

# Julius Caesar

## 1.3

*Thunder and lightning. Enter Casca, [at one door, with his sword drawn,] and Cicero [at another]*

**CICERO**

Good even, Casca. Brought you Caesar home?  
Why are you breathless, and why stare you so?

**CASCA**

Are not you moved, when all the sway of earth  
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,  
I have seen tempests when the scolding winds  
Have rived the knotty oaks, and I have seen  
Th'ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam  
To be exalted with the threat'ning clouds;  
But never till tonight, never till now,  
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.           10  
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,  
Or else the world, too saucy with the gods,  
Incenses them to send destruction.

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**CICERO**

Why, saw you anything more wonderful?

**CASCA**

A common slave±±you know him well by sight±± 15  
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn  
Like twenty torches joined; and yet his hand,  
Not sensible of fire, remained unscorched.  
Besides±±I ha' not since put up my sword±±  
Against the Capitol I met a lion           20  
Who glazed upon me, and went surly by  
Without annoying me. And there were drawn  
Upon a heap a hundred ghastly women,  
Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw  
Men all in fire walk up and down the streets.           25  
And yesterday the bird of night did sit  
Even at noonday upon the market-place,  
Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies  
Do so conjointly meet, let not men say  
`These are their reasons', `they are natural',           30

For I believe they are portentous things  
Unto the climate that they point upon.

**CICERO**

Indeed it is a strange-disposeÁd time;  
But men may construe things after their fashion,  
Clean from the purpose of the things themselves. 35  
Comes Caesar to the Capitol tomorrow?

**CASCA**

He doth, for he did bid Antonio  
Send word to you he would be there tomorrow.

**CICERO**

Good night then, Casca. This disturbeÁd sky  
Is not to walk in.

**CASCA** Farewell, Cicero. 40

*Exit Cicero*

*Enter Cassius, [unbraced]*

**CASSIUS**

Who's there?

**CASCA** A Roman.

**CASSIUS** Casca, by your voice.

**CASCA**

Your ear is good. Cassius, what night is this?

**CASSIUS**

A very pleasing night to honest men.

**CASCA**

Who ever knew the heavens menace so?

**CASSIUS**

Those that have known the earth so full of faults. 45  
For my part, I have walked about the streets,  
Submitting me unto the perilous night;  
And thus unbraceÁd, Casca, as you see,  
Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone;  
And when the cross blue lightning seemed to open 50  
The breast of heaven, I did present myself  
Even in the aim and very flash of it.

**CASCA**

But wherefore did you so much tempt the heavens?  
It is the part of men to fear and tremble  
When the most mighty gods by tokens send 55  
Such dreadful heralds to astonish us.

**CASSIUS**

You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life  
That should be in a Roman you do want,  
Or else you use not. You look pale, and gaze,  
And put on fear, and cast yourself in wonder, 60  
To see the strange impatience of the heavens;  
But if you would consider the true cause  
Why all these fires, why all these gliding ghosts,  
Why birds and beasts from quality and kind±±  
Why old men, fools, and children calculate±± 65  
Why all these things change from their ordinance,  
Their natures, and preformeÁd faculties,  
To monstrous quality±±why, you shall find  
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits  
To make them instruments of fear and warning 70  
Unto some monstrous state. Now could I, Casca,  
Name to thee a man most like this dreadful night,  
That thunders, lightens, opens graves, and roars  
As doth the lion in the Capitol;  
A man no mightier than thyself or me 75  
In personal action, yet prodigious grown,  
And fearful, as these strange eruptions are.

**CASCA**

'Tis Caesar that you mean, is it not, Cassius?

**CASSIUS**

Let it be who it is; for Romans now  
Have thews and limbs like to their ancestors. 80  
But woe the while! Our fathers' minds are dead,  
And we are governed with our mothers' spirits.  
Our yoke and sufferance show us womanish.

**CASCA**

Indeed they say the senators tomorrow  
Mean to establish Caesar as a king, 85  
And he shall wear his crown by sea and land  
In every place save here in Italy.

**CASSIUS** (*drawing his dagger*)

I know where I will wear this dagger then:  
Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius.  
Therein, ye gods, you make the weak most strong; 90  
Therein, ye gods, you tyrants do defeat.  
Nor stony tower, nor walls of beaten brass,

Nor airless dungeon, nor strong links of iron,  
Can be retentive to the strength of spirit;  
But life, being weary of these worldly bars, 95  
Never lacks power to dismiss itself.  
If I know this, know all the world besides,  
That part of tyranny that I do bear  
I can shake off at pleasure.

*Thunder still*

**CASCA** So can I.  
So every bondman in his own hand bears 100  
The power to cancel his captivity.

**CASSIUS**  
And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?  
Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf  
But that he sees the Romans are but sheep.  
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds. 105  
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire  
Begin it with weak straws. What trash is Rome,  
What rubbish, and what offal, when it serves  
For the base matter to illuminate  
So vile a thing as Caesar! But, O grief, 110  
Where hast thou led me? I perhaps speak this  
Before a willing bondman; then I know  
My answer must be made. But I am armed,  
And dangers are to me indifferent.

**CASCA**  
You speak to Casca, and to such a man 115  
That is no fleering tell-tale. Hold. My hand.  
Be factious for redress of all these griefs,  
And I will set this foot of mine as far  
As who goes farthest.

*They join hands*

**CASSIUS** There's a bargain made.  
Now know you, Casca, I have moved already 120  
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans  
To undergo with me an enterprise  
Of honourable-dangerous consequence.  
And I do know by this they stay for me  
In Pompey's Porch; for now, this fearful night, 125  
There is no stir or walking in the streets,

And the complexion of the element  
In favour's like the work we have in hand,  
Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

*Enter Cinna*

**CASCA**

Stand close a while, for here comes one in haste. 130

**CASSIUS**

'Tis Cinna; I do know him by his gait.

He is a friend.±±Cinna, where haste you so?

**CINNA**

To find out you. Who's that? Metellus Cimber?

**CASSIUS**

No, it is Casca, one incorporate

To our attempts. Am I not stayed for, Cinna? 135

**CINNA**

I am glad on't. What a fearful night is this!

There's two or three of us have seen strange sights.

**CASSIUS** Am I not stayed for? Tell me.

**CINNA** Yes, you are.

O Cassius, if you could 140

But win the noble Brutus to our party±±

**CASSIUS**

Be you content. Good Cinna, take this paper,

*He gives Cinna letters*

And look you lay it in the Praetor's Chair,

Where Brutus may but find it; and throw this

In at his window. Set this up with wax 145

Upon old Brutus' statue. All this done,

Repair to Pompey's Porch where you shall find us.

Is Decius Brutus and Trebonius there?

**CINNA**

All but Metellus Cimber, and he's gone

To seek you at your house. Well, I will hie, 150

And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

**CASSIUS**

That done, repair to Pompey's Theatre.

*Exit Cinna*

Come, Casca, you and I will yet ere day

See Brutus at his house. Three parts of him

Is ours already, and the man entire 155

Upon the next encounter yields him ours.

**CASCA**

O, he sits high in all the people's hearts,  
And that which would appear offence in us  
His countenance, like richest alchemy,  
Will change to virtue and to worthiness. 160

**CASSIUS**

Him and his worth, and our great need of him,  
You have right well conceited. Let us go,  
For it is after midnight, and ere day  
We will awake him and be sure of him.

*Exeunt*