

How shakespeare creates tension in julius caesar act 1 scene 3



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In act one scene three of Julius Caesar, there are many things that help to create tension and really help the reader to understand the immediate danger that is to follow. For example, the scene itself uses pathetic fallacy to set the scene and create a sense of tension. The 'thunder and lightning' effect our emotions in such a way that we are able to foreshadow things to come and realize that this is no ordinary scene. Furthermore, we can see further foreshadowing when Caska explains 'For I believe they are portentous things.'

The word portentous helps to create a sinister and ominous setting and is an indication of things to come. Further tension is created when we see that this is no ordinary night on which the conspirators meet. Many strange occurrences happen that seem to create a sense that the whole world has been turned upside down. For example, we are told that 'a common slave held up his hand, in which the flame burned, yet his hand remained untouched,' 'a loin walked the streets,' 'men, all in fire walk up and down the streets,' 'a bird of night did sit even at noonday upon the market-place' and 'a tempest dropping fire'.

All of these are extremely strange and are importantly stressed by Caska and Cicero. It gives us a sense that the world has been turned upside down and everything has become unnatural. Furthermore, the fact that a tempest is dropping fire can be seen as a clash of the two different elements, this can relate to the two different sides of the play. The conspirators and Caesar. Cassius also seems to be blaming Caesar for these events and says that the gods are angry because Caesar has been offered the crown; we can see this when Cassius says 'as doth the lion in the Capitol.'

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Further tension is created when Cassius clearly shows his hatred for Caesar. For example, he refers to him as being 'no mightier than thyself, or me, in personal action, yet prodigious grown and fearful.' He is showing that he believes Caesar is weak and that he should not be offered the crown. This is also shown earlier on in the play when Cassius explains the story of when he and Caesar did swim the river Tiber and when Caesar asked for Cassius' help when he was drowning.

Cassius further creates tension in the scene when he declares 'I know where I will wear this dagger then: Cassius from bondage will deliver Cassius.' Here, Cassius is stating that he will commit suicide if Caesar should come to power and the throne. However in these times committing suicide was seen as a heroic and noble act and therefore Cassius would be seen as a heroic figure and this would further damage the image of Caesar should it happen.

On top of this, Cassius further shows his dislike for Caesar when he says 'poor man, I know he would not be a wolf but that he sees the Romans are but sheep. He were no lion, were not Romans hinds.' Saying this, Cassius is trying to explain that Caesar does not deserve to have power and that he has only come to it by feeding off of the Romans and other people. Finally, a great amount of tension is created in the way Cassius manipulates Caska and this eventually leads to Caska joining the conspirators.

This can be seen when Caska says 'and I will set foot of mine as far as who goes farthest.' This shows that Caska is willing to do whatever it takes and to go as far as any other man who is part of the cause. It is also shown when Cassius explains 'there's a bargain made.' Furthermore, when Cassius

arranges the meeting to be held ' in Pompey's porch' a huge amount of tension is created, as the place is ironic as Pompey is Caesar's enemy and he has defeated them not too long ago.