



INSTITUTE  
OF DISTANCE  
EDUCATION **IDE**  
Rajiv Gandhi University

# BAENG201 INTRODUCING ENGLISH LITERATURE-III



**BA (ENGLISH  
ELECTIVE)  
3<sup>RD</sup> SEMESTER**

**Rajiv Gandhi University**

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# **Introducing English Literature II**

**(English Elective I)  
BAENG201**

**BA**

**II Semester**



**RAJIV GANDHI UNIVERSITY**

Arunachal Pradesh, INDIA - 791 112

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## About the University

Rajiv Gandhi University (formerly Arunachal University) is a premier institution for higher education in the state of Arunachal Pradesh and has completed twenty-five years of its existence. Late Smt. Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister of India, laid the foundation stone of the university on 4th February, 1984 at Rono Hills, where the present campus is located.

Ever since its inception, the university has been trying to achieve excellence and fulfill the objectives as envisaged in the University Act. The university received academic recognition under Section 2(f) from the University Grants Commission on 28th March, 1985 and started functioning from 1st April, 1985. It got financial recognition under section 12-B of the UGC on 25th March, 1994. Since then Rajiv Gandhi University, (then Arunachal University) has carved a niche for itself in the educational scenario of the country following its selection as a University with potential for excellence by a high-level expert committee of the University Grants Commission from among universities in India.

The University was converted into a Central University with effect from 9th April, 2007 as per notification of the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Government of India.

The University is located atop Rono Hills on a picturesque tableland of 302 acres overlooking the river Dikrong. It is 6.5 km from the National Highway 52-A and 25 km from Itanagar, the State capital. The campus is linked with the National Highway by the Dikrong bridge.

The teaching and research programmes of the University are designed with a view to play a positive role in the socio-economic and cultural development of the State. The University offers Undergraduate, Post-graduate, M.Phil and Ph.D. programmes. The Department of Education also offers the B.Ed. programme.

There are fifteen colleges affiliated to the University. The University has been extending educational facilities to students from the neighbouring states, particularly Assam. The strength of students in different departments of the University and in affiliated colleges has been steadily increasing.

The faculty members have been actively engaged in research activities with financial support from UGC and other funding agencies. Since inception, a number of proposals on research projects have been sanctioned by various funding agencies to the University. Various departments have organized numerous seminars, workshops and conferences. Many faculty members have participated in national and international conferences and seminars held within the country and abroad. Eminent scholars and distinguished personalities have visited the University and delivered lectures on various disciplines.

The academic year 2000-2001 was a year of consolidation for the University. The switch over from the annual to the semester system took off smoothly and the performance of the students registered a marked improvement. Various syllabi designed by Boards of Post-graduate Studies (BPGS) have been implemented. VSAT facility installed by the ERNET India, New Delhi under the UGC-Infonet program, provides Internet access.

In spite of infrastructural constraints, the University has been maintaining its academic excellence. The University has strictly adhered to the academic calendar, conducted the examinations and declared the results on time. The students from the University have found placements not only in State and Central Government Services, but also in various institutions, industries and organizations. Many students have emerged successful in the National Eligibility Test (NET).

Since inception, the University has made significant progress in teaching, research, innovations in curriculum development and developing infrastructure.

## About IDE

The formal system of higher education in our country is facing the problems of access, limitation of seats, lack of facilities and infrastructure. Academicians from various disciplines opine that it is learning which is more important and not the channel of education. The education through distance mode is an alternative mode of imparting instruction to overcome the problems of access, infrastructure and socio-economic barriers. This will meet the demand for qualitative higher education of millions of people who cannot get admission in the regular system and wish to pursue their education. It also helps interested employed and unemployed men and women to continue with their higher education. Distance education is a distinct approach to impart education to learners who remained away in the space and/or time from the teachers and teaching institutions on account of economic, social and other considerations. Our main aim is to provide higher education opportunities to those who are unable to join regular academic and vocational education programmes in the affiliated colleges of the University and make higher education reach to the doorsteps in rural and geographically remote areas of Arunachal Pradesh in particular and North-eastern part of India in general. In 2008, the Centre for Distance Education has been renamed as “Institute of Distance Education (IDE).”

Continuing the endeavor to expand the learning opportunities for distant learners, IDE has introduced Post Graduate Courses in 5 subjects (Education, English, Hindi, History and Political Science) from the Academic Session 2013-14.

The Institute of Distance Education is housed in the Physical Sciences Faculty Building (first floor) next to the University Library. The University campus is 6 kms from NERIST point on National Highway 52A. The University buses ply to NERIST point regularly.

### **Outstanding Features of Institute of Distance Education:**

(i) At Par with Regular Mode

Eligibility requirements, curricular content, mode of examination and the award of degrees are on par with the colleges affiliated to the Rajiv Gandhi University and the Department(s) of the University.

(ii) Self-Instructional Study Material (SISM)

The students are provided SISM prepared by the Institute and approved by Distance Education Council (DEC), New Delhi. This will be provided at the time of admission at the IDE or its Study Centres. SISM is provided only in English except Hindi subject.

(iii) Contact and Counselling Programme (CCP)

The course curriculum of every programme involves counselling in the form of personal contact programme of duration of approximately 7-15 days. The CCP shall not be compulsory for BA. However for professional courses and MA the attendance in CCP will be mandatory.

(iv) Field Training and Project

For professional course(s) there shall be provision of field training and project writing in the concerned subject.

(v) Medium of Instruction and Examination

The medium of instruction and examination will be English for all the subjects except for those subjects where the learners will need to write in the respective languages.

(vi) Subject/Counselling Coordinators

For developing study material, the IDE appoints subject coordinators from within and outside the University. In order to run the PCCP effectively Counselling Coordinators are engaged from the Departments of the University, The Counselling-Coordinators do necessary coordination for involving resource persons in contact and counselling programme and assignment evaluation. The learners can also contact them for clarifying their difficulties in then respective subjects.

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# SYLLABI-BOOK MAPPING TABLE

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## Syllabi

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### UNIT I: Explanation from Texts

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### UNIT II: Drama I

William Shakespeare: *Julius Caesar*

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### UNIT III: Drama II

Oliver Goldsmith: *She Stoops to Conquer*

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### UNIT IV: One Act Play

Percival Wilde: *The Hour of truth*

Anton Chekhov: *The Best Laid Plan*

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### UNIT V: Literary Forms

Lyric, ballad, ode, sonnet, epic, elegy, satire, dramatic monologue, drama, one act play



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# UNIT 1 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: *JULIUS CAESAR*

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## NOTES

### Structure

- 1.0 Introduction
- 1.1 Unit Objectives
- 1.2 Selected Passages for Explanation: Part I
- 1.3 Selected Passages for Explanation: Part II
- 1.4 Summary
- 1.5 Key Terms
- 1.6 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 1.7 Questions and Exercises
- 1.8 Further Reading

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

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The play *Julius Caesar* has been written by William Shakespeare, the greatest dramatist of the Elizabethan Age. *Julius Caesar* is a historical play, first performed in 1599. It was the premier show of the newly rebuilt Globe Theatre. It was not published during Shakespeare’s lifetime. Appeared seven years after Shakespeare’s death in the First Folio of 1623. The play appeared in the Folio as *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, but was listed as *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* in the table of contents. Most of the historical information for the play was taken from North’s translation of the work of the Greek historian, Plutarch. In this unit, you will be able to analyse selected passages from Shakespeare’s famous play *Julius Caesar*.

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## 1.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Analyse selected passages from Shakespeare’s famous play *Julius Caesar*
- Assess the themes of the play *Julius Caesar*
- Evaluate the biographical sketches of characters like Julius, Cassius, Brutus, etc.

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## 1.2 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: PART I

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1. ‘Stand you directly in Antonius’ way  
When he doth run his course.’

### Explanation

It is February 15, the Feast of the Lupercal. Rome is not only celebrating the festival of Lupercal, but also rejoicing the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. Caesar enters in a ceremonial procession, with his wife Calpurnia, and his senators,

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accompanied by a huge crowd. He reminds Calpurnia to stand in Antony's way as he runs his course race naked through the city striking bystanders with a goatskin thong.

Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloth made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and a dog and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. They then ran through the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal will soon be blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse. Caesar is superstitious too, since he asks his wife to touch Antony in the middle of the race to become pregnant.

The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public. Caesar's desire to produce a male heir also indicates that he intended to become the ruler of Rome and wanted to continue his reign. The power of politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and gives curt orders. His orders are obeyed and his commands are executed. He instructs both Calpurnia and Antony to carry out his orders. Both instantly surrender to his dictates.

2. 'Yond Cassius has a lean and hungry look. He thinks too much. Such men are dangerous...

He reads much, He is a great observer, and he looks Quite through the deeds of men. He loves no plays As thou dost, Antony; he hears no music. Seldom he smiles, and smiles in such a sort

As if he mocked himself and scorned his spirit That could be moved to smile at anything. Such men as he be never at heart's ease Whiles they behold a greater than themselves, And therefore are they very dangerous.'

### Explanation

These lines are spoken by Caesar in Act I, Scene II. Caesar and Antony have just come back from the games. Caesar sees Cassius, Brutus and Casca whispering to each other. He looks at Cassius and speaks these lines.

Caesar finds Cassius dangerous because he has soaring unfulfilled desires and ambitions which make him 'lean' and 'hungry'. Caesar says Cassius is envious of those who are greater than him. He is also very observant who penetrates through men's mind. He can see the hidden motives of men's actions. He is not interested in games and music. He does not smile much and whenever he does, it is to scorn or mock himself. People like Cassius are never at peace, they are restless when they see someone in higher position than themselves.

The lines draw a character sketch of Cassius, one of the Roman senators and main conspirators. Whatever Caesar has observed in the character of Cassius is true. He is jealous of Caesar because he believes he is no less than him. However, it is Julius Caesar, with all his infirmities, who enjoys power and the highest position in Rome. Cassius, personality clearly disturbs mighty Caesar.

From his insights into Cassius, it is evident that Caesar himself is an acute observer who can look through the deeds of men. Though, he voices his apprehensions about Cassius, but in his self-conceit, Caesar refuses to be intimidated by someone like him.

3. 'Then he offered it to him again; then he put it by again; but to my thinking, he was very loath to lay his fingers off it. And then he offered it the third time. He put it the third time by; and still as he refused it, the rabblement hooted, and clapped their chopt hands, and threw tip their sweaty nightcaps, and uttered such a deal of stinking breath because Caesar refused the crown that it had almost choked Caesar; for he swounded and fell down at it.'

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### Explanation

Brutus has pulled Casca out from the crowd. They asked him for the reasons for loud cheering sounds the crowd made. Casca narrates the events that took place off stage to Brutus and Cassius. Casca tells Brutus and Cassius that the crowd shouted out loud three times because Julius Caesar pushed the crown offered to him by Antony and every time more gently than before. It appeared that Caesar loathed it to put off the coronet. Casca finds it all absurd since the crown was actually a coronet wreathed with laurel. After a while, Caesar was speechless and fainted in the market place with foam coming out of his mouth. While Brutus calls it epilepsy, Cassius dismisses as a tantrum. Casca reports that Caesar feigned fainting since every time he refused the crown, the crowd cheered louder. So, Caesar offered them his throat and fainted. On gaining senses, Caesar desired the crowd to consider his mistakes to be his infirmities. Many women forgave him for all his misconducts. Casca opines, people of Rome will forgive Caesar even if he stabs their mothers. Therefore, it is no better to pay heed. Caesar always faints when people do not act according to his pleasure and displeasure.

The narration gives us Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality. In his view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not the actual crown. To show his humility in front of the crowd he refused to accept it. The crowd so cheered Caesar's refusal of the crown that he had no choice, but to continue to refuse. Caesar was angered with the crowd's reaction and to win back their sympathy he suffered an epileptic fit. Many from the crowd immediately showed sympathy towards Caesar. Casca expresses his concern over the events that have just transpired. The incident reveals Caesar's ambition to become the king of Rome and we also get a glimpse of people's mind. The general public has mixed opinions about Caesar, while Brutus, Cassius and Casca clearly do not wish him to be any more powerful.

4. 'Well, Brutus, thou art noble; yet I see Thy honourable mettle may be wrought From that it is disposed. Therefore it is meet That noble minds keep ever with their likes; For who so firm that cannot be seduced?

Caesar doth bear me hard; but he loves Brutus. If I were Brutus now and he were Cassius, He should not humour me. I will this night, In several hands, in at his windows throw, As if they came from several citizens,

Writings, all tending to the great opinion That Rome holds of his name; wherein obscurely Caesar's ambition shall be glanced at. And after this let Caesar seat him sure, For we will shake him, or worse days endure.'

### Explanation

These lines have been spoken by Cassius. Brutus and Cassius have been contemplating on the political situation of Rome and the repercussions of Caesar becoming the king. Brutus is in conflict with his own emotions. On one hand he loves Caesar,

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on the other, he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue. It is only when Brutus expresses his reluctance to see Caesar as the king of Rome that Cassius unfolds his plan. Cassius is in a hurry to get rid of Caesar, Brutus is determined not to be rushed into any hasty decision.

After Brutus leaves, Cassius reveals his doubts in the above lines. Brutus is a noble man, but he can sway from his honour. Noble minds should keep company of other noble minds so that they are not trapped. Meeting Brutus often will help him retain his position on Caesar and not be influenced by anyone into changing his decision. Caesar dislikes Cassius, but likes Brutus. Cassius too knows of this bond of affection between Brutus and Caesar. He plans to throw writings in Caesar's window as if they have come from the citizens of Rome expressing high opinion of him. This will assure Caesar of his ambition. In the meantime, Cassius and his allies will execute their plan to depose Caesar. If this does not happen then they will have to see worse days than the present.

The lines reveal the character of both Brutus and Cassius. Though, Brutus leads the conspirators, but it is Cassius who plays the major role in influencing Brutus into assurance. In Cassius' words, Brutus is a noble Roman. His love for Caesar and Rome is strong, but he is going through a tumultuous phase. Brutus is in conflict with his own emotions. Cassius fears that his emotions for Caesar may overcome his loyalty to Rome if the connivance of Cassius is explicitly portrayed by the dramatist. He is sure to assassinate Caesar and will not let Brutus change his mind.

5. 'She dreamt to-night she saw my statue,

Which, like a fountain with an hundred spouts,

Did run pure blood; and many lusty Romans

Came smiling and did bathe their hands in it. And these does she apply for warnings and portents

And evils imminent, and on her knee Hath begged that I will stay at home to-day.'

### Explanation

Caesar is with his wife Calpurnia in his house. Calpurnia stops him from going to the Senate. Decius comes to take Caesar with him to the Senate. He instructs Decius to inform the Senate that he will not attend the meeting today. Decius asks for the reason behind not going to the senate. Since, Caesar does not want to give any untrue reason for his absence, he relates Calpurnia's dream to Decius.

In the dream, Calpurnia has seen Caesar's statue. The statue has innumerable spouts like a fountain and blood is flowing from the spouts. Many blood thirsty Romans come near to the body smiling and wash their hands in the stream of royal blood. Calpurnia interprets the dream as a bad omen and a warning to Caesar. She has come down on her knees and begs Caesar to stay at home.

The scene foreshadows the impending death of Caesar. The dream and other portents foretell the death of someone of eminence. The dream of Calpurnia will come true this day. It is the ides of March and the soothsayer had asked Caesar to beware on this day in Act I, Scene II. His conspirators will murder him and wash their hands in his blood. Decius cleverly reinterprets the dream and convinces Caesar to accompany him to the Senate by appealing to his vanity. The manipulation of

facts in political situation is one of the major themes of the play. Decius' ironic interpretation of the dream also foreshadows Caesar's eventual rise to eternal fame.

The husband and wife scene clearly depicts the inferior position of women. Though, Calpurnia appears less submissive as compared to her first appearance in public, she is unable to persuade her husband to listen to her request to stay at home. Caesar does not mind telling Decius that Calpurnia begged him to not to go. As for Caesar, he maintains his public image in his private life too. He is dictatorial in her relationship with his wife as he is with his subjects and other senators.

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### 1.3 SELECTED PASSAGES FOR EXPLANATION: PART II

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6. 'I could be well moved, if I were as you; If I could pray to move, prayers would move me: But I am constant as the Northern Star,  
Of whose true-fixed and resting quality There is no fellow in the firmament. The skies are painted with unnumber'd sparks, They are all fire, and every one doth shine; But there's but one in all doth hold his place.  
So in the world: 'tis furnished well with men, And men are flesh and blood, and apprehensive;  
Yet in the number I do know but one That unassailable holds on his rank, Unshaked of motion; and that I am he,  
Let me a little show it, even in this — That I was constant Cimber should be banished And constant do remain to keep him so. '
- 'Et tu, Brute?— Then fall, Caesar!'

#### Explanation

Caesar speaks these lines in Act III, Scene I, after being stabbed many times by many conspirators who had decided to assassinate Julius Caesar. The whole conspiracy was led by Brutus. Brutus decides to kill Caesar because if he is crowned the king of Rome, he will grow in power, which will not be in the general good of Rome.

The other conspirators were Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Decius, Cimber, Nrutus, Trebonius.

Metellus Cimber approaches Caesar and asks for the reinstatement of his brother as a Roman citizen. Caesar's arrogance reaches astounding proportions as he refuses Cimber's plea based on his distaste for flattery and his power to remain constant. One by one each conspirator moves towards Caesar and encircle him. Having endured twenty-two stab wounds, Caesar is still standing. His wounds are splashing blood, which is the half fulfilment of Calpurnia's dream. It is the twenty-third wound inflicted by Brutus, the man he loved and trusted, that causes Caesar's life force to vanish. He echoes 'And you too, Brutus?' and falls dead to the floor.

The words are an expression of betrayal as well as shock. With the pathos of faithlessness, the last words also help to swing the sympathy of the audience back to Caesar. Caesar did not fall with the first twenty-two wounds by the other conspirators, but the last one proved fatal to his emotions. The dagger stabbed into his body by Brutus stunned him, he falls on the ground expressing his shock in the three words 'you too, Brute?'

#### Check Your Progress

1. When was the play *Julius Caesar* first performed?
2. Mention Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality in the play *Julius Caesar*.
3. What is one of the major themes of the play *Julius Caesar*?

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7. '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...

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, 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.'

### Explanation

These lines are spoken by Antony in Act III, Scene II. Brutus has just addressed the citizens of Rome to tell them the reasons for killing Julius Caesar. He requested them to be patient until the end of his speech, and to believe him because of his honour and respect. Brutus' love for Caesar was no less than any of his friend. He weeps for Caesar who loved him, he honours Caesar for his courage. Brutus rose against Caesar not because he loved Caesar less, but that he loved Rome more. He did not want the citizens of Rome to die as slaves. He would rather have Caesar dead, and live as free men. No one in Rome is so low to live a life of a slave, no one will be vile to not love his country. He killed Caesar for his ambition. Brutus ends his speech saying that he killed his best friend for the good of Rome. In the meantime, Antony has come with the dead body of Caesar to give him an honourable funeral.

Antony speaks rhetorically. He has come to bury Caesar, not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them and the good is often buried with their bones. Same will be with Caesar. Addressing Brutus as noble again and again, Antony says, if he said that Caesar was ambitious then he must be so and he has paid for his ambitions. It is by the permission of Brutus, an honourable man that he speaks. In a few minutes, Antony starts praising Caesar, a faithful friend and always just to him. Caesar brought many captives to Rome, whose ransoms filled the public treasury. When the poor cried, Caesar wept. If this is ambition then ambition should be made of sterner stuff. Yet Brutus, an honourable man, says Caesar was ambitious. On the feast of Lupercal, three times Caesar was presented with a kingly crown, and every time he refused. Yet Brutus, an honourable man, says he was ambitious. Here, he stands not to refute Brutus, but to speak what Antony knows of Caesar. All the Roman citizens loved Caesar at one time, not without cause. What has now

stopped them from mourning for him? He cries that men have lost their reason. He says he will not wrong Brutus and his allies, he will wrong Caesar, himself and the Romans. He mentions Caesar's will, which if the Romans come to know of, they would rush to kiss dead Caesar's wounds and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, and beg a hair of his for memory.

The death of Caesar is a moment of emotional intensity in the play, especially for Antony, a loyal friend. Though Antony claims that he is not a great orator, but with his rhetorical funeral speech, he stirs the crowd to a frenzy. He ensures the downfall of the conspirators with his speech. He uses poetry to move the people of Rome to act violently against the conspirators. To win the confidence of the crowd, Antony addresses them as friends and assures them that his intention is only to bury Caesar with honour and respect. During his speech, Antony quotes Brutus who gave Caesar's ambition as a reason for his death. In his speech, Antony rhetorically and forcefully refutes Brutus' claims that Caesar was ambitious. Keeping in mind the instructions of Brutus, he reminds the crowd that Brutus and the other conspirators are honourable men. He alternates ironic references to Brutus' honour and nobility with evidences to prove that Caesar was not ambitious, as Brutus claims. By using irony, Antony does not violate the instructions of Brutus. Simultaneously, he proves that Caesar was not as ambitious as Brutus claims to justify his murder. He influences the crowd to understand the subtext of the funeral speech and completely tears down Brutus' argument that Caesar was ambitious.

Antony was wise in the choice of his words. He manipulated the crowd to move to frenzy. He paid attention to the effect of his words on the crowd. The moment he understood that he has undone Brutus, he passionately weeps for his beloved friend. His heart is full of intense grief. The crowd becomes silent and sympathizes with Antony. His genuine feelings and passionate words stir up the crowd, the mob has turned into a violent force, who rush to look for the murderers of Caesar. Antony successfully maneuvered the things to seek retribution. The blood thirsty crowd solicits revenge.

The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics. In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. With their moving speech the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances. These impressionable commoners prove to be a great force in the turn of events. Antony uses his rhetorics to switch their allegiance to Caesar and punish the conspirators, leading to a civil war in Rome.

8. 'This was the noblest Roman of them all. All the conspirators save only he Did what they did in envy of great Caesar; He only, in a general honest thought And common good to all, made one of them. His life was gentle, and the elements So mixed in him that Nature might stand up And say to all the world, 'This was a man!'

## Explanation

Antony speaks these lines on the death of Brutus. Brutus tells his friend Strato that it is impossible for them to win the battle against the triumvirate. He tells him about the appearance of Caesar's ghost that appeared to him at night. He asks Strato to

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hold his sword and runs into it and dies. Strato tells Octavius, no one, but Brutus alone could conquer Brutus. No other man gains honor by killing Brutus.

Antony respectfully calls Brutus the noblest Roman of them all who killed Caesar because all the other conspirators killed Caesar out of envy. Brutus, on the other hand, is troubled by Caesar's threat to the republican freedom of Rome. He did not want Rome to have a tyrannical rule of kings and dictators. It was his political choice to save the republic that entails his moral choice to kill Caesar. Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome. He was gentle and noble, and the goodness was so balanced in his personality that nature itself will stand up to the world to say that Brutus was a noble soul.

9. 'This dream is all amiss interpreted; It was a vision fair and fortunate. Your statue spouting blood in many pipes, 85 In which so many smiling Romans bathed, Signifies that from you great Rome shall suck Reviving blood, and that great men shall press For tinctures, stains, relics, and cognizance. This by Calpurnia's dream is signified.'

### Explanation

These lines have been spoken by Decius. Decius has come to Caesar house to escort him to the Senate. Caesar tells Decius to inform the senate that he will not come. To say he cannot come will be false and dare not come will be falser. Decius insists on telling the real reason behind not going to the Senate. He tells Calpurnia does not want him to go out of the house. She saw a dream last night in which Caesar's statue, sprayed blood like a fountain with hundred spouts. Many joyful Romans came smiling and bathed their hands in it. She sees this as an evil omen and a warning. Calpurnia begged him on her knees to stay home.

Decius reinterprets the dream for Caesar as a good omen. He explains the dream as a vision fair and fortunate, the statue spouting blood from many pipes, in which so many smiling Romans bathed means that his blood will revive Rome. Many great men shall come to Caesar for his blessings and recognition. He further adds that the Senate has decided to give the crown of Rome to mighty Caesar this day. If he does not come to the Senate today, their minds may change. If Caesar hides himself because his wife asked him to, the Senate will make a mockery of him. They will whisper that Caesar is afraid. He asks to be pardoned for making bold statements and also because he loves Caesar. Caesar, instigated by Decius, decides to go. Just then Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna come and Antony follows. Ironically, Caesar asks the conspirators to be near him. Caesar welcomes the conspirators into his home and invites them to share wine with him. It can be interpreted as the biblical reference to the Last Supper. In an aside, Trebonius says so near will he be that Caesar's best friends would have been further. Caesar, ironically, wants to go as friends together with the group to the Senate. Brutus, in an aside feels saddened saying his so-called friends are not true. Decius shows his dexterity in manipulating Caesar by convincing him to go the Senate. He uses flattery to appeal to Caesar's vanity. Decius articulates one of the major themes present in *Julius Caesar*, the manipulation of people and circumstances to achieve one's own end.

#### Check Your Progress

4. What was Brutus' reason for killing Caesar?
5. What is the role of the mob in the play *Julius Caesar*?

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## 1.4 SUMMARY

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- Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of the festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloth made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and a dog and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood.
- The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public.
- The power of politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and give curt orders.
- The narration gives us Casca's understanding of Caesar's personality. In his view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not the actual crown.
- The death of Caesar is a moment of emotional intensity in the play, especially for Antony, a loyal friend.
- Though Antony claims that he is not a great orator, but with his rhetorical funeral speech he stirs the crowd to a frenzy.
- The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics.
- In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey.

## NOTES

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## 1.5 KEY TERMS

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- **Lupercal:** Lupercalia was a very ancient, possibly pre-Roman pastoral festival, observed in the city of Rome on February 15, to avert evil spirits and purify the city, releasing health and fertility.
- **Februa:** In ancient Roman religion, Februus, whose name means 'purifier', was the god of purification. Februus is possibly named in honor of the more ancient Februa, (also Februalia and Februatio), the spring festival of washing and purification.
- **Heir:** An heir apparent or heiress apparent is a person who is first in line of succession and cannot be displaced from inheriting by the birth of another person.

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## 1.6 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. *Julius Caesar* is a historical play, first performed in 1599.
2. In Casca's view, Caesar desperately wanted to accept the crown, even though it was just a wreath of laurel leaves and not actual crown. To show his humility in front of the crowd he refused to accept it.

## NOTES

3. The manipulation of facts in political situation is one of the major themes of the play.
4. Brutus decides to kill Caesar because if he is crowned the king of Rome, he will grow in power, which will not be in the general good of Rome.
5. The mob was established as a character in the opening scene of the play, Act I, Scene I. It has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with rhetorics. In the opening scene, the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. With their moving speech the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances.

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## 1.7 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Who is the protagonist in the play *Julius Caesar*? Is it Caesar who dies well before the end but whose power and name continue on? Or is it Brutus, the noble man, who falls because of his tragic flaws?
2. *Julius Caesar*, a play about statehood and leadership, is one of the most quoted of Shakespeare's plays in modern-day political speeches. Why do you think this play about conspiracy and assassination might appeal to politicians today?
3. Consider Brutus's actions. Is he right to join the conspiracy against Caesar?
4. Think about Caesar the mortal man as opposed to Caesar the public figure. How does he continue to wield power over events even after he is dead?
5. How does Cassius trick Brutus into joining the conspirators?
6. After an ominous dream, Calpurnia begs Caesar to stay away from the Senate and, at first, he agrees. What changes his mind?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss inflexibility in the play *Julius Caesar*, focusing on Caesar and Brutus. How is each man inflexible?
2. Discuss friendship in the play. Consider Caesar and Brutus, Caesar and Antony, Brutus and Cassius, Antony and Octavius, or any other pairings. Are these true friendships or merely political alliances forged for the sake of convenience and self-preservation?
3. As Caesar's appointed successor, how does Octavius carry on the great general's legacy? Consider his use of language and commands as well as the ways in which the other characters regard him and refer to him.
4. Describe the encounter between Brutus and Caesar's ghost.
5. Explain the significance of Antony's final speech, beginning with the line, 'This was the noblest Roman of them all'.

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## 1.8 FURTHER READING

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Griffin, Miriam (Ed.). 2015. *A Companion to Julius Caesar*. United States: John Wiley & Sons.

Thomson, Peter. 1992. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. United Kingdom: Psychology Press.

Bergeron Moore, David. 1996. *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*. United States: Associated University Press.

Selected Passages for  
Explanation: *Julius  
Caesar*

## NOTES

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# UNIT 2 WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE: *JULIUS CAESAR*

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## NOTES

### Structure

- 2.0 Introduction
- 2.1 Unit Objectives
- 2.2 An Introduction to William Shakespeare
  - 2.2.1 Shakespeare's Plays
  - 2.2.2 Drama in England
- 2.3 Classification of the Plays
  - 2.3.1 Features of the Plays
- 2.4 Act-Wise Summary of the Play
  - 2.4.1 Act I
  - 2.4.2 Act II
  - 2.4.3 Act III
  - 2.4.4 Act IV
  - 2.4.5 Act V
- 2.5 Themes and Literary Devices
- 2.6 Summary
- 2.7 Key Terms
- 2.8 Answers to 'Check Your Progress'
- 2.9 Questions and Exercises
- 2.10 Further Reading

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## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

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The play *Julius Caesar* is one of the famous tragedies written by Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar* is the story of an assassination, that is, the murder of a public figure. This play explores the ethical, political and psychological turmoil that surrounds such an event—the assassination of a public figure. This event highlights the chaos prevalent in the twentieth century history as well. In this unit, you will be introduced to the life and prominent works of William Shakespeare. Moreover, you will get to study his play *Julius Caesar* and analyse the major themes and literary devices of this play.

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## 2.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of William Shakespeare
- Assess the plays written by Shakespeare
- Summarize the play *Julius Caesar* act-wise
- Analyse the themes and literary devices of the play *Julius Caesar*

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## 2.2 AN INTRODUCTION TO WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

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John Shakespeare, the father of William Shakespeare, was a man of meagre means. But his fortune turned after he married Mary Arden in 1557. Mary was the daughter

## NOTES

of a prosperous farmer, and earned him a house, fifty acres of land and money in the form of dowry. In 1564 William Shakespeare was born. Nothing much is known about Shakespeare's early life until 1582 when, as records suggest, Shakespeare married Anne Hathaway, daughter of Richard Hathaway. The date on Anne's tombstone indicates that she was older to the poet by eight years.

By the 1590s Shakespeare had already been known as an actor and plagiarist as confirmed by Robert Greene's pamphlet 'Greenes Groatsworth of Witte: Bought with a Million of Repentaunce'. In 1593 *Venus and Adonis* was published; it was dedicated to the Earl of Southampton. But the dedication does not imply any connection between the poet and the patron. *The Rape of Lucrece* was published in 1594, again dedicated to the Earl of Southampton, indicating that he first achieved his literary distinction through his references. By 1594–95 he was already a part of Lord Chamberlain's Company as an actor. In the following years, Shakespeare's name was registered in some financial ambiguities. But by 1598 Shakespeare seems to have emerged successfully in the professional front as his quarto editions of *Richard II* and *Love's Labour Lost* appear that year and there is mention of his acting in Ben Jonson's work, *Every Man in His Humour*.

In the meantime, Shakespeare's reputation as a playwright was increasing so much so that in contemporary literature references to his works are abundant. John Webster in the acknowledgement to *The White Devil*, 1612, has shown his gratitude to his predecessors and a few contemporary artists including Shakespeare.

Shakespeare's poems earned him well. But his plays were not that lucrative because the playwright gave up all rights of his work by selling his plays to the manager of the company. But his investment in real estate in Stratford and London brought him substantial fortune.

With the accession of James I after the death of Queen Elizabeth, the situation improved even more. James I's inclination towards the arts turned out to be a boon for Shakespeare as well as Lord Chamberlain's Company. The Revels Accounts of the Company identify Shakespeare as one of the prominent actors. The recognition ushered by the court added to Shakespeare's fame. Jonson mentions Shakespeare playing a role in *Sejanus* in 1603. But later his name does not appear among actors, suggesting that sometime after Queen Elizabeth's death he gave up acting.

Seven years after Shakespeare's death in April 1616, Heming and Condell, his former colleagues from the theatre, collected and published the First Folio consisting of thirty-six of his plays.

### 2.2.1 Shakespeare's Plays

Though it is slightly problematic to provide for specific dates for composition, publication and performance of Shakespeare's plays due to lack of information, yet for the sake of convenience certain dates have been accepted as standard. Below is a list of his works and corresponding dates of their performance and publication.

- 1592: March 3, *Henry VI Part I* produced. First printed 1594
- 1592–93: *Henry VI Part II* first performed. First print 1594
- 1592–93: *Henry VI Part III* first performed. First printed 1623
- 1594: January 24 *Titus Andronicus* first performance. First print 1594
- 1594: December 28, Confirmed performance of *The Comedy of Errors*

- 1593–94: *Taming of the Shrew* first performed. First print 1623
- 1594–95: *Two Gentlemen of Verona* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1594–95: *Love's Labour Lost* first performed. First print 1598
- 1594–95: *Romeo and Juliet* first performance. First printed 1597
- 1595–96: *A Midsummer Night's Dream* first performed. First print 1600
- 1596–97: *The Merchant of Venice* first performed. First printed 1600
- 1597–98: *Henry IV Part I* first performed. First print 1598
- 1597–98: *Henry IV Part II* first performance. First printed 1600
- 1598–99: *Much Ado About Nothing* first performed. First print 1600
- 1598–99: *Henry V* first performed. First printed 1600
- 1599–1600: *As You Like It* first performed. First print 1623
- 1600–01: *Julius Caesar* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1601: February 7 First Recorded production of *Richard II*. First printed 1597
- 1600–01: *Richard III* first Recorded performance. First print 1597
- 1600–01: *Hamlet* first performed. First printed 1603
- 1600–01: *The Merry Wives of Windsor* first performance. First print 1602
- 1602: February 2 First Recorded production of *Twelfth Night*. First printed 1623
- 1602–03: *All's Well That Ends Well* first performed. First print 1623
- 1604: February 7 First Recorded production of *Troilus and Cressida*. First printed 1609
- 1604: December 26 First performance of *Measure for Measure*. First print 1623
- 1604–05: *Othello* first performed. First printed 1622
- 1606: December 26 First recorded performance of *King Lear*. First print 1608
- 1605–06: *Macbeth* first performance. First printed 1623
- 1606–07: *Antony and Cleopatra* first performed. First print 1623
- 1607–08: *Coriolanus* first performed. First printed 1623
- 1607–08: *Timon of Athens* first performance. First print 1623
- 1608–09: *Pericles* first performed. First printed 1609
- 1611: November 1 First Recorded production of *The Tempest*. First print 1623
- 1611–12: *Macbeth* First recorded performance. First printed 1623
- 1611–12: *Cymbeline* First recorded performance. First print 1623
- 1611–12: *The Winter's Tale* First recorded performance. First printed 1623
- 1612–13: *Henry VIII* first performance. First print 1623
- 1612–13: *The Two Noble Kinsmen*. First printed 1634

## NOTES

## NOTES

### 2.2.2 Drama in England

In comparison to the previous eras, English drama saw a sudden growth in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The first theatre was built in 1576 in London. Even Shakespeare had composed more than half his works by 1600. The roots of drama in England are associated with religious ceremonies. In the earlier days, Latin was the official language of the church and of official proceedings. Latin was not understood by the common people.

As the presentations in drama became more elaborate, the stage also changed. It first moved to the churchyard, then to the fields, and finally to the streets and open spaces in the towns. The change in location was supported by changes in the language used. Latin was passé. Vernacular was used. Unlike priests who performed in Miracle Plays, now laymen participated. The attitude towards these productions changed. Priests were no more permitted to take part in plays. The content of the drama too had taken a leap where the subject matter was no longer restricted to the sacred scriptures or lives of holy people.

Moving on from Morality Plays, Interludes emerged; a feature that was common to both Miracle Plays and Interludes was the Vice, a character who appeared under the garb of hypocrisy and deceit and whose job was to have fun mainly at the expense of the devil. The Vice is significant because some of its features are found in the fools of the later dramas.

John Heywood, a significant author of Interludes, lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth and Interludes continued to exist in the seventeenth century. But gradually it moved towards disappearance and a new movement came. With the emergence of Renaissance, the literary scenario was filled with new ideas especially from Italy and the classical world.

In drama, one can find a confluence of foreign material and local essence. Like the first English comedy, *Ralph Roister Doister* by Udall was adapted from the plot of *Miles Gloriosus* composed by Plautus to suit the taste of an English audience. It was around this time that Shakespeare appeared on the literary scene.

#### Check Your Progress

1. When was William Shakespeare born?
2. When was *Venus and Adonis* published?
3. What did Shakespeare do in Ben Jonson's work, *Every Man in His Humour*?
4. Who published Shakespeare's First Folio?
5. When was the first theatre built in England?
6. When did John Heywood live?
7. Name the first English comedy.

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## 2.3 CLASSIFICATION OF THE PLAYS

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Let us go through the classification of Shakespeare's plays.

- (i) **The Early Comedies:** *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to this group. These early plays are rather immature where the plots are less original, the characterization is sketchy and the wit falls flat. Over all, the style is not that of a mature Shakespeare.
- (ii) **The English Histories:** These plays display the rapidly maturing art of Shakespeare and his concern with the contemporary desire for stable government. The history plays like *Richard II*, *Henry IV (2)* and *Henry V* are remarkable for memorable characters like Falstaff and the mingling of low life with chronicle history.
- (iii) **The Mature Comedies:** To this group belong *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Twelfth Night*, *The Merchant of Venice* and *As You Like It*. The plays are full of vitality; contain many comic situations and the most popular of Shakespeare's comic characters like Beatrice and Benedick, Sir Toby Belch and Touchstone who are full of warmth and humanity.

- (iv) **The Sombre Plays:** Also called ‘Problem Plays’ or ‘Bitter Comedies’, these plays show the falsity of romance and the sordidness of reality. They are comedies because they do not end with the death of the chief characters, but reflect a cynical and disillusioned attitude towards life. *All’s Well That Ends Well*, *Measure for Measure* and *Troilus and Cressida* fall in this category.
- (v) **The Great Tragedies:** *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *Macbeth* and *King Lear* are the great tragedies of Shakespeare and mark the climax of his dramatic art. They are supreme in the realms of literature because of their intensity of emotion, psychological insight and powerful style.
- (vi) **The Roman Plays:** Though written at fairly wide intervals, they follow the lines of the tragedies and are based on North’s translation of Plutarch’s *Lives*. *Julius Caesar*, *Antony and Cleopatra* and *Coriolanus* belong to this group.
- (vii) **The Last Plays:** *Cymbeline*, *The Winter’s Tale* and *The Tempest* are the last plays, marking a befitting end to the career of the greatest dramatist in the English literary canon with their predominant note of reconciliation and forgiveness.

## NOTES

### 2.3.1 Features of the Plays

The features of Shakespearean plays are as follows:

- (i) **Originality:** Though the plots of his plays were largely borrowed (in keeping with the tradition of the age) with his Midas touch, he turned them into gold — impinging on them the mark of his originality by interweaving plot within plot as in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, by making history glow with the spirit of his imagination in *Macbeth* and by giving each of his plays a uniqueness which has made them immortal in literature.
- (ii) **Characters:** Shakespeare’s forte lay in characterization and in terms of output and variety, he is unrivalled in literature. His characters, irrespective of their historical or romantic background, have a sure touch of humanity that makes them plausible, keeping them within the range of the audience’s sympathy. Regarding Shakespeare’s rich gallery of portraits, Edward Albert says: ‘...the villain Iago is a man of resolution, intelligence and fortitude; the murderer Claudius (in *Hamlet*) shows affection, wisdom and fortitude; the peerless Cleopatra is narrow, spiteful, and avaricious; and the beast Caliban has his moments of ecstatic vision.’ Looking at his versatility, one cannot help but exclaim like Hamlet ‘What a piece of work is man!’

Another significant feature of Shakespeare’s characterization is his objectivity and though many have tried, none has achieved his ability to remain neutral to heroes (Hamlet, Othello and Lear) and villains (Claudius, Iago, Goneril and Regan) alike. Each of the characters, from the king to the clown, has a philosophy of his own. As Hamlet says:

*There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,  
Than are dreamt of in your philosophy.  
And Macbeth confesses in a soliloquy:  
Life’s but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale*

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

8. Name some of Shakespeare's plays which belong to 'The Early Comedies' category?
9. What are 'The Sombre Plays'?

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*signifying nothing.*

*For the melancholic philosopher Jacques in As You Like It:*

*All the world's a stage*

*And all the men and women merely players.*

And finally as Prospero points out: *We are such stuff As dreams are made on, and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.*

- (iii) **Metre:** The blank verse polished by Marlowe attains a brightness and shine in the hands of Shakespeare. He shows more range and variety than any other artist who dabbled in the use of the blank verse. The soliloquies of the great tragedies are a testimony to this fact, whether it is Macbeth

*Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow,*

*Creeps in this petty pace from day to day,*

*To the last syllable of recorded time;*

*And all our yesterdays have lighted fools*

*The way to dusty death.*

Or, Hamlet's *To be, or not to be: that is the question: Whether 'tis nobler in the mind to suffer The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, Or to take arms against a sea of troubles, And by opposing end them?*

- (iv) **Style:** Besides his dramatic gift, Shakespeare was essentially a poet. The beautiful songs interspersed in his plays show his poetic genius. His style reveals a consummate craftsmanship and is a combination of versification and rarity of images with accompanying music. Such a style moves easily into the highest flights of poetry as in *Twelfth Night*:

*That strain again! It had a dying fall:*

*O! it came o'er my ear like the sweet sound*

*That breathes upon a bank of violets,*

*Stealing and giving odour.*

*Iago's remark on seeing Othello already destroyed by jealousy*

*Not poppy, nor mandragora,*

*Nor all the drowsy syrups of the world*

*Shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep*

*Which thou ow'dest yesterday.*

*shows the beauty of the rhythm that brands Iago as an infernal villain.*

Shakespeare is, undoubtedly, a universal poet and dramatist. In Ben Jonson's words, he 'was not of an age, but for all time.' His genius has stood the test of time and his plays trace the drama of human life with its share of joys and sorrows. As Legoius points out:

*Free of every theory, accepting all of life, rejecting nothing, uniting the real and the poetic, appealing to the most various men, to a rude workman as to a wit, Shakespeare's drama is a great river of life and beauty. All who thirst for art or truth, the comic or the tender, ecstasy or satire, light or shade, can stop to drink from its waters, and at almost every instant of their changing moods find the one drop to shake their thirst.*

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## 2.4 ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

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*Julius Caesar* is thought to have been the play Shakespeare wrote for the opening of the new Globe Theatre in 1599. The printed version of the play appeared for the first time, seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the First Folio of 1623. The play appeared in the Folio as *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* but was listed as *The Life and Death of Julius Caesar* in the table of contents.

The majority of Shakespeare's information about the people and events in *Julius Caesar* was taken from the work of the Greek historian, Plutarch's *Lives of the Noble Grecians and Romans* translated in English by Sir Thomas North. North rendered the French translation of Plutarch's work into English.

*Julius Caesar*, the play, deals with actual historical events in Rome and explores the political and social issues. Political questions are central to the play. The play deals with the values of Roman Republicanism.

### 2.4.1 Act I

Let us look at the scene-wise summary of the play.

#### Act I, Scene I: A Street in Rome

The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than doing their daily work. The men receive indirect and condescending answers by the crowd, especially the cobbler. Eventually, Flavius and Marullus learn that the men are out to pay tribute to Caesar, who has had a recent victory on Pompey's sons. The feast of Lupercal has been combined with the celebration of Julius Caesar's victory over Pompey. The feast of Lupercal, a festival of fertility, was held on 15 February to honour Lupercus, god of flocks and herds. The commoners are rejoicing in the festivities by taking a holiday, dressed in their best clothes.

The tribunes chastise the tradesmen for their swift reversal of loyalties, from Pompey to Julius Caesar. They rebuke these commoners for showering praises on Caesar and rejoicing in his victory. They curse the revellers to be punished by gods and become nostalgic about Pompey and his glory. Flavius tells them to go and shed tears in river Tiber to mourn the victory of Caesar. Flavius and Marullus advise them to leave, which they do, seemingly feeling guilty. In order to lessen the celebrations in the honour of Caesar, Marullus and Flavius move around removing decorations from his statues and vandalizing anything that pays homage to Julius Caesar.

The celebrations of the common men are contrasted with the unhappiness of the tribunes, the official guardians of the rights of commoners, on the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. This puts the central conflict of the play into place. This scene reveals that there is a strong force, even within the government, that is against Caesar and afraid of his becoming too powerful. This conflict of interests further unfolds in the next scene when a full conspiracy against Caesar begins to take shape. It is evident that the officials do not want him to become politically stronger. Otherwise, they will have more to fear. The scene also demonstrates that the tribunes, while determined to avoid being controlled by a tyrant, are themselves behaving like tyrants.

## NOTES

## NOTES

The mob is established as a character that has its own set of characteristics and can be easily moved to change its mind on an issue with the help of rhetoric. When the tribunes remind the people of their fickleness that it was not long ago they stood at the same place celebrating the return of Pompey. When berated by the tribunes, the crowd feels ashamed and moves away from the street. They seem to easily switch their allegiances. These impressionable commoners will prove to be a great force in the turn of events in the play.

Marullus and Flavius chide the commoners for not carrying their tools. On regular days, men do not walk on streets without their tools, an indication of their profession. This is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade. Shakespeare often used Elizabethan references in his plays, regardless of the actual timeframe in which the story was taking place, hence, making it easy for the audience to connect with his work.

### **Act I, Scene II: A Public Place**

Caesar enters in a ceremonial procession, with his wife Calpurnia, and his senators, accompanied by a huge crowd. He reminds Calpurnia to stand in Antony's way as he runs his course race naked through the city striking bystanders with a goatskin thong. He gives the same order to Antony to which he gives his slavish acceptance saying whatever Caesar says will be performed. Amongst all the sounds of trumpets, a soothsayer warns Caesar to be cautious on ides of March, that is, the 15 March. Brutus repeats the warning of the soothsayer. Caesar dismisses the warning calling the soothsayer a dreamer.

All exit to witness the race, Brutus and Cassius stay. Brutus expresses his disinterestedness to enjoy the games, saying he lacks the vivaciousness and jest for life and its merriments like Antony. Cassius complains of Brutus' indifferent behaviour towards him which Brutus attributes to the conflicting emotions that he has been experiencing off late. No friend of Brutus, which includes Cassius, should be affected by it.

Cassius asks Brutus if he can see his own face to which Brutus replies that a person can see himself only through reflection in other things. Cassius insists on acting as a mirror to Brutus to show him what he himself does not know. He expresses his sadness on the ignorance of Brutus of his own worth which other respected Romans, except Caesar, praise. Admired by many for his great value, they wish to be guided by Brutus in these troubled times.

The spirits of Brutus are clouded with fear. He does not wish to seek what he does not have in himself. The cheering offstage reveals his fear and impels Brutus to believe that the public wants Caesar to be their king. Getting a hint from Brutus, Cassius manipulatively confirms from him about his intentions on Caesar being the king of Rome. Brutus clearly remarks, though he loves Caesar, he does not want him to become the king of Rome since that would not be in the common good of the country. He wishes to hear only about the welfare of people of Rome. He declares his intentions to look at honour and death indifferently if they bring no good to Rome. He loves honour more than he fears death. He declares his unwillingness to live under the oppression that threatens them. Cassius calls it a virtue.

Sensing the coldness of Brutus towards Julius Caesar, embittered Cassius launches a fierce verbal attack on Caesar. He begins with pointing at the physical infirmities of Caesar and narrates incidents from the past. Once upon a time, Caesar challenged Cassius to swim across river Tiber when the wild river roared. At this moment, when Caesar was nearly drowned he cried for help and it was Cassius who saved his life. Now, Cassius has to bow before Caesar who has become a god and Cassius is still a wretched man. Once in Spain, Caesar shook with fever, the colour of his lips was lost and his eyes, whose glances awed the world, had lost their lustre. He groaned in pain and the tongue that motivates the Romans who make his speeches immortal in their books, had cried for a drink to cure him. Calling Caesar a coward, Cassius remarks everyone is born as free as Caesar and he does not wish to stand in awe of someone whom he thinks is no better than him.

## NOTES

Cassius is amazed that such a feeble man Caesar should command the respect of the entire world and keep all the honour to himself. He believes that Caesar just strides a narrow world like a colossus and petty men like him honour him for his petty deeds. The fault is not in Caesar but in people who honour him. They have themselves chosen to be accepted as subordinates. Brutus and Caesar are just names, and when put together, it is Brutus who sounds fairer and weighs heavier than Caesar. There is no reason then why should Caesar's name be honoured more than Brutus. Caesar is not as great as he is thought to be. It is shameful time for Rome who has lost the breed of noble people. No age in history of Rome has had just one famous man.

More cheers, shouts and trumpets offstage worry Brutus. He believes the cheers indicate choice of people to heap more praise on Caesar.

Cassius tells Brutus not to be suspicious of his intentions reminding Brutus of the part played by his ancestor in dispensing tyranny from Rome. Brutus does not seem to be suspicious of Cassius' intentions. He is aware of the state of affairs in Rome and has already thought of the things Cassius talks about. Brutus is just reluctant to express himself on the political life of Rome at the moment. He assures Cassius that he will consider his words, listen to him patiently in future too, and will answer the issues later. Brutus feels ashamed of calling himself a Roman in these hard times. He is worried about the future of Rome if Caesar becomes the king. Cassius is glad to have been able to penetrate Brutus' mind and opinion on Caesar becoming a king.

After the games are over, Caesar returns with his attendants. Brutus notices anger on the faces of Caesar and Cicero and a pale look on Calpurnia's face.

Caesar warns Antony to be wary of Cassius. He suggests it is desirable to have fat people, who sleep well at night to be around him. Sleek headed, lean and hungry people like Cassius, who think too much are generally dangerous. Antony speaks for Cassius calling him a well-respected and noble Roman. Caesar gives his opinion of Cassius. He reads too much, is a close observer, and seems to understand the thinking of men. He loves no plays like Antony, hears no music, and he seldom smiles. And when he does, he smiles as if he mocks himself and scorns the spirit that could be moved to smile at anything. Such men are never at heart's ease when they see someone greater than themselves. That is why they are considered dangerous men. Such people should be feared. Caesar himself is not afraid of anyone. He asks Antony to come on his right side since his left ear is deaf.

## NOTES

Brutus pulls Casca out of the crowd when the train passes. Casca informs Brutus and Cassius that the crowd shouted out loud three times because Julius Caesar pushed the crown offered to him by Antony and every time more gently than before. It appeared that Caesar loathed to put off the coronet. Casca finds it all absurd since crown was actually a coronet wreathed with laurel. After a while, Caesar was speechless and fainted in the market place with foam coming out of his mouth. While Brutus calls it epilepsy, Cassius dismisses it as a tantrum. Casca reports that Caesar is feigning unconsciousness since every time he refused the crown, the crowd cheered louder. So, Caesar offered them his throat and fainted. On regaining his consciousness, Caesar desired the crowd to consider his mistakes to be his infirmities. Many women forgave him for all his misconducts. Casca opines, people of Rome will forgive Caesar even if stabs their mothers. Therefore, it is no better to pay heed. Caesar always faints when people do not act according to his pleasure and displeasure. Cicero too spoke but in Greek and Casca did not understand anything but people who understand Greek shook their heads and smiled at one another. Another important news is that Marullus and Flavius have been deprived of their tribuneship and exiled for pulling down the banners in Caesar's honour and praise.

As Casca leaves, Brutus comments that Casca who used to be clever and witty in his school days, has grown up into being excessively blunt. Cassius comments Casca has put up this rude behaviour so that people may be able to assimilate his mocking remarks. He has the potential to perform any bold and noble enterprise.

After Brutus leaves, Cassius reveals his doubts. Brutus is a noble man but he can sway from his honour. Noble minds should keep company of other noble minds so that they are not trapped. Caesar dislikes Cassius but likes Brutus. He plans to throw writings in Caesar's window as if they come from the citizen of Rome expressing high opinion of him. This will assure Caesar of his ambition. In the meantime, Cassius and his allies will execute their plan to depose Caesar. If this does not happen then they will have to see worse days than the present.

The political situation outlined in Act I Scene I is presented concretely on the stage. The tribunes are not the only ones who do not wish to accept Caesar as their king. It is a larger group of Roman elites, holding eminent positions in the politics of Rome, who despise Caesar. It is easy to sense an impending doom on the future of Rome with conspiracy brewing against Caesar. The huge crowd, both acknowledging and disclaiming Caesar, show that he has both friends and foes in the country.

The initial impression of Caesar reveals him as a dictator. He shows no consideration for his wife's feelings when he refers to her sterility in public. Caesar's desire to produce a male heir also indicates that he intended to become the ruler of Rome and wanted to continue his reign. The power politics is immediately brought to focus. Caesar authoritatively dictates others and gives abrupt orders. His orders are obeyed and his commands are executed. He instructs both Calpurnia and Antony to carry out his orders. Both instantly surrender to his orders.

The action points to Antony's strong physicality which is contrasted with Caesar's infirmities. Marc Antony, also known as Marcus Antonius, was related to Julius Caesar from his mother's side. He was the right hand of Julius Caesar, a loyal supporter in all his political pursuits. Antony shows his total commitment to Caesar.

The Act reveals the character of Brutus in conflict with his own emotions. On the one hand, he loves Caesar, and on the other he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue. Cassius too is aware of this bond of affection

existing between Brutus and Caesar. It is only when Brutus expresses his reluctance to see Caesar as the king of Rome that Cassius unfolds his plan. Since one can see one's face only in the reflection, Cassius, becomes a mirror to Brutus and tries to show what Brutus is capable of. The mirror as a reflection of the moral nature of man was a common literary device in Renaissance literature.

The character of Cassius is sharply distinguished from Brutus. While Brutus speaks of the common good, Cassius reveals his personal hatred for Caesar. More than holding a mirror to the virtues of Brutus, Cassius, in his magnificent description of the times he saved Caesar's life, accounts of himself as the heroic figure. His words are charged with jealousy and contempt. In his attempt to disregard Caesar, Cassius insists on his physical disabilities. Cassius is in a hurry to get rid of Caesar; Brutus is determined not to be rushed into any hasty decision. Caesar is precise in his judgment of Cassius' personality that he is a jealous man with sardonic humour, and one should be wary of people with such malicious disposition.

Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercalia, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloths made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and dogs and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. Then they ran throughout the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal is soon blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse. Caesar is superstitious too since he asks his wife to touch Antony in the middle of the race to become pregnant.

### **Act I, Scene III: A Street in Rome. There is a heavy storm withthunder and lightning.**

Casca complains to Cicero about not having seen such a storm dropping fire ever before. It seems either a war is going on among gods in heaven, or the world has angered the gods so much that they have sent destruction upon mankind. He grumbles of having seen some portents about their country. Cicero, not disturbed by the storm, remarks that individuals may construe things according to their understanding and experience.

Cassius does not hesitate to interpret things after his fashion. For him the storm is a fearful warning from heaven about the turbulent political situation in Rome. Cassius utilizes this opportunity to manoeuvre Casca to join him in the conspiracy. Cassius considers it to be a pleasant night for an honest man. He advises Casca to cast aside his fear and see the impatience of heaven through these natural happenings. He relates them with the turbulent political situation in Rome. Heaven has made nature an instrument of warning against unpropitious future. Indirectly referring to Julius Caesar, Cassius calls him more dreadful than this night, not mightier than himself. As Casca announces the crowning of Caesar as the king of Rome next day in the Senate, Cassius vows to commit suicide, thus, liberating himself from the bondage of the tyrant and forcing the tyrant to accept defeat. Making a rhetorical speech, Cassius remarks no one can hold the strength of the spirit. No tyrant can keep someone by force. He accuses the Romans of being Romans only in flesh and blood and not in spirit and action. Their actions are not manly. It is not Caesar, but the Roman citizens, who are responsible for the crippling condition of Rome. The Romans, like trash, have accepted to the rule of as base a person as Caesar. Casca is one of them, adds Cassius. Cassius successfully manipulates the situation and

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incites Casca into declaring his support for the conspiracy against Julius Caesar. Cassius says that the plan intends to do something honourable and dangerous, as bloody, fiery and terrible as the appearance of the sky and the night. Some noble-minded Romans, Pompey supporters, have already agreed to help him in executing his plan and only waiting for his further orders now.

Cinna, who is already a part of the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar, joins Casca and Cassius. He also mentions the portents he has seen. He insists that Brutus be on their side because people have a very high opinion of Brutus and their designs will be considered virtuous and worthy if Brutus joins them. To win Brutus, Cassius asks Cinna to execute a plan. He gives Cinna fabricated letters and directs him to keep one at his side table, one at the statue of old Brutus and throw one at Brutus' window. After which Cinna should join them at Pompey's Porch where other conspirators Decius, Brutus and Trebonius are already present. Cassius takes Casca with him to visit Brutus, whom he believes, has submitted his three parts to them already and the next conversation will win over the entire man Brutus on their side.

The fury and unnaturalness of the prodigies that accompany the storm are described with its vivid details. It points to the supernatural significance of these events. Shakespeare's plays, particularly tragedies, project a close relationship between the heavens, the natural world, and the human society. Disturbances in the heaven produce unnatural phenomena in the world of nature and political turmoil in the state. Any disorder or impending doom in the state would be mirrored in the natural world and in the heavens. The intimate relationship between these different realms of existence is conveyed through the imagery. It links the natural world with the political state of Rome. The unnatural portents reflect on the political upheaval planned by the conspirators. The storm conveys a sense of tumult and impending violence. But Cicero's wise and calm opinion that individuals may construe things according to their understanding and experience leaves the interpretation of the scary night open to judgment.

## 2.4.2 Act II

This section deals with Act II of the play.

### **Act II, Scene I: Brutus in his Garden**

Brutus, in his garden, contemplates on preserving the general good of Rome by killing Julius Caesar. Though, he does not have any personal cause to kill him. Caesar wants to be crowned the ruler of Rome. But his nature is like that of a snake. A crown will give him a sting making him more dangerous. Greatness is abused when it separates remorse from power. Caesar's feelings never take over his reason. Lowliness is young ambition's ladder. Once Caesar achieves his ambition of ruling over Rome, he will turn his back on those who have helped him to reach that position. He will scorn those at the lower rungs. Caesar is a serpent's egg who must be killed before hatching because once hatched it will be deadly.

Lucius gets a letter for Brutus that he found in his study. The letter makes a call for Brutus to wake up, strike and help Rome. Brutus has often got such letters

before. He promises to help Rome. Lucius confirms that next day is ides of March that is 15 March. Since Cassius first spoke against Caesar, Brutus has not slept. The time between the thought of a dreadful action and the first step taken to implement it is like a nightmare. Spirit and body are in conflict during that period and the condition of man is like that little kingdom that suffers the nature of a revolt.

Lucius announces the arrival of a few men, one of them is Cassius while the others have hidden their faces. The other conspirators are Casca, Decius, Cinna, Metellus Cimber, and Trebonius. Brutus tells himself, these people are plotters. In an aside, he says that conspiracy does not seek any dark place to hide; it hides in smiles and friendliness.

Cassius introduces each person to Brutus mentioning how each one of them respects Brutus and desires he had the same opinion of him that is shared by every noble Roman. Cassius wants Brutus to swear by his promise. A Roman shall do as he says or die for his words. Oaths are for priests, cowards, and suffering souls who welcome wrongs. The thought of taking oaths will stain the virtue of cause and the strength of spirits. Even if one of them breaks the promise, every drop of blood spilled by a Roman is tainted.

The group wants to include Cicero in their conspiracy. His experience will help them in giving a good opinion. People would know that his judgment ruled their hands. And the wild youth of Rome will be overshadowed by his age and dignity. Brutus declines the proposal to include Cicero since he never follows anything that other men have begun. Cassius proposes to kill Marc Antony too since he is much loved by Caesar. He could hurt them later upon the death of Caesar. Brutus disagrees to the proposition to kill Antony since he is just a limb of Caesar. If the head (Caesar) is cut off then the limb (Antony) will become useless. He cannot do anything more than being Caesar's right hand. The conspiracy is against the spirit, ways, actions and beliefs of Caesar, and not the person. If they can kill that spirit there would be no blood. But Caesar must bleed for it. Brutus explains that murder should be done boldly and not out of anger. Brutus wants to kill Caesar with respect. It should be a sacrifice and not cold-blooded murder. This will make the cause seem necessary, and commoners will call them cleansers, not murderers. Cassius insists on killing Antony as he would be dangerous for them because of the love he has for Caesar. Brutus find no reason to fear him because for all his love for Caesar, all he can do is kill himself or die of his grief. Since he enjoys sports and happy company, he will not kill himself. Trebonius opines Antony will only laugh at the murder of Caesar in future.

Cassius is in doubt about Caesar's appearance in the Capitol next day. Lately, he has been superstitious at the unusual terror of this night and the warning of the seers which may keep him from the Capitol today. Decius takes the charge to bring Caesar out of his house. Decius knows the art of taming Caesar. He intends to bring Caesar to the designated spot of murder by the eight hour.

Metellus suggests to include Ligarius in the group since he too hates Caesar. It was Caesar who scolded him for speaking well of Pompey. Brutus agrees to include Metellus in their conspiracy. He also instructs the group to behave like actors and warns not to reveal their purpose through their faces.

Brutus and his wife Portia are in a conversation. Portia is worried about her husband's health. She has noticed Brutus not being himself lately and is anxious to know the cause of his grief. Brutus agrees to reveal the secrets of his heart.

Ligarius has come to meet Brutus and he addresses him as the soul of Rome, a brave son of honourable parents who has revived his spirits. Personally, Brutus feels sick of the conspiracy, it weighs heavy on his heart. Ligarius follows Brutus even without knowing the true intention.

## NOTES

## NOTES

The scene shows the psychological disorder in Brutus' mind. The political confusion in Rome is paralleled by the confusion in Brutus' mind, and both are mirrored in the tumult of the storm. Brutus' thoughts are guided by his strong sense of duty. He abhors tyranny so much that he is prepared to kill the man whom he loves to prevent him from inflicting the slightest punishment to Rome. At the same time, he is perturbed about this decision which is evident in his attempts to justify the murder of Caesar and the description of his state of mind. He is rationally persuaded that he should kill Caesar, but is instinctively recoiling from the deed. Brutus' stand is further cleared as to why he does not want Caesar to be the king of Rome.

The internal conflict is evident by the outer conflict. The darkness outside suggests the darkness that will veil Rome. The storm is used to display the condition of Brutus' mind and heart. Oscillating between his friendship for Caesar and his commitment to the values of Rome, Brutus finally decides to kill Brutus. The outside turmoil presents the turmoil existing in the minds of other people. The storm and the ill omens are signs of disharmony in heaven as well as on the earth. It may also be interpreted as an indication of God's unacceptance of the plan to kill Caesar.

Cassius is able to win Brutus on their side. Most of the conspirators have personal motives and vendetta behind killing Caesar. Only Brutus wants him to be killed because of the good of Rome. The conspirators, except for Cassius underestimate the bond and the strength of Antony to react after the assassination of Caesar. Cassius alone could foresee what he is capable of. But others dismissed him as a mere frolicking person than a giant political force. It is he who will change the mind of the crowd with his rhetoric and turns them against the conspirators.

Brutus is also aware of the evil of conspiracy. It has to be covered even at night. The reference to Erebus in this Act was, in Greek mythology, to the dark underground passage to Hell. It was born of Chaos. Chaos was the primordial void that existed before order was created in the universe and from which all things, including the gods, proceeded. Immediately following the reference, Cassius and the other conspirators emerge from the dark, chaotic night and take their places in the dark and chaotic history of Rome that will follow the death of Caesar.

The scene of Brutus and his wife Portia in their garden is significant because we see Brutus first time in his private space. Brutus is gentle with his servant and respectful to his wife. He expresses concern over Portia's health. Brutus is a man who can feel deeply about people and their situations. He chooses to deny those feelings in public in an effort to maintain his honourable and stoic image. It is through Portia we come to know how much Brutus has changed.

Portia is a strong woman. She is proud of her lineage. She is not afraid to confront her husband demanding to know why he is so troubled. Portia does not allow Brutus to cover his activities with evasive stories about ill health. Portia reminds Brutus of her heritage and by association hopes to convince Brutus that she is stronger than the majority of wives. To prove her fearlessness, constancy, and equality, she shows Brutus the wound she has made on her thigh. The ability to suffer silently was highly prized as a Roman virtue and, by wounding herself, Portia seeks to prove herself constant and worthy of Brutus' trust. Brutus, in one of his most sincere and heartfelt responses tells Portia that she is a true and honourable wife. She is the one who can understand the true feelings of his heart.

## Act II, Scene II: Caesar's House

William Shakespeare:  
*Julius Caesar*

Caesar is worried about the general atmosphere and the appearance of the portents. The night is roaring, thundering and lightning. Calpurnia cried of Caesar's murder thrice in her dream. Caesar commands the priest to make sacrifices to appease the gods and wants to hear the news of the success of the sacrifices. He urges to go out but his wife stops him because of the omens in which Calpurnia has never believed before. Calpurnia describes the omens. She heard that a lioness gave birth in the streets of Rome, graves opened and gave up their dead, fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, blood drizzled upon the Capitol, the noise of battle filled the air, horses neighed and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked in the streets. These uncanny incidents happened in the city and she is perturbed by them.

### NOTES

According to Caesar, nothing that the gods have planned can be avoided and these omens can be for anyone as much as for him. However, comets are seen and the heavens themselves blaze forth only for the death of princes, not for the death of beggars. The omens foreshadow the calamity to strike a royal personage and not a commoner. Caesar is adamant to go, for he believes cowards die many times before their deaths while the valiant dies only once. Men do not fear death since death is a necessary end; it will come when it is destined. The servant also comes with the news from the priests that Caesar should not go out of his house since they did not find the heart in the beast upon its sacrifice. Caesar says he would be a beast without a heart if he stayed at home out of fear. Cowardice is not Caesar. Danger and Caesar are like two lions from the same litter, and he is more dangerous than danger itself. So Caesar shall go to the Capitol. According to Calpurnia, Caesar's wisdom has been overcome by his confidence. She suggests him to send Antony to inform the senate that he is unwell. Just when Caesar agrees to his wife's request, Decius comes in to take him to the Senate.

Caesar tells Decius to inform the Senate that he will not come. Decius insists on telling the real reason behind not going to the Senate. He tells the Senate that Calpurnia does not want Caesar to go out of the house. She saw a dream last night in which Caesar's statue, sprayed blood like a fountain with hundred spouts. Many joyful Romans came smiling and bathed their hands in it. She sees this as an omen. Calpurnia begs him on her knees to stay at home.

Decius reinterprets the dream for Caesar as a positive sign. He explains the dream as a vision fair and fortunate, the statue spouting blood from many pipes, in which so many smiling Romans bathed means that his blood will revive Rome. Many great men shall come to Caesar for his blessings and recognition. He further adds that the senate has decided to give the crown of Rome to mighty Caesar this day. If he does not come to the senate today, their minds may change. If Caesar hides himself because his wife asked him to, the Senate will make a mockery of him. They will whisper that Caesar is afraid. He asks to be pardoned for making bold statements and also because he loves Caesar. Caesar, instigated by Decius, decides to go. Just then Publius, Brutus, Ligarius, Metellus, Casca, Trebonius, and Cinna come and Antony follows. Ironically, Caesar asks the conspirators to be near him. Caesar welcomes the conspirators into his home and invites them to share wine with him. It can be interpreted as the biblical reference to the Last Supper. Caesar, ironically, wants to depart with the group to the senate. Brutus, in an aside feels saddened saying his so-called friends are not true.

## NOTES

Caesar's personality is further revealed. He cannot be accepted as a coward, no matter what may come. He can easily be manipulated in the name of courage and mettle. He is flattered by Decius. Caesar does want the crown and immediately wishes to go on listening to Decius about the senate's decision to offer him the crown today. Decius shows his dexterity in manipulating Caesar by convincing him to go the senate. He uses flattery to appeal to Caesar's vanity. Decius articulates one of the major themes present in *Julius Caesar*, the manipulation of people and circumstances to achieve one's own end. Others look happy but not Brutus. He is pained by the whole conspiracy; however, he does not express his feelings of pain explicitly. He comes across as a tormented soul.

The husband and wife scene clearly depicts the inferior position of women. Caesar puts on the same public image even in his privacy with his wife. Frightened Calpurnia is agitated by Caesar's refusal to acknowledge the premonitions of gods. For the first time, she accuses him of letting his wisdom be destroyed by his pride. Caesar does not mind telling Decius that Calpurnia begged him not to go.

The sighting of a comet was considered to be the sign of death of a monarch. In July (the month of Caesar's birth) of 44 BC, four months after Caesar's death, a comet, so bright that it could be seen during the day, was observed for seven days in the skies above Rome. Octavius Caesar utilizes the phenomenon to encourage the myth of Caesar's deification. The beast was without a heart. The dream of Calpurnia will come true this day. His conspirators will murder him.

### **Act II, Scene III: Between Caesar's House and the Senate**

Artemidorus enters reading a letter he has written for Caesar. The letter says that Caesar should be cautious of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus, Decius and Ligarius. They are not his friends. There is but one mind in all these men and it is bent against Caesar. He has to look around if he fears death because feeling safe makes a conspiracy easier. He prays for his well-being. Artemidorus' heart aches that virtue cannot remain devoid of envy's reach. If Caesar reads it he may live, if not, the fates are working with the traitors. This scene informs that others are also aware of the conspiracy. The effort of Artemidorus confirms that Caesar does have his supporters and well-wishers who want him to be saved.

According to Plutarch, Artemidorus was a professor of rhetoric. He had taught and was associated with many of Brutus' confidants. Therefore, he knew of the plot against Caesar. Artemidorus, listing the conspirators by name, has put his information in a letter that he intends to convey to Caesar as he approaches the Capitol. His attempt to save Caesar illustrates that Caesar has supporters as well as enemies, and, for the first time in the play, the conspirators are referred to as traitors.

### **Act II, Scene IV: Before Brutus' House**

In this scene, Brutus shares the secret of Caesar's assignation with Portia. She is anxious to hear news from the Capitol. She is also afraid that in her nervousness she might reveal the secret and put her husband into danger. Burdened with the secrets, she has become hysterical to such an extent that she hears noises. Portia sees the soothsayer and asks him where he is going. The soothsayer is on his way to the Capitol to warn Caesar to guard himself, only if Caesar pays heed to his warning. The reappearance of the soothsayer at this point increases the tension. Portia, overcome by the emotional turmoil of the day, becomes unconscious. She

blames her polite nature for her weakness. She offers prayers for the success of her husband and exits from the scene.

William Shakespeare:  
*Julius Caesar*

The scene brings forth another trait of Brutus that he is faithful towards his wife. He had promised to disclose everything that keeps him awake. Brutus has indeed kept his promise to reveal all his secrets to his wife. Portia calls upon constancy to help her guard the secret. She does not want her heart and tongue to have contrary interests. Portia's condition reveals her anxiety. She finds it difficult to keep the secret in her bosom.

## NOTES

### 2.4.3 Act III

This section gives an overview of the summary of Act III.

#### Act III, Scene I: Outside the Capitol

This scene takes place in Rome, in front of the Capitol. A crowd, including Artemidorus and the soothsayer, awaits the audience. Trumpets sound. Caesar, Antony, Brutus, and all the other conspirators enter the stage.

Caesar mockingly tells the soothsayer that the ides of March has come; soothsayer retorts that it has not passed yet. Artemidorus, giving the letter to Caesar, insists he should read it right away as it concerns him. Caesar does not read it. Popilius wishes Cassius good luck for the farewell. Cassius is troubled thinking their plan has been discovered. Brutus asks him not to worry. Trebonius takes Antony away with him.

Inside the Senate, Metellus bows in front of Caesar. Caesar insults him saying his brother has been banished for a reason. If he bows, prays and begs for him, he too will be kicked out of his way like a dog. Caesar praises himself saying he does not act unjustly and will not change his mind without a just cause. The laws are the same for all. Brutus speaks in the favour of Metellus' brother Publius Cimber, and requests that he should be called back. Cassius joins them in begging for Publius. Caesar eloquently praises himself and says that he is as constant as the northern star, which is unlike all other stars in the sky. The skies are filled with million sparks. All are fire and everyone does shine, but only one holds its place. The world is the same, all men are flesh and blood but only one keeps his strong position and does not move. While all men kneel, Casca is the first one to stab Caesar, others follow him and Brutus is the last one to stab Julius Caesar. Julius' last words are 'Even you, Brutus' as he dies falling on the ground.

Cinna shouts 'Liberty! Freedom! Tyranny is dead.' According to Brutus, Caesar's death symbolizes that ambition's debt is paid. They request the senate to stay calm. They ask Publius to stop if any of Caesar's friends tries to harm them. Brutus does not want anyone else except the conspirators to pay for it or get hurt if at all. Antony flees to his house, stunned men, wives, and children stare, cry out, and run as if the world was coming to an end. Cassius says by cutting off twenty years of Caesar's life they have cut off so many years of anticipatory death. Brutus calls upon the murderers to bend and fill their hands with Caesar's blood up to the elbows, and smear their swords as well with his blood. He asks them to walk in the marketplace, waving their blood drenched daggers over their heads, and loudly screaming 'Peace, freedom, and liberty!' Cassius remarks they will be remembered in history as men who gave liberty and freedom to Rome.

## **NOTES**

Antony's servant brings his message for Brutus. Brutus is noble, wise, brave, and honest. Caesar was mighty, bold, royal, and loving. Brutus feared, loved and honoured him. If Brutus will let Antony come to him in safety, and tell why Caesar deserved to die, he will show Brutus' due respect and love for him. He will follow Brutus in his new role, with all true faith. Calling Antony wise and valiant, Brutus sends the servant to tell Antony to come and meet him and all his questions will be answered.

Antony enters and seeing the body of Caesar says mighty Caesar lies so low, all his conquests, glories, triumphs, has shrunk to this small size. Antony says he is unaware of the intentions of Brutus and the other conspirators. If they intend to kill him then there is no better hour than Caesar's hour of death and no weapons worth half as much as their swords made rich with the noblest blood. There will not be any better time and place to die than next to Caesar and by those bloody hands which still stench and smoke.

Brutus requests Antony not to beg for his death. They may appear cruel and bloody but their hearts are full of pity. Just as fire drives out fire so does pity drives out pity. The murderers are full of pity for the wrongs suffered by Rome which has ultimately resulted in the assassination of Julius Caesar. But for Antony, there is just kind love and respect. Cassius adds that Antony will have a strong say in the selection of the leaders of Rome. Antony shakes each bloody hand in alliance, saying he can be seen either as a coward or a flatterer. It would grieve Caesar's spirit, more than his death. He expresses his love for Caesar. Antony extols Caesar's courage and asks for making peace with his murderers. Antony remarks that Caesar is laid on the ground like a deer struck by many princes.

Cassius doubts Antony's intentions as Antony offers his friendship but demands the reason for killing Caesar. He wants to know in what ways Caesar would be dangerous. Brutus says, listening to the reasons for killing Julius Caesar, even his son would be satisfied. Antony wants his friend's body to be brought to the market place so that he can speak at his funeral. Cassius asks Brutus if Antony's speech at Caesar's funeral can deeply move the people. Brutus decides to be the first one to speak on Caesar's funeral listing the reasons for his assassination. Brutus makes it clear to Antony that he may praise Caesar but will not speak a word against him and his friends. Antony agrees. All exit except Antony. Antony cries with a saddened heart. He asks for forgiveness for being meek and gentle with Caesar's murderers. Calling Caesar a piece of earth, his ruins be that of the noblest man that ever lived in the tide of times. He curses the hands that killed this noble blood. A curse shall fall upon the limbs of men. Antony predicts a violent civil war that will shake Italy. Blood and cruelty will become common. Caesar's spirit, eager for revenge, will cry havoc.

Antony gets the information that Octavius Caesar is on his way as Julius Caesar had sent him a letter to come to Rome. Octavius is camping just 20 miles from Rome. Octavius' servant sees the dead body of Caesar and cries. Antony commands the servant to report about the turmoil in Rome and cautions him it is dangerous for him to stay here. Antony asks the servant to help him to take Caesar's body to the marketplace. He decides to make a speech and see what is the reaction of the common public to this act of assassination.

### **Act III, Scene II: In the Marketplace**

Brutus addresses the citizens of Rome and tells them the reasons for killing Julius Caesar. He requests them to be patient until the end of his speech. He requests them

to judge him wisely. Brutus' love of Caesar was no less than a friend. He weeps for Caesar whom he loved and respected for his courage. Brutus rose against Caesar not because he loved Caesar any less, but that he loved Rome more. He did not want the citizens of Rome to die as slaves. He would rather have Caesar dead, and live as free men. No one in Rome is so low to live a life of a slave; no one will be vile not to love his country. Antony comes with the body of Caesar. Brutus informs the citizens that Antony was not involved in killing Caesar, but does benefit from it. He, like all the citizens of Rome, shall have a place in the ruling of their country. Brutus ends his speech saying just as he killed his best friend for the good of Rome; he will have the same dagger for himself when it shall please Romans to require him dead. Citizens praise Brutus and some shout to give honour to Caesar. While others are elated that Rome is rid of Caesar, the tyrant.

## NOTES

Antony starts the funeral speech. He says that he has come to bury Caesar and not to praise him. The evil that men do lives after them and their good deed is often buried with their dead body. The same will happen with Caesar. Addressing Brutus as noble again and again, Antony says, if he said that Caesar was ambitious then he must be so and he has paid for his ambitions.

Rhetorically, Antony starts praising Caesar as a faithful friend who was always just to him. Caesar brought many captives to Rome, whose ransoms filled the public treasury. When the poor cried, Caesar wept. Yet Brutus says that Caesar was ambitious. On the feast of Lupercalia, Caesar was presented with the kingly crown three times, and every time he refused. Here he stands not to refute Brutus but to speak what Antony knows of Caesar. All the Roman citizens loved Caesar at one time, not without cause. What has now stopped them from mourning for him? Antony cries that men have lost their reason. He says he will not wrong Brutus and his allies; he will wrong Caesar, himself and the Romans. He mentions Caesar's will, which if the Roman come to know of, they would rush to kiss dead Caesar's wounds and dip their handkerchiefs in his blood, and beg one strand of his hair for memory. Refusing to read the will, Antony claims that the crowd will be moved by it and he will wrong the honourable men Brutus and his friends who killed Caesar. Citizens call them traitors, murderers, and villains and urge Antony to read the will. He asks the citizens to make a ring around Caesar's corpse. He shows them the marks where he has been stabbed by Brutus and his allies. Brutus' cut was the unkindest of all because Caesar dearly loved him. All of them cry looking at Caesar's corpse drenched in blood. Now they shout out for revenge. Antony says he is not here to steal their hearts. He is not a fine speaker as Brutus.

Moreover, if these wise and honourable men have killed Caesar then there must have been a good reason. He does not want to stir their feelings. He would let the wounds talk for them. But if he were Brutus and Brutus were Antony, there would be an Antony who would stir the spirits of nation until every wound of Caesar would cry out, and move the very stones of Rome to rise in mutiny. As the citizens are ready to go and kill Brutus, Antony stops them to hear the will. It grants every Roman citizen 75 drachmas. He has also left all his walks, his private arbors, and new-planted orchards along the Tiber river for the Roman citizens and their heirs to enjoy forever. This was Caesar. Such men rarely come to earth to rule. Citizens exit with the body of Caesar.

A servant brings the news of the arrival of Octavius at Rome who waits at Caesar's house along with Lepidus. Brutus and his friends have fled Rome like madmen.

## NOTES

This scene reveals information about Antony more than anyone else. The fear of Cassius that if Antony is left alive he will avenge Caesar comes true. Antony emerges as a strong politician who has the ability to turn the tide in his favour with his words. He is a loyal friend of Caesar and loved him dearly. With his heart set on taking revenge on the murderers of Caesar, he commands the attention of the crowd, convinces them that Caesar was not as ambitious as he was thought to be, aroused the sentiments of the crowd, turns them into a blood thirsty and violent mob, who kills Cinna the poet in their rage. The mob here displays its tendency of being persuaded easily through words alone.

### **Act III, Scene III: Street in Rome**

Cinna, the poet, had a dream that he feasted with Caesar. It indicates that Cinna feels that what has happened to Caesar will also happen to him, that is, he will be killed. He will share the same fate as Caesar. He does not want to wander outside but something pulls him not to be on the street. Cinna encounters a hysterical mob. They demand to know his name. As soon as he says his name is Cinna they do not wait to listen his complete answer. He is mistaken to be Cinna the conspirator and is murdered.

The wild crowd incited by Antony's passionate funeral speech is looking for revenge. Innocent Cinna, the poet becomes a victim of the mob's mentality that overpowers reason completely. The incident sets the stage for civil strife in Rome.

### **2.4.4 Act IV**

This section give an overview of the summary of Act IV.

### **Act IV, Scene I: A House in Rome. Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus**

The triumvirate (Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus) discusses who among the opponents should die. They also discuss how they can cheat the people of Rome from the inheritance left to them in Caesar's will. Antony makes it clear that all the conspirators should die, including Lepidus' brother and Publius, Octavius' sister's son. Antony sends Lepidus to fetch Caesar's will. Antony calls Lepidus an unimportant man, fit to be sent on errands and is not sure to share power equally with Octavius and Antony. Octavius mocks Antony for taking advice from Lepidus as to who will be punished. Antony says he took advice to lay these honours on this man to ease the burden of some of the blame which Lepidus will carry as a donkey carries groaning gold and sweating under the load, either led or driven, as they point the way. And once he takes their treasure where they want, they will take down his load and turn him out like a donkey, to shake his ears and graze in the pastures. Though, Octavius says Lepidus has proven himself and is a brave soldier. Antony compares Lepidus to his horse who has also proven his worth for which he is given hay. He is a creature whom Antony has taught to fight, to turn, to stop, to go ahead. His body is controlled by Antony's spirit. Lepidus is just like that; fit to be thought of as a property. Antony informs Octavius of Brutus and Cassius raising armies and suggests to act in the right away. They need to prepare for war by gathering their most trusted friends to form armies.

The time between Act III, Caesar's funeral and Act IV, the formation of the second triumvirate, covers a period of more than a year. The second triumvirate was formed by three Romans—Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Antony and Octavius

opposed each other but for the political stability of Rome they came together. They both exhibited power struggles and their differences openly, but remained united in their purposes. The scene exhibits the futility of the motivations of Brutus to kill Caesar. Instead, Rome experienced civil war, differences between the senators, and battles. Not harmony but discord is witnessed by Rome.

## NOTES

### **Act IV, Scene II: An Army Camp, near Sardis**

Brutus is camping with his army in Sardis. He has sent for Cassius. Lucilius tells Brutus that Cassius received him politely but not with the same warmth and friendliness as he showed him in the past. Brutus replies when love begins to decay, it becomes forced ceremony. There are no tricks in plain and simple faith. But hollow men are like horses before a race. They promise spirit and make a brave show, but during the race, they break down, hence, failing in the test.

Cassius arrives and accuses Brutus of doing him wrong. To which Brutus says if he cannot wrong his enemies how can he do wrong to his brother. Brutus stops him from any argument in front of the army. The army should see only their love; else their morale will be affected. Cassius can vent his anger in Brutus' tent.

The relationship between Brutus and Cassius has declined over the period. The issue of friendship once again comes to the fore. Brutus clearly indicates that friendship between the two has deteriorated.

### **Act IV, Scene III: In Brutus' Tent**

Cassius complains that Brutus publicly accused Lucius Pella of taking bribes. Since Cassius knows him, he writes a letter speaking for his side, but Brutus ignores him. Brutus accuses Cassius of having an itching palm and of selling honours for gold, to men who do not deserve them. A heated argument ensues between them and Brutus says he killed Caesar for justice and he will not let Cassius do any fraud. Brutus also says that he will not raise gold and money by evil means. He will not behave with his friends like Cassius did. Cassius feels Brutus has split his heart. He questions Brutus' definition of friendship. A friend should accept the faults of his friend rather than highlight them. But Brutus has made Cassius' faults look greater than they are. Cassius accuses him of not loving him while Brutus says it is his faults that he does not support.

Heartbroken Cassius does not mind young Octavius and Antony comes and takes revenge upon Octavius alone. Cassius is weary of the world as he is hated by the one he loves like his brother. This brother (Brutus) scolded him like a slave, listed all his faults and threw back at him. He weeps and offers his dagger to Brutus, tells Brutus to kill him. Cassius tells him to strike him like he did Caesar. The more he hated Caesar, the more he loves him. Commenting on Cassius' anger Brutus compares it with a flint that bears spark. They make peace.

Brutus says he is sick with grief. Portia, his wife is dead. She was depressed and swallowed burning coals. Cassius and Brutus agree that Octavius and Antony have made themselves very strong. Others join them for wine and war strategy.

Antony and Octavius are heading towards Phillipi with their mighty army. Octavius, Antony, and Lepidus have put hundred senators to death and seized their property. Antony also ordered the killing of Cicero and Octavius supported it. Brutus wants to march towards Phillipi while Cassius does not want to do that. Cassius shows disagreement but Brutus listens to none. Finally, Cassius agrees.

Brutus sees the ghost of Caesar in his tent, which terrifies him. The ghost calls himself the evil spirit of Brutus and tells him that he will meet him at Philippi. He sends his servant with a message for Cassius to leave with his forces early morning and he will follow them.

## NOTES

The clash between Brutus and Cassius is indeed a clash between idealism and realism. The clash highlights the issues of ethics and morality. Cassius is a realist who understands that an army cannot be maintained without huge amount of money. This sum cannot be raised ethically; therefore, Cassius resorted to bribery. In times of need it should be considered deprived. Brutus, living up to his ethics, does not subscribe to Cassius under any circumstance. He condemns bribe taking, it is corruption. It is ironical because for all his idealism and ethics, Brutus led the group of conspirators into killing Caesar.

The argument between Brutus and Cassius becomes a childish quarrel. Brutus belittles and intimidates Cassius. Throughout the argument, he asserts his moral and ethical superiority. His ego increases as the scene progresses and he resembles Caesar evermore in being a dictator. The disintegration of the argument also shows the decline of Cassius' personality who appeared confident and unruffled while conspiring a murder. Brutus eclipsed Cassius with his arrogance and conceit. It is the same Cassius who manipulated Brutus, Casca and others. The emotional side of Cassius is foregrounded. He renounces his own better judgment to please Brutus. He displays his love and friendship for Brutus and feels betrayed. He is dejected and subdued.

The short episode of the poet and his earnest advice to love and be friends carries deeper overtones. The original motive behind killing Caesar is completely lost. The promise of holding up to the ideals of republic in Rome is crushed. No one is seen holding the flag of love for Rome and Romans, love for freedom, love between friends, love for the country, and love of the Roman ideals. The poet, doing justice to his job, lays bare the truth. It is only ambition, for which Caesar was assassinated, that steers the politics of Rome. Rome is on the verge of annihilation. Brutus dismisses the poet as an empty and vulgar fool, thereby disregarding everything that he endorsed.

The appearance of the ghost is not a figment of Shakespeare's imagination. It has been taken from Plutarch's *Lives*. The ghost identifies itself as the evil spirit of Brutus. The ghost can be taken as the manifestation of Brutus. It may be the guilty conscience of Brutus or his troubled mind. From the beginning, we have been introduced to the internal conflict in Brutus on the conspiracy to kill Caesar. The mayhem that Rome witnesses, subconsciously troubles him more for being the cause of chaos and immoral act of murder. The ghost may also be taken as the ghost of Caesar fulfilling Antony's prophecy that the ghost of Caesar will appear, as an omen of Brutus' death.

### 2.4.5 Act V

This section gives an overview of the summary of Act V.

#### **Act V, Scene I: The Plain of Philippi**

The two camps of Antony-Octavius and Brutus-Cassius prepare for a battle. A messenger brings the news of arrival of the enemy forces. Antony commands Octavius to fight from the left. First Octavius refuses and finally agrees. Octavius

is being referred to as Caesar by Antony. He asks for Antony's instruction to attack but Antony wants Brutus' army to attack first. Brutus inquires is it for verbal combat they have stopped, since good words are better than bad strokes. Antony mocks at Brutus for his good words delivered with bad strokes. He means the hole that he made in Caesar's heart, crying 'Long live! Hail, Caesar!'

## NOTES

Cassius tells Antony that the strength of his blows is yet unknown. But his words, at Caesar's funeral, robbed the bees of their honey. He compares Antony's words with honey; they were eloquent to move people into frenzy. Angrily, Antony takes on Brutus and Cassius, calls them villains, who in the guise of being friends, licking Caesar's feet and with flattery, attacked Julius Caesar and killed him. Cassius reminds Brutus of the advice he had given to kill Antony alongside Caesar. If Cassius' words were respected, Antony would not have stung them with his words on the battlefield. Octavius insults Brutus and Cassius saying neither will have the honour to kill Octavius. He draws his sword and vows to avenge thirty three wounds inflicted on Julius Caesar. Brutus tells Octavius that he will not die at the hands of traitors unless he brings them along. Octavius remarks he will not die by Brutus' sword. Offended Brutus tells young Octavius, if he had been from a noble family like Brutus himself he would not have got a better death than to die at Brutus' hands. Octavius was just twenty-one year old at this time. Cassius insults both Caesar and Antony, calls Octavius a peevish school boy worthless of the honour to die with the sword of Brutus and Antony. Antony and Octavius leave challenging Brutus and his company.

Cassius says everything is at stake now. While Brutus and Lucilius talk apart, Cassius tells Messala that it is his birthday. He wants Messala to be a witness to the battle that was fought against his will just as Pompey fought a battle with Julius Caesar at Pharsalia against his better judgment and was defeated. This refers to the Epicurean way of life. Epicurus was a Greek philosopher and Cassius as a believer in his teachings, would not have admitted the evidence of omens. But now Cassius has changed his mind, he gives credit to omens to predict the future. While coming from Sardinia two eagles perched on his soldiers and feed on their flesh. All those who accompanied them to Phillipi have left. In their place ravens, crows and kites fly over their heads and look down on them as if they are prey. Their fatal shadows are cast over them like a canopy. He says he is full of new spirit now and ready to face the dangers of war with fortitude.

Cassius and Brutus do not know whether they will see each other again, therefore, they talk to decide what to do if they lose the battle. Brutus does not wish to commit suicide since he believes in the Stoic philosophy which considers suicide cowardly. Till the time of his death he will patiently await the judgment of providence. Cassius asks him if he will be ready to be led in triumph through the streets of Rome if they lose the war. Brutus refuses to be taken hostage in chains on the streets of Rome. They leave to end the work begun on the Ides of March. Brutus and Cassius feel that they may lose the war, therefore, bid farewell to each other. Cassius says if they meet again they will greet each other with a smile and if they do not then this parting will be a good one.

From the conversation between Antony and Octavius, we come to know that Brutus and Cassius have descended from the hills onto the plains and Antony is amazed as well as thankful at the turn of the events. It was Brutus' unwise decision and Cassius confirms it while talking to Messala. Cassius, who could manipulate Brutus was now being led into unwise decision by him. He has definitely changed



## NOTES

by now. He submits to the will of Brutus even against his better judgment leading himself into a life-threatening situation. He shows his discontentment with Brutus but only to Messala. His refers to birds namely, eagle, raven, kite and crows who are associated with death. His belief in Epicurean philosophy that gods do not meddle with human events gives way to the Stoic philosophy of predestined fate. The scene also reveals the differences between Octavius and Antony who are together only against the same enemy.

### **Act V, Scene II and III: The Battlefield**

Brutus' men are fighting with Octavius' army while Cassius' army is battling against Antony's men. Brutus gives orders to Messala to command the whole army to come down from the heights and attack Caesar's camp since they lack the fighting spirit. Brutus' army overpowers Octavius' army. Brutus sends the news of victory to Cassius. Cassius' army is fighting with Antony's men. Brutus' men instead of helping Cassius and his men start celebrating their premature victory.

Cassius is defeated by Antony and Antony after reaching his tents informs Pindarus of his victory. Cassius sends Titans to see whose men are they in his tent and tells Pindarus to climb up the hill and look for Titans. The day of his birth will also be the day of his death, says Cassius. Pindarus tells him that Titans has been captured by the enemies. Cassius asks Pindarus, his slave to kill him. Pindarus stabs Cassius who dies. His last words denote the fact that Caesar is avenged with the same sword that stabbed him. Pindarus runs far away from Rome, to his freedom. Brutus won over the troops of Octavius and Antony won over Cassius' troops. Titinius comes back to give the news of Brutus' win just to see that Cassius is dead, who would have thought they have lost the battle. He says Cassius misunderstood everything. He crowns Cassius, calls him the sun of Rome. Messala regrets the misunderstanding on Cassius' part. He leaves to give the news of Cassius' death to Brutus to whose ears it will sound like darts. Titinus wishes that Cassius had understood well the victorious shouts. He makes Cassius wear the garland Brutus has given him. He takes Cassius' sword and asks the gods to allow him to take his life, thus, killing himself.

Brutus enters with Messala, young Cato and others. When he sees Cassius and Titinus, he calls Julius Caesar mighty even after death whose spirit moves around in the battlefield inflicting wounds on their bodies. He calls Cassius the last of the Romans, there will be no one of his kind ever. He owes more tears to Cassius than he can shed. Brutus sends his body for funeral. Brutus, with others, leaves for the battlefield to try their fortune the second time.

In this Act, Cassius is overcome with melancholy. He has resigned to his fate and is almost sure to die. Brutus says with the death of Cassius, the ideals of freedom and liberty of Rome held dear by both are thrown away. Brutus does not exhibit pain on Cassius' death in public. He does not wish to see the funeral also because that would make him emotionally incapacitated.

### **Act V, Scene IV and V: The Battlefield**

Young Cato calls himself the enemy of all tyrants. He dies fighting. Lucilius, pretending to be Brutus, is captured by Antony's soldier. Lucilius says he has surrendered only to die. He tells Antony that Brutus is safe and no one can capture Brutus alive. Gods will defend Brutus and if they find him alive or dead, he will be

true to himself. Impressed by Lucilius' love and loyalty to Brutus, he commands his soldiers to keep Lucilius alive. He likes to keep such men as friends and not as enemies. Antony tells his soldiers to find out Brutus and inform him in Octavius' tent. He suggests the soldier to kill him and then kill Brutus that would give him honour. They have actually captured a soldier who is posing as Brutus.

Brutus has lost the final battle. He tells his friend, his fellow soldiers about the appearance of Caesar's ghost several times to him both at Sardis and Philippi. He knows he has to die now. He asks Strato to hold his sword and runs into it. Brutus dies saying he did not kill Caesar with even the half the goodwill with which he kills himself. Octavius comes to look for Brutus. Strato tells him no one can conquer Brutus. Brutus alone has conquered Brutus. No other man gains honour by his death.

Octavius declares to accept all those who served Brutus into his service. Messala gives permission to Strato to go in the service of Octavius. Antony respectfully calls Brutus the noblest Roman of them all who killed Caesar because all the other conspirators killed Caesar out of envy. Brutus alone killed Caesar for the good of Rome. Octavius offered Brutus all the respect and rites of burial because of his virtue.

The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators. Octavius speaks the last words of the play, thus, establishing himself as the dominant figure of authority in the new regime. This new Caesar becomes the most powerful force in the history of Rome.

## NOTES

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## 2.5 THEMES AND LITERARY DEVICES

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Let us study the major themes and literary devices used in the play *Julius Caesar*.

### Themes

Rome is the setting of *Julius Caesar* and the focus is on the Roman republic and its ideals. Republicanism was a political position which was inherently challenging to the absolute monarchy. The question central to the play is whether Caesar actually had the ambition to become a king, and thereby establish his authoritarian rule. In this regard, the perspective of various characters is taken into account. Brutus, Cassius and the other conspirators judge all his actions to be ambitious. Ambition in the Elizabethan sense meant to be all-powerful. Antony, in the funeral speech, recounts the qualities which do not make him ambitious enough to be a threat to the Roman republic and its people and, hence, be murdered. Caesar's assassination is presented from conflicting perspectives of Brutus and Antony during the funeral speeches. Caesar's ambition is used as a reason by Brutus to justify his murder. Ironically, the assassination only leads to civil war in Rome, disturbing the general harmony and peace of Rome, not intended by the conspirators.

The public versus the private space is an important theme in the play. Most of the play is set in the public spaces of Rome. In Act II, Brutus and Caesar are found in their respective houses. In their private spaces too these statesman are never alone. Brutus opens up to himself in his own house. He is gentle to his servant and respectful and caring towards Portia. In private, Caesar, too, is alarmed by the portents. He instructs his servant to have the priests sacrifice an animal. As soon as Calpurnia enters, Caesar again wears his public mask and once again speaks with pride. Even with his wife, the privacy of his own house, Caesar is reluctant to part

### Check Your Progress

10. How does the play *Julius Caesar* begin?
11. Give an example of the use of superstition in the play.
12. What are the omens witnessed by Calpurnia in her dream?
13. How is the death of Caesar avenged?

## NOTES

with his glorified and conceited image. Portia is able to assert her authority over Brutus who gives her advice to him. Caesar does not pay heed to his wife's words.

Friendship is also a vital topic for consideration in the play. Brutus who claims to love Caesar as a true friend leads the conspiracy to murder him. The conspirators are mostly men who were either pardoned by Caesar as prisoners of war or were honoured with positions of power in the senate. Brutus tries to choose between his friend and Rome, and he chooses Rome. Even Brutus is pursued to join the conspiracy not for friendship but because he is seen as noble and respectful by the plebeians. His presence will make the immoral act acceptable and worthy. Antony is a loyal friend of Caesar till the end of the play. He ensures that the conspirators are punished and moves the crowd to frenzy who demand justice and revenge. Friendship between Cassius and Brutus ceases by the end of the play. We notice a lack of warmth and friendliness between the two leading conspirators. Brutus taking a high moral ground snubs Cassius for his immoral actions and corruption. As a result, Cassius is seen forlorn and dejected at the end of the play.

Manipulation and rhetoric play an indispensable role in the play *Julius Caesar*. Politicians use their rhetorical skills to gain power and to influence large, fickle crowds, and seeming friends lie outright to each other. Rhetoric is central to the politics of Rome as well as to the development of the plot. It not only represents but also constructs political reality. In the opening scene, the tribunes rebuke the commoners celebrating Julius Caesar's triumphant return after victory over Pompey. They give a fine speech to make the revellers feel ashamed of the celebrations. Cassius manipulates Brutus and Casca to join the conspiracy to murder Caesar. Decius uses the art of manipulation to take Caesar to the senate. After the murder of Julius Caesar, it is Mark Antony who uses rhetoric to move the mob in the favour of Caesar and avenge the murder of his beloved friend. Most of the manipulation that occurs in the play is either achieved by the use of flattery or by instilling fear.

Suicide was condemned in stoic philosophy. However, from the Roman perspective, suicide was considered an act of heroism, if it was done in an effort to avoid living a life that conflicted with the moral and ethical values held in esteem by the person committing the act. For Cassius, living under the tyranny of Caesar was unthinkable. Thus, death would become his only alternative. Brutus who was a stoic philosopher commits suicide to avoid tyranny at the hands of Octavius and Antony. The others from Brutus' army die to show loyalty to their masters.

Throughout the play, many actions of the characters are influenced by their own free will and yet others are directed by fate. Cassius uses the concept of free will to persuade Brutus to remove Caesar from power. Cassius says that it is the fault of the Romans that they follow Caesar with all servility. Human beings are masters of their fates, therefore, they decide whether Caesar should be a king or not. Brutus willingly convicts himself to murder Caesar. The conspirators together assert their free will by killing Caesar. Caesar dismisses the soothsayer as a dreamer. However, the fate is displayed through many portents and warnings. The soothsayer forces death for Caesar on the ides of March. He ignores his wife's dreams and all the other portents. The poet Cinna says he did not want to come out on the roads. He has dreamt of having the same fate as that of Caesar. He is mauled by the frenzied crowd.

Conflict in *Julius Caesar* is both external and internal. External conflict reflects the conspiracy to assassinate Julius Caesar because of the differences in the political ideologies between the conspirators and Julius Caesar. At the end of the play, the

war between the triumvirate as one army and Brutus and Cassius as another depict the power struggle. Internal conflict is experienced the most by Brutus before he finally decides to kill Caesar. He struggles to choose between his duty to uphold Republican idealism of Rome being challenged by the growing ambition of Caesar and his love and friendship with Caesar. His soliloquy reveals his inner thoughts and his motives behind killing his friend.

## NOTES

Shakespeare makes use of the supernatural events, circumstances or agencies to influence the action and the lives of the major characters. The play is full of omens and prophecies that come true. These agencies also undermine the sense that characters can exercise free will and influence the outcomes of their lives. Superstitions are attached to many natural occurrences. A falling comet indicates the death of a monarch. The omens foreshadow the murder of Caesar as well as subsequent chaos and mayhem in the city of Rome. The priests did not find the heart in the beast sacrificed for Caesar's good health which also indicates his impending death. The birds kite, eagle, ravens and crows seen hovering over the army of Cassius also indicate death.

Nature in Shakespeare's plays is often held as a mirror to the mind and heart of his characters. Nature appears in a distinct form to indicate the inward movements and working of the mind of the characters. The outside turmoil represents the inner upheaval which perturbs Brutus ceaselessly. This chaos in the universe also foreshadows the state of Rome in the near future. To Cassius, it is a sign from gods to carry on with their conspiracy and free Rome from tyranny. The heavy storm creates a sombre mood, foreboding a calamity. It sets the mood and tone of the play. It is also taken as the emotional burst of the gods. Casca calls the storm and thunder representing the wrath of gods on the deeds of human beings.

There are two women characters in the play, Portia and Calpurnia. Portia is Brutus' wife and Calpurnia is Caesar's wife. They occupy a secondary position in the play as compared with their male counterparts, even though most of their opinions are strong and their fears real. Caesar totally disregards Calpurnia's ominous dream. They are not taken seriously and their fears and opinion are disregarded. Portia submits to the idea that women are feeble and erratic who cannot keep secrets. They also represent the private and domestic realm. Both women plead with their husbands to be more aware of their private needs and feelings. Nonetheless, Caesar and Brutus rebuff the pleas of their respective wives. Their priority is duty as a senator and in the matters of public opinion. Calpurnia and Portia are powerless figures, although willing yet unable to help and comfort Caesar and Brutus.

Ambition resounds as one of the themes in the play. Brutus convicts himself to kill Caesar because he finds him ambitious. He believes that Caesar's ambitions are in conflict with the concept of Roman Republicanism. If he becomes the king, the values for which Rome stands that is, freedom and liberty will be lost in the dictatorship of a tyrant. Whatever Brutus believes is his own point of view. Antony declares that had Julius Caesar been ambitious to such an extent to be a threat to Rome and its people then he would not have refused the crown thrice in the public.

### Literary Devices

Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is being expressed in the statement. When Antony repeats that Brutus and his co-conspirators are 'honourable men' in his funeral speech, he

## NOTES

ironically uses words 'honourable' and 'noble'. The two words are resonant in Roman culture, and Antony's ironic usage of the two words proves to be tremendously detrimental to the politics of Rome. He does not consider the conspirators to be honourable. Brutus is the man who repeats the soothsayer's warning to Caesar, and ironically he is the man who leads the conspiracy.

Pun denotes a play on words that are either identical in sound (homonyms) or very similar in sound, but are sharply different in significance. In the opening scene, a cobbler uses pun on the word cobbler which means bungler as well as the shoemaker. He continues to have verbal fun at the expense of Marullus and Flavius.

Foreshadowing means the warning or the indication of something to happen in the future. There are several examples of anticipatory warnings evident in the play. For example, the conversation between Brutus and Cassius, the soothsayer's warning, heavy thunder and storm, lions roaming the capitol, ghostly women walking the streets, Armetelius' letter, and many other events all foreshadow the assassination of Caesar, disrupting the political situation of Rome, followed by mayhem and chaos in the city.

Imagery refers to the images taken collectively, and is used to signify all the objects and qualities of sense perception referred to in the works of literature, whether by literal description, allusion, or through similes and metaphors. Caesar is described as a falcon whose power will be weak if his popular support is withdrawn. The image of the storm infuses fear, terror and anxiety in the characters as well the readers. The images of infirmities of Caesar are vividly drawn by Cassius to Brutus. Caesar metaphorically compares himself to the northern star because it the brightest and constant star in the sky. He says he cannot be swayed by anybody's opinion. He is the master of his own thoughts.

Soliloquy is the act of talking to oneself. Playwrights have used this device as a convenient method of conveying information about a character's motives and state of mind, or as exposition, and sometimes with the objective of guiding the judgments and responses of the audience. Shakespeare has used soliloquy in his numerous plays as a vehicle to convey the thoughts and internal conflicts of the characters. In *Julius Caesar*, Brutus does not discuss about his inner life with anyone. It is through his soliloquy spoken in the garden where he expresses his state of psychological and emotional turmoil.

In literature, symbol is an object or event which signifies some feeling, trait, suggests a range of references, beyond itself. Signs and omens are interpreted as well as manipulated according to the whims of an individual. These omens are so vital in *Julius Caesar* that they become a thematic issue in the play. Casca, terrified by the storm, interprets it as a civil strife in the heaven or it seems that the gods are angry with the deeds of human beings. He fears that the gods do not approve of the conspiracy. A fallen comet stands for the death of a monarch; storm symbolizes the inner and the outer conflict. The northern star is the symbol of constancy.

Anachronism is the placing of an event or person or thing outside its historical context. Shakespeare has introduced a clock that strikes the hour in *Julius Caesar*. Shakespeare often used Elizabethan references in his plays, regardless of the actual timeframe in which the story took place to make it more accessible to his audience. The commoners walking without their signs of professions is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade. Another example of Shakespeare

using Elizabethan references in this scene is the reference to towers and chimney tops. There were no towers or chimneys in ancient Rome, but these anachronisms, chronologically misplaced events, words or details, bring the play into alignment with the experiences of the audience for whom the play was written.

William Shakespeare:  
*Julius Caesar*

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## 2.6 SUMMARY

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## NOTES

- John Shakespeare, the father of William Shakespeare, was a man of meagre means. But his fortune turned after he married Mary Arden in 1557.
- Shakespeare's poems earned him well. But his plays were not that lucrative because the playwright gave up all rights of his work by selling his plays to the manager of the company.
- In comparison to the previous eras, English drama saw a sudden growth in the last quarter of the sixteenth century. The first theatre was built in 1576 in London. Even Shakespeare had composed more than half his works by 1600.
- *The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to the early comedies. These early plays are rather immature where the plots are less original, the characterization is sketchy and the wit falls flat.
- Shakespeare's forte lies in character portrayal and in terms of output and variety, he is unrivalled in literature.
- *Julius Caesar* is thought to have been the play Shakespeare wrote for the opening of the new Globe Theatre in 1599. The printed version of the play appeared for the first time, seven years after Shakespeare's death, in the First Folio of 1623.
- The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than working.
- The celebrations of the common men are contrasted with the unhappiness of the tribunes, the official guardians of the rights of commoners, on the victory of Julius Caesar over Pompey. This puts the central conflict of the play into place.
- Marullus and Flavius chide the commoners for not carrying their tools. On regular days, men do not walk on streets without their tools, an indication of their profession. This is a reference to an Elizabethan law that required workers to identify themselves by wearing their work clothes and carrying the tools of their trade.
- The spirits of Brutus are clouded with fear. He does not wish to seek what he does not have in himself. The cheering offstage reveals his fear and impels Brutus to believe that the public wants Caesar to be their king.
- Cassius tells Brutus not to be suspicious of his intentions reminding Brutus of the part played by his ancestor in dispensing tyranny from Rome.
- The political situation outlined in Act I scene I is presented concretely on the stage. The tribunes are not the only ones who do not wish to accept Caesar as their king.

### Check Your Progress

14. Why is suicide considered an act of heroism from the perspective of the Romans?
15. Name the two prominent women characters of the play.
16. State the various literary devices used in the play *Julius Caesar*.

## NOTES

- Act I reveals the character of Brutus in conflict with his own emotions. On the one hand, he loves Caesar, and on the other he seeks the good of Rome. He is committed to honour and virtue.
- The character of Cassius is sharply distinguished from Brutus. While Brutus speaks of the common good, Cassius reveals his personal hatred for Caesar.
- Act II begins with Brutus, in his garden, contemplating on preserving the general good of Rome by killing Julius Caesar.
- Lucius gets a letter for Brutus that he has found in his study. The letter makes a call for Brutus to wake up, strike and help Rome. Brutus has often got such letters before.
- In Act II, Caesar is worried about the general atmosphere and the appearance of the portents. The night is roaring, thundering and lightning. Calpurnia cried of Caesar's murder thrice in her dream.
- In Act II, Scene III Artemidorus enters reading a letter he has written for Caesar. The letter says that Caesar should be cautious of Brutus, Cassius, Casca, Cinna, Trebonius, Metellus, Decius and Ligarius. They are not his friends.
- Act III takes place in Rome, in front of the Capitol. A crowd, including Artemidorus and the soothsayer, awaits the audience.
- Inside the senate, Metellus bows in front of Caesar. Caesar insults him saying his brother has been banished for a reason. If he bows, prays and begs for him, he too will be kicked out of his way like a dog.
- Brutus requests Antony not to beg for his death. They may appear cruel and bloody but their hearts are full of pity.
- In Act IV, the triumvirate (Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus) discusses who among the opponents should die. They also discuss how they can cheat the people of Rome from the inheritance left to them in Caesar's will.
- The time between Act III, Caesar's funeral and Act IV, the formation of the second triumvirate, covers a period of more than a year. The second triumvirate was formed by three Romans Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus. Antony and Octavius opposed each other but for the political stability of Rome they came together.
- The two camps of Antony-Octavius and Brutus-Cassius prepare for a battle in Act V.
- In Act V Scene II and III, Brutus' men are fighting with Octavius' army while Cassius' army is battling against Antony's men.
- The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators. Octavius speaks the last words of the play, thus, establishing himself as the dominant figure of authority in the new regime. This new Caesar becomes the most powerful force in the history of Rome.
- Rome is the setting of *Julius Caesar* and the focus is on the Roman republic and its ideals. Republicanism was a political position which was inherently challenging to the absolute monarchy.

- Friendship is also a vital topic for consideration in the play. Brutus who claims to love Caesar as a true friend leads the conspiracy to murder him. The conspirators are mostly men who were either pardoned by Caesar as prisoners of war or were honoured with positions of power in the senate.
- Manipulation and rhetoric play an indispensable role in Julius Caesar. Politicians use their rhetorical skills to gain power and to influence large, fickle crowds, and seeming friends lie outright to each other.

## NOTES

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### 2.7 KEY TERMS

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- **Rhetoric:** It is the art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing.
- **Ides of March:** It is a day on the Roman calendar that corresponds to 15 March. It was marked by several religious observances and became notorious as the date of the assassination of Julius Caesar.
- **Soothsayer:** It refers to a person who is supposed to be able to foresee the future.
- **Drachma:** The drachma was one of the world's earliest coins. Its name is derived from the Greek verb meaning 'to grasp', and its original value was equivalent to that of a handful of arrows.
- **Verbal irony:** It is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is being expressed in the statement.

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### 2.8 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. William Shakespeare was born in 1564.
2. In 1593, *Venus and Adonis* was published.
3. Shakespeare acted in Ben Jonson's play, *Every Man in His Humour*.
4. Heming and Condell collected and published the First Folio consisting of thirty-six plays of Shakespeare.
5. The first theatre in England was built in 1576.
6. John Heywood, a significant author of Interludes, lived during the reign of Queen Elizabeth.
7. The first English comedy was *Ralph Roister Doister*.
8. Some of Shakespeare's plays which belong to 'The Early Comedies' group are —*The Comedy of Errors*, *Love's Labour Lost* and *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* belong to this group.
9. Also called 'Problem Plays' or 'Bitter Comedies', 'The Sombre Plays' show the falsity of romance and the sordidness of reality. They are comedies because they do not end with the death of the chief characters, but reflect a cynical and disillusioned attitude towards life.
10. The play begins with the gathering of plebeians on the streets of Rome. Flavius and Marullus, both tribunes (elected officials that represent the people in the Roman republic), ask the common people why they are out in their best attire, rather than working.

## NOTES

11. Superstition plays an important role in the play. During the celebration of festival of Lupercal, the priest of Lupercus, dressed in loincloths made of goatskin, sacrificed goats and dogs and smeared themselves with sacrificial blood. Then they ran throughout the city carrying a goatskin thong, called a februa. Women placed themselves in such a way that the priests could strike them with the februa. It was a belief that a childless woman touched in this holy chase on the feast of holy Lupercal is soon blessed with a child and freed from the sterile curse.
12. Calpurnia describes that she heard a lioness gave birth in the streets of Rome, graves opened and gave up their dead, fierce fiery warriors fought upon the clouds, blood drizzled upon the Capitol, the noise of battle filled the air, horses neighed and dying men groaned, and ghosts shrieked in the streets. These uncanny incidents happened in the city and she is perturbed by them.
13. The death of Caesar is avenged with the death of all the conspirators.
14. From the Roman perspective, suicide was considered an act of heroism, since it was done in an effort to avoid living a life that conflicted with the moral and ethical values held in esteem by the person committing the act.
15. Portia and Calpurnia are the two prominent women characters of the play.
16. The use of verbal irony, foreshadowing, and anachronism are some of the literary devices used in the play.

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## 2.9 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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### Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of William Shakespeare.
2. List the major plays written by Shakespeare.
3. Mention the salient features of Shakespeare's plays.
4. What are the major themes of the play *Julius Caesar*?

### Long-Answer Questions

1. Discuss the evolution of English drama.
2. Explain the major classification of Shakespeare's plays.
3. Prepare an act-wise summary of the play *Julius Caesar*.
4. How is internal conflict evinced through external conflict in *Julius Caesar*?
5. Give examples of the use of literary devices in *Julius Caesar*.

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## 2.10 FURTHER READING

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Griffin, Miriam (Ed.). 2015. *A Companion to Julius Caesar*. United States: John Wiley & Sons.

Thomson, Peter. 1992. *Shakespeare's Theatre*. United Kingdom: Psychology Press.

Bergeron Moore, David. 1996. *Reading and Writing in Shakespeare*. United States: Associated University Press.

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# UNIT 3 OLIVER GOLDSMITH: *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*

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Oliver Goldsmith:  
*She Stoops to Conquer*

## NOTES

### Structure

- 3.0 Introduction
- 3.1 Unit Objectives
- 3.2 Life and Works of Oliver Goldsmith
- 3.3 Summary of the Play: *She Stoops to Conquer*
- 3.4 Act-Wise Summary of the Play
  - 3.4.1 Prologue
  - 3.4.2 Epilogue
  - 3.4.3 Themes and Characters
- 3.5 Summary
- 3.6 Key Terms
- 3.7 Answers to ‘Check Your Progress’
- 3.8 Questions and Exercises
- 3.9 Further Reading

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## 3.0 INTRODUCTION

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Eighteenth century poets — Alexander Pope, Oliver Goldsmith and Thomas Gray — belong to the Age of Enlightenment. Oliver Goldsmith is recognized as a fascinating English writer of the eighteenth century. He wrote a number of novels, plays, poems, essays and biographies. His works deal with themes such as social class and position, and wealth and poverty. His well-known works include *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Deserted Village*, ‘Citizen of the World’, and *She Stoops to Conquer*. In this unit, you will study the act-wise summary of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*, the character portrayal of the main characters and the depiction of the main themes of the play.

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## 3.1 UNIT OBJECTIVES

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After going through this unit, you will be able to:

- Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Oliver Goldsmith
- Assess prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith
- Explain the main themes of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*
- Analyse the main characters of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*

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## 3.2 LIFE AND WORKS OF OLIVER GOLDSMITH

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Several details about the life of Oliver Goldsmith are precisely unknown. It is believed that Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman in a Church of Ireland. Due to meagre financial resources, Goldsmith struggled for education and later for his livelihood. He spent most of his youth in the Lissoy village. Goldsmith joined the Trinity College, Dublin in 1745 under the sizar system which allowed poor students to study in lieu of the work they did as servants for the tutors. He never enjoyed a good reputation at college because he did not do well in

## NOTES

studies, violated the rules and also participated in a riot in which several people died. He received his degree in 1749. In 1752, he moved to Edinburgh to study medicine but left it without a degree. From 1753–56, he travelled across the British continent.

Goldsmith worked hard on the subject of theology for a couple of years but was rejected by the ministry. He failed as a teacher. He struggled to make a living as a tutor, a comedian, an apothecary's assistant, a physician in Southwark, an usher in a country school, all without any success. Eventually, he started writing reviews and essays for periodicals and embarked on a career as a Grub Street journalist and hack writer. He also started proofreading for the novelist and printer Samuel Richardson. The first book that appeared under the name of Goldsmith was entitled *The Citizen of the World; or, Letters from a Chinese Philosopher Residing in London to His Friends in the East*. These letters were published as a series of essays. These were fictionalized letters presumed to be written by a Chinese mandarin visiting England. Under the identity of an Asian visitor, Goldsmith satirized the follies and foibles of the fashionable London society. These letters brought Goldsmith into limelight and to the attention of Samuel Johnson. Through Johnson's friendship, Goldsmith became a member of the city's exclusive Literary Club, which included writers—James Boswell, Edmund Burke, and Thomas Percy, painter Sir Joshua Reynolds, and actor David Garrick. At the age of 47, Goldsmith fell sick of fever and died in 1774.

### Works

Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, a novelist, a playwright and an essayist. As a journalist, he contributed articles to several magazines like Tobias Smollett's *Critical Review*, Ralph Griffith's *Monthly Review*, *The Busy Body*, *The British Magazine*, *The Bee* and *The Lady's Magazine: or, Polite Companion for the Fair Sex*, and *The Westminster Magazine*. He wrote many essays including 'The Citizen of the World' in two volumes, 'The Life of Richard Nash,' 'The Mystery Revealed,' and 'History of England' in four volumes, 'Roman History' in two volumes, 'The Life of Henry St. John, Lord Viscount Bolingbroke,' and 'The Life of Thomas Parnell' and his most famous essay 'On Theatre: A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy'. He wrote numerous poems like *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. His significant plays include *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Grumbler* and a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.

Goldsmith's fame chiefly rests on his masterpiece, a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*, two plays *The Good Natur'd Man* and *She Stoops to Conquer*, two poems *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*. Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in 1773.

#### Check Your Progress

1. Name the prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith.
2. When was *She Stoops to Conquer* published?

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### 3.3 SUMMARY OF THE PLAY: *SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER*

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Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is seen as the first successful reaction to the sentimental comedy initiated by Steele. In a nutshell, the hero of the play Marlow is shy with ladies of his own social status, but quite open with servants, barmaids, and women of lower class. So the heroine, Miss Kate Hardcastle, decides to make him fall in love with her as someone from the lower class. She 'stoops' to an acceptable level to 'conquer' him. The play entertains and provokes laughter with its intrigues

and mischievous tricks that are not malicious. The play also marked an important step in the development of comedy by eclipsing the popular ‘sentimental comedy’ of the times. Though Horace Walpole, an advocate of sentimental comedy, attacked the play *She Stoops to Conquer* for being devoid of a moral lesson, the play proved to be an outstanding popular success when it debuted in 1773.

Sentimental comedy was developed in response to the perceived immorality of the Restoration theatre. It was founded on the belief that man is innately good and that he can be softened through tears that flow from contemplation on undeserved suffering. Goldsmith challenged sentimental comedy in his essay ‘A Comparison between Laughing and Sentimental Comedy’ published in 1773. In this essay, Goldsmith has written that comedy should excite laughter, by ridiculously exhibiting the follies of the lower part of mankind. All the classic writers of comedy aimed only at rendering folly or vice ridiculous. They never exalted their characters or made what Voltaire humourously calls a tradesman’s tragedy. He writes that in sentimental comedies, the virtues of private life and distress are exhibited while the vices and faults of mankind are not exposed. Sentimental comedies were successful among the people of his age. These plays portray all the characters as good and generous souls. Such plays did not do justice to the genre of comedy since they were more serious and moralizing in tone and the actors had block faces when they showed emotions. With the abundance of sentiment and feeling the plays lacked humour. The spectator was expected to pardon the faults or foibles, if any, in consideration of the goodness of their hearts. To Goldsmith, a genuine comedy is one that is a great source of entertainment and sentimental comedy provided none. Instead of ridiculing, it commended folly. Goldsmith believed if humour is banished from the stage, people would be deprived of the art of laughing. With *She Stoops to Conquer*, Goldsmith succeeded in introducing humour, mirth and delight, driving out the pathos of the sentimental comedy. The play proved to be innovative and exhibited a new kind of comedy.

Oscar James Campbell noted in an introduction to *Chief Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan: The School for Scandal, She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* that the central idea of this play was suggested to Goldsmith by an incident of his boyhood. He was told that the house of Mr Featherstone was an inn and directed there for entertainment. Goldsmith, easily deceived by a practical joke, had gone to the squire’s house and treated him as a host. From this situation, grew his character and their games of cross purposes.

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## 3.4 ACT-WISE SUMMARY OF THE PLAY

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Let us go through an Act-wise summary of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

### 3.4.1 Prologue

Mr Woodward, the speaker, is dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes. He is mourning for the death of ‘Comic muse’ that is genuine comedy. He argues that comedy which produced genuine laughter and candidly entertained people is now dead. It has been replaced by a new type of comedy known as the sentimental comedy. If sentimental comedy takes over the stage completely then the comic actors like himself and Ned Shuter (who played the role of Hardcastle) will have no work in future. Woodward tries to imitate a sentimental comedy actor and feels hopeless as he realizes that moralizing will not work for comic actors like him.

## NOTES

### Check Your Progress

3. Who is the hero of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*?
4. What is sentimental comedy?

## NOTES

The speaker hopes that Oliver Goldsmith, who, like a doctor, will restore an ailing patient, with five potions corresponding to the five acts of his comedy. Goldsmith will infuse comedy with lively and amusing situations and revive it by entertaining and giving comic relief to the audience. At the end of the play, the audience will decide whether the doctor is qualified or just another quack like many others of the time.

### Critical Analysis

Prologues and epilogues were written to comment on the play and to introduce the audience with the objectives of writing the play. The Prologue also gave the reasons for composing the drama.

The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times. He was a manager of a patent house in Drury Lane. The Prologue was spoken by Mr Edward Woodward, a contemporary comic actor. He was offered the role of Tony Lumpkin but the actor turned down the offer thinking that the play would not be successful. Ned Shutter, another comic actor of the times, played the role of Mr Hardcastle in the play. The Prologue is presented in the form of a metaphor where genuine comedy is the patient dying of sentimentalism while Oliver Goldsmith is the doctor who will resuscitate it through his play *She Stoops to Conquer*.

### Act I Scene I

#### Summary

Scene I of the play begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle is unhappy with their old fashioned house that resembles an old inn. She grumbles about not visiting the town every now and then like many others in the neighbourhood. She also complains that no one pays them a visit except Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife and Cripplegate, the lame dancing master. Besides, another source of entertainment are the old stories of prince Eugene and the Duke of Marlborough told by Mr Hardcastle over and over again. Mrs Hardcastle does not enjoy these stories anymore and dismisses them as old fashion trumpery. She snubs her husband for always accusing her son Tony. Tony is neither educated nor mature; he has never been to school which Mrs Hardcastle says was due to his sickness. She believes as long as Tony has fortunes, education is insignificant. Mrs Hardcastle thinks Latin is a suitable form of schooling for Tony. Mr Hardcastle expresses fondness for everything old, old friends, old wine, old books, and old manners. He is critical of Tony, that he is a drunkard, growing fat, is a trickster and knows only mischief. He is not fit for any education. The only schools that he can visit are the ale-house and a stable. Mr Hardcastle believes that Tony and his mother have spoiled each other.

As Tony enters the stage, he is in a hurry to reach the alehouse, The Three Pigeons. His mother dissuades him from keeping the company of low and paltry set of fellows at the ale house. Dick Muggins, Jack Slang, Little Aminabad, Tom Twist are Tony's companions at the alehouse, whom he does not find of low disposition. Moreover, he cannot disappoint himself by not visiting the alehouse and leaves with his mother running behind him.

As Kate Hardcastle enters, Mr Hardcastle comments on her dress. He loathes the superfluous silk with laces which he feels are trimmings of vanity. He does not like this show. She reminds her father of the deal they have that she can wear

fashionable silk dresses of her choice during the day to receive visitors of her interest each day. In the evening, she dresses up according to her father's taste and welcomes his guests.

Mr Hardcastle informs Kate that he has invited his prospective son-in-law, a young man Marlow, who is the son of his longtime friend Sir Charles Marlow. No one from the family has ever met him. Mr Hardcastle has heard of him to be scholar, a well-bred young man with excellent services and will be employed to serve his nation. Marlow is said to be brave, generous, handsome, bashful and reserved. Mr Hardcastle believes that modesty resides in people who are endowed with noble virtues and, therefore, he likes Marlow for his reserved nature. Kate feels that Marlow's reserved nature has undone all his other accomplishments. Though impressed by his good looks, Kate is not enamoured by the quality of being reserved since such men become suspicious husbands. She also believes it would be difficult to develop friendliness and love in a marriage fixed like a business. Nevertheless, Kate agrees to take Marlow as her husband to fulfil her father's desire. Mr Hardcastle informs, it may happen that Marlow may reject her. Kate takes it lightly, she will not cry on rejection and indifference, instead will set out to find a gentleman of newer fashion. For Kate, it is more important for her husband to be handsome and young rather than be sensible and good natured. She is apprehensive about having a reserved husband. She would first secure a lover and then a husband.

Miss Constance Neville, a very dear friend of Kate, is the last person to enter the stage in Scene I of Act I. Kate breaks the news of Marlow to Constance. The audience learns from Constance that her beloved Hastings will accompany Marlow. The two gentlemen are inseparable friends. Constance appreciates Marlow for his good reputation and virtues. She also says that Marlow is timid and diffident in the company of modest ladies of her own class but he mixes well with girls of low social class. Another information divulged through their communication is that Mrs Hardcastle is the guardian of Constance's fortune. She wants Constance to marry Tony because of this good fortune, as this marriage will secure her son's future. Constance keeps Mrs Hardcastle happy by portraying a good picture of Tony and pretending to be in love with him though she knows they both do not love each other. Mrs Hardcastle also does not suspect Constance to have feelings for another man. She says if her relationship with Hastings grows and culminates into marriage she does not mind leaving the fortune. She will happily leave it for her aunt. Even Tony does not want to marry Constance. He would be happy to see her marry someone else.

### **Critical Analysis**

The Act introduces the audience to the place of action that is a small countryside, in the house of Mr Hardcastle. Some background information, necessary to understand the play, is given to the audience. Mr and Mrs Hardcastle is an old couple and for both it is their second marriage. Mrs Hardcastle has a son Tony Lumpkin from her first marriage. Mr Hardcastle too has a daughter named Kate Hardcastle from his first wife.

Through a conversation between the two, Goldsmith instantly presents a contrasting nature of the two characters. While, Mrs Hardcastle has an interest in the London society and she takes a lively interest in the fashions of the day, Mr Hardcastle, on the other hand, is a traditional man. Their tastes also present a contrast between the hustling bustling life of London and its people and the serene,

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countryside and the simplicity of the rustics. Mr Hardcastle criticizes the vanities and affectation of the town, lamenting the loss of traditional values as the people of this age are lacking in sense and discretion. He believes whoever goes to London only comes back with fopperies and affectations. The worst is that earlier very few were affected by pretentiousness and snobbery but now it travels faster. Even her daughter Kate has become pretentious, influenced by the fashion, manners and French frippery after spending two years in London.

Although we see nothing of the surrounding countryside yet we hear about some of the neighbouring inhabitants. Miss Hoggs, Mrs Grigsby (a grig is a grasshopper) and Mrs Oddfish, all sound truly rural. Then there are Tony Lumpkin's low class friends who have rustic names and their occupations reflect their social class. Dick Muggins is the excise man, Jack Slang the horse doctor and there is Tom Twist.

The conversation between the couple throws light on some of the major characters and prepares the audience for their entry. Tony's entry confirms that Mr Hardcastle has given a more realistic account of Tony. He scarcely pays heed and respect either to his mother or his stepfather. Kate's entry immediately after Tony's exit puts them in stark contrast. She is polite in addressing both her father and stepmother; obedient in following Hardcastle's whim requiring her to wear simple dresses of her father's choice and meeting people of his choice in the evening.

The circumstances leading to plot development have also been established. Mrs Hardcastle's description of the mansion, comparing it with an inn prepares the audience for Marlow and Hastings to mistake the house for an inn and for Kate to be taken for a barmaid because of her plain attire in the evening.

Themes of wealth and inheritance are introduced. Tony Lumpkin has inherited an annuity from his father and Constance Neville owns a considerable quantity of jewellery which her aunt manages for her. She has to marry with the consent of her aunt or else lose her fortune.

The personalities of all the major characters of the play are revealed through their actions and dialogues. Kate is a confident and independent woman who will marry for love. At the same time, she ensures her father's happiness by making the man of his choice fall in love with her. We come to know about Marlow through Mr Hardcastle and Constance. Tony is fat, uneducated and outspoken. He is a trickster and loves to drink with his rowdy fellows. Hardcastle's description and his own actions confirm it.

### **Act I Scene II**

#### **Summary**

Scene II of Act I is set in the alehouse, The Three Pigeons. Tony is sitting at the head of the table, which is a little higher, with the ease of being very much at home. A gathering of shabby looking fellows with punch (cigar) and tobacco surround him, all shouting and singing. Holding a mallet in his hand, he sings a song, in which he raises a toast to all drunkards, shuns learning, education, and dismisses schoolmasters and Methodist preachers. The third verse of his song is in praise of the low life at the countryside. The alehouse landlord announces the arrival of two gentlemen from London standing outside. They have lost their way and are asking for directions to Mr Hardcastle's house. Tony is sure that one of them is a gentleman

who has come to court his sister Kate. Instantly, Tony Lumpkin hits on a plan to avenge his stepfather's constant grumbles about his behaviour. He asks the landlord to bring them in.

As the gentlemen ask about the Hardcastles, in his own fantasy, Lumpkin describes Mr Hardcastle as a cross-grained, old-fashioned, whimsical old man with an ugly face. He describes Kate as an 'all trapesing, trolloping, talkative maypole'. He presents the old man's son (himself) as a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that everybody is fond of. Marlow is reluctant to believe the information they have gathered about the father and his daughter from Tony's account. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful and the son is an awkward brat spoiled by his mother. Tony and the landlord fabricate the description of the countryside as an area of boggy roads, hills and dangerous commons. As Marlow and Hastings express their desire to rest tonight in the tavern, Tony says there is no space. He directs them to his stepfather's house, describing it as an inn named The Buck Head run by an eccentric innkeeper who fancies himself as a gentleman. He presents Mr Hardcastle as an innkeeper on the verge of retirement aspiring to be recognized as one of the gentry. The deluded travellers leave for the inn.

## NOTES

### Critical Analysis

Act I, Scene II lays the basis for the ensuing plot that begins to work immediately. The mistakes of the night begin with Marlow and Hastings believing that Hardcastle's house is The Buck's Head inn and Hardcastle is the old, idiosyncratic innkeeper.

The scene further unfolds Tony's character. His picture presented in the previous scene matches his actions. His seating position shows his dominating position in the group which includes the rustics named in Scene I. Tony is happy drinking and merry-making. He asserts that he chooses his company. No one dictates him. He is his own master. We get a glimpse into Tony's background. People, in general know, that his father has left him considerable wealth which he will inherit when he comes of age. He is a living replica of his father, who excels in country pursuits. He also says that he will soon be a worth fifteen hundred pound a year on marrying Constance.

Goldsmith also creates two scenes of the countryside. One scene is set in Mr Hardcastle's mansion which lacks the fashion of the town but there is decorum and refinement. The other scene is set in the alehouse, a hub for the rowdy and boisterous low class rustics and drunkards like Tony. The setting and characters further present a social order with class bias.

## Act II

### Summary

The scene is set in Hardcastle's house. Mr Hardcastle, awaiting the visit of his prospective son-in-law Marlow, is seen instructing his servants Diggory, Roger and others on how to behave when the guests come to their house. These servants are not used to receiving guests and waiting at the table. Diggory, the head servant, is very talkative and loves to eat. Hardcastle instructs them not to talk, eat, drink or laugh hard in their presence and be attentive. He finds it hard to teach these servants who do not know anything about table etiquettes. The servants are only more confused. The scene is interrupted by the news of the arrival of Marlow and Hastings. Mr Hardcastle goes to receive his guests.

## NOTES

Marlow and Hastings, with their servants, arrive at the scene. They admire the house instantly, clean and creditable, which as intended by Tony, is taken to be an inn. We learn from their conversation that Marlow has spent much of his life travelling, residing at the college or in an inn. This kind of life has not given him an opportunity to interact with reputable ladies. This factor is also responsible for his low confidence in the company of modest women. He does not remember of being acquainted with a single modest woman, except his mother. On rare occasions meeting a young cultured lady of his own class has left him petrified. He always looks for an opportunity to leave the room as he loses his confidence when the lady looks at him. He is also unable to counterfeit impudence since he is a modest man. He considers a modest woman, dressed out in all her finery, the most tremendous object of the whole creation.

On the contrary, Marlow is affable and boisterous with serving women and barmaids. He can say the finest things to the barmaid and the college bed maker but not a word of it to modest women. Jokingly, Hastings remarks that with this diffident attitude Marlow will never be able to get married unless his bride is courted by a proxy. Marlow is not even sure how will he court this woman whom he has come to meet and will simply answer her questions in yes and no. Hastings is surprised to know that a warm friend can be a cold lover. Marlow also asserts that he has come here to see the reconciliation of Hastings with Miss Constance Neville.

Mistaking Hardcastle to be an innkeeper, as intended by Tony, Marlow behaves arrogantly with him. Mr Hardcastle welcomes the two gentlemen in the Liberty Hall, at which the two young men poke fun throughout the conversation. While Marlow and Hastings speak of the need to change from travelling clothes into something fine like silk, the old man talks of his colonel uncle of which Marlow and Hastings make fun in an aside. The young men call for a cup of punch and then discuss the evening meal. They ask Mr Hardcastle for a bill of fare. It is a long menu because it has been prepared for special guests, Mr Hardcastle's prospective son-in-law and his friend. Marlow and Hastings are amazed at the quality and quantity of the proposed meal. They shun it thinking this big menu is to extract money from them. They ask for simple two-three things on the table. They force the old man to show them their bedroom. Mr Hardcastle is surprised to witness such imprudent and flippant behaviour. Nonetheless, he does what they desire. Marlow feels that the desire and learning to be a gentleman, has made the old man brazen. Finding the old man becoming troublesome, Marlow leaves the Liberty Hall to inspect his bedroom followed by the protest of Mr Hardcastle.

Hastings is surprised to see Miss Neville in an inn. Understanding that Hastings and Marlow have been duped by Tony, Constance clears the confusion. She tells him that it is her guardian Mrs Hardcastle's house and since it is old, it does look like an inn. She also mentions that Mrs Hardcastle is courting her on behalf of her son Tony who dislikes Constance. Hastings divulges his ploy to seize this opportunity to enter Constance's family and elope with her. Once the horses are refreshed they can travel to France. He wants to go to France because France gives freedom even to the slaves to choose their partners and the law of marriage among slaves is also respected. However, Constance is reluctant to leave without her jewels. She is anxious to get her jewels and secure her future. She has been asking for it from her aunt to wear it and will be successful very soon. Hastings does not desire anything but her. Together the lovers decide to leave Marlow in the deception that he is staying at

an inn because telling Marlow all this abruptly will make him leave the house and their plan to elope will not be executed.

Hastings informs Marlow that Constance and Kate have arrived. The family had come to dine in the neighbourhood and stayed back refreshing the horses at the inn. Marlow is reluctant to meet Kate. Constance and Hastings persuade Marlow to stay. After introducing Marlow and Kate to each other Hastings and Constance leave the place. A humorous conversation ensues between Kate and Marlow. Marlow is overcome by shyness, faltering and stuttering, scarcely able to complete his own sentences. In her solus, Kate sums up her impression of Marlow. She finds him attractive and a man of sentiment, sober, a serious, honourable and highly sensitive young man. He has good sense, but is ignorant of it. He is extremely engrossed in his fears. She determines to find out how she can boost his confidence and help him in overcoming his shyness.

The fashion styles of London are the topics of discussion for Mrs Hardcastle and Hastings as they re-enter the room. Hastings flatters Mrs Hardcastle on her hairstyle, her dress and her youthful appearance. Mrs Hardcastle is impressed with his talks of London which she loves and regrets that she has not been there. Hastings, to impress her, says it seems that she has been brought up in London as her manners are like the fashionable elite of London.

Mrs Hardcastle finds similarities of face and height in the two young people Tony and Constance and sees it as an auspicious sign of their suitability for each other. Meanwhile, Constance and Tony are fighting, Tony tells Constance to keep distance and that he does not wish to have any relationship with her. Mrs Hardcastle calls these fightings falling in and out of love many times a day as if they are already husband and wife. Tony Lumpkin upsets his doting mother and a rant between Tony and his mother ensues. She calls him a viper, a monster who is never seen in the house when in good humour or spirits. He is always found in the ale house, and that he never fulfils any duty towards his mother. She calls him a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, and undutiful boy. The two ladies leave.

Tony and Hastings are left in each other's company. Hastings tries to know about his feelings for Neville. Tony makes fun of Constance and Kate. He calls Constance a bitter cantankerous toad in all Christendom, with lots of tricks in her thicket, as loud as a hog in a gate with friends, eyes as black as shoes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion. Hastings exhibits his feelings for Constance; she is well-tempered, silent and sensible. Her meekness and modesty charms him. Tony says Hastings finds her to be a well-tempered girl because he does not know her as well as him. Hastings loves Constance and wants to marry her, while Tony detests the thought of marrying her. He is being urged by his mother so that she can maintain control of Constance's fortune for his son. Hastings requests Tony to help him elope with Constance. Tony instantly agrees since he wishes to get rid of her as soon as possible. He also promises to help them get Constance's fortune.

### **Critical Analysis**

The servants' scene once again emphasizes the contrast between the low life of the rustics to that of the gentry. The gap between the expectations of polished behaviour and what the servants can manage adds humour to the scene. The servants, in their conversation also emphasize that Mr Hardcastle is a great teller of military tales, which was also mentioned by Mrs Hardcastle.

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The ploy that Tony Lumpkin conceived starts working. Hastings and Marlow mistake Mr Hardcastle to be an old innkeeper who wishes to be a part of the gentry. The whole scene reveals the condition of taverns and inn and their owners. The maintenance of large mansions usually made the owners bankrupt, who later turned them into inns for their livelihood. Marlow, in spite of travelling widely, still lacks the assurance about these inns. The bad inns fleece and starve the travellers and the good ones tax them dearly for the luxuries. Everything appears so hospitable to them that the two fear the high charges for all of it.

The conversation between Hastings and Mrs Hardcastle exhibits the contrast between the opinion held by Mrs Hardcastle about the metropolitan city, London and the actual scenario. Mrs Hardcastle dwells in her own imaginative view of the world of the fashionable metropolitan London society. Her opinion of the elite London society which she has not experienced is based on the information given in 'the Scandalous Magazine' which contained reviews of books, plays and social circulars. Hastings has fun at her expense. Tower Wharf was certainly not a fashionable place. The Pantheon was in Oxford Street, the Grotto Gardens were less fashionable than Ranelagh and the Borough of Southwark was by this date not a place where the nobility resided. He pokes fun at Mrs Hardcastle's incomplete knowledge of London's fashionable society, of which she so yearns to be a part of. When Mrs Hardcastle joins Hasting's talk with Constance, her conversation reveals her pretensions and ignorance of the fashionable London life. Mr Hardcastle, too, is transported to the other world of campaigns in war. It is also a fabricated one with incorrect dates and names of places. Often, he narrates stories of valour and gallantry from the past.

Marlow, as described earlier, admits being shy and reserved with ladies of his own class, confident and boisterous with women of low class, and stating the reasons for such behaviour. He becomes uncomfortable and uneasy talking to a lady from the same class. Not once did he lift his eyes to look at Kate's face directly. He fumbled over the words throughout the conversation with the lady. Marlow's impudent behaviour with females of the lower class and refined conduct in the company of women of reputation, as well as his misbehaviour with Mr Hardcastle, thinking him to be the innkeeper and the servants emphasizes the entrenched system of class division in eighteenth century England.

The plan to elope to France where there is freedom to choose one's partner and respect for the institution of marriage is a critical statement on England's class conscious society where individuals marry with the intention of upholding their status rather than for love.

There is also one scene in the play in which Lumpkin has been presented as a friendly and agreeable person. Hastings draws attention of the audience to his virtue that he looks like a lad of spirit. Tony promises to get Constance jewels so that she can take them with her.

### Act III

#### Summary

The scene in Act III is set in Mr Hardcastle's mansion. Mr Hardcastle alone is perplexed and wonders why his friend, Sir Marlow, recommended that Kate should marry young Marlow, who seems rude and unmannered. He believes that Kate, too, will be shocked to meet such an insolent man. As it is evening, Kate has changed

her dress to live up to her commitment to her father to dress up with simplicity in the evening. Mr Hardcastle and his daughter share their views on Marlow. While Kate praises Marlow and approves of his ways which, she concludes, he has acquired from travelling across the world. She finds everything natural about the man. She is thoroughly impressed with his timidity. She claims to have not seen anyone so modest as Marlow, who met her with a respectful bow, stammering voice and a look fixed on the ground. He treated her with diffidence and respect, admired the prudence of girls that never laughed, tired her with apologies for being tiresome and then left the room with a bow. Mr Hardcastle disapproves of Marlow's ways and is convinced that he has acquired all that immodesty by travelling across the world, from the bad company and French dance masters. He is aghast by his brazen immodesty, asking twenty questions, and never waiting for an answer, interrupting his remarks with some silly pun, asking him to make punch (drink). He compares Marlow to a bully called Dawson from earlier in the century. Mr Hardcastle discerns that the first sight of Marlow has deceived his daughter.

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Finally, father and daughter agree to reject Marlow as unsuitable, but for different reasons, Hardcastle because of Marlow's impudence, Kate because of his apparent bashfulness. Although Kate does not dismiss Marlow completely yet she feels that he may have some good qualities behind his diffident appearance. For her, a smooth face represents good sense and virtue. Hardcastle says if Marlow, whom he addresses as Mr Brazen, is able to reconcile the contradictions in his personality then only he can please both of them. Both are of the opinion that they are neither completely right nor wholly wrong about Marlow and proceed to find more about him.

Tony enters with a casket of jewels that he has stolen from Mrs Hardcastle's drawer and gives them to Hastings. Tony has the keys to all the drawers in his mother's bureau and that is how he was also able to go to the alehouse every day. He does not want Constance to be cheated of her fortune. Hastings believes it would be better if Mrs Hardcastle gives the jewel casket to Miss Neville herself. Tony tells him to keep the box till she gets it directly from his mother which is like parting with her tooth. Hastings is worried about her disappointment when she finds jewels are not in her bureau.

In the next scene, Constance is seen requesting her aunt to give her the casket of jewels. Mrs Hardcastle reprimands her with remarks about the unsuitability of wearing ornaments at such a young age. She will need them when her beauty will fade. Constance retorts something that will repair beauty at 40 years of age will improve beauty at 20 years of age. Mrs Hardcastle praises Neville's beauty which is absolutely natural blush and is beyond the beauty of thousand ornaments. Mrs Hardcastle tries to convince Constance saying that jewels are out of fashion and offers her own unfashionable semi-precious ornaments to Constance, which she refuses to accept. In an aside, Mrs Hardcastle tells Tony that she will hang on to the jewels till Tony and Constance get married and the fortune passes on to Tony. As she leaves to bring her own jewellery, Tony informs Constance that he has given the jewels to Hastings and they both can elope. Tony Lumpkin, as mischievous as he can get, suggests Mrs Hardcastle to tell Constance that the jewels have been stolen and he is witness to this incident. She does so. Moments later a dreadful wailing breaks out as Mrs Hardcastle discovers that the jewels are missing. Lumpkin continues with his mischief appreciating Mrs Hardcastle for being a fantastic actor. She bemoans

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that her son is unable to distinguish between jest and earnest and feels sorry for her niece. Ironically, she is the one who has been tricked.

Kate, simply dressed, is accompanied by her maid Pimple. Her simple dress led Marlow to believe that she is a barmaid in the inn. Every woman in the country wears simple dress in the evening and changes only when she visits or receives company. Also, Marlow did not look up at her face even once when she met him first as Kate Hardcastle. Also, Kate's face was hidden behind the bonnet. Therefore, he does not recognize her in her evening dress. Kate wishes to keep up that delusion. It is by keeping up the mistake she wishes to be seen, and that is no small advantage to a girl who brings her face to the market. By stooping to conquer she would make an acquaintance and victory gained over one who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. Her chief aim is to take Marlow off his guard and examine his heart. Marlow enters whistling, happy to find himself away from the people of the house all alone. He muses that Miss Hardcastle is too grave and sentimental for him and she squints. Kate meets Marlow as a maid. The moment he looks at her, he wants to steal a kiss from her. He behaves the way Hastings had mentioned earlier about his behaviour in the company of women from the lower strata. He is unabashed with barmaids and others of the like. Marlow mentions he is a great favourite among ladies but he does not know what makes him so popular. At the Ladies Club in the town, a reference is made to a famous female coterie; he is called by the name Rattle. Telling his name Solomon, he flirts with Kate, mistaking her to be a bar maid. Offers to kiss her, salute her, to be at her service. He admits that cards, suppers, wine, and old women make him merry. Tries to hold her hand and kiss but fails and leaves.

Once again, Mr Hardcastle is shocked to see the impudence of the young man. But Kate wants to prove Marlow to be a modest man and wants to get a chance to convince her father of Marlow's modesty. She believes that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, and hopes that her father forgives him.

### Critical Analysis

This Act highlights the diverse views held by Mr Hardcastle and Kate about Marlow's character. It seems Kate and Mr Hardcastle are talking about two different people. With Mr Hardcastle, whom he believes to be an eccentric innkeeper, Marlow shows his unruly side. Knowing Kate to be a fine lady, however, Marlow remains reserved.

This Act further confirms the personality traits of Kate, Marlow and Tony. Kate takes pleasure in being obedient to her father. Marlow is modest and shy in the company of his own class and wild when with the barmaids. Tony shows his righteousness by giving the casket of jewels to Hastings and making arrangements for him to leave with Constance.

### Act IV

#### Summary

Mr Hardcastle receives a letter informing that Sir Charles Marlow will arrive shortly. Constance apprises Hastings of this information. The plans for elopement are made and Hastings wants to be out on their way to France as soon as possible because of the fear of getting caught since Charles Marlow recognizes him. He has given the jewels casket to Marlow. Marlow is a little confused about the casket. He has given

it to Mrs Hardcastle to keep it secure and safe. Hastings is horrified to know that the jewels casket is in the possession of Mrs Hardcastle and decides to leave without it.

Enchanted by the barmaid, Marlow is unable to free himself of her thoughts. He also expresses his intense desire to be one with her. He is totally in awe of her personality. He regrets not being able to kiss her.

Mr Hardcastle is exasperated with Marlow and his servants. He tolerates Marlow only because he is his friend's son. Angrily Mr Hardcastle commands Marlow to leave his house with the drunken pack of his servants immediately. He has endured Marlow's insolence for more than four hours and still there seem to be no an end to his immodesty. Marlow, on the contrary, not only refuses to leave but also claims to never have met with such impudence in his whole life before. Mr Hardcastle reveals that Sir Charles Marlow's letter made him believe Marlow to be a well-bred and modest man but he is no better than a coxcomb and a bully. Mr Harcastle informs Marlow of his father's arrival anytime soon which leaves Marlow puzzled.

A conversation follows between Kate and Marlow. He wishes to confirm whether the place is an inn and she is a barmaid or not. Kate calls herself a poor relation of Mr Hardcastle to whom the mansion belongs. She only manages the household. Marlow is ashamed for thinking Kate to be a barmaid. He feels sorry for his misbehaviour and for mistaking her simplicity for allurements. He expresses his feelings for Kate, thinking her to be a poor relation of Hardcastle, and that he is bewitched by her simplicity and he would be undone, if he stays any longer. Kate pretends to weep and Marlow calls it the first mark of tenderness he ever had from a modest woman. He is deeply touched. She is the only one from the family whom he would leave with reluctance. Owing to their different status Marlow cannot make her his wife.

Constance requests Tony to get the casket of jewels again; he refuses and informs her he has arranged for a horse for them to elope. Mrs Hardcastle arrives. Diggory, the servant brings a letter for Tony. Constance recognizes the handwriting, the letter is from Hastings. She tries to keep Mrs Hardcastle engaged so that their plan is not revealed. As Tony could not understand the handwriting, it is Mrs Harcastle who reads it, comes to know about their plan, and decides to send Constance to live with aunt Pedigree. She immediately prepares to leave for aunt Pedigree's house.

Hastings accuses Tony of disclosing the plan to his mother. Marlow blames Hastings for hiding the truth and not stopping him from the wrong act. Marlow tells Tony that it is because of his mischief that all here are in trouble and, hence, unhappy. All present on the stage are disappointed with the happenings.

### **Critical Analysis**

The mistaken identities and circumstances start unfolding. As Mr Hardcastle mentions Marlow's father, he begins to think of mistaking the mansion to be an inn. Kate tells him it is Mr Hardcastle's house. Marlow confesses to have feelings for Kate and Kate also reciprocates those feelings. Hastings plan to elope with Constance is also disclosed to Mrs Hastings.

The conversation between Marlow and Hastings also throws light on Marlow's opinion about women belonging to the low class. Hastings warns Marlow that he cannot rob a woman of his honour to which the reply comes that firstly, barmaid

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of an inn does not have any honour and secondly, there is nothing in this inn for which he cannot pay. He means to say that he will pay the barmaid to be with him. And if she has virtue, he should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it. The scenes also reveals Marlow's character a little more and his thoughts about women of lower class. Once again the class differences are highlighted and the necessity to be in relationship only with people of the same class is asserted. As Marlow says that if, he were alone in this world with no social obligations he could have married her. But the opinion of the world matters to him. According to Marlow, difference of birth, fortune and education has prevented him from marrying her. Kate has also fallen in love with Marlow and reiterates the title of the play that she will preserve the character to which she has stooped to conquer her love.

### Act V Scene I

#### Summary

Charles Marlow and Mr Hardcastle have come to know about Marlow's mistakes. Marlow possesses a fortune more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share and increase his happiness.

Marlow feels sorry for his misconduct. He apprises his father and Mr Hastings that he has not given Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of his attachment or even the most distant hint to suspect him of affection. They have just had one interview, and that was formal, modest and uninteresting. The old men are unable to believe this statement. As he leaves, Kate joins the two old men. She admits that Marlow has professed of a lasting attachment and love, has said civil things to her, talked much of his want of merit, and her greatness. Old Marlow mentions his son's submissive nature and inability to have conversation with modest women. Kate suggests them to hide and see Marlow professing his love for her.

#### Scene II

Scene II is set in the back garden. Tony tells Hastings that he took the ladies for a round and brought them back to the Hardcastle's house instead of taking them to aunt Pedigree's house. Moreover, Mrs Hardcastle falls into the pond. She does not know that it is her own house. She sees someone coming and Tony frightens her saying it is a highwayman. It is actually Mr Hardcastle, who has come listening to the cry for help. Anxious, she hides behind a tree. Tony convinces Mr Hardcastle there is no one around and his mother along with Constance is at aunt Pedigree's house. Mr Hardcastle is surprised that they have covered such a long journey in such a short time. Mrs Hardcastle, thinking the old man to be a highwayman, pleads for mercy to take all the money but spare her son. Recognizing the voice of his wife, Mr Hastings thinks she is out of her senses. Blinded by her fears, she is amazed to see Mr Hardcastle in a frightful place, far from home. Mr Hardcastle understood that Tony has played a prank on her. Mrs Hardcastle swears to teach Tony a lesson. Tony retorts that the whole parish is of the opinion that Mrs Hardcastle has spoiled her son so she should also bear the fruits of the same.

Constance is reluctant to elope and wishes to marry with the consent of everyone in the family and also get her fortune. Hastings tries to persuade her to elope, stay in love from the moment, let fortune perish. Love and contentment will

increase their fortune beyond the monarch's revenue. Constance wishes to be prudent. She believes that hasty decisions taken in a moment of passion lead to repentance in the long run. She has decided to talk to Mr Harcastle to resolve the issue for he is compassionate and just. Hastings is apprehensive because Mr Hardcastle may have the will to relieve her but not the power to do so since Mrs Hardcastle is her guardian and fortune keeper.

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### Scene III

Marlow admits to Kate (disguised as a poor relation) his inability to marry her. It agonizes him to be separated from her. Kate asks him to wait for a couple of more days and see his uneasiness subside. He confesses that he has already trifled too long with his heart. Now pride begins to surrender to his passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of parents, and the contempt of his peers, begin to lose their ground. There is nothing that can restore him to himself except this painful effort of resolution. Kate, still playing the role of a poor relation, says his sufferings for her are of little value as they will soon be gone in a day or two once he leaves for his city. Soon, he will regret the feeling he harbours for her. She does not urge him to stay. Kate tells Marlow that her family and education is as good as Miss Hardcastle's family but they come to nothing if the family is not affluent. Acting sorry, she says she must remain contented with the slight approbation of credited merit. Kate says what began with indifference should also end with indifference. Any connection between them would appear mercenary on her part and imprudence on his part. She will never feel the confidence of being addressed by a secure admirer.

Marlow defends himself. He does not care for the fortune; it is her beauty at first sight that caught his attention. He likes spending time with her. He decides to stay and tell his father about her. He is sure that after seeing her, his father will not question about her class. Marlow will not repent any decision except that he did not understand her merit before and would like to atone for his past misconduct. Every moment reveals a new merit in her and increases his diffidence and confusion. Marlow kneels down and expresses his feelings to make her feel confident and secure.

Both the fathers, Charles Marlow and Mr Hastings, who were listening to the conversation hiding behind the screen, chide Marlow for wooing Miss Hardcastle in private but not accepting it before them. Marlow is surprised to hear that Kate is Mr Hardcastle's daughter. Kate pokes fun at him and asks which Marlow should she address, one who is a faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the one who is loud, confident and keeps it up with Mrs. Mantrap, and old Miss Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning. The two old men pardon Marlow for everything.

Mrs Hardcastle believes Hastings and Constance have eloped but Constance has not taken her fortune. Mr Hardcastle knows she cannot be so mercenary. Hastings and Constance enter the stage and announce they could not go without the consent of everyone. Hardcastle asks Tony whether he refuses to take Constance as his wife or not. Tony says that he has not come of age yet to pronounce this statement. Mr Hardcastle discloses the secret that Tony has come of age three months ago and his wife asked him not to reveal this fact. Tony formally announces his refusal to make Constance his wife. Marlow and Kate reconcile and decide to have a merry morning.

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### Critical Analysis

Themes of class, marriage and money are again reinforced in this Act. Marriages are about making bonds stronger, as the old men say, and this will further lead to union of families. To own wealth and fortune is vital to be respectable in the society. As Kate mentions being affluent is more important than to have good education and family. The fact that it is Mrs Hardcastle who is responsible for spoiling her son, everyone believes it, is once again fortified. Kate, who stooped to conquer, wins Marlow's heart as a woman of social class lesser than his own. That justifies the title of the play. Marlow not only expresses his love to her but also firmly decides to convince his father and make Kate (belonging to low class) as his wife going against all restrictions of class.

The Act ends with the announcement of the union of both sets of lovers and that too with the consent of the family members.

#### 3.4.2 Epilogue

Epilogue one is spoken by the actress who played the part of Kate Hardcastle. She speaks in the person of a barmaid. It summarizes the action, hoping that the humorous tale of how Kate, who 'stooped to conquer' justifies the author's abandonment of sentimental comedy. She stooped to conquer and win a husband for herself without any aid from her fortunes. And Marlow falls in love with the simplicity of the barmaid and not the fashionable Kate and her fortunes. She begins and ends the epilogue with the plea to obtain the appreciation of the audience for the play. She narrates the five stages of the barmaid's life. The structure of the epilogue corresponds with the lines spoken by Jacques in *As You Like It*.

The second epilogue is spoken by J. Craddock, who plays the role of Tony Lumpkin. This epilogue reiterates the theme of the play that assumptions of money and class should not matter much to anyone. He says that now he has renounced Miss Constance and will soon start receiving a thousand pounds a year. He will go to London since there people have some regard for the innate qualities of a person, no matter what he inherits. He will show the world what good taste is. He will set new fashions and prove it to the London gentry that they too are gentlemen.

### Critical Analysis of the Setting

The play is set in eighteenth century England. The play is set in a country side, away from the urban London society. The place of action is in and around Mr Hardcastle's mansion. One of the scenes is set in the alehouse called The Three Pigeons, Tony's favourite hangout.

#### 3.4.3 Themes and Characters

Let us now study the prominent themes of the play.

##### Class

The play showcases the reality of class distinctions and class snobbery. People belonging to the upper class are keen to find suitable partners from the same class for their children. Young men from good families might consider sleeping with a barmaid, but would not normally consider marrying one.

Nevertheless, Goldsmith views class as more of a psychological construct, class prejudices are the product of social and psychological conditioning. The perspectives of the characters are influenced by the class to which they belong. For instance, Tony Lumpkin is a squire's son and like his biological father, prefers alehouse companions and country folk to people of his own class. He does not spend much time with any of his family members too. He is the only one who enjoys the company of low class people. Another example is that of Marlow. He is terrified of the respectability of women of his class like Kate Hardcastle. When he confronts Kate as a barmaid, Marlow is sexually interested in her, and gets emotionally involved when he comes to know that Kate is a poor relative of Mr. Hardcastle. But Marlow shows inability to marry a woman outside his class. Kate is the same person who plays different roles, and it is Marlow who invests those roles with social and psychological value. Kate, in disguise, cuts across the social boundaries and stoops to conquer love. Marlow's attitude towards Kate Hardcastle is another example of the vital role played by class in eighteenth century England. His behaviour throughout the play is natural and genuine.

## NOTES

### **Inheritance**

The theme of inheritance is a common one which was largely found in the plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England. In these plays, the fortunes of young men and women were often controlled by their guardians. If they married without the consent of their guardian these young people would lose their fortunes. Continuing with the tradition, Goldsmith also sets the same condition for Miss Constance, niece of Mrs Hardcastle. She has to marry the man of his aunt's choice or she will have to part with the jewels that her uncle has left for her in his will. And it is to save Tony's future that Mrs Hardcastle wishes Miss Constance to marry Tony.

### **Money**

Money is a practical need of life. Even amidst emotions, it is important to think of money. Kate, when playing the role of a poor relative to Mr Hardcastle, mentions to Marlow that men of their class marry women not for love but for their fortunes. Even Constance is reluctant to leave her casket of jewels behind. The characters are judged on the basis of lack or access to money. Marlow would hide his emotions for a woman who belongs to the lower class because his father would not accept this and, hence, will not give his approval for marriage. Even Mr Hardcastle is treated with disrespect till the moment he is thought to be the innkeeper. Mrs Hardcastle wants Tony to marry Constance for her fortune. It is Hastings who is ready to elope with Constance without her casket of jewels. He needs only her companionship and not her money. Tony is another character who does not care for money. He refuses to marry Constance because he does not like her. It does not matter to him if he loses the inherited wealth. Nonetheless, he can afford extravagance because he has access to wealth.

### **Love**

The theme of love runs throughout the play. Hastings accompanies Marlow only for his love for Constance. It does not matter to him whether Constance is able to get her money from Mrs Hastings or not. All he wishes for is to get married to her. This is the reason he decides to run away to France where love marriages are accepted.

## NOTES

Kate makes it clear in the beginning of the play that she would not marry someone whom she does not love. She has, therefore, 'stooped' from her status to make Marlow fall in love with her. This way she obediently respects her father's decision as well as fulfills her own desire to marry a man for love.

Mr and Mrs Hardcastle also share a bond of love that is strong and resilient. It is their second marriage. Mrs Hardcastle is loud, pretentious, greedy, a fashion freak and eccentric. She is the one who is responsible for Tony's presumptuousness. Mr Hardcastle loves the lady and treats her with all regards. He loves her with all her faults and attends her gently and in good humour. Mr Hardcastle is a loving and an affectionate father to both his obedient daughter Kate and his boisterous step son Tony.

Mrs Hardcastle loves her son so much that she covers up all his mischief. In order to protect Tony's future she wants Constance and Tony to get married even when she know they do not love each other. It is believed that Mrs Hardcastle's love and pampering has spoiled Tony.

### City vs Countryside

Mr Hardcastle views town manners as pretentious. The conversation between Mr and Mrs Hardcastle and their respective tastes present a contrast between the hustling bustling life of London and its people and the serene, countryside and the simplicity of the rustics. Mr Hardcastle criticizes the vanities and affectation of the town, lamenting the loss of traditional values as the people of this age are devoid of sense and discretion. He believes whoever goes to London only comes back with fopperies and affectations. In his song in the alehouse, Tony praises the countryside and he is the one who enjoys the company of his rustic friends.

Kate provides a combination of being refined and simple at the same time. It is Marlow who praises her for having a refined simplicity. Having lived in town, she is able to appreciate the values of both sides of life and can find happiness in appreciating the contradictions that exist between them.

### Characters

Mr Hardcastle, an old fashioned romantic, is a traditionalist who loves the past times, old manners, old books and old wine, and a rustic way of life. He is critical of the fashionable London society, which he believes, breeds vanity and affectation. He is a caring husband and an affectionate father. As a husband he loves his second wife with all her faults and treats her with his usual gentle good humour. As a stepfather, he is only gently critical of Tony. Mr Hardcastle understands Tony better than his mother and gives a more realistic appraisal of Tony's character. He is a doting father who wants his daughter to be happy in marriage and, therefore, firm in his decision to find a compatible match for Kate, but of course with her daughter's consent. He believes in class hierarchy.

Mrs Dorothy Hardcastle is an admirer of the fashionable London society. She yearns for it. Her first dialogues with her husband express her longing for a trip to the town. She takes lively interest in fashion. To accommodate the latest fashions she tries to look younger than her age. Her love for Tony, her son has spoilt him. Being a doting mother, she is not ready to admit any faults of Tony. In her selfish pursuit, she wants Miss Neville to marry Tony because of her inheritance and social standing. She is not at all concerned whether the two love each other or not.

Tony Lumpkin is an ill-mannered and a spoilt freak who enjoys drinking with his alehouse companions. He is neither interested in studies nor conscious of his class. His buddies are rustics who drink with him at the alehouse. He amuses himself by gambling, drinking, and playing pranks on people. It is his mischievous act on Marlow and Hastings that puts the plot into motion. Tony is reluctant to marry Constance but cannot refuse until he legally comes of age. For all his immaturity and imbecility, Tony does show some strength of character. He refuses to marry for money and fortune. Though for selfish reason to get rid of Constance, he helps Hastings to run away with Constance. He even steals the jewels for the lovers from his mother's drawer which could have been his own had Constance married with Hastings without Mrs Hardcastle's consent.

Kate Hardcastle is an independent woman. She is polite in addressing both her father and stepmother. She obediently follows her father's whim to wear a plain dress in the evening. She seeks a companion in marriage with whom she is comfortable, and not just a wealthy gentleman. To ascertain Marlow's true feelings, Kate pretends to be a barmaid to get him to announce that he loves her despite her low social position.

Marlow is a young man who behaves differently with people of different class. He is informed to be a handsome, brave and generous scholar, a reserved fellow. Marlow mixes with girls of low class, brash and outspoken in the company of barmaids and other working class women, but shy and tongue-tied when in the company of women of his own class and standing.

## NOTES

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### 3.5 SUMMARY

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- It is believed Goldsmith was born in 1728 in Ireland. His father was a poor clergyman in a church of Ireland. Due to meagre financial resources, Goldsmith struggled for education and later for his livelihood.
- Goldsmith received his degree in 1749. In 1752, he moved to Edinburgh to study medicine but left it without a degree. From 1753–56, he travelled across the British continent.
- Oliver Goldsmith was a poet, a novelist, a playwright and an essayist.
- Goldsmith wrote numerous poems like *Edwin and Angelina*, *The Traveller*, *The Deserted Village*, *Retaliation* and *The Haunch of Venison*. His significant plays include *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Grumbler* and a novel *The Vicar of Wakefield*.
- Goldsmith's *She Stoops to Conquer* (1773) is seen as the first successful reaction to the sentimental comedy initiated by Steele.
- Sentimental comedy was developed in response to the perceived immorality of the Restoration theatre. It was founded on the belief that man is innately good and that he can be softened through tears that flow from contemplation on undeserved suffering.
- Oscar James Campbell noted in an introduction to *Chief Plays of Goldsmith and Sheridan: The School for Scandal, She Stoops to Conquer, The Rivals* that the central idea of this play was suggested to Goldsmith by an incident of his boyhood.

#### Check Your Progress

5. Who wrote the Prologue of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*?
6. How does Scene I Act I of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* begin?
7. What is the setting of Act I Scene II?
8. Why does Mrs Hardcastle want Constance to marry Tony?
9. Whom does Mr Hardcastle want his daughter Kate to marry?
10. How does Marlow's treatment of ladies of low class and high class differ?

## NOTES

- Mr Woodward, the speaker, is dressed in black and holding a handkerchief to his eyes. He is mourning for the death of ‘Comic muse’ that is genuine comedy.
- Prologues and epilogues were written to comment on the play and to introduce the audience with the objectives of writing the play. The prologue also gave the reasons for composing the drama.
- The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times. He was a manager of a patent house in Drury Lane. The prologue was spoken by Mr Edward Woodward, a contemporary comic actor.
- Scene I of the play begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. Mrs Hardcastle is unhappy with their old fashioned house that resembles an old inn.
- Mr Hardcastle is critical of Tony, that he is a drunkard, growing fat, is a trickster and knows only mischief. He is not fit for any education. The only schools that he can visit are the ale-house and a stable. Mr Hardcastle believes that Tony and his mother have spoiled each other.
- Mr Hardcastle informs Kate that he has invited his prospective son-in-law, a young man Marlow, who is the son of his longtime friend Sir Charles Marlow. No one from the family has ever met him.
- Mr Hardcastle believes that modesty resides in people who are endowed with noble virtues and, therefore, he likes Marlow for his reserved nature.
- Kate feels that Marlow’s reserved nature has undone all his other accomplishments. Though impressed by his good looks, Kate is not enamoured by the quality of being reserved since such men become suspicious husbands.
- For Kate, it is more important for her husband to be handsome and young rather than be sensible and good natured. She is apprehensive about having a reserved husband. She would first secure a lover and then a husband.
- Act I presents a contrast between the characters of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle. While, Mrs Hardcastle has an interest in the London society and she takes a lively interest in the fashions of the day, Mr Hardcastle, on the other hand, is a traditional man.
- Act I Scene II highlights Tony’s character. Tony is happy drinking and merry-making. He asserts that he chooses his company. No one dictates him. He is his own master.
- The servants’ scene in Act II once again emphasizes the contrast between the low life of the rustics to that of the gentry. The gap between the expectations of polished behaviour and what the servants can manage adds humour to the scene.
- Marlow admits being shy and reserved with ladies of his own class, confident and boisterous with women of low class, and stating the reasons for such behaviour. He becomes uncomfortable and uneasy talking to a lady from the same class.
- Act III further confirms the personality traits of Kate, Marlow and Tony. Kate takes pleasure in being obedient to her father. Marlow is modest and

shy in the company of his own class and wild when with the barmaids. Tony shows his righteousness by giving the casket of jewels to Hastings and making arrangements for him to leave with Constance.

- In Act IV Marlow confirms that difference of birth, fortune and education has prevented him from marrying Kate (woman of low class). Kate has also fallen in love with Marlow and reiterates the title of the play that she will preserve the character to which she has stooped to conquer her love.
- Themes of class, marriage and money are again reinforced in Act V. Marriages are about making bonds stronger, as the old men say, and this will further lead to union of families.
- The Act ends with the announcement of the union of both sets of lovers and that too with the consent of the family members.
- The play showcases the reality of class distinctions and class snobbery. People belonging to the upper class are keen to find suitable partners from the same class for their children.
- The theme of inheritance is a common one which was largely found in the plays of the seventeenth and eighteenth century England.
- Money is a practical need of life. Even amidst emotions, it is important to think of money. Kate, when playing the role of a poor relative to Mr Hardcastle, mentions to Marlow that men of their class marry women not for love but for their fortunes.
- The theme of love runs throughout the play. Hastings accompanies Marlow only for his love for Constance. It does not matter to him whether Constance is able to get her money from Mrs Hastings or not.

## NOTES

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### 3.6 KEY TERMS

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- **Sizar system:** This system appears to have begun in the late sixteenth century in Cambridge and Dublin. This system allowed poor students to study in lieu of the work they did as servants for the tutors.
- **Foible:** It is a minor weakness or eccentricity in someone's character.
- **Solus:** It is alone or unaccompanied (used especially as a stage direction).
- **Coterie:** It refers to a small group of people with shared interests or tastes, especially one that is exclusive of other people.
- **Fop:** This term refers to a man who is excessively vain and concerned about his dress, appearance, and manners.

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### 3.7 ANSWERS TO 'CHECK YOUR PROGRESS'

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1. The prominent works of Oliver Goldsmith are *The Vicar of Wakefield*, *The Good Natur'd Man*, *She Stoops to Conquer*, *The Traveller* and *The Deserted Village*.
2. *She Stoops to Conquer* was published in 1773.
3. Marlow is the hero of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
4. Sentimental comedy is a genre of the eighteenth century literature in which comedy is aimed at producing tears rather than laughter.

Oliver Goldsmith:  
*She Stoops to Conquer*

## NOTES

5. The Prologue of *She Stoops to Conquer* was written by Mr David Garrick, a well-known actor and producer of his times.
6. Scene I Act I of the play *She Stoops to Conquer* begins with the entry of Mr and Mrs Hardcastle.
7. Scene II of Act I is set in the alehouse, The Three Pigeons.
8. Mrs Hardcastle wants Constance to marry Tony because Constance Neville has a fortune to her name. Hence, through this marriage Tony's future would be secured.
9. Mr Hardcastle wants his daughter Kate to marry his friend's son Marlow.
10. Marlow is affable and boisterous with serving women and barmaids. He can say the finest things to the barmaid and the college bed maker but not a word of it to women of high class. He is extremely shy and lacks confidence in front of women of high class.

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### 3.8 QUESTIONS AND EXERCISES

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#### Short-Answer Questions

1. Prepare a brief biographical sketch of Oliver Goldsmith.
2. Summarize the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Write a short note on the Prologue and Epilogue of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
4. Briefly summarize the role of Kate Hardcastle in the play.

#### Long-Answer Questions

1. Analyse *She Stoops to Conquer* as a sentimental comedy.
2. Discuss the title of the play *She Stoops to Conquer*.
3. Critically analyse the theme of wealth and inheritance as presented in the play.
4. Evaluate the characteristics of Marlow's personality.

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### 3.9 FURTHER READING

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