

THE TRAGEDY OF JULIUS CAESAR
By
William Shakespeare

Act IV, Scene III



SCENE III. within the tent of Brutus.

[Enter Brutus and Cassius.]

CASSIUS.

That you have wrong'd me doth appear in this:
You have condemn'd and noted Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians;
Whereas my letters, praying on his side
Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

BRUTUS.

You wrong'd yourself to write in such a case.

CASSIUS.

In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offense should bear his comment.

BRUTUS.

Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
Are much condemn'd to have an itching palm,
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.

CASSIUS.

I an itching palm!
You know that you are Brutus that speak this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last.

BRUTUS.

The name of Cassius honors this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

CASSIUS.

Chastisement!

BRUTUS.

Remember March, the Ides of March remember:
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?
What villain touch'd his body, that did stab,
And not for justice? What! shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man of all this world
But for supporting robbers,—shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes
And sell the mighty space of our large honours
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?
I had rather be a dog, and bay the moon,
Than such a Roman.

CASSIUS.

Brutus, bay not me,
I'll not endure it: you forget yourself,
To hedge me in; I am a soldier, ay,
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.

BRUTUS.

Go to; you are not, Cassius.

CASSIUS.

I am.

BRUTUS.

I say you are not.

CASSIUS.

Urge me no more, I shall forget myself;
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no farther.

BRUTUS.

Away, slight man!

CASSIUS.
Is't possible?

BRUTUS.
Hear me, for I will speak.
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
Shall I be frightened when a madman stares?

CASSIUS.
O gods, ye gods! must I endure all this?

BRUTUS.
All this? ay, more: fret till your proud heart break;
Go show your slaves how choleric you are,
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?
Must I observe you? Must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humour? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,
Though it do split you; for, from this day forth,
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
When you are waspish.

CASSIUS.
Is it come to this?

BRUTUS.
You say you are a better soldier:
Let it appear so; make your vaunting true,
And it shall please me well: for mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of abler men.

CASSIUS.
You wrong me every way, you wrong me, Brutus.
I said, an elder soldier, not a better:
Did I say "better"?

BRUTUS.

If you did, I care not.

CASSIUS.

When Caesar lived, he durst not thus have moved me.

BRUTUS.

Peace, peace! you durst not so have tempted him.

CASSIUS.

I durst not?

BRUTUS.

No.

CASSIUS.

What, durst not tempt him?

BRUTUS.

For your life you durst not.

CASSIUS.

Do not presume too much upon my love;
I may do that I shall be sorry for.

BRUTUS.

You have done that you should be sorry for.
There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,
For I am arm'd so strong in honesty,
That they pass by me as the idle wind
Which I respect not. I did send to you
For certain sums of gold, which you denied me;—
For I can raise no money by vile means:
By Heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring

From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash
By any indirection:—I did send
To you for gold to pay my legions,
Which you denied me: was that done like Cassius?
Should I have answer'd Caius Cassius so?
When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous
To lock such rascal counters from his friends,
Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,
Dash him to pieces!

CASSIUS.
I denied you not.

BRUTUS.
You did.

CASSIUS.
I did not. He was but a fool
That brought my answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart:
A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,
But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

BRUTUS.
I do not, till you practise them on me.

CASSIUS.
You love me not.

BRUTUS.
I do not like your faults.

CASSIUS.
A friendly eye could never see such faults.

BRUTUS.

A flatterer's would not, though they do appear
As huge as high Olympus.

CASSIUS.

Come, Antony and young Octavius, come,
Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius,
For Cassius is a-weary of the world;
Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;
Check'd like a bondman; all his faults observed,
Set in a note-book, learn'd and conn'd by rote,
To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep
My spirit from mine eyes!—There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast; within, a heart
Dearer than Plutus' mine, richer than gold:
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth;
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart:
Strike as thou didst at Caesar; for I know,
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lovedst him better
Than ever thou lovedst Cassius.

BRUTUS.

Sheathe your dagger:
Be angry when you will, it shall have scope;
Do what you will, dishonor shall be humour.
O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb
That carries anger as the flint bears fire;
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.

CASSIUS.

Hath Cassius lived
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus,
When grief, and blood ill-temper'd, vexeth him?

BRUTUS.

When I spoke that, I was ill-temper'd too.

CASSIUS.

Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.

BRUTUS.

And my heart too.

CASSIUS.

O Brutus,—

BRUTUS.

What's the matter?

CASSIUS.

—Have not you love enough to bear with me,
When that rash humor which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful?

BRUTUS.

Yes, Cassius; and from henceforth,
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,
He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

[Noise within.]

POET.

[Within.] Let me go in to see the generals:
There is some grudge between 'em; 'tis not meet
They be alone.

LUCILIUS.

[Within.] You shall not come to them.

POET.

[Within.] Nothing but death shall stay me.

[Enter Poet, followed by Lucilius, and Titinius.]

CASSIUS.

How now! What's the matter?

POET.

For shame, you generals! what do you mean?
Love, and be friends, as two such men should be;
For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye.

CASSIUS.

Ha, ha! How vilely doth this cynic rhyme!

BRUTUS.

Get you hence, sirrah; saucy fellow, hence!

CASSIUS.

Bear with him, Brutus; 'tis his fashion.

BRUTUS.

I'll know his humor when he knows his time:
What should the wars do with these jigging fools?—
Companion, hence!

CASSIUS.

Away, away, be gone!

[Exit Poet.]

BRUTUS.

Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders
Prepare to lodge their companies tonight.

CASSIUS.

And come yourselves and bring Messala with you
Immediately to us.

[Exeunt Lucilius and Titinius.]

BRUTUS.

Lucius, a bowl of wine!

[Exit Lucius.]

CASSIUS.

I did not think you could have been so angry.

BRUTUS.

O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.

CASSIUS.

Of your philosophy you make no use,
If you give place to accidental evils.

BRUTUS.

No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.

CASSIUS.

Ha! Portia!

BRUTUS.

She is dead.

CASSIUS.

How 'scaped I killing, when I cross'd you so?—
O insupportable and touching loss!—
Upon what sickness?

BRUTUS.

Impatient of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong;— for with her death
That tidings came;— with this she fell distract,
And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire.

CASSIUS.

And died so?

BRUTUS.

Even so.

CASSIUS.

O ye immortal gods!

[Re-enter Lucius, with wine and a taper.]

BRUTUS.

Speak no more of her.— Give me a bowl of wine.—
In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius.

[Drinks.]

CASSIUS.

My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.
Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup;
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love.

[Drinks.]

BRUTUS.

Come in, Titinius!—

[Exit Lucius.]

[Re-enter Titinius, with Messala.]

Welcome, good Messala.—
Now sit we close about this taper here,
And call in question our necessities.

CASSIUS.
Portia, art thou gone?

BRUTUS.
No more, I pray you.—
Messala, I have here received letters,
That young Octavius and Mark Antony
Come down upon us with a mighty power,
Bending their expedition toward Philippi.

MESSALA.
Myself have letters of the selfsame tenour.

BRUTUS.
With what addition?

MESSALA.
That by proscription and bills of outlawry
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus
Have put to death an hundred Senators.

BRUTUS.
There in our letters do not well agree:
Mine speak of seventy Senators that died
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.

CASSIUS.
Cicero one!

MESSALA.

Cicero is dead,
And by that order of proscription.—
Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

BRUTUS.

No, Messala.

MESSALA.

Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

BRUTUS.

Nothing, Messala.

MESSALA.

That, methinks, is strange.

BRUTUS.

Why ask you? hear you aught of her in yours?

MESSALA.

No, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Now, as you are a Roman, tell me true.

MESSALA.

Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell:
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

BRUTUS.

Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala:
With meditating that she must die once,
I have the patience to endure it now.

MESSALA.

Even so great men great losses should endure.

CASSIUS.

I have as much of this in art as you,
But yet my nature could not bear it so.

BRUTUS.

Well, to our work alive. What do you think
Of marching to Philippi presently?

CASSIUS.

I do not think it good.

BRUTUS.

Your reason?

CASSIUS.

This it is:

'Tis better that the enemy seek us;;
So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,
Doing himself offense; whilst we, lying still,
Are full of rest, defense, and nimbleness.

BRUTUS.

Good reasons must, of force, give place to better.
The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground
Do stand but in a forced affection;
For they have grudged us contribution:
The enemy, marching along by them,
By them shall make a fuller number up,
Come on refresh'd, new-added, and encouraged;
From which advantage shall we cut him off,
If at Philippi we do face him there,
These people at our back.

CASSIUS.

Hear me, good brother.

BRUTUS.

Under your pardon. You must note besides,
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brim-full, our cause is ripe:
The enemy increaseth every day;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat;
And we must take the current when it serves,
Or lose our ventures.

CASSIUS.

Then, with your will, go on:
We'll along ourselves, and meet them at Philippi.

BRUTUS.

The deep of night is crept upon our talk,
And nature must obey necessity;
Which we will niggard with a little rest.
There is no more to say?

CASSIUS.

No more. Good night:
Early to-morrow will we rise, and hence.

BRUTUS.

Lucius!—My gown.—Farewell now, good Messala:—

Good night, Titinius:— noble, noble Cassius,
Good night, and good repose.

CASSIUS.

O my dear brother!
This was an ill beginning of the night.
Never come such division 'tween our souls!
Let it not, Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Every thing is well.

CASSIUS.

Good night, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Good night, good brother.

TITINIUS. MESSALA.

Good night, Lord Brutus.

BRUTUS.

Farewell, everyone.—

[Exeunt Cassius, Titinius, and Messala.]

[Re-enter Lucius, with the gown.]

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?

LUCIUS.

Here in the tent.

BRUTUS.

What, thou speak'st drowsily:

Poor knave, I blame thee not, thou art o'er-watch'd.
Call Claudius and some other of my men;
I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

LUCIUS.
Varro and Claudius!

[Enter Varro and Claudius.]

VARRO.
Calls my lord?

BRUTUS.
I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep;
It may be I shall raise you by-and-by
On business to my brother Cassius.

VARRO.
So please you, we will stand and watch your pleasure.

BRUTUS.
I would not have it so; lie down, good sirs:
It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.—
Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so;
I put it in the pocket of my gown.

[Servants lie down.]

LUCIUS.
I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

BRUTUS.
Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.
Canst thou hold up thy heavy eyes awhile,
And touch thy instrument a strain or two?

LUCIUS.

Ay, my lord, an't please you.

BRUTUS.

It does, my boy:

I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

LUCIUS.

It is my duty, sir.

BRUTUS.

I should not urge thy duty past thy might;

I know young bloods look for a time of rest.

LUCIUS.

I have slept, my lord, already.

BRUTUS.

It was well done; and thou shalt sleep again;

I will not hold thee long: if I do live,

I will be good to thee.—

[Lucius plays and sings till he falls asleep.]

This is a sleepy tune.—O murderous Slumber,

Lay'st thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,

That plays thee music?—Gentle knave, good night;

I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee:

If thou dost nod, thou breakst thy instrument;

I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night.—

Let me see, let me see; is not the leaf turn'd down

Where I left reading? Here it is, I think.

[Enter the Ghost of Caesar.]

How ill this taper burns! Ha! who comes here?
I think it is the weakness of mine eyes
That shapes this monstrous apparition.
It comes upon me.— Art thou any thing?
Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,
That makest my blood cold and my hair to stare?
Speak to me what thou art.

GHOST.
Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

BRUTUS.
Why comest thou?

GHOST.
To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

BRUTUS.
Well; then I shall see thee again?

GHOST.
Ay, at Philippi.

BRUTUS.
Why, I will see thee at Philippi, then.

[Ghost vanishes.]
Now I have taken heart, thou vanishest:
Ill spirit, I would hold more talk with thee.—
Boy! Lucius Claudius! Sirs, awake

LUCIUS.
The strings, my lord, are false.

BRUTUS.

He thinks he still is at his instrument.—

Lucius, awake!

LUCIUS.

My lord?

BRUTUS.

Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst out?

LUCIUS.

My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

BRUTUS.

Yes, that thou didst: didst thou see any thing?

LUCIUS.

Nothing, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Sleep again, Lucius.—Sirrah Claudius!—

[To Varro.] Fellow thou, awake!

VARRO.

My lord?

CLAUDIUS.

My lord?

BRUTUS.

Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

VARRO. CLAUDIUS.

Did we, my lord?

BRUTUS.

Ay: saw you any thing?

VARRO.

No, my lord, I saw nothing.

CLAUDIUS.

Nor I, my lord.

BRUTUS.

Go and commend me to my brother Cassius;
Bid him set on his powers betimes before,
And we will follow.

VARRO. CLAUDIUS.

It shall be done, my lord.

[Exeunt.]