

Julius Caesar

2.1

Enter Brutus in his orchard

BRUTUS What, Lucius, ho!±±

I cannot by the progress of the stars

Give guess how near to day.±±Lucius, I say!±±

I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.±±

When, Lucius, when? Awake, I say! What, Lucius!

5

Enter Lucius

LUCIUS Called you, my lord?

BRUTUS

Get me a taper in my study, Lucius.

When it is lighted, come and call me here.

LUCIUS I will, my lord.

Exit

BRUTUS

It must be by his death. And for my part

10

I know no personal cause to spurn at him,

But for the general. He would be crowned.

How that might change his nature, there's the
question.

It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,

And that craves wary walking. Crown him: that!

15

And then I grant we put a sting in him

That at his will he may do danger with.

Th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins

Remorse from power. And to speak truth of Caesar,

I have not known when his affections swayed

20

More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof

That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,

Whereto the climber-upward turns his face;

But when he once attains the upmost round,

He then unto the ladder turns his back,

25

Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees

By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.

Then lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel

Will bear no colour for the thing he is,

Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,

30

Would run to these and these extremities;
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg,
Which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous,
And kill him in the shell.

Enter Lucius, with a letter

LUCIUS

The taper burneth in your closet, sir. 35
Searching the window for a flint, I found
This paper, thus sealed up, and I am sure
It did not lie there when I went to bed.

He gives him the letter

BRUTUS

Get you to bed again; it is not day.
Is not tomorrow, boy, the ides of March? 40

LUCIUS I know not, sir.

BRUTUS

Look in the calendar and bring me word.

LUCIUS I will, sir.

Exit

BRUTUS

The exhalations whizzing in the air
Give so much light that I may read by them. 45

He opens the letter and reads

`Brutus, thou sleep'st. Awake, and see thyself.
Shall Rome, et cetera? Speak, strike, redress.'±±
`Brutus, thou sleep'st. Awake.'

Such instigations have been often dropped
Where I have took them up. 50

`Shall Rome, et cetera?' Thus must I piece it out:
Shall Rome stand under one man's awe? What,
Rome?

My ancestors did from the streets of Rome
The Tarquin drive when he was called a king.

`Speak, strike, redress.' Am I entreated 55
To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise,
If the redress will follow, thou receivest
Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus.

Enter Lucius

LUCIUS

Sir, March is wasted fifteen days.

Knock within

BRUTUS

'Tis good. Go to the gate; somebody knocks. 60

Exit Lucius

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar
I have not slept.

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream. 65

The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in counsel, and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

Enter Lucius

LUCIUS

Sir, 'tis your brother Cassius at the door, 70
Who doth desire to see you.

BRUTUS

Is he alone?

LUCIUS

No, sir, there are more with him.

BRUTUS

Do you know them?

LUCIUS

No, sir; their hats are plucked about their ears,
And half their faces buried in their cloaks,
That by no means I may discover them 75
By any mark of favour.

BRUTUS

Let 'em enter.

Exit Lucius

They are the faction. O conspiracy,
Sham'st thou to show thy dang'rous brow by night,
When evils are most free? O then by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough 80
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy.
Hide it in smiles and affability;
For if thou put thy native semblance on,
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention. 85

*Enter the conspirators, muffled: Cassius, Casca,
Decius, Cinna, Metellus, and Trebonius*

CASSIUS

I think we are too bold upon your rest.
Good morrow, Brutus. Do we trouble you?

BRUTUS

I have been up this hour, awake all night.
Know I these men that come along with you?

CASSIUS

Yes, every man of them; and no man here
But honours you; and every one doth wish
You had but that opinion of yourself
Which every noble Roman bears of you.
This is Trebonius.

90

BRUTUS He is welcome hither.

CASSIUS

This, Decius Brutus.

BRUTUS He is welcome too.

95

CASSIUS

This, Casca; Cinna, this; and this, Metellus Cimber.

BRUTUS They are all welcome.

What watchful cares do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?

CASSIUS Shall I entreat a word?

Cassius and Brutus [stand aside and] whisper

DECIUS

Here lies the east. Doth not the day break here? 100

CASCA No.

CINNA

O pardon, sir, it doth; and yon grey lines
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

CASCA

You shall confess that you are both deceived.

He points his sword

Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises, 105

Which is a great way growing on the south,
Weighing the youthful season of the year.

Some two months hence up higher toward the north

He first presents his fire, and the high east

Stands, as the Capitol, directly here. 110

He points his sword.

[Brutus and Cassius join the other conspirators]

BRUTUS

Give me your hands all over, one by one.

He shakes their hands

CASSIUS

And let us swear our resolution.

BRUTUS

No, not an oath. If not the face of men,
The sufferance of our souls, the time's abuse±±
If these be motives weak, break off betimes, 115
And every man hence to his idle bed.

So let high-sighted tyranny range on
Till each man drop by lottery. But if these,
As I am sure they do, bear fire enough
To kindle cowards and to steel with valour 120

The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,
What need we any spur but our own cause
To prick us to redress? What other bond
Than secret Romans, that have spoke the word
And will not palter? And what other oath 125

Than honesty to honesty engaged
That this shall be or we will fall for it?
Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,
Old feeble carrions, and such suffering souls

That welcome wrongs; unto bad causes swear 130
Such creatures as men doubt; but do not stain
The even virtue of our enterprise,

Nor th'insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
To think that or our cause or our performance
Did need an oath, when every drop of blood 135
That every Roman bears, and nobly bears,

Is guilty of a several bastardy
If he do break the smallest particle
Of any promise that hath passed from him.

CASSIUS

But what of Cicero? Shall we sound him? 140
I think he will stand very strong with us.

CASCA

Let us not leave him out.

CINNA

No, by no means.

METELLUS

O, let us have him, for his silver hairs
Will purchase us a good opinion,

And buy men's voices to commend our deeds. 145
It shall be said his judgement ruled our hands.
Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,
But all be buried in his gravity.

BRUTUS

O, name him not! Let us not break with him,
For he will never follow anything 150
That other men begin.

CASSIUS Then leave him out.

CASCA Indeed he is not fit.

DECIUS

Shall no man else be touched, but only Caesar?

CASSIUS

Decius, well urged. I think it is not meet 155
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,
Should outlive Caesar. We shall find of him
A shrewd contriver. And you know his means,
If he improve them, may well stretch so far
As to annoy us all; which to prevent, 160
Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

BRUTUS

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards±±
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar. 165
Let's be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,
And in the spirit of men there is no blood.
O, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit,
And not dismember Caesar! But, alas, 170
Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly, but not wrathfully.
Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do, 175
Stir up their servants to an act of rage,
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make
Our purpose necessary, and not envious;
Which so appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be called purgers, not murderers. 180

And for Mark Antony, think not of him,
For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
When Caesar's head is off.

CASSIUS Yet I fear him;
For in the engrafted love he bears to Caesar±±

BRUTUS
Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him. 185
If he love Caesar, all that he can do
Is to himself: take thought, and die for Caesar.
And that were much he should, for he is given
To sports, to wildness, and much company.

TREBONIUS
There is no fear in him. Let him not die; 190
For he will live, and laugh at this hereafter.
Clock strikes

BRUTUS
Peace, count the clock.

CASSIUS The clock hath stricken three.

TREBONIUS
'Tis time to part.

CASSIUS But it is doubtful yet
Whether Caesar will come forth today or no;
For he is superstitious grown of late, 195
Quite from the main opinion he held once
Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies.
It may be these apparent prodigies,
The unaccustomed terror of this night,
And the persuasion of his augurers, 200
May hold him from the Capitol today.

DECIUS
Never fear that. If he be so resolved
I can o'ersway him; for he loves to hear
That unicorns may be betrayed with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes, 205
Lions with toils, and men with flatterers;
But when I tell him he hates flatterers;
He says he does, being then most flattered. Let me
work,
For I can give his humour the true bent,
And I will bring him to the Capitol. 210

CASSIUS

Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

BRUTUS

By the eighth hour. Is that the uttermost?

CINNA

Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

METELLUS

Caius Ligarius doth bear Caesar hard,
Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey. 215
I wonder none of you have thought of him.

BRUTUS

Now good Metellus, go along by him.
He loves me well, and I have given him reasons.
Send him but hither, and I'll fashion him.

CASSIUS

The morning comes upon's. We'll leave you, Brutus. 220
And, friends, disperse yourselves; but all remember
What you have said, and show yourselves true Romans.

BRUTUS

Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily.
Let not our looks put on our purposes;
But bear it as our Roman actors do, 225
With untired spirits and formal constancy.
And so good morrow to you every one.

Exeunt all but Brutus

Boy, Lucius!±±Fast asleep? It is no matter.
Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber.
Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies 230
Which busy care draws in the brains of men;
Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

Enter Portia

PORTIA

Brutus, my lord.

BRUTUS

Portia, what mean you? Wherefore rise you now?
It is not for your health thus to commit
Your weak condition to the raw cold morning. 235

PORTIA

Nor for yours neither. You've ungently, Brutus,
Stole from my bed; and yesternight at supper
You suddenly arose, and walked about
Musing and sighing, with your arms across;
And when I asked you what the matter was, 240

You stared upon me with ungentle looks.
 I urged you further; then you scratched your head,
 And too impatiently stamped with your foot.
 Yet I insisted; yet you answered not,
 But with an angry wafture of your hand 245
 Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did,
 Fearing to strengthen that impatience
 Which seemed too much enkindled, and withal
 Hoping it was but an effect of humour,
 Which sometime hath his hour with every man. 250
 It will not let you eat, nor talk, nor sleep;
 And could it work so much upon your shape
 As it hath much prevailed on your condition,
 I should not know you Brutus. Dear my lord,
 Make me acquainted with your cause of grief. 255

BRUTUS

I am not well in health, and that is all.

PORTIA

Brutus is wise, and were he not in health
 He would embrace the means to come by it.

BRUTUS

Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.

PORTIA

Is Brutus sick? And is it physical 260
 To walk unbrace'd and suck up the humours
 Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick?
 And will he steal out of his wholesome bed
 To dare the vile contagion of the night,
 And tempt the rheumy and unpurge'd air 265
 To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus,
 You have some sick offence within your mind,
 Which by the right and virtue of my place
 I ought to know of. (*Kneeling*) And upon my knees,
 I charm you by my once-commended beauty, 270
 By all your vows of love, and that great vow
 Which did incorporate and make us one,
 That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
 Why you are heavy, and what men tonight
 Have had resort to you±±for here have been 275
 Some six or seven, who did hide their faces

Even from darkness.

BRUTUS Kneel not, gentle Portia.

PORTIA *[rising]*

I should not need if you were gentle Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I your self
But as it were in sort or limitation?
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes? Dwell I but in the
suburbs

280

Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

285

BRUTUS

You are my true and honourable wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.

PORTIA

If this were true, then should I know this secret.
I grant I am a woman, but withal
A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife.
I grant I am a woman, but withal
A woman well reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so fathered and so husbanded?
Tell me your counsels; I will not disclose 'em.
I have made strong proof of my constancy,
Giving myself a voluntary wound
Here in the thigh. Can I bear that with patience,
And not my husband's secrets?

290

295

300

BRUTUS O ye gods,
Render me worthy of this noble wife!

Knocking within

Hark, hark, one knocks. Portia, go in a while,
And by and by thy bosom shall partake
The secrets of my heart.

305

All my engagements I will construe to thee,
All the charactery of my sad brows.
Leave me with haste.

Exit Portia

Lucius, who's that knocks?

Enter Lucius, and Ligarius, with a kerchief [round his head]

LUCIUS

Here is a sick man that would speak with you.

BRUTUS

Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of.±± 310

Boy, stand aside.

[Exit] Lucius

Caius Ligarius, how?

LIGARIUS

Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.

BRUTUS

O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!

LIGARIUS

I am not sick if Brutus have in hand 315
Any exploit worthy the name of honour.

BRUTUS

Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

LIGARIUS

By all the gods that Romans bow before,
I here discard my sickness.

He pulls off his kerchief

Soul of Rome,

320

Brave son derived from honourable loins,
Thou like an exorcist hast conjured up
My mortifieÁd spirit. Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible,
Yea, get the better of them. What's to do? 325

BRUTUS

A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

LIGARIUS

But are not some whole that we must make sick?

BRUTUS

That must we also. What it is, my Caius,
I shall unfold to thee as we are going
To whom it must be done.

LIGARIUS

Set on your foot, 330

And with a heart new-fired I follow you
To do I know not what; but it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on.

BRUTUS

Follow me then.

Exeunt