

Julius Caesar
Act III, scene i

SCENE I. Rome. Before the Capitol; the Senate sitting above.

A crowd of people; among them ARTEMIDORUS and the Soothsayer.
Flourish. Enter CAESAR, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, TREBONIUS, CINNA,
ANTONY, LEPIDUS, POPILIUS, PUBLIUS, and others

CAESAR

[To the Soothsayer] The ides of March are come.

Soothsayer

Ay, Caesar; *but not gone*.

ARTEMIDORUS

Hail, Caesar! read this schedule.

DECIUS BRUTUS

Trebonius doth desire you to o'erread,
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? 10

PUBLIUS

Sirrah, give place.

CASSIUS

What, urge you your petitions in the street?
Come to the Capitol.

[CAESAR goes up to the Senate-House, the rest following]

POPILIUS

I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

CASSIUS

What enterprise, Popilius? 15

POPILIUS

Fare you well.

[Advances to CAESAR]

BRUTUS

What said Popilius Lena?

CASSIUS

He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.
I fear our purpose is discovered.

BRUTUS

Look, how he makes to Caesar; mark him. 20

CASSIUS

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

BRUTUS

Cassius, be constant: 25
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;
For, look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not change.

CASSIUS

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

[Exeunt ANTONY and TREBONIUS]

DECIUS BRUTUS

Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go, 30

And presently prefer his suit to Caesar.

BRUTUS

He is address'd: press near and second him.

CINNA

Casca, you are the first that rears your hand.

CAESAR

Are we all ready? What is now amiss

That Caesar and his senate must redress? 35

METELLUS CIMBER

[Kneeling]

Most high, most mighty, and most puissant Caesar,

Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat

An humble heart,--

CAESAR

I must prevent thee, Cimber.

These couchings and these lowly courtesies 40

Might fire the blood of ordinary men,

And turn pre-ordinance and first decree

Into the law of children. Be not fond,

To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood

That will be thaw'd from the true quality 45

With that which melteth fools; I mean, sweet words,

Low-crooked court'sies and base spaniel-fawning.

Thy brother by decree is banished:

If thou dost bend and pray and fawn for him,

I spurn thee like a cur out of my way. 50

Know, Caesar doth not wrong, nor without cause

Will he be satisfied.

METELLUS CIMBER

Is there no voice more worthy than my own

To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear

For the repealing of my banish'd brother? 55

BRUTUS

[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

[Kneeling]

Pardon, Caesar; Caesar, pardon: 60

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, 65

Of whose true-fix'd and resting quality

There is no fellow in the firmament.

The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks,

They are all fire and every one doth shine,

But there's but one in all doth hold his place: 70

So in the world; 'tis furnish'd 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, 75

Let me a little show it, even in this;

That I was constant Cimber should be banish'd,

And constant do remain to keep him so.

CINNA

[Kneeling]
O Caesar,--
CAESAR
Hence! wilt thou lift up Olympus?
80
DECIUS BRUTUS
[Kneeling]
Great Caesar,--
CAESAR
Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?
CASCA
Speak, hands for me!
[CASCA first, then the other Conspirators
and BRUTUS stab CAESAR]
CAESAR
Et tu, Brute! Then fall, Caesar.
[Dies]
CINNA
Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
85
Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.
CASSIUS
Some to the common pulpits, and cry out
'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!'
BRUTUS
People and senators, be not affrighted;
90
Fly not; stand stiff: ambition's debt is paid.
CASCA
Go to the pulpit, Brutus.
DECIUS BRUTUS
And Cassius too.
BRUTUS
Where's Publius?
CINNA
Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.
METELLUS CIMBER
Stand fast together, lest some friend of Caesar's
95
Should chance--
BRUTUS
Talk not of standing. Publius, good cheer;
There is no harm intended to your person,
Nor to no Roman else: so tell them, Publius.
CASSIUS
And leave us, Publius; lest that the people,
100
Rushing on us, should do your age some mischief.
BRUTUS
Do so: and let no man abide this deed,
But we the doers.
[Re-enter TREBONIUS]
CASSIUS
Where is Antony?
TREBONIUS
Fled to his house amazed:
105
*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.
110
CASSIUS
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
His time of fearing death. *Stoop, Romans, stoop,* 115
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,
Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom and liberty!' 120

CASSIUS
Stoop, then, and wash. *How many ages hence*
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents yet unknown! (Shakespeare giving himself a shout-out)

BRUTUS
How many times shall Caesar bleed in sport,
That now on Pompey's basis lies along 125
No worthier than the dust!

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

DECIUS BRUTUS
What, shall we forth? 130

CASSIUS
Ay, every man away:
Brutus shall lead; and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest and best hearts of Rome.
[Enter a Servant]

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

Servant
Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel: 135
Thus did Mark Antony bid me fall down;
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; 140
Say I fear'd Caesar, honour'd him and loved him.
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 145
So well as Brutus living; but will follow
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; 150
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, so please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied; and, by my honour,
Depart untouch'd.

Servant
I'll fetch him presently. 155
[Exit]

BRUTUS
I know that we shall have him well to friend.

CASSIUS
I wish we may: but yet have I a mind
That fears him much; and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.

BRUTUS
But here comes Antony. 160
[Re-enter ANTONY]

Welcome, Mark Antony.

ANTONY

O mighty Caesar! dost thou lie so low?
Are all thy conquests, glories, triumphs, spoils,
Shrunk to this little measure? Fare thee well.
I know not, gentlemen, what you intend, 165
Who else must be let blood, who else is rank:
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Caesar's death hour, nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made rich
With the most noble blood of all this world. 170
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,
I shall not find myself so apt to die:
No place will please me so, no mean of death, 175
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.
Though now we must appear bloody and cruel,
As, by our hands and this our present act, 180
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;
And pity to the general wrong of Rome--
As fire drives out fire, so pity pity-- 185
Hath done this deed on Caesar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden points, Mark Antony:
Our arms, in strength of malice, and our hearts
Of brothers' temper, do receive you in
With all kind love, good thoughts, and reverence. 190

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
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,
And then we will deliver you the cause, 195
Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.