

2. Julius Caesar 1599-1600

Act III, Scene i. Against the advice of Cassius, Brutus gives Antony permission to deliver a public funeral oration. Antony in a soliloquy shows his determination to avenge Cæsar.

Pardon me, Julius! Here wast thou bay'd, brave hart;
Here didst thou fall; and here thy hunters stand,
Sign'd in thy spoil, and crimson'd in thy lethe.
O world, thou wast the forest to this hart;
And this, indeed, O world, the heart of thee.
How like a deer, stricken by many princes,
Dost thou here lie!

CASSIUS
ANTONY

Mark Antony,--

Pardon me, Caius Cassius:

The enemies of Caesar shall say this;

Then, in a friend, it is cold modesty.

CASSIUS

I blame you not for praising Caesar so;

But what compact mean you to have with us?

Will you be prick'd in number of our friends;

Or shall we on, and not depend on you?

ANTONY

Therefore I took your hands, but was, indeed,

Sway'd from the point, by looking down on Caesar.

Friends am I with you all and love you all,

Upon this hope, that you shall give me reasons

Why and wherein Caesar was dangerous.

BRUTUS

Or else were this a savage spectacle:

Our reasons are so full of good regard

That were you, Antony, the son of Caesar,

You should be satisfied.

ANTONY

That's all I seek:

And am moreover suitor that I may

Produce his body to the market-place;

And in the pulpit, as becomes a friend,

Speak in the order of his funeral.

BRUTUS

You shall, Mark Antony.

CASSIUS

Brutus, a word with you.

Aside to BRUTUS.

You know not what you do: do not consent

That Antony speak in his funeral:

Know you how much the people may be moved

By that which he will utter?

BRUTUS

By your pardon;

I will myself into the pulpit first,

And show the reason of our Caesar's death:
What Antony shall speak, I will protest
He speaks by leave and by permission,
And that we are contented Caesar shall
Have all true rites and lawful ceremonies.
It shall advantage more than do us wrong.

CASSIUS
BRUTUS

I know not what may fall; I like it not.
Mark Antony, here, take you Caesar's body.
You shall not in your funeral speech blame us,
But speak all good you can devise of Caesar,
And say you do't by our permission;
Else shall you not have any hand at all
About his funeral: and you shall speak
In the same pulpit whereto I am going,
After my speech is ended.

ANTONY

Be it so.
I do desire no more.

BRUTUS

Prepare the body then, and follow us.
Exeunt all but ANTONY.

ANTONY

O, pardon me, thou bleeding piece of earth,
That I am meek and gentle with these butchers!
Thou art the ruins of the noblest man
That ever lived in the tide of times.
Woe to the hand that shed this costly blood!
Over thy wounds now do I prophesy,--
Which, like dumb mouths, do ope their ruby lips,
To beg the voice and utterance of my tongue--
A curse shall light upon the limbs of men;
Domestic fury and fierce civil strife
Shall cumber all the parts of Italy;
Blood and destruction shall be so in use
And dreadful objects so familiar
That mothers shall but smile when they behold
Their infants quarter'd with the hands of war;
All pity choked with custom of fell deeds:
And Caesar's spirit, ranging for revenge,
With Ate by his side come hot from hell,
Shall in these confines with a monarch's voice
Cry 'Havoc,' and let slip the dogs of war;
That this foul deed shall smell above the earth
With carrion men, groaning for burial.