

**SHAKESPEARE MADE EASY**

**MODERN ENGLISH VERSION  
SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH FULL ORIGINAL TEXT**

*Julius  
Caesar*

EDITED AND RENDERED INTO MODERN ENGLISH BY  
Alan Durband



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# Act one

## Scene 1

*Rome. A street. Enter Flavius, Marullus and certain Commoners.*

**Flavius** Hence! home, you idle creatures, get you home:  
Is this a holiday? What, know you not,  
Being mechanical, you ought not walk  
Upon a labouring day without the sign  
5 Of your profession? Speak, what trade art thou?

**1st Commoner** Why, sir, a carpenter.

**Marullus** Where is thy leather apron, and thy rule?  
What dost thou with thy best apparel on?  
You, sir, what trade are you?

10 **2nd Commoner** Truly, sir, in respect of a fine workman, I am  
but, as you would say, a cobbler.

**Marullus** But what trade art thou? Answer me directly.

**2nd Commoner** A trade, sir, that I hope I may use with a safe  
conscience; which is, indeed, sir, a mender of bad soles.

15 **Marullus** What trade, thou knave? thou naughty knave, what  
trade?

**2nd Commoner** Nay, I beseech you, sir, be not out with me:  
yet, if you be out, sir, I can mend you.

**Marullus** What meanest thou by that? Mend me, thou saucy  
20 fellow?

**2nd Commoner** Why, sir, cobble you.

# Act one

## Scene 1

*A street in Rome. Flavius and Marullus, two tribunes, are trying to disperse a crowd of Roman workers, including a Carpenter and a Cobbler.*

**Flavius** Go home, you idle wretches! Go home! Do you think today's a holiday? Don't you know you tradesmen should wear working clothes on weekdays? You – [*he questions the ringleader*] what's your trade?

**Carpenter** Me, sir? I'm a carpenter.

**Marullus** Then where's your leather apron and your ruler? What are you doing with your best clothes on? [*To another*] You there! What's your job?

**Cobbler** To be honest, sir, compared with a real tradesman, I'm only what you'd call a mender or a cobbler.

**Marullus** But what's your trade? A straight answer!

**Cobbler** It's a trade I can follow with a clear conscience, sir. I'm a mender of bad soles.

**Marullus** [*getting angry*] Your trade, idiot! You fool – what's your trade?

**Cobbler** Please don't snap at me, sir! But should you snap, I can mend you!

**Marullus** What do you mean by that? "Mend me," you impudent fellow?

**Cobbler** Why, sir – cobble you.

**Flavius** Thou art a cobbler, art thou?

**2nd Commoner** Truly, sir, all that I live by is with the awl: I  
meddle with no tradesman's matters, nor women's matters;  
25 but withal I am, indeed, sir, a surgeon to old shoes: when  
they are in great danger, I recover them. As proper men as  
ever trod upon neat's leather have gone upon my handiwork.

**Flavius** But wherefore art not in thy shop today?  
Why dost thou lead these men about the streets?

30 **2nd Commoner** Truly, sir, to wear out their shoes, to get  
myself into more work. But indeed, sir, we make holiday to  
see Caesar, and to rejoice in his triumph.

**Marullus** Wherefore rejoice? What conquest brings he home?  
What tributaries follow him to Rome,  
35 To grace in captive bonds his chariot wheels?  
You blocks, you stones, you worse than senseless things!  
O you hard hearts, you cruel men of Rome,  
Knew you not Pompey? Many a time and oft  
Have you climb'd up to walls and battlements,  
40 To towers and windows, yea, to chimney-tops,  
Your infants in your arms, and there have sat  
The livelong day, with patient expectation,  
To see great Pompey pass the streets of Rome:  
And when you saw his chariot but appear,  
45 Have you not made an universal shout,  
That Tiber trembled underneath her banks  
To hear the replication of your sounds  
Made in her concave shores?  
And do you now put on your best attire?  
50 And do you now cull out a holiday?  
And do you now strew flowers in his way,  
That comes in triumph over Pompey's blood?  
Be gone!  
Run to your houses, fall upon your knees,

**Flavius** [*understanding at last*] Oh, so you are a shoe repairer, are you?

**Cobbler** Faith, sir: all my living is based on the awl. I don't meddle in tradesmen's affairs – nor in affairs with women – but, overall, I'm a shoe surgeon. When their lives are in danger, I save them. The finest men who ever wore shoe leather have trodden on my handiwork!

**Flavius** But why aren't you in your workshop today? Why are you leading these men around the streets?

**Cobbler** To wear their shoes out, sir – so I'll get more work! But joking apart, we've taken the day off to see Caesar and celebrate his victory.

**Marullus** What is there to celebrate? What treasure has he brought back home? How many hostages has he fetched to Rome, chained to his chariot wheels, who'll pay us tribute money? Blockheads! Numskulls! Fools! Oh, you hard-hearted, cruel men of Rome! Don't you remember Pompey? Many a time you've climbed up walls and battlements, towers and windows, yes, even to the tops of chimneys, with your infants in your arms, sitting there patiently all the livelong day, to see great Pompey pass through the streets of Rome. And when you saw his chariot appear, didn't you all cheer together, making the River Tiber tremble beneath its banks when your cries echoed along its curving shores? And are you now sporting your best clothes? Making a public holiday for yourselves? Throwing flowers before the man who triumphed over Pompey's sons? Be off with you! Run home, fall on your

55 Pray to the gods to intermit the plague  
That needs must light on this ingratitude.

**Flavius** Go, go, good countrymen, and for this fault  
Assemble all the poor men of your sort;  
Draw them to Tiber banks, and weep your tears  
60 Into the channel, till the lowest stream  
Do kiss the most exalted shores of all.

*[Exeunt all the Commoners]*

See where their basest mettle be not mov'd;  
They vanish tongue-tied in their guiltiness.  
Go you down that way towards the Capitol;  
65 This way will I. Disrobe the images,  
If you do find them deck'd with ceremonies.

**Marullus** May we do so?  
You know it is the feast of Lupercal.

**Flavius** It is no matter; let no images  
70 Be hung with Caesar's trophies. I'll about  
And drive away the vulgar from the streets;  
So do you too, where you perceive them thick.  
These growing feathers pluck'd from Caesar's wing  
Will make him fly an ordinary pitch,  
75 Who else would soar above the view of men  
And keep us all in servile fearfulness.

*[Exeunt]*