JULIUS CAESAR

READING COMPREHENSION

ACT 4

YEAR 5 AND 6

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’s 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.

These three - 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?

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.

“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.” 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???

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.

Night fell upon the camp. Brutus unable to sleep, looked out of his tent around the camp. Soldiers were asleep everywhere. The fires were slowly dying and there was for the first time in a long while, a silence. But it wasn’t a comfortable silence: it was eerie, as if the night had secrets. Brutus felt a chill on the back of his neck and went back into his tent. Strange, a mist was coming in under the flaps of his tent. Odd, the mist seemed to be rising up into the air. Stranger still, the mist was shaping itself into a figure, a figure that Brutus started to recognise! It couldn’t be, could it? It was, it was JULIUS CAESAR! Brutus pinched himself to check that he wasn’t dreaming. Ow, he definitely wasn’t dreaming.

“Who comes here?” said a very scared Brutus,

“Speak to me what thou art?”

The ghost (for that’s what it was) stared back at Brutus

“Thy evil spirit Brutus” it whispered in a horrible, raspy whisper.

Before Brutus could even ask what the spirit was doing here, it replied,

“To tell thee, thou shalt see me at Philippi. Thou shalt see me at Philippi.”

With that it vanished. What could it possibly mean? How would Brutus see Caesar again at Philippi? Brutus knew he wouldn’t get much sleep tonight and that was never a good thing the night before a battle.

QUESTIONS

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

**Using evidence from the text give 2 reasons**

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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. **What shows they are serious about what they are doing?**
2. **A. What is a Triumvirate?**

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**B. Which part of the word “triumvirate’ means three?**

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

Near Philippi

1. **A. Have Brutus and Cassius joined their armies together?**

**YES NO**

**B. Justify your answer with a direct quote from the text**

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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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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. **Write down two reasons Brutus gives for his wife, Portia, dying?**

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1. **Why does Cassius believe their armies in a ‘good position’?**

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1. **Using the knowledge you have from reading the text why is ‘Brutus unable to sleep’?**

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1. **What does Brutus see in his tent?**

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1. **What does the ghost say? Use a direct quote from the text**

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1. **What do you think is going to happen at Philippi? Justify your answer with evidence from the text.**

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JULIUS CAESAR

READING COMPREHENSION

ACT 4

YEAR 5 AND 6

ANSWERS

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

**Using evidence from the text give 2 reasons**

People are scared/suspicious

People hide behind doors

People won’t go to the market

Traitors are everywhere

No one knows who they can trust anymore

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’s death

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

Mark Antony and Lepidus

1. **What shows they are serious about what they are doing?**

Lepidus’ brother is in the book of traitors

1. **A. What is a Triumvirate?**

A gang/group of three

**B. Which part of the word “triumvirate’ means three?**

Tri

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

Near Philippi

1. **A. Have Brutus and Cassius joined their armies together?**

**NO**

**B. Justify your answer with a direct quote from the text**

‘Brutus and Cassius are keeping their armies apart, but close to each other’

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. **Write down two reasons Brutus gives for his wife, Portia, dying?**

i Impatient of my absence

ii.Scared that Octavius and Mark Antony have grown so strong,

1. **Why does Cassius believe their armies in a ‘good position’?**

They have the high ground, which means that Antony and Octavius’s army will have to fight uphill, which is much harder

1. **Using the knowledge you have from reading the text why is ‘Brutus unable to sleep’?**

He’s upset that his wife has died/he’s regretting everything that he’s done/he’s worried about the battle and the fact that Mark Antony and Octavius have killed 100 senators

1. **What does Brutus see in his tent?**

The ghost of Julius Caesar

1. **What does the ghost say? Use a direct quote from the text**

“Thy evil spirit Brutus” and/or

“To tell thee, thou shalt see me at Philippi. Thou shalt see me at Philippi.”

1. **What do you think is going to happen at Philippi? Justify your answer with evidence from the text.**

Brutus is going to die- Julius Caesar’s ghost says

“To tell thee, thou shalt see me at Philippi. Thou shalt see me at Philippi.”