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Act IV Study Guide

**Act IV, i**

**Synopsis:** Nineteen months after Caesar’s death, Antony, Octavius, and Lepidus form a second triumvirate and lay plans for ruling Rom with an iron hand. After the cold-blooded decision to kill their enemies, even relatives, Lepidus goes to Caesar’s house for the dead man’s will. In his absence, Antony and Octavius decide how they may bet use him and then cast him off. Their immediate plans are to strengthen their combined armies, strife all domestic opposition, and set forth in pursuit of Cassius and Brutus.

1. Who are the three characters meeting at the beginning of Act IV?

2. What are they doing?

3. What is the tone or feeling? How do you know?

4. What is the relationship between the three men?

5. How does Antony describe Lepidus?

6. How did Antony use Caesar’s will at his funeral? How is he using it now?

7. “He shall but bear them as the ass bears gold,

to groan and sweat under the business,

either led or driven, as we point the way;”

Speaker:

Spoken about:

Literary Element:

**Act IV, ii-iii**

**Synopsis:**

ii: During the months since Cassius and Brutus fled Rome, hard feelings have flourished between the men. Brutus sends for Cassius, requesting a meeting near Sardis in Asia Minor, so that Cassius can explain actions of which Brutus disapproves. When Cassius arrives in a foul and defensive mood, Brutus asks him to step inside the tent for a private talk.

iii: Alone, the two men quarrel bitterly. The idealistic Brutus disagrees with Cassius’ more practical methods of maintaining an army on foreign soil. Brutus admits his anger stems from grief over Portia’s suicide, while Cassius pleads a fiery temper, and the men cease quarreling. They lay plans to engage the armies of the triumvirate. Against his better judgment, Cassius is given in to Brutus’ plan to march to Philippi in ancient Macedonia and attach the enemy encamped there. After Cassius leaves and Brutus sits reading, Caesar’s ghost appears and tells Brutus ominously, “Thou salt see me at Philippi.” Disturbed by this visitation, Brutus sends to Cassius, ordering the attack begin with haste.

1. What are Brutus and Cassius arguing about?

2. Who has more control during the quarrel—Brutus or Cassius? How do you know?

3. What is Brutus’ idea for battle?

4. What is Cassius’ idea for battle?

5. What do they decide to do?

6. What happened to Portia? How? Why?

7. What citizen does the new triumvirate have killed for no reason?

8. Nearly two years have passed since Caesar’s death. Do you think Brutus still thinks of him? Why?

9. How does Caesar become an important part of the story again?

10. “O Cassius, you are yoked with a lamb

that carries anger as the flint bears fire;

Who, much enforced, shows a hasty spark,

And straight is cold again.”

Speaker:

Spoken to:

Dramatic Device:

11. “There is a tide in the affairs of men,

which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;

Omitted, all the voyage of their life

Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

On such a full sea are we now afloat;

And we must take the current when it serves,

Or lose our ventures.

Speaker:

Literary Device:

12. “Thy evil, spirit, Brutus. . .

To tell thee thou shalt see me at Philippi.”

Speaker:

Literary Element: