

Julius Caesar



William Shakespeare

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Act I

SCENE I. Rome. A street.

Enter FLAVIUS, MARULLUS, and certain Commoners

FLAVIUS

Hence! home, you idle creatures get you home:
Is this a holiday? what! know you not,
Being mechanical, you ought not walk
Upon a labouring day without the sign
Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

First Commoner

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?

Second Commoner

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

MARULLUS

But what trade art thou? answer me directly.

Second Commoner

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

MARULLUS

What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what trade?

Second Commoner

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

MARULLUS

What meanest thou by that? mend me, thou saucy fellow!

Second Commoner

Why, sir, cobble you.

FLAVIUS

Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

Second Commoner

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

FLAVIUS

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

Second Commoner

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.

MARULLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,
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? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers 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,
Have you not made an universal shout,
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks,
To hear the replication of your sounds
Made in her concave shores?
And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now cull out a holiday?
And do you now strew flowers in his way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood? Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
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
Into the channel, till the lowest stream
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

Exeunt all the Commoners

See whether their basest metal be not moved;
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;

This way will I

disrobe the images,
If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.

MARULLUS

May we do so?
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

FLAVIUS

It is no matter; let no images
Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about,
And drive away the vulgar from the streets:
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.
These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,
Who else would soar above the view of men
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

Exeunt

SCENE II. A public place.

Flourish. Enter CAESAR; ANTONY, for the course; CALPURNIA, PORTIA, DECIUS BRUTUS, CICERO, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA; a great crowd following, among them a Soothsayer

CAESAR

Calpurnia!

CASCA

Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

CAESAR

Calpurnia!

CALPURNIA

Here, my lord.

CAESAR

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

ANTONY

Caesar, my lord?

CAESAR

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

ANTONY

I shall remember:

When Caesar says 'do this,' it is perform'd.

CAESAR

Set on; and leave no ceremony out.

Flourish

Soothsayer

Caesar!

CAESAR

Ha! who calls?

CASCA

Bid every noise be still: peace yet again!

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 turn'd to hear.

Soothsayer

Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR

What man is that?

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.

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.

Sennet. Exeunt all except 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

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

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 veil'd my look,

I turn the trouble of my countenance

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 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 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.

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,
Where many of the best respect in Rome,
Except immortal Caesar, speaking of Brutus
And groaning underneath this age's yoke,
Have wish'd 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.
And be not jealous on me, gentle Brutus:
Were I a common laughèr, or did use
To stale with ordinary oaths my love
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.

Flourish, 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.

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?
If it be aught toward the general good,

Set honour in one eye and death i' the other,
And I will look on both indifferently,
For let the gods so speed me as I love
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
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
Endure the winter's cold as well as he:
For once, upon a raw and gusty day,
The troubled Tiber chafing with 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,
Accoutred as I was, I plunged in
And bade him follow; so indeed he did.
The torrent roar'd, and we did buffet it
With lusty sinews, throwing it aside
And stemming it with hearts of controversy;
But ere we could arrive the point proposed,
Caesar cried 'Help me, Cassius, or I sink!'
I, as Aeneas, our great ancestor,
Did from the flames of Troy upon his shoulder
The old Anchises bear, so from the waves of Tiber
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,
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
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
A man of such a feeble temper should