

Julius Caesar

1.2

[Loud music.] Enter Caesar, Antony stripped for the course, Calpurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, a Soothsayer, [a throng of citizens]; after them, Murellus and Flavius

CAESAR Calpurnia.

CASCA Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.
[Music ceases]

CAESAR Calpurnia.

CALPURNIA Here, my lord.

CAESAR
Stand you directly in Antonio's way 5
When he doth run his course.±±Antonio.

ANTONY Caesar, my lord.

CAESAR
Forget not in your speed, Antonio,
To touch Calpurnia, for our elders say
The barren, toucheÁd in this holy chase, 10
Shake off their sterile curse.

ANTONY I shall remember:
When Caesar says `Do this', it is performed.

CAESAR
Set on, and leave no ceremony out.
[Music]

SOOTHSAYER Caesar!

CAESAR Ha! Who calls? 15

CASCA
Bid every noise be still. Peace yet again.
[Music ceases]

CAESAR
Who is it in the press that calls on me?
I hear a tongue shriller than all the music
Cry `Caesar!' Speak. Caesar is turned to hear.

SOOTHSAYER
Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR What man is that? 20

BRUTUS
A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

CAESAR

Set him before me; let me see his face.

CASSIUS

Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.

The Soothsayer comes forward

CAESAR

What sayst thou to me now? Speak once again.

SOOTHSAYER Beware the ides of March. 25

CAESAR

He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass!

Sennet. Exeunt all but Brutus and Cassius

CASSIUS

Will you go see the order of the course?

BRUTUS Not I.

CASSIUS I pray you, do.

BRUTUS

I am not gamesome; I do lack some part 30

Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.

Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires.

I'll leave you.

CASSIUS

Brutus, I do observe you now of late.

I have not from your eyes that gentleness 35

And show of love as I was wont to have.

You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand

Over your friend that loves you.

BRUTUS Cassius,

Be not deceived. If I have veiled my look,

I turn the trouble of my countenance 40

Merely upon myself. Vexed I am

Of late with passions of some difference,

Conceptions only proper to myself,

Which give some soil, perhaps, to my behaviours.

But let not therefore my good friends be grieved±± 45

Among which number, Cassius, be you one±±

Nor construe any further my neglect

Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,

Forgets the shows of love to other men.

CASSIUS

Then, Brutus, I have much mistook your passion, 50

By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried

Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRUTUS

No, Cassius, for the eye sees not itself
But by reflection, by some other things. 55

CASSIUS 'Tis just;

And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
That you might see your shadow. I have heard 60
Where many of the best respect in Rome±±
Except immortal Caesar±±speaking of Brutus,
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes.

BRUTUS

Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius, 65
That you would have me seek into myself
For that which is not in me?

CASSIUS

Therefor, good Brutus, be prepared to hear.
And since you know you cannot see yourself
So well as by reflection, I, your glass, 70
Will modestly discover to yourself
That of yourself which you yet know not of.
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus.
Were I a common laughter, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love 75
To every new protester; if you know
That I do fawn on men and hug them hard,
And after scandal them; or if you know
That I profess myself in banqueting
To all the rout: then hold me dangerous. 80

Flourish and shout within

BRUTUS

What means this shouting? I do fear the people
Choose Caesar for their king.

CASSIUS Ay, do you fear it?

Then must I think you would not have it so.

BRUTUS

I would not, Cassius; yet I love him well.

But wherefore do you hold me here so long? 85
What is it that you would impart to me?
If it be aught toward the general good,
Set honour in one eye and death i'th' other,
And I will look on both indifferently;
For let the gods so speed me as I love 90
The name of honour more than I fear death.

CASSIUS

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,
As well as I do know your outward favour.
Well, honour is the subject of my story.
I cannot tell what you and other men 95
Think of this life; but for my single self,
I had as lief not be, as live to be
In awe of such a thing as I myself.
I was born free as Caesar, so were you.
We both have fed as well, and we can both 100
Endure the winter's cold as well as he.
For once upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with her shores,
Said Caesar to me 'Dar'st thou, Cassius, now
Leap in with me into this angry flood, 105
And swim to yonder point?' Upon the word,
Accoutred as I was I plunge'd in,
And bade him follow. So indeed he did.
The torrent roared, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside, 110
And stemming it with hearts of controversy.
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
Ay, as Aeneas our great ancestor
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder 115
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
Did I the tire'd Caesar. And this man
Is now become a god, and Cassius is
A wretched creature, and must bend his body
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him. 120
He had a fever when he was in Spain,
And when the fit was on him, I did mark
How he did shake. 'Tis true, this god did shake.

His coward lips did from their colour fly;
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world 125
Did lose his lustre. I did hear him groan,
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans
Mark him and write his speeches in their books,
`Alas!' it cried, `Give me some drink, Titinius',
As a sick girl. Ye gods, it doth amaze me 130
A man of such a feeble temper should
So get the start of the majestic world,
And bear the palm alone!

Flourish and shout within

BRUTUS Another general shout!
I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honours that are heaped on Caesar. 135

CASSIUS
Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus, and we petty men
Walk under his huge legs, and peep about
To find ourselves dishonourable graves.
Men at sometime were masters of their fates. 140
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that `Caesar'?
Why should that name be sounded more than yours?
Write them together: yours is as fair a name. 145
Sound them: it doth become the mouth as well.
Weigh them: it is as heavy. Conjure with 'em:
`Brutus' will start a spirit as soon as `Caesar'.
Now in the names of all the gods at once,
Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed 150
That he is grown so great? Age, thou art shamed.
Rome, thou hast lost the breed of noble bloods.
When went there by an age since the great flood,
But it was famed with more than with one man?
When could they say till now, that talked of Rome, 155
That her wide walls encompassed but one man?
Now is it Rome indeed, and room enough
When there is in it but one only man.
O, you and I have heard our fathers say
There was a Brutus once that would have brooked 160

Th'eternal devil to keep his state in Rome
As easily as a king.

BRUTUS

That you do love me I am nothing jealous.
What you would work me to I have some aim.
How I have thought of this and of these times 165
I shall recount hereafter. For this present,
I would not, so with love I might entreat you,
Be any further moved. What you have said
I will consider. What you have to say
I will with patience hear, and find a time 170
Both meet to hear and answer such high things.
Till then, my noble friend, chew upon this:
Brutus had rather be a villager
Than to repute himself a son of Rome
Under these hard conditions as this time 175
Is like to lay upon us.

CASSIUS

I am glad

That my weak words have struck but thus much show
Of fire from Brutus.

[Music.] Enter Caesar and his train

BRUTUS

The games are done, and Caesar is returning.

CASSIUS

As they pass by, pluck Casca by the sleeve,
And he will, after his sour fashion, tell you
What hath proceeded worthy note today. 180

BRUTUS

I will do so. But look you, Cassius,
The angry spot doth glow on Caesar's brow,
And all the rest look like a chidden train. 185
Calpurnia's cheek is pale, and Cicero
Looks with such ferret and such fiery eyes
As we have seen him in the Capitol
Being crossed in conference by some senators.

CASSIUS

Casca will tell us what the matter is. 190

CAESAR Antonio.

ANTONY Caesar.

CAESAR

Let me have men about me that are fat,

Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights.
Yon Cassius has a lean and hungry look.
He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.

195

ANTONY

Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous.
He is a noble Roman, and well given.

CAESAR

Would he were fatter! But I fear him not.
Yet if my name were liable to fear, 200
I do not know the man I should avoid
So soon as that spare Cassius. He reads much,
He is a great observer, and he looks
Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music. 205
Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort
As if he mocked himself, and scorned his spirit
That could be moved to smile at anything.
Such men as he be never at heart's ease
Whiles they behold a greater than themselves, 210
And therefore are they very dangerous.
I rather tell thee what is to be feared
Than what I fear, for always I am Caesar.
Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf,
And tell me truly what thou think'st of him. 215

*Sennet. Exeunt Caesar and his train. Brutus,
Cassius, and Casca remain*

CASCA (to Brutus) You pulled me by the cloak. Would you
speak with me?

BRUTUS

Ay, Casca. Tell us what hath chanced today,
That Caesar looks so sad.

CASCA Why, you were with him, were you not? 220

BRUTUS

I should not then ask Casca what had chanced.

CASCA Why, there was a crown offered him; and being
offered him, he put it by with the back of his hand,
thus; and then the people fell a-shouting.

BRUTUS What was the second noise for? 225

CASCA Why, for that too.

CASSIUS

They shouted thrice. What was the last cry for?

CASCA Why, for that too.

BRUTUS Was the crown offered him thrice?

CASCA Ay, marry, was't; and he put it by thrice, every 230
time gentler than other; and at every putting by, mine
honest neighbours shouted.

CASSIUS

Who offered him the crown?

CASCA Why, Antony.

BRUTUS

Tell us the manner of it, gentle Casca.

CASCA I can as well be hanged as tell the manner of it. 235
It was mere foolery, I did not mark it. I saw Mark
Antony offer him a crown±±yet 'twas not a crown
neither, 'twas one of these coronets±±and as I told you
he put it by once; but for all that, to my thinking he
would fain have had it. Then he offered it to him again; 240
then he put it by again±±but to my thinking he was
very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered
it the third time; he put it the third time by. And still
as he refused it, the rabblement hooted, and clapped
their chapped hands, and threw up their sweaty 245
nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath
because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost
choked Caesar; for he swooned and fell down at it.
And for mine own part, I durst not laugh for fear of
opening my lips and receiving the bad air. 250

CASSIUS

But soft, I pray you. What, did Caesar swoon?

CASCA He fell down in the market-place, and foamed at
mouth, and was speechless.

BRUTUS

'Tis very like: he hath the falling sickness.

CASSIUS

No, Caesar hath it not; but you and I 255
And honest Casca, we have the falling sickness.

CASCA I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure
Caesar fell down. If the tag-rag people did not clap him
and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased
them, as they use to do the players in the theatre, I 260

am no true man.

BRUTUS

What said he when he came unto himself?

CASCA Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the
common herd was glad he refused the crown, he
plucked me ope his doublet and offered them his throat 265
to cut. An I had been a man of any occupation, if I
would not have taken him at a word, I would I might
go to hell among the rogues. And so he fell. When he
came to himself again, he said, if he had done or said
anything amiss, he desired their worships to think it 270
was his infirmity. Three or four wenches where I stood
cried `Alas, good soul!' and forgave him with all their
hearts. But there's no heed to be taken of them: if
Caesar had stabbed their mothers they would have
done no less. 275

BRUTUS

And after that he came thus sad away?

CASCA Ay.

CASSIUS Did Cicero say anything?

CASCA Ay, he spoke Greek.

CASSIUS To what effect? 280

CASCA Nay, an I tell you that, I'll ne'er look you i'th'
face again. But those that understood him smiled at
one another, and shook their heads. But for mine own
part, it was Greek to me. I could tell you more news,
too. Murellus and Flavius, for pulling scarves off 285
Caesar's images, are put to silence. Fare you well. There
was more foolery yet, if I could remember it.

CASSIUS Will you sup with me tonight, Casca?

CASCA No, I am promised forth.

CASSIUS Will you dine with me tomorrow? 290

CASCA Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold, and your
dinner worth the eating.

CASSIUS Good; I will expect you.

CASCA Do so. Farewell both.

Exit

BRUTUS

What a blunt fellow is this grown to be! 295
He was quick mettle when he went to school.

CASSIUS

So is he now, in execution
Of any bold or noble enterprise,
However he puts on this tardy form. 300
This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,
Which gives men stomach to digest his words
With better appetite.

BRUTUS

And so it is. For this time I will leave you.
Tomorrow, if you please to speak with me,
I will come home to you; or if you will, 305
Come home to me and I will wait for you.

CASSIUS

I will do so. Till then, think of the world.

Exit Brutus

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see
Thy honourable mettle may be wrought
From that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet 310
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?
Caesar doth bear me hard, but he loves Brutus.
If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
He should not humour me. I will this night 315
In several hands in at his windows throw±±
As if they came from several citizens±±
Writings, all tending to the great opinion
That Rome holds of his name, wherein obscurely
Caesar's ambition shall be glanceÁd at. 320
And after this, let Caesar seat him sure,
For we will shake him, or worse days endure.

Exit