

Antony's Speech

This speech is an extract from the play, 'Julius Caesar' written by William Shakespeare. Julius Caesar was a Roman emperor with great political power. He was killed in a conspiracy led by Brutus. Antony, a great friend of Julius Caesar gave a rousing speech to the public on this occasion keeping the dead body before the public.

He begins his speech by saying: "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears..."



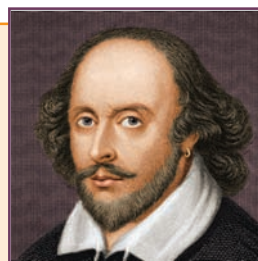
Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;
I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.
The evil that men do lives after them;
The good is oft interred with their bones;

So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus
Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:
If it were so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.
Here, under leave of Brutus and the rest--
For Brutus is an honourable man;
So are they all, all honourable men--
Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral.
He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
He hath brought many captives home to Rome
Whose ransoms did the general coffers fill:
Did this in Caesar seem ambitious?
When that the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept:
Ambition should be made of sterner stuff:
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.
You all did see that on the Lupercal
I thrice presented him a kingly crown,
Which he did thrice refuse: was this ambition?
Yet Brutus says he was ambitious;
And, sure, he is an honourable man.
I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke,
But here I am to speak what I do know.
You all did love him once, not without cause:
What cause withholds you then, to mourn for him?
O judgment! thou art fled to brutish beasts,
And men have lost their reason. Bear with me;
My heart is in the coffin there with Caesar,
And I must pause till it comes back to me.

- *William Shakespeare*

About the poet

William Shakespeare (1564 – 1616) was an English poet and playwright, widely regarded as the greatest writer and dramatist in the English language. He is often called England's national poet and the "*Bard of Avon*". His surviving works, including some collaborations, consist of about 38 plays, 154 sonnets, two long narrative poems, and several other poems. His plays have been translated into every major living language and are performed more often than those of any other playwright.



Glossary

oft (<i>adv</i>)	:	often
interred (<i>v</i>)	:	buried
hath (<i>v</i>)	:	has
grievous (<i>adj</i>)	:	very severe or serious
answer'd (<i>v</i>)	:	paid for something (to be punished for doing something bad)
under leave of (<i>phr</i>)	:	with the permission of
captives (<i>n</i>)	:	persons who have been taken prisoners or confined
ransom (<i>n</i>)	:	a sum of money demanded or paid for the release of a prisoner
general coffers (<i>n.phr</i>)	:	national treasury
sterner (<i>adj</i>)	:	cruel or unkind
the Lupercal (<i>n</i>)	:	the Lupercal feast day (a festival)
withhold (<i>v</i>)	:	suppress or restrain (an emotion or reaction)
mourn (<i>v</i>)	:	feel deep sorrow following someone's death
thou (<i>pron</i>)	:	you
art fled (<i>v</i>)	:	have run away
brutish (<i>adj</i>)	:	cruel or like an animal (Notice the pun upon Brutus's name.)
coffin (<i>n</i>)	:	a long, narrow box in which a dead body is buried or cremated
pause (<i>v</i>)	:	make a brief stop

I. Answer the following questions:

1. What elements in Antony's speech do you think make him succeed?
2. What is Mark Antony's message?