



TIKVAH
ONLINE
ACADEMY

Burial and Praise: Two Eulogies from Shakespeare’s “Julius Caesar”

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Background:

Before the play starts, Julius Caesar has reached the peak of power. A successful general, he is phenomenally popular with the people, and rumors fly that he is planning to accept the title of king. Why is this so unsettling? Because the Romans had kicked out their kings 500 years earlier and established a *republic*; in fact, one of the great heroes of this legendary uprising was a man named Brutus – a revered ancestor of the Brutus in this play.

In the first two acts, we learn about a conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar to keep him from becoming a king. The drama of these two acts centers around the character of Brutus – will he join with the conspirators? He is a very close friend of Caesar, and Caesar loves Brutus dearly.

Act III opens on the morning of March 15, the Ides of March, with Caesar headed to the Senate, despite warnings from a soothsayer to beware this day. By the end of scene one, Caesar is dead, his last words being, “Et tu, Brute” – “And you too, Brutus?”

Will the conspirators be hailed and celebrated as saviors of the republic, or will they be hunted down as murderers? The rest of the play will hang on the answer to this question. Our two speeches, occurring in Act III, scene 2, serve as a centerpiece, where Shakespeare asks and answers this question.

Guiding Questions:

1. The purpose of Brutus’ speech is clear: he has to explain why he joined the conspiracy and killed his own dear friend. Do you find his explanation persuasive? Why or why not?
2. Mark Antony has promised to speak only as a friend. What is the purpose of his speech? What effect does it have?
3. What is Shakespeare up to here? Does he believe in the republic? Does he believe in using violence to achieve political goals? Should we be sorry that Caesar was killed? Why or why not?

Act 3 Scene 2

Brutus gives reasons to the citizens, but Antony moves their hearts to mutiny with his oration at Caesar's funeral. Octavius has entered the city.

Os.d. *Plebeians*: commoners.

1 *satisfied*, given a satisfactory explanation.

2 *give me audience*: listen to me.

4 *part the numbers*: divide the crowd.

7 *public*: concerning the public; spoken in public.
rendered: rendered.

10 *severally*: separately.
rendered: rendered.

12 *till the last*: until the end.

13-33 *Romans ... reply*, Brutus tries to present a reasoned argument—in prose.

14-16 *Believe me ... believe*: believe me because I am a man of honour, and remember that I am an honourable man whom you can believe.

16 *Censure*, judge (not necessarily in a negative sense).

17 *senses*: understanding.

22 *Had you*: would you.

25 *fortunate*: successful (in war).

SCENE 2

Rome: the Forum. Enter Brutus and Cassius with the Plebeians

All

We will be satisfied! Let us be satisfied!

Brutus

Then follow me and give me audience, friends.

Cassius, go you into the other street

And part the numbers.

5 Those that will hear me speak, let 'em stay here;

Those that will follow Cassius, go with him;

And public reasons shall be rendered

Of Caesar's death.

First Plebeian

I will hear Brutus speak.

Second Plebeian

I will hear Cassius and compare their reasons

10 When severally we hear them rendered.

[Exit Cassius with some of the Plebeians]

Brutus goes into the pulpit

Third Plebeian

The noble Brutus is ascended, silence!

Brutus

Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen,¹ and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be silent that you may hear. Believe me for

15 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

20 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 freemen? As Caesar loved me, I weep for

25 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.

All

None, Brutus, none.

Brutus

35 Then none have I offended. I have done no more to Caesar than you shall do to Brutus. The question of his death is enrolled in the Capitol, his glory not extenuated wherein he was worthy nor his offences enforced for which he suffered death.

Enter Mark Antony and others with Caesar's body

40 Here comes his body, mourned by Mark Antony, who, though he had no hand in his death, shall receive the benefit of his dying, a place in the commonwealth, as which of you shall not? With this I depart: that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself when it shall please my country to need my death.

Comes down

All

Live, Brutus, live, live!

First Plebeian

Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

Second Plebeian

Give him a statue with his ancestors.

Third Plebeian

50 Let him be Caesar.

Fourth Plebeian

Caesar's better parts

Shall be crown'd in Brutus.

29 *would be*: would wish to be.

30 *rude*: uncivilized.

36 *cb to Brutus*: i.e. if Brutus becomes a tyrant

question of: reasons for.

37 *enrolled*: recorded upon a roll or parchment

extenuated: belittled.

38 *enforced*: emphasized.

41 *no hand in*: was not responsible for.

42 *a place in the commonwealth*: the right to live in a free republic.

44 *lover*: friend.

50 *parts*: qualities.

First Plebeian

We'll bring him to his house

With shouts and clamours.

Brutus

My countrymen—

Second Plebeian

Peace, silence, Brutus speaks!

First Plebeian

Peace ho!

Brutus

Good countrymen, let me depart alone,

55 And, for my sake, stay here with Antony.

Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech

Tending to Caesar's glories, which Mark Antony

(By our permission) is allow'd to make.

I do entreat you, not a man depart,

60 Save I alone, till Antony have spoke. [Exit

First Plebeian

Stay ho, and let us hear Mark Antony.

Third Plebeian

Let him go up into the public chair,

We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

Antony

For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

Goes into the pulpit

Fourth Plebeian

65 What does he say of Brutus?

Third Plebeian

He says for Brutus' sake

He finds himself beholding to us all.

Fourth Plebeian

'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here!

First Plebeian

This Caesar was a tyrant.

Third Plebeian

Nay, that's certain:

We are blest that Rome is rid of him.

Second Plebeian

70 Peace, let us hear what Antony can say.

Antony

You gentle Romans—

All

Peace ho, let us hear him.

Antony

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

The evil that men do lives after them,

75 The good is oft interred with their bones:

So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus

Hath told you Caesar was ambitious;

If it were so, it was a grievous fault,

And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.

80 Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest—

For Brutus is an honourable man,

So are they all, all honourable men—

Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.

He was my friend, faithful and just to me,

85 But Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honourable man.

He hath brought many captives home to Rome,

Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill;

Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?

90 When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:

Ambition should be made of sterner stuff;

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,

And Brutus is an honourable man.

You all did see that on the Lupercal

95 I thrice presented him a kingly crown,

Which he did thrice refuse. Was this ambition?

Yet Brutus says he was ambitious,

And sure he is an honourable man.

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,

100 But here I am to speak what I do know.

You all did love him once, not without cause;

What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?

O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts,

And men have lost their reason! Bear with me,

105 My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,

And I must pause till it come back to me.

72–249 *Friends . . . another*: Antony uses the skills of rhetoric and the power of verse to sway the emotions of the citizens; See 'Shakespeare's Plutarch', p.107.

72 *lend . . . ears*: listen to me.

75 *interred*: interrèd: buried—i.e. forgotten.

80 *under leave of*: with permission from.

88 *general coffers*: public treasury.

91 *sterner*: stronger.

94 *on the Lupercal*: on the feast of Lupercal (see note on I, 1, 69).

99 *disprove*: contradict.

102 *withholds*: prevents.

103 *brutish*: Antony seems to be making a pun on Brutus's name and the Latin word *brutus* (= dull, without reason).

56 *Do grace*: honour.
and grace: and respect.

57 *Tending to*: referring to.

62 *public chair*: orator's platform.

64 *For Brutus' . . . you*: I am indebted to you, thanks to Brutus.

First Plebeian

Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

Second Plebeian

If thou consider rightly of the matter,
Caesar has had great wrong.

Third Plebeian

Has he, masters!

109 *Has he, masters!:* he has indeed,
masters!

110 I fear there will a worse come in his place.

Fourth Plebeian

Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown,
Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

111 *Mark'd . . . words:* did you hear what
he said.

First Plebeian

If it be found so, some will dear abide it.

113 *be found:* can be proved.
dear abide it: pay dearly for it.

Second Plebeian

Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping.

Third Plebeian

115 There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

Fourth Plebeian

Now mark him, he begins again to speak.

116 *mark:* listen to.

Antony

But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there,
And none so poor to do him reverence.

117 *But:* only.

118 *stood against:* overcome the
opposition of.

119 *none . . . reverence:* nobody has the
humility to show respect.

120 O masters, if I were dispos'd to stir

Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong and Cassius wrong,
Who (you all know) are honourable men.

I will not do them wrong; I rather choose

125 *wrong the dead:* i.e. by not defending
Caesar from being called ambitious.
wrong myself: i.e. by not speaking
what I know to be true.
and you: i.e. by allowing you to be
deceived by Brutus.

125 To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,

Than I will wrong such honourable men.
But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar,
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will.

Let but the commons hear this testament—

127 *parchment:* document.

128 *closet:* study.

129 *commons:* citizens.
testament: will.

130 Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—

And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood,
Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,

And, dying, mention it within their wills,

135 Bequeathing it as a rich legacy

Unto their issue.

136 *issue:* children.

Fourth Plebeian

We'll hear the will. Read it, Mark Antony.

All

The will, the will, we will hear Caesar's will!

Antony

Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it.

140 *meet:* fitting.

140 It is not meet you know how Caesar lov'd you:
You are not wood, you are not stones, but men,
And, being men, hearing the will of Caesar,
It will inflame you, it will make you mad.

'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs,
145 For if you should, O, what would come of it?

Fourth Plebeian

Read the will, we'll hear it, Antony.

You shall read us the will, Caesar's will!

Antony

Will you be patient? Will you stay awhile?

I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it.

149 *o'ershot myself:* gone too far.

150 I fear I wrong the honourable men
Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar, I do fear it.

Fourth Plebeian

They were traitors. Honourable men!

All

The will! The testament!

Second Plebeian

They were villains, murderers! The will, read the will!

Antony

155 You will compel me then to read the will?

Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar
And let me show you him that made the will.
Shall I descend? And will you give me leave?

All

Come down.

Second Plebeian

160 Descend.

Third Plebeian

You shall have leave.

Antony comes down from the pulpit

Fourth Plebeian

A ring, stand round.

First Plebeian

Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.

Second Plebeian

Room for Antony, most noble Antony.

Antony

165 *far*: further.

165 Nay, press not so upon me, stand far off.

All

Stand back! Room, bear back!

Antony

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle. I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on,

170 'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii.

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;

See what a rent the envious Casca made;

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd,

171 *Nervii*: the most warlike of all the Gallic tribes, conquered by Caesar in 57 BC.173 *envious*: malicious.174 *well-beloved*: well-beloved.175 *cursed*: cursed.

175 And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,

Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors to be resolv'd

If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no,

For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel.

177 *resolv'd*: convinced.178 *unkindly*: unnaturally; cruelly.

180 Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him!

This was the most unkindest cut of all.

For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

Quite vanquish'd him. Then burst his mighty heart,

181 *most unkindest cut*: the most cruel wound; the double superlative is used for emphasis.184 *Then . . . heart*: Antony implies that the sight of Brutus amongst the conspirators was the real cause of Caesar's death.186 *statue*: The final *e* must be pronounced (see 2, 2, 76note).187 *Which . . . blood*: which was streaming with [Caesar's] blood all the time.190 *flourish'd*: thrived; triumphed.192 *dint*: blow.*gracious*: honourable.193 *but*: only.194 *vesture*: clothing.195 *marr'd*: mutilated.

185 And, in his mantle muffling up his face,

Even at the base of Pompey's statue

(Which all the while ran blood) great Caesar fell.

O, what a fall was there, my countrymen!

Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,

190 Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.

O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel

The dint of pity. These are gracious drops.

Kind souls, what weep you when you but behold

Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,

195 Here is himself, marr'd as you see with traitors.

First Plebeian

O piteous spectacle!

Second Plebeian

O noble Caesar!

Third Plebeian

O woeful day!

Fourth Plebeian

O traitors, villains!

First Plebeian

200 O most bloody sight!

Second Plebeian

We will be reveng'd!

All

Revenge! About! Seek! Burn! Fire! Kill!

Slay! Let not a traitor live!

Antony

Stay, countrymen.

First Plebeian

205 Peace there, hear the noble Antony.

Second Plebeian

We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.

Antony

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up

To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable.

208 *flood of mutiny*: wave of violence.210 *private griefs*: personal grievances.

210 What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,

That made them do it. They are wise and honourable,

And will no doubt with reasons answer you.

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts.

I am no orator, as Brutus is,

215 But—as you know me well—a plain blunt man

That love my friend, and that they know full well

That gave me public leave to speak of him.

For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,

Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech

220 To stir men's blood. I only speak right on.

I tell you that which you yourselves do know,

Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor, poor, dumb

mouths,

And bid them speak for me. But were I Brutus,

And Brutus Antony, there were an Antony

225 *ruffle up*: stir up, enrage.

225 Would ruffle up your spirits and put a tongue
In every wound of Caesar, that should move
The stones of Rome to rise and mutiny.

All

We'll mutiny.

First Plebeian

We'll burn the house of Brutus.

Third Plebeian

Away then, come, seek the conspirators.

Antony

230 Yet hear me, countrymen, yet hear me speak.

All

Peace ho, hear Antony, most noble Antony!

Antony

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what.

Wherein hath Caesar thus deserv'd your loves?

Alas, you know not! I must tell you then:

235 You have forgot the will I told you of.

All

Most true. The will, let's stay and hear the will!

Antony

Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal:

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy-five drachmaes.

Second Plebeian

240 Most noble Caesar, we'll revenge his death!

Third Plebeian

O royal Caesar!

Antony

Hear me with patience.

All

Peace ho!

Antony

Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,

244 *walks*: gardens.

245 *His private arbours*: his own summer-houses.

new-planted: freshly planted.

247 *common pleasures*: public pleasure-gardens.

248 *abroad*: in the open air.

245 His private arbours and new-planted orchards,
On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,
And to your heirs for ever—common pleasures,
To walk abroad and recreate yourselves.

Here was a Caesar! When comes such another?

First Plebeian

250 Never, never! Come, away, away!

251 *the holy place*: the Forum, centre of religious as well as political life in Rome; see 'Shakespeare's Plutarch', p.107.

252 *brands*: burning wood from the funeral pyre.

255 *Pluck*: pull.

257 *afoot*: begun.

We'll burn his body in the holy place
And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.

Take up the body.

Second Plebeian

Go fetch fire!

Third Plebeian

255 Pluck down benches!

Fourth Plebeian

Pluck down forms, windows, anything!

[*Exeunt Plebeians with the body*]

Antony

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,

Take thou what course thou wilt!

Enter Servant

How now, fellow?

Servant

Sir, Octavius is already come to Rome.

Antony

260 Where is he?

Servant

He and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

Antony

And thither will I straight to visit him.

He comes upon a wish. Fortune is merry,

And in this mood will give us anything.

Servant

265 I heard him say Brutus and Cassius

Are rid like madmen through the gates of Rome.

Antony

Belike they had some notice of the people,

How I had mov'd them. Bring me to Octavius.

[*Exeunt*]

Act 3 Scene 3

Cinna the poet is killed by the angry mob.

1 *tonight*: last night.

2 *things . . . fantasy*: my imagination is filled with ill omens.

3 *will*: desire.
forth of doors: outside.

12 *you were best*: you had better.

16 *Wisely*: The position of this word allows a double meaning ('with wisdom I say that I am a bachelor'; 'I say that, being wise, I am a bachelor').

18 *bear me a bang*: get a blow from me.

19 *Directly*: The Citizen means 'speaking plainly', but Cinna understands 'immediately'.

SCENE 3

Rome: a street. Enter Cinna the Poet, and after him the Plebeians

Cinna the Poet

I dreamt tonight that I did feast with Caesar,
And things unluckily charge my fantasy.
I have no will to wander forth of doors,
Yet something leads me forth.

First Plebeian

5 What is your name?

Second Plebeian

Whither are you going?

Third Plebeian

Where do you dwell?

Fourth Plebeian

Are you a married man or a bachelor?

Second Plebeian

Answer every man directly.

First Plebeian

10 Ay, and briefly.

Fourth Plebeian

Ay, and wisely.

Third Plebeian

Ay, and truly, you were best.

Cinna the Poet

What is my name? Whither am I going? Where do I dwell? Am I a married man or a bachelor? Then to answer every man directly and briefly, wisely and truly.

15 Wisely I say I am a bachelor.

Second Plebeian

That's as much as to say they are fools that marry. You'll bear me a bang for that, I fear. Proceed directly.

Cinna the Poet

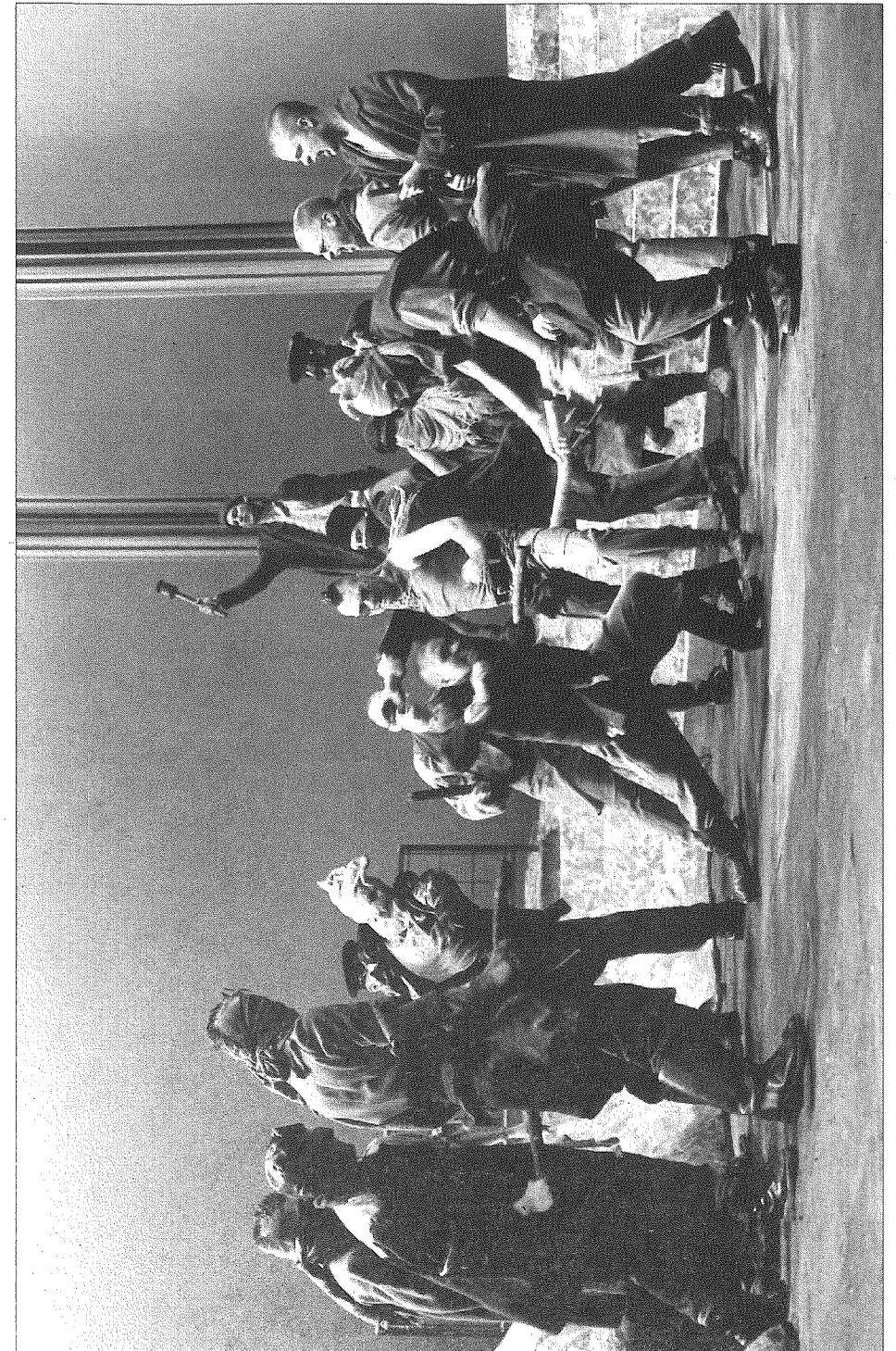
Directly I am going to Caesar's funeral.

First Plebeian

20 As a friend or an enemy?

Cinna the Poet

As a friend.



'Tear him to pieces, he's a conspirator.' (3, 3, 27). National Youth Theatre, 1993.

Second Plebeian
That matter is answered directly.

Fourth Plebeian
For your dwelling-briefly.

Cinna the Poet
Briefly, I dwell by the Capitol.

Third Plebeian
25 Your name, sir, truly.

Cinna the Poet
Truly, my name is Cinna.

First Plebeian
Tear him to pieces, he's a conspirator.

Cinna the Poet
I am Cinna the poet, I am Cinna the poet.

Fourth Plebeian
Tear him for his bad verses, tear him for his bad verses.

Cinna the Poet
30 I am not Cinna the conspirator.

Fourth Plebeian
It is no matter, his name's Cinna. Pluck but his name
out of his heart and turn him going.

Third Plebeian
Tear him, tear him! Come, brands ho, firebrands! To
Brutus', to Cassius', burn all! Some to Decius' house, and
35 some to Casca's, some to Ligarius! Away, go!

Exeunt all the Plebeians forcing out Cinna

31 *but* only.

32 *turn him going*: send him on his way.

ACT 4

SCENE 1

*Rome: Antony's house. Enter Antony, Octavius, and
Lepidus*

Antony
These many then shall die, their names are prick'd.

Octavius
Your brother too must die; consent you, Lepidus?

Lepidus
I do consent.

Octavius
Prick him down, Antony.

Lepidus
Upon condition Publius shall not live,
5 Who is your sister's son, Mark Antony.

Antony
He shall not live-look, with a spot I damn him.
But, Lepidus, go you to Caesar's house,
Fetch the will hither, and we shall determine
How to cut off some charge in legacies.

Lepidus
10 What, shall I find you here?

Octavius
Or here or at the Capitol. *[Exit Lepidus]*

Antony
This is a slight, unmeritable man,
Meet to be sent on errands; is it fit,
The threefold world divided, he should stand
15 One of the three to share it?

Octavius
So you thought him
And took his voice who should be prick'd to die
In our black sentence and proscription.

Act 4 Scene 1

Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus plan their
strategy.

1 *many*: this number.
prick'd: ticked off (with a pin-prick on
the list).

4 *Upon condition*, on condition that.

9 *cut ... legacies*: take some of our
expenses out of the legacies in
Caesar's will.

11 *Or ... or*: either ... or.

12 *slight*: weak.
unmeritable: unworthy.

13 *Meet*: suitable.
fit: right.

14-15 *The ... share it*: When the world
is divided into three parts (Europe,
Asia, Africa), he should have one of
the shares.

16 *voice*: vote.
prick'd: selected.

17 *In ... proscription*: in our harsh
sentences of death and exile.