Dearest Caerellia,

My apologies for not sending you this missive sooner. Of late my time has been preoccupied with acquiring several new volumes for my personal library’s collection. The booksellers here continue to flabbergast me with their lack of quality materials. I have examined no more than twelve different volumes of Homer’s illustrious Iliad from three different merchants before declaring the lot of them a lost cause. I have since started up another correspondence with my friend Atticus to see if he may find me a more substantial copy.

In regards to your last letter, I have been working tirelessly to gather the funds I owe you.¹ Please know that in addition to the distraction caused by my quest for a copy of the Iliad, I have also been writing again. I know you will be pleased with the topic: Plato’s Cave. I’ve enclosed a copy of my first draft for viewing. It’s not yet complete, but I figured your insight into the topic would be most welcome.² And once the piece is published, I hope it will find a place in your own personal library.

Until next time my dearest Caerellia, may the gods smile favorably on you.

Your friend,

Cicero

¹ Letters between Cicero and Atticus mention Cicero’s debt to Caerellia: “The other letters in which Caerellia’s name is mentioned are addressed to Cicero’s close friend and advisor, Atticus. There are six of them, all belonging to the years 45 and 44 B.C.” (Austin, 1946, p. 306).
² Two letters from Cicero to Atticus discuss how Caerellia had access to copies of Cicero’s latest work (p. 306).
Greetings Cicero,

It was so good to receive a letter from you. I had been longing to hear from you, my friend. May I first say that I understand the pull of such distractions as you mentioned in your last letter. I too hope to expand on my personal collection. My father, may he rest in peace, laid the foundation for my own library through his careful education. How I miss our conversations. I do hope that my library may aid my own daughters when the time comes for their own education. My husband is eager to play teacher.

I must take a moment to bring us back to the topic of your debt. While I understand the distractions you may have, I implore you to pay by your next letter. It does not serve me well if my other borrowers think I am showing favoritism by giving you yet another excuse. I am fine with a portion of the payment as long as the rest follows swiftly. Please understand.

On a lighter note, I have read your paper. The story of Plato’s Cave is one of my favorite parables. I have read it so often I fear my own copy may need some mending! And yet I rarely have anyone to share my joy about it with, save you, Cicero. The wives of my husband’s business partners do not possess the same love for philosophy as I do. I fear a few have not been given the chance to learn to read at all. A shame. I’ve tried to explain the story to them but like the prisoner who returned to the cave and could not make his fellow cave dwellers leave their shackles and journey into the sun, so to do I struggle to make the fellow members of my sex see the benefit of philosophy and libraries. Alas, their fathers kept them in the shadows too long and did not give them a chance to bask in the sunlight that is words and books.

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3 From our class readings, wealthy families educated their daughters and Cicero among others educated his own daughters.
I will end my letter here, my friend. You will find my comments on your work in the enclosed document. I could not even begin to fit all my commentary into just one short page!

May my comments serve you well!

Until next time, your friend,

Caerellia

Works Cited