



JULIUS CAESAR – A Potted Shakespeare
Adapted by Paul Smith

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THE POTTED SHAKESPEARE - JULIUS CAESAR

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CHARACTERS

JULIUS CAESAR

CASSIUS

BRUTUS

MARK ANTONY

CALPURNIA

CASCA

METELLUS

TREBONIUS

DECIUS

SOOTHSAYER

OCTAVIAN

STRATO

A MESSENGER

GUARDS

A PUBLIC PLACE IN ROME

A podium takes centre stage with steps up to it.

A trumpet fanfare – surrounded by others, JULIUS CAESAR takes his place on the podium, waving to the cheering crowds. Also there are MARK ANTONY, BRUTUS, CASSIUS, & CALPURNIA & OTHERS

CAESAR People of Rome. I stand before you in victory. A hard-fought, arduous and bloody war has come to an end and I have emerged victorious.

We can now face a time of peace and prosperity with every citizen of Rome able to look upon me with pride in their hearts and forever with joyful memories of being able to celebrate on this day.

I thank you all for your loyalty and support. Together we will make Rome even greater than it has been before.

Loud cheers

To Calpurnia, I thank you for your love and for being the most loyal wife a man could wish for.

For now, return to your homes. Celebrate. Toast my victory!

More loud cheers as CAESAR turns to CALPURNIA

Come, Calpurnia. Let us celebrate too.

They start to leave

CALPURNIA Of course, Caesar

CAESAR **(turning to MARK ANTONY)** What do you think Mark Antony? The people are happy at last are they not?

MARK So it would seem my Lord. Your victory has brought Rome together.

CAESAR Yes, yes, it has. Hasn't it?

An elderly SOOTHSAYER pushes his way towards CAESAR

SOOTHSAYER Beware the Ides of March.

CAESAR Who is this fool?

MARK Get away old man.

SOOTHSAYER I say it again great Caesar. Beware the Ides of March.

CAESAR What is he blithering about?

CALPURNIA The Ides of March are the 15th day of that month.

CAESAR I know that, you silly woman. Get rid of him. Guards!

Two GUARDS appear

SOOTHSAYER Great Caesar, respect my knowledge. You face great danger. The Ides of March are nearly here. Beware.

CAESAR Idiot. Take him away

The GUARDS remove the SOOTHSAYER

SOOTHSAYER *(as he is lead away)* I repeat. Beware!

CAESAR Never heard such nonsense

MARK The man is demented sadly Caesar.

CAESAR Obviously.

CALPURNIA He may not be Caesar.

CAESAR Of course he is. Complete lunatic. Needs locking up.

MARK He is safely out of the way now Caesar. Don't let a madman spoil your triumph.

CAESAR I certainly won't. Come let us drink and enjoy this moment.

CAESAR leads CALPURNIA, MARK ANTONY & OTHERS away. BRUTUS and CASSIUS hang back

CASSIUS There he goes. Not a care in the world. Anyone would think he had achieved the victory single-handed. No mention of the many brave men we have lost or the leadership of the generals. No, they don't get a look-in. *His* victory. He makes me sick.

BRUTUS Take it easy my friend, he did play a fairly important part in it.

CASSIUS I'm not underestimating it, but he doesn't give credit to anyone else – as usual.

BRUTUS You have a point.

CASSIUS We aren't the only ones to recognise this. Matters have been brewing for some months. The danger is that he will let all this adulation go to his head. There is talk in the senate of making him King. King!

BRUTUS Yes, I was aware of that. I agree it's a step too far.

CASSIUS It's what he wants and what he will get if no one stops the nobles from setting him on an even higher pedestal. Someone must act.

BRUTUS What are you suggesting?

CASSIUS For the sake of Rome. For the sake of us all. If these matters proceed, as I believe they will, then Caesar will become a dictator. Rome will be at his mercy. We all will.

BRUTUS Whatever you are considering, I believe we must be cautious.

CASSIUS But, don't you see, the Senate wants these powers to be bestowed on him now. He must be removed.

BRUTUS Temporarily?

CASSIUS *(he clutches at his dagger)* Permanently.

BRUTUS I see. Then we would be best to talk with those who are like-minded. As soon as possible.

CASSIUS I agree. Can we meet tonight?

BRUTUS Come to my house after dark. We can talk in the garden. My wife, Portia, is visiting relatives. It will be quiet and private.

CASSIUS I will bring the others at 10.

CASSIUS leaves

BRUTUS Oh Caesar, my friend. Please heed the warnings you are given. Don't
let your arrogance lead you to disaster.