

# The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

William Shakespeare

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# The Tragedy of Julius Caesar

William Shakespeare



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## Julius Caesar: Introduction

The setting of this play is ancient Rome. ▼



Shakespeare creates a world full of political intrigue, magical occurrences, and military conquest.

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# Julius Caesar: Introduction

Caesar, the most powerful man in Rome, has recently returned to the city after months of fighting abroad.



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## Julius Caesar: Introduction

Caesar was fighting Pompey, another powerful Roman, and his sons. ▼

Pompey, as well as others in the Roman senate, was disturbed by Caesar's growing ambition.



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## Julius Caesar: Introduction

Their fears seem to be valid when Caesar refuses to enter Rome as an ordinary citizen after the war.

Instead, he marches his army on Rome and takes over the government.



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## Julius Caesar: Introduction

But the people don't mind—in fact, they love him. ▼

Caesar is made *dictator*, or ruler—a position that was sometimes granted for a ten-year term—for the rest of his life.



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# Julius Caesar: Introduction

Many senators, however, resent Caesar for having so much power.



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# Julius Caesar: Introduction



Some senators begin to conspire. . .

**Brutus**, Caesar's friend who believes that he must act against Caesar for the good of Rome

**Casca**, who hates the ordinary citizens of Rome yet is jealous because they love Caesar and not him

**Cassius**, a greedy and jealous man who wants to take drastic measures to keep Caesar from winning any more power—and to take away any power that Caesar previously had!

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# Julius Caesar : Background



Shakespeare uses Roman customs and superstition to create spooky conditions to mirror the dangerous plot being planned.



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# Julius Caesar : Background

The Romans believed that omens could reveal the future. ▼



These omens could take the form of unusual weather, flights of birds, or other natural phenomena.



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# Julius Caesar: Background

Animals were seen as indicators of the future. ▼

The Romans often sacrificed animals to the gods, and had their entrails (guts) examined by an official called a *haruspex*. Any abnormalities or imperfections indicated the anger of a god or a particularly bad event about to happen.



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# Julius Caesar: Background

Unusual astronomical and meteorological occurrences were also seen as signs of future events. ▼

Solar eclipses were believed to foreshadow doom, as was lightning.



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# Julius Caesar: Background

One of the reasons the Senate was concerned by Caesar's accumulation of power was Rome's long history as a republic.



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# Julius Caesar : Background

Around 509 B.C., the Romans ended a monarchy by rebelling against the last king of Rome, Tarquinius.



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# Julius Caesar: Background



After this revolution, the Romans established their famous republic, in which all citizens were represented in the Senate. ▼

They were very proud of their non-king ruled government, and were determined to preserve it—but when Caesar arrived, they changed their minds!

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# Julius Caesar : Discussion Starters...

## Discussion starter topic 1:

### 1. How important is loyalty?

- Does your country or do your friends consider “loyalty” something to value? When can “loyalty” sometimes cause problems?
- What should people do when loyalty to their country and loyalty to their friend comes into conflict?
- Are there limits to what people should do in defense of the nation?

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# Julius Caesar: Discussion Starters

## Discussion starter topic 2:

### 2. What will a person do for the sake of political ideals?

- Assassinations of political figures are common in history.
- What political figures do you know of who have been assassinated?
- What effect did these assassinations have on the general public, a political party, or a cause at the time of the assassination?

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