

Act Four

Scene 1 At a table in Antony's house in Rome.

Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus now rule Rome as a triumvirate—a committee of three. The scene opens on the triumvirate, meeting to draw up a list of their enemies who must be killed. They also discuss changing Caesar's will. As Lepidus goes to fetch the will, Antony expresses his low opinion of Lepidus as a leader. Then, Antony and Octavius begin to discuss how to defeat the armies of Brutus and Cassius.

[Enter Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus.]

Antony. These many, then, shall die; their names are pricked.

1 pricked: marked down.

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.

6 with a spot ... him: I condemn him by marking him on this list.

10 **Lepidus.** 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 pricked to die

In our black sentence and proscription.

13 meet: fit.

13–15 Antony questions whether it is fitting for Lepidus to share control of Rome's lands in Europe, Asia, and Africa (the threefold world).

Antony. Octavius, I have seen more days than you;

And though we lay these honors on this man

20 To ease ourselves of divers slanderous loads,

He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,

To groan and sweat under the business,

Either led or driven as we point the way;

And having brought our treasure where we will,

25 Then take we down his load, and turn him off

(Like to the empty ass) to shake his ears

And graze in commons.

17 black sentence and proscription: death sentences.

19–27 Antony says that they are giving Lepidus temporary power only so that he will bear the burden of public criticism of their actions.

27 commons: public land for grazing.

Cassius and Brutus in the Globe Theatre's 1999 production

Octavius. You may do your will;
But he's a tried and valiant soldier.

Antony. So is my horse, Octavius, and for that
30 I do appoint him store of provender.
It is a creature that I teach to fight,
To wind, to stop, to run directly on,
His corporal motion governed by my spirit.
And, in some taste is Lepidus but so.
35 He must be taught, and trained, and bid go forth:
A barren-spirited fellow; one that feeds
On objects, arts and imitations
Which, out of use and staled by other men,
Begin his fashion. Do not talk of him,
40 But as a property. And now, Octavius,
Listen great things. Brutus and Cassius
Are levying powers. We must straight make head.
Therefore let our alliance be combined,
Our best friends made, and our best means stretched out;
45 And let us presently go sit in council
How covert matters may be best disclosed
And open perils surest answered.
Octavius. Let us do so; for we are at the stake
And bayed about with many enemies;
50 And some that smile have in their hearts, I fear,
Millions of mischiefs.
[Exeunt.]

Scene 2 A military camp near Sardis. In front of Brutus' tent.

Displeased at the way events are developing, Brutus tells his servant about Cassius' new cold and distant attitude. Cassius arrives, and he and Brutus go into the tent to talk about their disagreements.

[Sound of drums. Enter Brutus, Lucilius, Lucius, and Soldiers. Titinius and Pindarus, from Cassius' army, meet them.]

Brutus. Stand ho!

Lucilius. Give the word, ho! and stand!

Brutus. What now, Lucilius? Is Cassius near?

Lucilius. He is at hand, and Pindarus is come
5 To do you salutation from his master.

Brutus. He greets me well. Your master, Pindarus,
In his own change, or by ill officers,
Hath given me some worthy cause to wish
Things done undone; but if he be at hand,
10 I shall be satisfied.

30 appoint ... provender: give him a supply of hay.

31-40 Antony says that like a horse, Lepidus must be taught to turn (win) stop, and run straight. Lepidus is merely a tool (property) who fills his with borrowed ideas that have gone of fashion.

41-42 Listen ... head: Listen to important (great) matters. Brutus and Cassius are raising an army (levying powers). We must move fast (straight) make head) to build up our own army.

45-47 let us ... answered: Let us decide the best way to uncover hidden (covert) dangers and to deal with the threats we know about.

48-51 we are ... mischiefs: We are like a bear tied to a stake and taunted by barking dogs. Some of the people who smile at us may have evil intentions (mischiefs) in mind for us.

5 do you salutation: bring you greetings

6-9 He greets ... undone: Cassius serves a good man to greet me, but he has given me reason to be regretful, either because he has changed or because he is poorly served by subordinates. What might Brutus wish to have "undone"?

Pindarus. I do not doubt
But that my noble master will appear
Such as he is, full of regard and honor.

Brutus. He is not doubted. A word, Lucilius,
How he received you. Let me be resolved.

15 **Lucilius.** With courtesy and with respect enough,
But not with such familiar instances
Nor with such free and friendly conference
As he hath used of old.

Brutus. Thou has described
A hot friend cooling. Ever note, Lucilius,
20 When love begins to sicken and decay
It useth an enforced ceremony.
There are no tricks in plain and simple faith;
But hollow men, like horses hot at hand,
Make gallant show and promise of their mettle;
[*Low march within.*]

25 But when they should endure the bloody spur,
They fall their crests, and like deceitful jades
Sink in the trial. Comes his army on?
Lucilius. They mean this night in Sardis to be quartered.
The greater part, the horse in general,
30 Are come with Cassius.

Brutus. Hark! He is arrived.
March gently on to meet him.
[*Enter Cassius and his army.*]

Cassius. Stand, ho!

Brutus. Stand, ho! Speak the word along.

First Soldier. Stand!

35 **Second Soldier.** Stand!

Third Soldier. Stand!

Cassius. Most noble brother, you have done me wrong.

Brutus. Judge me, you gods! wrong I mine enemies?
And if not so, how should I wrong a brother? **A**

40 **Cassius.** Brutus, this sober form of yours hides wrongs,
And when you do them—

Brutus. Cassius, be content.
Speak your griefs softly. I do know you well.
Before the eyes of both our armies here
(Which should perceive nothing but love from us)

45 Let us not wrangle. Bid them move away.

13–14 **A word ... resolved:** Brutus takes his officer aside and asks him privately how he was treated when he met Cassius. Why does Brutus want to know this?

17 **conference:** conversation.

20–27 Brutus says that when affection begins to cool, it turns into awkward politeness. He compares insincere (**hollow**) men to horses who show spirit and courage (**mettle**) at first but fail like worn-out nags when put to the test.

28 **They ... quartered:** Cassius and his army intend to stay here (in Sardis) tonight.

29 **horse in general:** entire cavalry.

34–36 The soldiers are passing the order to stop marching (**Stand**) along the lengthy column that has followed Cassius into camp.

A TRAGIC HERO
What tragic flaw is revealed in Brutus's suggestion that he has never even wronged his enemies?

41 **content:** calm.

Then in my tent, Cassius, enlarge your griefs,
And I will give you audience.

Cassius. Pindarus,
Bid our commanders lead their charges off
A little from this ground.

50 **Brutus.** Lucilius, do you the like, and let no man
Come to our tent till we have done our conference.
Let Lucius and Titinius guard our door.

[*Exeunt.*]

Scene 3 *Inside Brutus' tent at Sardis.*

Brutus and Cassius argue angrily, as Brutus accuses Cassius of corruption and greed. After a while, though, they calm down and become friendly once again. Brutus informs Cassius of Portia's death. Soon after, Massala enters. He tells of all the killings in Rome and of Antony and Octavius approaching with their armies. Brutus persuades Cassius that their forces must meet the enemy at Philippi, in Greece. Later, as Brutus reads, the ghost of Caesar appears and promises to see Brutus at Philippi.

[*Enter Brutus and Cassius.*]

Cassius. That you have wronged me doth appear in this:
You have condemned and noted Lucius Pella
For taking bribes here of the Sardians;
Wherein my letters, praying on his side,
5 Because I knew the man, were slighted off.

Brutus. You wronged yourself to write in such a case.

Cassius. In such a time as this it is not meet
That every nice offense should bear his comment.

Brutus. Let me tell you, Cassius, you yourself
10 Are much condemned to have an itching palm,
To sell and mart your offices for gold
To undeservers.

Cassius. I an itching palm?
You know that you are Brutus that speaks this,
Or, by the gods, this speech were else your last!

15 **Brutus.** The name of Cassius honors this corruption,
And chastisement doth therefore hide his head.

Cassius. Chastisement?

Brutus. Remember March; the ides of March remember.
Did not great Julius bleed for justice' sake?
20 What villain touched his body that did stab
And not for justice? What, shall one of us,
That struck the foremost man of all this world

46 enlarge your griefs: freely express your grievances.

2 noted: publicly disgraced.

5 slighted off: ignored.

7-8 It is not ... comment: It is appropriate for every tiny (nic) to be criticized.

10 to have an itching palm: to look for bribes.

11 mart: market.

15-16 The name ... head: Brutus Cassius's name is linked to the name of the punishment (chastisement) who accept the bribes.

But for supporting robbers—shall we now
Contaminate our fingers with base bribes,
25 And sell the mighty space of our large honors
For so much trash as may be grasped thus?
I had rather be a dog and bay the moon
Than such a Roman.

Cassius. Brutus, bait not me!
I'll not endure it. You forget yourself
30 To hedge me in. I am a soldier, I,
Older in practice, abler than yourself
To make conditions.

Brutus. Go to! You are not, Cassius.

Cassius. I am.

Brutus. I say you are not.

35 **Cassius.** Urge me no more! I shall forget myself.
Have mind upon your health, tempt me no farther.

Brutus. Away, slight man!

Cassius. Is't possible?

Brutus. Hear me, for I will speak.
Must I give way and room to your rash choler?
40 Shall I be frightened when a madman stares?

Cassius. O ye gods, ye gods! Must I endure all this?

Brutus. All this? Ay, more! Fret till your proud heart break.
Go show your slaves how choleric you are
And make your bondmen tremble. Must I budge?
45 Must I observe you? Must I stand and crouch
Under your testy humor? By the gods,
You shall digest the venom of your spleen,
Though it do split you; for from this day forth
I'll use you for my mirth, yea, for my laughter,
50 When you are waspish. **B**

Cassius. Is it come to this?

Brutus. You say you are a better soldier;
Let it appear so. Make your vaunting true,
And it shall please me well. For mine own part,
I shall be glad to learn of noble men.

55 **Cassius.** You wrong me every way! You wrong me, Brutus!
I said an elder soldier, not a better.
Did I say "better"?

Brutus. If you did, I care not.

Cassius. When Caesar lived he durst not thus have moved me.

Brutus. Peace, peace! You durst not so have tempted him.

23 But for supporting robbers: because he supported corrupt officials. (This is not one of the charges the conspirators originally made against Caesar.)

27 bay: howl at.

28 bait: provoke.

32 make conditions: arrange matters.

B TRAGIC HERO

In lines 39–50, Brutus refers to Cassius's quick temper (*rash choler*), irritable mood (*testy humor*), and his spleen, which was once believed to be the source of emotions such as anger and spite. What character trait does Brutus imply is necessary in a good leader?

52 vaunting: bragging. What challenge does Brutus make?

58 he durst . . . me: Even Caesar would not have dared to provoke me this way.

60 **Cassius.** I durst not?

Brutus. No.

Cassius. What, durst not tempt him?

Brutus.

For your life you durst not.

Cassius. Do not presume too much upon my love.

I may do that I shall be sorry for.

65 **Brutus.** You have done that you should be sorry for.

There is no terror, Cassius, in your threats;

For I am armed so strong in honesty

That they pass by me as the idle wind,

Which I respect not. I did send to you

70 For certain sums of gold, which you denied me,

For I can raise no money by vile means—

By heaven, I had rather coin my heart

And drop my blood for drachmas than to wring

From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash

75 By any indirection. I did send

To you for gold to pay my legions,

Which you denied me. Was that done like Cassius?

Should I have answered Caius Cassius so?

When Marcus Brutus grows so covetous

80 To lock such rascal counters from his friends,

Be ready, gods, with all your thunderbolts,

Dash him to pieces! **C**

Cassius. I denied you not.

Brutus. You did.

Cassius. I did not. He was but a fool that brought

85 My answer back. Brutus hath rived my heart.

A friend should bear his friend's infirmities,

But Brutus makes mine greater than they are.

Brutus. I do not, till you practice them on me.

Cassius. You love me not.

Brutus. I do not like your faults.

90 **Cassius.** A friendly eye could never see such faults.

Brutus. A flatterer's would not, though they do appear

As huge as high Olympus.

Cassius. Come, Antony, and young Octavius, come!

Revenge yourselves alone on Cassius.

95 For Cassius is aweary of the world:

Hated by one he loves; braved by his brother;

Checked like a bondman, all his faults observed,

Set in a notebook, learned and conned by rote

To cast into my teeth. O, I could weep

71–75 For I can ... indirection: I cannot raise money by dishonest (vile) methods. I would rather make coins out of my heart and blood than steal money from peasants by lying (indirection).

76 legions: armies.

79–82 When ... pieces: When I become such a miser as to deny cheap coins (rascal counters) to my friends, may the gods destroy me.

C TRAGIC HERO

What conclusion would you draw about Brutus's honesty in light of his request for money from Cassius? Explain your answer.

85 rived: torn apart.

86 infirmities: shortcomings.

96 braved: defied.

97 Checked like a bondman: scolded like a slave.

98 conned by rote: memorized by repetition.

100 My spirit from mine eyes! There is my dagger,
And here my naked breast; within, a heart
Dearer than Pluto's mine, richer than gold:
If that thou be'st a Roman, take it forth.
I, that denied thee gold, will give my heart.
105 Strike as thou didst at Caesar; for I know,
When thou didst hate him worst, thou lov'dst him better
Than ever thou lov'dst Cassius. **D**

Brutus. Sheathe your dagger.

Be angry when you will; it shall have scope.
Do what you will; dishonor shall be humor.
110 O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb
That carries anger as the flint bears fire;
Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,
And straight is cold again.

Cassius. Hath Cassius lived
To be but mirth and laughter to his Brutus
115 When grief and blood ill-tempered vexeth him?

Brutus. When I spoke that, I was ill-tempered too.

Cassius. Do you confess so much? Give me your hand.

Brutus. And my heart too.

Cassius. O Brutus!

Brutus. What's the matter?

Cassius. Have you not love enough to bear with me
120 When that rash humor which my mother gave me
Makes me forgetful?

Brutus. Yes, Cassius, and from henceforth,
When you are over-earnest with your Brutus,
He'll think your mother chides, and leave you so.

[Enter a Poet followed by Lucilius, Titinius, and Lucius.]

Poet. Let me go in to see the generals!
125 There is some grudge between 'em. 'Tis not meet
They be alone.

Lucilius. You shall not come to them.

Poet. Nothing but death shall stay me.

Cassius. How now? What's the matter?

130 **Poet.** For shame, you generals! What do you mean?
Love and be friends, as two such men should be,
For I have seen more years, I'm sure, than ye.

Cassius. Ha, ha! How vilely doth this cynic rhyme!

Brutus. Get you hence, sirrah! Saucy fellow, hence!

135 **Cassius.** Bear with him, Brutus. 'Tis his fashion.

COMMON CORE RL.2

D ALLUSION

An allusion is a reference in a work of literature to a famous person, event, or idea in literature, history, or mythology. Allusions can help define the setting, add depth to characters, and even hint at themes. In this passage, Cassius makes an allusion to the Roman god Pluto, god of the underworld and of mines. Reread the allusion in line 102. What function does this allusion and Shakespeare's other references to Roman mythology serve?

108–113 Brutus tells Cassius not to restrain his anger; he will no longer take offense at Cassius's insults. He describes himself as a mild man (lamb) who may flare up when provoked but whose anger immediately cools.

113–115 Recalling Brutus's remark in lines 49–50, Cassius asks whether his moodiness has made him a joke to Brutus.

120 rash humor: quick temper.

124–138 The poet who interrupts Brutus and Cassius is called a rude fellow (cynic) and other insulting terms. Why might Shakespeare have included this brief scene with the poet?



Cassius and Poet in the Globe Theatre's 1999 production

Brutus. I'll know his humor when he knows his time.
What should the wars do with these jiggling fools?
Companion, hence!

Cassius. Away, away, be gone!

[Exit Poet.]

Brutus. Lucilius and Titinius, bid the commanders
140 Prepare to lodge their companies tonight.

Cassius. And come yourselves, and bring Messala with you
Immediately to us.

[Exeunt Lucilius and Titinius.]

Brutus. Lucius, a bowl of wine.

[Exit Lucius.]

Cassius. I did not think you could have been so angry.

Brutus. O Cassius, I am sick of many griefs.

145 **Cassius.** Of your philosophy you make no use
If you give place to accidental evils.

Brutus. No man bears sorrow better. Portia is dead.

Cassius. Ha! Portia?

Brutus. She is dead.

150 **Cassius.** How scaped I killing when I crossed you so?

145–146 **Of your . . . evils:** You aren't making use of your philosophy if you let chance happenings get you down. (Brutus was a Stoic, one who believed that pain and suffering should be endured calmly.)

148 **Ha:** Cassius is not laughing but is so shocked by the news of Portia's death that he gasps.

150 **How . . . so:** How did I escape being killed when I angered you, with such a terrible thing on your mind?

O insupportable and touching loss!
Upon what sickness?

Brutus. Impatient of my absence,
And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
Have made themselves so strong—for with her death
155 That tidings came—with this she fell distract,
And (her attendants absent) swallowed fire.

Cassius. And died so?

Brutus. Even so.

Cassius. O ye immortal gods!

[*Reenter Lucius, with wine and tapers.*]

Brutus. Speak no more of her. Give me a bowl of wine.
In this I bury all unkindness, Cassius.

[*Drinks.*]

160 **Cassius.** My heart is thirsty for that noble pledge.
Fill, Lucius, till the wine o'erswell the cup.
I cannot drink too much of Brutus' love.

[*Drinks. Exit Lucius.*]

[*Reenter Titinius, with Messala.*]

Brutus. Come in, Titinius! Welcome, good Messala.
Now sit we close about this taper here
165 And call in question our necessities.

Cassius. Portia, art thou gone?

Brutus. No more, I pray you.
Messala, I have here received letters
That young Octavius and Mark Antony
Come down upon us with a mighty power,
170 Bending their expedition toward Philippi.

Messala. Myself have letters of the selfsame tenure.

Brutus. With what addition?

Messala. That by proscription and bills of outlawry
Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus
175 Have put to death an hundred senators.

Brutus. Therein our letters do not well agree.
Mine speak of seventy senators that died
By their proscriptions, Cicero being one.

Cassius. Cicero one?

Messala. Cicero is dead,
180 And by that order of proscription.
Had you your letters from your wife, my lord?

152–156 Impatient ... fire: S
worried about my absence a
armies of Antony and Octav
things made her insane (she
When her servants were no
swallowed burning coals.

161 o'erswell: overflow.

164–165 Now sit ... nece:
around this candle and ta
we must do.

170 Bending ... Philipp
their armies to Philippi (n
northern Greece).

171 Myself ... tenure: I h
letters that say the sam

173 proscription ... outl
sentences and lists of cr

Brutus. No, Messala.

Messala. Nor nothing in your letters writ of her?

Brutus. Nothing, Messala.

Messala.

That methinks is strange.

185 **Brutus.** Why ask you? Hear you aught of her in yours?

Messala. No, my lord.

Brutus. Now as you are a Roman, tell me true.

Messala. Then like a Roman bear the truth I tell,
For certain she is dead, and by strange manner.

190 **Brutus.** Why, farewell, Portia. We must die, Messala.
With meditating that she must die once,
I have the patience to endure it now.

Messala. Even so great men great losses should endure.

Cassius. I have as much of this in art as you,

195 But yet my nature could not bear it so.

Brutus. Well, to our work alive. What do you think
Of marching to Philippi presently?

Cassius. I do not think it good.

Brutus. Your reason?

Cassius. This it is:

'Tis better that the enemy seek us.

200 So shall he waste his means, weary his soldiers,
Doing himself offense, whilst we, lying still,
Are full of rest, defense, and nimbleness.

Brutus. Good reasons must of force give place to better.
The people 'twixt Philippi and this ground

205 Do stand but in a forced affection,
For they have grudged us contribution.
The enemy, marching along by them,
By them shall make a fuller number up,
Come on refreshed, new-added, and encouraged;
210 From which advantage we cut him off
If at Philippi we do face him there,
These people at our back.

Cassius. Hear me, good brother.

Brutus. Under your pardon. You must note beside
That we have tried the utmost of our friends,
Our legions are brimful, our cause is ripe.

215 The enemy increaseth every day;
We, at the height, are ready to decline.
There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

181-195 Brutus seems to know no about Portia's death in this passage although earlier he describes her f. Cassius in lines 149-158. Many scholars believe that the first account of Portia's death was a revision and that Shakespeare intended to delete this second account. How does Brutus's reaction to Portia's death differ in the two accounts?

194 in art: in theory, in my beliefs.

203-212 Good ... our back: Good reasons have to give way to better ones. The people between ('twixt) here and Philippi are friendly only because they have to (stand but in a forced affection). They have given us aid grudgingly. If the enemy marches through, they will find recruits. If we face them at Philippi, we'll eliminate this advantage and keep these unfriendly people behind us.

213-217 Brutus interrupts with another reason for his plan: Their army is now at peak strength, while the enemy is growing stronger.

218-221 Comparing life to a sea voyage: Brutus says that if you miss the high tide when it comes, you can be stuck on shore forever.

220 Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.
On such a full sea are we now afloat,
And we must take the current when it serves
Or lose our ventures. **E**

Cassius. Then, with your will, go on.
225 We'll along ourselves and meet them at Philippi.

Brutus. The deep of night is crept upon our talk
And nature must obey necessity,
Which we will niggard with a little rest.
There is no more to say?

Cassius. No more. Good night.
230 Early tomorrow will we rise and hence.

Brutus. Lucius!

[*Reenter Lucius.*]

My gown.

[*Exit Lucius.*]

Farewell, good Messala.
Good night, Titinius. Noble, noble Cassius,
235 Good night and good repose!

Cassius. O my dear brother,
This was an ill beginning of the night!
Never come such division 'tween our souls!
Let it not, Brutus.

[*Reenter Lucius, with the gown.*]

Brutus. Everything is well.

Cassius. Good night, my lord.

Brutus. Good night, good brother.

240 **Titinius and Messala.** Good night, Lord Brutus.

Brutus. Farewell every one.

[*Exeunt all but Brutus and Lucius.*]

Give me the gown. Where is thy instrument?

Lucius. Here in the tent.

Brutus. What, thou speak'st drowsily?
Poor knave, I blame thee not, thou art o'erwatched.
Call Claudius and some other of my men;
245 I'll have them sleep on cushions in my tent.

Lucius. Varro and Claudius!

[*Enter Varro and Claudius.*]

Varro. Calls my lord?

Brutus. I pray you, sirs, lie in my tent and sleep.

E TRAGIC HERO

Reread lines 196–224. What tragic flaw does Brutus reveal in his response to Cassius' concerns about marching their armies to Philippi? Cite details to support your answer.

228 Which . . . rest: We will reluctantly satisfy nature by getting a little rest.

232 gown: nightgown.

242–243 What . . . o'erwatched: I see you're sleepy. It's no wonder, since you've been watching and waiting for so long.

It may be I shall raise you by-and-by
250 On business to my brother Cassius.

Varro. So please you, we will stand and watch your pleasure.

Brutus. I will not have it so. Lie down, good sirs.

It may be I shall otherwise bethink me.

[*Varro and Claudius lie down.*]

Look, Lucius, here's the book I sought for so;
255 I put it in the pocket of my gown.

Lucius. I was sure your lordship did not give it me.

Brutus. Bear with me, good boy, I am much forgetful.

Canst thou hold up by thy heavy eyes awhile,

And touch thy instrument a strain or two?

260 **Lucius.** Ay, my lord, an't please you.

Brutus. It does, my boy.

I trouble thee too much, but thou art willing.

Lucius. It is my duty, sir.

Brutus. I should not urge thy duty past thy might.

I know young bloods look for a time of rest.

265 **Lucius.** I have slept, my lord, already.

Brutus. It was well done; and thou shalt sleep again;

I will not hold thee long. If I do live,

I will be good to thee. **F**

[*Music, and a song. Lucius falls asleep as he sings.*]

This is a sleepy tune. O murd'rous slumber!

270 Layest thou thy leaden mace upon my boy,
That plays thee music? Gentle knave, good night.

I will not do thee so much wrong to wake thee.

If thou dost nod, thou break'st thy instrument;

I'll take it from thee; and, good boy, good night.

275 Let me see, let me see. Is not the leaf turned down
Where I left reading? Here it is, I think.

[*Sits.*]

[*Enter the Ghost of Caesar.*]

How ill this taper burns! Ha! Who comes here?

I think it is the weakness of mine eyes

That shapes this monstrous apparition.

280 It comes upon me. Art thou anything?

Art thou some god, some angel, or some devil,

That mak'st my blood cold and my hair to stare?

Speak to me what thou art.

Ghost. Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

249–253 It may ... bethink me: Brutus wants them to be handy in case he needs to send a message to Cassius. Varro offers to stand guard all night. Brutus insists the men sleep, not stand guard. He says he may change his mind (*otherwise bethink me*) about sending messages to Cassius.

COMMON CORE RL.4

Language Coach

Slang Slang words are informal, sometimes made-up words that substitute for formal words. You can often figure out the meaning of slang by its context. To what does *bloods* refer in line 264? How can you tell?

F TRAGIC HERO

What character traits are revealed in Brutus's dialogue with Lucius?

270 mace: a rod used as a symbol of authority. Brutus is addressing slumber as though it were an officer of the law who has arrested Lucius.

277 How ... burns: How poorly this candle burns. Everyone in the tent is asleep except Brutus. At first he thinks the thing he sees is only the result of poor eyesight. Then he realizes that something is really there.

282 stare: stand on end.

Brutus. Why com'st thou?

285 **Ghost.** To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.

Brutus. Well; then I shall see thee again?

Ghost. Ay, at Philippi.

Brutus. Why, I will see thee at Philippi then.

[Exit Ghost.]

Now I have taken heart thou vanishest.

290 **Ill spirit,** I would hold more talk with thee.

Boy! Lucius! Varro! Claudius! Sirs! Awake!
Claudius!

Lucius. The strings, my lord, are false.

Brutus. He thinks he still is at his instrument.

295 **Lucius, awake!**

Lucius. My lord?

Brutus. Didst thou dream, Lucius, that thou so criedst out?

Lucius. My lord, I do not know that I did cry.

Brutus. Yes, that thou didst. Didst thou see anything?

300 **Lucius.** Nothing, my lord.

Brutus. Sleep again, Lucius. Sirrah Claudius!

[To Varro.]

Fellow thou, awake!

Varro. My lord?

Claudius. My lord?

305 **Brutus.** Why did you so cry out, sirs, in your sleep?

Both. Did we, my lord?

Brutus. Ay. Saw you anything?

Varro. No, my lord, I saw nothing.

Claudius. Nor I, my lord.

Brutus. Go and commend me to my brother Cassius.

Bid him set on his pow'rs betimes before,

310 **And we will follow.**

Both. It shall be done, my lord.

[Exeunt.]

289 **Now ... vanishest:** Now that I have my courage back, you disappear.

293 **false:** out of tune. Lucius, only half awake, thinks he is playing the instrument that Brutus took from him earlier.

308 **commend me:** give my respects to

309 **Bid ... before:** Tell him to get his army (pow'rs) moving early in the morning.