

# The tragedy accompanying love in the tragedy of julius caesar

[Literature](#), [William Shakespeare](#)



One central theme that is identified in William Shakespeare's play "Julius Caesar" is how love can lead to tragedy. This is shown by Brutus' love for Rome, Julius Caesar's love for Brutus and Portia's love for Brutus. People presume that they can find happiness in love which is why they often pursue it. But contrary to popular belief, love can ultimately lead to tragedy, self conflict or destruction. This is amply implied in this play.

In the play, Brutus is constantly in conflict with himself. He has a perpetual dilemma whether to save Caesar because of his love for him or to assassinate him because of his ambition. In the end, he chose the latter because he did love Caesar but he ultimately loved Rome more: "Not that I loved Caesar less, but that I loved Rome more." (3. 2. 21-22). He essentially murdered his best friend and comrade not out of malice but for the sake of Rome as he thought the power would get to Caesar's head turning him into a tyrant: "That at his will he may do danger with / Th'abuse of greatness is when it disjoins remorse from power." (2. 1. 17-19). After the assassination of Julius Caesar, he told the people of Rome that if there was ever a day that the citizens would find him unworthy, then he would accept his death. This can symbolize how much he cares for Rome and how much he would do for his empire: "With this I depart: that, as I slew my best lover for the good of Rome, I have the same dagger for myself when it shall please my country to need my death." (3. 2. 43-46). Even until Brutus' last breath, all his actions were for the sake of Rome as he killed himself with his own sword so he wouldn't get captured. Everything Brutus did was because his love for Rome and in the end, he also died because of his love for Rome. Even Mark Anthony, his enemy, appreciated him as a true noble man to die for the sake

of Rome. He acknowledged that Brutus joined the conspirators out of selflessness because he truly thought that it was for the better for the people contrary to the rest who were envious of Caesar:

This was the noblest Roman of them all:

All the conspirators, save only he,

Did that they did in envy of great Caesar.

He only, in a general honest thought

And common good to all, made one of them. (5. 5. 68-72)

Along with his love for Rome, Brutus still loved Caesar until the time of his death as he avenges Caesar's spirit by killing himself: "Caesar, now be still." (5. 5. 50). Overall, Brutus represents how love can indeed lead to a tragic ending of oneself.

Physically, Julius Caesar died by getting stabbed but stated by Mark Anthony, it was because Brutus was a part of the conspirators that he died: "For when the noble Caesar saw him stab, Ingratitude, more strong than traitors' arms, Quite vanquish'd him / Then burst his mighty heart." (3. 2. 182-184). It was because he loved Brutus so much that the sight of him along the conspirators killed him rather than the knives. He accepted death because if someone as honourable as Brutus thought that he was a bad ruler for Rome, then so be it: "Et tu, Brute?- Then Fall, Caesar!" (3. 1. 77). It is often thought that those who love you would protect you but if one who you love harms

you, the pain is a tenfold worse than the pain of knives for Caesar. What Caesar felt was extreme heartbreak. If the conspirators were people he didn't love, then he would have died due to external pain but because of Brutus, he died from internal pain. From the pain of his broken heart. Caesar is a victim of tragic love as the reason why he ultimately died was because he loved Rome too much. When Artemidorus said that his letter was pertaining to Caesar, he wanted to read it last because he loved Rome more than he loved himself: "What touches us ourself shall be last serv'd." (3. 1. 8). If he read the letter, he would've lived: "If thou read this, O Caesar, thou mayst live; If not, the fates with traitors do contrive." (2. 3. 15-16). This ultimately led to the fall of Caesar. His tragic death can represent how death is most tragic when it involves love.

Portia's love for her husband is a form of self destruction. Her love shows that it can influence some to go to great extents as she showed her devotion by stabbing herself in the thigh: "I have made strong proof of my constancy, giving myself a voluntary wound here, in the thigh / Can I bear that with patience and not my husband's secrets?" (2. 1. 299-302). She loved Brutus so much that she was inclined to do that to show her loyalty and to convince him to tell her his secrets. Her belief is that since they are married, she should know everything that Brutus is worried about. Because of this psychological belief that love is trust, Portia feels extremely hurt when Brutus is hesitant to tell her. In the end, she ultimately killed herself because of her grief that comes from the love for her husband

Impatient of my absence,

And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony

Have made themselves so strong – for with her death

That tidings came. With this she fell distract

And, her attendants absent, swallow'd fire (4. 3. 152-156)

Portia truly is an example of self harm due to extreme love for someone. If she didn't love Brutus so much, then perhaps she would see better days.

In his play, Shakespeare can convey the message that love does not always lead to happy endings. Contrary to that, unconditional love for a country, for a person, for anything in that matter can often be a form of tragedy, of self destruction or conflict. People often dream about finding their soulmate or finding love. To some extent, some believe that life can be just a journey of finding love. Finding love for someone, for an activity or a hobby. But upon reaching it, they may find that it doesn't necessarily lead to happiness. It could lead to tragedy. The play "Julius Caesar" by Shakespeare implies that love is in fact tragedy and that it shown by the actions of Brutus, Caesar and Portia. But, if life is indeed a journey of love, then perhaps it is truly a journey of tragedy.