

BRUTUS SPEECH

Scene 2 The forum in Rome.

Brutus speaks before a group of "citizens," or common people of Rome. He explains why Caesar had to be slain for the good of Rome. Then Brutus leaves and Antony speaks to the citizens. A far better judge of human nature than Brutus, Antony cleverly manages to turn the crowd against the conspirators by telling them of Caesar's good works and his concern for the people, as proven by the slain ruler's will. He has left all his wealth to the people, as Antony stirs the citizens to pursue the assassins and kill them, he learns that Octavius has arrived in Rome and that Brutus and Cassius have fled.

[Enter Brutus and Cassius and a throng of Citizens, disturbed by the death of Caesar.]

Citizens. 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 Citizen. I will hear Brutus speak.

Second Citizen. I will hear Cassius, and compare their reasons

10 when severally we hear them rendered.

[Exit Cassius, with some of the Citizens. Brutus goes into the pulpit.]

Third Citizen. The noble Brutus is ascended. Silence!

Brutus. Be patient till the last.

Romans, countrymen, and lovers, hear me for my cause, and be

silent, that you may hear. Believe me for mine honor, and have

15 respect to mine honor, 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 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 him, as he

was fortunate to rejoice at it, as he was valiant, I honor him, but as

he was ambitious, I slew him. There is tears for his love; joy for his

25 fortune, honor for his valor; 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,

30 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!

(ethos)

Connection to audience

13 lovers: friends.

15 Censure me: Judge me.

16 senses: reason.

I ♥ Caesar

calls them to a sense of patriotism

rh? ?

25-26 Who is ... bondman: Which of you is so low that you would prefer to be a slave?

27 rude: uncivilized.

rh? ?

← pause for dramatic effect - If I'm wrong, correct me. I'll wait.

Brutus. 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 offenses enforced, for which he suffered death.

[Enter Antony and others, with Caesar's body.]

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.

You can expect me to die

All. Live, Brutus! live, live!

First Citizen. Bring him with triumph home unto his house.

Second Citizen. Give him a statue with his ancestors.

45 Third Citizen. Let him be Caesar.

Fourth Citizen. Caesar's better parts

Shall be crowned in Brutus.

First Citizen. We'll bring him to his house with shouts and clamors.

Brutus. My countrymen—

Second Citizen. Peace! silence! Brutus speaks.

First Citizen. Peace ho!

50 Brutus. Good countrymen, let me depart alone,

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 allowed to make.

asserts power over Antony

55 I do entreat you, not a man depart,

Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

[Exit.]

33-35 The question ... death: The reasons for his death are on record in the Capitol. We have not belittled (extenuated) his accomplishments or overemphasized (enforced) the failings for which he was killed.

GRAMMAR AND STYLE Reread lines 36-38. Here, Shakespeare uses the adjective clause "who ... shall receive the benefit of his dying" to convey Brutus' implication that Antony will gain from Caesar's death.

42-48 What is the mood of the crowd as Brutus finishes his speech?

45 parts: qualities.

52 grace his speech: Listen to him respectfully.

56 Save: except.

★ Purpose: to convince the crowd that this was a justified act. They did it for the good of Rome.