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10. Read the extracts given below and answer the questions that follow:

1. Cowards die many times before their deaths;
The valiant never taste of death but once.
Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
It seems to me most strange that men should fear;
Seeing that death, a necessary end,
Will come when it will come.

- (a) Whom is Caesar speaking to? Why does he say these words?
- (b) What fears has the listener expressed?
- (c) What is the basis for the fears expressed?

Answer:

- (a) Caesar is speaking to his wife Calpurnia. He speaks these words in response to Calpurnia's pleadings that he should not go out of the house as his life might be in danger.
- (b) Calpurnia has expressed a fear that the ominous signs during the night might mean that Caesar's life is in danger.
- (c) The bases of her fears are the unearthly events during the previous night and the strange dream which she had.

2. But here's a parchment with the seal of Cesar;
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament—
Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read—
And they would go and kiss dead Cesar's wounds

- (a) Who speaks these words? Where is the speaker at this moment?
- (b) What are the contents of Caesar's will that he is referring to?
- (c) Why does the speaker read Caesar's will to the citizens?
- (d) What is the reaction of the listeners to the reading of the will?

Answer:

- (a) Mark Antony speaks these words. He is in the market place pulpit.
- (b) Caesar has given seventy-five drachmas to every Roman. He has left all his walks, orchards on the side of the Tiber to the common men.
- (c) The speaker reads Caesar's will to the audience to play on their sympathy, and to make Caesar look like a great, benevolent ruler.
- (d) The listeners are convinced that Caesar was not ambitious. he was wrongly killed. After listening the will, they get incited and rush for the conspirators.

12. Questions for Further Study:

- (a) Why was the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar hatched?

Answer:

The conspiracy to assassinate Caesar was hatched to prevent him from being crowned the king of Rome. Brutus and Cassius had a grudge against Caesar and they wished to have the power in their hands rather than with Caesar.

- (b) Was Caesar really ambitious? Find evidence from the play to support your answer.

Answer:

Caesar was not ambitious at all. He brought many glories and victories to Rome and Romans. He was kind and sympathetic

person. He refused the crown thrice. Caesar was very compassionate. He understood the plight of the poor. He promised seventy-five drachmas to every Roman.

(c) What was Cassius' motive for murdering Julius Caesar?

Answer:

Cassius was jealous of Caesar's growing power and influence. In fact he didn't wish to see him as the great conqueror of the world. He didn't want that Caesar should rule the Romans and that is why he wished to murder him.

(d) Why was it essential for the conspirators to include Brutus in the conspiracy?

Answer:

It was essential for the conspirators to give a stamp of legitimacy of their cause of murdering Caesar. Brutus was a man of noble ideas. Also he was very close to Caesar. But he fell to the dirty tricks of the conspirators to join them to kill Caesar.

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(e) What were the mistakes made by Brutus that led to the failure of the conspiracy?

Answer:

Brutus allowed Antony to give Caesar a suitable funeral after giving a speech to the people at the Capitol. Second, his utter simplicity and belief in Antony. Third, leaving Antony alone with Caesar's dead body and mob. Fourth, his not heeding Cassius's fears in allowing Antony to speak to the people.

(f) Comment on Caesar's friendship with Antony.

Answer:

Antony was a dear friend of Caesar. He did not agree with Brutus that Caesar was an ambitious person who wanted to rule over Rome. In fact he was ready to lay down his life for Rome. After Brutus' speech at Caesar's funeral, Antony delivers an emotional speech. He tells the mob that Caesar was not at all ambitious. He refused the crown three times. He said that Caesar had left 75 drachmas for every Roman. Antony appealed to the sentiments of the mob and even showed the wounded corpse of Caesar. The mob was so influenced by Antony's speech that they turned against the conspirators. Thus Antony showed his affection and respect for Caesar.

(g) Write a brief character sketch of Antony.

Answer:

Antony is a noble personality. He has all the human virtues of love, sympathy, sincerity, integrity, solidarity, devotion etc. He is also a great orator and craftsman. He is extremely devoted to Caesar. He wishes that Caesar should be crowned the king. A clever man, Antony, is successful in fooling Brutus into believing that he is with the conspirators after the death of Caesar. He delivers an influential speech which makes the mob realize conspiracy behind Caesar's murder. He has genuine love and affection for Caesar and wishes to avenge his death. It is because of his speech, the conspirators are crushed.

(h) What is the role of Julius Caesar's ghost in the play, Julius Caesar?

Answer:

The ghost of Julius Caesar appears twice in the play: once before Brutus when he is sleeping in his tent, it stood by his bed side and said nothing. The second time it appears in a battle at Philippi. The ghost appeared in front of Antonius and Octavius. It did not say anything. The purpose of the ghost was to make Brutus realize his mistake. He was carried away by emotions and joined hands with

the conspirators. Caesar's death led to turmoil and unrest in Rome. Brutus is unhappy seeing all this and kills himself with his own sword.

(i) Why does Antony call Brutus 'the noblest Roman of them all'?

Answer:

Antony's comment that Brutus is 'the noblest Roman of them all' is laced with sarcasm. Actually he wishes to tell the public that Caesar was not at all ambitious as pointed by Brutus but he does not say this immediately rather he cites instances and instigates audience slowly and logically. Antony is a great orator. He first calls Brutus the noblest Roman in order to gain attention and sympathy of the public. Slowly he tells the public that it was not Caesar's ambition but Brutus' personal grudge against Caesar that made him kill Caesar. Thus he is able to avenge his friends' death as the mob after hearing Antony's speech turns against the conspirators.

(j) How do Brutus and Cassius meet their end?

Answer:

Brutus wants that their forces should move to Philippi and attack the enemy. Cassius does not agree and leaves alone. On the plains of Philippi, Brutus and Cassius reach with their forces where there are the armies of Octavius and Antony. With the interference of Octavius their wrong doing comes to an end. Then the forces of Cassius and Antony fight in which Antony emerges victorious. Cassius could not accept this defeat and commits suicide. Brutus too is disheartened and kills himself with his own sword.

13. A reporter covers the event of the assassination of Julius Caesar in the senate giving graphic details and a catchy headline. Write the newspaper report in about 200 words.

Answer:

Caesar Slandered

Today was a dark day in the history of Rome. A great son of soil, Julius Caesar, was assassinated in broad daylight. He was supposed to be crowned the king of Rome but unfortunately it was not meant to be.

Caesar came to Capitol to be crowned the king. At the Capitol, Cimber, bent in front of Caesar and pleads for his brother. Caesar had banished Cimber's brother. Brutus and Cassius also plead on behalf of Cimber. But Caesar does not relent. He is firm about decision about Cimber's brother. At this point the conspirators started to stab him. Caesar's great friend, Brutus also joins the others in stabbing Caesar. Caesar is shocked to see this and utters "You too, Brutus". After the stabbing the conspirators shouted slogans of 'Liberty, freedom and enfranchisement'.

It is believed that Calpurnia, Caesar's wife had a premonition about Caesar's death. She didn't want him to step out of the house that day. But Caesar was very keen to go to Capitol today.

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