

# The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act 1, Sc. 2, Close Reading

**Directions:** Read the following passage from Act 1 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.



## CASSIUS

I know that virtue to be in you, Brutus,  
As well as I do know your outward favor.  
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,  
I had as lief not be<sup>1</sup>, as live to be  
In awe of such a thing as I myself.<sup>2</sup>  
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,  
Accout'ed<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>4</sup>, 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 color fly,  
And that same eye whose bend doth awe the world  
Did lose his luster. I did hear him groan;  
Ay, and that tongue of his that bade the Romans

1. just as soon not exist

2. another human being  
(Caesar)

3. dressed in armor

4. a hero of the Trojan  
War; a founder of Rome  
who once carried his  
own father from the  
burning city of Troy

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  
So get the start of<sup>5</sup> the majestic world  
And bear the palm<sup>6</sup> alone.

*Shout. Flourish of trumpets.*

#### BRUTUS

Another general shout?  
I do believe that these applauses are  
For some new honors that are heap'd on Caesar.

#### CASSIUS

Why, man, he doth bestride the narrow world  
Like a Colossus,<sup>7</sup> and we petty men  
Walk under his huge legs and peep about  
To find ourselves dishonorable graves.  
Men at some time are masters of their fates:  
The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars,  
But in ourselves, that we are underlings.  
Brutus and Caesar: what should be in that "Caesar"?  
Why should that name be sounded 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; conjure with 'em,  
"Brutus" will start a spirit as soon as "Caesar."<sup>8</sup>  
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,<sup>9</sup>  
But it was famed with more than with one man?  
When could they say (till now) that talk'd of Rome,  
That her wide walls 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 Brutus once that would have brooked<sup>10</sup>  
Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome<sup>11</sup>  
As easily as a king.

5. should rule

6. a branch of a palm tree was seen as a symbol of victory in this time period

7. a giant or a god

8. raise

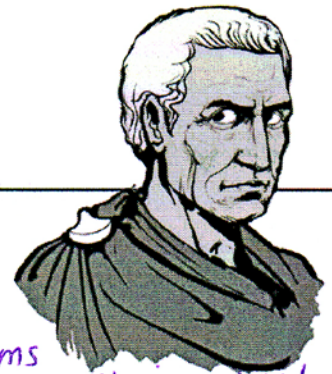
9. in Roman mythology, a great flood once killed everyone except two virtuous people

10. Another famous man with the same name as Brutus once helped overthrow the last king of Rome, a move which allowed the people of Rome to elect their ruler

11. tolerated

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CASSIUS

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As well as I do know your outward favor.  
Well, honor is the subject of my story.

*This seems to be the most important thing to Cassius.*

*Interesting - There's definitely a coldness in the air with all of this conspiracy talk.*

I cannot tell what you and other men  
Think of this life, but for my single self,

I had as lief not be<sup>1</sup>, as live to be

In awe of such a thing as I myself.<sup>2</sup>

*He'd rather die than place someone else before himself?  
Pride = both a strength and a weakness*

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,

*This must be a river.*

Caesar said to me, "Darest thou, Cassius, now

Leap in with me into this angry flood,

And swim to yonder point?" Upon the word,

Accout<sup>3</sup>'red as I was, I plunged in

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*Really? He dove into an "angry" river wearing his armor? He's either a fool or he's lying. I think he's exaggerating to impress/sway Brutus.*

*Wow, Cassius sure thinks highly of himself! He's like an epic hero? Really? I don't trust him.*

*This is a strange phrase. Mixed feelings about each other? About this foolish dare? Maybe Cassius still has mixed feelings about his actions regarding Caesar.*

*Cassius is jealous of Caesar*

*This is how he really feels about Caesar.*

*epilepsy*

1. just as soon not exist

2. another human being (Caesar)

3. dressed in armor

4. a hero of the Trojan War; a founder of Rome who once carried his own father from the burning city of Troy



Cassius is emasculating Caesar here. He cried like a girl.

↑ This is the worst insult tough guys can throw at each other. misogyny?

This emphasizes Cassius' point that Caesar's many honors are undeserved.

Hey! This is the title of John Green's novel, The Fault in Our Stars! Yea!

BRUTUS  
CAESAR  
Both are 6 letters and 2 syllables. good balance - I wonder if Brutus and Caesar are the same kind of man...

Cassius is telling Brutus to live up to the legacy of his name.

Mark him and write his speeches in their books,  
Alas, it cried, "Give me some drink, Titinius,"

As a sick girl.<sup>5</sup> Ye gods, it doth amaze me,  
A man of such a feeble temper should  
So get the start of the majestic world<sup>6</sup>  
And bear the palm alone.

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That her wide walls 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 Brutus once that would have brooked<sup>13</sup>

Th' eternal devil to keep his state in Rome

As easily as a king.

Cassius' adjectives to describe Caesar:

feeble  
sick  
coward  
tired

Dang!

Which is it, Cassius?

only sometimes?  
Fate vs. Free will  
Cassius makes a big deal about remaining free in every way.

Cassius is flattering Brutus, trying to feed his ego here.

5. should rule

6. a branch of a palm tree was seen as a symbol of victory in this time period

7. a giant or a god

8. raise

9. in Roman mythology, a great flood once killed everyone except two virtuous people

10. Another famous man with the same name as Brutus once helped overthrow the last king of Rome, a move which allowed the people of Rome to elect their ruler

11. tolerated

He's saying that men today aren't as honorable as they were in past generations.

↗ echoed here

# The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act 2, Sc. 1, Close Reading

**Directions:** Read the following passage from Act 2 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.



## BRUTUS

It must be by his death: and for my part,  
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,  
But for the general.<sup>1</sup> He would be crowned.  
How that might change his nature? There's the question.  
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder,<sup>2</sup>  
And that craves wary walking. Crown him that,  
And then, I grant, we put a sting in him,  
That at his will he may do danger with.  
The abuse of greatness is when it disjoins  
Remorse from power: and, to speak truth of Caesar,  
I have not known when his affections sway'd  
More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof,  
That lowliness<sup>3</sup> is young ambition's ladder,  
Whereto the climber upward turns his face;  
But when he once attains the upmost round,  
He then unto the ladder turns his back,  
Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees  
By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.  
Then, lest he may, prevent.<sup>4</sup> And, since the quarrel  
Will bear no color for the thing he is,  
Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,  
Would run to these and these extremities;  
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg  
Which hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous,  
And kill him in the shell.

1. public good

2. poisonous snake

3. humility

4. and since Caesar will likely do this, we need to prevent him from doing this



# The Tragedy of Julius Caesar, Act 2, Sc. 1, Close Reading

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Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented  
Would run to these and these extremities;  
And therefore think him as a serpent's egg  
Which hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous,  
And kill him in the shell.

*This isn't personal.*

*a king is too powerful. This reminds me of the saying, "Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely."*

*Leaders need to remember to be remorseful, humble, compassionate.*

*So... kill him while he's defenseless? Before he has a chance to abuse his power? Whoa! The logic is flawed here. You can't punish someone based on what he might do. That's a scary world to live in.*

*Indeed! Tread lightly when hidden danger lurks nearby. Brutus must feel like he's walking on egg shells these days.*

*Social climbers want to deny their roots? Sometimes. This reminds me of Jay Gatsby from The Great Gatsby.*

*Is this true? once we're successful, do we tend to hate the steps/places/people from our past? Hmm...*

*Power/wealth just magnify who we are. I've heard this before. Think of lottery winners.*

<sup>1</sup>. public good

<sup>2</sup>. poisonous snake

<sup>3</sup>. humility

<sup>4</sup>. and since Caesar will likely do this, we need to prevent him from doing this

*AND, where's the evidence? Brutus says right here that he doesn't have any evidence. Ugh!*

# Brutus' Funeral Speech, Act 3, Sc. 2, Close Reading

**Directions:** Read the following passage from Act 3 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.



BRUTUS

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! Hear me for my<sup>1</sup> cause, and be silent, that you may hear. Believe me, for mine honor, and have respect to mine honor, 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 honor him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears, for his love; joy, for his fortune; honor, for his valor; and death, for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman?<sup>2</sup> 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 offenses 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!

1. dear friends

2. so low he would agree to be a slave



# Brutus' Funeral Speech, Act 3, Sc. 2, Close Reading

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You can't listen and speak at the same time. This is true.

Brutus is flattering the commoners here. Smart.

A famous line! Love of country trumps friendship or personal loyalty. Do I agree w/ this?

Logical fallacy. To question Brutus now means that I hate my country and prefer to be a slave. An unfair construct.

Drama! Brutus knows how to sway a crowd. This pause is dynamic and effective. See?

ALL

None, Brutus, none!

Silence = Consent?

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 offenses enforced, for which he suffered death.

not really true - there's no record of Caesar's wrongdoings.

[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.

We all benefit from Caesar's death because none of us will be slaves. (Where is Brutus' proof that this was Caesar's intention?)

Foreshadowing?

ALL

Live, Brutus! Live, live!

1. dear friends

2. so low he would agree to be a slave

He means Antony. He's speaking to the crowd, but he's really speaking to Antony.

Effective use of poetic technique. Repetition and parallelism. Good drama w/ the twist in there.



# Antony's Funeral Speech, Act 3, Sc. 2, Close Reading

**Directions:** Read the following passage from Act 3 and annotate your thoughts, ideas, and/or questions as you read.



## 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 honorable man;  
So are they all, all honorable 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 honorable 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 honorable 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 honorable 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?  
I fear there will a worse come in his place.

FOURTH CITIZEN

Marked 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.<sup>1</sup>

SECOND CITIZEN

Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

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 honorable men.  
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose  
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,  
Than I will wrong such honorable men.  
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;  
I found it in his closet; 'tis his will.  
Let but the commons<sup>2</sup> 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<sup>3</sup> 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.<sup>4</sup>

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, hearing 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?

1. pay dearly for it

2. commoners/regular citizens

3. handkerchiefs

4. heirs

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Has he, masters?

I fear there will a worse come in his place.

So famous!

This is true. We tend to focus on scandals and the negative aspects of a person's life, forgetting all of the good he/she has done.

Antony lists Caesar's "faults":

① a good, faithful friend

② successful in winning battles and bringing ## to benefit Rome.

③ cried with the poor

④ refused the title of king 3 times

⑤ he was beloved by the people of Rome.

This "If" is important. Antony remains unconvinced.

Building ethos with the crowd - He has permission to speak to the crowd.

Repetition of the "honorable man" line is powerful. Effective use of verbal irony. (He means just the opposite of what he says.)

pathos!

like Brutus, Antony knows the power of a dramatic pause. He wants his argument to sink into the crowd.

The crowd is turning.

This reminds me of the proverb:

"The devil you know is better than the one you don't."



FOURTH CITIZEN

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Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

FIRST CITIZEN

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SECOND CITIZEN

Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

*simile!*

THIRD CITIZEN

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

*Not Brutus? Interesting...  
looks like Antony is winning.*

FOURTH CITIZEN

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*The power of suggestion.  
Oh, Antony, you are smooth!*

*Really? Then why mention it at all?  
Antony is great at manipulating this crowd.*

FOURTH CITIZEN

We'll hear the will; read it, Mark Antony.

*I like the double-meaning of this line! "the will." They are hearing Antony's will right now. Clever!*

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, hearing 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?

*This taps into the people's curiosity and greed. Shrewd.*

1. pay dearly for it
2. commoners/regular citizens
3. handkerchiefs
4. heirs

*Flatters the commoners.  
This would stroke their egos.*

*Us vs. Them  
Antony and the people vs. Brutus and the conspirators*

*Wow!  
Caesar's inheritance must be huge! It might help our children and grandchildren.*

*This makes me wonder what's in the will, too!  
Well-played, Antony.*