crime has been reported to you. If you think that few people are associated with this, you are very wrong. This evil has spread wider than you think. It has spread not only through Italy, but also it has crossed the Alps and creeping obscurely it has occupied many provinces already. In no way can it be oppressed by delay and procrastination. You must punish quickly, by whatever manner is pleasing.

IV

7. I see that up to now there have been two opinions, one of Decimus Silanus, who votes that they, who have tried to destroy these things, must be punished with death, the other, of Gaius Caesar, who removes the penalty of death, but embraces all the afflictions of the other punishments. Each in accordance with their own dignity and in accordance with the multitude resorts to the utmost severity. One [Silanus] does not think, that they who have tried to take all our lives, to destroy the empire, to extinguish the name of the people of Rome, ought to enjoy a moment of time in life and this common air, and he recalls that this kind of punishment has often been applied on dishonest citizens in this republic. The other [Caesar] understands that death has been chosen by the immortal gods not for the cause of punishment, but as either a necessity of nature or a relief from labour or misery. And so wise men are never unwilling to encounter it, but often brave men encounter it even willingly. Indeed chains and these for a lifetime, were certainly devised as the unparalleled penalty for nefarious crimes. It is ordered that they be distributed in the municipalities. This proposal seems to have unfairness, if you wish to order it, or difficulty, if you wish to ask it: However let it be decreed, if is pleasing.
8. For I will undertake it, and, as I hope, will find those, who, do not think to refuse this, which you will be deciding for cause of the safety of all, is (of) consistent with their own dignity. He adds a severe penalty to the municipalities, if any of these men break their chains: he places dreadful guards around, and guards deserving with the crime of the evil men. He ordains any of them, who he condemns, is not able to alleviate the penalty either through the senate or through the people: he even tears away their hope, hope which alone is accustomed to console men in misery. He orders moreover that their goods be confiscated. He leaves their life alone for the nefarious people, which if it had been seized, he would have taken away alone many grieves together of mind and body and all the penalties of evil. And so in order that some fear might be established for criminals in life, those in antiquity wanted that certain penalties of this kind had been arranged, for the wicked, among those in Hell, because one may see they began to understand that, with these things removed, death itself was not requiring to be feared.

9. Now, members of the senate, I see what is to my interest. If you will follow the opinion of Gaius Caesar, since he has followed that way in the republic, which is considered [*lit.* held to be] democratic, perhaps the popular attacks will be less [requiring] to be feared by me, with this man the author and advocate of this proposition; but if you adopt the other proposal, I rather think more [of] troubles will be occasioned for me. However, let the advantage of the republic defeat the reasons of my danger. For we have from Caesar, as his own dignity and the character of his ancestors used to demand, a proposal as a pledge of long-lasting goodwill towards the republic; it is understood, what is different between the fickleness of demagogues and a mind truly democratic, providing for the safety of the people.
10. I see that of those men, who want themselves to be held as democrats, several are absent, lest plainly they vote [*lit.* bear an opinion] about the life of Roman citizens. He three days ago gave over Roman citizens into custody and decreed (for me) a supplication on my behalf, and yesterday voted the greatest rewards for the witnesses. Now this is doubtful to no one, what he, who voted for imprisonment for the criminal, congratulation to the investigator, and rewards to the witnesses, thinks of the whole matter, and the case. But indeed Gaius Caesar understands, that the Sempronian law was passed concerning Roman citizens, but he whoever is an enemy of the republic, can by no means be a citizen; and in fact that the proposer of the Sempronian law himself paid the penalty to the state without command of the people. The same man does not think that Lentulus, a spendthrift and briber, when so cruelly, so bitterly he had thought of disaster for the Roman people, and the destruction of this city, is still able to be addressed as democratic. And so this most gentle and merciful man does not hesitate to send Publius Lentulus to eternal darkness and chains, and ordains in posterity, that no one will be able to boast by lightening his punishment or hereafter democratic in the ruin of the Roman people. He even adds the confiscation of their goods, so that to the torment of the minds and bodies even poverty and beggary will accompany.

VI

- 11 Wherefore if on the one hand you will have decided on this opinion, you will have given to me a companion for my meeting dear and pleasant to the people, or on the other hand if you have preferred to follow the opinion of Silanus, I will easily cleanse myself and you from the censure of cruelty by the Roman people, and I will prevail that it has been much lighter. Although, members of the senate, what cruelty can there be in the heinousness of such crimes which must be punished? For I judge from my own feeling. For thus may it be permitted to me to enjoy a safe republic with you, as I, because I am in this case much more severe, am not moved by the savageness of the mind (for who is gentler than I?) but rather by a certain remarkable humanity and compassion. For I seem to myself to see this city, the light of the whole world, and citadel of all races, suddenly falling in one burning; I perceive in my mind wretched men in my buried fatherland and unburied heaps of citizens; the furious sight of Cethegus moves before my eyes and revels in your slaughter.
12. When indeed I have placed Lentulus reigning as a king before me, just as he himself confessed that he hoped to be from the fates, that his Gabinius is arrayed in purple, when Catiline has come with his army, then I shudder at the lamentation of mothers in respect to their families, the flight of virgins and boys and the harassing of the Vestal virgins, and because these things seem to me exceedingly miserable and pitiable, on that account I will present myself severe and forcible in the case of those, who wanted to bring about these things. For I ask, if any father of a family, with his children having been killed by a slave, with his wife having been slaughtered, his house having been burned, were not to inflict upon the slave as severe as possible a penalty, whether he seems to be merciful and lenient or the most inhuman and cruel? Indeed to me (he would seem) unmannerly and hard-hearted, he who did not soothe his own pain by the pain and torture on the criminal. And so we in the case of these men, who wanted to slaughter us, our wives, and our children, who attempted to destroy the (individual) houses of each one of us, and this universal household of the republic, who did this, in order to set up the race of the Allobroges on the remains of this city and on the ash of the burned out empire, if we will have been most severe, we shall be considered compassionate; but if we wanted to be more indulgent, we must endure the reputation of the greatest cruelty in the case of the destruction of the fatherland and the citizens.
13. Unless indeed to anyone, Lucius Caesar, the most brave man and most fond of the republic, has seemed more cruel on the day before yesterday, when he said that the husband of his sister, a most excellent woman, being present and hearing, should be deprived of his life, when he said that his own grandfather, by order of the consul, had been killed, and his son, a youth, having been sent as an envoy by his father, was put to death in prison. What deed did they do like those of the conspirators [*lit.* of whom what deed was like those]? What plan was begun for the purpose of destroying the republic? The inclination for [*lit.* of] bribery at that time was situated in the republic, and a certain strife of the factions. And at that time the grandfather of this Lentulus, a most distinguished man, pursued Gracchus armed. He even received at that time a serious wound, so that nothing might be diminished from the welfare of the republic; this man [Lentulus] summons the Gauls for the purpose of overthrowing the foundations of republic, he incites the class of slaves, he calls for Catiline, he assigns to Cethegus us for slaughter and the other citizens to Gabinius for killing, the city to Cassius for burning, and the whole of Italy to Catiline for ravage and plunder. I suppose that you fear, lest you seem in this crime, so monstrous and heinous, to have determined something much to severe: But we must fear much

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more, that which we do not seem to have been cruel against the fatherland by the relaxing of punishment, than we do not seem to have been too severe against the most bitter enemies by the severity of punishment.

VII

- 14 But, members of the senate, I cannot conceal these things, which I hear. For voices are thrown about, which reach my ears, of those men who seem to fear, that I do not have enough of a guard to carry out those things which you have decreed on this day. Everything is foreseen, and prepared, and arranged, members of the senate, not only by my utmost care and diligence, but also even more by the greater inclination of the Roman people to retain its supreme authority and to preserve their common fortunes. All men of all ranks are present, of all races, in short of all ages; the forum is full, the temples around the forum are full, all the entrances to this temple and this place are full. For this cause is the only cause that has been found after the establishment of the city, in which all men were of the one and same opinion, except for those, who, when they saw that they must die, wanted to perish with everyone rather than by themselves.
- 15 These men I leave out and willingly set apart; nor do I think that they should be classed in the number of dishonest citizens, but in the number of the most bitter enemy. But indeed the others, immortal gods, in what great numbers, with what zeal, with what courage do they consent for the common safety and dignity! Why should I here mention the Roman *equites*? Who yielded you to such supremacy of rank and council, in order that they may content with you concerning their love for the republic; whom after [*lit.* from] the dissension of many years with [*lit.* of] this order, having been recalled to alliance and unity join with you this day and in this cause. If we hold forever in the republic the [*lit.* which] union, having been confirmed in my consulship, I confirm to you that no civil and domestic evil can hereafter come to any part of the republic. With equal zeal for the republic I see that the treasury tribunes, the bravest men, have come together; I see also all the clerks, whom by chance this day had been brought together in great number to the treasury, have turned away from the expectation of a lot [ie. the allotment of posts] to the common safety.
- 16 All the multitude of the free-born men are present, even those with the slenderest means. For who is there to whom these temples, the view of the city, the possession of liberty, finally this light itself and common soil, is not only dear, but also sweet and delightful?

VIII

- 16 It is worthwhile, members of the senate, to recognise the zeal of the freedmen, who, having by their own virtue attained the fortune of this state, they consider this to be truly their own fatherland, which some have been born here, and born in the highest place, have considered not to be their own fatherland, but a city of the enemy. But why do I mention these men and these orders, whom private fortunes, whom the commonwealth, whom finally that liberty, that which is the sweetest, has aroused to defend the safety of their fatherland? No one is (such) a slave, if he is [*lit.* who is] in a tolerable condition of servitude, that he does not shudder at the audacity of (these) citizens, that he does not desire that these things may stand, that he does not contribute as much of goodwill as he dares and as much (of goodwill) as he is able, to the common safety.
- 17 Wherefore, if this, which has been heard, by chance moves any of you, that a certain pimp of Lentulus prowls around the shops, hoping that [*lit.* that he hopes] by a bribe the minds of the unlearned and the inexperienced are able to be seduced, this indeed has been begun and attempted, but none have been found either so miserable in fortune or (so) corrupt in inclination, so that they do not wish that very place of his work-stool and of his toil, and of his daily business, so that they do not wish his couch and his cosy bed, so that in short they do not wish the quiet course of his life to be safe. By far [*lit.* by much] indeed the greatest of them, who are in the shops, nay rather— for this rather should be said— this entire class is most fond of peace. For their entire means, their entire toil and business is sustained by the throng of citizens, and is nourished by peace. If their [*lit.* of whom, if] business is accustomed to be diminished, with the shops having been closed, what, pray, would have happened, with them having been burned?

IX

- 18 Since these things are so, members of the senate, the guards of the Roman people do not fail. You see to it that you do not seem to fail the Roman people. You have a consul, having been kept back from many dangers and plots, and from the jaws [*lit.* middle] of death not for his own life, but for your safety. All ranks are in agreement in mind, in will, and in voice, to save the republic; the common fatherland, having been besieged by the torches and weapons of an impious plot, stretches out her hands to you humbly, to you she commends herself, to you the lives [*lit.* life] of all the citizens, to you the citadel and the Capitol, to you the altars of the household gods, to you that everlasting fire of Vesta, to you all the temples and shrines of the gods, to you the walls and the buildings of the city. Moreover it is requiring to be judged this day by you concerning your lives, concerning the lives [*lit.* life] of your wives and children, concerning the fortunes of all men, concerning your dwelling-places, concerning your hearths.
- 19 You have a leader mindful of you, forgetful of himself, an opportunity which [*lit.* which opportunity] is not always given; you have all ranks, all men, the whole Roman people, a thing which in a political matter [*lit.* the civil cause] we see on this day for the first time, thinking one and the same thing. Consider, (how) one night almost destroyed the empire founded with so many labours, our liberty established with so much courage, our fortunes increased and amplified by the kindness of the gods. It is requiring to be taken care by the citizens on this day, that it never hereafter not only is able to be fulfilled, but is not even able to be thought about. And I have spoken these words, not in order to stir you up, you who almost outrun my in my zeal, but in order that my voice, which ought to be the chief voice in the republic, may seem to have discharged the duty in the office of a consul.

X

- 20 Now, before I return to ask your opinion, I shall say a few words concerning myself. I see, that as great as the band of conspirators is, which you see is very great, so great is the multitude of enemies, that I have incurred, but I judge that they are base and infirm and cast down. If, however with that band having been aroused by the criminal fury [*lit.* fury and wickedness] of someone, at any time it will have more power than your dignity and that of the republic, however, it shall never make me sorry, members of the senate, of my actions and of my advice. For death indeed, which perhaps they threaten me with, is prepared for all; such glory is life, as much as you have honoured me by your decrees, no one has attained; for to others you have decreed congratulation, with things having been done well, but to me alone you have decreed congratulation for the republic having been preserved.
- 21 Let the great [*lit.* that] Scipio be famous, by whose [*lit.* of whom by] counsel and courage Hannibal was forced to return into Africa and depart from Italy. Let the other Africanus be extolled with exceeding praise, he who destroyed two cities most hostile to this empire, Carthage and Numantia; Let the great Paulus be considered a pre-eminent man, whose triumphal car was honoured by Perses, formerly the most powerful and most noble king. Let Marius be held in [*lit.* be with] eternal honour, who twice liberated Italy from siege and from fear of slavery. Let Pompey be preferred to them all, whose deeds waged and virtues are contained by the same regions and limits as the course of the sun [*lit.* whose deeds and virtues are contained by the same regions and boundaries, by which the course of the sun (is contained)]. There will be certainly among the praises of these, some place for my glory [*lit.* something of a place of our glory], unless by chance it is greater to open up provinces for us, whence we are able to go out, than to take care in order that even these men, who are absent, might have when they return to us as victors.
- 22 And yet in one point the circumstance of foreign triumph is better than that of domestic victory, because foreign enemies, either having been crushed are enslaved, or having been received {into friendship}, think themselves obligated by kindness: but those who are from the number of citizens, depraved by some madness, once begin to be enemies of their fatherland, when you have repelled them from the destruction of the republic, you are able to neither restrain them by force, nor conciliate them by kindness. Wherefore, I see that an eternal war with reprobate citizens has been undertaken by me; that, I trust will be driven back from me and also my own (family) easily, by your help, and that of all good men, and by the memory of such great dangers, which will be always fixed, not only among this people which has been saved, but in the discourse and minds of all nations. Nor, most certainly, might such power be found, which might be able to break up and shatter you union with the Roman *equites*, and such unanimity of all good men.

XI

- 23 Since these things are so, instead of command, instead of the army, instead of the province, which I have neglected, instead of the triumph and other marks of praise, which have been rejected by me for the sake of the guarding of the city and of your safety, instead of provincial clients and guests, which, however, by my urban success, which I defend with not less labour than I obtain, instead of therefore all these things, and in return for my unparalleled zeal on your behalf, and in return for this which you behold, diligence for the conserving of the republic, I demand nothing from you except the memory of this time and of my whole consulship. Which, so long as it will be fixed in your minds, I will judge that I am fenced in by the safest wall. But if the violence of wicked men will deceive and overpower [*lit.* will have deceived and overpowered] my hope, I commend to you my little son, to whom certainly there will be enough [of] protection, not only for his safety, but also for his dignity, if you will recollect that that son is of him, who has preserved all these things by his own danger alone [of him].
- 24 Wherefore, decide carefully, as you have begun, and [decide] bravely, concerning your own utmost safety and that of the Roman people, concerning your wives and children, concerning your altars and hearths, your shrines and temples, concerning the houses and dwellings of the whole city, concerning the empire and liberty, concerning the safety of Italy, concerning the whole republic. You have him as consul, who both does not hesitate to obey your decrees, and those things which have determined, as long as he lives, he is able to defend and warrant by his own self [ie. be personally responsible for].