Julius Caesar

Act 3 Scene 2

Questions and Answers

Passage 1

CITIZENS – We will be satisfied; let us be satisfied.

BRUTUS – Then follow me and give me audience, friends.

1. Why do the citizens wish to be satisfied? What mood are they in? Give the meaning of 'audience'.

The citizens are agitated at the death of their beloved Caesar. They wanted to know the reasons for his death. They are in a restless and dangerous mood. 'Audience' here means to hear to Brutus' reasons.

2. What instructions does Brutus give Cassius? What does Brutus tell the crowd before he goes up to the pulpit?

Brutus instructs Cassius to go into the street, after dividing the members. Before going up the pulpit, Brutus tells the crowd to stay there if they wish to listen to him or if they wish to follow Cassius for they can go after him. A public explanation will be given of Caesar's death.

3. What do the First Citizen and Second Citizen tell each other?

The first citizen says, he shall hear Brutus speak. The second citizen says, he shall hear Cassius and then they shall compare their reasons after hearing them separately.

4. What will be the purpose of Brutus' speech to the citizens who are waiting for him to speak?

The purpose of Brutus' speech to the citizens who are waiting for him to speak will be solely to pacify them and to convince them to satisfaction as they were furious at Caesar's murder and wished to know the reason behind this murder from Brutus.

5. According to Brutus what was the single major evil in Caesar's character?

The single major evil in Caesar's character was that Caesar had become too ambitious and wanted to make the Roman citizens his slaves.

Passage 2

Brutus – As Caesar loved me,
I weep for him, as he was fortunate,
I rejoice at it; as he was valiant,

I honour him, but as he was ambitious,
I slew him.

1. Where does the scene take place? Who is Brutus addressing?

The scene takes place at 'The Forum' in Rome. Brutus is addressing to the commoner's crowd.

2. Why does Brutus ask who he addresses be a better judge? Is Brutus correct in his assessment of what he addresses? Give reasons for your answer.

Brutus asks the people to be better judge and determine Brutus' acts as wise or unwise because he wants them to attentively listen to him and judge his action.

No, Brutus is not correct in his assessment of the mob's ability to judge wisely as the mob is always fickle-minded and makes decisions on the basis of what convinces them more.

3. Who does Brutus feel he has offended in his speech? What reply does he get?

Brutus feels he has offended a base man who would wish to be a slave or any man who does not love his country or any man who does not wish to be a free Roman citizen.

The crowd replies to Brutus by saying 'None, Brutus none.' (i.e. Brutus has offended none of them.)

4. How does Brutus justify that he has offended no one at the end of his speech? Who enters after his speech?

Brutus justifies his speech by saying that he has done no more to Caesar than what they shall do to him (Brutus), if ever they find him (Brutus) getting as ambitious as Caesar was.
Mark Antony and others enter with Caesar's body after the speech.

5. How does Brutus introduce the person who enters? Why is he confident that the person means no harm to the conspirators?

Brutus rutus introduces i Mark Antony as a noble friend of Caesar who had no hand in the murder of Caesar but he will definitely share the gains. He is confident about Antony that he means no harm because he believes that Antony is as noble as he is and honourable.

Passage 3

ANTONY – The noble Brutus
Hath told you that Caesar was ambitious;
If it was so, it was a grievous fault,
And grievously hath Caesar answer'd it.

1. State two instances cited by Antony in his speech to prove to the mob that Caesar was not ambitious.

Antony cites examples such as – Caesar has brought many captives home to Rome whose ransoms went into the public treasury and when the poor suffered, Caesar empathized with them and shed tears for them.

2. What is the word used by Antony in his speech which is a repetition in a sarcastic manner (verbal irony) to incite the mob to anger and fury? How does he cleverly play on the emotions of the mob against Brutus indirectly refuting what Brutus spoke of Caesar?

The word 'honourable' is used by Antony sarcastically to undermine Brutus' projection of Caesar as ambitious and turn the tables on the conspirator's motives. This indirectly turns the mob against the conspirators. At the same time, he avoided openly attacking Brutus.

3. Why does Antony ask the mob to bear with him? What is his ulterior motive in doing so?

Antony asks the mob to bear with him so that he can see the reaction of the commoners on his speech.

His ulterior motive is to manipulate the mood (anger) of the crowd and turn it against the conspirators responsible for Caesar's murder.

4. What is the reaction of the mob? What do they discuss among themselves? Give two instances of their conversation

The mob finds Antony's argument reasonable and justifiable. They discuss about the unjust treatment done to Caesar.

The first instance was when Caesar would not accept the crown.

Secondly, it was proved that Caesar was not ambitious

5. What qualities of Antony do you admire? What character traits are portrayed in his speech?

I admire Antony's skilful use of rhetoric and emotional manipulation in his speech. (a great orator). He rises as passionate and clever in the way he sways the crowd from supporting Brutus to turning against the conspirators. He pretends to be humble while actually intending to incite the mob to mutiny all along. Antony is portrayed as more emotionally intelligent than the logical Brutus, understanding how to appeal to the people's hearts rather than their heads.

Passage 4

ANTONY - O masters, if I were disposed to stir
Your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage,
I should do Brutus wrong, and Cassius wrong,
Who, you all know, are honourable men.

1. Who would Antony choose to wrong rather than the honourable men?

Antony would rather choose to wrong the dead Caesar, than to the living honourable men. (conspirator)

2. What had Antony found in Caesar's closet? What four things would the people do if they came to know of the contents of what Antony found?

Antony found a document (will of Caesar) with Caesar's seal on it in Caesar's closet.

The people would go and kiss dead Caesar's wounds,
They would urge to bathe their handkerchiefs in his sacred blood,
They would regard themselves fortunate if they would have one hair from his head as a memento,
They would keep these things as priceless gift to be given to their sons.

3. What reason does Antony give for delaying in reading the contents of what he had found in Caesar's closet? How does he incite the mob further?

Antony reasons that he might do injustice to Brutus and Caesar, as they know they are honourable men and if he read Caesar's will it would stir the people against those honourable men.

Antony keeps addressing the conspirators as honourable men to incite the mob further.

4. What does he ask the mob to do? What does he want to show them?

Antony asks the mob to form a ring round the corpse of Caesar. He asked the mob to do so, so that he can show them the wounds that could be seen from the Caesar's cloak.

5. Explain - "If I were disposed to stir your hearts and minds to mutiny and rage."

The given line explains that Antony wished if he had excited their (mob's) passions or had stirred them (mob) up to rebellion and fury.

6. Does Antony really stir their minds to mutiny and rage? Explain.

Yes, Antony did really stir the minds of the mob to mutiny and rage with his great oratory skills. In ironical statements, Antony repeatedly addressed the conspirators as 'honourable' men while each time he addressed them so, he actually pointed to their brutal acts of stabbing Caesar (who was a well wisher of the commoners) to death.

Passage 5

ANTONY – This was the most unkindest cut of all;
For when the noble Caesar saw him stab,
Ingratitude, more strong than traitor's arms
Quite vanquish'd him, then burst his mighty heart;

1. Which was the unkindest cut of all? Who have already stabbed Caesar? Where? When?

The cut made by Brutus' dagger was the unkindest cut of all.
Cassius and Casca have already stabbed Casca.
All the conspirators stabbed Caesar at the Capitol on the Ides of March.

2. Why was it referred to as 'the unkindest cut of all'? What was the reaction in Caesar's body to this cut? What does it show about Caesar's relationship with the person who gave him this cut?

... because it was Brutus who has given this cut and Brutus loved him dearly.
When Caesar saw Brutus stab him, he could not bear the ingratitude of a dear/loving friend and it shattered his heart completely.
This shows that Caesar had very close and loving relations with Brutus.

3. Where did Caesar fall? What was ironical about his fall?

Caesar fell at the foot of Pompey's statue. This fall is ironical because Caesar has fallen at the foot of the statue of his greatest rival.

4. What is spoken about the vesture of Caesar by Antony in his speech? What was so special about it? What was its significance in history?

Antony asks the citizens if they remember the cloak which Caesar was wearing.
It was on the day when Caesar had defeated the Nervii tribe, he had worn this vesture for the first time.
This cloak was used by Caesar to cover his face when he fell at the foot of Pompey.

5. How did the mob react? What did Antony achieve through his speech? How far was he successful?

The mob was furious to avenge Caesar's murder. Through his speech, Antony could arouse the mob to a sudden flood of mutiny.

He was completely successful as he could sense the spirit of mischief that has been let loose by his speech.

Passage 6

ANTONY - Good friends, sweet friends, let me not stir you up To such a flood of mutiny. They that have done this deed are honourable;

1. How does Antony go on to compare himself with Brutus? How does Antony try to project himself to be simple and outright to the mob? Why does he do so? Does he really mean it when he says 'let me not stir you up'?

Antony compares himself with Brutus stating that Brutus is a better orator than him. Antony projects himself as a straight forward, ordinary person who loves his friend. He does so to arouse the mob's passion. No, he does not really mean it when he says 'let me not stir you up.'

2. What does Antony show the people that incites them still further to mutiny and rage? What does it contain?

Antony shows the people the wounds on Caesar's corpse.

Antony stated that these wounds acted like poor, speechless mouths that cannot speak and that these wounds were asking him (Antony) to speak for them.

3. What do the mob decide to do at the end of the scene?

At the end of the scene, the mob decided to burn down the houses of the traitors with the burning logs.

4. Who enters after the mob disperses? What information does the person bring?

Servant to Octavius enters after the mobs disperses.

The servant informs that his master Octavius and Lepidus are at Caesar's house.

5. What shortcomings does Antony have as an orator according to himself? What would have happened had Antony and Brutus changed their places?

According to Antony, as an orator, he lacks quick wit, has no command over vocabulary, no personal merits, nor the gestures of an orator, nor expression, nor power of speech to arouse man's passion.

If Antony and Brutus had changed places, then Brutus as Antony would stir up the mob's spirit and gave every wound of Caesar a fluent tongue that would make the very stones of the road in Rome to rise up in rebellion.

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