

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

Enter BRUTUS in his orchard

BRUTUS

What, Lucius, ho!—
I cannot by the progress of the stars
Give guess how near to day.—Lucius, I say!—
I would it were my fault to sleep so soundly.—
5 When, Lucius, when? Awake, I say! What, Lucius!

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS

Called you, my lord?

BRUTUS

Get me a taper in my study, Lucius.
When it is lighted, come and call me here.

LUCIUS

I will, my lord.

Exit LUCIUS

BRUTUS

10 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.
It is the bright day that brings forth the adder
15 And that craves wary walking. Crown him that,
And then I grant we put a sting in him
That at his will he may do danger with.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1

BRUTUS enters in his orchard.

BRUTUS

Lucius, are you there? I can't tell by the position of the stars how near it is to daybreak—Lucius, are you there? I wish I had that weakness, to sleep too soundly. Come on, Lucius! Wake up, I say! Lucius!

LUCIUS enters.

LUCIUS

Did you call me, my lord?

BRUTUS

Put a candle in my study, Lucius. Call me when it's lit.

LUCIUS

I will, my lord.

LUCIUS exits.

BRUTUS

The only way is to kill Caesar. I have no personal reason to strike at him—only the best interest of the people. He wants to be crowned. The question is, how would being king change him? Evil can come from good, just as poisonous snakes tend to come out into the open on bright sunny days—which means we have to walk carefully. If we crown him, I have to admit we'd be giving him the power to do damage.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

20 Th' abuse of greatness is when it disjoins
 Remorse from power. And, to speak truth of Caesar,
 I have not known when his affections swayed
 More than his reason. But 'tis a common proof
 That lowliness is young ambition's ladder,
 Whereto the climber upward turns his face.
 But when he once attains the upmost round,
 25 He then unto the ladder turns his back,
 Looks in the clouds, scorning the base degrees
 By which he did ascend. So Caesar may.
 Then, lest he may, prevent. And since the quarrel
 Will bear no color for the thing he is,
 30 Fashion it thus: that what he is, augmented,
 Would run to these and these extremities.
 And therefore think him as a serpent's egg—
 Which, hatched, would as his kind grow mischievous—
 And kill him in the shell.

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS
 35 The taper burneth in your closet, sir.
 Searching the window for a flint, I found
 This paper, thus sealed up, and I am sure
 It did not lie there when I went to bed.
(gives him a letter)

BRUTUS
 Get you to bed again. It is not day.
 40 Is not tomorrow, boy, the ides of March?

LUCIUS
 I know not, sir.

BRUTUS
 Look in the calendar and bring me word.

LUCIUS
 I will, sir.

Rulers abuse their power when they separate it from compassion. To be honest, I've never known Caesar to let his emotions get the better of his reason. But everyone knows that an ambitious young man uses humility to advance himself, but when he reaches the top, he turns his back on his supporters and reaches for the skies while scorning those who helped him get where he is. Caesar might act like that. Therefore, in case he does, we must hold him back. And since our quarrel is with his future behavior, not what he does now, I must frame the argument like this: if his position is furthered, his character will fulfill these predictions. And therefore we should liken him to a serpent's egg—once it has hatched, it becomes dangerous, like all serpents. Thus we must kill him while he's still in the shell.

LUCIUS enters.

LUCIUS

The candle is burning in your study, sir. While I was looking for a flint to light it, I found this paper on the window, sealed up like this, and I'm sure it wasn't there when I went to bed. *(he gives BRUTUS the letter)*

BRUTUS

Go back to bed. It isn't daybreak yet. Is tomorrow the 15th of March, boy?

LUCIUS

I don't know, sir.

BRUTUS

Check the calendar and come tell me.

LUCIUS

I will, sir.

Exit LUCIUS

BRUTUS

45 The exhalations whizzing in the air
 Give so much light that I may read by them.
(opens the letter and reads)
 "Brutus, thou sleep'st. Awake, and see thyself.
 Shall Rome, etc. Speak, strike, redress!"
 "Brutus, thou sleep'st. Awake."
 Such instigations have been often dropped
 50 Where I have took them up.
 —"Shall Rome, etc." Thus must I piece it out:
 "Shall Rome stand under one man's awe?" What, Rome?
 My ancestors did from the streets of Rome
 The Tarquin drive when he was called a king.
 55 —"Speak, strike, redress!" Am I entreated
 To speak and strike? O Rome, I make thee promise,
 If the redress will follow, thou receivest
 Thy full petition at the hand of Brutus!

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS

Sir, March is wasted fifteen days.

Knock within

BRUTUS

60 'Tis good. Go to the gate. Somebody knocks.

Exit LUCIUS

Since Cassius first did whet me against Caesar,
 I have not slept.

LUCIUS exits.

BRUTUS

The meteors whizzing in the sky are so bright that I
 can read by them. *(he opens the letter and reads)* "Bru-
 tus, you're sleeping. Wake up and look at yourself. Is
 Rome going to . . . etc. Speak, strike, fix the wrongs!"
 "Brutus, you're sleeping. Wake up." I've noticed
 many such calls to action left where I would find them.
 "Is Rome going to . . . etc." What does this mean? Will
 Rome submit to one man's power? My ancestors
 drove Tarquin from the streets of Rome when he was
 pronounced a king. "Speak, strike, fix it!" Is this ask-
 ing me to speak and strike? Oh, Rome, I promise you,
 if you're meant to receive justice, you'll receive it by
 my hand!

LUCIUS enters.

LUCIUS

Sir, fifteen days of March have gone by.

The sound of a knock offstage.

BRUTUS

Good. Go to the gate. Somebody's knocking.

LUCIUS exits.

I haven't slept since Cassius first began to turn me
 against Caesar.

65

Between the acting of a dreadful thing
And the first motion, all the interim is
Like a phantasma or a hideous dream.
The genius and the mortal instruments
Are then in council, and the state of man,
Like to a little kingdom, suffers then
The nature of an insurrection.

Enter LUCIUS

LUCIUS

70 Sir, 'tis your brother Cassius at the door,
Who doth desire to see you.

BRUTUS

Is he alone?

LUCIUS

No, sir, there are more with him.

BRUTUS

Do you know them?

LUCIUS

No, sir. Their hats are plucked about their ears,
And half their faces buried in their cloaks,
75 That by no means I may discover them
By any mark of favor.

BRUTUS

Let 'em enter.

Exit LUCIUS

80

They are the faction. O conspiracy,
Shamest thou to show thy dangerous brow by night
When evils are most free? O, then by day
Where wilt thou find a cavern dark enough
To mask thy monstrous visage? Seek none, conspiracy.
Hide it in smiles and affability.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

From the time when you decide to do something terrible to the moment you do it, everything feels unreal, like a horrible dream. The unconscious and the body work together and rebel against the conscious mind.

LUCIUS enters.

LUCIUS

Sir, it's your brother-in-law Cassius at the door. He wants to see you.

BRUTUS

Is he alone?

LUCIUS

No, sir. There are others with him.

BRUTUS

Do you know them?

LUCIUS

No, sir, their hats are pulled down over their ears and their faces are half buried under their cloaks, so there's no way to tell who they are.

BRUTUS

Let them in.

LUCIUS exits.

It's the faction that wants to kill Caesar. Oh, conspiracy, are you ashamed to show your face even at night, when evil things are most free? If so, when it's day, where are you going to find a cave dark enough to hide your monstrous face? No, don't bother to find a cave, conspiracy. Instead, hide your true face behind smiles and friendliness.

85

For if thou path, thy native semblance on,
Not Erebus itself were dim enough
To hide thee from prevention.

*Enter the conspirators: CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, CINNA,
METELLUS, and TREBONIUS*

CASSIUS

I think we are too bold upon your rest.
Good morrow, Brutus. Do we trouble you?

BRUTUS

I have been up this hour, awake all night.
Know I these men that come along with you?

CASSIUS

90 Yes, every man of them, and no man here
But honors you, and every one doth wish
You had but that opinion of yourself
Which every noble Roman bears of you.
This is Trebonius.

BRUTUS

He is welcome hither.

CASSIUS

95 This, Decius Brutus.

BRUTUS

He is welcome too.

CASSIUS

This, Casca. This, Cinna. And this, Metellus Cimber.

BRUTUS

They are all welcome.
What watchful cares do interpose themselves
Betwixt your eyes and night?

100

CASSIUS

Shall I entreat a word?

BRUTUS and CASSIUS withdraw and whisper

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

If you went ahead and exposed your true face, Hell
itself wouldn't be dark enough to keep you from being
found and stopped.

*The conspirators—CASSIUS, CASCA, DECIUS, CINNA,
METELLUS, and TREBONIUS—enter.*

CASSIUS

I'm afraid we're intruding too boldly on your sleep
time. Good morning, Brutus. Are we bothering you?

BRUTUS

I was awake. I've been up all night. Do I know these
men who are with you?

CASSIUS

Yes, every one of them. There isn't one of them who
doesn't admire you, and each one of them wishes you
had as high an opinion of yourself as every noble
Roman has of you. This is Trebonius.

BRUTUS

He's welcome here.

CASSIUS

This is Decius Brutus.

BRUTUS

He's welcome too.

CASSIUS

This is Casca. This is Cinna. And this is Metellus
Cimber.

BRUTUS

They're all welcome. What worries have kept you
awake tonight?

CASSIUS

Can I have a word with you?

BRUTUS and CASSIUS whisper together.

DECIUS

Here lies the east. Doth not the day break here?

CASCA

No.

CINNA

O, pardon, sir, it doth, and yon gray lines
That fret the clouds are messengers of day.

105

CASCA

You shall confess that you are both deceived.
(points his sword)
Here, as I point my sword, the sun arises,
Which is a great way growing on the south,
Weighing the youthful season of the year.
Some two months hence up higher toward the north
He first presents his fire, and the high east
Stands, as the Capitol, directly here.

110

BRUTUS

(comes forward with CASSIUS)
Give me your hands all over, one by one.
(shakes their hands)

CASSIUS

And let us swear our resolution.

BRUTUS

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.
So let high-sighted tyranny range on
Till each man drop by lottery. But if these—
As I am sure they do—bear fire enough
To kindle cowards and to steel with valor
The melting spirits of women, then, countrymen,
What need we any spur but our own cause
To prick us to redress? What other bond
Than secret Romans that have spoke the word

115

120

125

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

DECIUS

Here's the east. Won't the dawn come from here?

CASCA

No.

CINNA

Excuse me, sir, it will. These gray lines that lace the
clouds are the beginnings of the dawn.

CASCA

You're both wrong. *(pointing his sword)* Here, where I
point my sword, the sun rises. It's quite near the
south, since it's still winter. About two months from
now, the dawn will break further toward the north,
and due east is where the Capitol stands, here.

BRUTUS

(coming forward with CASSIUS) Give me your hands, all
of you, one by one. *(he shakes their hands)*

CASSIUS

And let us swear to our resolution.

BRUTUS

No, let's not swear an oath. If the sad faces of our fel-
low men, the suffering of our own souls, and the cor-
ruption of the present time aren't enough to motivate
us, let's break it off now and each of us go back to bed.
Then we can let this ambitious tyrant continue
unchallenged until each of us is killed at his whim. But
if we have reasons that are strong enough to ignite
cowards into action and to make weak women brave—
and I think we do—then, countrymen, what else
could we possibly need to spur us to action? What
bond do we need other than that of discreet Romans
who have said what they're going to do and won't back
down? And what oath do we need other than that we
honest men have told each other that this will happen

And will not palter? And what other oath
 Than honesty to honesty engaged,
 That this shall be, or we will fall for it?
 130 Swear priests and cowards and men cautelous,
 Old feeble carrions and such suffering souls
 That welcome wrongs. Unto bad causes swear
 Such creatures as men doubt. But do not stain
 The even virtue of our enterprise,
 135 Nor th' insuppressive mettle of our spirits,
 To think that or our cause or our performance
 Did need an oath, when every drop of blood
 That every Roman bears—and nobly bears—
 Is guilty of a several bastardy
 140 If he do break the smallest particle
 Of any promise that hath passed from him.

CASSIUS

But what of Cicero? Shall we sound him?
 I think he will stand very strong with us.

CASCA

Let us not leave him out.

CINNA

No, by no means.

METELLUS

145 O, let us have him, for his silver hairs
 Will purchase us a good opinion
 And buy men's voices to commend our deeds.
 It shall be said his judgment ruled our hands.
 Our youths and wildness shall no whit appear,
 150 But all be buried in his gravity.

BRUTUS

O, name him not. Let us not break with him,
 For he will never follow anything
 That other men begin.

CASSIUS

Then leave him out.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

or we will die trying? Swearing is for priests, cowards, overly cautious men, feeble old people, and those long-suffering weaklings who welcome abuse. Only men whom you wouldn't trust anyway would swear oaths, and for the worst reasons. Don't spoil the justness and virtue of our endeavor nor weaken our own irrepressible spirits by thinking that we need a binding oath, when the blood that every noble Roman contains within him would be proven bastard's blood if he broke the smallest part of any promise he had made.

CASSIUS

But what about Cicero? Should we see what he thinks?
 I think he will stand strong with us.

CASCA

Let's not leave him out.

CINNA

No, by no means.

METELLUS

Yes, we should get his support, for his mature presence will make others think well of us and speak out in support of our actions. They'll assume that Cicero, with his sound judgment, ordered the actions. His dignified maturity will distract attention from our youth and wildness.

BRUTUS

No, don't even mention him. We shouldn't tell him about our plans. He'll never follow anything that other men have started.

CASSIUS

Then leave him out.

CASCA

Indeed, he's not right for this.

CASCA

155 Indeed he is not fit.

DECIOUS

Shall no man else be touched but only Caesar?

CASSIUS

Decius, well urged. I think it is not meet
Mark Antony, so well beloved of Caesar,
Should outlive Caesar. We shall find of him
160 A shrewd contriver. And, you know, his means,
If he improve them, may well stretch so far
As to annoy us all; which to prevent,
Let Antony and Caesar fall together.

BRUTUS

Our course will seem too bloody, Caius Cassius,
165 To cut the head off and then hack the limbs,
Like wrath in death and envy afterwards,
For Antony is but a limb of Caesar.
Let us be sacrificers but not butchers, Caius.
We all stand up against the spirit of Caesar,
170 And in the spirit of men there is no blood.
Oh, that we then could come by Caesar's spirit
And not dismember Caesar! But, alas,
Caesar must bleed for it. And, gentle friends,
Let's kill him boldly but not wrathfully.
175 Let's carve him as a dish fit for the gods,
Not hew him as a carcass fit for hounds.
And let our hearts, as subtle masters do,
Stir up their servants to an act of rage
And after seem to chide 'em. This shall make
180 Our purpose necessary and not envious,
Which so appearing to the common eyes,
We shall be called purgers, not murderers.
And for Mark Antony, think not of him,
For he can do no more than Caesar's arm
185 When Caesar's head is off.

ACT 2, SCENE 1

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

DECIOUS

But should we only go after Caesar? No one else?

CASSIUS

Good point, Decius. I don't think it would be wise to let Mark Antony, whom Caesar is so fond of, outlive Caesar. We'd find that he was a dangerous plotter. And as you know, his connections, if he put them to good use, might be enough to hurt us all. To prevent this, Mark Antony should die along with Caesar.

BRUTUS

Our action will seem too bloody if we cut off Caesar's head and then hack at his arms and legs too, Caius Cassius—because Mark Antony is merely one of Caesar's arms. It'll look like we killed Caesar out of anger and Mark Antony out of envy. Let's be sacrificers but not butchers, Caius. We're all against what Caesar stands for, and there's no blood in that. Oh, how I wish we could oppose Caesar's spirit—his overblown ambition—and not hack up Caesar himself! But, unfortunately, Caesar has to bleed if we're going to stop him. Noble friends, let's kill him boldly but not with anger. Let's carve him up like a dish fit for the gods, not chop him up like a carcass fit for dogs. Let's be angry only long enough to do the deed, and then let's act like we're disgusted by what we had to do. This will make our actions seem practical and not vengeful. If we appear calm to the people, they'll call us surgeons rather than murderers. As for Mark Antony—forget him. He'll be as useless as Caesar's arm after Caesar's head is cut off.

CASSIUS

But I'm still afraid of him, because the deep-rooted love he has for Caesar—

CASSIUS

Yet I fear him.

For in the engrafted love he bears to Caesar—

BRUTUS

Alas, good Cassius, do not think of him.

If he love Caesar, all that he can do

Is to himself: take thought and die for Caesar.

190 And that were much he should, for he is given
To sports, to wildness and much company.

TREBONIUS

There is no fear in him. Let him not die,

For he will live and laugh at this hereafter.

Clock strikes

BRUTUS

Peace! Count the clock.

CASSIUS

195 The clock hath stricken three.

TREBONIUS

'Tis time to part.

CASSIUS

But it is doubtful yet

Whether Caesar will come forth today or no.

For he is superstitious grown of late,

Quite from the main opinion he held once

200 Of fantasy, of dreams and ceremonies.

It may be, these apparent prodigies,

The unaccustomed terror of this night,

And the persuasion of his augurers

May hold him from the Capitol today.

DECIUS

205 Never fear that. If he be so resolved,
I can o'ersway him. For he loves to hear
That unicorns may be betrayed with trees,
And bears with glasses, elephants with holes,

ACT 2, SCENE 1

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

BRUTUS

Alas, good Cassius, don't think about him. If he loves Caesar, then he can only hurt himself—by grieving and dying for Caesar. And I'd be surprised if he even did that, for he prefers sports, fun, and friends.

TREBONIUS

There's nothing to fear in him. Let's not kill him. He'll live and laugh at this afterward.

A clock strikes.

BRUTUS

Quiet! Count how many times the clock chimes.

CASSIUS

The clock struck three.

TREBONIUS

It's time to leave.

CASSIUS

But we still don't know whether Caesar will go out in public today or not, because he's become superstitious lately, a complete turnaround from when he used to have such a bad opinion of fortune-tellers, dream interpreters, and ritual mumbo-jumbo. It might happen that these strange signs, the unusual terror of this night, and the urgings of his fortune-tellers will keep him away from the Capitol today.

DECIUS

Don't worry about that. If he's reluctant, I can convince him. He loves to hear me tell him how men can be snared by flatterers, just like unicorns can be captured in trees, elephants in holes, and lions with nets. When I tell him he hates flatterers, he agrees, just at the moment when I'm flattering him the most.

210 Lions with toils, and men with flatterers.
 But when I tell him he hates flatterers,
 He says he does, being then most flattered.
 Let me work.
 For I can give his humor the true bent,
 And I will bring him to the Capitol.

CASSIUS
 215 Nay, we will all of us be there to fetch him.

BRUTUS
 By the eighth hour. Is that the uttermost?

CINNA
 Be that the uttermost, and fail not then.

METELLUS
 Caius Ligarius doth bear Caesar hard,
 Who rated him for speaking well of Pompey.
 220 I wonder none of you have thought of him.

BRUTUS
 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.

CASSIUS
 225 The morning comes upon 's. We'll leave you, Brutus.
 —And, friends, disperse yourselves. But all remember
 What you have said, and show yourselves true Romans.

BRUTUS
 Good gentlemen, look fresh and merrily.
 Let not our looks put on our purposes,
 But bear it as our Roman actors do,
 230 With untired spirits and formal constancy.
 And so good morrow to you every one.

Exeunt. Manet BRUTUS

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

Let me work on him. I can put him in the right mood,
 and I'll bring him to the Capitol.

CASSIUS
 No, we'll all go there to bring him.

BRUTUS
 By eight o'clock. Is that the latest we can do it?

CINNA
 Let's make that the latest, but be sure to get there
 before then.

METELLUS
 Caius Ligarius doesn't like Caesar, who berated him
 for speaking well of Pompey. I wonder that none of
 you thought about getting his support.

BRUTUS
 Good Metellus, go to him now. He likes me, and I've
 given him good reason to. Just send him here, and I'll
 persuade him.

CASSIUS
 The morning is approaching. We'll leave, Brutus.
 Friends, go your separate ways. But all of you,
 remember what you've said and prove yourselves true
 Romans.

BRUTUS
 Good gentlemen, look like you're rested and happy.
 Don't let our faces betray our plans. Instead, carry
 yourselves like Roman actors, with cheerful spirits
 and well-composed faces. And so, good morning to all
 of you.

Everyone except BRUTUS exits.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

235 Boy! Lucius!—Fast asleep? It is no matter.
 Enjoy the honey-heavy dew of slumber.
 Thou hast no figures nor no fantasies,
 Which busy care draws in the brains of men.
 Therefore thou sleep'st so sound.

Enter PORTIA

PORTIA

Brutus, my lord.

BRUTUS

Portia, what mean you? Wherefore rise you now?
 It is not for your health thus to commit
 Your weak condition to the raw, cold morning.

PORTIA

240 Nor for yours neither. Y' have ungently, Brutus,
 Stole from my bed. And yesternight, at supper,
 You suddenly arose and walked about,
 Musing and sighing, with your arms across,
 And when I asked you what the matter was,
 245 You stared upon me with ungentle looks.
 I urged you further, then you scratched your head
 And too impatiently stamped with your foot.
 Yet I insisted; yet you answered not,
 But with an angry wafture of your hand
 250 Gave sign for me to leave you. So I did,
 Fearing to strengthen that impatience
 Which seemed too much enkindled, and withal
 Hoping it was but an effect of humor,
 Which sometime hath his hour with every man.
 255 It will not let you eat nor talk nor sleep,
 And could it work so much upon your shape
 As it hath much prevailed on your condition,
 I should not know you, Brutus. Dear my lord,
 Make me acquainted with your cause of grief.

Boy! Lucius! Fast asleep? Well, enjoy the sweetness of deep sleep. Your brain isn't stuffed with the strange shapes and fantasies that come to men who are overwhelmed by worries. That's why you sleep so soundly.

PORTIA enters.

PORTIA

Brutus, my lord.

BRUTUS

Portia, what are you doing awake? It isn't good for your health to expose your weak body to the raw, cold morning.

PORTIA

It's not good for your health, either. You rudely snuck out of bed. And last night at dinner, you got up abruptly and paced back and forth with your arms crossed, brooding and sighing, and when I asked you what was the matter, you gave me a dirty look. I asked you again, and you scratched your head and stamped your foot impatiently. I still insisted on knowing what the matter was, but you wouldn't answer me, instead giving me an angry wave of your hand and telling me to leave you alone. So I left, afraid of further provoking anger that was already inflamed but still hoping this was merely moodiness, which everyone is affected by once in awhile. Your strange mood won't let you eat or talk or sleep. If it had changed your outward appearance as much as it has affected you on the inside, I wouldn't even be able to recognize you, Brutus. My dear lord, tell me what's bothering you.

BRUTUS

260 I am not well in health, and that is all.

PORTIA

Brutus is wise, and were he not in health,
He would embrace the means to come by it.

BRUTUS

Why, so I do. Good Portia, go to bed.

PORTIA

Is Brutus sick? And is it physical
265 To walk unbracèd and suck up the humors
Of the dank morning? What, is Brutus sick,
And will he steal out of his wholesome bed,
To dare the vile contagion of the night
And tempt the rheumy and unpurgèd air
270 To add unto his sickness? No, my Brutus.
You have some sick offense within your mind,
Which by the right and virtue of my place
I ought to know of. *(kneels)* And upon my knees
I charm you, by my once-commended beauty,
275 By all your vows of love and that great vow
Which did incorporate and make us one
That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
Why you are heavy, and what men tonight
Have had to resort to you. For here have been
280 Some six or seven who did hide their faces
Even from darkness.

BRUTUS

Kneel not, gentle Portia.

PORTIA

(rising) I should not need if you were gentle, Brutus.
Within the bond of marriage, tell me, Brutus,
Is it excepted I should know no secrets
That appertain to you? Am I yourself
285 But, as it were, in sort or limitation,
To keep with you at meals, comfort your bed,
And talk to you sometimes?

ACT 2, SCENE 1

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

BRUTUS

I'm not feeling well—that's all.

PORTIA

You're smart, though, and if you were sick, you'd take
what you needed to get better.

BRUTUS

I'm doing so. Good Portia, go to bed.

PORTIA

Are you sick? And is it healthy to walk uncovered and
breathe in the dampness of the morning? You're sick,
yet you sneak out of your warm bed and let the humid
and disease-infested air make you sicker? No, my
Brutus, you have some sickness within your mind,
which by virtue of my position I deserve to know
about. *(she kneels)* And on my knees, I urge you, by my
once-praised beauty, by all your vows of love and that
great vow of marriage which made the two of us one
person, that you should reveal to me, who is one half
of yourself, why you're troubled and what men have
visited you tonight. For there were six or seven men
here, who hid their faces even in the darkness.

BRUTUS

Don't kneel, noble Portia.

PORTIA

(getting up) I wouldn't need to if you were acting
nobly. Tell me, Brutus, as your wife, aren't I supposed
to be told the secrets that concern you? Am I part of
you only in a limited sense—I get to have dinner with
you, sleep with you, and talk to you sometimes?

Dwell I but in the suburbs
Of your good pleasure? If it be no more,
Portia is Brutus' harlot, not his wife.

BRUTUS

290 You are my true and honorable wife,
As dear to me as are the ruddy drops
That visit my sad heart.

PORTIA

If this were true, then should I know this secret.
I grant I am a woman, but withal
295 A woman that Lord Brutus took to wife.
I grant I am a woman, but withal
A woman well-reputed, Cato's daughter.
Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
Being so fathered and so husbanded?
300 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?

BRUTUS

O ye gods,
305 Render me worthy of this noble wife!

Knock within

Hark, hark! One knocks. Portia, go in awhile.
And by and by thy bosom shall partake
The secrets of my heart.
All my engagements I will construe to thee,
310 All the charactery of my sad brows.
Leave me with haste.

Exit PORTIA

Lucius, who's that knocks?

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

Is my place only on the outskirts of your happiness? If it's nothing more than that, then I'm your whore, not your wife.

BRUTUS

You're my true and honorable wife, as dear to me as the blood that runs through my sad heart.

PORTIA

If that were true, then I'd know your secret. I admit I'm only a woman, but nevertheless I'm the woman Lord Brutus took for his wife. I admit I'm only a woman, but I'm still a woman from a noble family—I'm Cato's daughter. Do you really think I'm no stronger than the rest of my sex, with such a father and such a husband? Tell me your secrets. I won't betray them. I've proved my trustworthiness by giving myself a voluntary wound here in my thigh. If I can bear that pain, then I can bear my husband's secrets.

BRUTUS

Oh, gods, make me worthy of this noble wife!

A knocking sound offstage.

Listen! Someone knocks. Portia, go inside awhile, and soon enough you'll share the secrets of my heart. I'll explain all that I have committed to do and all the reasons for my sad face. Leave me quickly.

PORTIA exits.

Lucius, who's that knocking?

Enter LUCIUS and LIGARIUS

LUCIUS

He is a sick man that would speak with you.

BRUTUS

Caius Ligarius, that Metellus spake of.—

315 Boy, stand aside.—Caius Ligarius, how?

LIGARIUS

Vouchsafe good morrow from a feeble tongue.

BRUTUS

O, what a time have you chose out, brave Caius,
To wear a kerchief! Would you were not sick!

LIGARIUS

320 I am not sick if Brutus have in hand
Any exploit worthy the name of honor.

BRUTUS

Such an exploit have I in hand, Ligarius,
Had you a healthful ear to hear of it.

LIGARIUS

(removes his kerchief)

325 By all the gods that Romans bow before,
I here discard my sickness! Soul of Rome,
Brave son derived from honorable loins,
Thou, like an exorcist, hast conjured up
My mortifièd spirit. Now bid me run,
And I will strive with things impossible,
Yea, get the better of them. What's to do?

BRUTUS

330 A piece of work that will make sick men whole.

LIGARIUS

But are not some whole that we must make sick?

BRUTUS

That must we also. What it is, my Caius,
I shall unfold to thee as we are going
To whom it must be done.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

LUCIUS and LIGARIUS enter. Ligarius wears a cloth wrapped around his head, indicating that he's sick.

LUCIUS

Here's a sick man who wants to speak with you.

BRUTUS

It's Caius Ligarius, whom Metellus spoke of. Boy, stand aside. Caius Ligarius! How are you?

LIGARIUS

Please accept my feeble "good morning."

BRUTUS

Oh, what a time you've chosen to be sick, brave Caius! How I wish you felt better!

LIGARIUS

I'm not sick if you've prepared some honorable exploit for me.

BRUTUS

Indeed, I would have such an exploit for you, Ligarius, if you were healthy enough to hear it.

LIGARIUS

(takes off his head covering) By all the gods that Romans worship, I hereby throw off my sickness! Soul of Rome! Brave son of honorable ancestors! You've conjured up my deadened spirit like an exorcist. Now say the word, and I will tackle all kinds of impossible things, and succeed too. What is there to do?

BRUTUS

A deed that will make sick men healthy.

LIGARIUS

But aren't there some healthy men whom we have to make sick?

BRUTUS

That too. My dear Caius, I'll explain the task at hand to you as we walk toward the man we must do it to.

LIGARIUS

335 Set on your foot,
And with a heart new-fired I follow you,
To do I know not what. But it sufficeth
That Brutus leads me on.

Thunder

BRUTUS

Follow me, then.

Exeunt

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

LIGARIUS

Start walking, and with an energized heart, I'll follow
you—to what, I don't know, but I'm satisfied, simply
knowing that Brutus leads me.

Thunder.

BRUTUS

Follow me, then.

They all exit.

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Thunder and lightning

Enter Julius CAESAR in his nightgown

CAESAR

Nor heaven nor earth have been at peace tonight.
Thrice hath Calphurnia in her sleep cried out,
"Help, ho! They murder Caesar!"—Who's within?

Enter a SERVANT

SERVANT

My lord.

CAESAR

5 Go bid the priests do present sacrifice
And bring me their opinions of success.

SERVANT

I will, my lord.

Exit SERVANT

Enter CALPHURNIA

CALPHURNIA

What mean you, Caesar? Think you to walk forth?
You shall not stir out of your house today.

CAESAR

10 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 vanishèd.

CALPHURNIA

15 Caesar, I never stood on ceremonies,
Yet now they fright me. There is one within,
Besides the things that we have heard and seen,
Recounts most horrid sights seen by the watch.
A lioness hath whelpèd in the streets,
And graves have yawned and yielded up their dead.

ACT 2, SCENE 2

Thunder and lightning. CAESAR enters in his nightgown.

CAESAR

Neither the sky nor the earth have been quiet tonight.
Calphurnia cried out three times in her sleep, "Help,
someone! They're murdering Caesar!" Who's there?

A SERVANT enters.

SERVANT

My lord?

CAESAR

Go tell the priests to perform a sacrifice immediately,
and bring me their interpretation of the results.

SERVANT

I will, my lord.

The SERVANT exits.

CALPHURNIA enters.

CALPHURNIA

What are you doing, Caesar? Are you planning to go
out? You're not leaving the house today.

CAESAR

I will go out. The things that threaten me have only
seen my back. When they see the face of Caesar, they
will vanish.

CALPHURNIA

Caesar, I never believed in omens, but now they
frighten me. A servant told me the night-watchmen
saw horrid sights too, but different ones from what we
heard and saw. A lioness gave birth in the streets, and
graves cracked open and thrust out their dead.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

20 Fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds
In ranks and squadrons and right form of war,
Which drizzled blood upon the Capitol.
The noise of battle hurtled in the air.
Horses did neigh, and dying men did groan,
And ghosts did shriek and squeal about the streets.
25 O Caesar! These things are beyond all use,
And I do fear them.

CAESAR

What can be avoided
Whose end is purposed by the mighty gods?
Yet Caesar shall go forth, for these predictions
Are to the world in general as to Caesar.

CALPHURNIA

30 When beggars die there are no comets seen.
The heavens themselves blaze forth the death of princes.

CAESAR

Cowards die many times before their deaths.
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
35 It seems to me most strange that men should fear,
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

Enter SERVANT

What say the augurers?

SERVANT

They would not have you to stir forth today.
Plucking the entrails of an offering forth,
40 They could not find a heart within the beast.

CAESAR

The gods do this in shame of cowardice.
Caesar should be a beast without a heart
If he should stay at home today for fear.
No, Caesar shall not. Danger knows full well

Fierce, fiery warriors fought in the clouds in the usual formations of war—ranks and squadrons—until the clouds drizzled blood onto the Capitol. The noise of battle filled the air, and horses neighed, and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked and squealed in the streets. Oh, Caesar! These things are beyond anything we've seen before, and I'm afraid.

CAESAR

How can we avoid what the gods want to happen? But I will go out, for these bad omens apply to the world in general as much as they do to me.

CALPHURNIA

When beggars die there are no comets in the sky. The heavens only announce the deaths of princes.

CAESAR

Cowards die many times before their deaths. The brave experience death only once. Of all the strange things I've ever heard, it seems most strange to me that men fear death, given that death, which can't be avoided, will come whenever it wants.

The SERVANT enters.

What do the priests say?

SERVANT

They don't want you to go out today. They pulled out the guts of the sacrificed animal and couldn't find its heart.

CAESAR

The gods do this to test my bravery. They're saying I'd be an animal without a heart if I stayed home today out of fear. So, I won't.

45 That Caesar is more dangerous than he.
We are two lions littered in one day,
And I the elder and more terrible.
And Caesar shall go forth.

CALPHURNIA

Alas, my lord,
Your wisdom is consumed in confidence.
50 Do not go forth today. Call it my fear
That keeps you in the house, and not your own.
We'll send Mark Antony to the senate house,
And he shall say you are not well today.
(*kneels*) Let me, upon my knee, prevail in this.

CAESAR

55 Mark Antony shall say I am not well,
And for thy humor I will stay at home.

CALPHURNIA rises

Enter DECIUS

Here's Decius Brutus. He shall tell them so.

DECIUS

Caesar, all hail! Good morrow, worthy Caesar.
I come to fetch you to the senate house.

CAESAR

60 And you are come in very happy time
To bear my greeting to the senators
And tell them that I will not come today.
"Cannot" is false, and that I dare not, falser.
I will not come today. Tell them so, Decius.

CALPHURNIA

65 Say he is sick.

CAESAR

Shall Caesar send a lie?
Have I in conquest stretched mine arm so far
To be afraid to tell graybeards the truth?

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

Danger knows that Caesar is more dangerous than he is. We're two lions born on the same day in the same litter, and I'm the older and more terrible. I will go out.

CALPHURNIA

Alas, my lord, your confidence is getting the better of your wisdom. Don't go out today. Say that it's my fear that keeps you inside and not your own. We'll send Mark Antony to the senate house, and he'll say that you're sick today. (*she kneels*) Let me, on my knees, win you over to this plan.

CAESAR

All right. Mark Antony will say I'm not well, and to please you I'll stay at home.

CALPHURNIA gets up.

DECIUS enters.

Here's Decius Brutus. He'll tell them so.

DECIUS

Hail, Caesar! Good morning, worthy Caesar. I've come to take you to the senate house.

CAESAR

And you've come at a good time, so you can convey my greetings to the senators and tell them I won't come today. It wouldn't be true to say that I *can't* come, and even less true to say that I don't *dare* come. I simply *won't* come today. Tell them so, Decius.

CALPHURNIA

Say he's sick.

CAESAR

Would I send a lie? Have I accomplished so much in battle, but now I'm afraid to tell some old men the truth?

Decius, go tell them Caesar will not come.

DECIUS

Most mighty Caesar, let me know some cause,
70 Lest I be laughed at when I tell them so.

CAESAR

The cause is in my will. I will not come.
That is enough to satisfy the senate.
But for your private satisfaction,
Because I love you, I will let you know.
75 Calphurnia here, my wife, stays me at home.
She dreamt tonight she saw my statue,
Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,
Did run pure blood. And many lusty Romans
Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it.
80 And these does she apply for warnings and portents
And evils imminent, and on her knee
Hath begged that I will stay at home today.

DECIUS

This dream is all amiss interpreted.
It was a vision fair and fortunate.
85 Your statue spouting blood in many pipes,
In which so many smiling Romans bathed,
Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck
Reviving blood, and that great men shall press
For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance.
90 This by Calphurnia's dream is signified.

CAESAR

And this way have you well expounded it.

DECIUS

I have, when you have heard what I can say.
And know it now: the senate have concluded
To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

Decius, go tell them that Caesar won't come.

DECIUS

Most mighty Caesar, give me some reason, so I won't
be laughed at when I tell them so.

CAESAR

The reason is that it's what I want. I'm not coming.
That's enough for the senate. But for your private sat-
isfaction, because I love you, I'll tell you. Calphurnia,
my wife, is keeping me at home. Last night, she
dreamed she saw a statue of me with a hundred holes
in it, like a fountain with pure blood flowing from it,
and many happy Romans came smiling and washed
their hands in it. She takes these signs for warnings
and predictions of terrible evils to come, and, on her
knee, she begged me to stay home today.

DECIUS

This dream has been interpreted all wrong. It was a
good and lucky vision. Your statue spouting blood
through many holes, in which many smiling Romans
bathed, means that you'll provide great Rome with
sustaining blood, and that great men will strive to get
some token of approval from your holy blood. This is
what Calphurnia's dream means.

CAESAR

You've offered an excellent interpretation.

DECIUS

I will have when you hear the rest of what I have to say.
The senate has decided to give mighty Caesar a crown
today.

95 If you shall send them word you will not come,
 Their minds may change. Besides, it were a mock
 Apt to be rendered for someone to say,
 "Break up the senate till another time
 When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams."
 100 If Caesar hide himself, shall they not whisper,
 "Lo, Caesar is afraid"?
 Pardon me, Caesar. For my dear, dear love
 To your proceeding bids me tell you this,
 And reason to my love is liable.

CAESAR

105 How foolish do your fears seem now, Calphurnia!
 I am ashamed I did yield to them.
 Give me my robe, for I will go.

*Enter BRUTUS, LIGARIUS, METELLUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS,
 CINNA, and PUBLIUS*

And look, where Publius is come to fetch me.

PUBLIUS

Good morrow, Caesar.

CAESAR

110 Welcome, Publius.
 —What, Brutus, are you stirred so early too?
 —Good morrow, Casca.—Caius Ligarius,
 Caesar was ne'er so much your enemy
 As that same ague which hath made you lean.
 115 —What is 't o'clock?

BRUTUS

Caesar, 'tis strucken eight.

CAESAR

I thank you for your pains and courtesy.

Enter ANTONY

If you send them word that you won't come, they might change their minds. Besides, someone's likely to joke, "Adjourn the senate until some other time, when Caesar's wife has had better dreams." If you hide yourself, won't they whisper, "Caesar is afraid?" Pardon me, Caesar. My high hopes for your advancement force me to tell you this. My love gets the better of my manners.

CAESAR

How foolish your fears seem now, Calphurnia! I'm ashamed that I yielded to them. Give me my robe, because I'm going.

*PUBLIUS, BRUTUS, LIGARIUS, METELLUS, CASCA,
 TREBONIUS, and CINNA enter.*

And look, here's Publius, come to fetch me.

PUBLIUS

Good morning, Caesar.

CAESAR

Welcome, Publius. What, Brutus? Are you up this early too? Good morning, Casca. Caius Ligarius, I was never your enemy so much as the sickness that's made you so thin. What time is it?

BRUTUS

Caesar, the clock has struck eight.

CAESAR

I thank you all for your trouble and courtesy.

ANTONY enters.

See, Antony, that revels long a-nights,
Is notwithstanding up.—Good morrow, Antony.

ANTONY

So to most noble Caesar.

CAESAR

Bid them prepare within.

120

I am to blame to be thus waited for.
—Now, Cinna.—Now, Metellus.—What, Trebonius,
I have an hour's talk in store for you.
Remember that you call on me today.
Be near me, that I may remember you.

TREBONIUS

125

Caesar, I will. (*aside*) And so near will I be
That your best friends shall wish I had been further.

CAESAR

Good friends, go in and taste some wine with me.
And we, like friends, will straightway go together.

BRUTUS

130

(*aside*) That every "like" is not the same, O Caesar,
The heart of Brutus earns to think upon.

Exeunt

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

See! Even Antony, who stays up all night partying, is awake. Good morning, Antony.

ANTONY

And to you, most noble Caesar.

CAESAR

Tell them to prepare the other room for guests. I'm to blame for making you wait for me. Now, Cinna. Now, Metellus. Trebonius! I have an hour-long matter to discuss with you. Remember to see me today. Stay near me so I'll remember.

TREBONIUS

Caesar, I will. (*speaking quietly to himself*) In fact, I'll be so near that your best friends will wish I'd been further away.

CAESAR

Good friends, go in and have some wine with me. And we'll leave together, like friends.

BRUTUS

(*quietly to himself*) That we are now only "like" friends—Oh Caesar—makes my heart ache.

They all exit.

ACT 2, SCENE 3

Enter ARTEMIDORUS, reading a letter

ARTEMIDORUS

(reads aloud)

"Caesar, beware of Brutus. Take heed of Cassius.
Come not near Casca. Have an eye to Cinna. Trust not
Trebonyus. Mark well Metellus Cimber. Decius
Brutus loves thee not. Thou hast wronged Caius
5 Ligarius. There is but one mind in all these men, and
it is bent against Caesar. If thou beest not immortal,
look about you. Security gives way to conspiracy. The
mighty gods defend thee!

Thy lover,
Artemidorus"

10 Here will I stand till Caesar pass along,
And as a suitor will I give him this.
My heart laments that virtue cannot live
Out of the teeth of emulation.
If thou read this, O Caesar, thou mayst live.
If not, the Fates with traitors do contrive.

Exit

ACT 2, SCENE 3

ARTEMIDORUS enters, reading a letter.

ARTEMIDORUS

(reading aloud from the letter)

"Caesar, beware of Brutus. Watch Cassius. Don't
go near Casca. Keep an eye on Cinna. Don't trust
Trebonyus. Pay attention to Metellus Cimber.
Decius Brutus doesn't love you. You've wronged
Caius Ligarius. These men all have one intention,
and it's directed against Caesar. If you aren't
immortal, watch those around you. A sense of
security opens the door to conspiracy. I pray that
the mighty gods defend you!

Your friend,
Artemidorus."

I'll stand here until Caesar passes by, and I'll give him
this as though it's a petition. My heart regrets that
good men aren't safe from the bite of jealous rivals. If
you read this, Caesar, you might live. If not, the Fates
are on the side of the traitors.

He exits.

ACT 2, SCENE 4

Enter PORTIA and LUCIUS

PORTIA

I prithee, boy, run to the senate house.
Stay not to answer me, but get thee gone.
Why dost thou stay?

LUCIUS

To know my errand, madam.

PORTIA

I would have had thee there and here again
Ere I can tell thee what thou shouldst do there.
—O constancy, be strong upon my side,
Set a huge mountain 'tween my heart and tongue!
I have a man's mind but a woman's might.
How hard it is for women to keep counsel!
—Art thou here yet?

LUCIUS

Madam, what should I do?
Run to the Capitol, and nothing else?
And so return to you, and nothing else?

PORTIA

Yes, bring me word, boy, if thy lord look well,
For he went sickly forth. And take good note
What Caesar doth, what suitors press to him.
Hark, boy! What noise is that?

LUCIUS

I hear none, madam.

PORTIA

Prithee, listen well.
I heard a bustling rumor like a fray,
And the wind brings it from the Capitol.

LUCIUS

Sooth, madam, I hear nothing.

Enter the SOOTHSAYER

ACT 2, SCENE 4

PORTIA and LUCIUS enter.

PORTIA

Boy, I beg you to run to the senate house. Don't stay
to answer me—get going. Why are you still standing
there?

LUCIUS

To find out what you want me to do there, madam.

PORTIA

I want you there and back again before I can even tell
you what you should do there. *(to herself, so that no one
can hear her)* Oh, let my determination keep me from
speaking what is in my heart! I have a man's mind, but
only a woman's strength. How hard it is for women to
keep secrets! *(to LUCIUS)* Are you still here?

LUCIUS

Madam, what should I do? Run to the Capitol and
nothing else? And then return to you and nothing
else?

PORTIA

Yes, return and tell me if your master looks well,
because he was sick when he left. And pay attention to
what Caesar does and which men are close to him.
Listen, boy! What's that noise?

LUCIUS

I don't hear anything, madam.

PORTIA

I beg you, listen well. I heard a noise like a scuffle. The
wind brings it from the Capitol.

LUCIUS

Truly, madam, I don't hear anything.

The SOOTHSAYER enters.

PORTIA

Come hither, fellow. Which way hast thou been?

SOOTHSAYER

At mine own house, good lady.

PORTIA

What is 't o'clock?

SOOTHSAYER

25 About the ninth hour, lady.

PORTIA

Is Caesar yet gone to the Capitol?

SOOTHSAYER

Madam, not yet. I go to take my stand
To see him pass on to the Capitol.

PORTIA

Thou hast some suit to Caesar, hast thou not?

SOOTHSAYER

30 That I have, lady. If it will please Caesar
To be so good to Caesar as to hear me,
I shall beseech him to befriend himself.

PORTIA

Why, know'st thou any harm's intended towards him?

SOOTHSAYER

35 None that I know will be; much that I fear may chance.
Good morrow to you. Here the street is narrow.
The throng that follows Caesar at the heels,
Of senators, of praetors, common suitors,
Will crowd a feeble man almost to death.
I'll get me to a place more void, and there
40 Speak to great Caesar as he comes along.*Exit SOOTHSAYER*

PORTIA

Come here, you. Where are you coming from?

SOOTHSAYER

My own house, good lady.

PORTIA

What time is it?

SOOTHSAYER

Around nine o'clock, madam.

PORTIA

Has Caesar gone to the Capitol yet?

SOOTHSAYER

Madam, not yet. I'm going to stand so I can see him
pass on the way to the Capitol.

PORTIA

You have some plea for Caesar, don't you?

SOOTHSAYER

Yes, I do, lady. If it pleases Caesar to be so good to
himself as to hear me, I'll try to get him to do what's
good for him.

PORTIA

Why, do you know of any harm intended toward him?

SOOTHSAYER

Nothing that I know for sure, but a lot that I'm afraid
might happen. Good morning to you. The street is
narrow here. The crowd that follows Caesar at his
heels—senators, justices, common petitioners—will
suffocate a feeble man almost to death. I'll move to a
more open place and there speak to great Caesar as he
walks past.*He exits.*

PORTIA

I must go in. (*aside*) Ay me, how weak a thing
 The heart of woman is! O Brutus,
 The heavens speed thee in thine enterprise!
 Sure, the boy heard me. (*to LUCIUS*) Brutus hath a suit
 45 That Caesar will not grant.—Oh, I grow faint.—
 Run, Lucius, and commend me to my lord.
 Say I am merry. Come to me again,
 And bring me word what he doth say to thee.

Exeunt severally

NO FEAR SHAKESPEARE

PORTIA

I must go in. (*speaking quietly to herself*) Oh, a
 woman's heart is so weak! Oh Brutus, may the gods
 aid you in your endeavor! Surely, the boy heard me. (*to*
LUCIUS) Brutus has a claim that Caesar won't grant.
 Oh, I feel faint. Run, Lucius, and speak well of me to
 my lord. Say that I'm happy. Then return to me and
 tell me what he says to you.

They exit in opposite directions.