

JULIUS CAESAR - opening

Light grows on MARCUS BRUTUS, standing alone outside the offstage arena, in a pool of light, hearing the sounds from inside the arena. He's dressed, as are all the politicians, in contemporary business clothing, dark suit, conservative tie. He's in his mid 30s, still somewhat boyish, and his demeanor and his obvious observance of others' style, indicates that he's working hard to fit in with the patrician class.

The offstage sound now includes chants of the crowd calling "Caesar", rhythmically, pounding. After a few seconds of that, the voices of CAESAR, his wife CALPURNIA, and MARC ANTONY, are heard over the arena's PA system, their banter all being part of the event going on inside:

CAESAR
Calpurnia!

A VOICE
Peace, ho! Caesar speaks.

CAESAR
Calpurnia!

CALPURNIA
Here, my lord.

CAESAR
Stand you directly in Antonius' way,
When he doth run his course. Antonius!

ANTONY
Caesar, my lord?

CAESAR
Forget not, in your speed, Antonius,
To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say,
The barren, touched in this holy chase,
Shake off their sterile curse.

ANTONY
I shall remember:
When Caesar says 'do this,' it is perform'd!

SOUND – CHEERING CROWD

CAESAR

Set on; and leave no ceremony out.

The sound of a blast of music, the crowd cheers.

Enter MARULLUS, drunk, angry, leaving the arena, muttering to himself

MARULLUS

Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?
What tributaries follow him to Rome,
To grace in captive bonds his chariot-wheels?

Turns to arena, shouts at the crowd inside (who can't hear him)

You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day, with patient expectation,
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:
And do you now strew flowers in His way
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood? Be gone!
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,
Pray to the gods to intermit the plague
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

He staggers off left, past Brutus, who has watched him, without comment. As Marullus leaves, CASSIUS enters, passing Marullus, and noticing Brutus standing alone.

Cassius is 40'ish, female for preference, dressed in conservative female business attire. The lights brighten onstage to a dusk street scene

CASSIUS

(looks at Brutus, they share a smile over Marullus' drunkenness and vigor)
Will you go see the order of the course?

BRUTUS

Not I.

CASSIUS

I pray you, do.

BRUTUS

I am not gamesome: I do lack some part
Of that quick spirit that is in Antony.
Let me not hinder, Cassius, your desires;
I'll leave you.

CASSIUS

Brutus, I do observe you now of late:
I have not from your eyes that gentleness
And show of love as I was wont to have:
You bear too stubborn and too strange a hand
Over your friend that loves you.

BRUTUS

Cassius,
Be not deceived: if I have veil'd my look,
I turn the trouble of my countenance
Merely upon myself. Vexed I am
Of late with passions of some difference,
Conceptions only proper to myself,
Which give some soil perhaps to my behaviors;
But let not therefore my good friends be grieved--
Among which number, Cassius, be you one--
Nor construe any further my neglect,
Than that poor Brutus, with himself at war,
Forgets the shows of love to other men.

CASSIUS

Tell me, good Brutus, can you see your face?

BRUTUS

No, Cassius; for the eye sees not itself,
But by reflection, by some other things.

CASSIUS

'Tis just: And it is very much lamented, Brutus,
That you have no such mirrors as will turn
Your hidden worthiness into your eye,
I have heard where many of the best respect in Rome,
speaking of Brutus
Have wish'd that noble Brutus had his eyes.