Julius Caesar

Act IV Scene I

Passage 1

1. Where does this scene take place? Name the two new characters introduced in this scene. How does this short and rather unpleasant scene contrast with the earlier scene of mob fury?

Answer: The scene takes place in a house in Rome. Two new characters introduced are Octavius and Lepidus.

This scene is different from the earlier scene. Contrasted with the earlier scene, this scene shows clever manipulation of the situation and future plans of Antony and his companions.

2. What does Antony mean by saying 'their names are prick'd'? Why is this being done?

Answer: He means that the names of those who are to be put to death have been marked out. This is being done to get rid of the supporters of the conspirators.

3. What condition does Lepidus lay down after this extract? Does Antony agree to this condition? How does he show his consent?

Answer: When it is decided that Lepidus' brother will die. Upon this he lays down the condition that Antony's nephew should also die. Yes, Antony agrees to this.

He condemns him with the stroke of his pen, thereby showing his consent to Lepidus' condition.

4. What instructions does Antony give to Lepidus? What does Antony intend to do?

Answer: Antony instructs Lepidus to go to Caesar's house and bring his will. He intends to settle how they can reduce some of the expenditure in legacies.

5. What does this reveal about Antony's character?

Answer: It reveals that Antony is money minded and economical and also carefully planning the finance ahead of the war. This shows that he will take control of the situation very well.

Passage 2

1.Who is Antony referring to? Who is he speaking with?

Answer: Antony is referring to Lepidus. He is speaking with Octavius.

2. Why does he call the man 'slight unmeritable'? What is he only fit for?

Answer: Antony calls him a feeble man of no merit because he has a very poor opinion of Lepidus. Antony feels that he (Lepidus) is fit only to be used for errands.

3.Explain 'threefold world'.

Answer: 'Threefold world' refers to the division of Roman empire in Europe, Africa and Asia.

4.How does Octavius refute what Antony has just told him?

Answer: Octavius refutes what Antony has said. Tauntingly he says if Lepidus is a feeble man of no merit, then Antony's taking Lepidus' vote as to who should be marked off to die is not justified.

5.Explain 'black sentence' and 'proscription'.

Answer: Black sentence means capital punishment and proscription means list of laws for those people who are condemned by the state to die and their properties are to be confiscated by the government.

Passage 3

1. Who is the elder of the two speakers - Antony or Octavius? Why do you think Octavius tells Antony to 'do your will'?

Answer: Antony is elder of the two speakers. Octavius asks Antony to do as he likes because he admits Antony's seniority though he disagrees with him.

2.How does Octavius defend Lepidus?

Answer: Octavius says that Lepidus is not just a donkey fit to carry loads, but he is a brave soldier. He adds that Antony must not forget this quality of Lepidus.

3. How does Antony look after and control his horse? How does Lepidus behave like his horse?

Answer: Antony gives his horse a plentiful supply of food. He has trained him to fight, to stop and gallop. The movement of his horse are controlled by his wishes.

Antony says that Lepidus is like his horse. He must be guided, trained and instructed. In short, he has no originality.

4.What does Antony say about Lepidus last of all before changing the topic?

Answer: Antony says that Lepidus blindly imitates the manners of others. He is very happy to adopt what others have left after much use.

5. What are Brutus and Cassius busy doing? How does Antony plan to deal with the situation?

Answer: They are busy raising armies. Antony plans to gather resources and form a firm alliance to unite together and make the best use of their means. This is necessary to fight the enemy.

Passage 4

1. What does Antony mean by 'great things'? Why does he say 'great things' as compared to who?

Answer: 'Great - things' here means great news, the latest information.

He says great things because this news is much more important than wasting time in discussing Lepidus.

2. What does he tell Octavius regarding Brutus and Cassius?

Answer: He tells Octavius that Brutus and Cassius are raising armies and so they must also gather their resources and get ready for the war.

3. What does Antony suggest they should now do to overcome all dangers?

Answer: He says that they should consult how hidden dangers may be exposed and obvious dangers may be easily encountered.

4. What does Octavius reply?

Answer: Octavius replies that they are like the bear tied to the stake and they are fighting against their enemies who are like a ring of dogs. He adds that some outwardly smiling persons have ill-will in their hearts.

5.What is your opinion regarding Octavius in this scene?

Answer: We feel that Octavius is brave, sincere and respectful to Antony. He has to follow Antony if he wants to take revenge for the murder of Caesar.

Passage 5

1.Explain the metaphor Octavius uses about 'stake' and 'bay'd about'? (a popular sport in Elizabethan times)

Answer: Octavius feels that they are like the bear tied to the stake and fighting against a ring of dogs.

2.What does Octavius fear about people's smiles?

Answer: He fears that those, who outwardly claim that they are friends, but actually are are 1 hidden enemies, are more dangerous. They are smiling villains.

3. What is your opinion regarding the wisdom displayed by Antony and Octavius? Who appears to be wiser and more rational? Give reasons to substantiate your answer.

Answer: Antony and Octavius are very wise in handling the situation. They anticipate wisely the plans of their enemies and act accordingly. No wonder they succeed in defeating the enemy. Whereas Antony is more practical and ruthless. Octavius is wiser and more rational.

4. What is the sharp contrast between the noble Brutus and the Triumvirs in their intentions to seize power?

Answer: Brutus is noble and patriotic. He assumes leadership though he is not fit for the role of a politician. He lacks foresight and is not a good judge of persons. But in sharp contrast, the new triumvirs - Antony, Octavius and Lepidus are ambitious. Antony leading the group is practical, cold blooded and ruthless. He is also hypocrite at times. Brutus was clear that only Caesar should be killed, but Antony is ready to kill even his own nephew.

5. In what way does Antony appear to be ruthless and hypocritical? What sharp contrast is portrayed in Antony from what he was earlier in Act III?

Answer: Antony is ruthless as he does not mind putting his own nephew to death. He is hypocritical also. He wants to use Lepidus for his benefit and then discard him when he is of no use. Earlier in Act III he was pretending to be a lover of the masses, but now he is preparing a list of those who are to be put to death. He is ambitious, cold blooded, hypocrite.

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