

TEACHER : Kashama SharmaTENDER HEART HIGH SCHOOL, SEC. 33B, CHD.CLASS : XSUBJECT : ENGLISH LITERATUREACT III, SC-2 Julius CaesarSynopsis:

When Act 3, SC-2 begins we find Brutus and Cassius entering the Forum, followed by a throng of citizens who clamour to hear the reasons for Caesar's murder; some of them follow Cassius to hear his explanation, but the rest surround Brutus as he goes up into a pulpit and addresses them.

Brutus tells the crowd that he loved Caesar and honoured his great valour; but he loves Rome, even more, and slew Caesar because he was ambitious and would have made slaves of them all; using balanced, rhetorical questions, he asks if any of his listeners is

“so vile that will not love his country” and pauses for Antony's funeral oration.

This, they consent to do, though they are now quite persuaded that Caesar's death was justified and wish to bring Brutus home with triumph. Brutus then departs, and as Antony goes up into the pulpit some citizens mutter that “I were best he speak no harm of Brutus here.”

Addressing the mob, Mark Antony declares that he has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him, and dispassionately states that, although Caesar

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had been his close friend, he had not been without faults. Brutus, he continues, has said Caesar had the fault of ambition and since Brutus and his friends are all honourable men, this must certainly have been true. Yet, Mark Antony continues, Caesar brought great riches and honour to Rome, and the poor cried, Caesar used to weep - hardly the behaviour of an ambitious man!

Moreover, at the feast of the Lupercalia, Caesar had thrice refused the crown which Antony offered him. Does that seem like ambition? Although he is not trying to disprove what Brutus has just told them, he is determined to speak the truth as far as he knows it.

Antony breaks off with a show of grief -
'My heart is in the coffin here with Caesar.'

The citizens begin to discuss the words among themselves. They agree that there is much reason in what Antony says, and note how deeply he is affected himself - 'his eyes are red as fire with weeping'. Perhaps, after all, Brutus was wrong and Caesar was not so ambitious?

Silence falls as Antony again prepares to address them. Once again he stresses that he has no intention of disproving the conspirators since

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they all are such honourable men - instead,
'I rather choose to wrong the dead, to wrong myself, and you.'

He strikes a note of contrast between Caesar's former greatness and his present impotence. It is such a tragic fall as in itself might move all hearts to terror and pity. But what if the murder was undeserved? Antony says that he can prove that this was in fact so, but because Brutus and his men are such honourable men, he will keep faith with them and refrain from doing so. Nevertheless, he has found Caesar's will, though he will not read it; yet, if he did, it would show them that Caesar had been their best friend.

The crowd moved my compassion, curiosity and greed, cry out for the will to be read. But Antony coyly refuses their demand for there will be mutiny and bloodshed once they hear that Caesar made them his heirs. There is renewed insistence on the part of the mob, till at last Antony steps down from the pulpit and stands contemplating at the body, the crowd in a wide circle around him. Caesar's mantle recalls proud memories of the glorious victory of Roman arms over the barbaric Nervii - but this same mantle has been pierced by the slabs

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of the assassins, of Cassius, of Casca, of Brutus himself. Then B Antony withdraws the mantle and displays the mutilated corpse. There are cries of pity and of rage from the assembled citizens, who denounce Brutus and his henchmen as treacherous villains.

Antony seems taken aback and tells them he has intention of stirring up trouble. He is no orator, like Brutus, but a plain blunt man who loved Caesar. He has no wish to wrong those honourable men who have become murderers; yet, were he Brutus, he could put a tongue in each of Caesar's wounds, moving the very stones of Rome to rise and mutiny. The crowd is now bent on revenge and starts to clamour for the death of the conspirators. Once more Antony stills them: they have forgotten Caesar's will. He holds up the testament, shows them the Dictator's seal, and reads out that Caesar has left seventy-five drachmas (75) to each citizen and his private walks and gardens to be used as public parks.

This time there is no holding back the crowd. In a frenzy of mutinous excitement, they rush off to burn down the conspirators' houses while Antony mutters with satisfaction that his words have had the desired effect and that mischief is on the rampage.

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A servant arrives to give Antony the news that Octavius has come to Rome and has gone to Caesar's house with Lepidus. Antony is pleased with these tidings, as he goes off to join them, the servant tells him that Brutus and Cassius 'are riding like madmen through the gates of Rome.'

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