

JULIUS CAESAR

Character Notes

BRUTUS

A very complicated character. He is close friends with Caesar, and is honourable and patriotic. Nonetheless he is persuaded to join a group of conspirators who fear that Caesar wants to rule Rome as a king. Brutus is a powerful public figure, a husband, a master of servants and a strong military leader. Even though Brutus and Caesar are good friends, Brutus does not want Rome to be ruled by one person. Because Brutus has such a strong sense of honour, he is easily manipulated by Caesar's enemies such as Cassius. Brutus honestly believes that Caesar's death will benefit Rome and his actions are for the long term good of his country. Torn between his loyalty to Caesar and his loyalty to the state, Brutus becomes the tragic hero of the play.

JULIUS CAESAR

A real man's man. He's a Roman general and senator who has returned to Rome in victory after a successful military campaign, making him very popular with the people of Rome. Everyone thinks that Caesar wants ultimate power to rule Rome as a king but he doesn't show this and has turned down the opportunity a number of times. He has, however, begun to behave in a more authoritarian manner than before. Caesar's major flaw is that he starts to believe all the hype that surrounds him, thinking that nothing can destroy him, and because of this he ignores omens and threats against his life.

MARK ANTONY (MARCUS ANTONIUS)

Julius Caesar's best friend and one of his biggest supporters, as well as a military commander. Antony lies to Brutus and the conspirators after Caesar's death in order to save his own life. He pretends that he understands why they murdered Caesar and asks to address the crowd at Caesar's funeral in order to further explain the situation. Brutus, who likes to believe the best in everyone, grants him this opportunity. However, once on the podium he illustrates his loyalty to Caesar even after death. Antony's passionate speech over Caesar's body is what convinces the audience that Brutus was a traitor and that the conspirators should be hunted down in a bloody civil war. He is aware of the power of his speech and that he will provoke war.

CASSIUS

One of the sneakiest characters in the play. He has a pivotal role in the conspiracy against Caesar. Cassius is a talented general and has worked with Caesar for a long time. However he is jealous of Caesar's popularity amongst the Romans. He slyly leads Brutus into believing that Caesar's ambition will damage Rome and that the people will benefit from his death. Cassius is a shrewd political opportunist but does not have the integrity of either Brutus or Antony.

OCTAVIUS

Caesar's adopted son and appointed successor. Octavius is travelling abroad when he finds out about Caesar's death. After hearing the news he joins forces with Antony and sets off to fight Cassius and Brutus. Octavius is a natural leader like his adopted father, though Antony tries to calm and control him. Octavius eventually takes over the Roman government.

CASCA

Takes sides with Cassius and Brutus and opposes Caesar. Even though he knows that Caesar has refused the opportunity to rule over Rome single-handed, he thinks that Caesar is an actor out to fool the people of Rome. Casca takes a vital part in the conspiracy against Caesar, and is the first person to stab Caesar in the back.

CALPURNIA

Caesar's loving wife. Unlike her husband, she believes in the power of omens. She warns Caesar against going to the Senate on the Ides of March because of the soothsayer's predictions and her dream that the people of Rome were bathing in Caesar's blood. He dismisses her fears.

PORTIA

Brutus' wife. They have an open and trusting marriage and Portia is used to Brutus sharing his problems with her. Brutus keeps the conspiracy against Caesar from her and she notices and reprimands him for this. She can tell that something is worrying him deeply. After Caesar's death the civil war begins and Brutus is forced to leave her alone to fight. The news, towards the end of the play, that Portia has killed herself destroys Brutus.

FLAVIUS

A tribune (an official elected by the people to protect their rights) who is intensely jealous of Caesar's popularity with the people of Rome.

MARULLUS

A tribune like Flavius and also jealous of Caesar's popularity. Marullus and Flavius are punished for removing the decorations from Caesar's statues during Caesar's parade.

CICERO

A Roman senator who is famous for his speeches.

DECIUS

A conspirator responsible for leading Caesar into the hands of his murderers. Decius convinces Caesar that he should not be worried about Calpurnia's nightmares and that there is no danger involved in going to the Senate.