

Understanding personality and motives of mark antony (the tragedy of julius caesa...

[Literature](#)



Mark Antony is an interesting person. At first, he just seems to be fearing for his life, then he acts friendly towards the conspirators. No one knows what to make of him. He seems to be on their side, but then he decides to praise Caesar. Antony talks about how great Caesar was, and how angry he'd be if he knew how Antony was betraying him by shaking the conspirators' hands. By reading the story, I've learned about how multifaceted Mark Antony really is as a character. I've started to understand his personality and motives.

To begin, Antony started behaving strangely relative to who his character is. In Act 3, Scene 1, right after Caesar is assassinated, his servant speaks to Brutus for him. He says, " If Brutus will vouchsafe that Antony may safely come to him and be resolved how Caesar hath deserved to lie in death, Mark Antony shall not love Caesar dead so well as Brutus living, but will follow the fortunes and affairs of noble Brutus." To paraphrase, Antony is saying that if he can go to Brutus safely and be convinced that Caesar deserved death, he will follow and peacefully comply with Brutus's affairs. He seems to be accepting that he was on the wrong side of the conflict and is seemingly surrendering peacefully.

However, after talking to Brutus and Cassius, Antony shakes the conspirators' hands, hands that are still literally covered in Caesar's blood. He even acknowledges that they'll think of him as either a flatterer or a coward for doing this. He gives a soliloquy, and in one part says " I did love thee, Caesar, O, 'tis true. If then thy spirit look upon us now, shall it not grieve thee dearer than thy death to see thy Antony making his peace.

Shaking the bloody fingers of thy foes..." So after acknowledging that what he's doing might seem strange, he shares his thoughts with the audience. <https://assignbuster.com/understanding-personality-and-motives-of-mark-antony-the-tragedy-of-julius-caesar-by-william-shakespeare/>

Antony knows that Caesar would feel betrayed if his spirit was looking down upon them, but he seems to think that he's making the best choice available to him.

However, looking back on Antony's self admittedly zealous flattering, he seems to have an ulterior motive. He manages to convince Brutus and Cassius to let him give Caesar's eulogy, despite Cassius being a worried about Antony turning the people against them. He starts the speech off with " Friends, Romans, countrymen, lend me your ears. I come to bury Caesar, not to praise him." This is his way of saying that he is not going to try to stir up their emotions. However, his eulogy ends up being very good. He talks about how the evil that men create is often remembered after their death, while the good they create is often forgotten with their death. He moves people, causing them to riot and chase Brutus and Cassius out of the city. This makes Antony's behavior before the eulogy seem to be a purposeful choice to flatter the conspirators and gain their permission to speak about Caesar. However, it is hard to tell because it is never stated outright by Antony.

To conclude, Marc Antony is a multifaceted character that blurs the traditional lines of good or bad. Instead, judgement of Antony's character is left up to the personal interpretation of the reader. Shakespeare seems to like leaving certain aspects of a character's actions or motives open. In general, he seems to like leaving certain aspects of the story to be open to debate. This seems to be one of the reasons why his works stand the test of time. The reader doesn't always know everything, and sometimes even

making inferences is a challenge. This is a lot like life in the sense that you don't always know every intricate detail, and sometimes you don't end up learning them at all. Antony is an important part of this uncertainty, and Shakespeare wrote him with just enough clarity to make the reader question how they interpret literature. Antony's character teaches people to look beyond the obvious details and form their own interpretations of literature.