

STAGING CHALLENGES

Controlling the Chaos: Crowds and Audiences

Several scenes in *Julius Caesar* involve the crowd. The reactions of the common people are of chief importance to the conspirators and to their enemies. The first scene of the play shows two tribunes berating several commoners for making a holiday out of Caesar's triumph, and in the second scene, Brutus relates his fears that the people "choose Caesar for their king." Casca then comes in and relates the story of Mark Antony offering Caesar a crown three times, which he denied each time, to the crowd's great delight. Later on, Brutus and Cassius worry about how the people of Rome will react to their assassination of Caesar, and Brutus and Antony then vie for the mob's favor. When Antony incites them to violence, the audience sees their power: brutal, bloody, and unreasonable. The senators of Rome don't just have to contend with each other; they must also manipulate the fickle temper of the mob if they wish to succeed. Shakespeare shows several different methods of mob management through several characters' attempts.

These scenes also play on the thin line separating the in-theatre audience from the on-stage audience. Shakespeare's cast would likely have had, at most, five or six people to represent the population of Rome; his actors, then, would have made use of the 3,000 people standing in the pit and seated in the tiers at the Globe to flesh out the idea of a massive throng. Characters cast the audience throughout *Julius Caesar*, making the audience complicit in the goings-on of the play.

Activity #1: "Hence, home, you idle creatures"

The play opens with two tribunes (government officials) coming on stage and telling everyone to go home. The tribunes' complaints that the citizens of Rome are idle and wasting their time would have a double meaning, as Shakespeare's original audience would have been, themselves, skipping work in the middle of the afternoon to go see a play.

This activity is a prime opportunity to put the lessons from *Asides and Audience Contact* (page 83) into practice. Your students will determine which lines Flavius and Murellus should deliver to the Commoners on-stage, and which they should take to the audience.

- Give your students **Handout #9**: 1.1 of *Julius Caesar*.
- Stage the scene. Use the *Teacher's Guide* (page 136) to help redirect your students. As this scene comes from your *First 100 Lines*, you may also find the *Teacher's Guide in Asides and Audience Contact* helpful.
- Consider that, as this moment opens the play, Shakespeare's original audience would likely not have been behaving the same way that audiences today do while waiting for a play to start. They would have been talking, buying and eating food, jostling for space in the pit, and otherwise not paying strict attention to what's happening on the stage.
 - Instruct your "audience" students, those still in their seats, to talk amongst themselves while Flavius and Murellus enter.
 - You may wish to divide your class up into groups: Have one group repeat "rhubarb, rhubarb, rhubarb" until Flavius and Murellus quiet them, another group say "banana, banana, banana" and another group say "watermelon, watermelon, watermelon."
 - You may also wish to have your Commoners engage the audience in ad-libbed conversation.
 - How long does it take Flavius and Murellus to get the audience's attention?
 - Can speaking directly to the audience help speed this along?
- Consider the possibilities presented by having two characters on stage (Flavius and Murellus) who seem to serve the same dramatic function.

- How can you differentiate them?
- Can Flavius be hustling or shaming the in-theatre audience while Murellus berates the Commoners, or visa versa?
- Go through the scene and assign specific moments when one tribune will focus on the Commoners while the other focuses on the in-theatre audience. Stage the scene again with these notes in mind.
- What benefits does the tag-team approach give the actors? (Gives non-speaking character something to do, visually interesting, draws in audience simultaneously with on-stage focus, etc)
- What possible drawbacks are there? (Possibility of upstaging, splitting audience focus, distracting from the language, etc)
- Discuss:
 - How does Shakespeare play on the similarities between the on-stage and the in-theatre audience?

Activity #2: "Friends, Romans, countrymen"

In 3.2, after Brutus leaves the scene, Antony remains on stage with Caesar's corpse and an antagonistic mob.

In this activity, your students will explore the effect of using cue scripts in large, group scenes, as well as continuing to examine the relationship between the on-stage and off-stage audience.

Note that this is a long scene – about 10 minutes. You may wish to cut it for your students to stage, but that may lose some of the dramatic impact of Antony having to hold the plebeians' attention for so long. Alternatively, you may wish to discuss Antony's tactics, but only stage the last few lines of each monologue with the plebeians' exclamations.

- Review the analysis from **Rhetoric: The Language of Persuasion** (page 115).
- Staging 1:
 - Assign a Brutus, an Antony, and four Plebeians.
 - Antony has a lot of speaking to do; if you do not have a student willing to take that on, you may wish to switch out the role periodically.
 - You can choose to cast a student as Caesar's corpse, but a bundled-up coat or blanket will do just as well (and may ultimately be easier, since the Plebeians have to carry Caesar off-stage at the end).
 - Explain the use of cue scripts (see **Production Choices**, page 180).
 - You may also wish to discuss the potential cutting of long speeches in such a way that leaves the cue words, at the end of the speech, intact.
 - Give Brutus and Antony their cue scripts (**Handouts #8A-8B**), which will remain the same through both stagings. Give your Plebeians Set 1 (**Handouts #8C-F**).
 - Stage the scene.
 - Use the Teacher's Guide (page 156) to help direct your students through their staging.
 - It will probably not take your Plebeians long to realize that they occasionally speak in unison. Encourage them to embrace that, to speak in as unified a manner as possible.
 - Discuss:
 - How did your students feel using the cue scripts?
 - How did your Plebeians feel about their unison lines?
 - The Plebeians may be nameless entities, but can your students identify any distinct personalities among them? How could those clues translate to acting or costuming choices?
 - How does Antony manipulate the crowd?
 - How many opportunities did your students find to bring the audience in or to cast the audience?

- How did your audience-member students feel about being complicit in the mob's changing moods?
- Staging 2:
 - The frequent indications of ongoing noise suggest that lines may have overlapped and that not everyone would necessarily have spoken in perfect unison.
 - Alan Dessen and Leslie Thomson, co-authors of *A Dictionary of Stage Directions in English Drama, 1580-1642*, share these comments about the Plebeians' lines and cues in 3.2:
 - Thomson: "Given the nature of the repertory system and little rehearsal, I'd say that it certainly wasn't in unison, but that the 'All' all knew their cue and spoke the word or lines when they heard the cue. It was probably different each time they performed the play. I doubt anything ever happened "in perfect unison" or its equivalent. Again, the repertory system would have made that impossible; indeed, very likely no one even considered it as an ideal. In the case of *Julius Caesar*, a crowd speaking raggedly would have been more "realistic" too."
 - Dessen: "'All'" can be viewed as an open or permissive speech prefix, comparable to an entrance with A, B, and C 'and all the rest' or 'and as many as may be.' We don't know how many bodies constituted a crowd scene in *Julius Caesar* or *Coriolanus*, and likely the author of such an 'all' (there are some interesting ones in *Titus Andronicus*, 5.3) may also not have known how many would be available. Speaking precisely in unison is unlikely. What's difficult in today's productions is making any individual voices audible."
 - Switch your Plebeians' cue scripts out for Set 2 (**Handouts #8G-J**). This set has somewhat altered cues. These adapted cue scripts will produce staggered cues – something that Shakespeare's actors may have been able to work out on their own.
 - You will also need 3 more actors on the stage. These actors represent the "hired men" who companies may have added to the regular cast in order to fill out large group scenes like this one.
 - Your "hired men" also have cue scripts (**Handouts #8K-M**), though these are not like ones that early modern actors would have used. These are instead intended to help your students emulate the idea of extemporaneous speech. Their only lines are "rhubarb," "banana," and "watermelon." Instruct your hired men not to deliver these "lines" at full volume, but rather as background conversation, with each other or with audience members. There are also some calls for angry shouts, once they get to the rioting portion of the scene.
 - Their scripts also indicate where they should stop speaking – another device that would not have been used in an early modern theatre (as if the actors were speaking extemporaneously, they would have decided themselves when to stop), but which will help things run more smoothly in your classroom.
 - Instruct your Plebeians to look for moments when they might be able to get the audience chanting, such as "The will, the will! We will hear Caesar's will!"
 - If this is successful, what additional challenge does that pose for the actor playing Antony?
 - What benefit is there to drawing the audience in to the Plebeians' excitement?
 - Your Antony will now start hearing some of his cues at different times, as the Plebeians and hired men stagger their lines rather than saying them in unison.
 - Instruct your student actor to begin trying to speak the first time she hears the cue. This will give the effect of Antony having to work to get their attention or to quiet them down.
 - You do not need to restage the entire scene (though you certainly can if you wish and have the time). Choose a few sections of the text to revisit with the new cue sets.
 - Suggestions: Lines 57-71, 127-138, 146-164, 190-201, 217-250
 - What are the arguments for and against staging the scene this way?
 - For: Less ridiculous, more realistic, greater sense of urgency and mayhem.
 - Against: More chaotic, harder to hear cues, not precisely as in text.

TEACHER'S GUIDE

Staging Challenges – Crowds & Audiences

Activity #2 – *Julius Caesar*, 3.2

BRUTUS

Good countrymen, let me depart alone,

And, for my sake, stay here with Antony:

Do grace to Caesar's corpse, and grace his speech

Tending to Caesar's glories; which Mark Antony,

By our permission, is allow'd to make.

I do entreat you, not a man depart,

Save I alone, till Antony have spoke.

Exit

FIRST PLEBEIAN

Stay, ho, and let us hear Mark Antony.

THIRD PLEBEIAN

Let him go up into the public chair;

We'll hear him. Noble Antony, go up.

ANTONY

For Brutus' sake, I am beholding to you.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

What does he say of Brutus?



The Third Plebeian may try to speak here, as the cue for her first line is "Mark Antony."

55



What makes this necessary? Does anyone try to leave?



Antony, who came in with Caesar's body during Brutus's speech, needs to go "up" to the public chair – probably into the balcony. Note how the Plebeians' lines give him the time to do that.

60



Why doesn't the Fourth Plebeian hear Antony's answer himself?

THIRD PLEBEIAN

He says, for Brutus' sake,

He finds himself beholding to us all.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

'Twere best he speak no harm of Brutus here.



This exchange indicates that the Fourth and Third Plebeian are probably near each other on the stage. Where are the other two?

65

FIRST PLEBEIAN

This Caesar was a tyrant.

THIRD PLEBEIAN

Nay, that's certain:

We are blest that Rome is rid of him.



The Third Plebeian can hear the First Plebeian – are they close together, or is the First Plebeian shouting?

SECOND PLEBEIAN

Peace, let us hear what Antony can say.

ANTONY

You gentle Romans,--

ALL

Peace, ho, let us hear him.



Who are they hushing? The audience? Each other?

In the second set of instructions, they will be hushing the "extras".

ANTONY

Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears;

I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him.



How long does it take Antony to have everyone's attention? Have your class decide when they think Antony's no longer striving to be heard, and thus can actually start in on his argument.

70

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



Do the Plebeians find this reassuring? Or do they remain skeptical? Can different Plebeians have different reactions?

Hath told you Caesar was ambitious:

75

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,



Why does Antony have to qualify this? Is there some grumbling from the Plebeians about Brutus allowing Antony to speak?

80



How can the Plebeians react non-verbally to Antony's questions? How can they include the audience in on their reactions?

85



Who are "the poor"? The Plebeians? The audience?

90



Again, how should the Plebeians react to Antony referring to an event they did, in fact, witness (even though it happened off-stage for the audience)?



How much are the Plebeians still buying this? Are they starting to grumble for different reasons?

95

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 come back to me.

FIRST PLEBEIAN

Methinks there is much reason in his sayings.

SECOND PLEBEIAN

If thou consider rightly of the matter,

Caesar has had great wrong.

THIRD PLEBEIAN

Has he, masters?

I fear there will a worse come in his place.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

Mark'd ye his words? He would not take the crown,

Therefore 'tis certain he was not ambitious.

FIRST PLEBEIAN

If it be found so, some will dear abide it.



How can the Plebeians non-verbally react to this? With shame? With embarrassment?

100



See the note in **Rhetoric: The Language of Persuasion** about why Antony breaks off here. Have your class decide if this is a calculated move or genuine emotion. If it is calculated, how does Antony know it's now safe to break off, without fear that he'll lose his audience in the meantime?



Do the Plebeians' statements here need to be to each other, or can they be to the audience?

105



Try taking the first sentence to the other Plebeians and the second to the audience. Then try the reverse. Which seems to work better?



Who is the Fourth Plebeian talking to? The other Plebs, or an audience member? How might your staging and the positioning of the Plebs on the stage affect this choice?

110

SECOND PLEBEIAN

Poor soul, his eyes are red as fire with weeping.



Is it at all reasonable that, with Antony above, the Second Plebeian would be able to see this? If not, what instigates the comment?

THIRD PLEBEIAN

There's not a nobler man in Rome than Antony.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

Now mark him, he begins again to speak.



How does he know? What signal does Antony give that he is ready to begin again?

ANTONY

But yesterday the word of Caesar might
Have stood against the world; now lies he there.
And none so poor to do him reverence.



An embedded stage direction – Antony calls attention back to Caesar's corpse on the stage.

115

O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,



How are the Plebeians reacting now, to Brutus's and Cassius names and to "honourable men"?

120

Who, you all know, are honourable men:
I will not do them wrong; I rather choose
To wrong the dead, to wrong myself and you,
Than I will wrong such honourable men.



An embedded stage direction – Antony needs to have a parchment and pull it out here.

125

But here's a parchment with the seal of Caesar;
I found it in his closet, 'tis his will:
Let but the commons hear this testament--



How does Antony deliver this parenthetical statement? With embarrassment? Slyly? Nonchalantly? Have your students decide which emotion seems most appropriate.

Which, pardon me, I do not mean to read--
And they would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds,
And dip their napkins in his sacred blood;

130

160

Yea, beg a hair of him for memory,
And, dying, mention it within their wills,
Bequeathing it as a rich legacy
Unto their issue.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

We'll hear the will: read it, Mark Antony.



There are three beats missing between Antony's line and the Fourth Plebeians. Have your students come up with reasons for the pause and ways to fill it. Are the Plebeians drawing near to Caesar's body? Conferring amongst themselves?

135

ALL

The will, the will; we will hear Caesar's will.



In your students' cue scripts, we have given two-iamb cues, as is the ASC's standard. If, however, the cue was a single word (another possibility based on historical evidence) – in these lines, "will," – how would that change Antony's reaction to the crowd? Try this section of the scene again, with Antony attempting to begin each time he hears "will." How far into his speeches do the Plebeians continue speaking?

ANTONY

Have patience, gentle friends, I must not read it;

It is not meet you know how Caesar loved you.

You are not wood, you are not stones, but men:

And, being men, bearing the will of Caesar,

It will inflame you, it will make you mad:

'Tis good you know not that you are his heirs;

For, if you should, O, what would come of it?



How vehemently is Antony really putting them off?



Compare this to Murellus's comment calling them "You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things" in the first scene.

140



How can the Plebeians react to this "slip" of Antony's?

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

Read the will; we'll hear it, Antony;

You shall read us the will, Caesar's will.

145

ANTONY

Will you be patient? will you stay awhile?

I have o'ershot myself to tell you of it:

I fear I wrong the honourable men

Whose daggers have stabb'd Caesar; I do fear it.



Is it possible that the Plebeians might respond to these questions, even though no lines are scripted for them?

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

They were traitors: honourable men?

150

ALL

The will, the testament.

SECOND PLEBEIAN

They were villains, murderers: the will, read the will.



Point out to your students just how many (or how few) lines it has taken Antony to get the Plebeians to here from their initial lines defending Brutus.

ANTONY

You will compel me, then, to read the will?

Then make a ring about the corpse of Caesar,

And let me show you him that made the will.

Shall I descend? and will you give me leave?



A direction for the Plebeians. Where does Caesar's body need to be during this entire scene?

155

ALL

Come down.



From line 125 to here, the word "will" occurs twenty times, along with homophones like "we'll" and "while." *All* of Antony's cues in this section end on "will." Antony, looking at his cue script, will notice that though the Plebeians continually ask him for the will, he delays their gratification as long as he can. What effect do these teasing, delaying tactics have on the Plebeians? On the in-theatre audience?

SECOND PLEBEIAN

Descend.

162

THIRD PLEBEIAN

You shall have leave.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

A ring; stand round.



Who is standing where? Do these lines seem to indicate that there are more than four Plebeians on the stage?

FIRST PLEBEIAN

Stand from the hearse, stand from the body.



Is it possible, depending on the placement of Caesar's body, to take these lines to the audience members nearest the action? Would that make sense or be incongruous?

SECOND PLEBEIAN

Room for Antony, most noble Antony.



At what point in the above lines should Antony leave the balcony? How much time would the actor need to get back down to the stage?

160

ANTONY

Nay, press not so upon me; stand far off.



An embedded stage direction for the Plebeians, who must be gathering quite close to him as or after he enters.

ALL

Stand back; room, bear back.



As with the earlier hushing comments – Who are they speaking to?

ANTONY

If you have tears, prepare to shed them now.

You all do know this mantle: I remember

The first time ever Caesar put it on:

'Twas on a summer's evening, in his tent,

That day he overcame the Nervii.

Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through:

See what a rent the envious Casca made:



An embedded stage direction – Caesar must have a mantle drawn over him, which Antony displays now.

165



The many "this"es in these lines indicate that Antony is picking out specific tears in the garment and telling which conspirators stabbed where – despite the fact that he wasn't in the room at the time.

163

Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd,

170

And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,

Mark how the blood of Caesar follow'd it,

As rushing out of doors, to be resolved

If Brutus so unkindly knock'd, or no;

For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel:

175

Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar loved him!

This was the most unkindest cut of all:

For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,

Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms,

Quite vanquish'd him: then burst his mighty heart;

180

And in his mantle muffling up his face,

Even at the base of Pompey's statue,

Which all the while ran blood, great Caesar fell.

O, what a fall was there, my countrymen.

Then I, and you, and all of us fell down,

Whilst bloody treason flourish'd over us.

O, now you weep, and I perceive you feel

The dint of pity: these are gracious drops.

Kind souls, what, weep you when you but behold

Our Caesar's vesture wounded? Look you here,

Here is himself, marr'd, as you see, with traitors.

190



How visible do the bloodstains need to be? Enough for the Plebeians, or enough for the audience (which, at the Globe, would be 3000 people, many of them at some distance)?



How much of this might Antony re-enact, in order to augment the drama of the moment?



Note the stressed pronouns in this line. Have your Antony pick someone specific for "you" and make sure that all the Plebeians (and possibly audience members) are included on "us"

185



An embedded stage direction for at least one of the Plebeians. Should it be only one specific "you" or a general "you" to them all?



An embedded stage direction – Antony reveals Caesar's body.

FIRST PLEBEIAN

O piteous spectacle.

SECOND PLEBEIAN

O noble Caesar.

THIRD PLEBEIAN

O woeful day.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

O traitors, villains.

FIRST PLEBEIAN

O most bloody sight.

SECOND PLEBEIAN

We will be revenged.

ALL

Revenge, about, seek, burn, fire, kill, slay,

Let not a traitor live.

ANTONY

Stay, countrymen.

FIRST PLEBEIAN

Peace there! hear the noble Antony.



Is there a way for the Plebeians to deliver these lines so that they do not sound ridiculous? Can each Plebeian react with a slightly different emotional gloss – sorrow, disgust, nausea, revulsion, anger?



Who does the Second Plebeian promise this to? Antony? The other Plebeians? The audience?



Though every modern edition of the play assigns the lines like this, the 1623 Folio assigned them as:

1. O pitteous spectacle!
2. O Noble Caesar!
3. O woefull day!
4. O Traitors, Villaines!
1. O most bloody fight!
2. We will be reueng'd: Reuenge
About, seeke, burne, fire, kill, slay,
Let not a Traitor live.
Ans. Stay Country-men.



How loudly does Antony need to say this? Does anyone but the First Plebeian need to be able to hear him? What emotion is he registering now – is he amused that they have taken off so readily, or a little alarmed?

SECOND PLEBEIAN

We'll hear him, we'll follow him, we'll die with him.



Note that Antony's rhetorical devices of repetition seem to have rubbed off on the Second Plebeian.

200

ANTONY

Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up

To such a sudden flood of mutiny.

They that have done this deed are honourable:

What private griefs they have, alas, I know not,

That made them do it: they are wise and honourable,

And will, no doubt, with reasons answer you.

I come not, friends, to steal away your hearts:

I am no orator, as Brutus is;

But, as you know me all, a plain blunt man,

That love my friend; and that they know full well

That gave me public leave to speak of him:

For I have neither wit, nor words, nor worth,

Action, nor utterance, nor the power of speech,

To stir men's blood: I only speak right on;

I tell you that which you yourselves do know;

Show you sweet Caesar's wounds, poor poor dumb mouths,

And bid them speak for me: but were I Brutus,

And Brutus 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.



How does Antony behave towards the Plebeians when he calls them friends? Does he move to embrace them, shake hands? (See page 22 for information on Antony's reputation with the common people).



A false cue for the plebeians; if they react on this first "mutiny," Antony has to use his next line to reel them back in.

205



How can Antony deliver these two lines in a way that makes it seem plausible that the Plebeians would believe them, when he's just spent 100 lines showing the audience what a spectacular orator he is?

210



How is this argument of Antony's a kind of reverse *ethos* (see **Rhetoric: The Language of Persuasion**, page 115)? Though he's putting himself down, ostensibly, he's doing so in such a way that makes him more appealing to the Plebeian audience. How does this augment his alliance both with his on-stage and in-theatre audience? Can your students think of times they've seen politicians or celebrities do this?

215



Why does Antony choose to say "poor" twice? Make sure your student actor makes the choice apparent.



Notice the recurring images Antony calls on in these lines – Caesar's wounds, stones, the image of Rome herself. What about these images makes them powerful?

220

ALL

We'll mutiny.

FIRST PLEBEIAN

We'll burn the house of Brutus.

THIRD PLEBEIAN

Away, then, come, seek the conspirators.

ANTONY

Yet hear me, countrymen; yet hear me speak.



Again, is Antony alarmed or pleased? How hard does he have to work to be heard? (Consider that the repetition of "yet hear me" may indicate that no one does the first time he says it).

ALL

Peace, ho, hear Antony, most noble Antony.



Once again – Who are they shushing?

225

ANTONY

Why, friends, you go to do you know not what:

Wherein hath Caesar thus deserved your loves?

Alas, you know not: I must tell you then:

You have forgot the will I told you of.



Antony asks and answers his own question (a rhetorical device called *aporia*) – What purpose does this serve at this point in the speech? How does it reel in the Plebeians' attention? How does it build suspense for them? How can Antony play his awareness of the manipulation, and how can the Plebeians play their reactions?

ALL

Most true. The will; Let's stay and hear the will.

230

ANTONY

Here is the will, and under Caesar's seal.



Another embedded stage direction for Antony to display the will – Did he put it away before? Where did it go while he was talking of Caesar's wounds?

To every Roman citizen he gives,

To every several man, seventy-five drachmas.



Again, notice how Antony's self-corrections build suspense.

SECOND PLEBEIAN

Most noble Caesar. We'll revenge his death.

THIRD PLEBEIAN

O royal Caesar.

ANTONY

Hear me with patience.



Notice how many times the Plebeians call for peace. What might that indicate about the scene?

ALL

Peace, ho!

235

ANTONY

Moreover, he hath left you all his walks,

His private arbours and new-planted orchards,

On this side Tiber; he hath left them you,

And to your heirs for ever, common pleasures:

To walk abroad, and recreate yourselves.

Here was a Caesar! when comes such another?



Notice how many times within this speech Antony reiterates what the Plebeians gain through Caesar's will. How does this pay off, considering how long he delayed reading the will in the first place? How much should Antony savor the revelation? How should the Plebeians react to each new detail?

240

FIRST PLEBEIAN

Never, never. Come, away, away!

We'll burn his body in the holy place,

And with the brands fire the traitors' houses.

Take up the body.



A stage direction for the Plebeians to bear away Caesar's corpse as they exit. How many Plebeians will this require? Where and when should they exit? In an early modern space, would you need someone to open a door or page the curtain?

245

SECOND PLEBEIAN

Go fetch fire.



Who do the Plebeians give these orders to? Each other? The "hired men" extras? The audience?

THIRD PLEBEIAN

Pluck down benches.

FOURTH PLEBEIAN

Pluck down forms, windows, any thing.

Exeunt Plebeians.

ANTONY

Now let it work. Mischief, thou art afoot,

Take thou what course thou wilt!



Are the Plebeians completely off-stage when Antony says this? Can he deliver the line while they're still shouting and exiting, or does he need to wait for silence? Which makes a more powerful statement?

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