Julius Caesar Notes

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Act 1

Scene 1
- Tension between patricians and plebeian’s
- Treating like plebs like machines □ class conflict
- Pun on soles = accusation of morally corrupt practices, which is true □ foreshadowing
- Iambic pentameter (10 syllables/5 beats)
- Caesar has hubris = hamartia = pride

Scene 2
- Caesar was epileptic AKA not a true roman
Reasons For Killing Caesar:
1. Weakling (had to have been saved)
2. Epileptic
3. Girly
   - Predestination is not free will

Scene 3
- Supernatural events ○ animals behave strangely, fire is weird
- Pathetic fallacy
- Cassius blames Caesar for events
- Cassius and Brutus could be blamed for the events (they anger the gods)
- Brutus causes the chaos he seeks to stop

Act 2
Scene 1
- Rising action
- Brutus decides to kill Caesar
- Brutus’ ancestors are king removers/revolutionaries

1. Why does Shakespeare open Julius Caesar with comedy and such minor characters?
Shakespeare opens Julius Caesar with comedy and minor characters to engage/capture the audience’s attention and comment on the state and mindset of Rome, especially its peasants. This is seen in the quote “A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe conscience, which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles” where a peasant cleverly insults the higher class Murellus by using his trade as a pun to accuse him of corrupt business practices while still not getting in trouble. This humour and double meaning sets the scene for context between the nobles and commoners.

2. How has Shakespeare captured the fickle nature of the crowd in the opening Act?
Shakespeare has demonstrated how swayed the crowd are by victory even against someone they have once loved. This is demonstrated in the conversations between Plebeians and Patricians such as the lines, “Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?.

. O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft
Have you climbed up to walls and battlements,
To towers and windows, yea, to chimney tops,
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat
The livelong day with patient expectation
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome...
...And do you now put on your best attire?
And do you now call out a holiday?” These lines demonstrate the fickle way that the crowd reacts to victory and the pull of power. There is no demonstration of loyalty instead people follow like sheep.

3. How are the strengths and flaws of Cassius, Brutus and Caesar made evident in the opening scenes?

Caesar:
- demonstration of hubris “Forget not in your speed, Antonius, To touch Calphurnia, for our elders say, The barren, touch’d in this holy chase, Shake off their sterile curse.”
  - Way he treats peasants “He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass!”

Cassius:
● Power hungry “Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous.”
● Manipulative “Into what dangers would you lead me, Cassius, That you would have me seek into myself, For that which is not in me?

Brutus

● Self contained

4. Is Caesar’s “playing to the crowd” part of his political manoeuvring or was his refusal to take the crown genuine?

Caesar refusal to take the crown is a combination of these two things but is mainly genuine as he would not grow less resistant if it was a political move he would just accept the position.

5. What do we learn about the nature of politics through his construction of Act One?

6. 'The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars / But in ourselves, that we are underlings.' (1.2.140) - How does this dialogue capture Elizabethan values and foreshadow the pathetic fallacy of Scene Three?

Act 3

Scene 1  the killing

● Someone tries to warn Caesar
● Cassius worries of discovery
● All start sucking up to Caesar ask for brothers return home
● “Caesar does not wrong”
● All getting close to Caesar (he is encircled without knowing danger)
● Stabbing starts fights back Brutus stabs him he gives up
● “Liberty. Freedom. Tyranny is dead.”
● “there is no harm intended to your person nor no roman else.”
● They justify his death
● Audience would be horrified by “bathing in blood”
● Antony’s servant comes to ask for Antony’s safety from Brutus and the others
● “my misgivings fall shrewdly to the purpose”
● Mark Antony enters
● We will tell you why if you help us calm the public
● HE SHAKES THE BLOODY HANDS
● “either a coward or a flatterer”
● “Pardon me, Julius”
● Can we depend on you?
● Antony: I want to speak at the funeral
● Cassius: do not let Antony speak at the funeral
● Brutus: having him speak will help us…. …Antony in the speech don’t blame us just speak good of Caesar
● Aside to himself “woe the hand that shed this blood.. a curse shall light upon the likes of men” predicts war
● “Havoc… and let slip the dogs of war” screamed
● Seeing you cry makes me cry
● “here is a mourning Rome, a dangerous Rome”

Scene 2  Speeches/Orations

● Crowd is displeased and cheering/shouting/booing
● “not that I loved Caesar less, that I loved Rome more”
● “who is here so vile that will not love his country?”
● No one leave until Antony s finished speaking (crowd disagrees)
● Antony starts his speech
● “I come to bury Caesar not to praise him”
● Repetition of Brutus said he was ambitious & Brutus is an honourable man
● References refusal to take the crown
● “you all did love him once, not without cause”
● “there is not a more honourable man in Rome than Antony”
● Antony holds Caesars will
● You know you are the heirs of Caesar
● Makes a ring around Caesar, Antony comes down into the people
● Antony takes Caesars toga around
● He throws the toga to the ground
● “you and I fell down while bloody treason rained down on us”
● Uncovers Caesar’s body
● “we will be revenged”
● Soothsayer stays to stare at Caesar’s body
● Antony undoes the will and reads it
● “to every Roman Citizen he gives 75 drachma's”
● “He was a Caesar!”
● Antony aside to himself proclaims victory

Scene 3 ❅ wrong Cinna
● Citizens kill the wrong Cinna

Act 4
Scene 1
● Antony, Octavius & Lepidus: They plan to kill all the conspirators

Scene 2
● Talking between Cassius and Brutus in the eye of their armies
● Brutus is met by Lucilius who had just spent time with Cassius, he has figured out that something is wrong with Cassius. Cassius arrives where they go into Brutus’s tent to talk.

Scene 3
● Brutus and Cassius fight
● **Character ark of Brutus becoming more and more like Caesar**
● “Away, slight man”
● Brutus accuses Cassius of having personal motives towards killing Caesar instead of having the future of Rome as priority
● Brutus is also angry at Cassius for not funding the army and for accepting bribes
● Cassius feels that Brutus does not love him anymore because he is seeing and judging him for his flaws
● Brutus and Cassius reconcile & conclude they are overreacting and should stay friends for now for the benefit of Rome
● Invite in the other conspirators to talk about how Portia is dead and Antony murdered lots of senators
● The conspirators leaves Brutus to sleep, then Brutus wakes up and sees the ghost of Caesar, who says that Brutus will see him again
● Afraid, Brutus wakes all his servants, but none of them saw anything

Act 5
Scene 1
- Brutus and Cassius are part of the same army who are fighting Octavius and Antony at the planes of Philippi
- The battle represents the final stage in the struggle for power that began with the murder of Caesar
- Cassius’ “Two mighty eagles alighted on the foremost banners of their army and perched there, feeding from the soldiers’ hands”
- Brutus “must end that work the ides of March begun” “I would rather die than go to Rome as a defeated prisoner"

Scene 2
Brutus sends Messala to Cassius to report that he senses a weakness in Octavius’s army and will push forward to exploit it

Scene 3
final battle
Cassius is killed by the hands of Pindarus after finding out that Titinius has died
Moments after Cassius is killed, Titinius walks in with Messala (surprise not DEAD!) to tell cassius that they have won the battle.
Then after finding cassius is dead, Titinius kills himself too.

Scene 4
Brutus sits with his few remaining men.
He asks them to hold his sword so that he may run against it and kill himself.
He believes that the time has come for him to die.
His men urge him to flee; he demurs, telling them to begin the retreat, and that he will catch up later. He then asks one of his men to stay behind and hold the sword so that he may yet die honorably

Scene 5
Antony enters with Octavius, Messala, Lucillius, and the rest of their army.
Finding Brutus’s body, Lucillius says that he is glad that his master was not captured alive.
Octavius decides to take Brutus’s men into his own service.
Antony speaks over the body, stating that Brutus was the noblest Roman of all: while the other conspirators acted out of envy of Caesar’s power, Brutus acted for what he believed was the common good.

The Big Ideas
Checklist For Response/Essay:
- Your opinion on key ideas of the play
- Detailed textual reference (quotes from different parts of the play)
- Textual integrity (the unity of the text showing resolution of text)
- How meaning is shaped (techniques) esp. dramatic techniques (extra-dialogic instruction)
The Big Ideas of Julius Caesar

1. **Assassination as a political strategy**
   - Can assassination for political purposes ever be justified?

2. **Political Leadership**
   - What are the characteristics of an effective political leader?

3. **People and politics**
   - Democracy is fundamentally flawed as it gives too much power to the people. Discuss.

4. **Who is the tragic hero of the play?**
   - Is Caesar adequately established as a tragic hero by Shakespeare?

5. **Morality and Politics**
   - Who is ultimately responsible for Caesar’s death?

6. **Free will vs. Predetermination**
   - What does Shakespeare suggest determines our fate?

7. **Questions of authority**
   - What authority do texts have in reconstructing historical people, events and situations?

8. **Betrayal, Control + ambition, authority**

QTM’s

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Technique</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
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1.2.118
Cassius
A wretched creature and must **bend his body**
If Caesar carelessly but nod on him.

Act 1, scene 2, line 60
Cassius
Have **wished that noble Brutus had his eyes**...”

Act 1, scene 2, line 130
Cassius
he doth bestride the narrow world
Like a Colossus

1.2.210
Caesar
I rather tell thee what is to be fear’d
Than what I fear

1.3.0
Stage directions
Thunder and lightning. Enter CASCA and CICERO

4.1.1
Antony
He shall not live. Look, with a spot I damn him

4.1.200
OCTAVIUS
You may do your will, but he’s a tried and valiant soldier.

ANTONY
So is my horse,…

4.2.38
Brutus
Wrong I mine enemies? And if not so, how should I wrong a brother?"

4.3.67
Cassius
“Do not presume too much upon my love. / I may do that I shall be sorry for.” (4.3 67-68)

4.3.290
GHOST
Thy evil spirit, Brutus.

5.1.55
--
, till Caesar’s three and thirty wounds be well avenged
5.1 ???
???
This morning are they fled away and gone, and in their steads do ravens, crows, and kites

5.3.40
Cassius
Caesar, thou art revenged;
Even with the sword that killed thee.

5.3.95
Titinius
this is a Roman’s part:

5.5.17
BRUTUS
The ghost of Caesar hath appeared to me...
I know my hour is come.

5.5.50

Brutus

Caesar, now be still. I killed not thee with half so good a will

His life was gentle, and the elements so mixed in him that Nature might stand up:

- "Fight" - indicating the clear fight that is occurring between the groups
- "Low alarums" & "Alarum still" - continued sound of the battle
- "Fly, fly, fly!" - someone off stage cries run, run, run

Men at some time are masters of their fates.

Come on my right hand, for this ear is deaf:

Thunder and lightning.

kill him in the shell

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scene</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Big idea</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1.68</td>
<td>FLAVIUS These growing feathers plucked from Caesar’s wing Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,</td>
<td>Morality and Politics</td>
<td>Fat ð exess ð easier to bribe/control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 1, scene 2, line 195</td>
<td>Cassius Let me have men about me that are fat,</td>
<td>Fat ð exess ð easier to bribe/control</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act 1, scene 2, line 90</td>
<td>Brutus If it be aught toward the general good, Set honour in one eye and death i’ the other And I will look on both indifferently. For let the gods so speed me as I love The name of honor more than I fear death</td>
<td>Fate Predetermination</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.92</td>
<td>Cassius Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius.</td>
<td>Fate Predetermination</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>4.1.1</td>
<td>Antony He shall not live. Look, with a spot I damn him</td>
<td>Public VS Private</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scene</td>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Dialogue</td>
<td>Annotation</td>
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| 5.5.70 | Antony | *This was the noblest Roman of them all.*  
**All the rest** | Brutus as honourable hero |
| 1.2.82 | Brutus | *I do fear the people*  
*Choose Caesar for their king.* | Political systems |
| 1.2.30 | Brutus | *He is a dreamer. Let us leave him. Pass!* | Fate, destiny  
Caesar’s arrogance |
Using Critic’s Comments

**Why do I need to use Critics’ comments in my responses?**
- To support, refine, expand or reinforce your own PERSONAL RESPONSE

**What is meant by “perspective of others”?**
- Academic/scholarly journals, articles and papers
- Reviews and criticisms of the texts
- Literary, political, philosophical theory and theorists

In Julius Caesar you may want to use quotes that:
- Explore the big ideas
- Support insights into the authorial purpose
- The reception of the play at the time of publication and in more contemporary times

**What type of commentary quotes should I look for?**
- Support, affirm, reinforce
- Justify or defend

List of critic’s comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Quote</th>
<th>Big Idea</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ernest Schanzer</td>
<td>“the play is essentially the tragedy of Brutus.”</td>
<td>Brutus as the tragic Hero</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. Frost</td>
<td>not one but two protagonists in this play—Caesar and Brutus.</td>
<td>Tragic hero</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. Frost</td>
<td>history is made by men’s actions, not their ideals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. John</td>
<td>&quot;The main theme of Julius Caesar combines the political with the personal.&quot;</td>
<td>Public vs private personas</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. John</td>
<td>Despite the title, Brutus, not Caesar, is the hero of this play.</td>
<td>Tragic hero</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. John</td>
<td>Julius Caesar marks the advance of Shakespeare’s artistry in its use of dramatic irony.</td>
<td>Shakespeare’s techniques.</td>
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<td>K. John</td>
<td>the main theme of Julius Caesar combines the political with the personal.</td>
<td>Political/personal</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. John</td>
<td>Shakespeare… had to work his dramatic art within the restrictions of known history.</td>
<td>Elizabethan context</td>
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<tr>
<td>Author</td>
<td>Statement</td>
<td>Topic</td>
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<tr>
<td>K. Lynelle</td>
<td>&quot;The political sphere seems to have its own morals, or lack thereof, which often conflict with one’s innate sense of right or wrong.&quot;</td>
<td>Morality in politics</td>
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<td>Morality of politics</td>
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<td>Kenneth John</td>
<td>Whereas Caesar may have had too much ambition, Brutus has too little; Brutus is a man of ideals and words, and therefore he cannot succeed in the arenas of power.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth John</td>
<td>Cassius is a pure doer, a man of action, almost entirely devoid of sentiment or principle; Antonius is both a doer of deeds and a speaker of words — and therefore prevails over all in the end, following in the footsteps of his model, Caesar.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kenneth John</td>
<td>The pattern (referring to the pattern of foreshadowing) is also evident when Cinna mistakes Cassius for Metellus Cimber, foreshadowing the mistaken identity scene that ends in his own death</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Rollins</td>
<td>Mark Antony who emerges in Julius Caesar as Shakespeare’s model of the right ruler</td>
<td>Leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Rollins</td>
<td>it is ultimately the plebeians who bring about the final wave that causes the undoing of the conspirators.</td>
<td>Power of the people</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Rollins</td>
<td>Antony alone understands and successfully manipulates public opinion.</td>
<td>Power of rhetoric</td>
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<tr>
<td>L. Rollins</td>
<td>Thus Shakespeare’s hybridization of republicanism and monarchy... attempted to offer a corrective that would ensure the future success... of English imperial supremacy.</td>
<td>Elizabethan context and shakespeare's purpose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-L. Rollins</td>
<td>&quot;...Mark Antony who emerges in Julius Caesar as Shakespeare’s model of the right ruler.&quot;</td>
<td>Political leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lauren Leigh Rollins</td>
<td>“Shakespeare manipulates the characters and motives surrounding Caesar’s assassination not only to show that no man is guiltless or infallible but also to establish</td>
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### For the Prelim

**Knowledge of:**
- Characters
- Main ideas
- Important techniques
- Significance of context/values
- 10 quotes
- 5 critic’s comments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Malcom Hebron</th>
<th>“a representative republican form of government as ultimately self-defeating.”</th>
<th>Brutus as the tragic Hero</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>“the tragedy of Brutus, a great man whose rationale for political assassination leads only to personal and national disaster.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mark Van Doren</td>
<td>“The mistakes of Brutus are the mistakes of a man whose intelligence is muffled by nobility”</td>
<td>Brutus as the tragic Hero</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul Innes</td>
<td>“Julius Caesar is not in any simplistic way about Julius Caesar.”</td>
<td>Brutus as the tragic Hero</td>
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<tr>
<td>RENE GIRARD</td>
<td>Caesar is Brutus' rival because he is his model, and vice versa. The more Brutus loves Caesar, the more he hates him, and vice versa.</td>
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<tr>
<td>RENE GIRARD</td>
<td>Intense conflict and intense friendship are almost identical in Shakespeare.</td>
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<tr>
<td>S. Chidester</td>
<td>Brutus will not admit to himself that his motives are in any way personal</td>
<td>Political leadership</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wildred harstack</td>
<td>“There is no one truth in the play”</td>
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