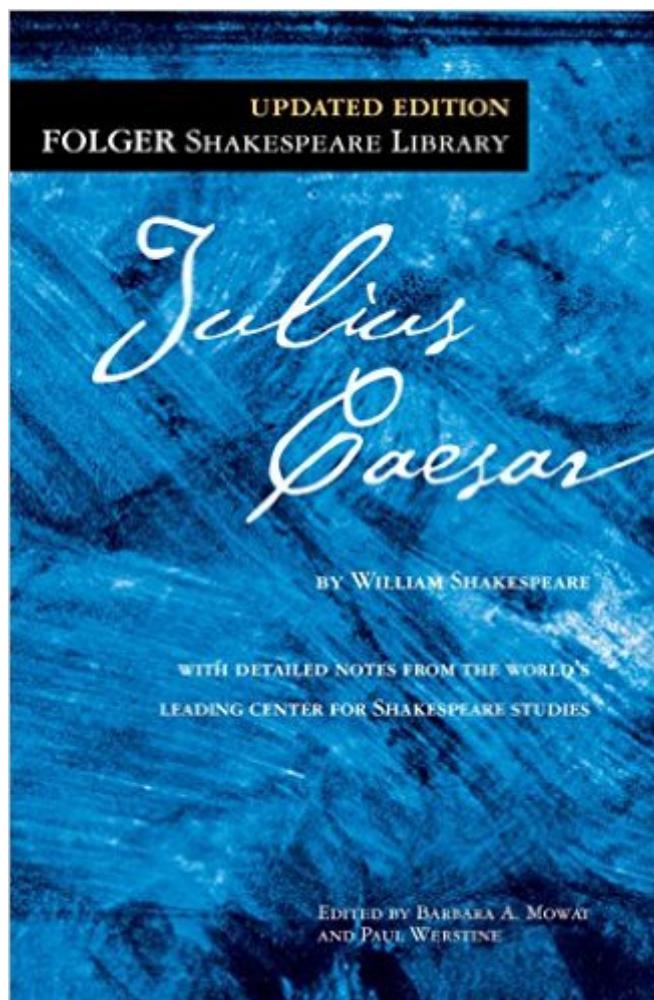


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Julius Caesar (Folger Shakespeare Library)



Synopsis

Shakespeare may have written Julius Caesar as the first of his plays to be performed at the Globe, in 1599. For it, he turned to a key event in Roman history: Caesar's death at the hands of friends and fellow politicians. Renaissance writers disagreed over the assassination, seeing Brutus, a leading conspirator, as either hero or villain. Shakespeare's play keeps this debate alive. The authoritative edition of Julius Caesar from The Folger Shakespeare Library, the trusted and widely used Shakespeare series for students and general readers, includes:

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Essay by Coppelia Kahn

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Customer Reviews

Before I begin, I would like to point out three things. One, I am only a middle-school student (this was an honours class project); two, this is my first review; three, I am reviewing the unabridged, original dialogue version. Thank you. William Shakespeare is hailed as the greatest writer ever, yet (based on people I've met) very few people have read even a single one of his works. I expected it to be required reading in high school or, at the very least, college. Alas, it is not. This is a disappointment, as I truly enjoyed reading this play, my first encounter with Shakespeare. Julius Caesar is a tale of honor and betrayal. Pompey, a beloved Roman leader, is defeated in civil war with Caesar. A small brotherhood, led by Marcus Brutus, is still devoted to him after his death, and wants nothing less than the assassination of their new leader. I had expected Caesar's death ("Et tu, Brutus? Then fall Caesar.") to be near the end of the book. However, it turned out to be within the third of five acts. The rest of the book is devoted to the attempts by Brutus's followers and Marc Antony (a dear friend of Caesar, and Brutus's enemy) to get the populace to believe in and follow that person's views, and turn them against the other people's ideals. Marc Antony, an orator with the ability to, in essence, brainwash an entire city with a short speech ("Friends, Romans, Countrymen, / Lend me your ears!"), convinces Rome to turn on Brutus's brotherhood. How their conflict is settled is, by far, the most captivating and entrancing parts of the play. With the plot discussed, I will move on to what makes this a challenging read: dialogue. Being a work from the Elizabethan Era, I (naively) expected words such as "forsooth" and manye more wordse endinge in "e".

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