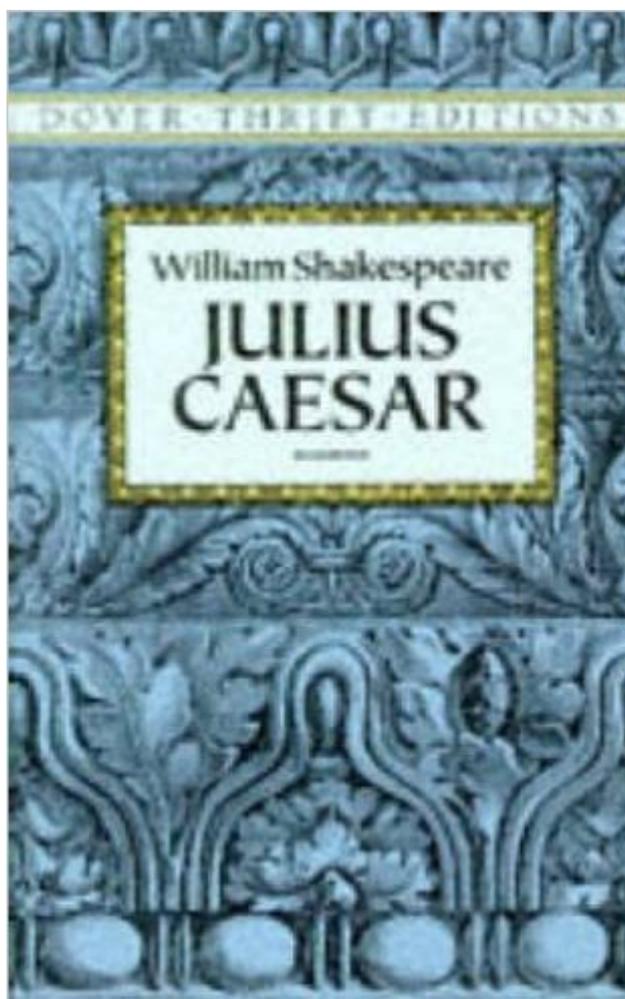


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Julius Caesar (Dover Thrift Editions)



Synopsis

Based on Plutarch's account of the lives of Brutus, Julius Caesar, and Mark Antony, Julius Caesar was the first of Shakespeare's Roman history plays. Presented for the first time in 1599, the play reveals the great dramatist's consummate ability to explore and express the most profound human emotions and instincts. So clearly and urgently does it impact its insights into history and human behavior, Julius Caesar is traditionally among the first of Shakespeare's plays to be studied at the secondary-school level. In addition to its compelling insights into the human condition, Julius Caesar is also superb drama, as Brutus, Cassius, and the other conspirators hatch a plot to overthrow Caesar, dictator of Rome. After Caesar is assassinated, Mark Antony cleverly turns the crowd against the conspirators in one of the most famous speeches in literature. In the civil war that follows, the forces of Mark Antony and Octavius Caesar eventually win out over the armies of Cassius and Brutus. Humiliated and desperate, both conspirators choose to end their lives. These tragic events unfold in a riveting dramatic spectacle that also raises profound questions about power, government, ethics, and loyalty. Now this great tragedy is available in this inexpensive edition, complete and unabridged with explanatory footnotes.

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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, Brute? 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 many more words ending in "e".

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