

Portia. Why, know'st thou any
towards him?

Soothsayer. None that I know will be, much
that I fear may chance.¹⁹⁶

Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow;
The throng that follows Caesar at the heels,
Of senators, of praetors,¹⁹⁷ common suitors,
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death.
I'll get me to a place more void,¹⁹⁸ and there
Speak to great Caesar as he comes along.

[Exit.]

Portia. I must go in. [Aside] Ay me, how weak a
thing

The heart of woman is! O Brutus,
The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!
Sure the boy heard me.—Brutus hath a suit
That Caesar will not grant.—O, I grow faint.—
Run, Lucius, and commend me¹⁹⁹ to my lord;
Say I am merry.²⁰⁰ Come to me again,
And bring me word what he doth say to thee.

[Exeunt severally.²⁰¹]

¹⁹⁶ chance: come to be.

¹⁹⁷ praetors: elected magistrates (Brutus was *praetor urbanus*, the chief justice).

¹⁹⁸ more void: less crowded with people.

¹⁹⁹ commend me: give my greetings and goodwill.

²⁰⁰ merry: cheerful, even frivolous.

²⁰¹ severally: separately.

ACT 3

Scene 1. Rome. A street before the Capitol.

Flourish. Enter Caesar, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Decius,
Metellus, Trebonius, Cinna, Antony, Lepidus,
Artemidorus, Popilius, Publius, and the Soothsayer.

Caesar. The ides of March are come.

Soothsayer. Ay, Caesar, but not gone.

Artemidorus. Hail, Caesar! Read this schedule.¹

Decius. Trebonius doth desire you to o'er-read,
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
serv'd.²

Artemidorus. Delay not, Caesar; read it
instantly.

Caesar. What, is the fellow mad?

Publius. Sirrah,³ give place.⁴ 10

Cassius. What, urge you your petitions in the
street?

Come to the Capitol.

Caesar enters the Capitol, the rest following.

¹ schedule: scroll.

² serv'd: presented, delivered (legal term, as in a legal writ or other document).

³ Sirrah: term of address to inferiors.

⁴ Give place: clear the way.

Popilius. I wish your enterprise to-day may thrive.

Cassius. What enterprise, Popilius?

Popilius.

Fare you well.

[Advances to Caesar.]

Brutus. What said Popilius Lena?

15

Cassius. He wish'd to-day our enterprise might thrive.

I fear our purpose is discovered.

Brutus. Look how he makes to⁵ Caesar. Mark him.

Cassius. Casca, be sudden,⁶ for we fear prevention.⁷

Brutus, what shall be done? If this be known,
Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back,⁸
For I will slay myself.

20

Brutus. Cassius, be constant.⁹
Popilius Lena speaks not of our purposes;
For look, he smiles, and Caesar doth not
change.¹⁰

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

25

[Exeunt Antony and Trebonius.]

⁵ heads toward.

⁶ sudden: swift.

⁷ prevention: being forestalled.

⁸ Cassius or Caesar never shall turn back: i.e., either Cassius or Caesar will die.

⁹ constant: (1) calm; (2) resolved in purpose.

¹⁰ change: i.e., change in his expression or appearance (he is not enraged or appalled).

Decius. Where is Metellus Cimber? Let him go
And presently prefer¹¹ his suit to Caesar.

Brutus. He is address'd;¹² press near and second
him.

Cinna. Casca, you are the first that rears your
hand.

30

Caesar. Are we all ready? What is now amiss
That Caesar and his Senate must redress?

Metellus. Most high, most mighty, and most
puissant¹³ Caesar,
Metellus Cimber throws before thy seat
An humble heart.

[Kneeling.]

Caesar. I must prevent thee, Cimber.

35

These couchings¹⁴ and these lowly¹⁵ courtesies
Might fire the blood of ordinary men,
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree¹⁶
Into the law of children. Be not fond¹⁷
To think that Caesar bears such rebel blood¹⁸
That will be thaw'd from the true¹⁹ quality²⁰
With that which melteth fools—I mean, sweet
words,

40

Low-crooked curtsies, and base spaniel²¹ fawning.
Thy brother by decree is banished;
If thou dost bend, and pray, and fawn for him,

45

¹¹ presently prefer: at once, immediately present.

¹² address'd: ready, prepared.

¹³ puissant: powerful, influential.

¹⁴ couchings: crouching, bowing protestations.

¹⁵ lowly: (1) humble; (2) abasing.

¹⁶ pre-ordinance and first decree: ancient customs or laws.

¹⁷ fond: foolish enough.

¹⁸ rebel blood: uncontrolled, rebellious blood (feelings).

¹⁹ true: proper.

²⁰ quality: (1) character; (2) degree of excellence.

²¹ spaniel: breed of dog with drooping ears, known for its blind obedience.

I spurn thee like a cur out of my way.
 Know, Caesar doth not wrong; nor without
 cause
 Will he be satisfied.

Metellus. Is there no voice more worthy than
 my own
 To sound more sweetly in great Caesar's ear
 For the repealing²² of my banish'd brother?

Brutus. 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. Pardon, Caesar! Caesar, pardon! 55
 As low as to thy foot doth Cassius fall,
 To beg enfranchisement²³ for Publius Cimber.

Caesar. I could be well mov'd, if I were as you;
 If I could pray to move,²⁴ prayers would move me;
 But I am constant as the northern star,²⁵ 60
 Of whose true-fix'd and resting²⁶ quality
 There is no fellow²⁷ in the firmament.
 The skies are painted with unnumb'red²⁸ sparks,
 They are all fire, and every one doth shine;
 But there's but one in all doth hold²⁹ his place. 65
 So in the world: 'tis furnish'd well with men,
 And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;³⁰

²² *repealing*: recalling, bringing back (from banishment).

²³ *enfranchisement*: freedom, restoration to the proper rights of a citizen.

²⁴ *move*: i.e., sway or influence the opinions or decisions of others.

²⁵ *northern star*: Polaris, the polestar, used as a point of navigation.

²⁶ *resting*: changeless, having constancy of character.

²⁷ *fellow*: equal.

²⁸ *unnumb'red*: innumerable, uncountable.

²⁹ *hold*: hold to, keep to.

³⁰ *apprehensive*: capable of reason or perception.

Yet in the number I do know but one
 That unassailable holds on his rank,
 Unshak'd of motion; and that I am he, 70
 Let me a little show it, even in this—
 That I was constant³¹ Cimber should be banish'd,
 And constant do remain to keep him so.

Cinna. O Caesar!

Caesar. Hence! Wilt thou lift up Olympus?³²

Decius. Great Caesar!

Caesar. Doth not Brutus bootless³³ kneel? 75

Casca. Speak, hands, for me!

[They stab Caesar. Casca strikes the first, Brutus the last blow.]

Caesar. Et tu, Brute?³⁴—Then fall, Caesar!

[Dies.]

Cinna. Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!
 Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets.

Cassius. Some to the common pulpits,³⁵ and cry
 out 80

'Liberty, freedom, and enfranchisement!'

Brutus. People and Senators, be not affrighted.
 Fly not; stand still. Ambition's debt is paid.³⁶

Casca. Go to the pulpit, Brutus.

Decius. And Cassius too. 85

³¹ *constant*: determined.

³² *Olympus*: mountain in Thessaly that is the abode of the gods in classical mythology.

³³ *bootless*: in vain.

³⁴ *Et tu, Brute?* And you (too), Brutus? (Latin).

³⁵ *pulpits*: speaker's stands.

³⁶ *Ambition's debt is paid*: Caesar's ambition has received its just deserts.

Brutus. Where's Publius?

Cinna. Here, quite confounded with this mutiny.³⁷

Metellus. Stand fast together, lest some friend of
Caesar's
Should chance—

Brutus. Talk not of standing.³⁸ 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,
Rushing on us, should do your age some
mischief.

Brutus. Do so; and let no man abide³⁹ this deed
But we the doers.

Re-enter Trebonius.

Cassius. Where is Antony?

Trebonius. Fled to his house amaz'd.⁴⁰
Men, wives, and children, stare, cry out, and
run,
As⁴¹ it were doomsday.

Brutus. Fates,⁴² we will know your pleasures.
That we shall die, we know; 'tis but the time,
And drawing days out, that men stand upon.⁴³

³⁷ *confounded with this mutiny*: overwhelmed by all the tumult.

³⁸ *standing*: organizing, planning out a stance.

³⁹ *abide*: bear the consequences of.

⁴⁰ *amaz'd*: confused, dismayed.

⁴¹ *As*: as if.

⁴² *Fates*: in classical mythology, three goddesses who ruled over the lives of men.

⁴³ *stand upon*: strive, hope for.

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 abridg'd
His time of fearing death. Stoop, Romans, stoop,
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 marketplace,⁴⁴
And waving our red weapons o'er our heads,
Let's all cry 'Peace, freedom, and liberty!'

Cassius. Stoop then, and wash. How many ages
hence
Shall this our lofty scene be acted over
In states unborn and accents⁴⁵ yet unknown!

Brutus. How many times shall Caesar bleed in
sport,⁴⁶
That now on Pompey's basis⁴⁷ lies along⁴⁸
No worthier than the dust!

Cassius. So oft as that shall be,
So often shall the knot⁴⁹ of us be call'd
The men that gave their country liberty.

Decius. What, shall we forth?

Cassius. Ay, every man away.
Brutus shall lead, and we will grace his heels
With the most boldest⁵⁰ and best hearts of Rome.

Enter a Servant.

⁴⁴ *marketplace*: the Roman Forum, the center of Roman public life.

⁴⁵ *accents*: languages.

⁴⁶ *in sport*: as part of a public entertainment.

⁴⁷ *Pompey's basis*: base of the pedestal of the statue of Pompey.

⁴⁸ *along*: stretched out at full length.

⁴⁹ *knot*: close group.

⁵⁰ *most boldest*: an emphatic superlative.

Brutus. Soft,⁵¹ who comes here? A friend of Antony's.

Servant. Thus, Brutus, did my master bid me kneel;

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,⁵² and loving.
Say I love Brutus, and I honour him;
Say I fear'd Caesar, honour'd him, and lov'd him.

If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony
May safely come to him, and be resolv'd⁵³
How Caesar hath deserv'd to lie in death,
Mark Antony shall not love Caesar dead
So well as Brutus living; but will follow
The fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus
Thorough⁵⁴ the hazards of this untrod state⁵⁵
With all true faith. So says my master Antony.

Brutus. Thy master is a wise and valiant Roman;
I never thought him worse.
Tell him, so⁵⁶ please him come unto this place,
He shall be satisfied and, by my honour,
Depart untouch'd.

Servant. I'll fetch him presently.⁵⁷

[Exit.]

⁵¹ Soft: wait.

⁵² royal: princely, beneficent.

⁵³ be resolv'd: know for certain.

⁵⁴ Thorough: through.

⁵⁵ untrod state: unknown, new state of affairs.

⁵⁶ so: if he.

⁵⁷ presently: immediately.

Brutus. I know that we shall have him well to friend.⁵⁸

Cassius. I wish we may. But yet have I a mind
That fears him much; and my misgiving still
Falls shrewdly to the purpose.⁵⁹

Re-enter Antony.

Brutus. But here comes 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,
Who else must be let blood,⁶⁰ who else is rank.⁶¹
If I myself, there is no hour so fit
As Caesar's death's hour; nor no instrument
Of half that worth as those your swords, made
rich

With the most noble blood of all this world.
I do beseech ye, if you bear me hard,⁶²
Now, whilst your purpled⁶³ hands do reek and
smoke,⁶⁴

Fulfil your pleasure. Live⁶⁵ a thousand years,
I shall not find myself so apt⁶⁶ to die.
No place will please me so, no mean⁶⁷ of death,

⁵⁸ well to friend: (1) as a good friend; (2) well worth befriending.

⁵⁹ my misgiving . . . to the purpose: my astute and serious concerns continue to be insightful regarding the real situation.

⁶⁰ let blood: (1) purified (as in "letting blood", a medical practice widely used at the time, through which unwholesome elements were supposed to be purified from the body); (2) killed.

⁶¹ rank: diseased and swollen (in need of bloodletting).

⁶² bear me hard: bear ill will toward me.

⁶³ purpled: i.e., stained with blood (and royal blood at that).

⁶⁴ reek and smoke: steam (with fresh blood).

⁶⁵ Live: though I may live.

⁶⁶ apt: prepared, ready.

⁶⁷ mean: means, manner.

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
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;⁶⁸

165

And pity to the general wrong of Rome,
As fire drives out fire, so pity pity,⁶⁹
Hath done this deed on Caesar. For your part,
To you our swords have leaden⁷⁰ points, Mark
Antony;

170

Our arms in strength of malice,⁷¹ and our hearts
Of brothers' temper,⁷² do receive you in
With all kind love, good thoughts, and
reverence.

175

Cassius. Your voice⁷³ shall be as strong as any man's
In the disposing of new dignities.⁷⁴

Brutus. Only be patient till we have appeas'd
The multitude, beside themselves with fear,
And then we will deliver you⁷⁵ the cause
Why I, that did love Caesar when I struck him,
Have thus proceeded.

180

Antony. I doubt not of your wisdom.
Let each man render me his bloody hand.

185

⁶⁸ pitiful: full of pity.

⁶⁹ pity pity: i.e., the pity for the situation of Rome drove out any pity for Caesar.

⁷⁰ leaden: i.e., blunt.

⁷¹ Our arms in strength of malice: our use of weapons is motivated by feelings of anger.

⁷² our hearts / Of brothers' temper: we feel like brothers in our hearts.

⁷³ voice: particularly as a vote in the Senate.

⁷⁴ In the disposing of new dignities: in dividing offices of government after Caesar's death.

⁷⁵ deliver you: explain to you.

First, Marcus Brutus, will I shake with you;
Next, Caius Cassius, do I take your hand;
Now, Decius Brutus, yours; now yours,
Metellus;

Yours, Cinna; and, my valiant Casca, yours.
Though last, not least in love, yours, good
Trebonius.

190

Gentlemen all—alas, what shall I say?
My credit⁷⁶ now stands on such slippery ground
That one of two bad ways you must conceit⁷⁷ me,
Either a coward or a flatterer.

That I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true!

195

If then thy spirit look upon us now,
Shall it not grieve thee dearer⁷⁸ than thy death
To see thy Antony making his peace,
Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes,
Most noble! in the presence of thy corse?⁷⁹

Had I as many eyes as thou hast wounds,
Weeping as fast as they stream forth thy blood,
It would become me better than to close⁸⁰

200

In terms of friendship with thine enemies.
Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd,⁸¹ brave
hart;⁸²

Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil,⁸³ and crimson'd in thy lethe.⁸⁴
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;

205

⁷⁶ credit: credibility, reputation.

⁷⁷ conceit: judge, conceive of.

⁷⁸ dearer: more dearly, keenly.

⁷⁹ corse: corpse.

⁸⁰ close: join, ally oneself.

⁸¹ bay'd: brought to bay (like an animal).

⁸² hart: stag (a noble animal, also a pun on "heart").

⁸³ spoil: blood.

⁸⁴ lethe: life's blood. (In classical mythology, Lethe is the river of the dead of the realm of Hades, the water of which, when drunk, causes the dead to forget their lives on earth. The term is also used for the gore of dead animals, with which hunters traditionally smeared themselves.)

And this indeed, O world, the heart of thee!
How like a deer stricken⁸⁵ by many princes
Dost thou here lie!

Cassius. Mark Antony—

Antony. Pardon me, Caius Cassius.
The enemies of Caesar shall say this;
Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.⁸⁶

Cassius. I blame you not for praising Caesar so;
But what compact mean you to have with us?
Will you be prick'd⁸⁷ in number of our friends,
Or shall we on,⁸⁸ and not depend on you?

Antony. Therefore I took your hands; but was
indeed
Sway'd from the point by looking down on
Caesar.
Friends am I with you all, and love you all,
Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons
Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous.

Brutus. Or else were this⁸⁹ a savage spectacle.
Our reasons are so full of good regard⁹⁰
That were you, Antony, the son of Caesar,
You should be satisfied.

Antony. That's all I seek;
And am moreover suitor that I may
Produce⁹¹ his body to the market-place

⁸⁵ *strucken*: stricken, struck down, killed.

⁸⁶ *modesty*: moderation.

⁸⁷ *prick'd*: counted, marked down (in a tally of the number of friends).

⁸⁸ *on*: go on.

⁸⁹ *were this*: this would be.

⁹⁰ *regard*: consideration, reasoning.

⁹¹ *Produce*: present, bring forth.

And, in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,
Speak in the order⁹² of his funeral.

Brutus. You shall, Mark Antony.

Cassius. Brutus, a word with you.
[*Aside to Brutus*] You know not what you do.
Do not consent
That Antony speak in his funeral.
Know you how much the people may be mov'd
By that which he will utter?

Brutus. [*Aside to Cassius*] By your pardon—
I will myself into the pulpit first,
And show the reason of our Caesar's death.
What Antony shall speak, I will protest⁹³
He speaks by leave and by permission;
And that we are contented Caesar shall
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.
It shall advantage⁹⁴ more than do us wrong.⁹⁵

Cassius. I know not what may fall.⁹⁶ I like it not.

Brutus. Mark Antony, here, take you Caesar's
body.
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,
But speak all good you can devise of Caesar;
And say you do't by our permission;
Else shall you not have any hand at all
About his funeral. And you shall speak
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,
After my speech is ended.

Antony. Be it so;
I do desire no more.

⁹² *order*: course of a ceremony.

⁹³ *protest*: declare, explain.

⁹⁴ *advantage*: be to the benefit of.

⁹⁵ *wrong*: harm.

⁹⁶ *fall*: befall, happen.

Brutus. Prepare the body then, and follow us.

[Exeunt all but Antony.]

Antony. O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of
earth,⁹⁷ 255

That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.⁹⁸
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy— 260
Which like dumb⁹⁹ mouths do ope¹⁰⁰ their ruby lips
To beg the voice and utterance¹⁰¹ of my tongue—
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic¹⁰² fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber¹⁰³ all the parts of Italy; 265
Blood and destruction shall be so in use,¹⁰⁴
And dreadful objects so familiar,
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quartered with the hands of war,
All pity chok'd with custom of fell¹⁰⁵ deeds; 270
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Até¹⁰⁶ by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines¹⁰⁷ with a monarch's voice
Cry 'Havoc!'¹⁰⁸ and let slip¹⁰⁹ the dogs of war,

⁹⁷ piece of earth: i.e., man (formed from the earth).

⁹⁸ tide of times: the ebb and flow of the stream of history.

⁹⁹ dumb: mute.

¹⁰⁰ ope: open.

¹⁰¹ utterance: (1) speech; (2) vehemence.

¹⁰² Domestic: i.e., internal, national.

¹⁰³ cumber: encumber, oppress.

¹⁰⁴ in use: customary, widely experienced.

¹⁰⁵ fell: cruel.

¹⁰⁶ Até: in classical mythology, goddess of discord and vengeance.

¹⁰⁷ in these confines: within these boundaries, this region.

¹⁰⁸ Havoc! the order for unrestrained slaughter in a battle (which only the king could give).

¹⁰⁹ let slip: unleash.

That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion¹¹⁰ men, groaning for burial. 275

Enter Octavius' Servant.

You serve Octavius Caesar, do you not?

Servant. I do, Mark Antony.

Antony. Caesar did write for him to come to
Rome.

Servant. He did receive his letters, and is
coming, 280
And bid me say to you by word of mouth—
O Caesar! [Seeing the body.]

Antony. Thy heart is big,¹¹¹ get thee apart and
weep.
Passion,¹¹² I see, is catching; for mine eyes,
Seeing those beads of sorrow stand in thine, 285
Began to water. Is thy master coming?

Servant. He lies to-night within seven leagues of
Rome.

Antony. Post¹¹³ back with speed, and tell him what
hath chanc'd.¹¹⁴ 290
Here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome,
No Rome¹¹⁵ of safety for Octavius yet;
Hie¹¹⁶ hence and tell him so. Yet stay awhile;
Thou shall not back till I have borne this corse
to the market-place. There shall I try,¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ carrion: dead, rotting, needing burial.

¹¹¹ big: swollen (with grief).

¹¹² Passion: intense emotion (grief).

¹¹³ Post: travel swiftly by a relay of horses.

¹¹⁴ chanc'd: happened.

¹¹⁵ Rome: pronounced "room".

¹¹⁶ Hie: hurry.

¹¹⁷ try: test to find out.

In my oration, how the people take
 The cruel issue¹¹⁸ of these bloody men;
 According to the which thou shalt discourse
 To young Octavius of the state of things.
 Lend me your hand.

[*Exeunt with Caesar's body.*]

Scene 2. Rome. The Forum.

Enter Brutus and Cassius, with the Plebeians.

Citizens. We will be satisfied!¹¹⁹ Let us be satisfied!

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

Cassius, go you into the other street,
 And part the numbers.¹²⁰

Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;
 Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;
 And public reasons¹²¹ shall be rendered
 Of Caesar's death.

5

1 Plebeian. I will hear Brutus speak.

2 Plebeian. I will hear Cassius, and compare
 their reasons,

When severally we hear them rendered.

10

[*Exit Cassius, with some of the Plebeians. Brutus goes into the pulpit.*]

3 Plebeian. The noble Brutus is ascended.
 Silence!

¹¹⁸ cruel issue: consequences of the cruel actions.

¹¹⁹ will be satisfied: require a full explanation.

¹²⁰ part the numbers: divide up the crowd.

¹²¹ public reasons: (1) publicly given reasons; (2) reasons that touch the public generally.