JULIUS CAESAR

READING COMPREHENSION

ACT 4

YEAR 3 AND 4

OK, prepare yourself because things have got pretty bad. Remember when everyone was enjoying a festival in the streets? It has only been a few days since that fun and laughter happened, but it feels like a lifetime ago. Everything in Rome has changed. The people are scared and suspicious, they hide behind their doors, afraid to even go to the market. Traitors are everywhere and the army *hunt* for traitors everywhere. Nobody knows who to trust anymore, the situation is out of control.

As we begin act 4, Octavius Caesar has arrived in Rome. He is Julius Caesar’s adopted son, and he’s desperate to seek revenge on the men who murdered his father. In a cold, dark room he meets with Mark Antony and a Roman soldier called Lepidus. These three, by the light of a candle, are plotting. They are deciding which Romans are loyal and which are not. They are also making sure that anyone they think is disloyal *to them* will meet a terrible end*.* People’s names are written down in a book and once their names are “prick’d” into the book, they will be gone!

To show how serious the three of them are, even Lepidus’s own brothers’ name is written down in the book! They think he is a traitor!

“Your brother must die, consent you Lepidus?” said young Octavius

“I do consent” said Lepidus firmly, without even a tear in his eye. That is harsh behaviour.

Octavius, Lepidus and Mark Antony form what is known as a triumvirate: tri, because there’s three of them, like a tricycle or a triangle or a triceratops, see?

1. **Why has ‘Everything in Rome changed’? Tick two boxes**

People are scared/suspicious

There is a new ruler

The weather is horrible

Traitors are everywhere

1. **A. What is the name of Julius Caesar’s adopted son?**

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1. **Why has he arrived in Rome?**

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1. **Write down the names of the two people he has met up with to seek revenge for his father’s death**

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1. **How do we, as the reader, know how serious Lepidus is about seeking revenge?**

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1. **What do Octavius, Lepidus and Mark Antony form?**
2. **Write down ONE word**
3. **Underline the part of the word that means ‘three’**

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Meanwhile, Brutus and Cassius have got their armies together and set up camp near a place called Philippi. Things haven’t been going very well for them and Brutus has recently had some bad news. Brutus and Cassius are keeping their armies apart, but close to each other. Cassius arrives at Brutus’s camp and immediately starts an argument. They are both tired and hungry and finding it difficult to keep their tempers.

“Most noble brother you have done me wrong,” shouted Cassius. This annoyed Brutus quite a lot, not only because it was rude, but also because it was in front of their armies and generals shouldn’t argue in front of their armies. That’s rule number one of being a general.

“Cassius, in my tent I will give you audience,” said Brutus trying to get his angry “friend” inside.

1. **Where have Brutus and Cassius set up camp?**

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1. **Who arrives at Brutus’ camp and ‘immediately starts an argument’?**

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1. **Why are Brutus and Cassius finding it hard to ‘keep their tempers’? Give 2 reasons**

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1. ***“Cassius, in my tent I will give you audience,”* said Brutus trying to get his angry “friend” inside.**

Why do you think “friend” is in quotation marks?

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“YOU LOVE ME NOT” shouted Cassius. Not this again thought Brutus. Ever since they had teamed up, Cassius kept going on that Brutus didn’t like him as much as he had liked Caesar. Finally Brutus had had enough and shouted back,

“I do NOT like your faults.” But Cassius just kept going and going…

“Even when you hated Caesar most, you like him better than me” whined Cassius. Enough was enough and Brutus had to tell him the sad secret he was hiding.

“O Cassius, I am sick with grief, Portia IS DEAD! Impatient of my absence and scared that Octavius and Mark Antony have grown so strong, she died of sadness…” With that, Brutus fell down upon his bed and began to cry. The sacrifices he was making for Rome felt almost too much for him.

“O ye immortal gods!” cried Cassius. He had gone too far, shouting at his friend when his wife had died. Before he could say sorry, a messenger ran into the tent and exclaimed that Mark Antony and Octavius had put to death ONE HUNDRED senators, calling them traitors. A hundred? A HUNDRED???

1. **A. Who is Cassius jealous of?**

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**B. Write down a direct quote from the text that supports your answer**

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1. **What is the ‘sad secret’ that Brutus is hiding? Tick one box**

**He killed Julius Caesar**

**He doesn’t like Cassius anymore**

**His wife, Portia, has died**

**He thinks the Gods are going to punish him**

The time for action has come, this can’t go on for much longer. Brutus wants to move his army into battle.

“What think you of marching NOW to Philippi?” He asks Cassius.

“I think it not good, I think it is better the enemy seek us” replies Cassius with a bit of hesitation in his voice, because he doesn’t want to upset Brutus again. The thing is, that their armies are in a very good position. They have the high ground, which means that Antony and Octavius’s army will have to fight uphill, which is much harder (as you know if you’ve ever tried to run up a hill with a heavy sword and shield).

But Brutus is past the stage of listening and waiting. He is ready to go and no-one will stop him.

“Our cause is ripe, our legions are brim full, we MUST march.” And so it was decided: the next day, the armies would march into Philippi. It was a good plan, probably.

1. **What does Brutus want to do now? Tick two boxes**

**Kill Cassius**

**Move his army into battle**

**Say sorry to Mark Antony**

**March to Philippi**

1. **Why does Cassius reply to Brutus “with a bit of hestitation in his voice”? Use a direct quote from the text**

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1. **Write down the one word which shows that perhaps Brutus’ plan is not such a good one?**

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READING COMPREHENSION

ACT 4

YEAR 3 AND 4

ANSWERS

1. **Why has ‘Everything in Rome changed’? Tick two boxes**

People are scared/suspicious

Traitors are everywhere

1. **A. What is the name of Julius Caesar’s adopted son?**

Octavius Caesar

1. **Why has he arrived in Rome?**

To seek revenge for his father

1. **Write down the names of the two people he has met up with to seek revenge for his father’s death**

Lepidus

Mark Antony

1. **How do we, as the reader, know how serious Lepidus is about seeking revenge?**

His brother is on the list of traitors who will be killed and he is ok with that.

1. **What do Octavius, Lepidus and Mark Antony form?**
2. **Write down ONE word**

**Triumvirate**

1. **Underline the part of the word that means ‘three’**
2. **Where have Brutus and Cassius set up camp?**

Near Philippi

1. **Who arrives at Brutus’ camp and ‘immediately starts an argument’?**

Cassius

1. **Why are Brutus and Cassius finding it hard to ‘keep their tempers’? Give 2 reasons**

Hungry

Tired

1. ***“Cassius, in my tent I will give you audience,”* said Brutus trying to get his angry “friend” inside.**

Why do you think “friend” is in quotation marks?

Because Brutus doesn’t really see Cassius as a true friend.

1. **A. Who is Cassius jealous of?**

Julius Caesar

**B. Write down a direct quote from the text that supports your answer**

“Even when you hated Caesar most, you like him better than me”

1. **What is the ‘sad secret’ that Brutus is hiding? Tick one box**

**His wife, Portia, has died**

1. **What does Brutus want to do now? Tick two boxes**

**Move his army into battle**

**March to Philippi**

1. **Why does Cassius reply to Brutus “with a bit of hestitation in his voice”? Use a direct quote from the text**

“he doesn’t want to upset Brutus again”

1. **Write down the one word which shows that perhaps Brutus’ plan is not such a good one?**

Probably