

# JULIUS CAESAR

## SYNOPSIS

1

The play opens with the citizens of Rome celebrating Caesar's wartime victories, but two constables complain that Caesar overthrew the well-loved Pompey and that decorations praising Caesar should be torn down. Elsewhere, Caesar is attending a ceremonial race when a Soothsayer warns him to "beware the ides of March" (March 15th); Caesar dismisses the warning.

As the entourage departs, Brutus and Cassius are left alone. Cassius works to convince Brutus that Caesar is becoming too powerful and tyrannical. Cassius also works up a plot to write a series of fake letters speaking ill of Caesar to convince Brutus that others believe this as well.

Unable to sleep, Brutus discovers the letters and considers them. He then is visited by a number of conspirators who recruit him for a planned assassination of Caesar the next day. Portia, Brutus' wife, begs to be told what is going on and Brutus assures her he will tell her more. The next morning, Caesar's wife is concerned and begs him not to go to the Capitol. He is convinced to dismiss her worries.

Caesar is again approached by the Soothsayer and Caius Ligarius (a conspirator who has second thoughts). They try to warn him of danger, which he disregards. At the senate, the conspirators gather around Caesar, pretending to seek a pardon for an exiled kinsman, and then stab him. Brutus is the final one to betray him. They all wash their hands in his blood and proudly proclaim, "Tyranny is dead."

Mark Antony, one of Caesar's closest allies, arrives to confront the conspirators, then asks to speak at Caesar's funeral. Cassius advises against this, but Brutus allows it. Brutus says that he will first explain their motives to the crowd. When left alone, Antony speaks of revenge. We learn Caesar's great-nephew and heir Octavius is also coming to Rome.

## INTERMISSION

2

At Caesar's funeral, Brutus convinces the crowd that Caesar was ambitious and would take away their freedom. Mark Antony speaks next, emotionally reminding the crowd all that Caesar did for Rome. The crowd grows furious at Caesar's death and the conspirators flee. The crowd is so bent on revenge that they confuse Cinna the poet for a conspirator and kill him.

Octavius, Lepidus, and Antony, the three men who will form the new triumvirate of Rome, meet to make a list of senators who must be executed and also to prepare for the coming war. Brutus and Cassius do the same, but their friendship turns to in-fighting. Brutus reveals that his wife Portia has died. Later that night, Brutus is visited by Caesar's ghost.

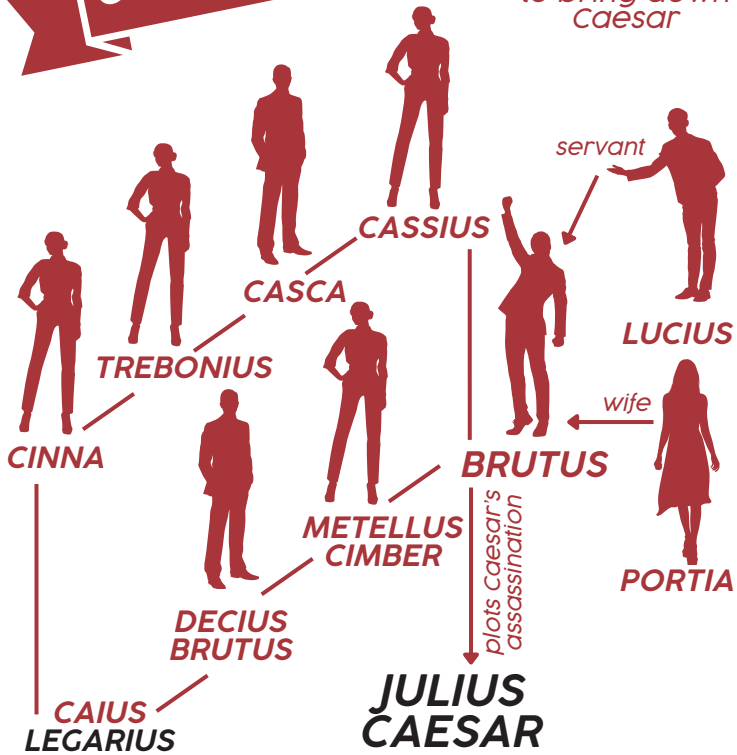
Both armies meet at Philippi, exchanging words and blows. Cassius mistakes a victory on his side for defeat and takes his own life. Brutus rallies his soldiers, who face ever more daunting odds. Hiding out with the few remaining troops, Brutus asks someone to assist in his death. Just before dying, he cries out to Caesar's spirit. Octavius and Antony's armies enter. The generals praise Brutus' honor and agree to give him a soldier's burial.

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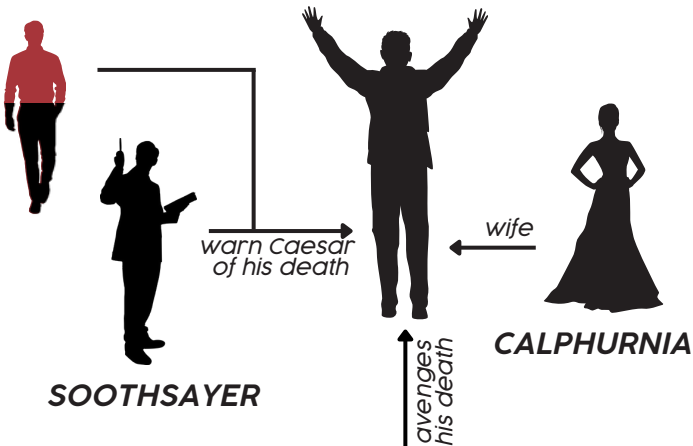
## CHARACTERS

### CONSPIRATORS

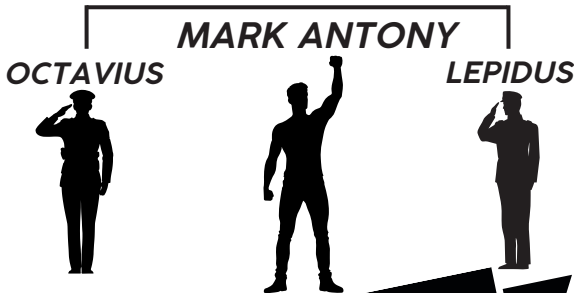
Those who work together to bring down Caesar



### JULIUS CAESAR



triumvirate



Those who work to protect and honor Caesar / his legacy

### SUPPORTERS

Dramaturgical work is made possible by a generous gift in honor of HUSTON DIEHL.