

The Tragedy of JULIUS CAESAR

William Shakespeare

CHARACTERS

JULIUS CAESAR		CINNA	Poets
OCTAVIUS CAESAR	} Triumvirs* After the Death of Julius Caesar	ANOTHER POET	
MARCUS ANTONIUS		LUCILIUS	} Friends to Brutus and Cassius
M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS		TITINIUS	
CICERO	MESSALA		
PUBLIUS	YOUNG CATO		
POPILIUS LENA	} Senators	VOLUMNIUS	
MARCUS BRUTUS	} Conspirators Against Julius Caesar	VARRO	} Servants to Brutus
CASSIUS		CLITUS	
CASCA		CLAUDIUS	
TREBONIUS		STRATO	
LIGARIUS		LUCIUS	
DECIUS BRUTUS		DARDANIUS	Servant to Cassius
METELLUS CIMBER		PINDARUS	Wife to Caesar
CINNA	CALPURNIA	Wife to Brutus	
FLAVIUS	} Tribunes	PORTIA	
MARULLUS		SOOTHSAYER	
ARTEMIDORUS OF CNIDOS	Teacher of Rhetoric	SENATORS, CITIZENS, GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, AND SO ON	

Scene: During most of the play, at Rome; afterward near Sardis, and near Philippi.

***Triumvirs** (trī um' verz) *n.* in ancient Rome, a group of three rulers who share authority equally.

Act I

Scene i. Rome. A street.

[Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, and certain COMMONERS¹ over the stage.]

FLAVIUS. Hence! Home, you idle creatures, get you home!

Is this a holiday? What, know you not,
Being mechanical,² you ought not walk
Upon a laboring day without the sign

5 Of your profession?³ Speak, what trade art thou?

1. **COMMONERS** (kam' en
erz) *n.* people not of the
nobility or upper
classes.

2. **mechanical** of the
working class.

3. **sign/Of your profes-
sion** work clothes and
tools.

CARPENTER. Why, sir, a carpenter.

MARULLUS. Where is thy leather apron and thy rule?
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?
You, sir, what trade are you?

10 COBBLER. Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman,⁴ I am but, as you
would say, a cobbler.⁵

MARULLUS. But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

15 COBBLER. A trade, sir, that, I hope, I may use with a safe conscience,
which is indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

FLAVIUS. What trade, thou knave?⁶ Thou naughty knave what trade?

COBBLER. Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me: yet, if you be
out,⁷ sir, I can mend you.⁸

MARULLUS. What mean'st thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy fellow?

20 COBBLER. Why, sir, cobble you.

FLAVIUS. Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

25 COBBLER. Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl:⁹ I meddle with
no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters; but withal, I am
indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes: when they are in great dan-
ger, I recover them. As proper men as ever trod upon
neat's leather¹⁰ have gone upon my handiwork.

FLAVIUS. But wherefore art not in thy shop today?
Why dost thou lead these men about
the streets?

30 COBBLER. Truly, sir, to wear out their
shoes, to get myself into more work. But
indeed, sir, we make holiday to see
Caesar and to rejoice in his triumph.¹¹

▼ **Critical Viewing**

How can you tell that the man standing is a man of power? [Infer]

4. in respect of a fine workman in relation to a skilled worker.

5. cobbler mender of shoes or a clumsy, bungling worker.

Reading Strategy

Using Text Aids What double meaning of cobbler applies here?

6. knave (nāv) *n.* tricky rascal; rogue.

7. be not out . . . if you be out be not angry . . . if you have worn-out shoes.

8. mend you mend your shoes or improve your disposition.

9. awl (ōl) *n.* small, pointed tool for making holes in leather.

10. neat's leather leather made from the hides of cattle.

11. triumph (trī əmf) *n.* procession celebrating the return of a victorious general.

✓ **Reading Check**

Why are the carpenter and the cobbler celebrating?



MARULLUS. Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?

What tributaries¹² follow him to Rome,

35 To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!

O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,

Knew you not Pompey?¹³ Many a time and oft
Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,

40 To tow'rs and windows, yea, to chimney tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat

The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.

And when you saw his chariot but appear,

45 Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber¹⁴ trembled underneath her banks
To hear the replication of your sounds

Made in her concave shores?¹⁵

And do you now put on your best attire?

50 And do you now cull out¹⁶ a holiday?

And do you now strew flowers in his way

That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?¹⁷

Be gone!

Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,

55 Pray to the gods to intermit the plague¹⁸

That needs must light on this ingratitude.

FLAVIUS. Go, go, good countrymen, and, for this fault,

Assemble all the poor men of your sort;

Draw them to Tiber banks and weep your tears

60 Into the channel, till the lowest stream

Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.¹⁹

[All the commoners exit.]

See, whe'r their basest mettle²⁰ be not moved,

They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.

Go you down that way toward the Capitol;

65 This way will I. Disrobe the images,

If you do find them decked with ceremonies.²¹

MARULLUS. May we do so?

You know it is the feast of Lupercal.²²

FLAVIUS. It is no matter; let no images

70 Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about

And drive away the vulgar²³ from the streets;

So do you too, where you perceive them thick.

These growing feathers plucked from Caesar's wing

Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,²⁴

75 Who else would soar above the view of men

And keep us all in servile fearfulness. [Exit]

12. tributaries (trib' yōō ter' ēz) n. captives.

13. Pompey (pām' pé) A Roman general and triumvir defeated by Caesar in 48 B.C. and later murdered.

14. Tiber (tī' bər) river that flows through Rome.

15. concave shores hollowed-out banks; overhanging banks.

replication (rep' lə kā' shən) n. echo or reverberation

16. cull out pick out; select.

17. Pompey's blood Pompey's sons, whom Caesar has just defeated.

18. intermit the plague (plāg) stop the calamity or trouble.

19. the most exalted shores of all the highest banks.

20. whe'r their basest mettle whether the most inferior material of which they are made.

21. Disrobe the images . . . decked with ceremonies strip the statues . . . covered with decorations.

22. feast of Lupercal (lōō' pər kal) ancient Roman festival celebrated on February 15.

23. vulgar (vul' gər) n. common people.

24. pitch upward flight of a hawk.

Scene ii. A public place.

[Enter CAESAR, ANTONY (for the course),¹ CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, a SOOTHSAYER; after them, MARULLUS and FLAVIUS.]

CAESAR. Calpurnia!

CASCA.

Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

CAESAR.

CALPURNIA. Here, my lord.

CAESAR. Stand you directly in Antonius' way
When he doth run his course. Antonius!

5 ANTONY. Caesar, my lord?

CAESAR. Forget not in your speed, Antonius,
To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say
The barren, touchèd in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse.²

ANTONY.

I shall remember:
When Caesar says "Do this," it is performed.

10 CAESAR. Set on, and leave no ceremony out.

SOOTHSAYER. Caesar!

CAESAR. Ha! Who calls?

CASCA. Bid every noise be still; peace yet again!

15 CAESAR. Who is it in the press³ 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. ♦

1. *for the course* ready for the foot race that was part of the Lupercal festivities.

Reading Strategy

Using Text Aids Which notes on this page did you use to clarify unfamiliar words or phrases?

2. **barren . . . sterile curse**

It was believed that women who were unable to bear children (such as Calpurnia), if touched by a runner during this race, would then be able to bear children.

3. **press** *n.* crowd.

✓ Reading Check

Why are Marullus and Flavius angry about the celebration of Caesar's victory?

Literature in context

Humanities Connection

♦ The Ides of March

When the soothsayer mentions "the ides of March," he is referring to March 15. This term comes from the ancient Roman calendar, which did not number the days of each month. Instead, names were given to these three days:

- Kalends (the first day of each month)
- Nones (the seventh of March, May, July, and October and the fifth of other months)
- the Ides (the fifteenth of March, May, July, and October and the thirteenth of other months)

It was a complicated and awkward system. If Caesar were to ask Antony to meet on what we would call March 12, he would say, "Three days before the ides of March." In this play, the soothsayer's warning gives the ides a more ominous meaning.



CAESAR.

What man is that?

BRUTUS. A soothsayer bids you beware the ides of March.

20 CAESAR. Set him before me; let me see his face.

CASSIUS. Fellow, come from the throng; look upon Caesar.

CAESAR. What say'st thou to me now? Speak once again.

SOOTHSAYER. Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR. He is a dreamer, let us leave him. Pass.

[A trumpet sounds. Exit all but BRUTUS and CASSIUS.]

25 CASSIUS. Will you go see the order of the course?⁴

BRUTUS. Not I.

CASSIUS. I pray you do.

BRUTUS. I am not gamesome:⁵ I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit⁶ that is in Antony.

30 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
And show of love as I was wont⁷ to have;
35 You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand⁸
Over your friend that loves you.

BRUTUS. Cassius,
Be not deceived: if I have veiled my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself.⁹ Vexèd I am

Literary Analysis

Exposition in Drama
What effect does the
soothsayer's warning have
on the story?

4. order of the course
the race.

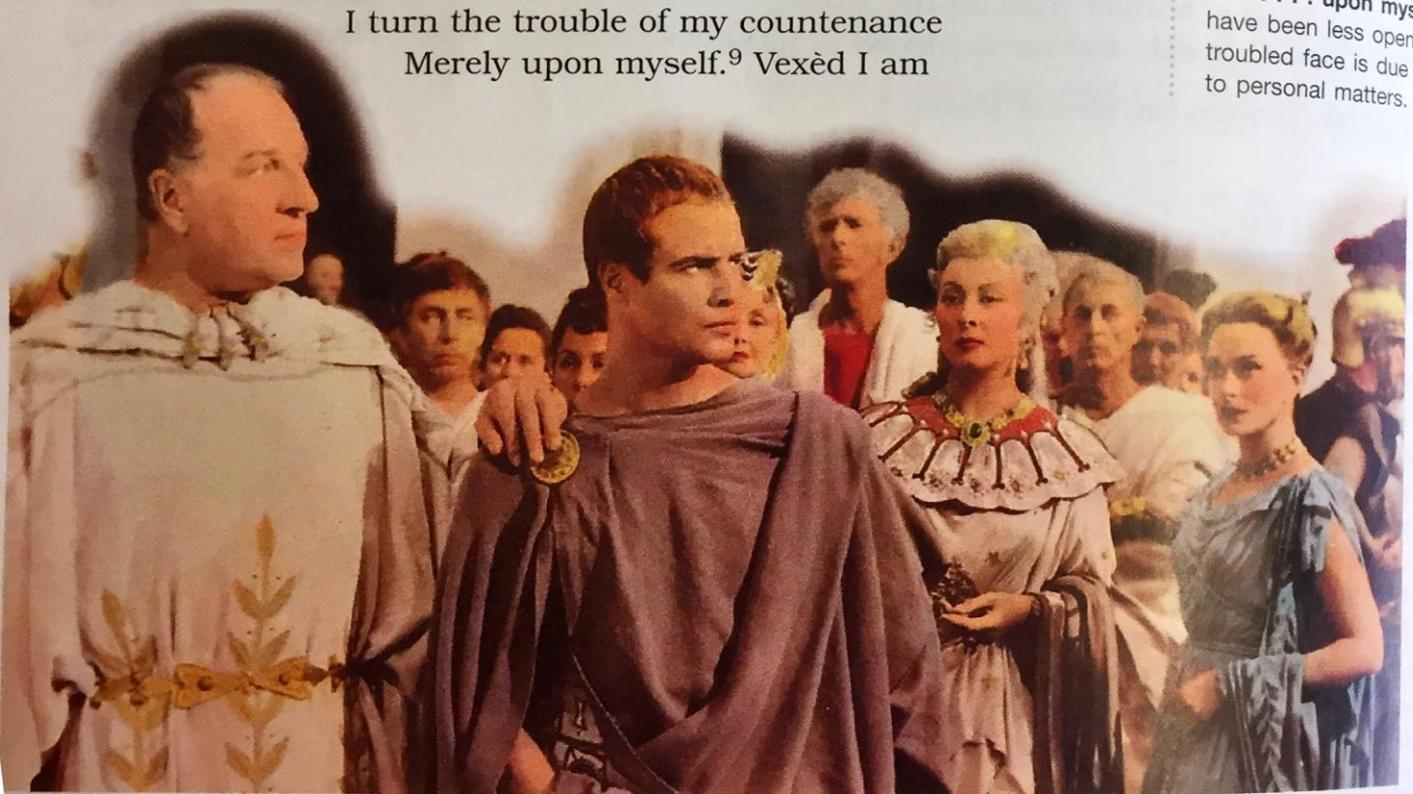
5. gamesome (gām' sēm)
adj. having a liking for sports

6. quick spirit lively
disposition.

7. wont (wōnt) accustomed.

8. bear . . . hand treat
too harshly and too like
a stranger.

9. if I . . . upon myself if I
have been less open, my
troubled face is due entirely
to personal matters.



Of late with passions¹⁰ of some difference,¹¹
 Conceptions only proper to myself,¹²
 Which give some soil,¹³ perhaps, to my behaviors;
 But let not therefore my good friends be grieved
 (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;
 By means whereof this breast of mine hath buried¹⁴
 Thoughts of great value, worthy cogitations.¹⁵
 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.

CASSIUS. 'Tis just.¹⁶
 And it is very much lamented,¹⁷ Brutus,
 That you have no such mirrors as will turn
 Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
 That you might see your shadow.¹⁸ I have heard
 Where many of the best respect¹⁹ in Rome
 (Except immortal Caesar), speaking of Brutus,
 And groaning underneath this age's yoke,²⁰
 Have wished that noble Brutus had his eyes.

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

CASSIUS. Therefore, good Brutus, be prepared to hear;
 And since you know you cannot see yourself
 So well as by reflection, I, your glass
 Will modestly discover to yourself
 That of yourself which you yet know not of.²¹
 And be not jealous on²² me, gentle Brutus:
 Were I a common laughter,²³ or did use
 To stale with ordinary oaths my love
 To every new protester;²⁴ if you know
 That I do fawn on men and hug them hard,
 And after scandal²⁵ them; or if you know
 That I profess myself in banqueting
 To all the rout,²⁶ then hold me dangerous.

[Flourish of trumpets and shout]

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.

- 10. **passions** feelings; emotions.
- 11. **of some difference** in conflict.
- 12. **Conceptions . . . myself** thoughts that concern only me.
- 13. **soil** blemish.
- 14. **By means . . . buried** because of which I have kept to myself.
- 15. **cogitations** (kaj ə tā shənz) *n.* thoughts.
- 16. **'Tis just** it is true.
- 17. **lamented** (lə men' ted) *v.* regretted.
- 18. **turn . . . shadow** reflect your hidden noble qualities so you could see their image.
- 19. **the best respect** most respected people.
- 20. **this age's yoke** the tyranny of Caesar.
- 21. **Will modestly . . . know not of** will without exaggeration make known to you the qualities you have that you are unaware of.
- 22. **be not jealous on** do not be suspicious of.
- 23. **common laughter** object of ridicule.
- 24. **To stale . . . new pro- tester** to make cheap my friendship to anyone who promises to be my friend.
- 25. **scandal** slander; gossip about.
- 26. **profess myself . . . rout** declare my friendship to the common crowd.

 **Reading Check**

Why does Cassius think that Brutus is unhappy with him?

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

But wherefore do you hold me here so long?

What is it that you would impart to me?

85 If it be aught toward the general good,²⁷

Set honor in one eye and death i' th' other,

And I will look on both indifferently;²⁸

For let the gods so speed²⁹ me, as I love

The name of honor more than I fear death.

90 **CASSIUS.** I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,

As well as I do know your outward favor.³⁰

Well, honor is the subject of my story.

I cannot tell what you and other men

Think of this life, but for my single self,

95 I had as lief not be,³¹ as live to be

In awe of such a thing as I myself.³²

I was born free as Caesar; so were you:

We both have fed as well, and we can both

Endure the winter's cold as well as he:

100 For once, upon a raw and gusty day,

The troubled Tiber chafing with³³ her shores,

Caesar said to me "Darest thou, Cassius, now

Leap in with me into this angry flood,

And swim to yonder point?" Upon the word,

105 Accout'ed³⁴ as I was, I plungèd in

And bade him follow: so indeed he did.

The torrent roared, and we did buffet³⁵ it

With lusty sinews,³⁶ throwing it aside

And stemming it with hearts of controversy.³⁷

110 But ere we could arrive the point proposed,

Caesar cried "Help me, Cassius, or I sink!"

I, as Aeneas,³⁸ our Great ancestor,

Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder

The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber

115 Did I the tired 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.

He had a fever when he was in Spain,

120 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 color fly,³⁹

And that same eye whose bend⁴⁰ doth awe the world

did lose his⁴¹ luster: I did hear him groan;

125 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,

A man of such a feeble temper⁴² should

Literary Analysis

Exposition How does Brutus' first statement illustrate his conflict?

27. aught . . . good anything to do with the public welfare.

28. indifferently without preference or concern.

29. speed give good fortune to.

30. favor face; appearance.

31. as lief not be just as soon not exist.

32. such a thing as I myself another human being (Caesar).

33. chafing with raging against.

34. Accout'ed dressed in armor.

35. buffet (buf it) v. struggle against.

36. lusty sinews (sin' yooz) strong muscles.

37. stemming it . . . controversy making progress against it with our intense rivalry.

38. Aeneas (i nē' əs) Trojan hero of the poet Virgil's epic poem *Aeneid*, who carried his old father, Anchises, from the burning city of Troy and later founded Rome.

39. His coward lips . . . fly color fled from his lips, which were like cowardly soldiers fleeing from a battle.

40. bend *n.* glance.

41. his *its.*

42. feeble temper weak physical constitution.

So get the start of⁴³ the majestic world,
And bear the palm⁴⁴ alone.

BRUTUS. Another general shout?

I do believe that these applauses are
For some new honors that are heaped on Caesar.

[Shout. Flourish of trumpets]

CASSIUS. Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus,⁴⁵ and we petty men

Walk under his huge legs and peep about
To find ourselves dishonorable⁴⁶ graves.
Men at some time are masters of their fates:

The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,⁴⁷

But in ourselves, that we are underlings.⁴⁸
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that "Caesar"?

Why should that name be sounded⁴⁹ more than yours?

Write them together, yours is as fair a name;
Sound them, it doth become the mouth as well;

Weigh them, it is as heavy; conjure⁵⁰ with 'em,

"Brutus" will start⁵¹ a spirit as soon as "Caesar."
Now, in the names of all the gods at once,

Upon what meat doth this our Caesar feed,

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,⁵²

But it was famed with⁵³ more than with one man?

When could they say (till now) that talked of Rome,

That her wide walks 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 Brutus⁵⁴ once that would have brooked⁵⁵

Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome

As easily as a king.

BRUTUS. That you do love me, I am nothing jealous;⁵⁶

What you would work me to,⁵⁷ I have some aim;⁵⁸

How I have thought of this, and of these times,

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

Both meet to hear and answer such high things.

Till then, my noble friend, chew upon⁵⁹ this:

Brutus had rather be a villager

Than to repute himself a son of Rome

Under these hard conditions as this time

43. get the start of become the leader of.

44. palm symbol of victory; victor's prize.

45. Colossus (kə lās' əs) *n.* gigantic statue of Apollo, a god of Greek and Roman mythology, which was set at the entrance to the harbor of Rhodes about 280 B.C. and was included among the seven wonders of the ancient world.

46. dishonorable (dis ən' ə r ə bəl) *adj.* shameful (because they will not be of free men).

47. stars destinies. The stars were thought to control people's lives.

48. underlings inferior people.

49. sounded spoken or announced by trumpets.

50. conjure (kän' jər) *v.* summon a spirit by a magic spell.

51. start raise.

52. great flood in Greek mythology, a flood that drowned everyone except Deucalion and his wife Pyrrha, who were saved by the god Zeus because of their virtue.

53. But it was famed with without the age being made famous by.

54. Brutus Lucius Junius Brutus had helped expel the last king of Rome and had helped found the Republic in 509 B.C.

55. brooked put up with.

56. nothing jealous not at all doubting.

57. work me to persuade me of.

58. aim idea.

59. chew upon think about.

Reading Check

What happened when Caesar and Cassius held a swimming race in the river Tiber?

Is like to lay upon us.

175 **CASSIUS.** I am glad
That my weak words have struck but thus much show
Of fire from Brutus.

[Enter CAESAR and his TRAIN.]

BRUTUS. The games are done, and Caesar is returning.

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

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:⁶⁰
185 Calpurnia's cheek is pale, and Cicero
Looks with such ferret⁶¹ and such fiery eyes
As we have seen him in the Capitol,
Being crossed in conference⁶² by some senators.

CASSIUS. Casca will tell us what the matter is.

190 **CAESAR.** Antonius.

ANTONY. Caesar?

CAESAR. Let me have men about me that are fat,
Sleek-headed men, and such as sleep a-nights.
Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look;
195 He thinks too much: such men are dangerous.

ANTONY. Fear him not, Caesar, he's not dangerous;
He is a noble Roman, and well given.⁶³

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.⁶⁴ He loves no plays,
As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music;
205 Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort⁶⁵
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.

[A trumpet sounds. CAESAR and his TRAIN exit.]

60. chidden train
scolded attendants.

61. ferret (fer' it) n. small
animal, like a weasel,
with reddish eyes.

62. crossed in conference
opposed in debate.

63. well given well
disposed.

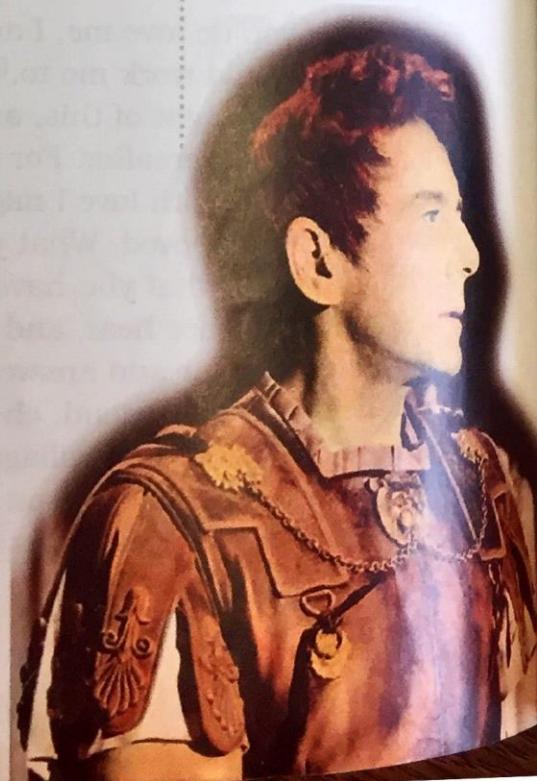
64. looks . . . deeds of
men sees through people's
actions to their motives.

65. sort way.

spare (sper) adj. lean or
thin

▼ Critical Viewing

What details of Cassius' appearance can you see in this picture that might make Caesar distrust him? [Infer]



CASCA. You pulled me by the cloak; would you speak with me?
BRUTUS. Ay, Casca; tell us what hath chanced⁶⁶ today,
That Caesar looks so sad.

CASCA. Why, you were with him, were you not?
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 by⁶⁷ with the back of his hand, thus; and then
the people fell a-shouting.

BRUTUS. What was the second noise for?
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 time gentler
than other; and at every putting-by mine honest neighbors
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: 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 coronets⁶⁸—and, as I told you, he put it by once; but for all that, to
my thinking, he would fain⁶⁹ have had it. Then he offered it to
him again; 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 rabblement⁷⁰ hooted, and clapped their chopt⁷¹ hands,
and threw up their sweaty nightcaps,⁷² and uttered such a
deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown, that
it had, almost, choked Caesar; for he swooned⁷³ 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.

CASSIUS. But, soft,⁷⁴ I pray you; what, did Caesar swoond?

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

BRUTUS. 'Tis very like he hath the falling-sickness.⁷⁵

CASSIUS. No, Caesar hath it not; but you, and I,
And honest Casca, we have the falling-sickness.⁷⁶

CASCA. I know not what you mean by that, but I am sure Caesar

66. **hath chanced** has happened.

67. **put it by** pushed it away.

Literary Analysis

Exposition and Dialogue

How does this dialogue develop the situation set up in the exposition?

68. **coronets** (kôr' ə nets') *n.* ornamental bands used as crowns.

69. **fain** (fān) *adv.* gladly.

70. **rabblement** (rab' əl mənt) *n.* mob.

71. **chopt** (chäpt) *adj.* chapped.

72. **nightcaps** workers' caps.

73. **swooned** swooned; fainted.

74. **soft** slowly.

75. **falling-sickness** epilepsy.

76. **we have the falling-sickness** We are becoming helpless under Caesar's rule.

Reading Check

Why does Mark Antony offer Caesar a crown?

260 fell down. If the tag-rag people⁷⁷ did not clap him and hiss him, according as he pleased and displeased them, as they use⁷⁸ to do the players in the theater, I am no true man.

BRUTUS. What said he when he came unto himself?

265 **CASCA.** Marry, before he fell down, when he perceived the common herd was glad he refused the crown, he plucked me ope his doublet⁷⁹ and offered them his throat to cut. An I had been a man of any occupation,⁸⁰ 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
270 said anything amiss, he desired their worships to think it was his infirmity.⁸¹ Three or four wenches,⁸² 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
275 their mothers, they would have done no less.

BRUTUS. And after that, he came thus sad away?

CASCA. Ay.

CASSIUS. Did Cicero say anything?

CASCA. Ay, he spoke Greek.

280 **CASSIUS.** To what effect?

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
285 could tell you more news too: Marullus and Flavius, for pulling scarfs off Caesar's images, are put to silence.⁸³ 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.⁸⁴

290 **CASSIUS.** Will you dine with me tomorrow?

CASCA. Ay, if I be alive, and your mind hold,⁸⁵ and your dinner worth the eating.

CASSIUS. Good; I will expect you.

CASCA. Do so. Farewell, both.

[Exit]

295 **BRUTUS.** What a blunt⁸⁶ fellow is this grown to be! He was quick mettle⁸⁷ when he went to school.

CASSIUS. So is he now in execution⁸⁸

Of any bold or noble enterprise,
However he puts on this tardy form.⁸⁹

300 This rudeness is a sauce to his good wit,⁹⁰
Which gives men stomach to disgest⁹¹ his words
With better appetite.

77. tag-rag people the rabble.

78. use are accustomed.

79. doublet (dub' lit) n. close-fitting jacket.

80. An I . . . occupation if I had been a working-man (or a man of action).

infirmity (in fur' mē tē) illness; physical defect.

81. infirmity n. Caesar's illness is epilepsy.

82. wenches (wench' əz) n. young women.

83. for pulling . . . silence for taking decorations off statues of Caesar, they have been silenced (by being forbidden to take part in public affairs, exiled, or perhaps even executed).

Literary Analysis
Exposition in Drama
How did the exposition set the stage for this kind of action against Marullus and Flavius?

84. am promised forth have a previous engagement.

85. hold does not change.

86. blunt dull; not sharp.

87. quick mettle of a lively disposition.

88. execution (ek' sə kyōō' shən) n. carrying out; doing.

89. tardy form sluggish appearance.

90. wit intelligence.

91. disgest digest.

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,
Come home to me, and I will wait for you.

CASSIUS. I will do so. Till then, think of the world.⁹²

Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see
Thy honorable mettle may be wrought
From that it is disposed;⁹³ therefore it is meet
That noble minds keep ever with their likes;
For who so firm that cannot be seduced?
Caesar doth bear me hard,⁹⁴ but he loves Brutus.
If I were Brutus now, and he were Cassius,
He should not humor me.⁹⁵ I will this night,
In several hands,⁹⁶ in at his windows throw,
As if they came from several citizens,
Writings, all tending to the great opinion⁹⁷
That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely
Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at.⁹⁸
And after this, let Caesar seat him sure;⁹⁹
For we will shake him, or worse days endure.

[Exit BRUTUS.]

[Exit]

Scene iii. A street.

[Thunder and lightning. Enter from opposite sides, CASCA and CICERO.]

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 earth¹
Shakes like a thing unfirm? O Cicero,
I have seen tempests, when the scolding winds
Have rived² the knotty oaks, and I have seen
Th' ambitious ocean swell and rage and foam,
To be exalted with³ the threat'ning clouds;
But never till tonight, never till now,
Did I go through a tempest dropping fire.
Either there is a civil strife in heaven,
Or else the world, too saucy⁴ with the gods,
Incenses⁵ them to send destruction.

CICERO. Why, saw you anything more wonderful?

CASCA. A common slave—you know him well by sight—
Held up his left hand, which did flame and burn
Like twenty torches joined, and yet his hand,
Not sensible of⁶ fire, remained unscorched.
Besides—I ha' not since put up my sword—
Against⁷ the Capitol I met a lion,

92. **the world** present state of affairs.

93. **wrought . . . is disposed** shaped (like iron) in a way different from its usual form.

94. **bear me hard** dislikes me.

95. **humor me** win me over.

96. **several hands** different handwritings.

97. **tending to the great opinion** pointing out the great respect.

98. **glanced at** hinted at.

99. **seat him sure** establish himself securely.

Reading Strategy

Using Text Aids How does the description of the weather add to the drama?

1. **all the sway of earth** the stable order of Earth.

2. **Have rived** have split.

3. **exalted with** lifted up to.

4. **saucy** rude; impudent.

5. **Incenses** enrages.

6. **sensible of** sensitive to.

7. **Against** opposite or near.

✓ Reading Check

What has happened to Marullus and Flavius?

Who glazed⁸ upon me and went surly by
 Without annoying me. And there were drawn
 Upon a heap⁹ a hundred ghastly¹⁰ women,
 Transformed with their fear, who swore they saw
 25 Men, all in fire, walk up and down the streets.
 And yesterday the bird of night¹¹ did sit
 Even at noonday upon the market place,
 Hooting and shrieking. When these prodigies¹²
 Do so conjointly meet,¹³ let not men say,
 30 "These are their reasons, they are natural,"
 For I believe they are portentous things
 Unto the climate that they point upon.¹⁴

CICERO. Indeed, it is a strange-disposed¹⁵ time:
 But men may construe things after their fashion,¹⁶
 35 Clean from the purpose¹⁷ of the things themselves.
 Comes Caesar to the Capitol tomorrow?

CASCA. He doth; for he did bid Antonius
 Send word to you he would be there tomorrow.

CICERO. Good night then, Casca; this disturbèd sky
 Is not to walk in.

40 **CASCA.** Farewell, Cicero. [Exit CICERO.]

[Enter CASSIUS.]

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?

45 **CASSIUS.** Those that have known the earth so full of faults.

For my part, I have walked about the streets,
 Submitting me unto the perilous night,
 And thus unbracèd,¹⁸ Casca, as you see,
 Have bared my bosom to the thunder-stone;¹⁹

50 And when the cross²⁰ blue lightning seemed to open
 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 part²¹ of men to fear and tremble
 55 When the most mighty gods by tokens send
 Such dreadful heralds to astonish²² us.

CASSIUS. You are dull, Casca, and those sparks of life
 That should be in a Roman you do want,²³

surly (sur' lē) adv. in a proud, commanding way

8. glazed stared.

9. were drawn . . . heap huddled together.

10. ghastly (gast' lē) adj. ghostlike; pale.

11. bird of night owl.

portentous (pôr ten' tēs) adj. foreboding; full of unspecified meaning

12. prodigies (prād' ə jēz) n. extraordinary happenings.

13. conjointly meet occur at the same time and place.

14. portentous (pôr ten' tēs) . . . upon bad omens for the country they point to.

15. strange-disposed abnormal.

16. construe . . . fashion explain in their own way.

17. Clean from the purpose different from the real meaning.

18. unbracèd with jacket open.

19. thunder-stone thunderbolt.

20. cross zigzag.

21. part role.

22. by tokens . . . to astonish by portentous signs send such awful announcements to frighten and stun.

23. want lack.

Or else you use not. You look pale, and gaze,
And put on fear, and cast yourself in wonder,²⁴
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,²⁵
Why all these things change from their ordinance,²⁷
Their natures and preformèd faculties,
To monstrous quality,²⁸ why, you shall find
That heaven hath infused them with these spirits²⁹
To make them instruments of fear and warning
Unto some monstrous state.³⁰
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,
In personal action, yet prodigious grown
And fearful,³¹ 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 thews³² and limbs like to their ancestors;
But, woe the while!³³ Our fathers' minds are dead,
And we are governed with our mothers' spirits;
Our yoke and sufferance³⁴ show us womanish.

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

CASSIUS. I know where I will wear this dagger then;
Cassius from bondage will deliver³⁵ Cassius.
Therein,³⁶ ye gods, you make the weak most strong;
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 to³⁷ the strength of spirit;
But life, being weary of these worldly bars,
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
The power to cancel his captivity.

24. put on . . . in wonder show fear and are amazed.

25. from quality and kind acting contrary to their nature.

26. calculate make predictions.

27. ordinance regular behavior.

Reading Strategy

Using Text Aids Using the side notes, explain what Cassius says in lines 57–71.

prodigious (prō dij' əs) *adj.* impressively forceful

28. preformèd . . . quality established function to unnatural behavior.

29. infused . . . spirits filled them with supernatural powers.

30. monstrous state abnormal condition of government.

31. fearful causing fear.

32. thews (thyōōz) *n.* muscles or sinews; strength.

33. woe the while alas for the times.

34. yoke and sufferance slavery and meek acceptance of it.

35. will deliver will set free.

36. Therein in that way (by using his dagger on himself).

37. be retentive to confine.

✓ Reading Check

What bad omens have people noticed?

CASSIUS. And why should Caesar be a tyrant then?

Poor man, I know he would not be a wolf
105 But that he sees the Romans are but sheep;
He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.³⁸
Those that with haste will make a mighty fire
Begin it with weak straws. What trash is Rome,
What rubbish and what offal,³⁹ when it serves
110 For the base matter⁴⁰ to illuminate
So vile a thing as Caesar! But, O grief,
Where hast thou led me? I, perhaps, speak this
Before a willing bondman; then I know
My answer must be made.⁴¹ But I am armed,
115 And dangers are to me indifferent.

CASCA. You speak to Casca, and to such a man
That is no fleering tell-tale.⁴² Hold, my hand.
Be factious⁴³ for redress of all these griefs,⁴⁴
And I will set this foot of mine as far
As who goes farthest.

[*They clasp hands.*]

120 **CASSIUS.** There's a bargain made.
Now know you, Casca, I have moved already
Some certain of the noblest-minded Romans
To undergo⁴⁵ with me an enterprise
Of honorable dangerous consequence,⁴⁶
125 And I do know, by this⁴⁷ they stay for me
In Pompey's porch;⁴⁸ for now, this fearful night,
There is no stir or walking in the streets,
And the complexion of the element⁴⁹
In favor's like⁵⁰ the work we have in hand,
130 Most bloody, fiery, and most terrible.

[*Enter CINNA.*]

CASCA. Stand close⁵¹ awhile, for here comes one in haste.

CASSIUS. 'Tis Cinna; I do know him by his gait;⁵²
He is a friend. Cinna, where haste you so?

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

135 **CASSIUS.** No, it is Casca, one incorporate⁵³
To our attempts. Am I not stayed⁵⁴ for, Cinna?

CINNA. I am glad on't.⁵⁵ 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.

140 O Cassius, if you could
But win the noble Brutus to our party—

CASSIUS. Be you content. Good Cinna, take this paper,

38. hinds (hindz) *n.* female deer; peasants; servants.

39. offal (ôf' əl) *n.* garbage.

40. base matter inferior or low material; foundation materials.

41. speak this . . . answer must be made say this before a willing servant of Caesar's; then I know I will have to answer for my words.

Literary Analysis
Exposition and Dialogue
What is clarified between Cassius and Casca in lines 111–120?

42. fleering tell-tale sneering tattletale.

43. factious (fak' shəs) *adj.* active in forming a faction or a political party.

44. redress (ri dres') of all these griefs setting right all these grievances.

45. undergo undertake.

46. consequence (kän' sə kwens') *n.* importance.

47. by this by this time.

48. Pompey's porch portico of Pompey's Theater.

49. complexion of the element condition of the sky; weather.

50. In favor's like in appearance is like.

51. close hidden

52. gait (gāt) *n.* way of moving.

53. incorporate (in kôr' pər it) *adj.* united.

54. stayed waited.

55. on't of it.

And look you lay it in the praetor's chair,⁵⁶
Where Brutus may but find it;⁵⁷ and throw this
In at his window: set this up with wax
Upon old Brutus⁵⁸ 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,
And so bestow these papers as you bade me.

CASSIUS. That done, repair to Pompey's Theater.
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
Upon the next encounter yields him ours.

CASCA. O, he sits high in all the people's hearts;
And that which would appear offense⁵⁹ in us,
His countenance,⁶⁰ like richest alchemy,⁶¹
Will change to virtue and to worthiness.

CASSIUS. Him, and his worth, and our great need of him,
You have right well conceited.⁶² Let us go,
For it is after midnight, and ere day
We will awake him and be sure of him.

[Exit CINNA.]

[Exit]

Literary Analysis

Exposition in Drama

What is the connection between Cassius' speech and the sentiments expressed by the tribunes in the exposition in Scene i?

56. praetor's (prē' tərz)
chair Roman magis-
trate's (or judge's) chair.

57. Where . . . find it where only Brutus (as the chief magistrate) will find it.

58. old Brutus' Lucius Junius Brutus, the founder of Rome.

59. offense (ə fens') *n.* crime.

60. countenance (koun' tənəns) *n.* support.

61. alchemy (al' kə mē) *n.* an early form of chemistry in which the goal was to change metals of little value into gold.

62. conceited (kən sēt' id) understood.

Review and Assess

Thinking About Act I

- 1. Respond:** Which character interests you most? Why?
- (a) Recall:** How do the workmen celebrate as the play begins?
(b) Analyze: Why does their celebration annoy Flavius and Marullus?
- (a) Recall:** What warning does the soothsayer give to Caesar?
(b) Infer: What does Caesar's reaction tell you about him?
- (a) Recall:** What does Brutus say when he hears the shouts of the people? **(b) Infer:** What mixed feelings does the shouting arouse in Brutus? **(c) Analyze:** How does Cassius take advantage of Brutus' conflicting feelings?
- 5. Apply:** Explain how Brutus, Cassius, and Caesar represent qualities that can be found in people of any time period.
- 6. Predict:** What do you suspect is going to happen in the next part of the play? Why?