

Act III Scene 2 (Brutus' funeral speech, before Anthony, taking responsibility for killing Caesar)

BRUTUS

Be patient till the last. Romans, countrymen, and lovers! hear me for my cause, and be silent, that you may hear: believe me for mine honour, and have respect to mine honour, that you may believe: censure me in your wisdom, and awake your senses, that you may the better judge.

If there be any in this assembly, any dear friend of Caesar's, to him I say, that Brutus' love to Caesar was no less than his. If then that friend demand why Brutus rose against Caesar, this is my answer:

Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more. Had you rather Caesar were living and die all slaves, than that Caesar were dead, to live all free men? As Caesar loved me, I weep for him; as he was fortunate, I rejoice at it; as he was valiant, I honour him: but, as he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his fortune; honour for his valour; and death for his ambition.

Who is here so base that would be a bondman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so rude that would not be a Roman? If any, speak; for him have I offended. Who is here so vile that will not love his country? If any, speak; for him have I offended. I pause for a reply.

Death of Caesar

Caesar:

I could be well moved, if I were as you;
If I could pray to move, prayers would move me.
But I am constant as the northern star,
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality
There is no fellow in the firmament.
The skies are painted with unnumbered sparks,
They are all fire and every one doth shine;
But there's but one in all doth hold his place.
So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men,
And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;
Yet in the number I do know but one
That, unassailable, holds on his rank,
Unshaked of motion; and that I am he.
Let me a little show it, even in this —
That I was constant Cimber should be banished,
And constant do remain to keep him so.

Cinna

[Coming forward]

O Caesar —

Caesar

Hence! Wilt thou lift up Olympus?

Decius Brutus

[Coming forward]

Great Caesar —

Caesar

Doth not Brutus bootless kneel?

Casca

[Coming forward]

Speak, hands for me!

[Casca first, then the other Conspirators, and finally Brutus stab Caesar.]

Caesar

Et tu, Brute? — Then fall, Caesar!

[Caesar dies.]

Cassius and Brutus begin to disagree on how to govern, Brutus fears Cassius will not fight to defend the republic

Brutus

Thou hast described

A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,

When love begins to sicken and decay,

It useth an enforced ceremony.

There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;

But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,

Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;

[Low marching music offstage.]

But when they should endure the bloody spur,

They fall their crests, and like deceitful jades

Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?

Brutus, having banished a noble for bribery, accuses Cassius of profiting from his office

Brutus

Lucilius, do you the like, and let no man
Come to our tent till we have done our conference.
Let Lucius and Titinius guard our door.
[Exit all but Brutus and Cassius.]

Cassius

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

Brutus

You wronged 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 condemned 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 touched 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 honors
For so much trash as may be graspèd thus?
I had rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a Roman.

Brutus cannot afford to govern honestly

Brutus

You have done that you should be sorry for.
There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats,
For I am armed 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 answered 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!

Brutus Forces the Battle

Brutus

Under your pardon. You must note beside,
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.

Brutus sees Caesar's ghost before battle at Philippi.

Brutus swears he will never be captured

Brutus

No, Cassius, no. Think not, thou noble Roman,
That ever Brutus will go bound to Rome.
He bears too great a **mind**. But this same day
Must end that work the Ides of March begun,
And whether we shall meet again I know not.
Therefore our everlasting farewell take.
For ever and for ever farewell, Cassius!
If we do meet again, why, we shall smile.
If not, why then this parting was well made.

Death of Cassius

Cassius

Come down, behold no more.
O coward that I am to live so long,
To see my best friend ta'en before my face.
[Pindarus descends.]
Come hither, sirrah.
In Parthia did I take thee prisoner,
And then I swore thee, saving of thy life,
That whatsoever I did bid thee do,
Thou shouldst attempt it. Come now, keep thine oath.
Now be a freeman, and with this good sword
That ran through Caesar's bowels, search this bosom.
Stand not to answer. Here, take thou the hilts;
And when my face is covered, as 'tis now,
Guide thou the sword.
[Pindarus stabs him.]
Caesar, thou art revenged,
Even with the sword that kill'd thee.
[Cassius dies.]

Titinius

Why didst thou send me forth, brave Cassius?
Did I not meet thy friends, and did not they
Put on my brows this wreath of victory,
And bid me give it thee? Didst thou not hear their shouts?
Alas, thou hast misconstrued everything!
But hold thee, take this garland on thy brow —
Thy Brutus bid me give it thee, and I
Will do his bidding. Brutus, come apace,
And see how I regarded Caius Cassius.
By your leave, gods; this is a Roman's part —
Come, Cassius' sword, and find Titinius' heart.
[Kills himself.]

Death of Brutus

Brutus

I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord.
Thou art a fellow of a good respect;
Thy life hath had some smatch of honor in it.
Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,
While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?

Strato

Give me your hand first. Fare you well, my lord.

Brutus

Farewell, good Strato. — Caesar, now be still.
I killed not thee with half so good a will.

Antony

This was the noblest Roman of them all.
All the conspirators save only he
Did that they did in envy of great Caesar.
He only, in a general honest thought
And common good to all, made one of them.
His life was gentle, and the elements
So mix'd in him that Nature might stand up
And say to all the world 'This was a man!'