

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE'S

JULIUS CAESAR

LEVEL 5



Something Must Be Done!



"Caesar's expression is one of anger," Brutus reported.

- Preview:**
1. Read the name of the story.
 2. Look at the picture.
 3. Read the sentence under the picture.
 4. Read the first five paragraphs of the story.
 5. Then answer the following question.

You learned from your preview that Julius Caesar

- ☐ a. fears Cassius.
- ☐ b. rarely smiles.
- ☐ c. wants to speak with Casca.
- ☐ d. thinks Cassius can be dangerous.

Turn to the Comprehension Check on page 16 for the right answer.

Now read the story.

Read on to find out what happened on the game field.

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Brutus and Cassius watched Caesar and his group leave the field. The games had ended. "Caesar's expression is one of anger," Brutus reported. "And Calpurnia's cheek appears pale. Even Cicero's eyes flash with fire. We've seen that look in the Capitol, when someone does not agree with him."

"Grab Casca's arm as they pass by," Cassius suggested. "He'll tell us what has happened."

As Caesar and his cluster of men neared Brutus and Cassius, Caesar spoke in a low voice to Mark Antony. "I like men around me who are fat and content. I like men who sleep soundly at night, men who don't worry about things. Cassius over there has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous."

"Have no fear of him, Caesar. He's not dangerous. He is a true Roman. He'll not cause any trouble," replied Mark Antony.

"I wish his expression were more content, but I don't fear him. Yet, if I were afraid of anyone, it would be lean Cassius that I'd avoid. He's always watching what goes on around him, as if he were suspicious. He can interpret the reasons behind men's deeds. He reads too much. He doesn't go to plays like you, Antony. He doesn't like to listen to music. He rarely smiles. And when he does, it's a false smile. Men like him are never content while others command above them. Of course, I'm only telling you what might be feared, not what I actually fear. After all, I am Caesar always!"

As Caesar and Antony walked on, Brutus tugged at Casca's arm to get his attention.

"You wish to speak with me?" Casca asked.

Brutus nodded. "Tell us what happened today to make Caesar look so angry."

"Why, he was offered the crown. Yet he brushed it aside like

this," Casca said, making a sweeping motion with his hand. "And then the people began shouting and cheering."

"What was the second noise for?" Brutus asked.

"Why, for the same reason," Casca said.

"They shouted three times," Brutus said. "What was the last cry for?"

"The very same thing," Casca said.

"So, the crown was offered to Caesar three times?"

Casca nodded. "And each time he put it aside more slowly."

"Who offered him the crown?" Cassius demanded.

"Mark Antony," Casca replied. "And though Caesar refused it, I think he wanted to have it. Of course, it wasn't an official crown. It was one of those circles that people weave with leaves and flowers, the same kind they've been hanging on Caesar's statues all over the city. But still, I think he'd likely accept an official crown. He seemed upset that the people cheered when he refused it. Each time he refused it, the people clustered around. They shouted and cheered louder. The air was filled with their stinking breath. So horrible was the smell that Caesar fell to the ground in a faint."

"Caesar fainted?" Cassius asked.

Casca nodded again. "He fell down and could not speak."

"That's very likely," Brutus said. "He suffers from the falling-disease."

"No," Cassius said, shaking his head grimly, "it's you, and I, and honest Casca who have falling-disease, not Caesar!"

"I don't know what you mean by that, but Caesar certainly did fall down," Casca insisted.

"What happened right before he fainted?" Brutus questioned.

"When he realized the crowd was glad he'd turned down the

crown, he opened his collar and offered them his throat to cut. And if I'd had a sharp tool to use, I might have acted on his words," Casca told them grimly.

"Did Cicero say anything about all this?" Cassius asked.

"Yes. He spoke in Greek."

"And what did he have to say?"

Casca shrugged. "Those who understood smiled at each other and shook their heads. But, for myself, I could not interpret his words. It was Greek to me." Casca paused a moment, then added, "There's more news. Ambitious Caesar had Marullus and Flavius killed for pulling the crowns and flowers off his statues."

Cassius studied Casca carefully. "Will you dine with me tomorrow?" he asked.

"Yes," Casca said, then bid them both goodby.

"If you want to talk to me tomorrow," Brutus told Cassius, "come to my home."

"I'll do that," Cassius answered. "Meanwhile, think things over."

After Brutus left, Cassius thought about their talk. Indeed, Brutus was a man of honor. But his honor could be coaxed into another direction. There was no one so blind that he couldn't be moved to take action, for it was so needed! Cassius decided to write several notes. He would pretend they were written by many different Roman citizens. He planned to tie a stone to each note. Then, he would toss them all through one of Brutus' open windows that very night. The notes would speak of Brutus' high standing among the Romans. They would mention how ambitious Caesar was becoming. Brutus was too trusting to even be suspicious of false notes.

Cassius smiled grimly. They would shake Caesar from his ruling position. It was that, or suffer even more horrible days ahead.

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COMPREHENSION CHECK

Choose the best answer.

Preview Answer:

- d. thinks Cassius can be dangerous.

1. The group of people who were at the game field with Caesar included
 - ☐ a. Brutus and Calpurnia.
 - ☐ b. Mark Antony and Cicero.
 - ☐ c. Cassius and Cicero.
 - ☐ d. Marullus and Flavius.
2. Caesar complains to Mark Antony about
 - ☐ a. Casca.
 - ☐ b. Brutus.
 - ☐ c. Cassius.
 - ☐ d. Cicero.
3. Mark Antony does not believe that this person is dangerous. That person is
 - ☐ a. Cassius.
 - ☐ b. Casca.
 - ☐ c. Brutus.
 - ☐ d. Cicero.
4. The real reason why Caesar is uncomfortable with Cassius is because Cassius
 - ☐ a. never acts in a suspicious way.
 - ☐ b. is writing notes about Caesar to Brutus.
 - ☐ c. smiles grimly.
 - ☐ d. may be jealous of Caesar's power.
5. Brutus learns from Casca what happened on the game field. Next, Casca tells the news about Flavius and Marullus. Then,
 - ☐ a. Cassius decides to write false notes.
 - ☐ b. Casca says that Caesar fainted.
 - ☐ c. Cassius invites Casca to dinner.
 - ☐ d. Brutus invites Casca to his home.
6. According to Casca, Caesar
 - ☐ a. really wants more power.
 - ☐ b. refused the official crown offered to him.
 - ☐ c. offered Mark Antony a crown.
 - ☐ d. was happy when the people refused to crown him.
7. Caesar offered the crowd his throat to cut when
 - ☐ a. Caesar fainted.
 - ☐ b. Casca tried to act on Caesar's words.
 - ☐ c. Caesar realized that the people did not want to give him more power.
 - ☐ d. Caesar realized that he was suffering from the falling-disease.
8. Cassius plans to coax Brutus to change his mind about Caesar by
 - ☐ a. throwing stones at Brutus' house.
 - ☐ b. dining with Brutus and Casca the next day.
 - ☐ c. sending untrue messages to Brutus.
 - ☐ d. writing Cicero's Greek words to Brutus.
9. Another name for this story could be
 - ☐ a. "Lean and Hungry Casca."
 - ☐ b. "I'm Caesar Always."
 - ☐ c. "Cassius Makes Plans."
 - ☐ d. "The Cheering Crowd."
10. This story is mainly about
 - ☐ a. Cassius raising doubts about Caesar in the minds of Brutus and Casca.
 - ☐ b. Caesar complaining about Cassius.
 - ☐ c. Casca reporting what happened to Caesar.
 - ☐ d. Mark Antony encouraging Caesar to be ambitious.

Check your answers with the Key on page 67.

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