

**IULIUS**  
**CAESAR**

By- **William Shakespeare**

**SUMMARY**

Caesar's wife Calpurnia dreams of somebody killing Caesar. She is restless throughout the night and keeps shouting in her sleep.

Calpurnia believes that such bad omens are a premonition of evil and some harm would befall Caesar.

Calpurnia wants Caesar to stay at home. She tells Caesar that she does not believe in omens and forecast but what she had seen in her dream had made her

believe that there was a threat to his life.

Caesar rebuffs her, refusing to give in to fear. Caesar says these signs apply to the world in general and refuses to believe that they bore ill for him personally.

He feels that valiant people like him should not exhibit cowardice and succumb to dreams.

Calpurnia says it is Caesar's overconfidence which has consumed his wisdom.

Finally, Calpurnia prevails upon Caesar to stay at home.

Decius Brutus arrives and jeopardizes Calpurnia's plan. He tells that

Calpurnia

has misinterpreted her dream.

He appeals to the ambitious side of Caesar and forces Caesar to go to the Senate, where the senators are waiting to offer a crown to him.

The conspirators put before Caesar the petition of the banished

Publius Cimber, the brother of Metellus Cimber. Caesar rejects the petition of Metellus Cimber to revoke the orders for his brother's banishment. He

believes that if somebody has done wrong he/she deserves to be punished

He rejects Metellus Cimber's mercy plea.

This proves to be the last nail in his coffin.

Immediately afterwards, Casca and other senators along with Brutus stab

Caesar.

Caesar's last words are, "Et tu Brute?"

The conspirators proclaim that they have got liberty and freedom. They call Caesar a tyrant. The conspirators turn to the plebians and start shouting slogans of "Liberty, Freedom and Enfranchisement" as if they were safeguarding the rights of all the Romans.

Mark Antony is too dumbstruck to see Caesar's dead body in a pool of blood, but

tactfully restrains himself from making any statements.

Antony calls Brutus and other conspirators who have murdered Caesar as 'the choice and master spirits of this age.' He wants them to even kill him and lay him

beside Caesar.

Both Brutus and Cassius tell Antony that he must not think of them as

murderers.

Their hands may be smeared with blood but their hearts are full of brotherly love for him. They try to justify their action.

Antony requests Brutus for allowing him to make a funeral speech.

Cassius does not want Antony to speak at funeral ceremony because he feels that people may be moved by his speech.

Dismissing Cassius' objection, Brutus allows him but only after he has himself addressed the public. He tells Antony that he could take Caesar's dead body for the funeral and he also tells him that he will speak only about the good aspects of Caesar and not blame them (conspirators).

Antony calls Brutus and others as butchers. He feels miserable that he has shaken hands with them. He foresees war, strife and destruction in Rome. He

says that a curse will befall Rome and civil war will take place. Killings will be common and there will be fire, destruction and death all around.

Brutus asks people of Rome to listen him with patience. He tells them he too loved Caesar and was his friend but he loved Rome more than he loved Caesar. He says Caesar was honourable, valiant and fortunate but he was very ambitious too. It was this reason because of which he killed him.

The public hails Brutus and agrees with him.

Antony draws the attention of the people towards all the deeds done by Caesar.

He tells them that Caesar always wept when the poor wept. Ambitious men do not cry as they are made of sterner stuff. Then he draws their attention to the number of times Caesar had refused to adorn the crown. This clearly indicates that Caesar was not ambitious.

He tries to arouse the emotions of people of Rome by appealing to their senses and comparing it with the statement made by Brutus. This has a great impact in the head and heart of the Romans.

He also very cleverly mentions the will made by Caesar wherein Caesar has rewarded them with seventy five silver coins, his private arbours and newly planted orchards

Antony uses his excellent oratorical skills very cleverly and succeeds in inciting the mob to mutiny and wreak havoc against the conspirators. His speech

arouses the people to such an extent that they declare mutiny and decide to burn

down the houses of Brutus and other conspirators for murdering Caesar.

Antony with help of Octavius Caesar, Julius Caesar's nephew defeats Brutus and

Cassius at Phillipi and Sardis and both commit suicide.

### **PLOT OF THE PLAY**

The heavens forecast the death of Caesar through Calpurnia's dream.

Calpurnia tries to tell Caesar that he should stay at home and not go

anywhere because what she had seen in her dream had made her believe

that there is threat to his life.

Caesar rebuffs her, refusing to give in to fear. He feels that valiant people like him should not exhibit cowardice and succumb to dreams

Calpurnia says it is Caesar's overconfidence which has consumed his wisdom.

Finally, Calpurnia prevails upon Caesar to stay at home.

Decius Brutus arrives. He appeals to the ambitious side of Caesar and forces Caesar to go to the Senate, where the senators are waiting to offer a crown to him.

The conspirators put before Caesar the petition of the banished Publius Cimber, the brother of Metellus Cimber

Caesar rejects the petition of Metellus Cimber to revoke the orders for his brother's banishment

Casca and other senators along with Brutus stab Caesar. Caesar's last words are, "Et tu Brute?"

The conspirators proclaim that they have got liberty and freedom

Mark Antony is too dumbstruck to see Caesar's dead body in a pool of blood, but

tactfully restrains himself from making any statements.

Antony requests Brutus for allowing him to make a funeral speech.

Brutus allows him but only after he has himself addressed the public.

Brutus asks people of Rome to listen him with patience. He tells them he too loved Caesar and was his friend but he loved Rome more than he loved Caesar. He says Caesar was becoming ambitious and therefore he was killed by them

Antony tries to arouse the emotions of people of Rome by appealing to their senses and comparing it with the statement made by Brutus. He also mentions the will of Caesar. This has a great impact in the head and heart of the Romans

His speeches arouse the people to such an extent that they declare mutiny and decide to burn down the houses of Brutus and other conspirators for murdering

Caesar.

Brutus and Cassius commit suicide

### **DIFFICULT WORDS AND THEIR MEANINGS**

- Right form of war - correct battle order
- Beyond all use - most unnatural
- Valiant - brave
- Graybeards- old men (contemptuously dismissing the senators).
- Portents - omen
- Great men shall press For tinctures, stains, relics and cognizance - great men shall gather around Caesar and stain their handkerchiefs in his blood which will serve as colours added to a coat of arms, an object of reverence, mementos and a badge of service.
- Expounded - explained
- Puissant - powerful
- Couchings and these lowly courtesies- bowing and bending.

- Pre-ordinance- an order that has existed from earlier times.
- First decree- law passed earlier
- I could pray to move - pray to others to change their minds.
- Resting – permanent
- Ettu, Brute - even you, Brutus
- Bear me hard - bear a grudge against me
- Reek – stench
- Cumber – burden
- Custom of fell deeds - terrible deeds shall become so familiar.
- Ate- Greek goddess of revenge
- Believe me for mine honour- believe me because you know I am honourable.
- Censure- judge
- Rude- uncivilized
- Lupercal- the feast of the god Lupercus. Lupercus was the protector of flocks and herds, the god of fertility.
- Disprove- contradict
- Stood against - overcome the opposition of.
- Wrong the dead - be unjust to Caesar, who has been assassinated, by calling him ambitious.
- To wrong myself - by not speaking what I know.
- You - by allowing you to be deceived by Brutus.
- Ingratitude - the blow struck by Brutus' ingratitude.
- Which all the while ran blood - which was covered with Caesar's blood.

### **MAJOR CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY CALPURNIA**

Caesar's wife.

Loves and cares for Julius  
Caesar.

Calpurnia invests great authority in omens and portents.

She warns Caesar against going to the Senate on the Ides of March, since she has had terrible nightmares and heard reports of many bad omens.

Caesar's ambition ultimately causes him to disregard her advice.

### **MARCUS BRUTUS**

emerges as the most complex character in Julius Caesar.

Close associate and friend of Caesar.

. He is a powerful public figure, a dignified military leader, a republican, a great patriot and a loving friend.

To him his country and countrymen held great importance.

Brutus's rigid idealism is both his greatest virtue and his most deadly flaw.

He was a gullible person who couldn't judge people. He easily believes Cassius when he told him that Caesar was threat to Rome as he was an ambitious person and he wanted to make Romans his slaves.

For the love of his country and countrymen Brutus kills Caesar.

### **JULIUS CAESAR**

The greatest and most powerful of the Romans.

A valiant warrior who brought Rome great glory.

Loved Rome and its people.

Did not believe in omens and forecasts.

Calpurnia says he is overconfident and his overconfidence has consumed his wisdom.

Somewhere deep within he wants to be the ruler of Rome.

It is his ego and ambition that Decius Brutus appeals and persuades him to go to the senate.

Assassinated by Brutus, Cassius and band of conspirators who feel Caesar is very ambitious and wants the crown.

### **MARK ANTONY**

Caesar's most loyal friend.

A great orator who incites the mob through his oratory skills.

Antony proves strong in all of the ways that Brutus proves weak.

Antony claims allegiance to Brutus and the conspirators after Caesar's death in

order to save his own life.

Later, however, when speaking a funeral oration over Caesar's body, he spectacularly persuades the audience to withdraw its support of Brutus and instead condemn him as a traitor.

With tears on his cheeks and Caesar's will in his hand, Antony engages masterful rhetoric to stir the crowd to revolt against the conspirators.

### **CASSIUS**

A talented general and longtime acquaintance of Caesar.

Cassius dislikes the fact that Caesar has become godlike in the eyes of the Romans.

He slyly leads Brutus to believe that Caesar has become too powerful and must die.

Inspirer and organizer of the conspiracy.

Impulsive and unscrupulous, Cassius harbors no illusions about the way the political world works.

A shrewd opportunist.

**EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS**

1. 'Cowards die many times before their deaths;  
The valiant never taste of death but  
once. Of all the wonders that I yet  
have heard.

It seems to me most strange that men should  
fear; Seeing that death, a most necessary end,  
Will come when it will come.'

- a) Whom is Caesar speaking to? Why does he say these words?
- b) What fears has the listener expressed?
- c) What does the word 'valiant' mean?

**Ans-** a) Caesar is speaking to his wife Calpurnia. He says this because Calpurnia does not want him to leave the house as she had a bad dream. But Caesar is not ready to listen her.

- b) Calpurnia says that she dreamt of Caesar's death.
- c) Brave.

2. 'This dream is all amiss interpreted;  
It was a vision fair and fortunate:  
Your statue spouting bloods in many  
pipes, In which so many smiling Romans  
bathed, Signifies that from you great  
Rome shall suck Reviving blood and the  
great men shall press For tinctures, stains,  
relics and cognizance.'

- a) Who is the speaker?
- b) What is speaker's interpretation of the dream?
- c) What do you understand by "great men shall press.....cognizance?"

**Ans-** a) Decius Brutus is the speaker.

- b) According to him it was a vision fair and fortunate.
- c) It means that great men shall gather around Caesar and stain their handkerchiefs in his blood which will serve as colours added to coat of arms, an object of reverence, mementos and a badge of service.

3. 'I must prevent thee, Cimber.  
These couchings and these lowly courtesies  
Might fire the blood of ordinary men,  
And turn pre-ordinance and first decree  
Into the law of children'.

- a) To whom the speaker is speaking to?
- b) What the listener is pleading?
- c) What do you mean by 'couchings and these lowly courtesies'?

- Ans-** a) The speaker is speaking to Metellus Cimber.  
b) The listener is pleading for freedom of his banished brother Publius Cimber.  
c) It means bowing and bending.

4. 'When that the poors have cried, Caesar has wept:  
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:  
Yet Brutus says he was an ambitious;  
You all did see that on Lupercal  
I thrice presented him a kingly crown  
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?'

- a) Who is the speaker and to whom is he addressing?  
b) What the speaker is trying to prove?  
c) What is meaning of the word 'stern'.

- Ans.** a) Mark Antony is the speaker and he is addressing the Romans.  
b) He wants to prove that Caesar was not ambitious as said by Brutus.  
c) Tough.

5. '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 it by our permission;'

- a) Who is the speaker?  
b) What do you mean by 'devise of'?  
c) What conditions have been laid by the speaker to Antony?

- Ans** a) Marcus Brutus is the speaker.  
b) It means to 'think of'.  
c) The conditions were-Antony should not blame them for killing Caesar-  
can speak all good things about Caesar-tell people that we (conspirators)  
have allowed you to speak-will speak only after Brutus' speech is over.

6. 'I kiss thy hand, but not in flattery, Caesar;  
Desiring that Publius Cimber may  
Have an immediate freedom of repeal'.

- a) Who is the speaker?  
b) What he desires?  
c) The opposite of 'freedom' is.....?

- Ans.** a) Marcus Brutus is the speaker.  
b) He desires immediate freedom of Publius Cimber.



c) Slavery.

**ADDITIONAL EXTRACT BASED QUESTIONS**

1. 'I shall not find myself so apt to die:

No place will please me so, no mean of death,

As here by Caesar and by you cut off,

The choice and master spirits of this age.'

a) Who is the speaker and to whom is he talking to?

b) Who has been killed?

c) Who are 'the choice and master spirits of this age' according to the speaker?

2. 'You know not what you do: do not consent

That Antony speak in his funeral:

Know you how much the people may be moved'

By that which he will utter?

a) Who is the speaker?

b) What is his objection?

c) What does the word 'utter' mean?

3. 'Pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,

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.'

a) Who is the speaker?

b) Why is he meek and gentle with the butchers?

c) Give the meaning of the word 'butcher'?

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

I found it in his closet is his will:

Let but the commons here this testament—

Which pardon me; I do not mean to read –

a) What do you mean by 'parchment'?

b) Why Antony wants to read it?

c) What is listeners' reaction afterwards?

**SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS(30-40 WORDS EACH)**

1. How do the heavens 'blaze forth' the death of Julius Caesar?

**Ans.** The heavens forecast the death of Caesar through Calpurnia's dream. She had a dream of some people murdering Caesar. She is worried and restless



throughout the night and keeps shouting in her sleep 'Help,ho!they murder Caesar!'.  
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2 .What does Calpurnia try to convince Caesar of?

**Ans.** Calpurnia tries to tell Caesar that he should not move out of the house that day, She does not believe in omens and forecasts but whatever she had seen in her dream had made her believe that there was threat and danger to Caesar's life. According to her when ordinary people die, there are no forecasts or predictions but when royal people are involved, the stars try to forewarn us.

3 .Why does Calpurnia say Caesar's 'wisdom is consumed in confidence'?

**Ans.** Caesar refuses to stay at home. Calpurnia sees him to be overconfident. Caesar's overconfidence has made him blind so much that he is not able to understand her fears and act wisely.

4. Who says "Et tu Brute" When are these words spoken?

**Ans.** These words are said by Caesar when he saw his dear friend Marcus Brutus stabbing him along with the conspirators.

5. Why does Cassius object to allowing Antony to speak at Caesar's funeral ceremony?

**Ans.** Cassius knows very well that the people may be moved by Antony's speech as Antony was a good orator and also a much respected man in Rome. Therefore, he objects giving permission to Antony to speak at the funeral ceremony.

### **ADDITIONAL SHORT ANSWER TYPE QUESTIONS**

1. What are the arguments put forward by Decius Brutus to convince Caesar to go to the Capitol?
2. What is the petition put before Caesar by the conspirators?
3. Whom does Antony call 'the choice and master spirits of this age'? Why?
4. What prediction does Antony make regarding the future events in Rome?
5. At the end of the scene what is the fate of Brutus and Cassius?

### **LONG ANSWER TYPE /VALUE BASED QUESTIONS (80-100 WORDS EACH)**

1. How does Antony incite the mob against the conspirators?

#### **Value Points:**

Antony a good orator-draws the attention of people-deeds done by Caesar—tells them all – Caesar was not ambitious--Caesar cried— when poor wept—was always with them—ambitious people never cry—made of sterner stuff—on Lupercal –Caesar thrice—refused to take the crown—not a sign of an ambitious man—tries to arouse the emotions of people—appeals to their senses—compares his statements with the

statements made by Marcus Brutus—discloses about the will of Caesar for Romans—seventy five silver coins—arbours and orchards—wins mind and heart of people—tells about goodness of Caesar—tells that Caesar always worked for the betterment of Rome and Romans—entices the mob wisely—uses his skillful oratory skills—exposes the conspirators and the plot to kill Julius Caesar—killed Caesar because of jealousy.

2. Why Calpurnia wants Caesar to stay at home? Is she successful?

**Value Points:**

Calpurnia –wife of Julius Caesar—loves and cares for her husband—dreams some people killing Julius Caesar---restless throughout night—keeps shouting in her sleep 'Help,ho!they murder Caesar!--tries to convince Caesar-to stay at home-tells Caesar --- threat to his life-when ordinary people die there are no prediction-heavens blaze themselves when princes are to die-Caesar refuses-remains adamant-feels valiant people ---not exhibit cowardice and succumb to dreams—Calpurnia accuses him of being overconfident—Caesar's overconfidence has consumed his wisdom—unable to understand her feelings and act wisely-- Finally, Calpurnia prevails upon Caesar to stay at home.

Decius Brutus arrives -- jeopardizes Calpurnia's plan-- he tells that Calpurnia has misinterpreted her dream--he appeals to the ambitious side of Caesar -- tempts Caesar to go to senate - senators are waiting to offer the crown to him.

3. Antony through his oratory skills wins the heart and mind of people. Why one should be a good and orator and what we should avoid while speaking?

**Value Points:**

Great orators have got success—achieved their aim—words have great power— should be used wisely—a good orator is liked and followed—people get inspiration-a good orator can bring about great changes in people—Harsh words should be avoided—they hurt—give pain-demoralize-sweet words are soothing—make us happy-they can heal the wounds-always please others-- skillful orator can change situations in his favour.

**ADDITIONAL LONG/VALUE BASED QUESTIONS**

Q.1.Compare the speeches of Brutus and Antony.

Q.2.Brutus commits a number of mistakes and is responsible for the ultimate downfall of the conspirators. Comment.

Q.3. Briefly describe how Caesar was assassinated. Q.4.What reasons does Brutus give for murdering Caesar? Q.5.Why does Antony 'shake hands' with Caesar's enemies?

Q.6. Write a paragraph about the Roman mob as depicted in the play 'Julius Caesar'.