

Julius Caesar

William Shakespeare

This extract is from Shakespeare's play Julius Caesar. Julius Caesar has just been stabbed by a group of very important men – including Brutus, who he thought was his friend – and has just been called a traitor. They said that he was too ambitious and wanted to be king. His real friend, Marc Antony, cannot say that Caesar was a good man or he would be called a traitor too, but he makes this speech at Caesar's funeral.

- 1 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.

- 9 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.

- 13 He was my friend, faithful and just to me:
But Brutus says he was ambitious;
And Brutus is an honourable man.

- 16 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.

- 21 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?

- 25 O judgement! 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 come back to me.