

## **Julius Caesar: Study Questions with Answers**

### Act 1

1) Why are the tribunes Flavius and Marullus so upset at the opening of the play?

The tribunes are angry that the working class citizens of Rome gather to celebrate Caesar's victory, while forgetting Pompey, the Roman hero (and a part of the First Triumvirate that ruled Rome) who was killed in battle alongside Caesar. Their hostility toward Caesar serves to introduce the deep political divide that will become the central issue of the play.

2) What holiday are the Roman masses celebrating at the time of Caesar's return?

Caesar's triumph coincides with the feast of Lupercal, which was celebrated on February 15th. The festivities were in honor of Lupercus, the god of nature (Pan in Greek mythology).

3) Describe Caesar's encounter with the soothsayer.

As Caesar passes through the crowd the soothsayer cries out to him, warning him to "beware the ides of March." Caesar dismisses the soothsayer as a dreamer and continues on. Caesar's encounter with the soothsayer foreshadows his assassination in the senate in 3.1. Note that in the ancient Roman calendar the "ides" was the fifteenth day of March, May, July, and October, and the thirteenth day of the other months. Gaius Julius Caesar was assassinated on March 15, 44 BC.

4) What is most significant about the meeting between Cassius and Brutus in 1.2.?

Cassius presents his best argument to convince Brutus, his close friend and brother-in-law, to conspire with him to assassinate Caesar. Brutus reveals he has concerns about the state of the Republic, but will not commit outright to join with Cassius.

5) How does Cassius trick Brutus into joining the conspirators?

Cassius fabricates a petition, pretending it is from the angry citizens demanding Caesar's removal, and he throws it in Brutus's window. The welfare of Rome drives Brutus, and Cassius knows Brutus will give the people what they desire.

## Act 2

1) How does Portia prove she is worthy to hear the plans of her husband, Brutus?

Portia cuts herself in the thigh and suffers the pain of both the wound and the infection it causes in silence. Her show of bravery and self-control convinces Brutus she is "stronger than her sex" (2.1.296) and he agrees to confide in her, only to be interrupted before he has a chance.

2) After an ominous dream, Calpurnia begs Caesar to stay away from the senate and, at first, he agrees. What changes his mind?

Decius, a conspirator whose role it is to guarantee Caesar is in the Capitol that day, favorably interprets Calpurnia's dream and then chides Caesar for yielding to his wife's whims. Decius adds that the senate is planning again to offer Caesar a crown, and Caesar gives in to vanity. He leaves Calpurnia and accompanies Decius to the Capitol.

**Write the answers of the following Questions by your own.**

1. Why does Caesar decide to go to the Senate despite his wife's warnings?

2. Was assassinating Caesar the right decision?

3. What are the causes for Caesar's tragedy?

4. How could Caesar avoid his tragic fate ?