

THE TRAGEDY OF CAESAR AND POMPEY or CAESAR'S REVENGE

INTRODUCTION

Scene by Scene Summary

Act 1, Prologue

Discord enters the stage and complains of Rome's greatness and pride. She summons up the furies to bring about the destruction of Rome.

Act 1, Scene 1

Pompey has been defeated at the Battle of Pharsalia. Titinius, Brutus and Pompey enter separately, each bewailing their defeat. Pompey is contemplating fleeing the battle. Titinius spots the other two, and Pompey is forced to halt his retreat out of shame that his friends will see. Brutus then notices the other two, and greets them, assigning their defeat to Rome rather than Caesar. Pompey wishes he could have died at the height of his fame rather than being shamed, should he become Caesar's captive. Whilst Pompey bewails ending his 58 years of greatness in defeat, Brutus praises his great mind and reassures Pompey that there will be aid from Egypt and Libya. Pompey sees this as false hope; these countries will only provide a place to die, and he names Brutus as the only hope to free Rome from Caesar's tyranny. Titinius and Brutus persuade Pompey to flee the scene in order to gain reinforcements from Egypt or Libya. Pompey and Titinius leave the stage separately, whilst Brutus remains alone.

Act 1, Scene 2

Caesar enters urging his troops onward. Brutus demands that Caesar kill him, but Caesar refuses, as he feels a great and unchangeable affection for Brutus. Brutus regrets Caesar's greatness is tainted with personal ambition; he has taken Brutus' honour and given him his life. Brutus leaves Caesar alone on the stage. He considers his victory, but views it as tainted by its very nature, as this is civil war with Roman slaying Roman and can only lessen Rome's greatness overall. He remains on stage.

Act 1, Scene 3

Caesar's followers enter. They have come to declare Caesar the victor and crown him with laurels. However, Caesar's mood is gloomy; he sees the land here as forever cursed by the civil war fought over it. Anthony tries to cheer him by pointing out other times when Caesar has killed just as many, or more, and not let it disturb him. Caesar points out that even enemies sometimes pity the destruction of their foes, and regrets that by his actions he has actually harmed the city that nurtured him. Dolabella, Anthony and a Lord persuade Caesar that the fault lies at Pompey's feet, and the strife should end with his death. Rallying, Caesar determines to chase Pompey and utterly defeat him despite any forces he can summon to his defence.

Act 1, Scene 4

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Cato Senior bewails the loss of Roman liberty to Caesar's tyrannous rule. He decries the horror of Roman fighting Roman and warns of omens such as showers of blood and comets damaging the temple, foretelling the end of Rome.

Act 1 Scene 5

Pompey and his wife, Cornelia, are on a boat near Egypt. Pompey is seeking assistance from Ptolomey whose kingship he helped to secure in better times. Cornelia begs to go with him and share the danger. He insists that she stay on the boat and suggests there is no danger. She grasps at this demanding if there is not danger to be allowed to accompany him, but he says her guaranteed safety on the boat will provide him with peace of mind. Eventually she agrees to stay. He exits and she continues to worry about his safety and Ptolomey's trustworthiness. Finally she decides that she will wander weeping by the shore until Pompey returns.

Act 1, Scene 6

Cleopatra seeks Caesar's help in regaining her half of the throne of Egypt. Caesar is obviously besotted, extravagantly offering her the whole of Africa, and determined to place her alone on the throne. He claims that her beauty has drained his warlike nature, that she is become his moon goddess, ruling his moods. Dolabella and the Lord also praise her beauty. However, in this scene Anthony stands a little aside from the action, mooning over Cleopatra like a love-sick teenager. Caesar leads the others off-stage heading to Alexandria. Anthony trails behind, lost to Cleopatra's beauty.

Act 2, Prologue

Discord enters and mocks Caesar's good luck. She points out that though Caesar is currently great, Pompey too was once as great, if not more so. She relishes the civil war that has been caused in Rome and claims to have started the Trojan war and the war at Thebes, delighting in the downfall of Rome which has conquered the rest of the world.

Act 2, Scene 1

Two men on an Egyptian beach wait to murder Pompey at Ptolomey's command. Achilles is an Egyptian, whilst Sempronius is a Roman who has often marched in Pompey's army. Sempronius proclaims he'd kill anyone, even his own mother, for gold. As Pompey approaches stating his case for himself, Sempronius makes ironic asides to the audience. Achilles lures him closer with fair words and then Sempronius stabs him. Achilles and Sempronius drag the body off to show Caesar, hoping for a reward. Sempronius' last aside points out that kings and princes get away with

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murdering half the world and are called heroes, whilst those that only kill one person are considered murderers.

Act 2, Scene 2

Cornelia is on the same beach and has witnessed the whole event from the ship. She makes a short speech bewailing the horror of what she has seen and the unfairness that nature did not rebel in some way to hide such a hideous sight. She then stabs herself and dies.

Act 2, Scene 3

Caesar has had Ptolomey, Achillas and Sempronius killed for their treacherous murder of Pompey and plans to bury him with all honours due such a great man. Anthony registers his enslavement to Cleopatra's beauty exacerbated by her indifference to him. Caesar compares himself and Cleopatra to Mars lying in the arms of Venus. Dolabella is upset at what he sees as the loss of manly virtue. Caesar prepares to indulge himself in the feasting and luxuries of Cleopatra's court and summons the others to follow him. It is clear that Anthony is distracted and unresponsive due to his desire for Cleopatra, but he manages to pass it off as being due to thoughts of Rome.

Act 2, Scene 4

In Rome Cicero, Brutus, Casca, Camber and Trebonius discuss Pompey's shameful death, and lament what Caesar's victory will mean to the Roman commonwealth. They are incensed at the thought of Caesar parading his victory over Roman bodies through the streets of Rome, but allow themselves to be calmed by Cicero who recommends they greet Caesar meekly and pacify him.

Act 2, Scene 5

Cato at home with his son discusses how awful the political situation is, and, advising him to always put his country first, sends his son away. Claiming that Caesar will never triumph over him, Cato then stabs himself. His son returns, and distraught, tries to talk him out of this rash action. Saying he is persuaded, Cato sends his son for help. He stabs himself again, and his son returns to find his father dead. He knows not whether to be sad at his father's passing or proud at his nobility.

Act 3, Prologue

Discord describes Caesar riding triumphantly through Rome and becoming more ambitious. She summons Nemesis and the Furies to waken discontent in Brutus and Cassius, making peace more bloody than war.

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Act 3, Scene 1

Cassius describes with distaste Caesar's triumph, points out that he is at his highest point on Fortune's wheel, and dulled by his dalliance in Egypt. Cassius swears that if no-one else will protect Roman liberty, then he shall.

Act 3, Scene 2

Caesar compares his leaving Cleopatra to Odysseus leaving Circe, and relishes his new position as sole ruler of the world. Dolabella, the Lord and the Romans praise him, whilst Anthony is locked into his own dark thoughts at having lost Cleopatra's presence in his life. The others leave Anthony alone on stage, where he continues to mope. His Bonus Genius enters and chastises him for his womanish behaviour, threatening that should he continue down this path death and disaster would follow. Anthony pulls himself together, throwing off his obsession with Cleopatra reasserting his Roman manliness.

Act 3, Scene 3

Brutus is struggling with his feelings towards what is happening in Rome. Cassius sounds him out. He encourages Brutus to wake up and take action.

Act 3, Scene 4

Caesar maps out his next campaign. His followers try to persuade him to take a crown, but he refuses citing the Roman struggle to rid itself of kings. Instead he is prepared to rule the world simply as Caesar.

Act 3, Scene 5

Trebonius informs Cassius, Brutus, Cumber and Casca that the Senate approve their plot to assassinate Caesar. The group express their eagerness and commitment to the deed ahead.

Act 3, Scene 6

Caesar is trying to head to the Senate. He shrugs off Calphurnia's prophetic dream and eventually detaches himself from her. Next an Augur warns him of danger presaged by many strange omens. He ignores this warning, and determines that he will dissipate any future danger by dissolving the Senate. Finally a Praeceptor presents him with a piece of paper and a warning, which Caesar merely laughs at. Cassius appears and lures Caesar into the arms of the Senate (meeting in the Theatre of Pompey) who fall on him stabbing him. Brutus, to whom he has shown great favour, enters last and stabs him three times. Cassius regrets the deed is over so soon, whilst Trebonius notes the irony that Pompey's killer lies dead at the feet of a statue of Pompey. Anthony

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enters, passionately demands to know how anyone could do such a deed to so great a man, and exits carrying Caesar's body and swearing revenge on his murderers.

Act 4, Prologue

Discord delights in the previous action. Brutus has done what he wanted to, but in doing so begins another round of civil war and must pay for what he has done. Once more, war begets war.

Act 4, Scene 1

Octavian mourns the death of Caesar, his uncle and adoptive father, and says that he will shortly change his mourning gear for armour. He joins the funeral cortege. The attendees speak of his greatness, whilst Anthony and Octavian turn the group to thoughts of vengeance.

Act 4, Scene 2

Cassius and Brutus have an army. Titinius arrives and tells them that the people of Rome have turned against them over Caesar's murder. Brutus stands firm saying he has no regrets for what they did. They agree to raise greater armies and meet with Anthony's troops in Thessaly, fighting over the same ground where Pompey lost to Caesar at the start of the play.

Act 4, Scene 3

Caesar's Ghost has fled the Underworld, filled with the ghosts of everyone he has slain. Wanting revenge, he acknowledges that, as a ghost, he is powerless to take it for himself. He must rely on Anthony and Octavian who are, it seems, as keen to fight one-another as they are to hunt down his murderers. Anthony calls Romans to revenge Caesar and scorns Octavian's youth. Octavian is quick to take offense. Caesar's Ghost chastises them and returns them to their proper purpose of avenging his murder. They swear to avenge him and set off to war.

Act 5, Prologue

Discord welcomes the beginning of battle and summons all the fiends of the Underworld to make this day hell on earth.

Act 5, Scene 1

Cassius, Brutus, Titinius and Cato Junior are at the head of an army. So far all have fallen before them. They have now reached Phillipi, the site of Pompey's defeat, where the armies of Anthony and Octavian have been

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spotted. Brutus has a presentiment that he will die here, and his companions are unable to cheer him up. He sends them away. Just as it becomes clear that he is feeling guilty, Caesar's Ghost appears, rails at him for his treachery and swears he will die by Anthony's sword that day. Brutus leaves the stage determined to receive his punishment and end his life on the battlefield.

Cato Junior returns to the stage wounded, makes a speech about the fickleness of fate and dies.

Cassius takes the stage and tells how the battle has gone against them. All may be lost, but he returns to the fight to die like a true Roman.

Anthony pauses on stage to shout about revenge and rejoins the fight.

Titinius enters bewailing the horror of the day. Cassius joins him. They discuss the hopelessness of their cause. Cassius suggests that the only ray of hope would be if Brutus still lived. Titinius returns to the battle to see if he can find Brutus, whilst Cassius sits and waits for his return. Distinctly down-hearted, Cassius talks himself into believing that all is lost, and stabs himself.

Titinius returns with the news that Brutus fights on like a god, only to discover Cassius' corpse. Titinius, devastated by the loss of Cassius, uses the same knife and kills himself.

Brutus appears followed closely by Caesar's Ghost. He can take it no longer, and stabs himself and dies.

Caesar's Ghost seems pleased that the murderer has murdered himself. Discord enters revelling in the huge numbers of slain she has sent to the underworld. Caesar is pleased that his revenge has been visited upon his murderer, but Discord cares only that she has caused so much suffering and drunk the blood of so many. She will return to the Underworld, whilst Caesar returns to Elysium where he can spend eternity at rest.