

JULIUS CAESAR
READING COMPREHENSION
ACT 2
YEAR 3 AND 4

So much has happened already and there is so much more to follow. As we start act two, we find Brutus in his house. The storm is over and Brutus has found all the letters that were thrown through his window in the night. Do you think he's been convinced that Caesar should be dealt with? Let's find out....

"It must be by his death. He would be crowned
How that might change his nature, there's the question
Therefore think him as the serpent's egg
Which, hatched, would grow mischievous
And kill him in the shell."

It sounds like Brutus has almost made up his mind! This is all just as Cassius planned. Maybe Brutus needs a final push to get him over the edge.....

1. Where is Brutus?

2. Brutus talks about Julius Caesar and says

*"It must be by his death. He would be crowned
How that might change his nature, there's the question
Therefore think him as the serpent's egg
Which, hatched, would grow mischievous
And kill him in the shell."*

A. What is Brutus worried will happen if Caesar is crowned and becomes a King? Tick one box

- His nature would change He would become too rich
He would become too selfish He wouldn't want to be Brutus' friend

B. What does Brutus compare Caesar to?

There was a knock on the door! There stood Cassius surrounded by men in hoods.

“Good morrow Brutus, do we trouble you?” said Cassius

“I have been up this hour, awake all night,” said Brutus, who did look very tired.

“Do I know these men?”

One by one Cassius named the men. We would call them “conspirators” now. They are people who are part of a “conspiracy” which is a secret plan. Decius Brutus, Casca, Cinna and Metellus Cimber. These are the men that Cassius has brought with him, these are the men that are prepared to do harm to Caesar.

Decius said, “Shall no man be touched apart from Caesar?”

They had to decide whether anyone else would be “got rid of”. This was a chance for Cassius to get rid of the person he thought was most dangerous to his plans, he didn’t waste a moment...

“I think Mark Antony should **not** outlive Caesar,” he said quickly, seizing his opportunity

But Brutus wasn’t up for that, “Let’s be sacrificers but not butchers” he shouted at Cassius

“Yet I fear him for the love he bears to Caesar,” argued Cassius, trying to cover his tracks.

“Let Mark Antony not die.” It was decided. All of them were worried that because Caesar was superstitious and because there had been a huge storm the night before, that Caesar wouldn’t go to the senate because it might have made him scared and suspicious. Caesar had to go to the senate today so that they could kill him before anyone found out about their plan.

Decius and Metellus thought it would be best if they went to Caesar’s house to make sure he left for the senate as normal. The plan was set.

3. Write down two people who are part of Cassius’ conspiracy to harm Julius Caesar

i. _____

ii. _____

4. What is “a conspiracy?”

5. Re-read from *They had to decide whether anyone else would be “got rid of”....*

Who else does Cassius want to ‘get rid of’?

6. . Why were all the conspirators worried? Tick one box

Julius Caesar is superstitious and won’t go to the senate because of the big storm last night.

Julius Caesar is suspicious of them.

Someone has told Julius Caesar they plan to harm him.

Julius Caesar is ill.

7. Who is going to make sure Caesar goes to the senate as normal?

All of the conspirators left Brutus’s house. He was deep in thought, worrying if he was doing the right thing, when his wife Portia came into the room.

Portia asked him what was going on? He’d been up all night, wandering around and muttering. Brutus told her that he wasn’t very well, that was all, but she knew he was hiding something

“Here there have been six or seven men that did hide their faces,” she said to him.

She reminded him that she was his wife and deserved to know what was happening. Brutus wanted to tell her, but such a terrible secret must be

kept, well, secret. He told her that she should go back to bed and that he'd tell her later.

9. What is the name of Brutus' wife?

10. Why did Brutus' wife know something was going on?

Tick 2 boxes

Brutus had been up all night

Brutus had gone red in the face

Her friend had called her and told her

A group of men, hiding their faces had been at the house

11. Did Brutus tell his wife what was going on

YES NO

Explain your answer with reference to the text

It was March 15th, *The Ides of March*, the day the soothsayer had warned Caesar about.

Julius Caesar had just been through the worst night's sleep ever. His wife Calpurnia had been tossing and turning and mumbling and shouting in her sleep. He could only catch the occasional thing she was saying, something that sounded like "Help, ho, they murder Caesar." Honestly, last night of all nights - the night before he might be offered the crown once and for all. Although he was tired, he was excited for the day ahead of him. He was just about to leave for the senate when Calpurnia burst into the room.

“You shall not stir out of the house today” she said to him. Ha! Not leave the house? Well, he was going to show her...
“Caesar shall forth”.

Caesar was determined to go, but Calpurnia (who didn't really get superstitious) was suddenly very frightened of the dreams she'd been having. She'd decided that they were bad omens, and that her husband should not go out today.

Caesar said that bad dreams should be afraid of *him* and that he was more dangerous than danger. They argued for a while, but in the end he said he'd stay at home with her if it made her feel better.

12. Why was 15th March a significant day for Julius Caesar?

13. Why had Julius Caesar had such a bad night's sleep?

14. What is Julius Caesar's wife's name? Tick one box

Julia Calpurnia

15. Using a direct quote from the text what did Julius Caesar think he heard his wife say?

16. Why did Caesar's wife want him to stay at home and not go to the senate?

17. Did Calpurnia persuade Caesar to stay at home?

YES NO

Use a quote from the text to justify your answer

JULIUS CAESAR
READING COMPREHENSION
ACT 2
YEAR 3 AND 4

ANSWERS

1. Where is Brutus?

At home

2.

A. What is Brutus worried will happen if Caesar is crowned and becomes a King? Tick one box

His nature would change

B. What does Brutus compare Caesar to?

A serpents egg

3. Write down two people who are part of Cassius' conspiracy to harm Julius Caesar

i. Casca ii. Cinna

4. What is "a conspiracy?"

"a secret plan"

5. Re-read from *They had to decide whether anyone else would be "got rid of"....*

Who else does Cassius want to 'get rid of'?

Mark Antony

6.. Why were all the conspirators worried? Tick one box

Julius Caesar is superstitious and won't go to the senate because of the big storm last night.

7. Who is going to make sure Caesar goes to the senate as normal?

Decius and Metellus

8. What is the name of Brutus' wife?

Portia

9. Why did Brutus' wife know something was going on?

Tick 2 boxes

Brutus had been up all night

A group of men, hiding their faces had been at the house

10. Did Brutus tell his wife what was going on

NO

Explain your answer with reference to the text

Brutus wanted to tell his wife but he knew what they were planning on doing was so awful he couldn't.

"such a terrible secret must be kept, well, secret".

11. Why was 15th March a significant day for Julius Caesar?

The day the soothsayer had told him to beware of...

12. Why had Julius Caesar had such a bad night's sleep?

Because his wife had been tossing and turning all night and calling out in her sleep.

13. What is Julius Caesar's wife's name? Tick one box

Calpurnia

14. Using a direct quote from the text what did Julius Caesar think he heard his wife say?

"Help, ho, they murder Caesar."

15. Why did Caesar's wife want him to stay at home and not go to the senate?

She was frightened of the dreams she'd been having. She'd decided that they were bad omens and that her husband should not go out today.

16. Did Calpurnia persuade Caesar to stay at home?

NO

Use a quote from the text to justify your answer

"They argued for a while, but in the end he said he'd stay at home with her if it made her feel better."