

The wives in julius caesar

[History](#), [Ancient History](#)



The wives of Caesar and Brutus played a very key role in Act II, scenes 1 and 2 in *Julius Caesar*, by Shakespeare. They both significantly affected their husbands. They had to do something to influence their husbands to prevent them from doing something wrong, some things they did actually successfully influenced their husbands and some things that they did did not have the effect that they wanted. Both wives are very loyal to their husbands and would do anything to keep them safe and away from danger.

Portia consuled Brutus because she thought that he was keeping a lot of secrets from her and she tried to get him to open up. She is very worried about him and is afraid that something is wrong. She said when they were eating dinner he “ suddenly arose and walked about, musing and sighing, with your arms crossed”(II, i, 259-260). This shows that she is very observant of her husband and she knows him well enough to know that something is on his mind and it’s not right. When he would not answer what was wrong she became worried about his health because he was looking a little bit healthy. She showed this by saying, “ As it hath prevailed on your condition” (II, i, 274). She also tried to charm him to tell him and tried to tell him that he can trust her because she will be forever loyal to him. She told him to “ unfold to me, yourself, your half” (II, i, 295). She also accused him of thinking she is too weak to handle his secrets and she has given herself a “ voluntary wound” (II, i, 323) to show that if she could handle a cut in the thigh that she gave to herself and bear it than she must be able to handle whatever Brutus’ secrets are. This seems like one of the first signs of feminism, she believe that women are not as weak as everyone think they are so she wanted to prove to him that she is not weak like what everyone think that stereotypical

women are like. She actually accused him of being sexist, she was able to convince him to change that thought and change the stereotype of women in his mind. Portia showed Brutus that she can be trusted with his secrets, and he can share everything with her.

Brutus took Portia's advice to mind and he was very pleased with how much she cared about him. He said, "render me worthy of this honorable wife" (II, i, 327). This shows that he is very impressed with his wife and he believes that she is incredibly noble and honorable. At first he still did not want to tell her what he was hiding because he still had doubts and just wanted her to stop asking him. He was worried that she could not be trusted and that she would not be able to handle everything he has planned. He kept asking her to just go back to their room and just stop asking him to confess to her. However, when she asked even more he began to change his mind and wonder if she could be trusted after all. Finally, when she showed him that she cut herself so that he would tell her what has been bothering him, he decided to tell her. He said to her, "all my engagements I will construe to thee" (II, i, 331). She successfully convinced him to tell her his secrets, she also successfully influenced him. She helped him to look past genders and to see that females are just as strong and also he should be more trusting of his loving wife. He also showed first signs of feminism and he has agreed that women can be strong too. Brutus now completely trust his wife and will be willing to tell her everything in his plan. Portia is successful at influencing Brutus to tell her what has been bothering him.

The wife of Caesar, Calphurnia, has also tried to influence her husband to stop him from going to the senate house. She had a dream that someone is going to kill Caesar and she is afraid that if Caesar leave the house that day he will be killed so she tried to convince him to stay in the house for the day. She said that she saw a statue of caesar that “ drizzled blood upon the capitol” (II. i. 21). She begged Caesar to not risk it and stay home. She was screaming in her sleep because of her nightmare, Caesar heard her and was a little worried about her. She actually has a special power where her dreams become reality, no one knows it yet but some previous dreams of hers have came true and she was afraid that this one might come true too. No matter how much Caesar tried to tell Calphurnia that it was just a dream she still insisted that it was going to be true and that he was going to be killed if he step out of the house that day. Women at that time is still not very trusted and what they say are usually not taken seriously so Caesar still thinks that she is crazy. This is a gender stereotype like women are all crazy and nothing they say should be taken seriously. Caesar agreed with the gender stereotype and refused to take Calphurnia seriously.

Caesar followed the gender stereotype during that time period and took what Calphurnia said about her dream as a joke. This was shown when Caesar said, “ and for thy humor I will stay home” (II, ii, 60). He is taking what she is saying as a joke and wants to amuse her by staying home. Before this no matter how much Calphurnia begged he will not stay, he insisted that she is crazy and that is just a dream and nothing else. He is mostly doing this because she is a woman and women at that time are not taken as serious as men because they are seen as less educated so they

have silly thoughts. However, when Mark Antony told him that he should not go out that day he was a bit more convinced because he is a man and men are more educated than women. Caesar also care too much about his pride, because before when Calphurnia was trying to convince him to stay in the house he thought that staying at home would mean that he is a coward and that he is afraid of what is coming and he could not bear the thought of the great Caesar being afraid and a coward. Also later when Decius Brutus came to get him to go to the senate house he at first refused, but when Decius Brutus started flattering Caesar and talking about how great Caesar is and could not possibly be convinced to not step out of the house because of a dream that his wife had Caesar started to become convinced. He did not want to be known as the man who was scared of his wife's dream because that made him a coward. He had confidence that whatever he should be afraid of would coward when they saw him because he is the great Caesar and he should not be afraid of anything because everything is afraid of him. He was convinced to go to the senate house where he is killed by his best friend and several other people. Calphurnia did not successfully influence Caesar because she did not convince him to stay at their house and the entire time Caesar was not taking Calphurnia seriously. He thought everything Calphurnia said was a joke and for the brief period of time when he was convinced to stay at the house was because Mark Antony advised him not to leave the house. In the end Caesar still went with Decius Brutus and was killed.

The wives of Brutus and Caesar both played a key role in the tragedy and how they acted and how their husbands reacted reflected on the gender

stereotypes at that time and some early signs of feminism. Portia was able to successfully influence Brutus by convincing him to tell her his secrets. On the other hand, Calphurnia was not successful in trying to convince Caesar to stay at home and not go with Decius Brutus to the senate house and Caesar was killed.