

Act II, scenes 2-4
Julius Caesar
Modern English Transcription

Caesar: Is anyone in the world sleeping soundly tonight? Calpurnia yelled three times in her sleep, “Help! They’re killing Caesar!”
Hey! Anyone here?!

Enter the servant

Servant: Yes, sir?

Caesar: Tell the priests to kill a bird and look at its guts. They’ll be able to predict whether or not I’m safe.

Servant: Ok.

Calpurnia enters.

Calpurnia: What are you doing, Caesar? If you think you’re going to the Capitol today, you’re wrong. You are not leaving this house!

Caesar: I’m going, Calpurnia. Any threats being made about me are behind my back. Once I’m there, in person and face-to-face, nothing will be done.

Calpurnia: Caesar, I’m not one to believe in superstitions, but now I’m scared. Think about all of the horrible things that have been happening: Lions by the Capitol, graves opening up and revealing their dead, warriors fighting on clouds, blood drizzling onto the Capitol. Ghosts have been heard shrieking, Caesar! These aren’t normal—they’re supernatural! I’m scared!

Caesar: Look, if your number is up, what are you going to do? I have got to go, Calpurnia. Besides, all of the bad things happening are for the entire world, not for me.

Calpurnia: When the regular, average Joe dies, there are no weird things that happen, but when famous people, especially leaders, die, Heaven screams and catches on fire! They are signs of your own fate, Julius!

Caesar: When you’re a coward, you die many times over because you’re always fearing it. But brave men only die once. They only think about their death as it’s happening. I think it’s weird that men should fear death. It’s going to happen eventually and it happens to everyone—it’s natural. So why be scared of it?

A servant enters.

Caesar: Hey, what did the priests say?

Servant: They don't think you should go, Caesar. When they opened up the bird, they couldn't find the heart. That's a bad omen.

Caesar: This is the gods' way of shaming those who fear. I would be the one who would be heartless if I stayed at home today. No, I will not stay at home. If Danger were a man and you matched the two of us up, I would win. Danger and I would be like two lines, but I'm the oldest and strongest, so therefore, I will go to the Capitol because I'll win.

Calpurnia: You are mistaking wisdom for confidence, Caesar. I think you're being a little cocky. You are not going out today. Tell everyone it's my fault and I'm the one who's scared instead of saying it's you. Mark Antony will go to the Senate House and tell them you're not feeling well. Please, I'm on my knees begging you!

Caesar: Ok, fine. Mark Antony will say I'm sick. I'll humor you and stay at home, ok? Oh, look! Here's Decius! I'll tell him I'm not going.

Decius: Caesar! Good morning, sir! I've come to take you to the Senate House.

Caesar: You're just in time, Decius. I need you to tell the senators that I will not be coming today. Please don't tell them I can't come, or that I'm too scared to come; make sure you tell them I WILL NOT come today. It's my choice and I won't do it, ok, Decius?

Calpurnia: Tell everyone he's sick.

Caesar: That's a lie and I won't tell them that. Have I won all of those battles just to be scared to tell a bunch of old guys what's really wrong? Decius, just tell them I will not come.

Decius: Darling Caesar, please let me know why you won't come. I don't want the guys to laugh at me when I tell them.

Caesar: Just tell them that the reason is me. I'm not going, and that's all there is to it. That should be enough to satisfy everyone. But, I'll let you in on the secret and tell you why I'm not going because I like you and trust you. Calpurnia wants me to stay at home. She had a dream tonight that she saw my statue with blood spurting from it everywhere, and all of these Romans were putting their hands in it and smiling. She thinks the dream means something and is begging, on her knees, that I stay at home.

Decius: You've misinterpreted the dream! That was a GOOD dream! Your statue spouting blood means that you will revive Rome! New blood means a new leader! That's all the dream meant.

Caesar: You make a lot of sense.

Decius: You'll definitely think so once you've heard this: the Senate plans to crown you king today! If you don't come, they might change their minds! And what are they going to say? "Well, guys, I guess we'll meet another day to crown him. We'll wait till Calpurnia has a good dream so Caesar won't be scared." If you hide today, they'll think you're a chicken. Look, Caesar. I love you SO much, and because of that, I need to tell things to you as they are.

Caesar: Duh, Calpurnia! You're worrying over nothing! I'm embarrassed I even believed you. Give me my clothes, I'm going.

Enter Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Tebonius, Cinna, and Publius.

Publius: Good morning, Caesar.

Caesar: Welcome, Publius. Wow, you guys are up early. What time is it?

Brutus: It's 8:00.

Caesar: Thanks so much for being here so early.

Antony enters.

Caesar: Hey, Antony. You're up to, eh?

Antony: I came to honor you, Caesar.

Caesar: Hey, servant—make sure there's plenty of food and wine inside, ok? Now, guys, I have one hour to talk to you. Please remain by my side, ok? I need you guys.

Trebonius: Oh, I'll be right there, Caesar. *Aside*—I'll be so close to you that your best friends will wish I had been far, far away.

Caesar: Friends, let's go eat and drink, and then we'll all leave together. Ok?

Brutus (to himself): Oh God, Caesar. I am so sorry that all of us appear to be your friends but we're not at all.

Scene 3

Artemidorus: Dear Caesar, please be careful of the following men: Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus Cimber, Decius Brutus, and Caius Ligarius. Stay away from them. Don't trust them. Don't love them. They don't love you at all! They

only have one thing in mind—and it's to destroy you! You think you're safe among friends, but they're planning your downfall! God help you! Your friend, Artemidorus. Ok, I'm going to stand here until Caesar walks by, then I'll give him this. I'm so scared! If you read this, Cease, you may live! If not, the gods have been helping the traitors!

Scene 4

Portia: Lucius, go to the Senate House. Well, don't just stand there! What do you want to say?! Tell me quickly.

Lucius: Uh, it'd be helpful if you told me what I'm supposed to do there.

Portia: Oh, if only I could really tell you what to do there, but I can't. *To herself:* Please let me know squeal on my husband. I'm smart like a man, but I talk like a woman. It's so hard for women to keep secrets! Still here?

Lucius: Yeah, what do you want me to do? Just go there, nothing else? And then just come back, nothing else?

Portia: Yes, tell me what's going on. See if Brutus looks ok and what he's up to. He wasn't feeling well earlier. And make sure you know what Caesar's doing, and who's with them. Hey! What was that noise?

Lucius: What noise? I didn't hear anything.

Portia: Listen to me. I swear I heard something coming from the Capitol.

Lucius: Honestly, I heard nothing.

Soothsayer enters.

Portia: Come where. Where have you been?

Soothsayer: At my house.

Portia: What time is it?

Soothsayer: About nine.

Portia: Has Caesar left for the Capitol?

Soothsayer: No, not yet. I'm on my way to watch him pass on his way to the Capitol.

Portia: You're going to speak to him, right?

Soothsayer: Yes, if he'll listen to me, then I'll tell him what I need to say and be his friend.

Portia: Why, do you know if something's going to happen to him?

Soothsayer: I don't know anything specific, but I have a feeling something's going to happen. Good morning. This street is far too little. If we all stand here, we'll crowd him too much. I'm going to go where I can have some room and speak to him as he passes.

Portia: Oh God, how weak a heart of a woman is! Brutus, please come home to me quickly! Lucius must've heard me. Caesar will never allow Brutus to do this to him. Oh, I think I'm going to be sick. Run away, Lucius, and get me my lord! Tell him I'm happy! Come back to me and tell me what he says to you!