Act II Study Guide for *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*

**Characters** - Identify and know the actions/intentions of each

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brutus</th>
<th>Cinna</th>
<th>Caesar</th>
<th>Artemidorus</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lucius</td>
<td>Metellus</td>
<td>Servant</td>
<td>Soothsayer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cassius</td>
<td>Trebonius</td>
<td>Calphurnia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Decius</td>
<td>Portia</td>
<td>Publius</td>
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<tr>
<td>Casca</td>
<td>Ligarius</td>
<td>Antony</td>
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</tbody>
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**Quotations** - Identify the speaker, act, scene, line number, and meaning of each

“It must be by his death; and for my part,
I know no personal cause to spurn at him,
But for the general. He would be crowned.
How that might change his nature, there’s the question.”

“Th’ abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
Remorse from power;”

“Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy;
Hide it in smiles and affability:”

“No not an oath. If not the face of men,
The sufferance of our souls, the time’s abuse
If these be motives weak, break off betimes,
And every man hence to his idle bed.”

“I think it is not meet
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,
Should outlive Caesar;”
“Let’s be sacrificers, but not butchers, Caius.”

“Let’s carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.”

“We shall be called purgers, not murderers.”

“Let me work;
For I can give his humor the true bent,
And I will bring him to the Capitol.”

“Now, good Metellus, go along by him.
He loves me well, and I have given him reasons;
Send him but hither, and I’ll fashion him.”

“I should not know you Brutus. Dear my lord,
Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.”

“You have some sick offense within your mind,
Which by the right and virtue of my place
I ought to know of;”
“Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose’em. 
I have made strong proof of my constancy, 
Giving myself a voluntary wound 
Here in the thigh; can I bear that with patience, 
And not my husband’s secrets?”

“By all the gods that Romans bow before, 
I here discard my sickness!”

“Caesar shall forth. The things that threatened me 
Ne’er looked but on my back; when they shall see 
The face of Caesar, they are vanished.”

“When beggars die, there are no comets seen; 
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.”

“And tell them that I will not come today. 
Cannot, is false; and that I dare not, falser: 
I will not come today.”

“Caesar, I will (aside) and so near will I be, 
That your best friends shall wish I had been further.”
“If thou beest not immortal, look about you: security gives way to conspiracy.”

Questions - Answer each

1. Explain in detail the image of the climber on the ladder.

2. Explain in detail the image of the serpent’s egg.

3. Why does the letter Brutus receives help sway his decision whether to kill Caesar or not?

4. Explain why Brutus does not want Cicero to join the conspiracy.

5. How does Casca appear fickle? How could you relate him to the people in Act I, Scene 1?

6. What mistake does Brutus make when the conspirators discuss killing Caesar? How is this mistake an example of dramatic irony?

7. What is Cassius’ weakness (the reason he can’t overrule Brutus)?
8. Provide two examples of how Shakespeare shows Brutus’ gentle and compassionate side?

9. Describe the relationship between Brutus and Portia. Use evidence from the text to support your evidence.

10. Portia and Calphurnia both kneel before their husbands. What is the difference in the way the husbands react?

11. Ligarius throws off his scarf. How is this symbolic?

12. Look at Calphurnia’s words in lines 19-23 in Act II, Scene 2. How do her words foreshadow later events (those after Caesar’s death)?

13. In lines 32-33 Caesar comments on a lesson about life. What is his message?

14. What dream does Calphurnia have about Caesar? How does she interpret this dream?

15. How does Decius interpret Calphurnia’s dream? How does this interpretation affect the action of the play?
16. Some critics say Act II, Scene 2 makes the conspirators look particularly horrific. Why?

17. Look at Brutus’ final words in Act II, Scene 2. What emotions become apparent in Brutus’ comment? How do you know?

18. Why would Scene 3 (with Artemidorus) add to the suspense of the play and be an example of dramatic irony?

19. Portia knows about the plot to kill Caesar at the end of Act II. However, there has been no opportunity for her to be told. Odd, eh?

20. What is Portia’s internal conflict at the end of Act II?