

Julius Caesar

2.2

Thunder and lightning.

Enter Julius Caesar in his nightgown

CAESAR

Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight.

Thrice hath Calpurnia in her sleep cried out

`Help, ho! They murder Caesar!'±±Who's within?

Enter a Servant

SERVANT My lord.

CAESAR

Go bid the priests do present sacrifice, 5

And bring me their opinions of success.

SERVANT I will, my lord.

Exit

Enter Calpurnia

CALPURNIA

What mean you, Caesar? Think you to walk forth?

You shall not stir out of your house today.

CAESAR

Caesar shall forth. The things that threatened me 10

Ne'er looked but on my back; when they shall see

The face of Caesar, they are vanisheÁd.

CALPURNIA

Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,

Yet now they fright me. There is one within,

Besides the things that we have heard and seen, 15

Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.

A lioness hath whelpeÁd in the streets,

And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead.

Fierce fiery warriors fight upon the clouds,

In ranks and squadrons and right form of war, 20

Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.

The noise of battle hurtled in the air.

Horses do neigh, and dying men did groan,

And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.

O Caesar, these things are beyond all use, 25

And I do fear them.

CAESAR What can be avoided
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
Yet Caesar shall go forth, for these predictions
Are to the world in general as to Caesar.

CALPURNIA
When beggars die there are no comets seen; 30
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of
princes.

CAESAR
Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear, 35
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Enter Servant

What say the

augurers?

SERVANT
They would not have you to stir forth today.
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
They could not find a heart within the beast. 40

CAESAR
The gods do this in shame of cowardice.
Caesar should be a beast without a heart
If he should stay at home today for fear.
No, Caesar shall not. Danger knows full well
That Caesar is more dangerous than he. 45
We are two lions littered in one day,
And I the elder and more terrible.
And Caesar shall go forth.

CALPURNIA Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.
Do not go forth today. Call it my fear 50
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.
We'll send Mark Antony to the Senate House,
And he shall say you are not well today.
Let me upon my knee prevail in this.

She kneels

CAESAR

Mark Antony shall say I am not well, 55
And for thy humour I will stay at home.

Enter Decius

Here's Decius Brutus; he shall tell them so.
[Calpurnia rises]

DECIUS

Caesar, all hail! Good morrow, worthy Caesar.
I come to fetch you to the Senate House.

CAESAR

And you are come in very happy time 60
To bear my greeting to the senators
And tell them that I will not come today.
Cannot is false, and that I dare not, falser.
I will not come today; tell them so, Decius.

CALPURNIA

Say he is sick.

CAESAR Shall Caesar send a lie? 65

Have I in conquest stretched mine arm so far,
To be afeard to tell greybeards the truth?
Decius, go tell them Caesar will not come.

DECIUS

Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause,
Lest I be laughed at when I tell them so. 70

CAESAR

The cause is in my will; I will not come.
That is enough to satisfy the Senate.
But for your private satisfaction,
Because I love you, I will let you know.
Calpurnia here, my wife, stays me at home. 75
She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
Which like a fountain with an hundred spouts
Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans
Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it.
And these does she apply for warnings and portents 80
Of evils imminent, and on her knee
Hath begged that I will stay at home today.

DECIUS

This dream is all amiss interpreted.
It was a vision fair and fortunate.
Your statue spouting blood in many pipes, 85
In which so many smiling Romans bathed,

Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck
Reviving blood, and that great men shall press
For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance.
This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.

90

CAESAR

And this way have you well expounded it.

DECIUS

I have, when you have heard what I can say.
And know it now: the Senate have concluded
To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.
If you shall send them word you will not come, 95
Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock
Apt to be rendered for someone to say
'Break up the Senate till another time,
When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams.'
If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper 100
'Lo, Caesar is afraid'?
Pardon me, Caesar; for my dear dear love
To your proceeding bids me tell you this,
And reason to my love is liable.

CAESAR

How foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia! 105
I am ashamed I did yield to them.
Give me my robe, for I will go.

*Enter [Cassius,] Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca,
Trebonius, and Cinna*

And look where Cassius is come to fetch me.

[CASSIUS]

Good morrow, Caesar.

CAESAR Welcome, Cassius.±±

What, Brutus, are you stirred so early too?±± 110
Good morrow, Casca.±± Caius Ligarius,
Caesar was ne'er so much your enemy
As that same age which hath made you lean.
What is't o'clock?

BRUTUS Caesar, 'tis stricken eight.

CAESAR

I thank you for your pains and courtesy. 115

Enter Antony

See, Antony that revels long a-nights

Is notwithstanding up. Good morrow, Antony.

ANTONY

So to most noble Caesar.

CAESAR *[to Calpurnia]* Bid them prepare within.

I am to blame to be thus waited for.

[Exit Calpurnia]

Now, Cinna.±±Now, Metellus.±±What, Trebonius! 120

I have an hour's talk in store for you.

Remember that you call on me today.

Be near me, that I may remember you.

TREBONIUS

Caesar, I will, *[aside]* and so near will I be

That your best friends shall wish I had been further. 125

CAESAR

Good friends, go in and taste some wine with me,

And we, like friends, will straightway go together.

BRUTUS *(aside)*

That every like is not the same, O Caesar,

The heart of Brutus ernes to think upon.

Exeunt