The Tragedy of Julius Caesar Study Guide

Act I

1. When and where does the play begin?
2. Why are Flavius and Marullus angry in scene i?
3. Why do Flavius and Marullus consider the crowd fickle?
4. Who was Pompey?
5. What afflictions does Caesar have?
6. What does the soothsayer say to Caesar? How does Caesar respond?
7. What is Cassius’s goal in speaking with Brutus? What techniques does Cassius use to sway him?
8. Why are the conspirators so eager to have Brutus join them?
9. What reasons does Caesar have for calling Cassius dangerous?
10. How do the commoners feel about Caesar refusing the crown? According to whom?
11. Explain what Cassius says in his soliloquy at the end of scene ii.
12. What is the setting (time and place) at the beginning of scene iii? Describe the mood.
13. What unusual sights has Casca seen?
15. What does Cassius say he will do if Caesar becomes king?
16. What is the main conflict of the play as it is established in this act?

Act II

1. What worries Brutus as he speaks alone in his garden at the beginning of Act II?
2. What reasons do the following characters have for going to the capitol: Brutus, the soothsayer, Caesar, Cassius, and Artemidorus?
3. How does Brutus justify his decision to carry out the plot?
4. Why does Metellus Cimber want Cicero to join the conspiracy? Why do the conspirators decide against inviting him to join?
5. List three words that characterize Portia.
6. What are Brutus’s reasons for not wanting the conspirators to swear loyalty oaths?
7. What are Cassius’s and Brutus’s arguments regarding Antony?
8. Describe the two different interpretations of Calpurnia’s dream.
9. What arguments does Decius use to persuade Caesar to go to the capitol?
10. Why can you conclude that Portia has learned Brutus’s secret in scene iv?
11. Describe both Brutus’s and Cassius’s motives for wanting to kill Caesar.

Act III

1. Why are Brutus and Cassius worried about the appearance of Popilius Lena?
2. Why does Trebonius draw Antony aside?
3. Why do the conspirators bring up the name of Publius Cimber to Caesar?
4. Who is the first to stab Caesar? What does he say as he stabs, and what is the meaning of this line?
5. What is the significance of Caesar saying, “Et tu, Brute” as Brutus stabs him?
6. What is Brutus’ main reason for killing Caesar?
7. How do Antony’s comments to the conspirators show they should hesitate to trust him?
8. How does Brutus think he can overcome the danger of Antony’s speaking to the crowd?
9. Summarize the reasons Brutus gives for the assassination of Caesar.
10. Why does Antony’s servant speak to the conspirators immediately after Caesar’s murder?
11. What does Antony foretell?
12. Describe three specific emotional appeals Antony uses to sway the crowd:
13. Who is a better judge of character: Brutus or Cassius? Explain your reasons.
14. Who is the more persuasive speaker: Brutus or Antony? Explain your reasons.
15. Why can you infer that Antony has achieved his purpose at the end of Act III?
16. What dangerous mistakes has Brutus made up to this point in the play?

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Act IV

Scene i
1. Nineteen months after Caesar’s death, what three characters rule Rome as a triumvirate?
2. List three questionable activities that Antony discusses in this scene.
3. Explain the discussion between Antony and Octavius.
4. Explain how Antony has changed since the first part of the play.

Scene ii
1. Brutus and Cassius set up camp where?
2. What does Brutus ask Lucilius, and how does Lucilius respond?
3. What is the main point that Brutus makes in ll. 18-27?
4. Why is Brutus’ advice to move inside the tent sound?

Scene iii
1. Of what does Brutus accuse Cassius?
2. Why does Brutus challenge Cassius? What is Cassius’ response?
3. Brutus takes a moral position in ll. 65-82. Is he being honorable or hypocritical? Explain.
5. Explain Brutus’ philosophy of stoicism.
6. We learn about whose death in this scene. How and why did it happen?
7. Discuss Brutus’ and Cassius’ battle plans. Whose do they go with?
8. What does the ghost say?
9. Discuss any personality changes in Brutus and Cassius during this act.

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Act V

Scene i
1. What is the relationship of Octavius and Antony? What are the clues at the beginning of the scene?
2. Explain ll. 36-47 (Antony and Cassius).
3. What is Cassius’ outlook on the upcoming battle? Give specifics to support your opinion.
4. What does Brutus say about suicide beginning on l. 100?

Scene ii
1. Paraphrase this scene.

Scene iii
1. Why is it Brutus' fault that Cassius and his men are in deep trouble in this scene?
2. Clearly describe the events leading up to Cassius’ death.
3. On what memorable day does Cassius die?
4. What does Pindarus receive if he fulfills his master’s wishes? How does Pindarus feel about this situation?
5. What is ironic about Cassius’ death?
6. How does Caesar still come into play during this scene?

Scene iv
1. Why does Lucilius claim to be Brutus?
2. Why does Antony want to keep Lucilius safe?

Scene v
1. Bidding his friends farewell, Brutus says he has found “no man but he was true to me.” Who did take unfair advantage of Brutus’ trust? What does the remark say about Brutus’ character?
2. How does Brutus die?
3. In what respect do Brutus’ last words resemble those of Cassius?
5. Who is the authority figure at the end of the play? Explain.