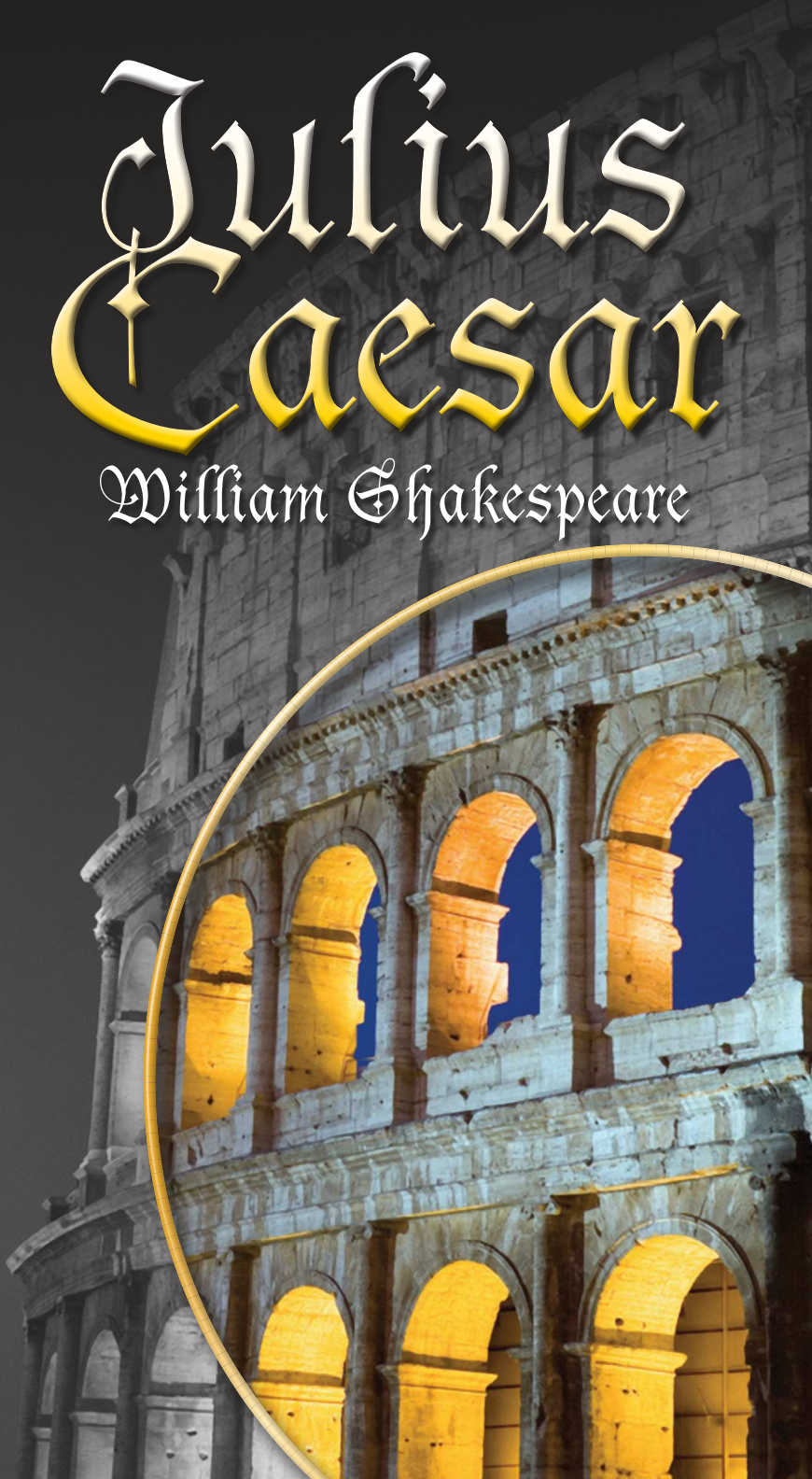
Julius Caesar

William Shakespeare



TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE

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– INTRODUCTION –

It is 44 B.C. in Rome. Julius Caesar, an army general, has defeated a Roman aristocrat named Pompey in a fierce battle. A public celebration is being held as the play opens. But some of the noblemen who had supported Pompey are fearful of Caesar's growing popularity. They're afraid that the ambitious Caesar wants to be named king—which would mean the end of the great Roman Republic. To protect their own power, they begin to conspire against him.

– CAST OF CHARACTERS –

JULIUS CAESAR Roman statesman and army general

OCTAVIUS A Roman politician; later called Augustus Caesar, first Emperor of Rome

MARK ANTONY A Roman politician, general, and friend of Caesar

LEPIDUS A Roman politician

MARCUS BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, LIGARIUS, DECIUS BRUTUS, METELLUS CIMBER, and **CINNA** Plotters against Caesar

CALPURNIA Caesar's wife

PORTIA Brutus's wife

CICERO, POPILIUS, and **POPILIUS LENA** Senators

FLAVIUS and **MARULLUS** Tribunes

CATO, LUCILIUS, TITINIUS, MESSALA, and **VOLUMNIUS** Supporters of Brutus

ARTEMIDORUS A teacher of rhetoric

PUBLIUS An elderly gentleman

STRATO and **LUCIUS** Servants to Brutus

PINDARUS Servant to Cassius

THE GHOST OF CAESAR

A **SOOTHSAYER,** a **POET, SENATORS, CITIZENS, SOLDIERS, COMMONERS, MESSENGERS,** and **SERVANTS**

ACT 1

Scene 1

*(A street in Rome. **Flavius, Marullus**, and certain **commoners** enter.)*

FLAVIUS: Go home, you idle creatures!
Is this a holiday? Don't you know you're
Not allowed to walk around on a workday
Without some sign of your profession?
Tell me, what is your trade?

COMMONER 1: Why, sir, I am a carpenter.

MARULLUS: Where are your tools?
Why are you wearing your best clothes?
And you, sir—what is your trade?

COMMONER 2: Sir, I am a cobbler.
I work with a clear conscience,
For I am, sir, a mender of bad soles.
If you are out of sorts, sir, I can mend you.

MARULLUS: What do you mean by that? Hmm.
Mend me, you saucy fellow?

COMMONER 2: Why, sir—repair your shoes.

FLAVIUS: Why aren't you in your shop? Why do you lead these men about the streets?

COMMONER 2: To wear out their shoes, sir.

Then I'll get more work. But, indeed,
sir, we've taken a holiday to see Caesar
and to rejoice in his triumph.

MARULLUS: Why rejoice? What has he won?
What captives does he bring home?
You blocks, you stones, you worse than
senseless things!
Oh, you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome!
Do you not remember Pompey? Many a
Time you've climbed up walls and towers,
Your infants in your arms. There you've sat
All day long, waiting patiently to
See great Pompey pass the streets of Rome.
And when you saw his chariot appear,
Didn't you shout so loud that the
River Tiber trembled under her banks
With the echo of your sounds?
And now you put on your best clothes?
You call out a holiday and
Lay flowers before him who comes
In triumph over Pompey's blood?
Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees!
Beg the gods to stop the plague
That will surely punish you for such
ingratitude.

FLAVIUS: Go, go, good countrymen—and,
For this fault, gather all the men like you.
Draw them to the banks of the Tiber, and

Weep into the river until the
Lowest stream kisses the highest shores.

*(All the **commoners** exit.)*

See how they vanish, silent in their guilt.
You go down that way toward the Capitol.
I'll go this way. Remove any banners
You see that honor Caesar.

MARULLUS: May we do so?
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

FLAVIUS: It doesn't matter. Let no statues
Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll drive
The commoners from the streets.
You do the same, where you see them thick.
We must pluck these feathers from
Caesar's wing before he can soar so high
We'll have even more to fear.

*(**Flavius** and **Marullus** exit.)*

Scene 2

*(A public place. The sound of trumpets. **Caesar** enters, followed by **Antony, Calpurnia, Portia, Decius, Cicero, Brutus, Cassius**, and **Casca**. A **crowd** follows, among them a **soothsayer**.)*

CAESAR: Calpurnia!

CALPURNIA: Here, my lord.

CAESAR: Stand directly in Antony's way,
When he runs his course. Antony!
Do not forget to touch Calpurnia
As you race past her. The elders say that
Childless women, touched in this holy race
On the feast of Lupercal, will soon be able
To have children.

ANTONY: I shall remember.
When Caesar says "Do this," it is performed.

(Trumpets sound.)

SOOTHSAYER *(from the crowd)*: Caesar!
Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR: Who said that?

BRUTUS: A soothsayer warns you to be careful on March 15.

CAESAR: Let me see his face.

CASSIUS: Fellow, come out of the crowd!

CAESAR: Speak once again.

SOOTHSAYER: Beware the ides of March.

CAESAR: He is a dreamer. Let us leave him.

*(**All** but Brutus and Cassius exit.)*

CASSIUS: Will you go watch the race?

BRUTUS: I am not interested in games. I lack
That quick spirit that is in Antony.
But don't let me stop you, Cassius.
I'll leave, and you can watch.

CASSIUS: Brutus, I have noticed that
You seem to be avoiding me lately.

BRUTUS: No, Cassius. It's just that I've been
Concerned with some personal matters.
But do not let my good friends—of which,
Cassius, you are one—worry too much
about me.
My neglect of friends is only because
Poor Brutus is at war with himself.

CASSIUS: Then I have been mistaken.
I have kept my thoughts to myself.
Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRUTUS: No, for the eye does not see itself
Except by reflection in other things.

TIMELESS SHAKESPEARE

Julius Caesar

Fearful of Caesar's growing popularity, a group of powerful Roman politicians begin to plot his death. Can a man remain loyal to Caesar and still be loyal to Rome? Caesar's noble friend Brutus is forced to make a terrible decision.

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