

## **To what extent is Cassius a manipulator, and how does he exploit Brutus's honor for his own ends? Discuss his role in initiating the assassination.**

### **Extent of Cassius's Manipulation**

- Highly manipulative and calculating
- Builds the conspiracy indirectly by influencing others, not by open rebellion
- Uses Brutus's honour to make the assassination look patriotic and acceptable

### **Cassius as the Chief Instigator**

- First major character to decide Caesar must be stopped
- Turns fear of Caesar's growing power into a planned conspiracy
- Reveals political jealousy and anger
  - Quote: "Caesar doth bestride the narrow world / Like a Colossus."

### **Brutus as the Key Target**

- Knows people distrust Cassius but respect Brutus
- Targets Brutus early to give the plot legitimacy
- Treats Brutus's honour as something he can shape
  - Quote: "Thy honourable mettle may be wrought."

### **Flattery and Undermining Caesar**

- Praises Brutus to make him feel morally superior
- Presents Caesar as undeserving and too human for godlike status
- Pushes Brutus toward action by attacking Caesar's "worthiness"

### **Moral Trap: Freedom vs Slavery**

- Frames the situation as a moral duty for Brutus
- Creates a false choice: save Rome or accept slavery under Caesar
- Emphasises personal responsibility over fate
  - Quote: "The fault, dear Brutus, is not in our stars, / But in ourselves."

### **Forged Letters as the Strongest Tool**

- Plants fake letters to imitate public demand for Brutus's leadership
- Exploits Brutus's self-image as Rome's noble saviour
- Forces Brutus emotionally and morally toward the conspiracy
  - Quote: "Brutus, thou sleep'st: awake."

### **Building the Conspiracy and Giving It a Respectable Face**

- Recruits dissatisfied senators and creates momentum
- Ensures Brutus becomes the moral centre and public symbol
- Makes the assassination appear honourable rather than personal revenge

### **Outcome and Irony**

- Cassius initiates and fuels the plot, but Brutus later overrules Cassius's practical instincts
- Brutus spares Antony and allows him to speak, which turns Rome against them
- The conspiracy Cassius builds collapses and contributes to the conspirators' downfall

**How crucial is the support of the common people (plebeians), and are they merely fickle pawns, as characters suggest?**