

Introduction

S*hakespeare on the Double! Julius Caesar* provides the full text of the Bard's play side by side with an easy-to-read modern English translation that you can understand. You no longer have to wonder what exactly "The valiant never taste of death but once" means! You can read the Shakespearean text on the left-hand pages and check the right-hand pages when Shakespeare's language stumps you. Or you can read only the translation, which enables you to understand the action and characters at a more even pace. You can also read both, referring easily between the original text and the modern translation. Any way you choose, you can now fully understand every line of the Bard's masterpiece!

We've also provided you with some additional resources:

- **Brief synopsis** of the basic plot and action provides a broad-strokes overview of the play.
- **Comprehensive character list** covers the actions, motivations, and characteristics of each major player.
- **Visual character map** displays who the major characters are and how they relate to each other.
- **Cycle of death** pinpoints the sequence of deaths in the play, including who dies, how they die, and why they die.
- **Reflective questions** help you delve even more into the themes and meanings of the play.

Reading Shakespeare can be slow and difficult. No more! With *Shakespeare on the Double! Julius Caesar*, you can read the play in language that you can grasp quickly and thoroughly.



Synopsis

ACT I

Scene 1

On the feast of the Lupercal in mid-February, Julius Caesar, a Roman general, receives a victor's parade into Rome. Commoners celebrate his victory over Pompey and his sons in a civil war. Two tribunes, Flavius and Marullus, scold disloyal fans for forgetting their regard for Pompey and for applauding his enemy.

Scene 2

Caesar and his procession enter on their way to a ritual foot race. A fortune teller warns Caesar to beware March 15. Caesar, arrogant and overconfident, dismisses the man as a dreamer and brushes by him. During the foot race, Cassius draws Brutus into conversation outside the arena to discuss Rome's political unrest. Cassius resents and envies Caesar for becoming Rome's absolute dictator. Cassius describes Caesar as the only mortal who dares think of himself as a god.

Brutus does not echo Cassius' envy, but he does worry that too much power to the dictator means less freedom for Romans. Brutus' greatest fear is that fans of Caesar will offer him a crown, thus replacing the republic with a monarchy. The dilemma between loyalty to his friend and respect and patriotism for Rome gnaws at Brutus. Cassius manipulates the inner conflict to persuade Brutus to acknowledge that Rome's survival depends on the assassination of Caesar.

When the procession exits the race, Caesar remarks to his loyal friend Mark Antony that Cassius looks untrustworthy. Lest he seem fearful, Caesar claims to fear no one. When the followers move on, Casca joins Brutus and Cassius and reports that Antony offered Caesar a crown three times. And three times, Caesar pushed the crown aside, each time a little less eagerly. The public spectacle ended with Caesar's collapse from an epileptic seizure. The sickness endeared him to the people. Cicero said

something in Greek, but Casca didn't understand him. When Casca and Brutus depart, Cassius reveals that he intends to corrupt Brutus and draw him into a conspiracy against Caesar. The importance of Brutus to the plot derives from his prestige as an honorable Roman of unquestionable morals.

Scene 3

In the street during a thunderstorm, Cicero encounters Casca, who reports on strange omens—fire from heaven, flame burning harmlessly around a slave's hand, and a lion walking by the Capitol. Cicero learns that Caesar will come to the Capitol the next day and hurries out of the storm.

Cassius meets briefly with Casca and instructs him to leave forged letters in Brutus' chair. The messages urge Brutus to take pity on Rome, which Caesar appears to have in a stranglehold. Cassius is determined to bind Casca, Decius Brutus, Caius Ligarius, Cinna, Metellus, and Trebonius in an execution plot.



ACT II

Scene 1

Late at night, Brutus paces restlessly in his orchard and orders his servant Lucius to light a candle in the study. Brutus finds the forged letters from Cassius and ponders the seriousness of Rome's situation. With faces concealed, the conspirators converge at his house to discuss their plan. By now a willing participant, Brutus declares that they must act nobly and without stealth. Cassius insists that they kill Mark Antony as well. Brutus counters Cassius and claims that the group should not think of themselves as butchers but sacrificers.

After the conspirators depart, Portia asks her husband about his recent restlessness and about the late-night meeting. He tries to conceal the plot and claims that he has been ill. A woman of noble ancestry, Portia reminds her husband that she is the daughter of Cato, Rome's censor. In proof of her courage, she reveals a wound that she has inflicted on her thigh to show that she is able to keep a secret. Moved by her act, he promises to tell her what has been troubling him. When Caius Ligarius arrives with a bandage on his head, Brutus urges him to take part in an act that will heal Rome.

Scene 2

After a frightening storm in the night, Calpurnia, Caesar's wife, awakens on March 15. She is shaken by a terrifying dream in which Caesar's statue poured blood that citizens washed in. She pleads with him to remain home from the Senate. Augurers sacrifice an animal and find no heart. They agree that the signs indicate that Caesar should stay home.

At Calpurnia's urging, Caesar decides to forego the Senate session, but Decius Brutus, a friend who secretly works for the conspirators, reinterprets Calpurnia's dream from a positive angle. He describes the bleeding statue as the nurturer of Roman citizens. He persuades Caesar to attend to public duty or else be laughed at for fearing a woman's dreams. Caesar agrees and shares wine with the conspirators before leaving for the day's work.

Scene 3

On the way to the Senate House, Artemidorus, a grammarian, stands in the street. He is ready to hand Caesar a note. The message alerts Caesar to the conspirators' intentions.

Scene 4

Portia, terrified at the plot that her husband is involved in, remains at home. She dispatches the servant boy Lucius for news from the Senate. The boy is confused about what he is supposed to look for. She encounters a fortune teller, who awaits Caesar at a narrow part of the street to warn him of danger. She feels faint as she anticipates news from Lucius and charges females with being weak and unable to keep a secret.



ACT III

Scene 1

As Caesar, his colleagues, and others approach the Capitol, the fortune teller warns that the Ides of March have arrived without incident, but are not yet past. At an opportune moment, Artemidorus stops Caesar and begs that he read a petition. Caesar rejects the personal request until he has completed Senate business. Drawing near the Capitol, the conspirators press around pleading for the return of Metellus Cimber's brother Publius, an exiled citizen.

When Trebonius draws Mark Antony out of the way, the conspirators surround Caesar. After Casca strikes the first blow, the other plotters stab Caesar 33 times. At the advance of Brutus, whom Caesar trusts, Caesar draws his cloak over his face and falls from the final blow. His corpse lies at the base of Pompey's statue. The conspirators bathe their hands and weapons in Caesar's blood.

Immediately, disorder threatens the conspirators' plans. To ingratiate himself with assassins, Mark Antony sends a servant. Assured that he may approach without fear of attack, Mark Antony pretends to concur with the killers' claims that Caesar was a tyrant. Mark Antony seeks Brutus's permission to speak at Caesar's public funeral. Against Cassius' advice, Brutus grants the request. When the conspirators scatter, Antony reveals his fury at the murderers and his intent to transform a moving funeral oratory into the beginning of a bloody civil war. He warns Octavius' servant to keep his master safe from public rage until it is safe to enter the city.

Scene 2

At the public lectern, Brutus sends Cassius to another venue to address the people. Brutus confronts a suspicious crowd. He outlines the reasons that Cassius and the other plotters assassinated Caesar before he gained more power. The people applaud Brutus's noble purpose in halting tyranny and in restoring Roman freedoms. He leaves the pulpit to Mark Antony, whom the crowd suspects of maligning Brutus. At first, Mark Antony appears to yield to the "honorable" plotters and halts to regain control of his sorrow. He soon turns his repeated praise of Brutus and the conspirators into grim sarcasm.

Through skilled rebuttal of Brutus' claims, Mark Antony twists the mob's emotions. He uncovers the bloody corpse and names the assassins who stabbed through Caesar's cloak. At the mob's demand, Mark Antony reads Caesar's will, which gives Rome's citizens cash as well as land for recreational purposes. By the end of Antony's harangue, the populace perceives Brutus and Cassius as brutal killers. The people howl for revenge. Plebeians pour into the thoroughfares, determined to tear the conspirators apart and burn their houses. Brutus, Cassius, and the other plotters flee through the gates. Octavius, Caesar's nephew and only heir, arrives in Rome after receiving a summons earlier from Caesar.

Scene 3

The raving mob happens on Cinna the poet and, thinking him to be Cinna the conspirator, lay hold on him to tear him apart.



ACT IV

Scene 1

At Mark Antony's house, Octavius allies with him. The two join Lepidus in a triumvirate and plot the deaths of the assassins. They agree that all eight and their families must die. Mark Antony reveals that there are rewards awaiting their swift action. Octavius justifies the role of Lepidus as errand boy. Antony and Octavius realize that they must raise an army.

Scene 2

Near Sardis in Turkey, Brutus is camped with his army. He suspects that Cassius is no longer a close friend and ally. When Cassius arrives, he accuses Brutus of maligning him. The two leaders quarrel in view of the soldiers.

Scene 3

In the privacy of the tent, Cassius complains that Brutus has accused Lucius Pella of taking bribes. Brutus accuses Cassius of fiscal corruption and of withholding pay to Brutus' forces. Brutus reminds Cassius that the conspirators killed Caesar as a means of restoring justice to Rome. Cassius retorts that he has more experience and is an abler soldier and leader. Brutus promises to laugh at Cassius for his rages. The two men cool off and shake hands. Brutus rationalizes his anger as a result of the recent death of Portia. She grew depressed during Brutus' absence. As the forces of Mark Antony and Octavius gained strength, she despaired and swallowed live coals.

After Titinius and Messala join Brutus and Cassius for a conference, the two leaders discuss the recent execution of 100 senators, including Cicero. Meanwhile, Antony and Octavius camp at Philippi in southern Macedonia. Cassius prefers to wait for the armies of Antony and Octavius to attack at Sardis, but Brutus opts to assault the position at Philippi. Cassius and Brutus part friends. That night, Brutus listens to his servant Lucius sing while Brutus reads. Caesar's ghost appears to Brutus and promises to see him again at Philippi. Brutus questions Lucius and his guards, Marullus and Flavius, but no one else heard the ghost.



ACT V

Scene 1

Before war breaks out at Philippi, Octavius is delighted that Brutus and Cassius are abandoning the high country at Sardis to attack in Macedonia. The leaders of the two sides trade insults. Mark Antony accuses the conspirators of gross disloyalty to Caesar. Cassius believes that he will soon die. Brutus declares that he will never be displayed as a prisoner of war.

Scene 2

Brutus dispatches Messala across the battlefield with letters for the legions on the opposite hill. The message urges them to sweep down on the plain and overwhelm their enemy.

Scene 3

When Brutus' soldiers obey the command, they succeed and break ranks to loot their enemy. Cassius misinterprets the turmoil on the plain below. Pindarus reports that Mark Antony has seized Cassius' tents. Fearing that the messenger Titinius has fallen to the enemy, Cassius promises freedom to Pindarus if Pindarus will help Cassius commit suicide. Cassius collapses on the sword with which he stabbed Caesar. Messala returns with good news, but finds Cassius dead. Titinius awards the corpse a victory wreath. Titinius then kills himself. Brutus comes upon Cassius' body and promises to grieve for his comrade when he finds time. Brutus leads his soldiers back to battle.

Scene 4

Lucilius lures the enemy away from Brutus by pretending to be Brutus. To instill courage in the troops, young Cato rushes bravely into the fray and dies in combat. After Mark Antony's troops capture Lucilius, Mark Antony realizes that Lucilius has tricked them. Mark Antony orders his men to honor Lucilius for his courage. Men depart to locate and capture Brutus and Octavius. Mark Antony awaits in Octavius' tent.

Scene 5

In the last assault, Brutus' troops flee from defeat. He asks his comrades Dardanius, Clitus, and Volumnius to help him commit suicide, but they refuse. With the aid of Strato, Brutus falls on his sword. He dies claiming to the ghost that he killed himself far more willingly than he stabbed Caesar. Mark Antony and Octavius find Brutus' remains. Octavius promises employment to Brutus' servants, including Strato. Mark Antony praises Brutus as the noblest and least blameworthy of the assassins. All the others envied Caesar, but Brutus acted out of fear for Rome's safety and survival. Octavius orders that Brutus' body lie in state in Octavius's tent.



List of Characters

FLAVIUS AND MARULLUS Tribunes who wish to protect the plebeians from Caesar's tyranny; they break up a crowd of commoners waiting to witness Caesar's triumph and are "put to silence" during the feast of Lupercal for removing ornaments from Caesar's statues.

JULIUS CAESAR A successful military leader who wants the crown of Rome. Unfortunately, he has become imperious, easily flattered, and overly ambitious. Eight conspirators assassinate him midway through the play; later, his spirit appears to Brutus at Sardis and also at Philippi.

CASCA A witness to Caesar's attempts to manipulate the people of Rome into offering him the crown, he reports the failure to Brutus and Cassius. He joins the conspiracy the night before the assassination and is the first conspirator to stab Caesar.

CALPURNIA The wife of Julius Caesar; she urges him to stay at home on the day of the assassination because of the unnatural events of the previous night as well her prophetic dream in which Caesar's body spurts blood.

MARCUS ANTONIUS (MARK ANTONY) He appears first as a confidant and a devoted follower of Caesar, and he offers Caesar a crown during the feast of Lupercal. He has a reputation for sensuous living, but he is also militarily accomplished, politically shrewd, and skilled at oratory. He is able to dupe Brutus into allowing him to speak at Caesar's funeral. By his funeral oration, Antony excites the crowd to rebellion. He forms a triumvirate with Lepidus and Octavius. Antony and Octavius defeat Brutus and Cassius at Philippi.

A SOOTHSAYER He warns Caesar during the celebration of the feast of Lupercal to "beware the ides of March." Only minutes before the assassination, he again warns Caesar as he enters the Senate House.

MARCUS BRUTUS A *praetor*; or judicial magistrate of Rome. He is widely admired for his character and noble family. He joins the conspiracy because he fears that Caesar will become a tyrant. Idealism causes Brutus to make several poor judgments and impedes his ability to understand those who are less honorable than he. Brutus defeats Octavius' forces in the first battle at Philippi, but loses the second battle and commits suicide rather than be taken prisoner.

CASSIUS The brother-in-law of Brutus and an acute judge of human nature, Cassius organizes the conspiracy against Caesar. He recruits Brutus by passionate argument and by dispatching, forged letters to Brutus' office. Cassius argues that Antony should be assassinated along with Caesar, and that Antony should not speak at Caesar's funeral. Cassius lets Brutus convince him to fight Antony and Octavius at Philippi rather than to await the enemy at Sardis. Antony defeats Cassius at the first battle of Philippi. Cassius commits suicide when he mistakenly believes that Antony and Octavius have defeated Brutus.

CICERO A senator and a scholarly orator of Rome. He is calm and philosophical when he meets the excited Casca during the night of portentous tumult preceding the day of the assassination. The triumvirs have him put to death.

CINNA The conspirator who urges Cassius to bring "noble" Brutus into the conspiracy. Cinna assists by placing some of Cassius' forged letters where Brutus will discover them.

LUCIUS Brutus' young servant. Lucius sings for his master in Sardis. Brutus treats him with understanding, gentleness, and tolerance.

DECIUS BRUTUS The conspirator who persuades Caesar to attend the Senate on the day of the ides of March by fabricating a positive interpretation of Calpurnia's portentous dream and by telling Caesar that the Senate intends to crown him king.

METELLUS CIMBER The conspirator who attracts Caesar's attention by requesting that Caesar recall Publius, Metellus's brother, from exile. The distraction allows the assassins to surround Caesar and give Casca the opportunity to stab Caesar from behind.

TREBONIUS A conspirator who concurs with Brutus' argument that Antony be spared. Trebonius lures Antony out of the Senate House so that the other conspirators can kill Caesar without having to fear Antony's intervention. Consequently, Trebonius is the only conspirator who does not actually stab Caesar or see him die.

PORTIA The wife of Brutus and the daughter of Marcus Cato. She argues that family relationships make her strong enough to conceal Brutus' secrets. On the morning of the assassination, she is extremely agitated by the fear that she will reveal what Brutus has confided to her. She commits suicide when she realizes that Octavius and Antony are gaining in popularity.

CAIUS LIGARIUS A conspirator who is too ill to attend the meeting at Brutus' house. Although Caius Ligarius does not stab Caesar, irate citizens mark his house for destruction.

PUBLIUS Clears the way for Caesar on the way to the Capitol. He is stunned as he witnesses the assassination. Brutus sends him out to tell the citizens that the conspirators will not harm them.

ARTEMIDORUS A supporter of Caesar. Artemidorus gives Caesar a letter at the Capitol. In the letter, he lists the conspirators by name and indicates that they intend an assassination. Caesar does not read the letter.

POPILIUS LENA The senator who wishes Cassius well in his "enterprise" as Caesar enters the Senate House. This comment intensifies the dramatic tension prior to the assassination by causing Cassius and Brutus to suspect that others know of the plot to murder Caesar.

CINNA THE POET On his way to attend Caesar's funeral, he encounters rioters stirred by Antony's funeral oration. The mob at first confuses him with Cinna the conspirator, but even after they discover their error, they seize the poet "for his bad verses."

OCTAVIUS CAESAR The nephew, adopted son, and heir of Julius Caesar. Octavius joins Antony and Lepidus to rule following the death of Caesar. He and Antony lead the army that defeats Cassius and Brutus at Philippi. Octavius honors Brutus' high ideals.

M. AEMILIUS LEPIDUS A Roman noble who joins Antony and Octavius to form the Second Triumvirate to rule the Roman Empire following the assassination of Caesar. Lepidus is weak. Antony uses him essentially to run errands.

LUCILIUS The officer who impersonates Brutus at the second battle of Philippi. After his capture, Antony admires his loyalty to Brutus and protects him, hoping that Lucilius will choose to serve him as loyally as he did Brutus.

PINDARUS A Parthian captive. At Philippi, he erroneously tells his master, Cassius, that Antony has captured the scout Titinius. Actually Brutus' forces celebrate victory with Titinius. Thinking that all is lost, Cassius decides to die. Pindarus stabs him with the same sword that stabbed Caesar.

TITINIUS An officer in the army of Cassius and Brutus. Titinius guards the tent at Sardis during the argument between the two generals, and takes notes of the army's needs. Titinius guards Cassius at Philippi during a parlay with Antony and Octavius and reports on the outcome of combat. After Cassius commits suicide when he mistakenly believes Titinius to have been taken prisoner by the enemy, Titinius kills himself in emulation of Cassius.

MESSALA A soldier serving under Brutus and Cassius, Messala gives information concerning the advance of the triumvirs, and he reports Portia's death to Brutus at Sardis. At Philippi, he tries to lift Cassius' spirits and hears Cassius confess that he believes in omens. Messala delivers a message to troops across the battlefield. Later, he discovers Cassius' body and becomes a captive of Antony and Octavius.

VARRO AND CLAUDIUS Servants of Brutus, they spend the night in his tent at Sardis. Neither of them observes the ghost of Caesar that appears to Brutus.

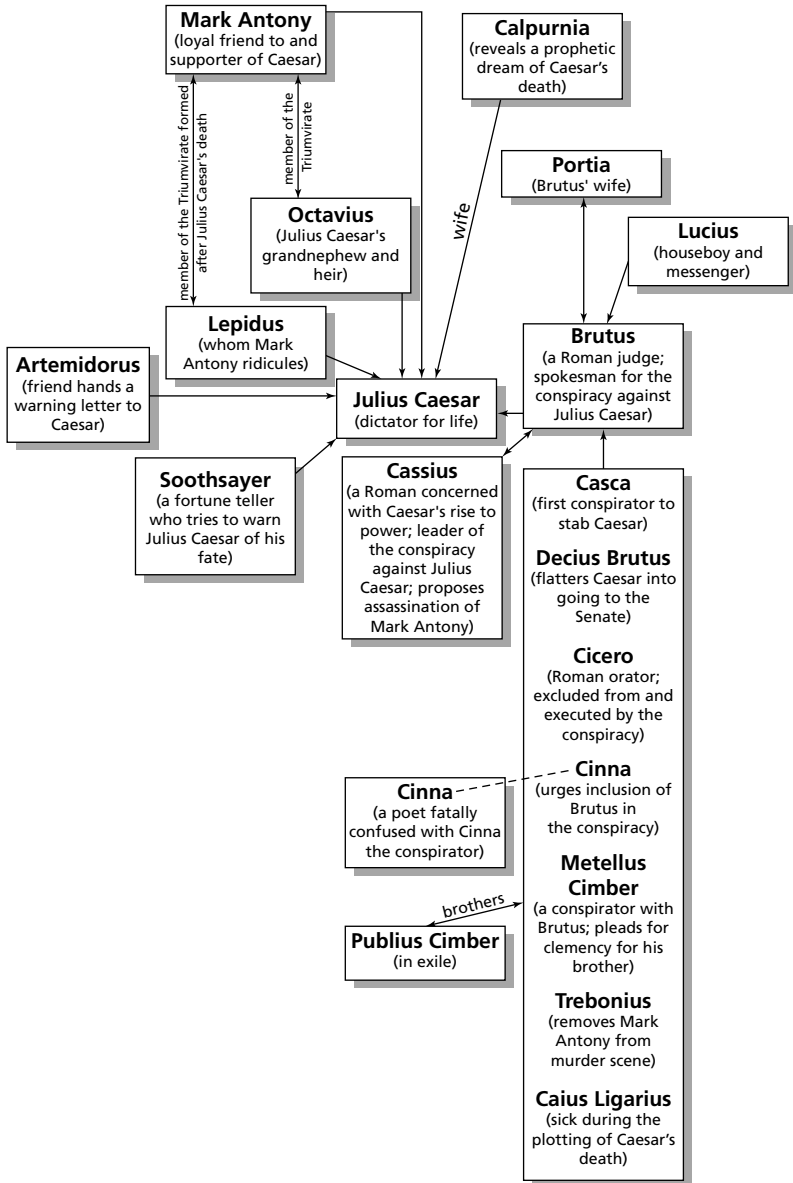
YOUNG CATO The son of Marcus Cato, the brother of Portia, the brother-in-law of Brutus, and a soldier in the army commanded by Brutus and Cassius. He dies during the second battle at Philippi while trying to inspire the army by loudly proclaiming that he is the son of Marcus Cato and that he is still fighting.

CLITUS AND DARDANIUS Servants of Brutus, they refuse their master's request at Philippi to kill him.

VOLUMNIUS A schoolmate of Brutus and a soldier under his command at Philippi. He refuses to hold a sword for Brutus to impale himself on.

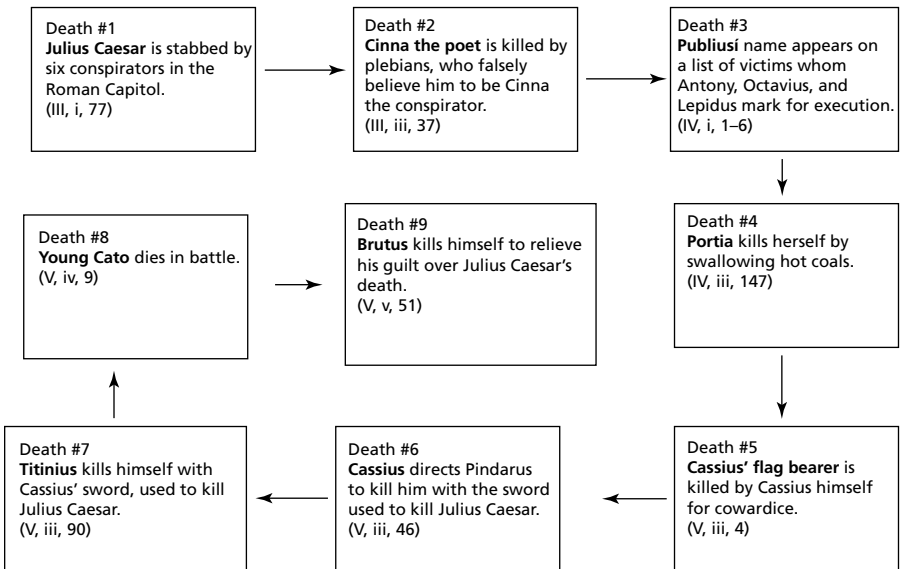
STRATO The loyal servant who holds Brutus' sword so that he may commit suicide. Later, upon Messala's recommendation, Strato becomes a servant to Octavius.

Character Map



Cycle of Death

Julius Caesar's assassination at the hands of the conspirators begins a cycle of suicide, murder, and death in the play. This death spiral continues until Brutus, one of the lead conspirators, kills himself at the play's end. The graphic below outlines the sequence of deaths that spur the execution plot.





**Shakespeare's
Julius Caesar**