

READING 31 (adapted) Tacitus tells a story of intrigue and murder in the Roman Empire. Agrippina, the second wife of Emperor Claudius, persuaded him to adopt her son by a previous marriage, Nero. Four years later, Claudius died — probably poisoned by Agrippina — and Nero, three or four years older than Claudius' son, Britannicus, became emperor. But Agrippina subsequently lost influence over Nero and began to support her stepson Britannicus as the rightful heir. This prompted Nero to plot the poisoning death of Britannicus at a banquet in A.D. 55, as Tacitus describes.

Turbātus est Agrippīnae minīs Nerō et, propinquō diē, quō quartum decimum aetātis annum Britannicus finiēbat, eum ōdisse incēpit. quia nūllum crīmen neque iubere caedem frātris palam audēbat, occulta mōlītur parārīque venēnum iubet.

Mōs habēbātur prīncipum liberōs cum cēterīs idem aetātis **nōbilibus** vescī in **aspectū** propinquōrum propriā et parciōre mēnsā. illic epulānte Britannicō, quia cibōs pōtūsque eius ūnus ex ministrīs gustū explōrābat, hic dolus inventus est. innoxius ac praecalidus et libātus pōtus datur Britannicō; tum, postquam fervōre aspernābātur, frīgidā in aquā adfunditur venēnum, quod celeriter cunctōs eius artūs **pervāsīt**. celerrimē et vōx et spīritus raptī sunt. trepidant quī **circumsedent**, diffugiunt nesciī; sed, quibus altior intellectus, manent dēfixī et Nerōnem spectantēs. ille, ut erat **reclīnis** et nesciō similis, solitum esse ita ait per comitiālem morbum quō primā ab **infantiā** adflīctārētur Britannicus, et reditūrōs esse paulātīm **vīsus sēnsūsque**. at Agrippīnae pavor, ea **cōsternātiō** mentis, quamvīs vultū premerētur, ēmicuit. sibi suprēmum auxilium ēreptum esse intellegēbat. Ita post breve **silentium** repetīta convīvii laetitia est.

Vocabulary:

turbō, -āre	to disturb	circumsedeō, -ēre	to sit around
propinquō diē	<i>abl. absolute</i>	diffugiō, -ere	to scatter
mina, -ae <i>f.</i>	threat	nescius, -a, -um	unaware, not knowing
ōdisse (pf. inf.)	to dislike, hate	quibus (+ est)	(<i>dative of possession</i>)
palam (adv.)	openly	altior (adj.)	better
occultum, -ī <i>n.</i>	secret plan	intellēctus, -ūs <i>m.</i>	understanding
mōlior, -īrī, -ītus sum	to devise; undertake	dēfixus, -a, -um	rooted (in their seats)
venēnum, -ī <i>n.</i>	poison	ut	as
idem aetātis	“of the same age”	reclīnis, -e	reclining
nōbilis, -e	noble	solitus, -a, -um	normal, customary
aspectus, -ūs <i>m.</i>	sight	comitiālis, -is <i>m.</i>	epilepsy
propriā et parciōre mēnsā	“at their own, less luxurious table”	morbus, -ī <i>m.</i>	illness, ailment
illīc (adv.)	there	īnfantia, -ae <i>f.</i>	infancy
epulor, -ārī, -ātus sum	to feast	adflīctārētur	“(he) had been afflicted”
minister, -trī <i>m.</i>	servant	paulātim (adv.)	gradually
gustus, -ūs <i>m.</i>	tasting	vīsus, -ūs <i>m.</i>	sight
explōrō, -are	to investigate, test	sēnsus, -ūs <i>m.</i>	sense; consciousness
innoxius, -a, -um	harmless	pavor, -ōris, <i>m.</i>	trembling (from fear)
praecalidus, -a, -um	very hot	cōnsternātiō, -iōnis <i>f.</i>	alarm, distress
libō, -āre, -āvī -ātus	to taste	quamvīs premerētur	although “she tried to conceal”
fervor, -ōris <i>m.</i>	boiling heat	repetō, -ere, -īvī, -ītus	to renew, begin again
aspernor, -ārī	to reject	silentium, -ī <i>n.</i>	silence
adfundō, -ere	to pour in	convīvīi laetitīa	joy of the banquet
pervādō, -ere, -vāsī, -vāsus	to spread, pervade		
spīritus, -ūs <i>m.</i>	breath		
trepidō, -āre	to be afraid, anxious		
ēmicō, -ere, -uī sibi	to be conspicuous (<i>dative of reference</i>)		
ēripiō, -ere, -rēpī	to take away		