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## Introduction

It is 44 b.c. in Rome. Julius Caesar, an army general, has defeated a Roman aristocrat named Pompey in a fierce battle. A public celebration is being held as the play opens. But some of the noblemen who had supported Pompey are fearful of Caesar's growing popularity. They're afraid that the ambitious Caesar wants to be named king—which would mean the end of the great Roman Republic. To protect their own power, they begin to conspire against him.

## Cast of Characters

**JULIUS CAESAR** Roman statesman and army general

**OCTAVIUS** A Roman politician; later called Augustus  
Caesar, first Emperor of Rome

**MARK ANTONY** A Roman politician, general, and  
friend of Caesar

**LEPIDUS** A Roman politician

**MARCUS BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS,  
LIGARIUS, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, and  
CINNA** Plotters against Caesar

**CALPURNIA** Caesar's wife



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**PORTIA** Brutus's wife

**CICERO, POPILIUS, and POPILIUS LENA** Senators

**FLAVIUS** and **MARULLUS** Tribunes

**CATO, LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA, and VOLUMNIUS**

Supporters of Brutus

**ARTEMIDORUS** A teacher of rhetoric

**PUBLIUS** An elderly gentleman

**STRATO** and **LUCIUS** Servants to Brutus

**PINDARUS** Servant to Cassius

**THE GHOST OF CAESAR**

A **SOOTHSAYER, a POET, SENATORS, CITIZENS, SOLDIERS,**  
**COMMONERS, MESSENGERS, and SERVANTS**





# ACT 1

## Summary

Flavius and Marullus are angry. They send home some commoners who are waiting to see Caesar enter Rome and remove banners honoring Caesar. Elsewhere, Caesar and his followers wait to watch a race for the feast of Lupercal. A soothsayer comes out of the crowd, telling Caesar to beware the Ides of March. Brutus and Cassius speak about Brutus's recent bad moods.

Cassius hints that Brutus might be a better leader than Caesar. He talks about Caesar's shortcomings and great ambition. Caesar refuses the crown three times when it is offered to him by Mark Antony. Cassius resolves to change Brutus's mind about Caesar's greatness.

That night, a terrible storm rages in Rome. Strange sights are reported. Cassius and Casca talk about Caesar in negative terms. Cassius invites Casca to join him and some others in a plot against Caesar. They agree that if Brutus were on their side, their chances of success would be much greater. Cassius and Casca decide to speak to Brutus in the morning.





## Scene 1

(A street in Rome. **Flavius**, **Marullus**, and certain **commoners** enter.)

**FLAVIUS:** Go home, you idle creatures!

Is this a holiday? Don't you know you're  
Not allowed to walk around on a workday  
Without some sign of your profession?  
Tell me, what is your trade?

**COMMONER 1:** Why, sir, I am a carpenter.

**MARULLUS:** Where are your tools?

Why are you wearing your best clothes?  
And you, sir—what is your trade?

**COMMONER 2:** Sir, I am a cobbler.

I work with a clear conscience,  
For I am, sir, a mender of bad soles.  
If you are out of sorts, sir, I can mend you.

**MARULLUS:** What do you mean by that? Hmm.

Mend *me*, you saucy fellow?

**COMMONER 2:** Why, sir—repair your shoes.

**FLAVIUS:** Why aren't you in your shop? Why do you  
lead these men about the streets?





**COMMONER 2:** To wear out their shoes, sir. Then I'll  
get more work. But, indeed,  
sir, we've taken a holiday to see Caesar and to  
rejoice in his triumph.

**MARULLUS:** Why rejoice? What has he won?  
What captives does he bring home?  
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless  
things!  
Oh, you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome!  
Do you not remember Pompey? Many a  
Time you've climbed up walls and towers,  
Your infants in your arms. There you've sat  
All day long, waiting patiently to  
See great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.  
And when you saw his chariot appear,  
Didn't you shout so loud that the  
River Tiber trembled under her banks  
With the echo of your sounds?  
And now you put on your best clothes?  
You call out a holiday and  
Lay flowers before him who comes  
In triumph over Pompey's blood?  
Be gone!





Run to your houses, fall upon your knees!  
Beg the gods to stop the plague  
That will surely punish you for such ingratitude.

**FLAVIUS:** Go, go, good countrymen—and,  
For this fault, gather all the men like you.  
Draw them to the banks of the Tiber, and  
Weep into the river until the  
Lowest stream kisses the highest shores.

(All the **commoners** exit.)

See how they vanish, silent in their guilt.  
You go down that way toward the Capitol.  
I'll go this way. Remove any banners  
You see that honor Caesar.

**MARULLUS:** May we do so?

You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

**FLAVIUS:** It doesn't matter. Let no statues  
Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll drive  
The commoners from the streets.  
You do the same, where you see them thick.  
We must pluck these feathers from  
Caesar's wing before he can soar so high  
We'll have even more to fear.

(**Flavius** and **Marullus** exit.)



## Scene 2

(A public place. The sound of trumpets. **Caesar** enters, followed by **Antony, Calpurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius,** and **Casca**. A crowd follows, among them a **soothsayer**.)

**CAESAR:** Calpurnia!

**CALPURNIA:** Here, my lord.

**CAESAR:** Stand directly in Antony's way,  
When he runs his course. Antony!  
Do not forget to touch Calpurnia  
As you race past her. The elders say that  
Childless women, touched in this holy race  
On the feast of Lupercal, will soon be able  
To have children.

**ANTONY:** I shall remember.

When Caesar says "Do this," it is performed.

(Trumpets sound.)

**SOOTHSAYER (from the crowd):** Caesar!

Beware the ides of March.

**CAESAR:** Who said that?

**BRUTUS:** A soothsayer warns you to be careful on  
March 15.





**CAESAR:** Let me see his face.

**CASSIUS:** Fellow, come out of the crowd!

**CAESAR:** Speak once again.

**SOOTHSAYER:** Beware the ides of March.

**CAESAR:** He is a dreamer. Let us leave him.

*(All but Brutus and Cassius exit.)*

**CASSIUS:** Will you go watch the race?

**BRUTUS:** I am not interested in games. I lack

That quick spirit that is in Antony.

But don't let me stop you, Cassius.

I'll leave, and you can watch.





## JULIUS CAESAR

**CASSIUS:** Brutus, I have noticed that  
You seem to be avoiding me lately.

**BRUTUS:** No, Cassius. It's just that I've been  
Concerned with some personal matters.  
But do not let my good friends—of which,  
Cassius, you are one—worry too much about  
me.

My neglect of friends is only because  
Poor Brutus is at war with himself.

**CASSIUS:** Then I have been mistaken.  
I have kept my thoughts to myself.  
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

**BRUTUS:** No, for the eye does not see itself  
Except by reflection in other things.

**CASSIUS:** It is very sad, Brutus,  
That you have no mirrors to reveal  
Your hidden worth to your own eyes.  
I have heard many respected Romans,  
Except immortal Caesar, praising you.  
Groaning under these troubled times, they  
Wish that noble Brutus had Caesar's eyes.



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