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How does Casca reassure Cassius (lines 110-114)? **A.** Casca assures Cassius that he is not a talebearer and that he will support Cassius in his efforts to overthrow Caesar.



Rising action: Cassius reveals the beginnings of the plot to kill Caesar (lines 115-120).

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How does the weather reflect Cassius' enterprise (lines 122-124)? **A.** Like the weather, Cassius' planned enterprise is stormy and horrifying.



What pleases Cinna (line 131)? **A.** He is glad that Casca is involved in the conspiracy.



What instructions does Cassius give Cinna (lines 136-141)? **A.** Cassius instructs Cinna to place a letter on Brutus' chair, throw another in at his window, and affix a third to the statue of Lucius Junius Brutus. The letters are those that Cassius forged in different handwritings, urging Brutus to assume power. (1.2.314-319.)

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What does Cassius predict about Brutus (lines 148-150)? **A.** Cassius predicts that their next meeting will conclude with Brutus joining the conspiracy.



How does Casca describe the benefit that will ensue as a result of Brutus' involvement in the conspiracy (lines 151-154)? **A.** Since Brutus is so respected by the people, it is logical to assume that his actions and decisions will be acceptable as well. Casca uses a simile comparing Brutus' involvement in the conspiracy to the pseudo-science of alchemy, which seeks to transform base metal into gold. Thus, he believes that Brutus' support will convert what might otherwise be perceived as a vile deed into something noble and worthwhile.

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Check Quiz: Scene III

1. What extraordinary events have caused Casca to wonder? **A. a.** A slave held his arm up and it blazed like a torch, yet the man felt no pain. **b.** Casca encountered a lion in front of the Capitol and it merely passed Casca, without attacking him. **c.** A group of frightened women claimed that they had seen men surrounded by fire walking up and down the streets. **d.** An owl hooted and shrieked by day.
2. Why is Casca frightened by what he has seen? **A.** Casca is frightened because all these events are contrary to the natural order of things and, as such, he sees them as portents of danger.

3. According to Cassius, in what way are the Romans of his day more like their mothers than their fathers? **A.** According to Cassius, the fearless Romans of previous ages would never have tolerated the oppression and tyranny of a Caesar. The toleration and complaisance of the Romans of his generation make them more like their mothers than like their fathers.
4. What are the metaphors that Cassius uses to describe the relationship between Caesar and the Roman people? Explain each. **A.** Cassius first compares Caesar to a wolf, and the Roman people to sheep. Then he compares Caesar to a lion and the people to deer. These comparisons portray Caesar as a mighty predator and the Roman people as docile and easy quarry. Next, he compares the people to weak straws and Caesar to one who wants to create a massive fire, using the straws as fuel. Finally, he compares the people to garbage, indicating his disapproval of their acceptance of Caesar's tyranny.
5. Why are the conspirators so eager for Brutus to become involved in their plan? **A.** The Roman people greatly respect Brutus. Thus, his involvement will validate a plan that might otherwise have been seen as vile and ignoble.



Literary Critique: Act 1

1. Discuss the grievances that Cassius and Brutus bear toward Caesar. How does Casca's description of the public gathering increase their anger? **A.** Cassius and Brutus believe that Caesar has amassed too much power and will soon be crowned. This is antithetical to the philosophy of the Roman Republic, and to the beliefs of Cassius, Brutus, and other noblemen. Casca's description of Caesar's refusal of the crown adds fuel to the fire because they perceive that Caesar really wants the crown and only his fear of public displeasure prevents him from accepting it. The men fear that, in time, Caesar will actually become emperor and that his powers will become limitless and dangerous.
2. One of Shakespeare's favorite conventions is the use of puns. Explain two of the puns used in Act 1. **A. Soles/souls.** The cobbler truly repairs **soles**, but he leads the tribunes to believe that he is a man who mends **souls**. **Room/ Rome.** This pun plays on the fact that Rome appears to be only big enough for one man — Caesar. In other words, there is no **room** in **Rome** for more than one powerful leader.
3. How does Act 1, scene 1 compare to the exposition of a story? **A.** Just as the exposition of a story does, Act 1, scene 1 provides background and context for the play. The audience is introduced to the common folk who clearly admire and respect Caesar, as well as to the noblemen who clearly resent him. The stage is set for the conflicts that will divide the Roman people, and the audience is subtly made aware that the sentiments and loyalties of the common people will be the prize that is sought by Caesar's supporters as well as by his detractors.
4. What role does weather play in Act 1? What do we learn about the superstitions and beliefs of the Romans? **A.** The weather sets the tone and creates an aura of fear, tension, and violence. Like Elizabethan audiences, the Romans presumably believed that extremely inclement weather and supernatural occurrences were portents of doom. Often, these weather events were interpreted as signals of heavenly wrath or disapproval.