

JULIUS CAESAR**(From Act III Scene 2)****Introduction**

The play opens with Julius Caesar's victorious return to Rome after defeating the sons of Pompey. While people rejoice, there is a group which fears that all these victories would get into Caesar's head and he would cease to be democratic. Cassius, Brutus and others plot to kill Caesar.

A soothsayer (astrologer) warns Caesar about the "ides of March". Calphurnia, Caesar's wife, forbids him from going to the Senate House as she has had bad dreams. Decius Brutus, one of the conspirators, convinces Caesar to come to the Senate House.

At the Senate House, the conspirators surround Caesar. Casca is the first to stab him. Caesar is shocked when he sees his friend Marcus Brutus with a sword. With an anguished cry of Et tu, Brute?

(You too Brutus) he dies.

Mark Antony, Caesar's trusted friend, meets the murderers and requests them to allow him to take Caesar's body to the market place. Marcus Brutus agrees, but warns Antony not to blame them in his funeral speech.

In Act III Scene 2, Brutus justifies the murder of Caesar. But Mark Antony, with his eloquence, wins the public over to his side. The result is that a riot breaks out and people are moved to a frenzy to avenge the murder of Caesar. Cassius and Brutus flee Rome, and Mark Antony, Octavius Caesar and Amelius Lepidus become the 'triumvirs'. At the battle of Philippi, the forces of Cassius and Marcus Brutus are defeated, and true to his word, Brutus kills himself with his sword.

Note: This extract is known for the funeral orations of Brutus and Mark Antony.

Brutus: Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your 5 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 honour him; but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition. Who is here so base that would be a bondman? 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.

Citizens. None, Brutus, none.

Brutus. Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus.

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.

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 honourable man;

So are they all; all honourable 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 honourable 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 honourable 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 honourable 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 judg'ment! 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. Mark'd 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.

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 dispos'd to stir Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,

I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,

Who, you all know, are honourable men:

I will not do them wrong; I rather choose

To wrong the dead, to wrong myself, and you,

Than I will wrong such honourable men.

But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;

I found it in his closet,—'tis his will:

Let but the commons 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 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.

Antony. If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle: I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on;

'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii:—
Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:
See what a rent the envious Casca made:
Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd;
And, as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,
As rushing out of doors, to be resolv'd
If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;
For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:
Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him!
This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,
Quite vanquished him: then burst his mighty heart;
And, in his mantle muffling up his face,
Even at the base of Pompey's statue,
Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.
O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!
Antony. Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up
To such a sudden flood of mutiny:
I am no orator, as Brutus is;
But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,
That love my friend; and that they know full well
That gave me public leave to speak of him:
For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,
Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,
To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;
I tell you that which you yourselves do know;
Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,
And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,
And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony
Would ruffle up your spirits, and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

Glossary (line numbers are given for easy reference):

overs : close friends

ensure : judge

enses : reason (Brutus appeals to the head and not to the heart, as Antony does)

valiant : very brave and determined

slew : killed

base : depraved; mean

vile : morally base, disgusting

I have the same dagger : I will kill myself (Brutus later dies for myself by his own sword)

oft : often

interred : buried, i.e. let the good qualities of Caesar rest with him in his grave

grievous fault : serious mistake

Caesar answer'd it : Caesar paid for it (his mistakes) with his life

under leave : under permission

honourable : honest, upright. Notice the repetition of the word in his speech. From a compliment it turns into a taunt.

captives : prisoners

ransoms : payment for the release of prisoners

coffers : state treasury

Ambition should be : an ambitious person made of sterner stuff would be strict (but Caesar, points out Mark Antony, was one with the masses)

Lupercal : Lupercalia—an ancient fertility festival in honour of Pan, the god of the shepherds

cause : reason

what cause withholds you, : what prevents you from then, to mourn for him? mourning for Caesar?

O judg'ment! Thou art : men have lost their fled to brutish beasts capacity to judge and reason

methinks : it seems to me (that)

I fear there will a worse : a person worse than come in his place Caesar might rule

Mark'd ye his words? : Did you pay attention to his (Antony's) words?

abide it : pay for it (someone will have to pay for Caesar's death)

mark him : listen to him

so poor : lowly in rank; even in death the lowly placed citizen does not honour Caesar

mutiny : revolt

parchment : animal skin used as writing surface

his will : Caesar's will

napkins : handkerchiefs

bequeathing : leave to a person by a will

legacy : gift left in a will

issue : children

mantle : cloak. Antony displays the bloodstained cloak of Caesar.

Nervii : The battle of the Sambre, 57 B.C. Caesar defeated the Nervii, a tribe of Gaul.

By uncovering the body of Caesar and revealing the stab wounds, Antony plays on the emotions of the crowd and inflames them.

Cassius and Casca - along with Brutus, Cassius and Casca stabbed Caesar.

rent : tear; cut (Note: Antony was not there when Caesar was murdered but he uses his imagination.)

plucked his cursed steel : pulled out the cursed away sword

as : as though

resolved : informed

unkindest cut : cruel, unnatural because Caesar loved Brutus and Brutus repaid his love by stabbing him. (Pay attention to Shakespeare's language—most unkindest cut)

Ingratitude, : Personification. more strong than traitors' Ingratitude is personified arms/ Quite vanquished him here.

vanquished : defeated

Then burst his: When Caesar saw Brutus mighty heart/And, in his with the sword, he did mantle muffling up his face not resist; instead he covered his face with his mantle.

Pompey: the Roman general whom Caesar had defeated

The crowd does not see the irony in Antony's speech.

wit: intelligence

worth: reputation. Antony says that he does not have the skills needed for an orator.

To stir men's blood : to stir up emotions

Poor dumb mouths : as the wounds cannot speak

Antony expresses their agony.

ruffle: disturb, upset

Antony had all along said that he did not want to incite the crowd but his eloquent speech does just that.

Join Us on FB 

For English – Examsdaily

For Tamil – Examsdaily Tamil

For  WhatsApp Group - [Click Here](#)