

Character List: Julius Caesar

Brutus - A supporter of the republic who believes strongly in a government guided by the votes of senators. While Brutus loves Caesar as a friend, he opposes the ascension of any single man to the position of dictator, and he fears that Caesar aspires to such power. Brutus's inflexible sense of honor makes it easy for Caesar's enemies to manipulate him into believing that Caesar must die in order to preserve the republic. While the other conspirators act out of envy and rivalry, only Brutus truly believes that Caesar's death will benefit Rome. Unlike Caesar, Brutus is able to separate completely his public life from his private life; by giving priority to matters of state, he epitomizes Roman virtue. Torn between his loyalty to Caesar and his allegiance to the state, Brutus becomes the tragic hero of the play.

Julius Caesar - A great Roman general and senator, recently returned to Rome in triumph after a successful military campaign. While his good friend Brutus worries that Caesar may aspire to dictatorship over the Roman republic, Caesar seems to show no such inclination, declining the crown several times. Yet while Caesar may not be unduly power-hungry, he does possess his share of flaws. He is unable to separate his public life from his private life, and, seduced by the populace's increasing idealization and idolization of his image, he ignores ill omens and threats against his life, believing himself as eternal as the North Star.

Antony - A friend of Caesar. Antony claims allegiance to Brutus and the conspirators after Caesar's death in order to save his own life. Later, however, when speaking a funeral oration over Caesar's body, he spectacularly persuades the audience to withdraw its support of Brutus and instead condemn him as a traitor. With tears on his cheeks and Caesar's will in his hand, Antony engages masterful rhetoric to stir the crowd to revolt against the conspirators. Antony's desire to exclude Lepidus from the power that Antony and Octavius intend to share hints at his own ambitious nature.

Cassius - A talented general and longtime acquaintance of Caesar. Cassius dislikes the fact that Caesar has become godlike in the eyes of the Romans. He slyly leads Brutus to believe that Caesar has become too powerful and must die, finally converting Brutus to his cause by sending him forged letters claiming that the Roman people support the death of Caesar. Impulsive and unscrupulous, Cassius harbors no illusions about the way the political world works. A shrewd opportunist, he proves successful but lacks integrity.

Octavius - Caesar's adopted son and appointed successor. Octavius, who had been traveling abroad, returns after Caesar's death; he then joins with Antony and sets off to fight Cassius and Brutus. Antony tries to control Octavius's movements, but Octavius follows his adopted father's example and emerges as the authoritative figure, paving the way for his eventual seizure of the reins of Roman government.

Casca - A public figure opposed to Caesar's rise to power. Casca relates to Cassius