

Good Bones;
or
The Writing Workshop of
Brutus, Cassius, Casca, and Marc Antony
on the Eulogy of Julius Caesar

by

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BRUTUS

Caesar's bestie / A leader of Caesar's assassination
Very reminiscent of Kendall Roy from Succession
(must be able to do six push ups)

CASSIUS

One of the leaders of Caesar's assassination
In control, but also a bit neurotic

CASCA

The first one to stab Caesar
A little, um, off...
(must have good comedic timing)

ANTONY

A good friend of Caesar's / Political Opportunist
Good at pretending to be a cool and quirky friend
(must have experience with Shakespeare)

Time

44 B.C.

Place

Ides of March

Notes:

Though these characters are based on older Roman men, please consider people of all genders/ethnicities for these roles.

Caesar's singular line can either be a recording or said in a different voice by one of the other actors.

The Crowd's lines/sounds should be pre-recorded.

Pacing and timing is everything -- the last thing you want to do is let this drag.

AT RISE:

IDES OF MARCH, ROME

Loud, agonizing, and painful screams come from an unseen man being stabbed.

CAESAR (OFF)

Et tu, Brute? -- Then fall, Caesar!

Unseen, we hear CAESAR's body thud.

CASSIUS (OFF)

Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead!

CASCA (OFF)

Run hence, proclaim, cry it about the streets!

BRUTUS, filled with a million conflicting emotions, enters and begins pacing, completely lost in thought.

CASSIUS (OFF)

Go to the pulpit, Brutus!

BRUTUS

Yeah, just give me a sec!

CASCA (carrying a knife) bounces in -- absolutley fired up, followed by a cool, confident CASSIUS.

CASCA
WOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO
Knife drop!

CASSIUS
Mission accomplished.

CASCA drops his knife "mic drop" style.

CASSIUS

And it was all thanks to dear old Brutus. Choosing his country over his best friend -- some real badass shit, man.

CASCA

I was the first stab, you see that? He was all like “Brutus, you gonna kneel before me, bro?” And I was like “Not today, *bitch*.” Did some sweet moves I learned from my gladiator training. BOOM -- LEFT HOOK. BAM -- RIGHT HOOK. HA-CHA -- KNIFE STAB. . I gott’em right in the stomach. You see me do that, Brutus?

BRUTUS

(in a daze)

I just killed Caesar.

CASSIUS

I mean, it was a group effort -- but now’s not the time for semantics. There is a large crowd out there who just witnessed their leader get stabbed to death and are waiting to hear what’s to come of it. And being the ones who did the said stabbing, I think, maybe, it might be beneficial to, you know, control the narrative on this one.

BRUTUS

You want us to, what, give a speech, or --

CASSIUS

Something like that. A final **resolution** to this dictatorship. Something to calm the crowd, put their mind at ease, you know? The last thing we want right now is a riot on our hands.

MARC ANTONY saunters in.

BRUTUS

But what do I -- what do I even say // to try to connect --

CASSIUS

Marc, my man!

CASCA

ANTONY! What up, what up?

ANTONY

Hey pals. What’s the haps? What’s going on?

BRUTUS

We just killed Caesar

CASCA

Nothing much. Oh RIGHT, we did just kill Caesar, I knew I was forgetting something.

ANTONY

You guys didn’t actually... Oh my god, you went through with it. You killed Caesar.

CASCA

(cheerily)

It was SO bloody!!

ANTONY

So, not to put the chariot before the horse, so to speak, but, I'm assuming the next step is finding a new leader? Someone, of course, with Rome's best interest at heart. Maybe who has served Caesar, since they'd already know the ropes. Military trained. Strong ties with people such as, psssh, I don't know, Cleopatra, maybe. Wait a second, crazy random happenstance, I just happen to know someone --

BRUTUS

No, we need a republican system of government -- the people should rule! Ooo that should go in the speech.

CASSIUS

(to ANTONY)

We're trying to brainstorm a eulogy --

-- to calm the common people --

-- after the death of Caesar

CASCA

(to ANTONY)

Death speech.

Angry mob

Guy we killed

ANTONY

Did we already decide who's doing the speech? Because, theoretically, they would be a "substitute leader" of sorts, yes? A face the people would remember soothed them in a time of crisis.

BRUTUS

Uh, I guess so?

ANTONY

We need to find a strong speaker for this or it will -- All. Fall. Apart.

A beat as BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA think.

ANTONY

(fast, sotto, to himself)

Red Leather, Yellow Leather, Red Leather, Yellow Leather --

The three share a look.

CASSIUS

Antony, would you like to give the --

ANTONY

What, who? Me? I mean, psshh, I mean. I guess if no one else -- No? No? No? Okay, I guess I'll do it!

CASSIUS

We just need someone out there and soon, because that crowd's about to snap any second. Let's start with -- opening line, something attention grabbing.

CASCA

Attention grabbing, you say... How about we start off with something along the lines of -- "PAY ATTENTION TO ME. PAY ATTENTION TO ME. I'VE GOT SOMETHING TO SAY AND YOU'RE ALLLL GONNA WANNA HEAR WHAT'S GONNA COME WIGGLING OUT OF MY MOUTH."

ANTONY

Alright. Um, small note, how about something more like -- "Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears."

CASSIUS

Okay, opening done. Let's move on. What's the jist? What's the message?

BRUTUS

That we have rid ourselves of a tyrant and they just need to trust us or they'll just fall in line under the next dictator who makes them false promises.

ANTONY

Yes, totally totally totally -- because praising Caesar and getting the people riled up would be *bad* for our totally joint plan.

CASSIUS

So, uh, you know, start with the fact that we are here to, I don't know, like bury Caesar, not... to... praise him. Right?

CASCA

Mention that he's dead.

BRUTUS

Casca, they know he's dead. He's laying dead just right over there. They can all see him.

CASCA

Mention his bones. He's got good bones.

CASSIUS

What? Why are we talking about his bones? Can we get back on subject, please?

ANTONY

I get it -- it's showing that there was some good to him. Acknowledging his good parts and proving that this wasn't a crime of passion, but rather a tactical political move.

BRUTUS

I guess that couldn't hurt?

CASCA

(to CASSIUS)

I don't understand what he's saying, but has a strong jawline so I trust him.

ANTONY

So let's change gears a bit. Gain credibility. Good things about Caesar. Brainstorm. We're blue skying it -- no wrong answers -- all ideas are valid.

CASCA

Amazing lover!

ANTONY

All ideas except for Casca's -- Brutus.

BRUTUS

Um, he was ambitious. Too ambitious, really. Which is more of a criticism, but --

ANTONY

Yes, yes ambitious. We can work with that. Let's keep going. He was a pretty humble, right? I tried to give him a crown a couple times and he refused to wear it.

CASCA

Nah, he just didn't want to wear it because people would recognize how big his head is. Like, metaphorically it's pretty big, don't get me wrong. But physically that thing is like Acrocorinthus.

CASSIUS

What's that?

CASCA

Sisyphus's Boulder.

CASSIUS

Isn't that Greek?

CASCA

What are we?

BRUTUS

Shouldn't we be listing bad things about Caesar? To remind the people that, even though they loved him, he was a tyrant.

CASSIUS

And make sure to mention Brutus. As someone who will lead this new government, painting him in an admirable light is essential.

CASCA

Tell them he can do six pushups!

BRUTUS

What?

CASSIUS

Can you do six pushups?

BRUTUS

Why does that matter?

CASCA

Caesar could do five. Shows you're stronger than him.

BRUTUS

Alright, sure. Say I can do six push-ups.

CASSIUS

Well, we don't want to start off this new era with a lie.

BRUTUS

I can do six push-ups.

CASSIUS, CASCA, and ANTONY share an unsure look. BRUTUS huffs and starts doing push-ups.

CASSIUS

Alright, broad strokes. This is the conclusion of Caesar's reign. He was a man who may have had his good points, but served a position that hurt Rome as a whole. We want to be governed by a republic, led by Brutus an honorable man --

BRUTUS

(out of breath)

Who can do six push ups!

CASCA

Five and a half.

CASSIUS

And will lead Rome to success. Just guide the crowd to accept change and keep the them calm.

Sounds of crowd start getting louder -- things such as, "What will we do?", "We need a leader", and "Man, what a stab in the back."

ANTONY

Alright, that's my cue.

CASCA

Wait -- should we let Marc Antony speak? Although he relayed to us that he approved of our insurrection against Caesar, never did he aid in the cause in recruitment process nor in the physical assassination of our former leader. A reminder that hitherto he could be characterized as one driven by his own political gains rather than Rome's collective prosperity. Can he be a trusted figurehead for this revolution?

A pause.

CASSIUS

You wanna do it?

CASCA

Nope. Break a leg!

ANTONY exits.

BRUTUS

This is it. Our reign is about to begin. We are about to lead the people into a new Golden Age.

ANTONY (OFF)

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears!

CASSIUS, BRUTUS, and CASCA, run to listen in.

ANTONY (OFF)

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.

CASSIUS

Off to a good start.

ANTONY (OFF)

The evil that men o lives after them; the good is oft interred with their bones.

CASCA

Good he mentioned the bones. That'll really reel them in.

ANTONY (OFF)

So let it be with Caesar. The noble Brutus hath told you Caesar was ambitious. For Brutus is an honorable man.

CASSIUS

That's nice.

BRUTUS

(shouting)

AND CAN DO SIX PUSH-UPS

CASCA

Five and a half.

ANTONY (OFF)

Come I to speak in Caesar's funeral. He was my friend, faithful and just to me.

CASSIUS

Um, that's a little strong on the pro-Caesar side.

BRUTUS

He's gonna bring it around. He's gonna do the fake out thing. Build 'em up to knock 'em down. Just watch.

ANTONY (OFF)

When the poor have cried, Caesar hath wept.

CASCA

That's funny, it sounds like he's saying Caesar cared about his people. Is it opposite day?

CASSIUS

(scared)

No, it's not.

CASCA

(to BRUTUS)

That means it is.

BRUTUS

He's going off script.

ANTONY (OFF)

I speak not to disprove what Brutus spoke, // but here I am to speak what I do know.

CASSIUS

Should we do something?

BRUTUS

What can we do?

CASCA

I can stab him!

CASSIUS

No!

BRUTUS

No!

ANTONY (OFF)

You all did love him once, not without cause. What cause withholds you then to mourn for him?

CASSIUS

I told you guys we should've killed him along with Caesar!

BRUTUS

But he seemed like such a cool dude! Was this his plan the whole time?

CASCA

I mean he was acting pretty fishy earlier. And him and Caesar were like
D.A.W.T.B.F.F.W.N.J.C.A.O.S.O.A.I.T.B.s

(a pause -- confusion on the face of the others)

Dictator and Advisor Who are Totally Best Friends Forever and Would Never Join a
Coup Against the Other or Stab One Another in the Back.

(to BRUTUS)

No offense.

ANTONY (OFF)

O judgement, thou art fled to brutish beasts, and men have lost their reason!

BRUTUS

We've lost our reason!? He's inciting a riot!

ANTONY (OFF)

But were I Brutus, an Antony there were an Antony would ruffle up your spirits,
and put a tongue in every wound of Caesar that should move the stones of Rome to rise
and mutiny.

A pause.

CASCA

Hey -- maybe the crowd didn't buy it.

CROWD (OFF)

(cheering)

We'll mutiny!

CASCA

Well, we tried our best.

Sounds of an angry mob start coming their way.

BRUTUS

My comrades, if this is the last time we speak, thank you for risking your life for not what Rome is, but what it could be.

CASCA

(giving BRUTUS an uncomfortable high-five)

No prob, Bob!

CASSIUS

Battle positions! We charge on my signal!

CASSIUS, CASCA, and BRUTUS all put their backs to each other with their hands out ready to fight.

CASCA

We can fight 'em off! We're strong, right? Hey -- Brutus can do six push ups!

Sounds of the angry mob get louder and louder.

BRUTUS

Five and a half.

CASSIUS signals with his hand and they all run off screaming into battle.

END OF PLAY.