

Julius Caesar

SUMMARY:

Act I

The tribunes of Rome, Marullus and Flavius, break up a gathering of citizens who want to celebrate Julius Caesar's triumphant return from war. The victory is marked by public games in which Caesar's protégé, Mark Antony, takes part. On his way to the arena, Caesar is stopped by a stranger who warns him that he should 'Beware the Ides [15th] of March.' Fellow senators, Caius Cassius and Marcus Brutus, are suspicious of Caesar's reactions to the power he holds in the Republic. They fear he will accept offers to become Emperor. He has been gaining a lot of power recently and people treat him like a god. Cassius, a successful general himself, is jealous of Caesar. Brutus has a more balanced view of the political position. The conspirator Casca enters and tells Brutus of a ceremony held by the plebeians. They offered Caesar a crown three times, and he refused it every time. But the conspirators are still wary of his aspirations.

Act II

Cassius, Casca, and their allies plant false documents to manipulate Brutus to join their cause to remove Caesar. After doing so, they visit Brutus at night in his home to persuade him of their views. There they plan Caesar's death. Brutus is troubled but refuses to confide in his devoted wife, Portia. On 15 March, Caesar's wife, Calpurnia, urges him not to go to the Senate. She has had visionary dreams and fears the portents of the overnight storms.

Act III

Caesar is nevertheless persuaded by flattery to go to the Capitol. At the Capitol, he is stabbed by each conspirator in turn. As Brutus gives the final blow, Caesar utters the famous phrase: