

Julius Caesar

3.1

Enter [at one door] Artemidorus, the Soothsayer, and citizens. Flourish. Enter [at another door] Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Decius, Metellus, Trebonius, Cinna, [Ligarius,] Antony, Lepidus, Publius, Popillius, [and other senators]

CAESAR *(to the Soothsayer)* The ides of March are come.

SOOTHSAYER Ay, Caesar, but not gone.

ARTEMIDORUS Hail, Caesar! Read this schedule.

DECIUS *(to Caesar)*

Trebonius doth desire you to o'er-read

At your best leisure this his humble suit. 5

ARTEMIDORUS

O Caesar, read mine first, for mine's a suit

That touches Caesar nearer. Read it, great Caesar.

CAESAR

What touches us ourself shall be last served.

ARTEMIDORUS

Delay not, Caesar, read it instantly.

CAESAR

What, is the fellow mad?

PUBLIUS *(to Artemidorus)* Sirrah, give place. 10

CASSIUS *(to Artemidorus)*

What, urge you your petitions in the street?

Come to the Capitol.

[They walk about the stage]

POPILLIUS *(aside to Cassius)*

I wish your enterprise today may thrive.

CASSIUS

What enterprise, Popillius?

POPILLIUS Fare you well.

He leaves Cassius, and makes to Caesar

BRUTUS What said Popillius Laena? 15

CASSIUS

He wished today our enterprise might thrive.

I fear our purpose is discover'd.

BRUTUS

Look how he makes to Caesar. Mark him.

CASSIUS

Casca, be sudden, for we fear prevention.±±
Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known, 20
Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back,
For I will slay myself.

BRUTUS

Cassius, be constant.
Popillius Laena speaks not of our purposes,
For look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.

CASSIUS

Trebonius knows his time, for look you, Brutus, 25
He draws Mark Antony out of the way.
Exeunt Trebonius and Antony

DECIUS

Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go
And presently prefer his suit to Caesar.
[Caesar sits]

BRUTUS

He is addressed. Press near, and second him.

CINNA

Casca, you are the first that rears your hand. 30
[The conspirators and the other senators take their places]

CAESAR

Are we all ready? What is now amiss
That Caesar and his Senate must redress?

METELLUS *(coming forward and kneeling)*

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat
An humble heart.

CAESAR I must prevent thee, Cimber. 35

These couchings and these lowly courtesies
Might fire the blood of ordinary men,
And turn preordinance and first decree
Into the law of children. Be not fond
To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood 40
That will be thawed from the true quality
With that which melteth fools: I mean sweet words,
Low-crookeÁd curtsies, and base spaniel fawning.
Thy brother by decree is banisheÁd.
If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him, 45
I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.

Know Caesar doth not wrong but with just cause,
Nor without cause will he be satisfied.

METELLUS

Is there no voice more worthy than my own
To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear 50
For the repealing of my banished brother?

BRUTUS (*coming forward and kneeling*)

I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar,
Desiring thee that Publius Cimber may
Have an immediate freedom of repeal.

CAESAR

What, Brutus?

CASSIUS (*coming forward and kneeling*) Pardon, Caesar; Caesar,
pardon. 55

As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall
To beg enfranchisement for Publius Cimber.

CAESAR

I could be well moved if I were as you.
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me.
But I am constant as the Northern Star, 60
Of whose true fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.

The skies are painted with unnumbered sparks;
They are all fire, and every one doth shine;
But there's but one in all doth hold his place. 65

So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one
That unassailable holds on his rank,
Unshaked of motion; and that I am he 70

Let me a little show it even in this±±
That I was constant Cimber should be banished,
And constant do remain to keep him so.

CINNA (*coming forward and kneeling*)

O Caesar!

CAESAR Hence! Wilt thou lift up Olympus?

DECIUS (*coming forward [with Ligarius] and kneeling*)

Great Caesar!

CAESAR Doth not Brutus bootless kneel? 75

CASCA (*coming forward [and kneeling]*)

Speak hands for me.
They stab Caesar, [Casca first, Brutus last]
CAESAR *Et tu, Brute?* Then fall Caesar.
He dies
CINNA
 Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
 Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.
CASSIUS
 Some to the common pulpits, and cry out
 'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!' 80
BRUTUS
 People and senators, be not affrighted.
[Exeunt in a tumult Lepidus, Popillius, other
senators, Artemidorus, Soothsayer, and
citizens]
 Fly not! Stand still! Ambition's debt is paid.
CASCA Go to the pulpit, Brutus.
DECIUS And Cassius too.
BRUTUS Where's Publius? 85
CINNA
 Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.
METELLUS
 Stand fast together, lest some friend of Caesar's
 Should chance
BRUTUS
 Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer!
 There is no harm intended to your person, 90
 Nor to no Roman else—so tell them, Publius.
CASSIUS
 And leave us, Publius, lest that the people,
 Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.
BRUTUS
 Do so; and let no man abide this deed
 But we the doers. 95
[Exit Publius]
Enter Trebonius
CASSIUS Where is Antony?
TREBONIUS Fled to his house, amazed.
 Men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run,
 As it were doomsday.
BRUTUS Fates, we will know your pleasures.

That we shall die, we know; 'tis but the time
And drawing days out that men stand upon. 100

CASCA
Why, he that cuts off twenty years of life
Cuts off so many years of fearing death.

BRUTUS
Grant that, and then is death a benefit.
So are we Caesar's friends, that have abridged 105
His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,
And let us bathe our hands in Caesar's blood
Up to the elbows, and besmear our swords;
Then walk we forth even to the market-place,
And, waving our red weapons o'er our heads, 110
Let's all cry `peace, freedom, and liberty!'

CASSIUS
Stoop, then, and wash.
They smear their hands with Caesar's blood
How many ages hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over,
In states unborn and accents yet unknown!

BRUTUS
How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport, 115
That now on Pompey's basis lies along,
No worthier than the dust!

CASSIUS So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot of us be called
The men that gave their country liberty.

DECIUS
What, shall we forth?

CASSIUS Ay, every man away. 120
Brutus shall lead, and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.
Enter Antony's Servant

BRUTUS
Soft; who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

SERVANT (*kneeling and falling prostrate*)
Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel.
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down, 125
And, being prostrate, thus he bade me say.
`Brutus is noble, wise, valiant, and honest.
Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving.

Say I love Brutus, and I honour him.
Say I feared Caesar, honoured him, and loved him. 130
If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony
May safely come to him and be resolved
How Caesar hath deserved to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Caesar dead
So well as Brutus living, but will follow 135
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus
Thorough the hazards of this untrod state
With all true faith.' So says my master Antony.

BRUTUS

Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman.
I never thought him worse. 140
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied, and, by my honour,
Depart untouched.

SERVANT *[rising]* I'll fetch him presently.
Exit

BRUTUS

I know that we shall have him well to friend.

CASSIUS

I wish we may. But yet have I a mind 145
That fears him much; and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.
Enter Antony

BRUTUS

But here comes Antony.±±Welcome, Mark Antony.

ANTONY

O mighty Caesar! Dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils, 150
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.±±
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend±±
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank.
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Caesar's death's hour, nor no instrument 155
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,
Now, whilst your purpled hands do reek and smoke,
Fulfil your pleasure. Live a thousand years, 160

I shall not find myself so apt to die.
No place will please me so, no mean of death,
As here by Caesar, and by you cut off,
The choice and master spirits of this age.

BRUTUS

O Antony, beg not your death of us! 165
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,
As by our hands and this our present act
You see we do, yet see you but our hands,
And this the bleeding business they have done.
Our hearts you see not; they are pitiful; 170
And pity to the general wrong of Rome±±
As fire drives out fire, so pity pity±±
Hath done this deed on Caesar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony.
Our arms, unstrung of malice, and our hearts 175
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence.

CASSIUS

Your voice shall be as strong as any man's
In the disposing of new dignities.

BRUTUS

Only be patient till we have appeased 180
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,
And then we will deliver you the cause
Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.

ANTONY

I doubt not of your wisdom.
Let each man render me his bloody hand. 185
He shakes hands with the conspirators
First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you.±±
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand.±±
Now, Decius Brutus, yours;±±now yours, Metellus;±±
Yours, Cinna;±±and my valiant Casca, yours;±±
Though last, not least in love, yours, good Trebonius. 190
Gentlemen all±±alas, what shall I say?
My credit now stands on such slippery ground
That one of two bad ways you must conceit me:
Either a coward or a flatterer.
That I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true. 195

If then thy spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death
To see thy Antony making his peace,
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes±±
Most noble!±±in the presence of thy corpse? 200
Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
It would become me better than to close
In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
Pardon me, Julius. Here wast thou bayed, brave hart; 205
Here didst thou fall, and here thy hunters stand
Signed in thy spoil and crimsoned in thy lethe.
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;
And this indeed, O world, the heart of thee.
How like a deer stricken by many princes 210
Dost thou here lie!

CASSIUS Mark Antony.

ANTONY Pardon me, Caius Cassius.
The enemies of Caesar shall say this;
Then in a friend it is cold modesty. 215

CASSIUS
I blame you not for praising Caesar so;
But what compact mean you to have with us?
Will you be pricked in number of our friends,
Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

ANTONY
Therefore I took your hands, but was indeed 220
Swayed from the point by looking down on Caesar.
Friends am I with you all, and love you all
Upon this hope: that you shall give me reasons
Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous.

BRUTUS
Or else were this a savage spectacle. 225
Our reasons are so full of good regard,
That were you, Antony, the son of Caesar,
You should be satisfied.

ANTONY That's all I seek;
And am, moreover, suitor that I may
Produce his body to the market-place, 230
And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,

Speak in the order of his funeral.

BRUTUS

You shall, Mark Antony.

CASSIUS

Brutus, a word with you.

(Aside to Brutus) You know not what you do. Do not
consent

That Antony speak in his funeral. 235

Know you how much the people may be moved
By that which he will utter?

BRUTUS *(aside to Cassius)* By your pardon,

I will myself into the pulpit first,

And show the reason of our Caesar's death.

What Antony shall speak I will protest 240

He speaks by leave and by permission;

And that we are contented Caesar shall

Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies,

It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

CASSIUS *(aside to Brutus)*

I know not what may fall. I like it not. 245

BRUTUS

Mark Antony, here, take you Caesar's body.

You shall not in your funeral speech blame us;

But speak all good you can devise of Caesar,

And say you do't by our permission;

Else shall you not have any hand at all 250

About his funeral. And you shall speak

In the same pulpit whereto I am going,

After my speech is ended.

ANTONY Be it so;

I do desire no more. 255

BRUTUS

Prepare the body then, and follow us.

Exeunt all but Antony

ANTONY

O pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,

That I am meek and gentle with these butchers.

Thou art the ruins of the noblest man

That ever lived in the tide of times. 260

Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!

Over thy wounds now do I prophesy±±

Which like dumb mouths do ope their ruby lips
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue±±
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men; 265
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold 270
Their infants quartered with the hands of war,
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds;
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice 275
Cry 'havoc!' and let slip the dogs of war,
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.

Enter Octavius' Servant

You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?

SERVANT I do, Mark Antony. 280

ANTONY

Caesar did write for him to come to Rome.

SERVANT

He did receive his letters, and is coming,
And bid me say to you by word of mouth±±
(*Seeing the body*) O Caesar!

ANTONY

Thy heart is big. Get thee apart and weep. 285
Passion, I see, is catching, for mine eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine,
Began to water. Is thy master coming?

SERVANT

He lies tonight within seven leagues of Rome.

ANTONY

Post back with speed and tell him what hath
chanced. 290
Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No Rome of safety for Octavius yet.
Hie hence and tell him so.±±Yet stay awhile.
Thou shalt not back till I have borne this corpse
Into the market-place. There shall I try 295

In my oration how the people take
The cruel issue of these bloody men;
According to the which thou shalt discourse
To young Octavius of the state of things.
Lend me your hand.

300

Exeunt with Caesar's body