

The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

Act III, Scene 2

The Forum.

Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS, and a throng of Citizens

Citizens. We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

Brutus. Then follow me, and give me audience, friends.

Cassius, go you into the other street,
And part the numbers.

Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;

Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;

And public reasons shall be rendered

Of Caesar's death.

First Citizen. I will hear Brutus speak.

Second Citizen. I will hear Cassius; and compare their reasons,
When severally we hear them rendered.

[Exit CASSIUS, with some of the Citizens. BRUTUS goes into the pulpit]

Third Citizen. The noble Brutus is ascended: silence!

Brutus. Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my
cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me
for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that
you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and
awake your senses, that you may the better judge.

If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of
Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar
was no less than his. If then that friend demand
why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer:

—Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved
Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and
die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live
all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him;
as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was
valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I
slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his
fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his
ambition. Who is here so base that would be a
bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended.

Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If
any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so
vile that will not love his country? If any, speak;
for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

All. None, Brutus, none.

Brutus. Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol; his glory not extenuated, wherein he was worthy, nor his offences enforced, for which he suffered death.

[Enter ANTONY and others, with CAESAR's body]

Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony: who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth; as which of you shall not? With this I depart,—that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself, when it shall please my country to need my death.

All. Live, Brutus! live, live!

First Citizen. Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

Second Citizen. Give him a statue with his ancestors.

Third Citizen. Let him be Caesar.

Fourth Citizen. Caesar's better parts
Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

First Citizen. We'll bring him to his house
With shouts and clamours.

Brutus. My countrymen.

Second Citizen. Peace, silence! Brutus speaks.

First Citizen. Peace, ho!

Brutus. Good countrymen, let me depart alone,
And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:
Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech
Tending to Caesar's glories; which Mark Antony,
By our permission, is allow'd to make.
I do entreat you, not a man depart,
Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

Exit

First Citizen. Stay, ho! and let us hear Mark Antony.

Third Citizen. Let him go up into the public chair;
We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

Antony. For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

Goes into the pulpit

Fourth Citizen. What does he say of Brutus?

Third Citizen. He says, for Brutus' sake,
He finds himself beholding to us all.

Fourth Citizen. 'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.

First Citizen. This Caesar was a tyrant.

Third Citizen. Nay, that's certain:
We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

Second Citizen. Peace! let us hear what Antony can say.

Antony. You gentle Romans!

Citizens. Peace, ho! let us hear him.

Antony. Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;
So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men—
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it come back to me.

First Citizen. Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

Second Citizen. If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Caesar has had great wrong.

Third Citizen. Has he, masters? 1655
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

Fourth Citizen. Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown;
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

First Citizen. If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

Second Citizen. Poor soul! his eyes are red as fire with weeping. 1660

Third Citizen. There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

Fourth Citizen. Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

Antony. But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there.
And none so poor to do him reverence.
O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament—
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

Fourth Citizen. We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.

All. The will, the will! we will hear Caesar's will.

Antony. Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;
It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you.
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men;
And, being men, bearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad:
'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;
For, if you should, O, what would come of it!

Fourth Citizen. Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;
You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

Antony. Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?
I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:
I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.

Fourth Citizen. They were traitors: honourable men!

All. The will! the testament!

Second Citizen. They were villains, murderers: the will! read the will.

Antony. You will compel me, then, to read the will?
Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?

Several Citizens. Come down.

Second Citizen. Descend.

Third Citizen. You shall have leave.

ANTONY comes down

Fourth Citizen. A ring; stand round.

First Citizen. Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

Second Citizen. Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

Antony. Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.

Several Citizens. Stand back; room; bear back.

Antony. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle: I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on;

'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii:

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Casca made:

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;

And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,

Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolved

If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;

For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!

This was the most unkindest cut of all;

For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;

And, in his mantle muffling up his face,

Even at the base of Pompey's statua,

Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.

O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!

Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,

Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.

O, now you weep; and, I perceive, you feel

The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.

Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold

Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,

Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

First Citizen. O piteous spectacle!

Second Citizen. O noble Caesar!

Third Citizen. O woful day!

Fourth Citizen. O traitors, villains!

First Citizen. O most bloody sight!

Second Citizen. We will be revenged.

All. Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill! Slay!

Let not a traitor live!

Antony. Stay, countrymen.

First Citizen. Peace there! hear the noble Antony.

Second Citizen. We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

Antony. Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up

To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable:

What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,

That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,

And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:

I am no orator, as Brutus is;

But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,

That love my friend; and that they know full well

That gave me public leave to speak of him:

For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,

Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,

To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;

I tell you that which you yourselves do know;

Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,

And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,

And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony

Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue

In every wound of Caesar that should move

The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

All. We'll mutiny.

First Citizen. We'll burn the house of Brutus.

Third Citizen. Away, then! come, seek the conspirators.

Antony. Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.

All. Peace, ho! Hear Antony. Most noble Antony!

Antony. Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:

Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?

Alas, you know not: I must tell you then:

You have forgot the will I told you of.

All. Most true. The will! Let's stay and hear the will.

Antony. Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.

Second Citizen. Most noble Caesar! We'll revenge his death.

Third Citizen. O royal Caesar!

Antony. Hear me with patience.

All. Peace, ho!

Antony. Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,

His private arbours and new-planted orchards,

On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,

And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures,

To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.
Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?

First Citizen. Never, never. Come, away, away!
We'll burn his body in the holy place,
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.
Take up the body.

Second Citizen. Go fetch fire.

Third Citizen. Pluck down benches.

Fourth Citizen. Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.

Exeunt Citizens with the body

Antony. Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,
Take thou what course thou wilt!

[Enter a Servant]

How now, fellow!

Servant. Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

Antony. Where is he?

Servant. He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

Antony. And thither will I straight to visit him:
He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,
And in this mood will give us any thing.

Servant. I heard him say, Brutus and Cassius
Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

Antony. Belike they had some notice of the people,
How I had moved them. Bring me to Octavius.

Exeunt