

***Julius Caesar***  
Summary: Acts 4 and 5

**Act 4, Scene 1**

- Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus are gathered with a checklist of the men they plan to murder for conspiracy. Lepidus agrees that his brother can be killed as long as Antony agrees for his nephew to be killed.
- Lepidus is sent to collect Caesar's will, to see if they can divert some of his money their way.
- As soon as Lepidus has gone, Antony begins to talk trash about him. Antony thinks Lepidus is weak, so it's a shame that he'll be sharing power with Antony and Octavius in the triumvirate. Antony says he only took Lepidus' word about who should die because he's more experienced than Octavius.
- The plan is to let Lepidus bear the burden of ruling while doing as he's told by the other two.
- Octavius is more in the pro-Lepidus camp and insists that he's a good soldier. Antony replies that his (Antony's) horse is a good soldier too – good at being led and ordered. To them, Lepidus should only be a puppet.
- They then discuss the fact that Brutus and Cassius are raising an army, which they have to fight by allying their friends and funds.
- They go off to sit in council and discuss how they'll fight their enemies and weed out the traitors.

**Act 4, scene 2**

- Brutus and his friend Lucilius meet Pindarus, servant and friend to Cassius, with Titinius, another mutual buddy.
- Brutus says Cassius, who isn't there yet, has engaged in or overseen some shady business that makes Brutus wish they had never killed Caesar. Still, if Cassius is on his way, that's okay.
- Lucilius admits, when asked by Brutus, that Cassius wasn't his usual friendly self. To Brutus, it sounds like the friendship is cooling.
- Cassius' army will stay in Sardis (in what's now Turkey) that night, and the cavalry will arrive with Cassius.
- Cassius enters and announces that Brutus has done him wrong. Brutus is shocked: how could he wrong someone who's like a brother to him? The two men are about to have a spat, and Brutus suggests it's best to do it privately rather than let the troops know they're fighting.
- They order their armies to be moved away so they can go to Brutus' tent and argue in private, with Lucilius and Titinius guarding the door.

**Act 4, scene 3**

- The root of Cassius and Brutus' argument comes out: Brutus has condemned a man, Lucius Pella, for taking bribes from the Sardians. Cassius wrote a letter saying Pella shouldn't be punished, but Brutus ignored it. He accuses Cassius of being dishonorable for suggesting they let bribery slide.
- Cassius resents being called greedy, but Brutus gets to the heart of the matter: they all killed Caesar for justice's sake, but when they start getting involved in petty robbery, it compromises their honor and calls into question their noble motives for killing Caesar.
- Cassius and Brutus then argue, and Brutus is all "I don't even know who you are anymore." Brutus tells Cassius to get out of his sight, which doesn't go over well, and the two start threatening each other.

- Brutus brings up an old problem: he had asked Cassius to send gold to pay his soldiers, but Cassius denied him, which was not cool. Cassius claims he didn't deny Brutus; it must've been some bad messenger's fault. Still, Brutus should be a good friend, Cassius says, and ignore his faults. That's what friends do.
- Things come to a head when Cassius offers Brutus his blade and naked chest. Cassius points out that Brutus stabbed Caesar out of love, which is more than Cassius is getting from Brutus right now.
- With the offer of murder on the table, they both realize they're being a bit moody and melodramatic. They agree that Cassius is showing his mother's temper again. From now on they'll be friends and not get angry at each other.
- As they step out of the tent, they find a poet waiting to tell them they should be friends. It's really nice of the poet to be so concerned. They laugh at him and send him off, then they direct Lucilius and Titinius to get their armies ready to lodge for the night.
- Then the big news about what put Brutus in such a bad mood comes out. Portia, Brutus's loving wife, was driven to grief by his flight from Rome and by Antony and Octavius's growing strength. Long story short, she has killed herself by swallowing coals. (Ouch.)
- After he tells all this to Cassius, Brutus gets some wine and aims to drink the pain away, saying they should speak no more of his dead wife.
- Messala and Titinius come in, and though Cassius would like to dwell on Portia's death a bit, Brutus is all business.
- They've learned that Octavius and Antony have decreed that a hundred senators must die in Rome. Both men are now on their way to Philippi. Brutus says he's only heard the names of seventy senators, and that Cicero is one of them. Messala then pipes up that Cicero is dead, and tries to skirt around the issue of Portia's death with Brutus.
- Brutus is less hurt than anyone expected him to be. He says Portia had to die only once, and he can bear that death.
- The talk then turns to beating their enemies at Philippi. Cassius thinks it's better for them to sit tight until Antony and Octavius wear out their own armies with travel. That way Brutus and Cassius' army will still be fresh to fight.
- Brutus points out, though, that the enemy army might gather strength as it goes. Because more and more men between Rome and Philippi don't support Brutus and Cassius, they might be willing to join Antony and Octavius' forces. Brutus thinks his and Cassius' army is at its peak right now. They'll only get weaker, so it's better to act right away.
- They all agree to go to Philippi and meet Antony and Octavius' army.
- Everyone decides to get a little sleep. They all say their "goodnights" to one another, and Brutus has Lucius call in some soldiers to sleep in his tent just in case he needs them to take messages to Cassius in the night.
- Brutus is apparently pretty keyed up. He asks Lucius to play him a tune on his instrument, even though Lucius is sleepy.
- Lucius plays, but falls asleep mid-song. With everyone else asleep, Brutus picks up his book to read.
- Just then Caesar's ghost shows up, claiming he is "thy evil spirit, Brutus." Brutus is a bit shaken, and the ghost explains that he'll see him again at Philippi. Brutus is all "see you then, I guess."
- After the ghost disappears, Brutus wakes the men who've been sleeping in his tent. None of them saw the ghost.
- Brutus has one of the men tell Cassius to send his army off early in the morning; Brutus' army will follow. It seems Caesar's ghost has only cemented Brutus' willingness to meet his fate, whatever it be.

### **Act 5, scene 1**

- Octavius and Anthony confer on the plains of Philippi.

- Octavius is surprised to see that Brutus and Cassius' army has come to meet them, especially since Antony thought the enemy would stay put. Antony thinks the enemy is fronting: clearly Brutus and Cassius mean to *appear* courageous and brave, but Antony can see right through that.
- Antony and Octavius set up a battle plan and are met by Brutus and Cassius—each with his army behind him—for a pre-battle parley, or negotiation.
- As Brutus tries to get them to reason (and maybe avoid the fight), Antony and Octavius bait him. They claim Brutus' words are no good when they're accompanied by bad strokes (of the sword). Antony's like, remember that time you cried "Long live! Hail Caesar!" while you stabbed him in the heart? This is a sore point for Brutus.
- There's some more back and forth, and folks get testy. Finally, Octavius draws his sword and says he won't put it back again until he's dead or Caesar's 33 wounds (not that anybody's counting) are avenged.
- After more of this taunting, Antony and Octavius challenge Brutus and Cassius to meet them on the battlefield.
- As Brutus talks with Lucilius privately, Cassius confides in Messala that it's his birthday. Though Cassius claims to be an Epicurean (meaning he doesn't believe in "signs and omens" mumbo jumbo), he's inclined to begin thinking differently after seeing something weird on his way from Sardis: two eagles swooped down from the sky, feeding out of the soldiers' hands. In the morning, they were replaced by "ravens, crows, and kites" that spread like a shadow of death over the army. (Not a good sign.)
- Messala tries to sway Cassius from the bad-omen talk, but Cassius brushes it off, saying he's still ready to face his peril.
- Then Brutus and Cassius speak and agree to say goodbye to each other in a way that would be fitting if this were to be their last meeting ever.
- Cassius asks Brutus what he'll do if things get bad, possibly hinting at suicide. Brutus points out that he condemned his father-in-law, Cato (who had fought on Pompey's side), for killing himself instead of giving himself over to Caesar. He's not sure what he'll do if they're defeated, as he finds suicide to be cowardly, especially if no one's really sure how things might turn out if they stay alive.
- Cassius points out that if they lose, Brutus will be dragged through the streets of Rome.
- Without explicitly saying he's decided to kill himself if they fail, Brutus declares that he'll never be taken to Rome in chains. Unless Brutus plans to catch the next plane to Vegas, we've just seen the great man commit himself to suicide.
- Brutus and Cassius part nobly, saying that if they never see each other again, this was a good goodbye.
- Brutus ends on a sort of Darryl Downer note, saying that although they don't know how, this day will come to an end. This is nice foreshadowing if you like that sort of "death is inevitable" talk.

### **Act 5, scene 2**

- Brutus sends Messala to ride out and instruct the soldiers to bear down on Octavius' side of the enemy's army. That group lacks spirit and might easily fall after a good push.

### **Act 5, scene 3**

- Cassius and Titinius watch the battle from another part of the field.
- When Cassius' standard-bearer (the guy who carries his battle flag) tried to run away, Cassius killed him and took up the flag himself. This guy is merciless!
- Titinius doesn't comment on this behavior but points out that Brutus came down on Octavius's army too early. Though they were initially weaker, Octavius's men now appear to be overtaking

Brutus's, and Antony is enclosing Cassius's. The situation is looking pretty dire for Cassius and Brutus.

- Pindarus comes to Cassius and Titinius with the news that Antony has invaded Cassius's tents. He tries to get Cassius to run away, but Cassius is distracted by a set of fire in the distance.
- Cassius sends Titinius off on horseback to see whether the troops are friends or enemies. He also sends Pindarus higher up the hill to watch and report on Titinius' progress.
- Cassius notes to himself that his birthday is a good day to die, his life having come full circle.
- Cassius is resigned to his fate, but he still fights on. Pindarus reports on Titinius play by play. A horde of horsemen has surrounded Titinius. Now they've overtaken him. And now they're shouting with joy. It looks like the worst has happened.
- Cassius calls for Pindarus to stop watching. He laments that he's such a coward to have sent his best friend Titinius to his death. Pindarus returns to Cassius' side, and Cassius speaks to him.
- Cassius reminds Pindarus how he took him prisoner at Parthia and spared his life on the condition that he do whatever Cassius asked him to. Cassius then tells Pindarus how to make himself a free man: he should kill him with the very blade he used to kill Caesar.
- Pindarus stabs Cassius, who dies declaring that Caesar is avenged by the same sword that killed him.
- Pindarus, now hovering around Cassius' body, claims that this wasn't the way he wanted to gain his freedom, and that if he had his own will (and hadn't been Cassius' servant), he wouldn't have done it. He declares that he'll run far away so no Roman will ever see (or enslave) him again.
- Messala then enters the scene with Titinius (who—surprise!—is not dead), announcing the new state of the battle: they're basically even on both sides. Brutus has overtaken Octavius' forces, while Antony's forces have beaten Cassius' men.
- The men are stoked to tell Cassius that all isn't lost, but then they see his dead body, which is in no condition to accept good news.
- Messala is more Action Jackson than super-sleuth; he goes off unhappily to inform Brutus of Cassius' death. Meanwhile, Titinius is left to find Pindarus. While he looks around, Titinius realizes that Cassius must have misunderstood what had happened on the hilltop.
- It doesn't matter where Pindarus is, and Titinius doesn't even look for him. Instead, Titinius explains what actually happened in the scene that Cassius killed himself over. Titinius was indeed overtaken, but by friends of Brutus and Cassius on horseback. The shouts Pindarus heard were shouts of joy for Cassius' side. They overtook Titinius to put a wreath of victory on his head, which Brutus then wanted the rider to give to Cassius.
- Titinius still has the doomed crown, which, in a dramatic moment, he places on dead Cassius' head.
- Titinius then cries, "By your leave, gods! – this is a Roman's part," and proceeds to stab himself with Cassius' sword. Titinius dies beside his friend.
- Messala and Brutus arrive just in time to find that Titinius has played Ultimate Mourning and killed himself.
- Brutus cries out, "Julius Caesar, thou art mighty yet!" (He might be suggesting that the ghost is out convincing people to kill themselves, or he might be talking about his effect on the conspirators' consciences.)
- Brutus laments that two of Rome's bravest men should lie here this way. He prophetically calls Cassius "the last of all the Romans," meaning the last of the old school Romans that prefer death to subjugation. Brutus says he knows he ought to cry over Cassius, but now is not the time for crying.
- In the meantime, they decide not to hold the funerals in the camp, as funerals are no way to boost troop morale. Still, it's only 3 o'clock, which means there's time to try their luck against the enemy again, in the hopes something might be accomplished before dinnertime. Brutus gathers his remaining friends for the fight.

#### **Act 5, scene 4**

- Everyone goes out onto the battlefield in a blaze of glory. Young Cato runs around shouting his name as a challenge to anyone who stands for tyranny and against the Roman Republic.
- Lucilius is running around pretending to be Brutus.
- Some enemy soldiers unceremoniously kill Young Cato. They're ready to kill Lucilius too, but he says he's Brutus, and they should be honored to kill him.
- The soldiers take him prisoner and are excited to show off their catch to Antony. (They really believe he's Brutus.)
- The captive Lucilius tells Antony that no one will ever take Brutus alive. Lucilius promises that when Antony finds Brutus, whether alive or dead, he'll still be Brutus, with the same noble character and unchanged by these events.
- Antony tells his overeager soldiers that this guy isn't Brutus, but he's no less worth capturing. Antony orders the soldiers to keep Lucilius safe and to be kind to him, as he'd rather have such men for friends than enemies.
- Antony then sends some folks off to find out whether Brutus is alive or dead. He goes to Octavius' tent to hear news of how things are going.

### **Act 5, scene 5**

- Elsewhere in the field, Brutus stops and asks his remaining friends to rest on a rock.
- He calls Clitus aside and asks him to do something in a whisper. Clitus declines to do the mystery deed, saying he'd rather kill himself.
- The process is repeated with Dardanius. The two men, Clitus and Dardanius, reveal to each other that Brutus has asked them to kill him.
- They share the news while Brutus tears up a little bit.
- Brutus calls Volumnius over now and tells him that Caesar's ghost has appeared to him twice, once at night and once again in the fields of Philippi. Brutus knows his hour has come and he would rather leap into the pit than loiter around and wait for his enemies to push him in.
- He asks Volumnius to kill him, since they were old friends from school. Volumnius points out that this is the very reason he can't do it.
- Just then the alarums (call to arms) are sounding, so Clitus urges everyone to get away before the enemy arrives.
- Brutus speaks to his men valiantly. He says that even though he has lost to Antony and Octavius, he will find more glory in this day than either of them can hope to achieve through their vile conquest of Rome. As the alarums continue to sound out, Brutus tells everyone to flee and promises to follow after everyone else has left.
- The only man left with Brutus now is Strato, who's slept through all the speeches and sadness. Strato has woken up just in time to be asked to hold Brutus' sword while he runs into it. Strato thinks this is a good idea and asks only to shake hands with Brutus before doing the deed.
- Brutus' final words assure that what he does now is twice as pure as what he did to Caesar, who is avenged by this act: "Caesar, now be still, I kill'd not thee with half so good a will."
- Antony, Octavius, and their armies, along with the captive Lucilius and Messala, now approach the site of Brutus' death.
- Messala asks Strato where their master is, and Strato says that Brutus is free.
- Only Brutus overcame Brutus, Strato says, and Brutus himself is the only one who gained honor in his death.
- There's a bit of a conference, and Octavius will entertain all the men who nobly served Brutus.
- Brutus' enemies are a lot friendlier to him now that he's dead. Antony declares Brutus the "noblest Roman" of them all, as he alone among the conspirators killed Caesar not out of envy but out of concern and care for the public good.
- Octavius says Brutus will be buried as an honorable soldier, and his body will stay in Octavius' tent for the night.
- After that, they agree it's time to celebrate and share "the glories of this happy day."

