

Name _____



Speech Battle

After the shocking death of Julius Caesar, Rome was in chaos. The people did not know whether to support the senators who had killed Caesar or to be angry about his assassination. Two powerful speeches would decide the future of Rome—one from Brutus, one of Caesar's closest friends, and one from Mark Antony, a loyal supporter of Caesar.

First, Brutus spoke to the crowd. He wanted to explain why the senators

had killed Caesar. He told the people that Caesar was too ambitious and would have become a king, taking away their freedom. Brutus assured them that he did not hate Caesar, but he loved Rome more. He asked the crowd, "Would you rather Caesar were living and we all be slaves?" His words were calm and logical, and at first, the people agreed. They thought Brutus had acted for the good of Rome.

Then, Mark Antony stepped forward. Antony was smart. He knew that if he directly attacked Brutus, the crowd might turn against him. Instead, he used sarcasm to make the people question Brutus' words. He repeated the phrase, "Brutus is an honorable man," but he said it in a way that made people wonder if Brutus was truly honorable. Antony then showed the crowd Caesar's will, which promised money and land to the Roman people. He also revealed Caesar's bloody cloak and pointed to where each senator had stabbed him, making the people feel sympathy for Caesar.

Antony's speech turned the crowd against Brutus and the other senators. Soon, the people of Rome rioted, burning houses and hunting down the conspirators. Brutus and his allies had to flee.

These two speeches showed the power of words. Brutus tried to convince people using logic, but Antony used emotion, questions, and evidence to turn public opinion against the senators. In the end, Antony's speech won because it connected to the people's feelings. The power of persuasion changed the course of Rome's history.